

**PERCEPTION OF SOURCES, EFFECTS AND RESOLUTION METHODS OF  
CONFLICTS IN TOWN UNIONS OF ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.**

**BY**

**Andrew Okolo OBIAJULU**

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

**AUGUST 2014**

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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. This study therefore investigated the sources, effects and resolution methods of TU conflicts in Anambra State.

Marxian theory of social conflict and Ted Gurr's theory of Relative Deprivation were used as theoretical framework. 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 caretaker committees. *Amansea* was selected purposively from list of 160 communities with functional TUs as the study locations. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 516 respondents. The sample frame was the list of TU members as held by ward leaders in the towns. Participants were selected as follows (*Nri*-128; *Isiagu*-204 and *Amansea*-184) using simple random sampling method. Whereas 12 in-depth interviews were conducted on members of vigilante (6), victims of TU conflicts (6), 23 key informants interview were conducted on traditional ruler's representatives (6), ward leaders (15) and government officials (2) to obtain qualitative data for the study. The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression, Chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data were content analysed.

Respondent's age was  $45.3 \pm 12.8$  years and 65.7% of them were males. 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 were politicised. 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. Communities without a serving monarch should be encouraged to have one; since the institution enhances Town Union's peace. Moreover, culturally approved penal sanctions should be used in the discipline of erring Town Union officials.

**Keywords:** Town unions, Socio-political conflicts, Conflict resolution, Anambra state.

**Word count:** 493

## **DEDICATION**

To my maker and ultimate provider, Our Lord Jesus Christ, with gratitude unsurpassed.

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I have indeed benefited from the authors whose works I consulted and I once again acknowledge them, in cold prints of course.

**Andrew Obiajulu**

**August, 2014**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this thesis work was carried out by Andrew Okolo OBIAJULU under my supervision.

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**Date**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
Title Page	i
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Certification	vii
Table of contents	viii
List of Figure and Tables	xii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.1.2 Origin and structure of town unions as voluntary associations	4
1.1.3 Igbo town unions	5
1.2 Statement of the problem	7
1.3 Research questions	11
1.4 Objectives of the study	11
1.5 Study justification	12
1.6 Definition of terms	13
1.6.1 Negative participation in town union affairs	13
1.6.2 Socio-political Conflicts	13
1.6.3 Traditional ruler's interference in town union affairs	13
1.6.4 Indigenous methods of conflict resolution	13
1.6.5 Foreign methods of conflict resolution	14
1.6.6 State intervention in town union affairs	14
1.6.7 Ascription in role allocation	14
1.6.8 Conflict town	14
1.6.9 No conflict town	14
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	
2.1 Literature review	15
2.1.1 The Nature of social conflict	15
2.1.2 Parties in conflict	16



2.1.3	Issues in conflict	17
2.1.4	Environment of conflict	17
2.1.5	Attitude in conflict	18
2.2	Models of conflict analysis	19
2.3	Social conflict and infrastructural development	20
2.4	State government and creation of care-taker committee in Anambra state	22
2.5	Traditional rulers' involvement in TU affairs	26
2.6	Gender inequity among the Igbo	30
2.7	Strategies of conflict resolution	31
2.7.1	Negotiation	31
2.7.2	Mediation	32
2.7.3	Arbitration	32
2.7.4	Adjudication	33
2.7.5	Conflict management	34
2.7.6	Conflict suppression	34
2.7.7	Realism	35
2.7.8	Traditional method	36
2.8	Etiology of social conflict	38
2.8.1	Social psychological theories	38
2.8.2	Social-structural theories	40
2.8.3	Structural functionalist theory	41
2.8.4	Modernization theory	46
2.8.5	Structural conflict theory	48
2.8.6	Dependency theory	54
2.8.7	Social definitionists approach	58
2.9	Empirical review	59
2.9.1	Leadership issues in TU administration	64
2.9.2	Determinants of peoples' participation in TU affairs	69
2.10	Theoretical framework	71
2.11	Conceptual framework	73
2.12.	Study Assumptions	74

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Anambra State, the study setting	75
3.2	Study design	78
3.3	Scope of the study	79
3.4	Study population	80
3.5	Sampling process	81
3.6	Questionnaire	82
3.7	In-depth interview guide	82
3.8	Validation of the instruments	83
3.9	Processes of data collection	84
3.10	Problems encountered in the study	85
3.11	Ethical consideration	86
3.12	Data analysis	86

### **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

4.1	Demographic characteristics of respondents	88
4.2	Internal sources of conflict within the town union	91
4.2.1	Leadership struggle as a source of TU conflict	91
4.2.2	Issue of accountability of TU monies	95
4.2.3	Role ascription along gender as a source of TU conflict	97
4.2.4	Role ascription along cult slave line as a source of TU conflict	98
4.2.5	Feeling of inequity as a source of TU conflict	99
4.3	External sources of Town Union conflicts	101
4.3.1	State Governments' financial allocation as a source of TU conflict	101
4.3.2	Creation of care taker committee as a source of TU conflict	103
4.3.3	Traditional rulers' insistence on producing president-general of TUs as a source of conflict	105
4.3.4	Traditional rulers as sources of conflict facing TU	105
4.3.5	Traditional rulers influencing where amenities should be cited as a source of TU conflict	106
4.4	Effects of conflict on infrastructural development	107
4.4.1	Willingness of TU members to contribute to development projects	109
4.4.2	Conflict leading to more amenities for some sections of the town	110
4.4.3	Conflict leading to fewer amenities for some sections of the communities	110

4.4.4	Conflict and formation of a faction of TU	111
4.4.5	Conflict and ability of TUs to embark on new development projects	112
4.4.6	Conflict on tendency of members to attend TU meetings	114
4.4.7	Conflict and willingness of members of TU to pay union levies and fines	114
4.4.8	Conflict and members getting their entitlements	115
4.4.9	Conflict and members of TU embarking on new development projects since year 2000	116
4.4.10	Conflict on the ability of TU to offer scholarship to indigent students	117
4.4.11	Effect of TU conflict on the quality of rural roads	118
4.5	Current methods of conflict resolution since 2000	119
4.6	Preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of TU	122

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	Summary	125
5.1.1	Internal sources of conflicts within TU in Anambra State	125
5.1.2	External sources of conflicts facing TUs in Anambra State	126
5.1.3	Effects of TU conflicts on infrastructural development	127
5.1.4	Prevailing methods of conflict resolution within TUs in Anambra State	127
5.1.5	Preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of TUs in Anambra State	128
5.2	Conclusion	128
5.3	Recommendations	129
	REFERENCES	131
	Appendix 1 Questionnaire	144
	Appendix 2 Key informants interview guide	150
	Appendix 3 In-depth interview guide for community members	152

## LIST OF FIGURE AND TABLES

	Pages
Figure 1: Map of Anambra State	75
Table 1: Communities with caretaker committees and their local government areas (LGAs)	78
Table 2: Communities with factionalized town unions and their local governments areas	79
Table 3: Manner of distribution of Instruments for data collection	82
Table 4: Demographic characteristics of respondents	89
Table 5: Summary of Chi square test on internal sources of conflict	91
Table 6: Summary of Chi square test on external sources of Conflict	101
Table 7: Summary of Chi square test on effects of conflict on Infrastructural Development	108
Table 8: Types of Conflict and Frequencies of members endorsing conflict resolution method used since 2000	120
Table 9: Summary of multiple regression analysis on preferred methods of conflict resolution	123

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

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).

Tocqueville (1969:516) observes that, in American society, “associations might serve representative functions with respect to the state. They help in the development of individual capacities that support democratic system of government.” This is possible because, through associational life, Americans cultivate the habit of collective action, contribute towards public good, monitor the dialectics of state machinery and view their own interest in an enlightened manner. Also, in America, voluntary associations have been disparaged as one of the instruments of social exclusion along racial and ethnic lines. Sisiainen (2009) notes that in Finland, voluntary associations are so well developed that Finns relate more through them than they do through the state in civic activities. He attributes the success of the Finnish welfare state to the role of voluntary associations in creating the enabling environment for both the leaders and the led to work as a team. Scott (2006) holds a similar view with respect to the role of voluntary associations in Australia. Putman (1993), for Northern Italy, and Anheier and Kendall (2000), for Germany, do not differ in their contention that voluntary associations are indispensable institutions for building trust in the societies they analysed.

