

Destructive Nature of Communal Conflict in Nigeria: A Focus on Oruku and Umuode Conflict in Enugu State of Nigeria

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Abstract: - This paper examines the destructive nature of communal conflict in Nigeria with a focus on Oruku/Umuode conflict in Enugu State. The specific objectives of the paper were to investigate factors that escalates the conflict, its effect on the development of the communities and to find out why the resolution strategies adopted by Enugu State Government and other Third Party interveners failed. Macro theory of conflict was adopted as framework of analysis. The study adopts documentary and survey research design while data were collected through primary and secondary sources. The secondary source are data in books, journals, internet materials, Court documents relating to the conflict, Government Gazettes on the conflict, memoranda and petitions submitted by the communities to different Panel of Inquiry, and recommendations of different Panels of Inquiry on the conflict. The primary source is data generated directly from respondents through interview. Purposive sampling technique was used to select forty (40) respondents inter viewed. The paper found that the conflict had led to loss of several lives and properties and created internally displaced persons who took refuge in the neighboring communities and within Oruku. The paper argues that resolution of such an intractable and destructive conflict requires neutrality by interveners and a change of strategy and approach with the adoption of conflict transformation through which both the actors, the issues, structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of the conflict will be transformed. The paper recommends that Government and third-party interveners should be neutral in their bid to resolve the conflict and that the youths who are combatants in the area should be demobilized and empowered. Those who were displaced by the conflict should be identified and rehabilitated by government or non-governmental organizations so as to alleviate their suffering and change their perception from the culture of war to a culture of peace.

Keywords: Conflict, Communal Conflict, Intractable Conflict, Oruku/Umuode, Destructive Conflict

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the destructive nature of communal conflict in Nigeria with a focus on Oruku/Umuode conflict in the Enugu State of Nigeria. The paper as its objectives to investigate the factors that escalate Oruku/Umuode conflict, its effect on the development of the communities as well as why the resolution mechanisms

adopted by Government and the church and other interveners failed to de-escalate the conflict. The paper is designed to provide Government at all level as well as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with added knowledge on the level of destruction and hardship the conflict has imposed on the two communities and the factors escalating it with recommendations on the pragmatic plan of action that will mitigate and resolve the conflict.

Communal conflict as observed by Elfversson & Brosché (2012) is a violent conflict between non-state groups that were organized along with a shared communal identity. The groups involved non-state groups, meaning that neither actor controls the state and armed forces (although state actors may be involved as an important supporting actor in a communal conflict). Communal conflicts can take many different forms, and in order to understand the different dynamics of communal conflict, it is useful to analyze their underlying causes and the issue over which the conflict is fought. Different conflict issues may necessitate different types of interventions and conflict resolution strategies. Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC, 2013) noted that the term “communal conflict” embraces both inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflict but also may include inter-village clashes where narrower identities define the parties. Horowitz (2000) sees communal conflict as a form of violence that is perpetrated across ethnic or communal lines, the violent parties feel solidarity for their respective groups, and victims are chosen based on group membership. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013) sees communal conflicts as a form of violence between communities with a different religious group, different sects or tribes of the same religious group, clans, ethnic origins or national origin. However, this excludes conflict between two individuals or two families.

Onwe, Nwogbaga & Nwakamma (2015) observed that Nigeria for instance, has witnessed numerous communal conflicts such as Zango-Kataf crisis in Kaduna State 1999-2001, Tiv-Jukun crisis in Taraba State 1999-2001, Ife-Modakeke in Osun State 1999-2000, Eleme-Okrika crisis, Itsekiri-Urhobo crisis 1999-2000, Itsekiri-Ijaw crisis, Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in Anambra State 1995-1999,, Umuode-

Oruku conflict, the Igbo-Ikom conflict in Cross-River State and the Ezza-Ezillo conflict in Ebonyi State among others. Oruku/ Umuode conflict is an intra-ethnic/intra-communal conflict which Idowu (2001) and Oladoyin (2001) attributed to an internal phenomenon like a dispute over ownership of land and population escalation. Akinteye (1999) attributed it to a tussle for a chieftaincy title.

Nwanegbo (2009) posits that in Nigeria we have too many of this kind of conflict and wars which are called communal conflict/wars. More of these disputes came about over ownership of land and defence of community pride and properties and even people. They were usually intense and as destructive as major civil wars

Historical account of Oruku and Umuode conflict

Oruku and Umuode are communities in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria, with the following communities bordering them: Akpuoga Nike and Nchatancha Nike on the North; Akpugo and Akpawfu communities on the West; Ezza-Akpuoga Nike and Amechi Idodo on the East and Amagunze on the South.

The conflict started in the year 1990/91 following the amendment of 1976 chieftaincy constitution of the town from rotatory among the three clans in the community namely; Umuchiani, Onuogowo and Umuode. which produced HRH Igwe Nwatu Okenwa in 1981 (who died in 1984) to Merit system which produced HRH Igwe Dr. C A Nomeh as the traditional ruler of the Town in 1991 (Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008; Obi-Ani, 1999; Okenwa, 1999). The amendment of the 1976 constitution was initiated by Umuchiani/Ihunnam and Umuode in 1987 and which both of them ratified and signed the same year. Onuogowo opposed the amendment *ab. initio* and refused to sign the constitution but when HRH Igwe Nomeh from their quarters (Onuogowo) elected the Traditional Ruler of Oruku based on Merit in line with the 1987 amended constitution, they (Onuogowo clan) cunningly affirmed the constitution. This elicited discomfort and discontentment from Umuode clan who perceive the sudden u-turn as a ploy against them. The Umuodes started opposing the amended constitution they signed with Umuchiani and boycotted the coronation of HRH Igwe Dr. C A Nomeh in spite of their participation in his election and presentation to the government. They thereafter went to court to challenge the election of Igwe Nomeh at an Enugu High Court in Suit No E/450/91 but later abandoned it, hence setting the stage for the manifestation of the conflict. As a power-sharing measure, Oruku/Umuode supported and voted one Umuode man, Mr. Emmanuel Omaba as the Counselor representing Amechi Idodo/Oruku ward under the defunct SDP and who contested against an NRC candidate, Mr. Sebastine Ngwu from Amechi Idodo. Chief Nnaji Nwobisi of Umuchiani Clan was elected the Chairman of Oruku Town Union but this conciliatory measures did not assuage the conflict instead it exacerbated it (Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008).

