

## CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS AMONGST TOWN UNIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### Abstract

*Town Unions (TUs) exist for identifying and resolving communal problems among others in Anambra State. Ironically, many of them are conflict infested. Although many studies have been conducted on conflict, none specifically focused on the nature of social conflict facing TUs in Anambra State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Nri was selected through simple random sampling method from a list of 5 communities with two TUs in the state where one should exist. Likewise, Isiagu was selected from a list of 12 communities with care-taker committees. Amansea was selected purposively from list of 160 communities with functional TUs as the study locations. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression, Chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data were content analyzed. Leadership struggle was found to be a significant source of TU conflict in Isiagu (85.1%) but was not in Nri (55.4%) and Amansea (73.2%). Qualitative data attributed the struggle to the absence of a serving monarch in the town. This was not a significant source of TU conflict in Nri and Amansea where serving monarchs existed. Again conflict in Isiagu and Nri arose because identity of some indigenes was politicized. Also, in Isiagu (75.6%), Nri (53.3%) and Amansea (35.9%) of respondents saw State Governments` financial assistance as a source of TU conflict. Qualitative data showed most of the money could be misappropriated by community leaders. In Isiagu (81.0%), Nri (39.0%) and Amansea (35.5%) of respondents saw lack of accountability of TU monies as an internal source of TU conflict. The use of mediators ( $r = 0.3$ ), elders and traditional rulers ( $r=0.3$ ), were mostly preferred methods of conflict resolution in the three communities. Conversely, the use of TU constitution ( $r = 0.2$ ), invitation of the police ( $r = 0.2$ ) were not preferred. Leadership struggles and financial assistance foster Town Unions conflict more in towns with caretaker committees in Anambra State.*

### Introduction

Voluntary associations are one of the avenues through which human beings meet their social affiliation need. Reasons for their emergence and persistence vary across cultures. They can be racial (Rushton, 1999), ethnic (Nnoli, 2008), economic (Alba, 2000), cultural (Nwanunobi, 1992), ecological (Anikpo, 1998).

Town Unions (TUs) in Nigeria are socio-cultural voluntary organizations. They exist in many cultural areas of the country. They are known by different names, such as: patriotic unions, national unions, descendants` union, development unions or associations and improvement unions (Honey and Okafor, 1998; Adesoji, 2008). Their members claim a common ancestry and so tend to recreate preference for communal associational life in their interaction dynamics (Nwanunobi, 1992). The philosophy of town union is built and sustained by its members` conviction and commitment towards the uplift of their primordial cultural concerns, value preferences, aspirations and collective well-being (Florin and Wanderman, 1990).

The structure of TUs, and by implication functions, appears to change with time. In Nigerian cities, like Lagos and Kano, Igbo unions exist as an umbrella body containing members of different town unions that can still be identified and related to as a group. Such a group has arisen because, as urban dwellers, many Nigerians have come to appreciate what they have in common with those who come from the same geographical locations with them. Town unions have remained one of the resilient traditional mechanisms

of recreating kinship ties. Modernization processes have not been able to dwarf the relevance of TUs in the associational life of Nigerians.

### **Statement of the problem**

To assist the state in community development, town unions use indigenous knowledge, traditional service delivery methods and value preferences (Warren cited in Honey and Okafor, 1998). In the cities where some members of town unions reside, they recreate traditional role processes to adapt to challenges of city life; this often brings them into conflict with initial inhabitants of the areas or sons of the soil (Nzimiro, 2001).

Two problems confront members of town unions, namely: that associated with their primordial cultural preferences and that represented by the civic cultural equivalent (Ekeh, 1975). Member's inclination to the former explains why they tend to shift their loyalty from the state towards the development of their homelands, often avoid payment of taxes to the state and, periodically, honor a member that has attracted public amenities from the state to the homeland (Nwoga, 1987). In this way, town unions often serve as institutional mechanisms of struggling for collective resources at the state level. Because the state is weak in constraining members of TU from acting out their free will, they tend to see their relationship with the state as very weak (Igun, 2006; Okafor, 2010).

The state now appreciates the importance, relevance and indispensability of TUs in public service delivery. In Anambra State, an enabling law defining their statutory functions exists. According to the law, they are assumed to be fairly independent of traditional rulers in their communities. Thus, whereas traditional rulers are described as custodians of cultural values of their people, President-General of town union are entrusted with the day-to-day administration of their communities. Role conflict tends to arise between them often owing to struggle over values (Coser, 1957).

Conflict contributes to the socialization of individuals and the regulation of collective life. Best (2007: 64) expects scholars on conflict studies to appreciate that "every conflict has a specific context, history and background", which deserves to be appreciated in resolving the conflict situation. Conflict can be violent, silent or non-violent (Waltz in Adedokun, 1989), dynamic or dialectical (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2004; Best, 2007).

### **Social conflict and infrastructural development**

Infrastructural development is about the provision and availability of those basics on which the production, distribution and consumption of man's survival needs depend. Infrastructural availability in modern states is a function of variables, like technological position of a country in the global division of labour (Okonjo, 1976; Bruntland, 1980; Igun, 2006) and quality of governance (Williams, 1980; Yoroms, 1994, Osaghae and Suberu, 2005).

Conflict has impacted both positively and negatively on the infrastructural development of many communities in Nigeria. In the Niger Delta, for example, the insensitivity of oil companies operating in the region to the ecological problems arising from their activities created much misery that led to the emergence of rebellious social movements, such as Movement for the Survival of *Ogoni* People (MOSSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and Supreme Egbesu Assembly (SEA). The conflict disposition of the organizations towards the suffering of Niger Deltans, the insensitivity of the Nigerian state to their predicament has led to many losses in terms of human resources and infrastructural facilities. The killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and 9 other Ogoni activists (Abosedo, 2010), and the Odi Massacre of 1999 (Albert, 2003), among others, may have influenced the spate of kidnapping, youth restiveness, senseless killing of defenseless citizens, and bombing of oil installations, characteristic of social life in the Niger Delta

### **Traditional ruler's involvement in TU affairs**

Traditional rulers and TUs in contemporary Igbo society are the recognized institutional mechanism for civil society administration. While the TUs can be said to have evolved from the cultural preferences of the people, the traditional rulership cannot be so described. Igbo society is described as acephalous. Kings existed only in centralized polities like: Nri (Onwuejiogwu, 2001); Onitsha and Oguta (Nzimiro, 1972); Osomari and Aboh (Wandeers).