Taylor (1990), quoting Locke, observes that the state has arisen to take care of those things which members of the society cannot achieve through voluntary associations. In his analysis of modern industrial capitalism, Sisiainen (2011:3) avers that “voluntary associations have been especially important as collective processes of self- production and means of the self -creation of competent individuals and collective actors of modern society”. Quoting Madison and Tocqueville, Bonkowsky and McPherson (2006:2) see civil society as the “aggregate of voluntary associations, existing primarily to protect local interests, from the intrusion of government authority”. Kauffman (1999) and Stoll (2000),

while agreeing with this view, also noted that voluntary associations, help in nurturing constructive social norms in most societies.

Town Unions (TUs) in Nigeria are socio-cultural voluntary organisations. 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; Appiagyei-Atua, n. d). 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).

Members of TUs in Nigeria have demonstrated that, through collective action, they can improve on their material conditions of existence (Azikiwe, 2001), mobilise against the out-group (Nzimi, 2001), and defend a common cause (Nwosu, 2009). Although TUs are locally initiated, their influence and cultural appeal transcends local confines. Their members believe that, through collective action, they can modify national policies to suit local realities, needs and challenges.

Before the emergence of TUs in their modern form, associational life existed in pre-colonial cultural areas comprising Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1974). The Igbo society had a history of a well-structured social network that guaranteed civil society participation in governance. This is true with respect to the village assembly (Afigbo, 1972), council of elders (Nzimi, 1972), the *okpala* in family and lineage administration (Ifemesia, 1980), the age grade system (Nwosu, 2009) and so on.

Through such associational life, vital decisions are taken at the family, village, lineage and clans comprising a community. This is done through dialogue, consultation, advocacy and consensus building. TUs existed, therefore, as the meeting point of village assemblies. Most Igbo patrilineal societies are patrilocal. Essentially for this reason, lineages comprising a town or community are hierarchically organized. Thus, Nzimi (2001:10), notes that “within a lineage are adopted lineages absorbed within specific lineage groups”. Most of the adopted lineages suffer some social disabilities. The implication of the above

is that, when a TU is assumed to have a common ancestry, its internal structure has endemic social formations that predisposes its members to fission.

That notwithstanding, in Nigeria, TUs have tried to assist their members from colonial days to the modern era, meet their survival needs, especially the challenges of urban life (Nnoli, 2008), rural development (Nzimiro, 2001), political mobilization against the out-group (Nwosu, 2009), scholarship programme (Azikiwe, 2001) and relating to the state on community development matters (Okafor, 2010).

When TUs are perceived as ‘communities without propinquity’ (Webber cited in Honey and Okafor, 1998:9), their membership transcends religious, caste, sub-ethnic, residential and occupational differences to include members’ commitment towards achieving a common goal. In Nigeria, this prevails when TUs exist and are seen as agents of community development. As agents of community development, TUs exist as: channels through which local needs and preferences are identified, expressed and addressed. To do this, they create the enabling environment for voluntary cooperation, self-help and mutual aid efforts to thrive among their members. Much advocacy is usually done in this regard so that their members will be convinced of the plausibility of participating in achieving a collectively defined goal. Such goals are usually directed at improving the physical, infrastructural, social and economic conditions of their areas or home lands.

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.

### 1.1.2 Origin and structure of town unions as voluntary associations

Nzimiro (2001), Owolabi (2003), Nnoli (2008), describe town unions as one of the people's methods of adapting to the problems associated with poverty of cultural assimilation, cultural stratification, and socio-economic inhibitions to members' upward mobility, Characteristic of colonial cities. They emerged so that their financially distressed members could be helped in a society where they were strangers. This philosophy runs through most of the associations, hence Honey and Okafor (1998:5) note that:

Though they vary in many respects, TUs share a few common features. A crucial one is that they have significance both at home and abroad. At home the focus is on improvement...Abroad the focus is dual---maintaining connections with home but also providing a supportive environment for people in a place where they are regarded as strangers.

Ofoegbu (1992:30) is more elaborate:

Town Improvement Unions started in the 1930s in the urban centres as family meetings established to provide immediate relief to rural-urban migrants; help them adjust to the conditions of the township; help them find employment or jobs; provide mutual assistance to members; and attend to other social and welfare needs of their members and their dependents. Thereafter, they began discussing rural conditions in their home communities and what they could do to bring physical development in the form of new schools, health facilities, town halls, post offices and so on. They began also arranging annual general meetings in their home towns; inviting sons and daughters resident in all townships, and inviting representatives of the various traditional structures of power and authority...The ability of town unions to organize well, raise funds, generate good ideas, initiate and complete the building of schools and colleges, provide pipe-borne water, construct access roads and other infrastructures, confirmed them as new and important structures of power in their communities.

As a voluntary association, the TU uses human capital to thrive. Its members do not usually expect or receive monetary rewards for their roles in



keeping the organisation going. Paid staffs are virtually non-existent in it. Existence of paid staff in them is virtually nonexistent (Florin and Wanderman, 1990). It has been existing as an organization that enables its members to identify, harness and use their skills, energies and willingness to participate in its activities, to meet collectively set-out goals (Nwanunobi, 1992, Honey and Okafor 1998; Nzimiro, 2001; Appiagyei-Atua, n.d).

### 1.1.3 Igbo town unions

Traditionally, a TU is what Afigbo (1972) calls supreme body of Igbo towns. Structurally, it is one of the components of the four dimensions of authority characteristic of the Igbo society. The first of the other three is: the *eze*, who are regarded as the first among equals, the figurehead of communal cohesiveness. The second is *Ndichie*, made up of respectable and well-informed elders who, in most cases, represent villages in each community. The third *Nze-na-ozo* comprises those whose *nze-na-ozo* this comprises those whose wealth have enabled them to take the *ozo* title. A member of this body, cannot take such a title if the father is still alive and has not taken the title. Some wealthy young men not bestowed with wisdom tend to take to this category of communal power structure. Ofoegbu(1992:26) equated TU or *Oha-ne-eze* with the structural equivalent of Greek *Ecclesia* (general assembly of citizens).

A town union meeting is usually an assemblage of families making up kindred (*ummunna*), kindreds making up a lineage (*ogbe*) and lineages making up a town or community (*obodo*). It is usually headed by the eldest son of the most senior kindred. This, in turn, is assisted by council of elders comprising eldest sons of other lineages, titled men and men of exceptional cultural accomplishments (Afigbo, 1972; Anigbo, 1985; Achebe, 2002).

In Igbo communities, TU meetings are usually held in village squares. The meetings afford every normal adult male member of the communities, the chance to participate in community administration. The body is an arena for identifying collective needs, addressing the same and resolving social conflicts. Colonial rule, through the monetisation of the economy, outright conquest and introduction of indirect rule system of administration, disrupted the traditional social structure (Owolabi, 2003; Nnoli, 2008). Ofoegbu (1992:26) captures it succinctly:

Colonial rule and the changes it introduced affected the peoples' mode of production and patterns of living, and exposed those rural people to a money economy, export economy, urban growth, new and formalized system of education and new centres of political authority possessing far greater coercive powers than the traditional structure possessed and exercised. They were in consequence compelled to produce to sell and to export, to feed the towns and to see some of their sons and daughters leave for the towns. The formal schools socialised the young ones not in values, culture and belief systems of indigenous communities but in values, cultures and beliefs that were of Christian, western, liberal and capitalist world.