The conflict took another dimension in 1994, following the Supreme Court of Nigeria Judgment of July 16th 1994 (Appeal No. SC/203/1989) that awarded Aguefi land which is the entire right hand side of Oruku inhabited by them to Akpugo who had been contesting the ownership of the land with Oruku people right from the colonial period. The conflict became confrontational in July 1995 following disagreement over a portion of farmland between some people from Umuode clan and Chief Nnaji Nwobisi (then Chairman of Oruku Town Union) at Ovuma farmland in Oruku (Oruku Memoranda to Dimoji Panel, 1995). In retaliation the youths of Umuchiani and Onuogowo went on a rampage at Eke Oruku market and vandalized/looted some shops belonging to Umuode people (Umuode Memoranda to Dimoji Panel, 1995).

On October 9th 1995, violent clashes erupted between Umuchiani/Onuogowo people against Umuode people following disagreement over the venue of a planned reception to honour Prof. Barth Nnaji, (Umuode's leader in Oruku) by Oruku Youths Federation (made up of Umuode Youths) which they fixed the venue to be Community Primary School Oruku but failed to notify the traditional ruler of Oruku and the Oruku Town Union. Another cause of the clash was that the reception was fixed on a day when school was in session as well as Umuode's refusal to pay a levy of N20.00 imposed on all taxable adults from Oruku by Oruku Town Union for the repair of the damaged roof of the Primary School. As a result of these controversies, Umuchiani and Onuogowo people blocked the use of the school for the reception. To ensure peace, the Enugu State Police Command banned any activity on the school on that day and further directed Oruku Youths Federation to change the venue to the home of Prof. Bartholomew Nnaji. In the evening, Umuode youths attacked Oruku people returning from Enugu along Oruku-Akpuoga road. The other two clans went there to rescue their people and in the process clashes erupted. However, on the following day, one Mr. John Obisi and Mr. Donatus Ogbodo all of Umuchiani were shot and killed by Umuode people. Umuchiani/Onuogowo retaliated and killed some Umuode people, vandalized their properties and the Umuodes ran to the neighboring communities for their safety but were brought back by the then Military Administrator of Enugu State, Col Mike Torey, in February 1996, who made the elders of both clans to embrace each other publicly at Eke Oruku Market (Okenwa, 1999; Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008; Umuode memoranda to Dimoji Panel, 1995)

In 1998, Umuode leaders lobbied for an autonomous community which was granted to them by Col Sule Ahman's regime with a *proviso* or clause that the autonomy shall become effective on the identification of a virgin land. Oruku people donated Abari land (a virgin and vacant land) for the settlement of Umuode people since they live interwoven but Umuode people refused to go to Abari but instead demanded that the majority Oruku people living in Aguefi should vacate for them claiming that they have

purchased the land from a section of Akpugo community called Umuanibureke. The Traditional Rulers of Akpugo went to court to challenge the claim because the Supreme Court judgment did not award the land to any particular family or group in Akpugo but to Akpugo people in general and in the process secured an injunction restraining Umuode and Umuanibureke from trespassing into the land. The Traditional Rulers of Akpugo later handed over the land Oruku people in a consent judgement delivered by an Enugu High Court presided by Justice Nosike in 2018 (Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008).

In 1999 the dispute over Oruku parking out of Aguefi and Umuode relocating to it led to internecine war between Umuode (who at that point has acquired an autonomous community status). After the war, Umuode went into exile in the neighboring communities till 2007. The war led to the death of some people on both sides. On April 2009, the then Military Administrator of Enugu State Navy Captain Adewunmi Agbaje issued a white paper acquiring the contentious Aguefi land for the settlement of Umuode (Umuode memoranda to Oputa Panel 2001). In reaction, Akpugo Traditional Rulers went to court to challenge the acquisition at Enugu High Court in Suit No HAGB/6/2008. In 2000, two Oruku leaders late Mr. Simon Bernard Nnamani and Mr. Stephen Nnamani were killed as they were returning from Enugu by Umuode youths near Iyiyama River. On December 8th, 2007, following a pact with the then Governor of Enugu State Barrister Sullivan Chime, Umuode returned to Oruku and camped at the home of Prof. Barth Nnaji, their leader at Eziobodo village from where they started attacking Oruku people. Several petitions were written by Oruku to the government to stop them but all proved abortive. (Oruku memoranda to C J Aneke Panel, 2008; Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008)

On 29th December 2007, Umuode youths killed one Ekene Okenwa of Oruku in his house at Eziobodo village and also kidnapped and killed Chief Felix Nwatu the then Chairman of Oruku Town Union/Development Committee. This led to the deployment of a team of mobile policemen to the area to maintain peace (Oruku memoranda to C J Aneke Panel, 2008).