### **Negotiation**

A direct process of dialogue and discussion which takes place at least between two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute”. The aim is for the two parties to reach an agreement on the sources of conflict between them. Roger fishers, who is associated with this mode of conflict resolution, introduced the term *principled negotiation* as a component of conflict resolution.

### **Mediation**

Mediation usually involves dialogue aimed at helping parties to a dispute reach a solution to their problems (Scott, 2006). The mediator is expected to help the parties by creating the enabling environment for dialogue between them to prevail. To do this the mediator must not be seen as playing the *Tertius Gauden* role (Simmel cited in Timascheff, 1957). Instead, the mediator’s objectivity, neutrality, astuteness in helping the parties reached a win-win situation, and should not be in doubt to the parties in conflict. Scott (2006:1) notes that mediation is a favored method of resolving conflict in voluntary associations of Australia. He attributes this development to the fact that “mediation helps voluntary associations to avoid escalation of conflicts, heavy costs of unregulated conflicts, drain on people’s time and resources, poor management of public image of the associations and reduction in the participatory functions of the members of the associations. It was through mediation that late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe brokered the peace in Onitsha during the 1974-76 Onitsha Market Crisis. In traditional Igbo society, mediation process is usually undertaken by titled men (*Ndichie*).

### **Traditional methods of conflict resolution**

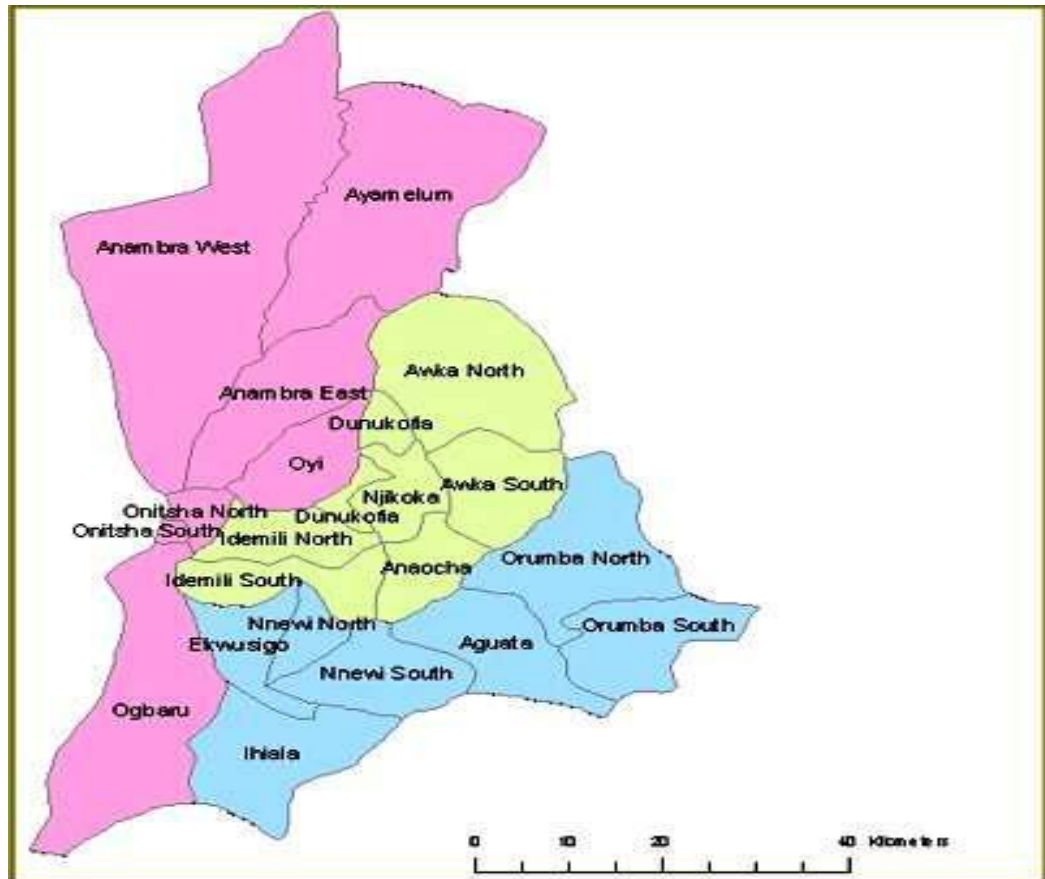
In Igbo society, conflict resolution is undertaken by such bodies as the age grades Council of elders settles marriage disputes, conflict arising out of inheritance rights, and breach of rites of passage (Ifemesia, 1985; Nwanunobi, 1992) and so on. The village assembly exists to resolve seniority rights of component lineages in a town (Anigbo, 1985; land disputes Udechukwu, 2003).The chief priest handles conflicts associated with violations of rules sustaining caste system, calendar and critical ceremonies.

Rituals, like breaking of cola nut (*cola acuminata* ), pouring of libations, invocation of the ancestors, smearing of the white chalk *nzu* usually by titled elderly men, show how the living commune with the dead. This creates the environment for deliberation and conflict resolution. It is a method that encourages parties to a dispute to share meaning on existing methods of conflict resolution (Imobighe, 2003). It is also a method of socialization.