Ofoegbu (1992:29), further observes that rural urban migrants were faced with challenges of adapting to the racially structured colonial cities. Also, Nnoli (2008), notes that retention and recreation of primordial cultural values were seen by the migrants as a plausible method of surviving in the cities. Nwanunobi (1992), and; Honey and Okafor (1998) argue that consequent on this development, they formed the unions as a convenient forum for recreating kinship ties and establishing a network with their homelands. Most of their homelands lacked indicators of modernization as were being provided by the colonial masters.

The unions operate as a well-structured organization. Most of them have a working constitution adopted by the members. This defines the roles, status and benefits of membership of the association (Aguda, 1998; Nwosu, 2009). Chikwendu (1992:57), remarks that:

Their common characteristic is that they are based upon traditional social groupings, such as the lineage, clan or village group. The headquarters of the organisation will be based in the lineage home town, but all members of the lineage union, resident in other parts of Nigeria, are expected to form themselves into branches of the union if they are up to five people in such a community. They would be formally linked to the parent organization, through the medium of a general constitution, periodic communication and the holding of annual conference which representatives from each branch are expected to attend.

There is also the women's wing of the town unions. In most cases, members of this body are those whose husbands belong to the men's wing. However, in a community like Mbieri (Nwosu, 2009), unmarried women who are up to 45 years can become members. The women's wing is structured like men's. Mbanefoh (1998:103) describes the *Eziowelle* women's wing as having elected officers comprising president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, financial secretary and provost. Women officers handle all matters affecting their wing, but they are expected to seek advice from the men's branch in serious matters. This expectation reinforces the subordinate position of women in Igbo society. Every branch of a town union is expected to monitor the political climate in its resident community and to report this to the parent union where such conditions are considered of interest to the town or clan.

Like most social organisations, the town unions have their structural problems. These include poorly defined roles and role conflict between TUs and traditional rulers (Nwosu, 2009; Ononiba, 2003), tendency of TUs to be involved in doctrinal matters (Ononiba, 2003) and tendency of some of its members to recreate sectional feelings, interests and expectations in town union affairs (Okonkwo, 2007).

Participation in associational life is often a function of variables like age (Nwosu, 2009), education (Azikiwe, 2001), income, leadership style (Nzimiro, 2001), Okafor (2010) and feeling of equity and belongingness (Udechukwu, 2003). It is the manner of participation, that determines how the organisational goals of the town unions are met. The problems of this study, suggest that members manner of participation in town union affairs is not wonderful in Anambra State.

## **1.2 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 publics confront members of town unions, namely: that associated with their primordial cultural preferences and that represented by the civic cultural equivalent (Ekeh, 1975). Members' 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, honour 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 for 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, Presidents-General of town unions are entrusted with the day-to-day administration of their communities. Role conflict tends to arise between them often owing to struggle over values (Cosser, 1957).

The state has also elevated the social relevance of TUs, when it endorsed that public office seekers should be cleared by their town unions before being considered by the state for such an appointment (Atupulazi, 2011). It also makes periodic financial releases to the town unions for public service delivery (Ilozue, 2010). Town unions have also been involved in the construction of facilities like markets, primary schools, pipe-borne water projects, using resources generated from their communities and beyond (Onu, 2011). Presidents-General of TUs are members of Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), a socio-political organization where matters of state and national importance are unofficially discussed. Its members are believed to be important stake holders in the political process of the state (Ilozue, 2010), Atupulazi (2011). They can be financially induced as the need arises.

The above seems to have influenced the struggle for the leadership of town unions (Onu, 2011). This can be violent as in the cases of *Isiagu*, *Isuofia*, and *Awka Etiti*. (Onwuegbusi, 2011). Even when the conflict is silent, it can lead

to avoidance of what TU does (Onuorah, 2011). It can lead to grumblings and misgivings by some of its members. No meaningful development can occur in a conflict-infested social milieu. Writing about this situation in one of the affected towns in the state, Onuorah (2011) notes that:

For over forty years the people of Osumenyi *in Nnewi* South LGA have been without a monarch. The people floated two town unions. The conflict between the two divides of the town reached its 'crescendo in 2006 when some properties were destroyed.

Also, Okafor (2010:1) avers that:

In Anambra State, most communities are replete with cases of conflicts. Many are engulfed in wrangling which mutual negotiations would have helped to resolve. Most often, such conflicts lead to protests, demonstrations, violence, bloodshed and even warfare. In that state of affairs, it is difficult to pull the resources of the community together to engage in development projects.

Ibeanu and Onu (2001) found that 68% of the conflict-infested communities in the south east geopolitical zone of Nigeria are in Anambra State. Such pronounced conflict situation can affect internal and external migration of able-bodied citizens, and aggravate the problem of over urbanisation in our cities.

Although a town union presents an image of a culturally monolithic entity, a dialectical examination of its activities reveals a structured social arrangement which implicates identity formation, retention and maintenance in what the organization does (Okonkwo, 2007; Nzimiro, 2001). For example, in Isuofia, the ambition of an aspirant to the rulership of the town was a source of conflict because of the caste position of the aspirant (Onwuegbusi, 2011). This identity definition is often used when members struggle for values (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Okafor, 2010). It is the politicisation of such identities (*ethno genesis*) especially in the allocation of roles, privileges, and benefits of being members of town unions that is associated with conflicts.

There is also the problem associated with how the state government imposes caretaker committees on communities it defines as conflictual.

Unpleasant power relations between the state government and the traditional rulers, on the one hand, as well as Presidents –General of town unions and the state on the other hand, can make the state government impose caretaker committee in communities it has defined as very conflictual (NPI, 2009). Communities like Ugah, Isiagu Amichi and Umuoji (Obikwelu, 2008) are examples of communities where members claimed this has happened.

It is a known fact in Nigerian polity that those in charge of government at any point in time come from particular communities and there is this perception that they use their offices to further the interest of their communities (Ibeanu, 2003; Okafor, 2010:10). Creation of caretaker committees is at variance with democratic ideals. Existing realities in the state is that many projects initiated and completed through the efforts of town unions are in a state of disrepair (ANSG, 2008). Not many new projects are being embarked upon by town unions at the moment. It is logical to attribute this development to the manner of members' participation in town union affairs

In communities like Ozubulu and Nise, people are being compelled to participate in town union affairs. Negative sanctions are in use to ensure compliance. It is an offence to take the town union to court. Abuses of human rights are not difficult to find. For instance, on the prescriptions of town unions, deviants may not mourn their dead relations or engage in marriage ceremonies without paying the town unions dearly. Funds being generated by town unions are not always accounted for properly. This often creates room for silent conflict among town union members. Town union meetings in some communities are heavily policed. Many indigenes of troubled communities prefer to avoid such meetings (Asiyanbola, 2007).

It is also unclear how conflict situations facing town unions are resolved. Scott (2006:2) asserts that "few voluntary organizations undertake an analysis of the kind of disputes within their organizations to determine whether the processes and structures currently used are effective in achieving the organizations' goals in resolving (or at least managing) conflict". It can be said that many communities are not favourably disposed to the use of the Criminal Justice System (comprising the police, courts and prisons) in handling conflicts within them (Ukah, 2005; Nwosu, 2009; Idi, 2011). The way a conflict situation is handled impacts on how members of an organization participate in its affairs (Nwosu, 2009).

It can equally be erroneous to assume that traditional methods of conflict resolution are acceptable to most members of town unions. The prevalence of conflicts within town unions, even when they have constitutional ways of conflict resolutions, suggests that the existing methods are not effective. It is rational, therefore, to find out from members of town unions their preferred methods of conflict resolution in town union affairs.

### **1.3 Research questions**

It is in the light of the above that the following research questions were answered in the course of the research.

- 1 What do members of town unions in Anambra State see as internal sources of conflicts within the organisations?
- 2 What do members of town unions in Anambra State see as external sources of conflicts facing their organisation?
- 3 What do members of town unions see as the effects of town union conflicts on infrastructural development of their communities?
- 4 What do town union members endorse as methods of conflict resolution for different types of conflicts since the year 2000?
- 5 Which of the conflict resolution methods (indigenous or foreign) is preferred by town union members of Anambra State?