Between 6th March 2008 and 30th March 2008, several clashes erupted which led to loss of one life each on both side while Oruku houses within Eziobodo village were vandalized and burnt by Umuode youths (Ukemenam & Okechukwu, 2008).

On January, 2009, following the approval of a white paper on the report of a panel set up by Governor Chime regime directing all Oruku people living at Aguefi numbering 449 homes to vacate for Umuode numbering 181 homes and which Oruku people later challenged the white paper in an Enugu High Court (Suit No E271/2009). The perception of the government directive as contained in the white paper led to a violent clash which left several properties

damaged especially those of Umuode (Ugwu, 2009; Uba,2009). Between 2010 till date, there were several clashes between the two parties following repeated efforts by Umuode to implement the government white paper by themselves and that of Oruku People to stop them as reported in several news media in the country. Several efforts made by the Enugu State Government and the Catholic Church to resolve the conflict also failed ((Ugwu, 2009)

From the historical account of Oruku/Umuode conflict, it can be observed that the conflict had become intractable and destructive and has defiled all efforts to resolve it. Oruku/Umuode conflict has caused untold hardship on the people of the two communities who were formerly one community under Oruku Town and who had lived in peace and cohabited in spite of their different history. The effect of the conflict has even spread to their neighboring communities where some of their people live in exile. The conflict has defiled all solutions adopted by the government to resolve it ostensibly because of the intransigence of the parties, actors, and leaders of both communities and in addition, the influence of secondary/shadow and interested stakeholders (Obu-Ani, 1999) who stand to benefit from the outcome of the conflict. Reports of some Panel of Enquiry on the conflict favour each party at different occasions and thus their recommendations failed to resolve the conflict (Dimoji Panel, 1995; Nyanayo Panel, 1998; Oputa Panel, 2001; Aneke Panel, 2008).

Conceptual Clarification of Conflict

Conflict is as old as humanity and inherent in human life in as much as there are interactions among human being either at inter-personal level, intra-group level or inter-group level. There is no consensus among scholars on the definition of conflict as each defined it according to the writer's perspective but what seems to be common in the scholarly definitions is that conflict occurs when there is a state of struggle, opposition, incompatibility, interference, divergence of interest, tension, interaction and interdependence among others (Adenyi, 2016).

Wright (1990) defined conflict as an opposition among social entities directed against one another. This definition emphasizes that conflict erupts during social interaction among people when there is antagonism among them.

Kreisberg (1973) simply defined it as a relationship between two people or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. This definition attributes conflict to the perception among two people or more seeking to achieve some goals which they feel is irreconcilable.

Coser (1956) sees conflict as a struggle between opponents over values, and claim to scarce status, power and resources. This definition is specific on what the scholar perceives as the causes of conflict or factors that will lead to it, which is here attributed to fight over values such as belief, ideology, identity; resources which may be tangible or

intangible resources; status which may include position, rank and class; power which may also include authority, influence and control.

Ifesinachi (2009) posits that conflict is the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. The use of forces and armed violence in pursuit of interest and goals produce armed conflict.

Obasi, (2009) dealt on sources of conflict and posits that there may be multiple causes. These multiple causes, which are often rooted in history, lead to violence due to a variety of catalysts. Most of these catalysts in the case of Nigeria, as in many ethnic groups, are; land, political marginalization, religion, environmental degradation and cultural

Conflict is constructive if it leads to social change (Coser & Rosenberg, 1976; Rose, 1993), it could also be destructive. In differentiating between constructive and destructive conflict, Meehan (2008) posits that destructive conflict promotes inequality and an imbalance of power often damages a relationship, unlike constructive conflict which operates under the belief that all parties can win. Destructive conflict ignores the real issues between the conflicting parties. It occurs for a variety of reasons which in most cases is attributed to a power struggle. One party remains determined to win his way on an issue of particular interest, poor management styles limits the positive interaction and also contributes to destructive conflict.

Nature of Destructive Conflict

Bercovitch (2003) described destructive conflict as a conflict that has sunk into a self-perpetuating violent interaction in which each party develops a vested interest in the continuation of the conflict which is always characterized by a deep feeling of fear, hostility, and intractability. Clausewitz (1982) while contributing on the destructive nature of conflict in the book "On War" listed four characteristics of armed conflict or war which includes danger, exertion, chance, and uncertainty. Burton (1990) commenting on destructive conflict posits that intractable conflict or deep-rooted conflict conflicts involve deep feelings, values, and needs (that) cannot be settled by any order from outside such as a court, an arbitrator or a more powerful nation. These conflicts appear endless; erupting into the emotional display and other displays and even violence from time to time. Threats to identity tend to arouse feelings of anger and fear which can, in turn, fuel conflict escalation and thus lead to destruction (Kriesberg, 1998). As a result of escalation, formerly neutral or moderate parties are pulled towards one side or the other and communities became severely polarized, third parties who would otherwise urge moderation and attempt mediation of the controversy disappear, such polarization further reduces the opportunity for communication and contributes to the general deterioration of relations between the adversaries (Rubin & Pruitt, 2002).

Ayo, Durojaye, & Unmeri, (2009) delved into the consequences or effects of destructive conflict and described it as follows;

- **It creates stress in people.** Destructive conflict generally affects the physical and mental health of those involved in direct combat. Conflict becomes very intense as it creates a general atmosphere of fear, guilt, frustration, and aggression.
- **It leads to a diversion of energy.** The fact that the group involved in conflict channel their resources (energy, time, human and material resources) to the pursuit of victory is a serious diversion from group goals and values.
- **Instability and chaos.** During conflicts, actions such as group and individual collaborations dwindle significantly or sometimes disappear completely. The tension that dovetails into a complete breakdown of communications is common features. Explaining the negative implications of destructive conflict.