Usually, the aim of reconciliation in traditional Igbo society is to encourage the parties in dispute to achieve a harmonious social relationship after the conflict is settled. This is why commensality, covenant-making, oath-taking (Anigbo, 1985) are part of the Igbo approach to conflict resolution

### Anambra State the Study Setting

MMA



**Fig. 1: Map of Anambra State Showing the 21 Local Government Areas**

**Source: *Anambra State Hand Book, 2001***

Anambra State, the research setting was one of the states carved out of the old Anambra State on August 27, 1991. Its name is derived from Omambala River, one of the tributaries to the River Niger. The state shares boundaries with Enugu State in the East; Imo and Abia State, in the south; Delta State, in the West and Kogi State in the North. The population of the state, according to 2006 population census, was estimated, to be 4,055,048 people. The land mass of the state is put at 4,844 sq. km. The population is predominantly Igbo.

Anambra State is made up of 177 autonomous communities. Each of these is expected to have a traditional ruler entrusted with the preservation of the community's cultural values. The community is also expected to have a President –General who is in charge of running the activities of the town union of the community. These 177 communities are clustered into 21 local government areas (Fig.1) which are also clustered into three Senatorial Districts namely: Anambra North, Anambra Central and Anambra South Senatorial Districts.

The three communities chosen for this study were Nri Kingdom in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State, Isi-Agu in Awka South Local Government Area and Amansea in Awka North Local Government Area (Fig. 1).

Nri Kingdom is believed to be the ancestral home of the Igbo people. Its founding father Eri is said to be of Jewish origin (Okonkwo, 2007). A myth surrounding this claim is associated with a lot of rituals surrounding Eze Nri institution. For example, the traditional ruler of the town is associated with mystical powers. His words are sacred, and ought to be respected. Nri is made up of six lineages: Uruorji, Obeagu, Agbadana, Ekwenayika, Diodo and Uruofolo. The first three is called Agu-Ukwu. The last three is called Akamkpisi. The conflict in the town was between Agu-Ukwu and Akamkpisi. Two town unions exist in the town, Nri Progressive Union (NPU) and Ikenga Nri. Only the first named is recognized by the Anambra State. Nri also has two traditional rulers. One, Eze-Nri is recognised the other is not. Nri was randomly selected from communities with factionalized town unions in Anambra State (see Table 2).

Isi-Agu is in Awka South LGA. It has no written history to date. It is made up of the following lineages: Ebeano, Gbalagu, Umuenem, Umuonyia, Okpala-Ukwu, Umuzor, and Okpalakunne. The conflict is between Ebe comprising the first four and Umuzor comprising the rest. It is predominantly populated by peasant farmers. Isiagu has experienced the rule of her town union by a caretaker committee created by Anambra State Government. This is why the community was randomly selected for this study from a host of other communities with caretaker committee (see Table 1 below).

Amansea, the third community for this study, is in Awka North Local Government Area. Like Isi-agu, it has no written history. Her Town Union appears to be very functional. The traditional ruler is believed to be working hand in hand with the President-General of the town union.

### **Study design**

Table 1 below, was gotten from the Anambra State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, in Awka. It shows communities that have caretaker committees for the affairs of their town union.

| <b>Community</b> | <b>LGA</b>    |
|------------------|---------------|
| Ntege            | Oyi           |
| Umunze           | Orumba North  |
| Ugbenu           | Awka North    |
| Owerri-Ezukala   | Oyi           |
| Ohita            | Ogbaru        |
| Ugah             | Aguata        |
| Okpoko           | Ogbaru        |
| Amichi           | Nnewi South   |
| Ideani           | Idemili North |
| Nkpor            | Idemili South |
| Umuoji           | Idemili South |
| Isi-Agu          | Awka South    |

**Source:** Anambra State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Awka, 2011.

Through simple random sampling method, *Isi-Agu* was selected from communities in Table 1 above. Also in Table 2 below, communities with factionalized town unions, as gotten from the same ministry is shown.

| <b>Community</b> | <b>LGA</b>  |
|------------------|-------------|
| Okija            | Ihiala      |
| Osumenyi         | Nnewi South |
| Ogbunike         | Oyi         |
| Abacha           | Idemili     |
| Nri              | Anaocha     |

**Source:** Anambra State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Awka, 2011

Using the same simple random sampling method, Nri town in Anaocha Local Government Area was selected from Table 2 to represent towns with factionalized town unions. The third town Amansea was selected purposively as a sort of control group because of relative peace prevailing in the town. In each of the communities, the survey method of social investigation was used in collecting both the quantitative and qualitative data for the study.

**Table 3: Manner of Distribution of Instruments for data collection**

| Instrument               | Study Participants                             | Communities | Number of Wards | Place of residence per Ward |       | Total Instruments Administered |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
|                          |  |             |                 | Rural                       | Urban |                                |
| Questionnaire            | Members of TU                                  | Isiagu      | 10              | 15                          | 10    | 250                            |
|                          |  | Nri         | 10              | 15                          | 10    | 250                            |
|                          | <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | Amansea     | 10              | 15                          | 10    | 250                            |
|                          |  |             |                 |                             |       | 750                            |
| Communities              |  |             |                 |                             |       |                                |
| In-depth Interview guide | Perceived victims of insult during TU meetings | Isiagu      | Nri             | Amansea                     | Total |                                |
|                          |  | 2           | 2               | 2                           | 6     |                                |
|                          | -Members of vigilante services                 | 2           | 2               | 2                           | 6     |                                |
|                          |  |             |                 |                             |       | <b>12</b>                      |
| KII                      | -Ward Leaders                                  | 5           | 5               | 5                           | 15    |                                |
|                          | -traditional Rulers                            | 2           | 2               | 2                           | 6     |                                |
|                          | Representatives                                |             |                 |                             |       |                                |
|                          | Government Officials                           |             |                 |                             | 2     |                                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             |  |             |                 |                             |       | <b>23</b>                      |

### **Questionnaire**

This was used to collect quantitative data for the study. The instrument (Appendix 1) requested answers relating to the profile of the respondents, sources of conflicts, effects of the same, and prevailing and preferred methods of conflict resolution within the town unions.

### **In-depth interview guide and key informant interview guide**

The instruments, presented as Appendices 2 and 3, were used to collect qualitative responses from the study participants described above. The instruments were used to elicit the consent of respondents and subjective reasons behind causes and effects of conflicts within town unions. They were also used to ascertain respondents` view on the prevailing and preferred methods of conflict resolution in their town unions.