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study was to identify members perception of sources and effects of conflicts in town unions of Anambra State, and also to determine the prevailing and preferred methods of resolving the conflicts. These were specifically investigated through Identification of what members of town union perceived as:

1. Internal sources of conflicts within town unions in Anambra State.
2. External sources of conflicts facing town unions in Anambra State.
3. The effects of these conflicts on the infrastructural development of the communities in Anambra State.
4. Prevailing mechanisms in use by town unions to resolve different types of conflict since year 2000.



5. Preferred (indigenous or foreign) methods of conflict resolution by members of TUs in the State.

### **1.5 Justification of the study**

Conflict within town unions can be characterized by horizontal inequality. That is, one that prevails within societies with the same objective conditions of existence (Ukiwo, 2005). Its existence is always associated with difficulty in reaching deprived groups with poverty-alleviating programmes and reduction in growth potential of the society because merit and efficiency are compromised. Poorly-handled social conflict can make its victim alienated from active participation in social activities. It is a situation that can affect adversely one's feeling of loyalty to one's society.

This study has analysed how the conflict milieu facing town unions influenced their willingness, readiness and ability to participate in their set-out goals. The Influence of conflict on the structure of such communities is an important indicator of the adequacy or inadequacy of existing strategies of planning and executing community development projects in the state.

The Anambra State Edict 22 of 1986, section 54 [c], recognises town unions as legitimate stakeholders in the development of their communities but there has been no empirical study that has analysed the relationship between the conflict situations they face and members manner of participation in what the organizations do. Again, the prevalence of conflicts within the unions suggests that their constitutional mechanisms for conflict resolution may not be acceptable to their members after all. By identifying the preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of town unions, a positive step would have been taken in enhancing their level of participation in town union affairs. The outcome of this study will also help stakeholders in appraising existing conflict situations in Anambra State. It is likely to contribute ideas helpful in minimizing losses associated with such conflicts. According to Beckman (1985), Asiyanbola (2007) and Best (2007) protracted social conflict weakens civil society, delegitimizes governmental institutions, destroys the economy and frustrates developmental goals.

This study can be helpful in capacity building and promotion of sustainable development because no meaningful development can thrive in a state



of protracted conflict. The study can be one of the bases for comparing societies at the same level of development as the Igbo of Anambra State extraction. Finally, the study is, to an extent, an enrichment of the existing literature on conflict situation of town unions, which, according to Honey and Okafor (1998) has not been adequately treated.

## **1.6 Definitions of terms**

### **1.6.1 Negative participation in town union affairs**

This refers to members withholding the exhibition of conduct norms likely to aid the realization of goals set by town unions. It can manifest as members avoiding attendance of town union activities, like meetings, burial ceremonies; reluctance to pay levies, fines, and make donations; and so on (Khan, 1993). It prevails when respondents in this study answer affirmatively to the statements measuring it.

### **1.6.2 Socio-political Conflicts**

This refers to conflict situations arising from unequal power relations between social actors in context. It is usually associated with status, role, and identity differences between social groups. It is a network of interaction within a space with poorly defined boundaries (Mouffe, 1994).

### **1.6.3 Traditional Ruler's Interference in Town Union Affairs**

Traditional rulers refer to recognised town heads according to Traditional Rulers Cap (148) Laws of Anambra State. Their interference in town union affairs arises when members affirm that they insist on influencing how town union leadership structure should be, where amenities should be sited and who should represent a community as the need arises.

### **1.6.4 Indigenous methods of conflict resolution**

This means those methods of conflict resolution outside the criminal justice system. It includes covenant making, use of respectable elders, age grades, youth organizations, influential community leaders, women groups, and so forth in trying to resolve a conflict situation.

### **1.6.5 Foreign methods of conflict resolution**

This is the use of police, courts, caretaker committees and commission of inquiry, among others in trying to resolve a conflict situation.

### **1.6.6 State intervention in town union affairs**

This refers to the periodic financial allocations made by the government of Anambra State to town unions towards community development. It also includes setting up of caretaker committees by the same to handle the affairs of conflict- infested town unions.

### **1.6.7 Ascription in role allocation**

This prevails when selection of officials in managing town union affairs is based on variables like gender, village of origin, caste and seniority and not on achievement

### **1.6.8 Conflict towns**

In this study, this refers to Nri and Isiagu. They are described as such because they do not have a functional TU that is very inclusive of the component sections of their communities

### **1.6.9 No conflict town**

In this study, this refers to Amansea. It is so described because it has a functional TU that is very inclusive of all the sections of the community.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the nature of social conflict, models of conflict analysis, social conflict and infrastructural development, state and creation of caretaker committee and strategies of conflict resolution are discussed. The chapter also focuses on traditional rulers' involvement in TU affairs, etiology of social conflict, empirical reviews, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the assumptions of the study.

#### 2.1 Literature review

This part of the chapter presents a review of literature relevant to social conflict.

##### 2.1.1 The nature of social conflict

Etymologically, conflict is derived from Latin word *confligere*, which means to strike together. Socially, it implies overt and coercive attitude of one party against another (Varcovitch, Kremeryuk, and Zartman, 2009). For Coser (1957), conflict is a struggle over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the opposing parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals. Himes (1980:14), notes that "social conflict refers to purposeful struggles between collective actors who use social power to defeat or remove opponents and to gain status, power, resources and other scarce values". Wieviorka (2010:3), posits that for conflict to prevail,

there must be a sphere of action, within which the relationship between opponents can take shape... this shared space has the effect of ensuring that the issues at stake in the conflict are recognized by the actors who oppose one another struggling to control the same resources, the same values or the same power.

Social conflict ranges from "inter-personal disagreements, to class and ethnic conflicts as well as international rivalry and wars" (Goldthorpe, 1985; Francis, 2007). Vercovitch et al. (2009) observes that conflict can be categorized into that within and between parties, institutionalized and non-institutionalized

conflicts, conflict between equal and unequal parties. For these reasons, it makes sense to think and talk of identifiable conflict situations.

George Simmel (1903) views social conflict as a form of sociation (interaction), which helps people in conflict evaluate the realities of their relationship. Competition is an important aspect of conflict/consensus because; when it prevails, social actors can have the same aim, share the same values without necessarily opposing one another. 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 Adalakun, 1989), dynamic or dialectical (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2004; Best, 2007).

The dialectical nature of social conflict is best appreciated by reviewing Fishers’ five stages of conflict, namely: pre-conflict, confrontation, crisis, outcome and post-conflict stages (Simon Fishers et al., quoted in Best, 2007). Anikpo (1998) is of the opinion that the intensity of any conflict situation is a function of the specific correlates that influence the observed conflict situations.

An objective analysis of any conflict situation requires an understanding of (1) parties in conflict, (2) issues in conflict, (3) environment of conflict and (4) attitude in conflict (Vercovitch et al., 2009).

### **2.1.2 Parties in conflict**

Parties in conflict can refer to individuals, ethnic groups, communities, nations, states, organizations, or other social groups. The parties are believed to initiate a conflict, pursue it and determine its outcome. The parties can experience internal disharmony, which can be manipulated by a stronger social group, and its goals may or may not rhyme with the mainstream cultural prescriptions of the society. The identity of parties in conflict may be an issue of contention. Vercovitch et al. (2009:5) argues that “each conflict party develops its own means and procedures of dealing with its adversaries and pursuing its conflicts”. For this reason, conflict between individuals can differ from that between groups and conflict which is intra-group can vary from that which is inter-group.

Analysis of parties in conflict demands that the nature of the parties and their structural/organisational features be understood.

### **2.1.3 Issues in conflict**

Parties to any conflict situation, hold divergent views on the issue generating the conflict. This is because of variations in man's cognitive processes. On receiving a conflict stimulus, parties to the conflict evaluate it often according to their previous experiences and history. The meaning they assign to the stimulus is a function of these variables. It is the meaning that influences their response to the conflict situation. The meaning again is influenced by each party's needs, interest and value preferences.