Effects of Communal Conflict

Akpenpuun (2013) observes that the eruption of communal conflicts usually results in a massive loss of lives and destruction of properties. It also hinders manpower growth, labour strength, socio-economic development, social cohesion, and political stability. Communal conflicts have the proclivity or tendency to undermine the health of society. Such conflict also reduces people's personal security and restrict their access to food, medicines and medical supplies, clean water, sanitation, shelter and health services. People's coping capacities are severely strained: The pattern of this type of conflict has an immediate impact on civilian suffering (Akpenpuun, 2013). Enyigwe, Udejah & Ugwuanyi (2017) using Ezza-Ezillo communal conflict as a case study observe that communal conflicts have caused irreparable, immeasurable and irreversible calamities, the cumulative negative effect of which are; loss of millions of human lives, wanton destruction of property worth millions of naira, displacement/dislocation of inhabitants making them homeless or refugees in another land, halting of commercial activities and developments, and creating permanent enemies. Besides, experience has shown that communal conflicts create room for tension, hostility, and lack of trust, overreactions and other problems associated with social frictions.

Literature on the factors that escalated Oruku and Umuode conflict

Scholars, commentators, and writers have divergent views on the cause(s) of the conflict: Okenwa (1999) traced Oruku/Umuode conflict to the caste system –freeborn vs. ex-slaves existing in the community. Obi-Ani (1999) traced Oruku/Umuode conflict to the acrimony between the Amadi-freeborn and the Ohu-ex-slaves in Nkanu land and further linked this dichotomy to the manner in which the colonial masters liberated the ex-slaves and the brazen manner in

which the ex-slaves accepted their freedom. Enechukwu (2011) attributed it to the controversy surrounding the settlement of Umuode as an autonomous community and asserts all efforts to re-settle Umuode community out of Oruku Town have failed because the war between Umuode and Oruku is bloody and catastrophic. In another development, Mba (2014) described Oruku/Umuode conflict as a sub-ethnic conflict that might not attract as much academic attention as macro –ethnic conflict but are capable of yielding theoretical insight into identity formation, ethnic transformation and question of citizenship in a dynamic setting such as Nigeria. Asogwa, Ugwu, Ochie, Didiugwu & Odoziobodo (2017) posit that Oruku and Umuode conflict is a classic example of indigene-settlers driven conflict and this type of conflict flows from the discrimination and exclusion suffered by the victims on account of their migratory narratives. They further added that all over Nigeria, the crises between indigenes and settlers exist in the context of identity consciousness, access to and control of resource and positions. Asogwa et al (2017) further found that the seed of discord of the conflict was sown by the colonial disruption of the economic base of early settlers of Nkanu land. The economic system that the British met in many sections of Southern Nigeria was based on the feudal type of slave owners (or Ohu-Amadi). The manner with which the ex-slaves moved to assert their new found status with malice had been the source of acrimony between the two groups in Nkanu land and Oruku/Umuode seems to be the battleground in recent times.

Based on the foregoing, it can be deduced that Oruku and Umuode conflict has constituted a challenge to peace and development in that part of Nigeria. It is also one of the most intractable conflicts in the country which had lasted for close to three decades now. Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak & Bui-Wrzosinska (2018) observed that an intractable conflict is essentially one that persist because they seem impossible to resolve. Kriesberg (2005) identified three dimensions that differentiate intractable from tractable conflicts which are their persistence, destructiveness, and resistance to resolution.

The lack of peaceful resolution of Oruku and Umuode conflict can to a large extent be attributed to the functioning of very powerful socio-psychological barriers that inhibit and impede progress. These barriers are socio-psychological forces that underlie the disagreements and prevent their resolution by posing major obstacles to negotiations, agreement and reconciliation.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Macro Theory of Conflict

This study adopts the Macro Theory of Conflict developed by William G Cunningham in 1998 to explain the effect of destructive conflict. Osuala (2005:39) posits that in selecting a theoretical base in an academic discourse, the writer would have read and reviewed writings and research in psychology, sociology, history or any other fields that forms a base on which the research may have been founded.

Macro Theory of Conflict focused on the interaction of groups specifically on the conscious level. According to Cunningham, early political theorists from Thucydides, Sun Tzu to Machiavelli and Carl von Clausewitz chose one element to concentrate on power. According to the theorist, the use and exercise of power is a central concept of Macro Theory of Conflict. The theorist argues that power comes in many forms; economic power, political, military and even cultural power.

The major tenets of the theory is that conflict arises as a result of competition from the groups in pursuit of power and resources. The theory also assumes that competition and struggle for power and resources trigger conflict.

Macro Theory of conflict capitalizes on observation of group phenomenon for single event in order to study the problem in-depth and determine the importance and relationships of many variables rather than using few variables for many cases. The predominant methodologies used in Macro theory of conflict is historical or case study approach. The theorist further argued that within Macro Theory of Conflict there is an important set of concepts that can be derived from the study of conflict even though conflict can be given any tag, be it ethnic, religious, or sectarian conflict, they adopt the same dimension. But what is important is that group of people in conflict categorize themselves distant groups and view each other as out group or enemy group.