**Data analysis**

Following the nature of data collected, data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative forms. The quantitative data was subjected to both univariate and bivariate analyses. This entailed frequency distribution and use of Chi-square. The primary data was analyzed using frequency counts of participants responses on nominal measures of YES and NO. The nonparametric Goodness-of-fit Chi-square test statistic was used to answer questions put under sections B and C of Appendix 1. The responses from the three communities were compared.

Research question 4 was answered by ranking the frequency counts of participants responses to the current methods of resolving the various types of conflicts indicated in Section D of Appendix 1. The Multiple Regression Analysis (enter method) was used to determine the amount of variance each of the 10 methods of conflict resolution contributed to the total variance. Analysis was performed on data from a 3-point rating scale of not preferred (1), slightly preferred (2), and highly preferred (3), method of conflict resolution. The standardized beta coefficient was used as measure of each methods contribution to the total variation in a linear equation. This was used to answer research question 5.

The qualitative information got through the In-depth Interviews (IDIs) was transcribed and used in discussing some of the findings of the quantitative analysis.

**Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

| Demographic Variables  |  | Number | Percent |
|------------------------|--|--------|---------|
| Age                    | Min. = 20, Max. = 87<br>( <i>M</i> = 45.32, <i>SD</i> = 12.78) | 515    | 98.3    |
|                        | No Response  | 9      | 1.7     |
| Sex                    | Male   | 344    | 65.7    |
|                        | Female   | 148    | 28.2    |
|                        | No Response  | 32     | 6.1     |
| Occupation             | Civil servant  | 123    | 23.5    |
|                        | Vigilante service  | 32     | 6.1     |
|                        | Community leader   | 50     | 9.5     |
|                        | Politician   | 36     | 6.8     |
|                        | Religion leader  | 38     | 7.3     |
|                        | Others   | 221    | 42.2    |
|                        | No Response  | 24     | 4.6     |
| Educational Attainment | No formal education  | 15     | 2.9     |
|                        | Primary school   | 81     | 15.5    |
|                        | Secondary school   | 207    | 39.4    |
|                        | Above secondary  | 186    | 35.5    |
|                        | No Response  | 35     | 6.7     |
| Town of respondents    | Nri  | 128    | 24.4    |
|                        | Isiagu   | 204    | 38.9    |
|                        | Amansea  | 184    | 35.2    |
|                        | No Response  | 8      | 1.5     |
| Village of Respondents | Obeagu   | 36     | 6.9     |
|                        | Uruorji  | 29     | 5.5     |
|                        | Agbadeani  | 15     | 2.9     |
|                        | Diodu  | 18     | 3.4     |
|                        | Ekwenanyika  | 17     | 3.2     |
|                        | Uruofolo   | 24     | 4.6     |



|                                      |               |     |      |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|
|                                      | Ebeano        | 40  | 7.6  |
|                                      | Gbalagu       | 11  | 2.1  |
|                                      | Umuoenem      | 17  | 3.2  |
|                                      | Umuonyia      | 27  | 5.2  |
|                                      | Uniagu        | 8   | 1.5  |
|                                      | Okpalukwu     | 44  | 8.4  |
|                                      | Umuzo         | 16  | 3.1  |
|                                      | Okpala Akunne | 34  | 6.5  |
|                                      | Amansea Town  | 188 | 35.9 |
| Marital status of Respondents        | Married       | 380 | 72.5 |
|                                      | Single        | 68  | 13.0 |
|                                      | Widowed       | 49  | 9.4  |
|                                      | Separated     | 20  | 3.8  |
|                                      | No Response   | 7   | 1.3  |
| Religious affiliation of Respondents | Catholic      | 254 | 48.5 |
|                                      | Anglican      | 121 | 23.1 |
|                                      | Pentecostal   | 93  | 17.7 |
|                                      | Others        | 49  | 9.4  |
|                                      | No Response   | 7   | 1.3  |
| Respondents place of Residence       | City          | 191 | 36.5 |
|                                      | Village       | 324 | 61.8 |
|                                      | No Response   | 9   | 1.7  |
| Born/raised in the y?                | Yes           | 167 | 31.9 |
|                                      | No            | 291 | 55.5 |
|                                      | No Response   | 66  | 12.6 |

It can also be seen from Table 4 that 65.7% of the respondents were males, while only 28.2% were females and 6.1% did not indicate their sex. This is congruent with the claim of Smith { 1975] quoted in Bonkowsky and McPherson (2006) that, in American society, men participate more in voluntary associations than women. Again, Igbo society, being a patrilineal one, this is not unexpected.

In terms of their occupational distribution, 23.5% of the respondents were civil servants, 6.5% earned their living rendering vigilante services. Only 9.5% of the respondents were community leaders. These figures were higher than those of politicians (6.8%) and religious leaders (7.3%) who participated in the study. Those classified as others included: artisans, petty traders, and peasants. It was 42.2% of these that took part in the study.

Analysis of the formal educational distribution of respondent's revealed that 2.9% had no formal education, 15.5% terminated theirs at primary school level. Only 39.4% had secondary school education as their highest level of formal education. The participants who furthered their education above the secondary school level were 35.5%. If one relates this to the mean age of the study participants (45yrs) it can be inferred that many of them benefited from the Universal Free Primary Education that thrived in the country in the 1970s.

In terms of respondents' towns of origin, Isiagu has the highest (38.9%), followed by Amansea (35.2%) and Nri (24.4%). Furthermore, marital status of the respondents showed that, whereas 72.5% were married, 13% were single. Only 9.4% were widowed, while 3.8% were separated. This finding is not unexpected considering the mean age of the study participants. At age 45 years an unmarried Igbo man is likely to attract the anger of his significant others. An unmarried woman is believed to have little chances of doing so. This may be one of the reasons why, in Mbieri, they can be admitted as members of TU meetings (Nwosu, 2009).