According to Vercovitch et al. (2009:6)

When conflict issues are defined in terms of interests, the basic incompatibility between the parties is perceived as differences on the preferred model of distribution of resources. When they are defined as conflict of value, the basic incompatibility is perceived in terms of differences in beliefs, ideologies and cognitive structures. Such differences have their effects on how conflict is managed.

Conflict can be further appreciated by looking at expected rewards by parties in conflict. Usually, conflict is minimal when conflict issues are defined to produce identical rewards for both parties (for example. if one party gets more the other also gets more).It is maximal when the rewards of one party occurs at the expense of the other. Two parties in dispute may decide to cooperate along an issue of common interest (for example, reduction of nuclear proliferation by super powers during the cold war. The reward associated with a conflict situation determines its intensity and how it can be managed. According to Deutch (1973), the content of a conflict situation revolves around five variables, namely: resource, preferences, and nature of relationship, values and beliefs.

### **2.1.4 Environment of conflict**

Every conflict occurs within a social milieu. The milieu may be structured (such as town unions) or unstructured (for example, a revolution). In a structured social milieu, institutional mechanisms for conflict management exist. Role

processes are evaluated according to institutionalized conduct norms. Likelihood of regulating conflict in a structured social milieu is enhanced by members of the organization sharing meaning on acceptable models of conflict management. Conflict within an unstructured social setting is characterized by zero-sum game. Usually here, what one party wins is what the other loses (Vercovitch et al., 2009). This makes such conflicts to be very intense and often difficult to manage. The environment of conflict influences how conflict is perceived by parties to it, the options they prefer for its resolution and ultimately the roles they play in its resolution.

### **2.1.5 Attitude in conflict**

Attitude is one of the psychological factors that influences conflict and is influenced by the same. As a relatively enduring disposition of social actors to a given social situation, attitudes are characterized by cognitive, affective and behavioural attributes. Indeed, it is the beliefs and ideas held by parties to a dispute that influence their feelings towards a given conflict-precipitating issue. It is the feelings that also influence their manner of response to the issue in dispute. People's attitude to conflict can differ because people differ in their cognitive processes. People in conflict may be seeing the same issue differently because of variations in their cognitive processes. It is people's response to a prevailing conflict situation that constitutes conflict behaviour. This can be expressed in three ways: persuasion, coercion and reward (Williams, 1977). While advocacy characterizes persuasion, coercion is characterized by threat of and actual use of violence. Violence may be verbal or physical. It is usually associated with negative sanctions and losses. Through reward, promises can be made to the contending party, if the party can shift grounds for peace to prevail.

From the above, it is evident that social conflict is an inevitable component of man's social existence. It is a cultural universal and, so, cannot be wished away as long as there exists variation in man's needs, interests, cognitive processes and response to stimuli associated with conflict.

## 2.2 Models of conflict analysis

Fishers, in Best (2007:62), describes conflict analysis as “those activities that are undertaken by any person, doing anything either directly or indirectly, to know as much as possible about what is going on in a given conflict situation”. It is a systematic inquiry into the genesis, trends, dialectics, and challenges of a given conflict situation. In making conflict analysis, the analyst should be concerned with (1) understanding issues in conflict, (2) participants relationship to each other, (3) relevant past history, (4) values and needs of the participants, (5) barriers to resolving the conflict, and (6) power utilization and how it impacts on the conflict (Best, 2007).

Conflict analysis is usually done through conflict mapping, onion/doughnut method, attitude behaviour context method, conflict tree and the pyramid/island methods. Through conflict mapping, a holistic view of the position of parties in conflict as well as issues involved can be made. In the onion/doughnut method, the effort is made to understand underlying currents, issues, positions, interests and needs in most conflict situations. If these are identified and effectively addressed using appropriate satisfiers, an enduring resolution of the conflict is possible. When conflict is being analysed from the attitude, behaviour and context (ABC) model, it is assumed that it is people's feeling in any relationship that generates conflict. Conflict arises when facts and realities are presented in a way that generates negative feelings. The model assumes that negative attitude engenders negative behaviour which creates and sustains conflict.

The conflict tree model assumes that conflict has its root causes and spillover effects. Identifying its root causes can be helpful in conflict transformation. It is an approach that is seen as helpful in understanding and resolving intra-group conflict such as those facing town unions.

The island and pyramid approach assumes that, even when positions of parties to a conflict may appear diametrically opposed, their interests may be closer. Beneath these lies their fears and needs which, in fact, can have their meeting points. If the meeting points are identified, meaningful resolution of the conflict is possible.

### **2.3 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. Essentially Marxian in sociological analysis, the concept encompasses technological, organisational and social components of man's existential realities. Marx (1968) saw infrastructural development as an important determinant of the quality of life being lived by social actors.

Infrastructure constitutes the final key consumption item for individuals within households making up the society. 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.

According to Olayode (2009), the establishment of Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) by the Federal Government to oversee the disbursement of funds and execution of infrastructural projects in the oil producing areas, is one of the outcomes of the struggles of Niger Deltans.

It is the conflict arising from the structure of colonially imposed capitalist mode of production and its corresponding social relation of production, that led to the emergence of TUs as development partners of the state in Nigeria. The



sources of economic conflict in colonial economy ranged from monetization of the economy (Nnoli, 2008), outright exploitation of the peasantry (who produced the cash crops) through what Okigbo (1986:2) calls “fiscal anesthesia”. It extended to exploitation of the working class (Ananaba, 1980) and progressive uneven development of the urban areas on the one hand and the urban-rural divide on the other.

Town unions arose in colonial cities to assist rural urban migrants adapt to the challenges posed by the colonial cities where, as stated earlier, they were poorly integrated. Their interest in developing their homelands rather than the cities (where most of their members resided) infrastructurally, can be seen as a strategy of managing the conflict characteristic of the capitalist social relations of production under colonial rule. It was a development that enabled the TUs to provide indicators of development as defined from the colonialists’ perspective. Many of the TUs built secondary schools, postal agencies, markets, maternity centres, bridges and even offered scholarship programmes for their bright but indigent members in quest of Western education. Unfortunately, it was a development that made many elite who coordinated the activities of these TUs to be parochial in thinking. It became a source of conflict when peoples identity became defined along primordial and particularistic considerations. Unknown to many, most of the communities having these TUs had endemic social structure that was far from being egalitarian.

Achebe (1960) shows how the cult slave institution is a source of conflict within Umuofia Improvement Union. Nwosu (2009) reveals how the same institution was a source of conflict in *Ifakala* community of Imo State because those defined culturally as cult slaves *osu*, wanted the institution abolished by their community. As this was a cultural creation, the demand was refused. The people (*osu*) challenged the institution via court action. Resources meant for community development was diverted to prosecuting the case. Most importantly, those defined as *osu* refused to contribute to development projects being undertaken by the town union of Ifakala community (Nwosu,2009). When a people defined as culturally monolithic politicise their observed differences, ethnicity is at work. Even within some town unions, conflict has a negative influence on members’ participation in what the organizations do. This is true of communities like Ifakala (Nwosu, 2009),Ogbunike and Akpo (Okafor, 2010).

## **2.4 The state and creation of caretaker committees in Anambra State**

In discharging the responsibility of social control in Anambra State, the government stipulates the modus operandi of registered TUs. The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters supervises the TUs elections and what traditional rulers do, in community administration of the autonomous communities of the state. The ministry, not only supervises TU, but also networks with the Presidents- General of TUs and the traditional rulers as the need arises. The ministry can create caretaker committees to oversee the activities of TUs in a community it believes to be drifting towards anomie. It is not only in the running of TU that the state uses caretaker committees. Indeed, until January 2014, the local government administration of the State has been run on this principle since 1999 when the current democratic dispensation was constituted. In practical terms however, the objectivity of the State government in creating the care-taker committee as well as the manifest reasons given by the government for such a creation have not gone down well with many communities in the state.