The application of this theory is to show that it was competition and struggle for power and resources that triggered Oruku and Umuode conflict. The conflict started with a competition for power through chieftaincy dispute and later metamorphosed to struggle for land resources. The Oruku's contention is that Umuode should be resettled in Abari a land donated by them for Umuode's resettlement. While on the other hand, the Umuodes contend that they should be settled at Aguefi land meaning that all Oruku's living in the land must vacate their homes for the establishment of Umuode autonomous community. The consequence of this competition and struggle for power and resources which the theory identified as causes of conflict led to the formation of enemy image by Oruku and Umuode against each other even though they were previously one community under Oruku Town. They also view each other as outgroup and enemy group. The theory helps to trace the historical antecedent of conflict using a case study as well as the impact of power acquisition and competition for resources in exacerbating a conflict. Consequently, the asymmetric power relation between Oruku and Umuode and the competition for their common wealth contributed to the escalation of the conflict, and this poses a great threat to government, non-governmental organizations, and the security agencies in the area of peace-building, peacemaking, and reconciliation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative research method which is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. The study relied on documentary and survey data and to enrich the study, primary and secondary data were sourced. Secondary sources explored to collect data include: books, journals, internet materials, Court documents on Oruku and Umuode conflict, Government Gazette on the conflict, memoranda and petitions submitted by the communities to different Panels of Inquiry, as well as reports and recommendations of these Panels of Inquiry on Oruku/Umuode conflict among others. The primary source are data generated directly from respondents through interview. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Forty (40) respondents interviewed.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The respondents interviewed during the study were in agreement that disagreement over chieftaincy stool triggered the caused. They also agreed that the contention over which of the two communities should occupy Aguefi land, which triggered armed conflict between the two communities, intransigence of the leaders of the warring communities, hypocrisy and lack of impartiality from those who had tried to mediate the conflict including some past governments in Enugu State as well as numerous court cases pending in high courts on the conflict which affects its settlement are among factors escalating it.

Effect of Oruku and Umuode conflict on the development of the communities

The respondents interviewed agreed that the conflict has led to loss of lives and properties in the area, it has retarded socio-economic development and brought hatred among the two communities who were once one community under Oruku Town. The respondents responses corroborated findings of previous studies about the conflict such as Adenyi (2014) who found that Oruku and Umuode conflict has caused untold hardship on the people of the two communities and that the effect of the conflict had even spread to their neighboring communities where some of their people live in exile. In the same manner, Obibi (2019) found that lives (including that of women) and properties were lost in the conflict and some of the population were displaced. Okenwa (1999) found that the conflict-affected economic activities at the famous Eke Oruku market which used to be a beehive of activities with people from far and near coming to buy agricultural products of

various types were affected as these activities waned as a result of the crisis while Uba (2009) observes that the youths of the two communities abandoned their agricultural livelihood and became combatants, brandishing weapons against each other. Agbaegbu (2000) found that the conflict-affected education activities as the constant armed and violent confrontation between the two communities put some of their children out of school. Asogwa *et al.* (2017) found that the conflict affected the socio-economic development and integration in the two communities. Enyigwe *et al.* (2017) found that the conflict had caused irreparable, immeasurable and irreversible calamities, the cumulative negative effect of which is; loss of millions of human lives, wanton destruction of properties worth millions of naira, displacement/dislocation of inhabitants making them homeless or refugees in another land, halting of commercial activities and developments, and creating permanent enemies. Besides, experience has shown that the communal conflict creates room for tension, hostility, and lack of trust, overreactions and other problems associated with social frictions.

Management of Conflict by the Enugu State Government and other interveners

According to Onwuzurigbo (2009) Government is a vital organ of conflict resolution and mediation in any state because it is only organ capable of mustering enough legitimacy, resources, and the facilities to efficiently manage crisis/conflict. How these resources are articulated and mobilized in contending with conflicts define what its experience will be in handling conflict, but sometimes, instead of adopting conflict resolution, conflict transformation and conflict management strategies or approaches in managing conflict, government do suppress conflict to favour their interest. Best (2011) argues that conflict suppression is used to portray the unwillingness of more powerful or stronger interveners who may have the ability to transform or manage a conflict situation, to take necessary measures leading to the management or resolution of the conflict. Instead, they use instruments of power to force or push away the issues under the carpet or to impose a solution that is not sustainable and which the parties are not satisfied. Government and repressive regimes are usually guilty of this situation by declining to take appropriate decisions as and when due or trying to lord it over others, leading to protracted conflicts. Sometimes, the state uses its coercive apparatus to suppress conflict but this cannot be sustainable.

Table 1 showing past efforts to resolve the Oruku and Umuode conflict and their outcome