Responses on the place of residence of the participants showed that 61.8% of them were rural dwellers. Only 36.5% lived in the cities. This finding is closely related to the view of the participants on whether they were born and raised in the city. In this regard, while 31.9% answered in the affirmative 55.5% said no to the question. It can be seen that most of the respondents were under the influence of rural social structure. Many of them shuttle between the home towns and nearby urban areas like Awka, Ekwulobia and Nnewi. This suggests that what happens in their TU is supposed to be of vital social importance to them. Study assumption 1 states that internal variables like leadership struggle, lack of accountability, role ascription and feeling of inequity within town unions will be perceived by union members as sources of conflict in town union affairs.

The results of the responses are presented in Table 5 below

**Table 5: Chi square test of internal sources of conflict**

| Variable  | ISIAGU     |          |    |      | NRI           |          |    |           | AMANSEA        |          |    |      |
|---|------------|----------|----|------|---------------|----------|----|-----------|----------------|----------|----|------|
|   | Response   | $\chi^2$ | Df | P    | Response      | $\chi^2$ | Df | P         | Response       | $\chi^2$ | Df | P    |
| <b>Struggle for Leadership</b>                          | Yes        |          |    |      | Yes 67(55.4%) |          |    |           | Yes 49 (26.8%) |          |    |      |
|   | 172(85%)   |          |    |      | No 54(44.6%)  |          |    |           | No 134(73.2%)  |          |    |      |
|   | No         | 99.8     | 1  | .001 | Total 121     | 1.4      | 1  | .23       | Total 183      | 39.5     | 1  | .001 |
|   | 30(15%)    |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |
|   | Total 202  |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |
| <b>Lack of Accountability of TU monies</b>              | Yes        |          |    |      | Yes 46(39%)   |          |    |           | Yes            |          |    |      |
|   | 153(81%)   |          |    |      | No 72(61%)    |          |    |           | 47(25.7%)      |          |    |      |
|   | No         | 72.4     | 1  | .001 | Total 118     | 5.7      | 1  | .02       | No 136(74.3%)  | 43.3     | 1  | .001 |
|   | 36(19%)    |          |    |      |               |          |    |           | Total 183      |          |    |      |
|   | Total 189  |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |
| <b>Role allocation along gender</b>                     | Yes        |          |    |      | Yes 9(7.4%)   |          |    |           | Yes            |          |    |      |
|   | 24(12%)    |          |    |      | No 112(92.6%) |          |    |           | 4(2.2%)        |          |    |      |
|   | No         | 115.5    | 1  | .001 | Total 121     | 87.7     | 1  | .001      | No 180(97.8%)  | 168.3    | 1  | .001 |
|   | 176(88%)   |          |    |      |               |          |    | Total 184 |                |          |    |      |
|   | Total 200  |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |
| <b>Discrimination along osu cult Membership</b>         | Yes        |          |    |      | Yes 8(6.8%)   |          |    |           | Yes            |          |    |      |
|   | 3(1.5%)    |          |    |      | No 110(93.2%) |          |    |           | 5(2.7%)        |          |    |      |
|   | No         | 184.2    | 1  | .001 | Total 118     | 88.2     | 1  | .001      | No 179(97.3%)  | 149.8    | 1  | .001 |
|   | 193(98.5%) |          |    |      |               |          |    | Total 184 |                |          |    |      |
|   | Total 196  |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |
| <b>ffFeeling of inequity as a source of TU Conflict</b> | Yes        |          |    |      | Yes 44(36%)   |          |    |           | Yes            |          |    |      |
|   | 30(15.2%)  |          |    |      | No 78(64%)    |          |    |           | 9(4.9%)        |          |    |      |
|   | No         | 95.3     | 1  | .001 | Total 122     | 9.5      | 1  | .001      | No 175(95.1%)  | 149.8    | 1  | .001 |
|   | 167(84.8%) |          |    |      |               |          |    | Total 184 |                |          |    |      |
|   | Total 197  |          |    |      |               |          |    |           |                |          |    |      |

**Note: Values in parentheses represent percentage of number of responses in the cell to the total number of valid responses for an item**

**Leadership struggle as a source of TU conflict**

It can be seen from Table 5 above that 85% of the respondents from Isiagu perceived leadership struggle as a significant source of the conflict within their TU ( $\chi^2 = 99.8$ ). In Nri town, 55.4% of the respondents who expressed a similar view with regards to their TU was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.4, p = .23$ ). The above contrasted sharply with what prevailed in Amansea where 26.8% of the respondents, saw leadership struggle as true of their TU ( $\chi^2 = 39.5, p = .001$ ).

The inference is that leadership struggle prevails more in communities with caretaker committees than in those with factionalized TUs. It is not a pronounced source of TU conflict in Amansea, the no conflict town.

An in-depth interview with one of the victims of the conflict in *Isiagu* shed some light on why the struggle prevailed: After the death of our traditional ruler, many who wanted to succeed him surfaced. This led to

series of conflicts that led to an existing court case between the most daring of them, Onwa of Ebe section of Isiagu and the rest of the community. The man has his loyalists. He descended on many who opposed him, had them detained in Abuja, including me.

Another victim of conflict in Isiagu also explained the reason for the struggle in this way: Onwa from Ebe section of Isiagu refused to accept a man nominated and presented to be the President-General of our TU by Umuzor as constitutionally provided in Isiagu. As a self-styled „Kingmaker“ he stormed the venue of town union election with armed policemen. The community objected and he left with the police. After the election, he used his connection with the state Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs to nullify the election.

In Nri town, there was no pronounced conflict within the town union during the reign of Tabansi Udene who died in 1979. The conflict is said to have started when Akamkpisi section demanded to produce the successor of late traditional ruler.

This was denied on the grounds that they (Akamkpisi section) do not produce rulers of the town. According to Okonkwo (2007:46), Diodo, the only *Eze Nri* that hailed from Akamkpisi died without an heir. That was in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Okonkwo (2007:55) further remarks that “Nsekpe, the grandfather of settlement was not of Nri lineage and cannot claim to be of Nri kingdom”.