In Alor the home town of former Governor Chris Ngige, a think tank group called Alor Development Initiative (ADI) objected to the suspension of their town union, Alor Peoples Convention (APC). The group accused the then Peter Obi administration of deliberate marginalisation of their town in many respects. The state was said to have, in a letter dated 1/1/12 and received in Alor on 7/2/12, dissolved the executive committee of APC and, in its place, set up a 16-man caretaker committee headed by one Dr Nwodo Odenigbo (ADI, 2014).

The group argued that the government imposition of the caretaker committee was based on an unverified allegation made against APC by some disgruntled indigenes of the town. The complaint made against APC was that its executive officers failed to conduct an acceptable TU election and extended its mandate by one year.

Members of the caretaker committee were described as persons of “diminished integrity, questionable character, and blemished track record in community affairs and lacking in constructive ideas” (ADI, 2014). The group likened the imposition of the caretaker committee to previous acts of hatred meted out to the town since the year 2006 when Governor Chris Ngige left the state house as Governor of Anambra State. Some of these included: the removal of the Alor campus of Anambra State University to Awka, the sacking of Alor

technocrats serving in the State ministry without due process, refusal to commission two water boreholes built in the town by the Ngige administration in 2006, excluding two secondary school in Alor from benefiting from Millennium Development Goals projects that are benefiting more than 160 secondary schools in the state, and refusal to commission a five-classroom block constructed by APC in the town and refusal to pay back the organization ₦2 million it incurred in the process. Others were preventing an Alor indigene, Mr. Ifeanyi Okafor, from becoming the elected chairman of Onitsha Main Market Traders Union, creating a caretaker committee to man the affairs of the body and excluding Alor from a list of communities that benefitted from Anambra State Government's financial release in 2011. The group prayed the state government to restore their TU.

According to Nwosu (2010), the former Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters under governor Obi's administration was accused of fomenting trouble in Umuoji Anambra State. The commissioner was said to have created a seven-man caretaker committee to run the affairs of the town. Five of the members of the committee were said to be members of the defunct electoral committee which failed to conduct a credible election into the Umuoji TU on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2009, at the instance of the same commissioner. The sixth person in the list, Dr. Anyaegbunam, who declined to serve in the caretaker committee noted that:

To the best of my knowledge, Umuoji is well on course to solve her problems through dialogue and consultations. There has been no breach of the peace, neither is there any security threat that has incapacitated or over powered the -Igwe in- council presently, nor embarrassed the Peter Obi Administration. Anyaegbunam cited in (Nwosu, 2010).

On February 13, 2013, youths in Nawfia community of Anambra State demonstrated against the imposition of a caretaker committee on their town by the state government. The traditional ruler of the town described the body as illegal and lacking the mandate of *Nawfia* people to run the affairs of their town. In this way, they prevented the members of the committee from presenting to the town for adoption, a draft constitution they had prepared for the running of the

community. The constitution was described as arbitrarily prepared, without consulting any of the 10 villages comprising Nawfia town.

The traditional ruler of the town believed that the caretaker committee was created to whittle down his influence in the town. He substantiated this view by remarking that the Peter Obi administration deliberately deprived him of his entitlements as a traditional ruler. He claimed that he never received his stipends and security votes like other traditional rulers in the state.

Usually, when a caretaker committee is created by the state to run the affairs of a town union, it is given its term of reference. Nwakwesili (2012) identifies these to be:

- Reconciliation of warring factions in a community where it is created.
- Preparing adequate grounds for conducting TU election at least 2 weeks to the expiration of its tenure (usually six months).
- Creating structures that will enhance TU peace.
- Mobilizing resources capable of enhancing the life chances of people in the communities they operate.

These steps were followed in Ughah in 2012 (Nwakwesili, 2012); Ekwulobia (Maduabuchi, 2013) and so on.

In clear defiance of the repressive role of the Commissioner for Local Government in running the TUs, the people of Ebenebe in Anambra State rose against a sit-tight President-General of their TU by creating a caretaker committee for their TU. The deposed President-General was accused of embezzling over 7.5 million naira given the town by the state government for palliative purposes. Also, the patrol van given to the town's vigilante group was said to have disappeared (Nwakwesili, nd). The President-General was described as very disrespectful to the traditional ruler. He was said to have been enjoying special protective favour from the state Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters. In reaction to these allegations, The Great Ebenebe General Assembly created a caretaker committee to run the affairs of their TU.

Maduabuchi, (2013) showed how in Ekwulobia, some government officials worked against the interest of their TU government. According to him, the traditional ruler of the town connived with the commissioner to form a parallel TU where one should exist. The newly formed TU was used to collect the

financial releases meant for the town for palliative purposes. The parallel TU was challenged in Aguata High Court and an injunction obtained restraining the body from operating was obtained. The Executive of the legitimate TU was restored following the court order. The court order notwithstanding, the commissioner dissolved the executive officers on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 and set up a caretaker committee in its place (Maduabuchi, 2013). The court ordered the committee dissolved. The order was ignored. When the legitimate President-General of Ekwulobia TU refused to hand over to the caretaker committee, the Commissioner wrote the Anambra State Commissioner of Police to have him arrested.

The above empirical examples show, that in the process of creating caretaker committees, state government officials can be disrespectful of the feelings of members of affected communities.

Conflict suppression is characterised by unnecessary show of might is right syndrome by agents of the government. At different times in Nigeria's development, this mindset has been displayed by the government against the governed. In specific terms, the manner in which the British used the criminal justice system on the people was repressive, awe-inspiring and unfortunate. The peoples resistance cut across cultural areas of the country. Nnoli (2012:1) notes that:

Violent uprisings, riots and armed resistances against the state confronted colonial rule. Among them were the armed struggle of the people of Satim in Sokoto Province, the resistances of the Tarok, Montol and Doemak of the Jos Plateau to colonial rule, the uprising of the Dancing Women of the Okigwe Area and the Ekumeku movement of the Asaba area, the Iseyin and Warri uprisings, the Abeokuta rebellion and the Aba women riots. The people were desirous of preventing their cherished ways of life from falling apart as a result of the domination, oppression, exploitation, injustice and illegitimacy of colonial occupation.

The post- colonial Nigerian state did not make a significant departure in excessive use of state power to suppress the governed, even when the laws dictate responsible governance. Many societal laws (the violation of which is supposed to be a deviant act) have been defined as inimical to harmonious inter-ethnic

relationship in Nigeria. In specific terms, the abandoned property policy of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1970 (Achebe, 2012), was seen as anti-Igbo ethnic group (Nzimiro, 2001). In the same way, the Indigenization Decree of 1972 and 1977 was seen as anti-Igbo (Ake, 1980). The State's Land Use Decree of 1978 was unacceptable to many communities of Nigeria (Beckman; 1985, Ibeanu, 2003; Nnoli, 2012).

At different times in Nigeria's history, communities have reacted often violently against unpopular laws made by the government. The Tiv uprisings of 1962 and 1964, the Agbekoya Revolt in Yoruba land in 1968; the Bakolori Peasants revolt in the then Sokoto State 1980 (Ibeanu, 1993), the Bachama land conflict of 1987 (Egwu, 1998) are enough instances. It is from this tradition that the people of Alor, Umuoji, Nawfia, and Ekwulobia reacted to the imposition of a caretaker committee on their communities by the state government.

The use of caretaker committee can also be seen as one of the resilient cultural forms of prolonged military rule in Nigeria. The military punctured political harmony in many communities when town unions were suspended in the 1960s for identifying with the political parties. The military, through Edict 22 of 1986 of old Anambra State, politicised the traditional institution when TUs and local government chairmen became important stakeholders in the production of whoever becomes the traditional ruler of a community. State administrators used top government functionaries to reach out to the communities in making the selection. Unknown to them, many of these communities have endemic social formations that predispose them to fission. Some of these, centered on myths of origin, settlement patterns, issue of adopted lineages and so on. Some government functionaries who came from these communities interpreted government's policy statements to suit their purposes.