Enugu State Government and Nkanu East LGA			
Regime	Date	Method	Outcome
Col Herbert Obieze	1991-1992	Application of dialogue	Conflict at the latent stage
Okwezilize Nwodo	1992-1993	Applied diplomacy	Manifest stage
Navy Captain Temi Ejoor	1993-1994	Applied diplomacy	Manifest Stage
Col Mike Lucky Torrey	1994-1996	Made efforts to reconcile the two parties and brokered peace	Violent stage
Col Sule Ahman	1996-1998	Created Umuode Autonomous community	Escalated the conflict because of land to settle Umuode
Navy Captain Benson Agbaje	1998-1999	Acquired Aguefiland for settlement of Umuode	Akpugo community sued Government in Suit No HAGB/06/2008
Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani	1999-2007	Applied Diplomacy	Visited Abari and Aguefi land but due to pressure from Umuode, he avoided the conflict.
Late Justice Oputa Panel of Inquiry	2001	Recommended settling Umuode at Abari land	Umuode rejected Oputa Panel's recommendations
Barr Sullivan Chime	2007-2015	Set up a panel that enumerated houses of Oruku and Umuode and later issued a White Paper to eject Oruku living in Aguefi Land	White paper/gazette rejected by Oruku community and went to court to challenge it.
Hon Ejike Ani (then Executive Chairman of Nkanu East LGA (Indigene of Oruku)	2010-2011	Convened peace meeting of both Communities at Practicing School Emene	Oruku people offered to Umuode the right-hand side of Oruku/Akpugo road from the junction leading to Akpugo from Oruku. Accepted and later rejected by Umuode people.
Barr Sullivan Chime	2014	Constituted Emeka Ujam Committee for re-enumeration of Oruku and Umuode houses	Recommended the eviction of Oruku People at Uzam area of Aguefi land which was rejected by Oruku people.
Barr Sullivan Chime	2015	Constituted Mr. Patrick Okolo Committee for further enumeration of Oruku and Umuode houses.	Oruku People living at the right-hand side up to the road leading to Uzam from Eziobodo to vacate their homes which was rejected by Oruku people
Enugu High Court Suit No E/271/2009	2017	Granted Interlocutory Injunction restraining Enugu State Government from implementing Government white paper pending the final determination of the suit in court.	Matter subsisting in Court.
Honourable Ikechukwu Ubagu	2018	Convened Peace Meeting of both Communities ALGON office Enugu for the resolution of the conflict	The meeting ended in a deadlock
Non-Governmental Organizations/ Individuals			
Catholic Church 1. Under Late Bishop Eneje 2. Under Bishop Gbuji 3. Bishop Onaga	1990/91 till date		1. Tried to use diplomacy to resolve the conflict, then it had not turned violent. 2. Supported settling Umuode at Aguefiland. 3. Had been applying diplomacy the handling of the conflict.
Traditional Rulers from Nkanu land	2016	Mediation of the conflict	Recommended Settling Umuode at Abari. Recommendation rejected by Umuode and Enugu State Government
Mr. Fidelis Mba an Oruku Indigene	2018	Convened peace meeting attended by representatives of both communities.	The meeting ended in a deadlock

Source: Compiled by the researcher from documentary sources on the conflict and Researcher Field Survey

Data on Table 1 shows that Nine (9) former Governors of Enugu State both military and civilian had made efforts to resolve the conflict during their tenure however among them it was Col. Sule Ahman, Navy Captain Agbaje and Barr. Sullivan Chime that came up with an official position to resolve it. Sule Ahman created Umuode autonomous

community, Navy Captain Agbaje acquired Aguefi for the settlement of Umuode while Sullivan Chime issued a white paper ordering Oruku people to vacate Aguefi land. The action of the three former governors clearly favoured Umuode people. On the other hand, it was Oputa Panel's report that recommended settling Umuode at Abari which Umuode

people rejected. The table also showed that Oruku people shifted their position during the regime of Hon Ejike Ani (then Executive Chairman of Nkanu East LGA) who as an Oruku indigene convened peace meeting of both Communities at Practicing School Emene where Oruku people offered to Umuode the right-hand side of Oruku/Akpugo road from the junction leading to Akpugo from Oruku which Umuode initially accepted and later rejected it. The meeting convened at the instance of the present Chairman of Nkanu East LGA Hon Ikechukwu Ubagu ended in a deadlock following disagreement by both parties. The table also shows that the Catholic church made several efforts to resolve the conflict but while Bishops Eneje (late) and the Onaga (current Bishop) were neutral, Bishop Gbuji (now retired) supported Umuode in their position on the matter. The table also shows that Nkanu land traditional rulers supported settling Umuode at Abari land, which Umuode rejected. Furthermore, the only individual effort to resolve the conflict was from one Mr. Fidelis Mbah who hails from Oruku but the move failed due to disagreement by the parties. The table further shows that on two occasions two sons of Oruku Hon. Ejike Ani and Mr. Fidelis Mbah made efforts to resolve the conflict.

Majority of the respondents responded that those strategies and efforts to resolve the conflict failed because of Enugu State Government's plan to eject majority of Oruku people from the contentious Aguefi land which they (Oruku) people continued to resist through series of Court matters. The respondents also responded that the strategies failed because of Umuode's rejection of Abariland donated by Oruku people for their settlement and Oruku people's refusal to vacate Aguefi.

Management of the conflict by Rt. Hon Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi the current governor of Enugu State

On assumption of office in 2015, His Excellency Rt. Hon Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi on several occasion visited the warring communities on peace interventions, promised that his administration will resolve the crisis in line with its peace and grassroots development initiatives. He made Oruku and Umuode leaders to sign a memorandum of understanding to halt hostilities on 8th day of April, 2019. He also ordered for a survey of the entire land mass of old Oruku Town (Uzodimma, 2019). Each of the two communities of Oruku and umuode were given N2, 500,000.00 each to hire a surveyor that will represent them in the process (Suit No HAGB/16/2019)

The Governor carved out Aguikpa Village in Oruku as a new autonomous community and the former traditional ruler of Oruku Community HRH Igwe Dr. C. A. Nomeh who though resides in Obinagu Village in Oruku was appointed the traditional ruler of the new Aguikpa Autonomous community. The governor further dissolved the executive of Oruku Town Union and appointed Caretaker Committees for both Oruku and Aguikpa Communities (Okogba, 2019). The Governor also divided Oruku land and allotted 30% to Umuode who

have five (5) families out of the 23 families of old Oruku Town before the eruption of the conflict.

Analysis of Rt. Hon Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi's management of Oruku and Umuode Conflict.