The conflict in Nri is, therefore, traceable to settlement pattern and myths of origin, as these have affected associational life of Nri people in their town union. By using this mindset to exclude the Akamkpisi from producing Eze Nri, the community demonstrates poverty of cultural assimilation which scholars like Nnoli (2008), Osaghae and Suberu (2005), Nzimiro (2001) claim prevailed only in Nigerian cities. The problem is that this cultural divide has permeated town union leadership in form of leadership struggle.

The ensuing conflict situation in both towns can be explained from violation of Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of human needs (1970) as well as Burton’s theory (1979) of human needs. It is the deprivation of the need for belongingness, participation, recognition and respect for Akamkpisi in Nri and Umuzor in Isiagu, to be involved in the leadership of their communities that is part of the conflict facing their TUs.

#### **External sources of town union conflicts**

In the study, perceived external sources of conflict facing town unions were investigated for Study Assumption 2. The results are presented in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Summary of Chi Square Test on External Sources of Conflict**

| VARIABLES   | ISIAGU             |       |   | NRI       |                   |      | AMANSEA   |      |                   |       |   |      |
|---|--------------------|-------|---|-----------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|-------|---|------|
|   | Responses          | Df    | P | Responses | Df                | P    | Responses | Df   | P                 |       |   |      |
| State governments' financial allocation                 | Yes 152<br>(75.6%) | 52.8  | 1 | .001      | Yes 57<br>(46.7%) | .53  | 1         | 5    | Yes 3 (1.6 %)     | 39.5  | 1 | .001 |
|   | No 49<br>(24.4%)   |       |   |           | No 65<br>(53.3%)  |      |           |      | No 181<br>(98.4%) |       |   |      |
|   | Total 201          |       |   |           | Total 122.        |      |           |      | Total 184         |       |   |      |
| Creation of Caretaker Committee to run TU               | Yes 114<br>(57%)   | 3.9   | 1 | 0.5       | Yes 26<br>(21.1%) | 41   | 1         | .001 | Yes 37<br>(20.1%) | 43.3  | 1 | .001 |
|   | No 86 (43%)        |       |   |           | No 97<br>(78.9%)  |      |           |      | No 147<br>(79.9%) |       |   |      |
|   | Total 200          |       |   |           | Total 123         |      |           |      | Total 184         |       |   |      |
| Traditional Ruler's Insistence on producing P.G. of TUs | Yes 53<br>(26.4%)  | 44.9  | 1 | .001      | Yes 17<br>(13.9%) | 63.5 | 1         | .001 | Yes 11 (6%)       | 168.3 | 1 | .001 |
|   | No 148<br>(73.6%)  |       |   |           | No 105<br>(86.1%) |      |           |      | No 171 (94%)      |       |   |      |
|   | Total 128          |       |   |           | Total 122         |      |           |      | Total 182         |       |   |      |
| Traditional Rulers as sources of Conflict               | Yes 40<br>(31.2%)  | 18    | 1 | .001      | Yes 12 16.7%      | 32   | 1         | .001 | Yes 12<br>(6.6%)  | 164.5 | 1 | .001 |
|   | No 88<br>(68.8%)   |       |   |           | No 60<br>(83.8%)  |      |           |      | No 170<br>(93.4%) |       |   |      |
|   | Total 128          |       |   |           | Total 72          |      |           |      | Total 182         |       |   |      |
| Traditional Rulers Influencing of citing of amenities   | Yes 27<br>(13.5%)  | 106.6 | 1 | .001      | Yes 19 (15%)      | 56.9 | 1         | .001 | Yes 9 (4.9%)      | 149.8 | 1 | .001 |
|   | No 173<br>(86.5%)  |       |   |           | No 102 (85%)      |      |           |      | No 175<br>(95.1%) |       |   |      |
|   | Total 200          |       |   |           | Total 121         |      |           |      | Total 184         |       |   |      |

*Note: Values in parentheses represent percentage of number of responses in the cell to the total number of valid responses for an item.*

**State Governments' financial releases as a source of TU conflict**

With respect to state government's financial releases to town unions being a source of conflict, results in Table 6 above showed that in Isiagu, 75.6% of respondents saw this variable a significant source of TU conflict ( $\chi^2=52.8$ ; p.001). In Nri, 53.3% of respondents who did not see such a release as a source of their TU conflict, was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2=5.3$ ; p.5). In Amansea,

98.4% did not see such releases as a source of their TU conflict ( $\chi^2=39.5$ ; p.001).

It can be inferred that State Governments financial releases to TUs is a source of the Conflict in conflict towns like Isiagu and to an extent Nri.

The Secretary of Ikenga Nri revealed that their section of the community was yet to benefit from the financial releases meant for the whole town.

Mr. Peter Obi's financial releases to communities in the state through town union don't reach us. The road network to our section of Nri town is not tarred. When government gives allocation for the renovation of roads, they simply trip laterite on some of our roads and leave it to be washed by the rains (KII, Secretary Ikenga Nri).

The Palace Secretary of Nri town narrated the circumstance that made Eze Nri to go and queue up for the money (that is the financial release) in Government's House Awka. According to him: The President-General and his loyalists thought government's financial allocation to Nri town should be appropriated by the town union alone. When they discovered the palace is entitled to partake in its disbursement, they took an avoidance approach. For this reason *Eze Nri* is often compelled to go to the state government for the money (KII, Palace Secretary, *Nri*).

#### **Traditional rulers' insistence on producing President-General of TUs as a source of conflict**

In Isiagu (73.6%), Nri (86.1%) and Amansea (94%) of the respondents did not see this variable as a source of TU conflict. There is no significant difference in their responses. We therefore conclude that traditional rulers do not interfere in terms of insisting who becomes the President-General.