## **2.5 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,

1990). It is only among these riverine Igbo people that kings existed as in such centralized polities like Oyo, and Benin, (Afigbo,1972); Wandeers,1990; Nwosu, 2009).

Colonial rule, through the 1916 Ordinance, created and imposed warrant chiefs on the Igbo people. The warrant chiefs were arbitrarily chosen by the colonialists. They became the channel of communication between the colonialists and the colonised. They were used in tax collection and settlement of disputes in colonial courts. The conflict and social disapproval surrounding their appointment and roles were some of the factors that led to the Aba Womens Riot of 1929 (Ananaba, 1980).The women objected to an envisaged taxation of women by the warrant chiefs. Following the military coup of January 1966, the chieftaincy institution was suspended. However, in 1978, an edict was enacted reinstating it. Many families that produced the warrant chiefs saw it as their birthright. Conflict arose in many communities when many of them were resisted (Nwosu, 2009). The military was not prepared to interrogate these conflict situations. Some wealthy indigenes who were influential enough to 'buy' the position, did so. Many of them became traditional rulers.

Consequent upon this development, the following functions were assigned to recognized traditional rulers in existing autonomous communities of Anambra state:

- Representing their communities during ceremonial occasions.
- Presiding at calendar and other festivals of their communities
- Assisting in the maintenance of law and order by ensuring that the cultural values of their people are preserved and defended.
- Involving himself in development projects
- Assisting local governments in the collection of taxes, rates and community levies.

Nwosu (2009) is of the view that, in practice, traditional rulers hardly get involved in the collection of taxes and levies. This may be one of the spillover effects of Aba Women`s Riot. It is in the discharging of their roles as culture preservers and important stakeholders in community development that their roles tend to conflict with that of TUs. In communities like Onitsha (Azikiwe, 1976);



Ekwulobia (Maduabuchi, 2013), Ogbunike (Okafor,2010), the traditional rulers and their TUs have been in court.

The traditional institution was extensively used by the military to consolidate their rule at the grassroots. Not only did late Sanni Abacha set aside 5% of the national budget for traditional rulers, but he equally used some of them against their people. He never cared to know that the institution was at variance with the Igbo people`s primordial cultural preferences and needs. Some of them used such apparatus of the state like the police, and the army to move about and maintain `peace` in their societies. Some of them were awarded government contracts for infrastructural development of their communities. Some influenced the appointment of their favourites into high political offices. In addition, the government created the Traditional Rulers Council where government-recognised traditional rulers periodically meet and network with state government officials on matters of state policy and direction. The above implies that the government sees some of the tradition rulers as stooges existing, willing and available to be used against the interest of their communities.

Evidences exist that where a recognised traditional ruler is not favourably disposed to carrying out the directives of the state, his certificates of recognition can be withdrawn. The Igwe of Nawfia opined that Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State had been running TUs, local government councils with caretaker committees. He believed the governor wanted to extend the practice to the running of traditional institutions (Obenta, 2013).In Ekwulobia, the traditional ruler connived with the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters to proscribe their TU. He ignored an order given by the Aguata High Court to restore the TU. Also in Ebenebe, the same commissioner was said to be very reluctant bringing the President-General of their TU to order.

Unlike the traditional rulers position and roles, the TUs as the supreme body of *Igbo* village assembly, can be described as: people-initiated, people-directed, people-sustained and people-oriented. Although Edict 22 of 1986 expects that TUs will elect their traditional rulers according to the culture of the community, the document makes mockery of the TUs because the culture in question has no room for traditional rulers position, hence the imposition of the body on the people, their objection, notwithstanding. Town unions are also expected to present the elected traditional ruler to the chairman of their local



government who will, in turn, present the ruler-elect to the government. This provision is based on a false notion of representativeness. The provision little addresses endemic social arrangements that make such a selection elitist and unrepresentative of the people's value preferences and needs. The provision has created a situation where those opposed to a particular traditional ruler-elect, have taken to the formation of a parallel TU (See Table 2 page 79). Nwosu (2009:18) is very apt in his contention: 'from all indications, the *eze* established by governments statutes, crowned by the government, paid by the government and removed at will by the government cannot be said to enjoy a high level of autonomy. The system is highly dependent on the government. Lack of autonomy is, perhaps, exemplified by rather the ignoble collective role of some Igbo traditional leaders in lending support to the self-succession bid of late Sanni Abacha even against the wish of the majority of the Igbo people.

Government, in its mind-management strategy has always rationalised its actions by associating traditional rulers with roles that exist to:

- Maintain communal peace
- Facilitate social control at the grass roots
- Enhance existing communication network between the government and the governed
- Facilitate community mobilisation
- Preserve people's cherished cultural values
- Serve as a link between the past, present and the future

Antagonists of the institution, however, contend that, when the leadership of a community is ascribed, the institution constrains some gifted individuals from contributing effectively to the development of their community (Ofoegbu, 1992). Moreover, the institution is change-resistant to the extent that it recreates extinct cultural values.

Today, in many communities of Igboland, political aspirants, successful businessmen who want to be contextually relevant in the political process tend to influence the traditional rulers with gifts. This is to enable them to be conferred with honorary traditional titles. Such titles form part of their honorific names, with which some of them are greeted during social functions that do not exclude TU meetings (Oha, 2009). However, such titles do not make their recipients

qualified to perform rituals associated with the cultural essence of any autonomous community in the state.

## 2.6 Gender inequality among the Igbo

Public perception of social inequality among the Igbo is aptly captured by the saying '*chi mmadu na ibeya abughi ofu*' (peoples' destiny vary). Achebe (1974) notes that, among the Igbo, age is respected but achievement is revered. Achievement is culturally routinised, validated and recreated through such institutions as marriage, *ozo* title-taking, revered *ichie* institution, the masquerade cult, and so on. Role ascription is true of Igbo society. Gender roles are culturally defined. Wanders (1990:34) opined that an *nze* must be a free born (i.e neither the father nor forefather of the person ought to have been slaves or *osu*, cult slave dedicated to a god).

Women and children are not mentioned before the ancestors as capable of blessing the living. Men without title are often equated with women and children. Since the society is patrilineal and gerontocratic, an *Nze* should possess seniority over non-titled members of the society, the age difference between them notwithstanding. The title exempts them from communal service, such as road construction and maintenance, construction of village squares and markets. As privileged members of the society, particular portions of slaughtered animals are their preserve. Until they die they continue to enjoy the sharing of money and goods brought by new initiates into the *ozo* institution.

Women in many cultural areas of Igboland are regarded as wealth to be exported (*akumba*). At kindred meetings; they attend only on invitation by the men. During conflict situations at the family level, a woman whose husband has refused to eat the meal she prepared is not expected to eat the food. In matters of sexuality, double standards of morality prevail for both males and females. It is news when a married woman has a paramour. In the case of men doing the same, society turns its eye the other way round (UNFPA, 2004). A woman that has given birth only to females is looked down upon. Women cannot negotiate sex with their husbands. Teenage pregnancy by any unmarried girl qualifies the victim to be given out in marriage to a handicapped person or very elderly ones in need of a mistress (UNFPA, 2004). Widowhood practices in some cultural areas

can be very inhuman. Inheritance is based on primogeniture. Thus, in associational life, women are expected to have social organisations that respect the dominant position of men in the society.

## **2.7 Strategies of conflict resolution**

In his satisfaction of human needs theory of conflict resolution, John Burton (1979) submits that meeting what he calls ontological needs is very important for the survival of human society. This includes need for security, control, justice, rationality, stimulation, response, esteem, recognition and defence of one's role. Ontological needs differ from values and interests. Whereas they are not negotiable, limited forum for negotiation exist for values. Interests centre to a large extent, on negotiable issues. Burton's submission is helpful in appreciating the recurrence of ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

Ethnic and sub-ethnic groups conflicts in Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta (Isumonah and Gaskiya, 2003), Ife-Modakeke (Asiyanbola, 2007), and among the Igbo (Ibeanu and Onu, 2001), have remained resilient because government thinks that they can be solved through negotiation. The issue remains that the groups feel unsafe. A political process that allays such fear is very important in solving such a problem and its related conflicts.