The methodology adopted by Governor Ugwuanyi in managing the conflict was greeted with mixed feelings. The researcher found that the Umuodes were in jubilation and accepted the management style of the Governor. On the side of Oruku people, Governor Ugwuanyi's management style divided the community, while the members of the new Aguikpa autonomous Community made up of four families out of the Eighteen (18) families of Oruku namely: Umuchieze, Umujoreji, Umunshiuba and Umuanegu Nohe (all belonging to Umunnaa Igwejike kindred of Onuogowo Clan) were also in jubilation alongside Umuode, it generated feud and disagreement in Oruku made up Umuchiani Clan with 12 out of the 18 families in Oruku who alongside the two remaining families in Onuogowo clan namely: Umuagubata and Umuokenwa Onuma constituted the present Oruku autonomous Community.

This feud as discovered by the study led to division of Oruku into two with one group praising the resolution method and strategy of Governor Ugwuanyi while the other group showed disapproval of the Governor's style and lamented that the Governor's management style was not different from that of some of his predecessors and an attempt to dislocate some Oruku people from their ancestral homes in Eziobodo and Uzam Villages within Aguefi land.

The bone of contention was that the Governor allotted 30% of Oruku land to Umuode at Aguefi land and specifically in Eziobodo and Uzam Villages. They also content that those who went and signed Memorandum of Understanding where the 30% percent of Oruku land for Umuode and the remaining 70 percent for the rest of Oruku including Aguikpa autonomous Community misrepresented them. In a letter to the governor dated May 31st 2019, the opposing group through their Lawyer Barrister Ifeanyi Chukwu Ukoh Chambers advised Governor Ugwuanyi to carve out the 30% for Umuode at Abari land (a virgin land). They also reminded the Governor of an Enugu High Court interlocutory injunction in Suit No. E271/2019 restraining Enugu State Government from relocating any Oruku person out of Aguefi land pending the final determination of the suit (The Sun, 2019a). Furthermore, the opposing group instituted a suit at an Agbani High Court in Suit No. HAGB/16/2019 against all the signatories to the **Memorandum of Understanding** especially those from Oruku side. Part of their claims are read thus:

1. That on 14th day of June 2019, the signatories to the **Memorandum of Understanding** were invited to Government House Enugu where they were asked to sign the final peace agreement, however those who refused to sign on Oruku side were threatened which

- lead to some of them signing the document which they were not given the chance to read through.
2. That following the incidence 14th June, some Oruku leaders who refused to sign the final peace agreement were arrested and questioned at DSS Enugu State Command and Police Headquarters on trump-up allegations
 3. That the signing of the memorandum of understanding was done without their due consultation.
 4. That if the Governor intends to share Oruku land, it should be shared among the 23 families of old Oruku Town (before the conflict) on equal bases such that each family will get 4.3 % which will give 5 Umuode families 21.7% while the 18 families of Oruku (Aguikpa inclusive) will get 78.3 % . That giving Umuode's 5 families 30% translates to 6% of Oruku land to each of them while the remaining 70% for the remaining 18 families of Oruku translates to 3.8% percent to each of them and that such an arrangement is a grave injustice against Oruku people and a strategy to cede Oruku homes and lands to Umuode people (HAGB/16/2019).

The plaintiffs in the Suit No. HAGB/16/2019 prayed the court to restrain the defendants and Enugu State Government from implementing, any government policy whereby 30% of Oruku land will be ceded to Umuode as against their fair share of 21.7% among others.

Furthermore the group as discovered by the study had served Enugu State government a pre-action notice as required by law which will last for 90 days. In another development, the group in a petition titled: **Oruku Community where do we go from here** lamented that inspite of a subsisting court injunction, since Thursday 5th September, 2019 an intimidating number of police and military personnel, had been stationed at Eziobodo village of Oruku with Caterpillars and Bulldozers balkanizing Oruku homes to cede same to Umuode as a fall out of Governor Ugwuanyi's peace deal while series of trumped up allegations were made against some Oruku people both in and outside national service. (Daily Sun, 2019b)

However, Governor Ugwuanyi's strategy was hailed by the other group in Oruku led by a former Local Government Chairman who hails from the town and who see it as the only solution to the decade old conflict and a measure to bring about peaceful resolution of the conflict so that loss of lives and properties will come to a halt. The supporting group paid a thank you visit to the Governor and in their separate speeches according to Amodeni (2019):

The caretaker chairmen of the three autonomous communities, and former chairman of the council, Hon Emma Omaba of Umuode, Hon Emma Mba of Oruku, Hon Raphael Ani of Aguikpa Oruku, and Hon Ejike Ani expressed gratitude to Gov Ugwuanyi for

settling the age-long communal dispute and assured the governor that posterity will forever remember him for his peace initiatives and uncommon leadership style

The study interviewed some respondents from the area on their feelings with the Governor's Strategy and found that they responded that the governor adopted conflict suppression, inducement and incentives. The respondents responded that Governor Ugwuanyi suppressed the conflict by forcing some Oruku people to sign the **final peace document** while some were framed up in a trump-up charges. They also responded that ceding 30% of Oruku land to Umuode was part of the suppression. They further responded that the carving out of Aguikpa as an autonomous community (though they are not in opposition to it) is an inducement to disunite, incapacitate and whittle down the power base of Oruku People. The respondents further responded that the dissolution of Oruku Town Union and appointment of caretaker committee members made up of protégés of those who supported his conflict management strategy is an incentives.