In Agukwu section of Nri Kingdom, the President-General and the traditional ruler appear to be working as polar opposites in community development matters. It is an indication that the President-General does not feel obliged to the traditional ruler as his benefactor as revealed below. The President-General of the NPU and his loyalists hardly confer with the palace on community development matters. It is a silent expression of who will call the shots. Most of the development projects occurring in the town are being undertaken by the palace (KII, community leader Nri). In Isiagu the traditional ruler while alive, is believed to be, not very influential in the election of the president general of the town union. Also in Amansea the President-General noted that: The traditional ruler is not a party to my winning election. I contested and won my opponents. During the campaigning process, aspirants can visit the traditional ruler for his blessings, which he usually gives (KII, President-General Amansea Town Union).

#### **Traditional rulers as sources of conflict facing TU**

Also a significant number of the participants did not see traditional rulers as a source of conflict. In this regard 68.8% of respondents from Isiagu, 83.3% of respondents from Nri and 93.4% of the same from Amansea did not see Traditional rulers as sources of TU conflict. In Nri, the recognized traditional ruler was described as being very cooperative with officials of Ikenga-Nri the parallel TU in the town. Eze Nri was described as being favorably disposed to proper disbursement of financial releases made to the town by the state. While the traditional ruler of Isiagu was alive, the community enjoyed relative peace. This goes to show how the traditional ruler and the President-General worked hand in hand. This study implies there was no pronounced role conflict between the traditional rulers and Presidents-General of town unions. It also showed that the functions of the traditional rulers as defined under cap 148 of Anambra State are not a source of conflict facing town unions in the state. In Nri it is the conflict associated with the traditional stool that penetrated town union activities. In Isiagu, *the* conflict escalated due to the demise of their traditional ruler. While in Amansea, conflict is minimal because the traditional ruler and the President-General work hand in hand. This suggests the two institutions are not mutually exclusive. However this finding is at variance with Ononiba (2003), Nwosu (2009), Okafor (2010), Onu (2011), Onwuegbusi (2011), all of which implicated traditional rulers as sources of TU conflict.

| Variable  | ISIAGU  |      |    |     | N<br>R<br>I  |      |    |      | AMANSEA                                       |       |    |      |
|---|---|------|----|-----|--|------|----|------|---|-------|----|------|
|   | Responses                                     |      | df | P   | Responses  |      | df | P    | Response                                      |       | Df | P    |
| Conflict unwillingness to contribute to development Projects            | Yes 108 (53.7%)<br>No 93 (46.3)<br>Total 201  | 1.1  | 1  | .3  | Yes 46 (38%)<br>No 75 (62%)<br>Total 121             | 7.0  | 1  | .08  | Yes 14 (7.6%)<br>No 170 (92.4%)<br>Total 184  | 132.3 | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict caused more amenities in your village                          | Yes 14 (7%)<br>No 187 (93%)<br>Total 201      | .9   | 1  | .00 | Yes 9 (7.3%)<br>No 115 (92.7%)<br>Total 124          | 90.6 | 1  | .001 | Yes 2 (1%)<br>No 182 (99%)<br>Total 184       | 176.0 | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict leads to fewer amenities in your village                       | Yes 84 (41.8%)<br>No 117 (58.2%)<br>Total 201 | 49.5 | 1  | .02 | Yes 42 (14.7%)<br>No 79 (65.3%)<br>Total 121         | 11.3 | 1  | .001 | Yes 38 (20.7%)<br>No 146 (79.3%)<br>Total 184 | 63.4  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict causing one to join a faction of TU                            | Yes 51(25.2%)<br>No 151(74.8%)<br>Total 202   | 49.5 | 1  | .00 | Yes 54 (44.3%)<br>No 68 (55.7%)<br>Total 122         | 1.6  | 1  | .20  | Yes 15 (8.2%)<br>No 169 (91.8%)<br>Total 184  | 128.9 | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict constrain new Development projects                             | Yes 145 (72.1)<br>No 56 (27.9)<br>Total 201   | 39.4 | 1  | .00 | Yes 54 (43.5%)<br>No 70 (56.5%)<br>Total 124         | 2.1  | 1  | .15  | Yes 54 (29.3)<br>No 130 (70.7)<br>Total 184   | 50.9  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict cause you not to attend the TU meeting                         | Yes 105 (52.5)<br>No 95 (43.5)<br>Total 200   | .50  | 1  | .48 | Yes 47 (38.8%)<br>No 74 (61.2%)<br>Total 121         | 6.03 | 1  | .01  | Yes 44 (24%)<br>No 140 (76%)<br>Total 184     | 50.9  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict cause you not to pay TU levies or fines                        | Yes 84 (41.8%)<br>No 117(58.2%)<br>Total 201  | 5.4  | 1  | .02 | Yes 33 (27%)<br>No 89 (73%)<br>Total 122             | 25.7 | 1  | .001 | Yes 36 (19.6%)<br>No 148 (80.4%)<br>Total 184 | 68.2  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict prevented you from getting your entitlements                   | Yes 123(61.8%)<br>No 76 (38.2%)<br>Total 199  | 11.1 | 1  | .00 | Yes 49 (39.8%)<br>No 74 (60.2%)<br>1<br>2<br>Total 3 | 5.1  | 1  | .05  | Yes 47 (26.9%)<br>No 128 (73.1%)<br>Total 175 | 44.0  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict responsible for no new schools, hospitals etc. since year 2000 | Yes 101 (50%)<br>No 101 (50%)<br>Total 202    | .001 | 1  | 1.0 | Yes 49 (39.8%)<br>No 74 (60.2%)<br>1<br>2<br>Total 3 | 5.1  | 1  | .02  | Yes 55 (30.1%)<br>No 128 (69.9%)<br>Total 183 | 29.1  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict has led to no scholarship since year 2000                      | Yes 79(39.1%)<br>No 123(60.9%)<br>Total 202   | 9.6  | 1  | .00 | Yes 53 (43%)<br>No 70 (57%)<br>1<br>2<br>Total 3     | 2.4  | 1  | .13  | Yes 36 (19.6%)<br>No 148 (80.4%)<br>Total 184 | 68.1  | 1  | .001 |
| Conflict has led to bad roads since year 2000                           | Yes 122(60.4%)<br>No 80 (39.6%)<br>Total 202  | 8.7  | 1  | .00 | Yes 59 (47.6%)<br>No 65 (52.4%)<br>1<br>2<br>Total 4 | .29  | 1  | .6   | Yes 31 (16.8%)<br>No 153 (83.2%)<br>Total 184 | 80.9  | 1  | .001 |