According to Doxey (1996) cited in Udeuhele (2018), inducement refers to an offer of a reward by a sender in exchange of a particular action or response by a recipient while incentive is defined as the granting of a political and or economic benefits for a specified policy adjustment (Udeuhele, 2018). Stedman (2000) also argued that inducement is a spoiler strategy in conflict Management and a convenient strategy that is applied without adequate consideration of whether it is an appropriate strategy

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Oruku and Umuode communal conflict had suffered a lot of setbacks due to Enugu State Government's plan to eject some Oruku people from the contentious Aguefi.
2. Umuode's rejection of Abariland donated by Oruku people for their settlement and Oruku people's refusal to vacate Aguefi via avalanche of court cases instituted by Oruku people continues to exacerbate the conflict.
3. The conflict apart from loss of lives and properties has retarded development in the area.
4. Successive regimes in Enugu State have continuously adopted conflict suppression to resolve the conflict whose outcome disfavours Oruku people.
5. The latest efforts of Governor Ugwuanyi though a bold efforts is characterized by inducement, incentives as well as conflict suppression and has led to a "collision cause" among Oruku people.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Oruku and Umuode conflict has led to the loss of several lives and properties as well as creating internally displaced persons who took refuge in the neighboring communities and within Oruku. The conflict has defiled all possible resolutions

apparently because of the negative perception of the interveners as well as the approaches adopted by the government of Enugu State, individuals and the church. The conflict poses a big threat to the peace of the area, Nkanu land and Enugu State in general. The symmetric power relation and competition by the two communities have been a “cog on the wheel” of its resolution. The failure of government and interveners change their strategies and adopt conflict management approaches like conflict transformation and traditional method which is more potent in resolving communal conflict in African setting, raises some questions about government’s capacity and preparedness to manage and effect peaceful resolution of the conflict.

This paper argues that resolution of such an intractable and destructive conflict requires a change of strategy and approach and the adoption of conflict transformation through which both the actors, the issues, structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of the conflict will be transformed. As posited by Miall (2004) conflict transformation as a concept and strategy to resolve conflict especially Oruku and Umuode conflict is designed to reframe the way in which peacebuilding initiatives are discussed and pursued, particularly in the contexts of ethnic conflict. The emphasis has been on conflict resolution and conflict management methods, which focus on reducing or defusing outbreak of hostilities. It places a greater weight on addressing the underlying conditions which gave rise to the conflict.

The advantage of Conflict transformation is that it pays attention to how conflict transforms relationships, communication, perceptions, issues and social organization with the aim of altering the conflict from violent manifestation characterized by armed violence and war to constructive and peaceful expression. It removes all structures that impede sustainable positive peace and seeks ways of involving all stakeholders including erstwhile combatants, local individuals, communities and external third parties in a concerted way. It also improves the whole context of the conflict and brings about a positive change in the disputants’ relationships or complete behavioural and attitudinal changes of the disputants. Another advantage of the concept is that it entails reassessment and redefinition of the disputants in order to explore avenues for final resolution. The aim of this is to transcend zero-sum (win-lose) phase to arrive at a positive-sum (win-win) agreement. New mutually benefiting arrangements are proposed and worked out in which the hitherto contested issues become less or no longer relevant and other issues and values become dearer to all the parties in the conflict.

This paper further strongly argues that destroying peoples home in order to establish another autonomous community on them is not a good strategy for conflict resolution, as that entails using force to resolve conflict which is often a “Greek Gift”. Such policy is not only obnoxious but capable of entrenching perpetual hatred, trauma and resentment as is the case in the protracted Israeli and Palestine

conflict. Adenyi (2016) in his Policy Theory of Conflict argued that bad, obnoxious unpopular and discriminatory policies can lead to a violent conflict. He formulated the theory in his book: *Elements of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution* to explain why some programme of action of government instead of bringing peace and cordiality, and atmosphere of cohesion, tranquility may lead to bitterness, animosity, resentment, malice and acrimony and thereby bring about conflict which often is destructive and intractable due to the bias, preconceived notion, favoritism, partiality of the policy formulators against a particular group or individuals especially in the allocation of scarce resource, power sharing, resolution approach to conflict among others. Adenyi (2016) added that whenever such policy is formulated, the group, individual or individuals that the policy discriminates against or disfavours will show disenchantment and resistance against the implementation of the policy and may employ every means such as litigation, demonstration and violence to express their rejection or grievances and which may degenerate into an intractable dimension. Government being the formulators of the policy (public policy) will in turn resort to the use of conflict suppression mechanism by mobilizing all its apparatus such as the police, army and bureaucrats to enforce compliance with the policy against the agitating groups of individual(s). In some case government often infiltrate the disfavoured group and use some of them to whittle down their opposition and resentment to the policy after which the moles are rewarded with appointment or financial reward (Adenyi, 2016)

In addition to the above, the paper recommends that Government and third-party interveners should be neutral and shun bias in their bid to resolve the conflict and that the youths who are combatants in the area should be demobilized and reintegrated with empowerment. The inability of government and third-party interveners in the conflict to identify the youths combatants of the two warring communities and demobilize them is an impediment to its resolution and thus a “vicious circle”. The paper further recommends that those who were displaced by the conflict should be identified and rehabilitated by Enugu State Government or non-governmental organizations as this will help to empower them to alleviate their suffering. Empowering those displaced by the conflict will also make them to start thinking of how to build peace instead of seeing themselves as victims of the conflict, this will also alter their perception, from culture of war to culture of peace. In addition, the traditional method of conflict resolution in line with the custom of Nkanuland should be explored to resolve the conflict. It is incontrovertible that in Africa, communal conflicts are easily resolved through a traditional method such as covenant, oath-taking ritual as well as reconciliation through the elders of the communities. Enugu State Government should ensure that Oruku people’s homes were not destroyed, demolished or ceded to Umuode as part of the resolution of the conflict because such will leave perpetual scar on the victims.

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