*Note: Values in parentheses represent percentage of number of responses in the cell to the total number of valid responses for an item.*

**Willingness of TU members to contribute to development projects** Table 7 above shows that because of TU conflict, 53.7% of the participants from *Isiagu* opined they were unwilling to contribute to the development projects of their town. Their response however was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2=1.1$ ). In *Nri* 38% of the respondents expressed a similar view ( $\chi^2=7.0$ ) and the responses were not statistically significant either. In *Amansea*, a significant 92.4% of the respondents contended that TU conflict did not constrain them from contributing to the development projects being undertaken by their TU. It can be inferred from the above that TU conflict tends to constrain members in communities that had caretaker committees from contributing to the development projects of their TU in *Anambra State*. Findings made through KII showed that in *Isiagu*, financial contribution of members to town union projects was achieved through compulsion. Such contribution prevailed in form of security levy which town union managed.

#### **Conflict on the ability of TU to offer scholarship to indigent students**

In *Isiagu*, the participants were undivided on this issue. Their response was not statistically significant. However, in *Nri*, 60.2% of the participants, and 69.9% of the same from *Amanseas* said TU conflict had not led to the commencement of these infrastructural facilities. The responses were statistically significant. The result showed that conflict within town union had not affected the offering of scholarships to indigent students

In *Nri*, the town union is so conflict-infested that the issue of scholarship is old fashioned. Most importantly, the community is so rich that not many families will like their children to be „bonded“ to the community through receiving such a gesture.

#### **Effect of TU conflict on the quality of rural roads**

Finally, on whether conflicts have led to bad roads in the communities since 2000. It can be seen that 60.4% of the respondents from *Isiagu* affirmed to this statement ( $\chi^2=8.7$ ). Unlike these, 47.6% of the respondents from *Nri* ( $\chi^2=.29$ ) expressed a similar view. That, however, was not statistically significant. In *Amansea*, 83.2% of the respondents remarked that TU conflict never led to bad roads in their town. In *Nri* kingdom, *Akamkpsi* section do embark on fixing their roads even when they feel relatively deprived that Governor *Obi*'s financial releases Did not reach them. In *Amansea*, the state government had constructed some link roads to the community. Bad road network is not seen as a challenging problem facing the TU at the moment. The same is true of *Isiagu* community

To answer our research question No.3: what do members of town union see as effects of conflicts on the infrastructural development of their community? We can say in the light of the above that conflict is not a strong deterrent to members' participation in town union affairs especially in terms of contributing to development projects, equal distribution of amenities, attendance of TU meetings, payment of levies, offering of scholarship schemes and improvement on rural road networks. Conflict can be said to have constrained the commencement of new development projects by TUs in conflict towns.

In the conflict towns, there was no visible infrastructural development facility like good road network seen in *Isiagu*. Good roads prevalent in *Agukwu*, is credited to both the state government and an important female politician from the town. While that of *Isiagu* has not generated feeling of inequity among members of its town union that of *Nri* Kingdom had.

In conflict towns, there is no significant rapport between the town union and the traditional institution. Where this has led to the formation of a parallel town union and traditional ruler, (as in *Nri*), avoidance of developmental projects being undertaken by the recognized town union is not strange. The splinter town union can go ahead to initiate and complete its own infrastructural development projects. Thus, it can be said that in the non-conflict towns, human development and infrastructural development prevails.



### **Conclusion**

In this study, effort has been made to investigate internal and external sources of conflicts facing town unions in Anambra state. In the process, struggle for leadership was implicated as an internal source of conflict facing town union.

Only state government financial allocation to town union was implicated as an external source of conflict. Role ascription along gender and cult slave (*osu*) lines, feeling of inequity, creation of caretaker committee and traditional rulers interference were not found as sources of town union conflict.

On infrastructural development, none of the variables investigated, namely: unwillingness to contribute to project development, biased distribution of amenities, factionalisation of town union, constraints to new projects, absence to union meetings, unwillingness to pay levies and fines, stoppage of entitlements, lack of schools and hospitals, lack of scholarships, and poor road networks, were seen as effects of town union conflict.

Use of the town union constitution is the most prevailing method of conflict resolution since year 2000 till date. The fact that traditional methods of conflict resolution are preferred over the foreign equivalent, shows how resilient our inherited cultural values can be. It is a development that shows how adequate the theoretical framework for this study has been. The Marxian theory of social conflict assumes that every conflict situation has a history that deserves to be appreciated if the dynamics of the conflict and indeed, its effective resolution is to be made. Traditional methods of conflict resolution which have been highly preferred in this study are part of Igbo history. Constitutional provisions, which has been in use is the least preferred and by implication, a source of conflict.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

- Leadership struggle as an internal source of conflict should be addressed by rotating positions of president general of town union within the component quarters of every community in the state. Those who challenge constitutional provisions in this regard should be prosecuted by the state for breach of the peace in their communities. Traditional rulers should ensure that this constitutional provision is respected. Communities without a serving monarch should be encouraged to have one since the institution enhances Town Union peace.
- Troubled communities in the state should not benefit directly from governments financial release. The government should however, ascertain their needs through social enquiry. These should be addressed using appropriate machinery of the state. The state government should be responsible enough as not to use the financial release to create communal conflicts. Governments should insist that a statement of account of the money and other monies received by town unions be rendered to the public for verification. In this regard, periodic auditing of financial transactions of TU should be maintained. Erring TU union officials should be punished according to established laws. Also, government officials implicated in the use of the financial allocation to create communal conflict should be prosecuted.
- Communities that prefer traditional methods of conflict resolution can be assisted to appreciate challenges involved in doing so, especially in this era of globalizations. In this regard they should be encouraged to entrench in their constitution indigenous methods of conflict resolution they like and de-emphasize the foreign ones they dislike.

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