### **2.7.1 Negotiation**

Best (2007:105) claims that negotiation is "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. This advocated for interest-based negotiation.

Fishers advocated empathy in conflict resolution. Like Max Weber, he believed that, through this way, subjective reasons influencing positions of parties to a dispute can be appreciated. In this way, negotiation is possible. Its rules demand that parties to a dispute share meaning on the issues precipitating conflict. It assumes existence of unhindered access to information necessary for the negotiation process (Miller, 2003).

### **2.7.2 Mediation**

Best (2007), defines mediation as, informal non-binding process undertaken by an external party that fosters the settlement of different parties demand, between directly interested parties. Mediation is usually associated with the emergence of a third party. It is supposed to be a voluntary process.

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), or the role of third party that enjoys. Instead, the mediator's objectivity, neutrality, astuteness in helping the parties reach a win-win situation, and should not be in doubt to the parties in conflict. Scott (2006:1) notes that mediation is a favoured 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*).

### **2.7.3 Arbitration**

This is the use of a supposedly neutral third person to resolve a conflict situation. The parties can be involved in deciding the arbitrator. The third party usually listens to the parties' position statements and weighs the evidences presented before handing down their decision. Such decisions are expected to be binding on the parties to the dispute. In this way, arbitration differs from mediation. Unlike litigation, arbitration is usually done outside the court. Again arbitration depends on the ability of the third party to command the trust of the groups in conflict. During the Onitsha Market Crisis of 1974, the arbitrator was late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. He disagreed with the position and roles of his fellow cabinet members who assumed the task of arbitrating in the dispute. The committee that mediated on the conflict suspended the traditional ruler of the

town and some indigenes of the town associated with purchasing market stalls in the Onitsha Market contrary to the resolution of their TU. Azikiwe criticized the committee for double standards in their penal policies. His empirical evidences in this regard led to the signing of peace treaty that led to the end of the conflict (Azikiwe, 1976).

Among the Igbo, the process of arbitration is becoming less attractive, especially among the rich, who prefer to use adjudication and apparatus of the state on social control, for example the police, and the army (Ukah, 2005).

#### **2.7.4 Adjudication**

Adjudication involves the use of courts and other litigation processes. Courts vary according to their levels of jurisdiction. Parties to a dispute are usually represented by their counsels. The court is usually briefed by the counsels to the parties in dispute. Evidences are always taken. All these are important in determining the facts of the matter. The so-called 'facts' can be concocted. Court ruling on the issue(s) in dispute is binding on both parties. Appeals can be made to a higher court. Judicial decisions are often enforced. Litigation is very expensive a legal process. Although it is a peaceful process, it does not go down well with many Igbo people. According to Nwosu (2009), it is the litigation between the traditional ruler of Ifakala and the town union of his community which paralysed the Ifakala water project. Court cases long settled have become a source of protracted conflict between individuals, parties, communities and even organisations (Ononiba 2003; Nwosu, 2009; Okafor, 2010). Best (2007:110), notes that "litigation tends to destroy trust, love, respect and other forms of confidence between parties". Azikiwe (1976:34) observes that:

Series of adjudication did not bring peace to Onitsha because 'Incessant wrangling of a personal nature have ruined our communal life. Petty quarrels in the law courts over trivialities connected with amorphous tradition and custom have polarized the Onitsha community. These incongruities lead me to appreciate why we, the *Ndichie*, as patriarchs and leaders of our people, have been so selfish and factious that few of us are at peace with our kindred.

### **2.7.5 Conflict management**

This is usually a proactive measure aimed at nipping conflict in the bud. It is about ensuring that the society, using available cultural mechanisms, does not allow conflict to escalate to the point of consuming people in conflict. As an inevitable aspect of human life, conflict management, strategies include conflict limitation, containment and litigation.

Among the Igbo, there are cultural mechanisms of ensuring that conflict is nipped in the bud. Family meetings, village assemblies, committee of elders, associations, like age-grades, women married into kindred, daughters already married, titled men and women, and so on do meet as the need arises to address problems arising on such issues as land dispute, marriage breakdown, violation of communal rules, sanctions and social expectations. Usually, such meetings can be characterised by commensality (that is eating and drinking together) after which the issues in dispute are discussed through dialogue (Anigbo, 1985). The President-General of Oraifite Town Union observed, in his welcome address to the Central Executive Committee of his association, that the administration had:

Imbided the culture of resolving all conflicts through dialogue. Consequently, various cases of land disputes which are usually potential sources of violence and disorder were tactfully managed and peacefully resolved through dialogue at various levels of our conflict resolution process carefully knitted into our organizational structure. With the introduction of this method of conflict resolution, our people are gradually imbibing the culture of resolving their problems through round table discussion which promotes peace in the society (Okolo, 2014:1).

### **2.7.6 Conflict suppression**

This is about using the instruments of coercion by the state (the police, the army, and so on) to push an issue or issues precipitating conflict under the carpet while imposing solutions that are not sustainable, and shared by the other parties. It is a case of a resolution method that is both wrong and strong. In Nigeria, this strategy of resolving conflict is not uncommon. The shooting of Bakalori peasants of Kano in 1980 for objecting to governments appropriation of their land for commercial agricultural purposes (Beckman, 1985), the killing of the

people of Odi for protesting the pollution of their environment by the oil companies operating in Niger Delta (Albert, 2003) are not different from the culture of shooting demonstrators, including university students (often with bullets and expired tear gas canisters) when unpopular government policies are being resisted (Madunagu, 1980; FGN: 1982).

Onwuzurigbo (2009) captures the futility of this approach to conflict resolution thus:

Confronting violence with violence was the hallmark of colonial patterns of conflict management. The post-colonial government inherited and adopted this underlying philosophy of colonial conflict management approach to its repertoire of conflict management strategies. The pattern usually takes this trend: once there is an outbreak of violence, truck load of policemen, most times complemented by soldiers with instruction to 'shoot-at-sight', are dispatched to quell the situation. As soon as calm and normalcy are restored, the team of policemen and soldiers are withdrawn. No attempt is made to set up structures for reintegrating and building peace among the people.

Conflict suppression is an indication of unequal social relationship between parties in conflict. It usually leads to protracted conflict because of its spillover effects, tendency to encourage grumbling, misgivings and reprisal attacks. It is, therefore, not sustainable. Closely related to this model is the power based approach or realism.

### **2.7.7 Realism**

This is based on coercion or use of force to resolve conflict. It includes both violent and non-violent methods of coercion like war and diplomacy. It is usually a win-lose situation. This method is widely in use in the settlement of international disputes. It often involves negotiators advancing their positions for the most powerful party to decide.

According to Ishn Bushton, quoted in Mills (2006), realism ends with coercive settlement and not resolution. Great powers believe that international security can be achieved through this method. In doing so, they usually create



regional power balances in unstable regions of the world, either by force or by mediation. It is the non-violent aspect of realism that is being applied in form of aid to a recipient country when this is being tied to certain conditions that must be met (Miller, 2006). American presidents, like Jimmy Carter, R. Reagan, George Bush, Snr., and George Bush, Jnr., have used this method to ensure compliance of Israel to American peace initiatives. The post-Saddam regime in Iraq shows that this method can create more problems than it can solve. Little wonder then that realism has been criticized for being pessimistic about human nature. Under realism, conflict manipulation is an important strategy of conflict resolution. Usually, dialogue is engaged in during peace process with conflicting groups. The aim may be to help increase the bargaining power of the favoured group. When the trick is exposed, the manipulated party can retaliate and the peace process can be undermined.

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

In community administration of Igbo society, conflict resolution is undertaken by such bodies as the age grades (where the offender has deliberately neglected performing an expected civic responsibility). 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 socialisation.

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. According to Imobighe (2003:28), the merits of this traditional method of conflict resolution is



that it helps parties involved appreciate the objective conditions of the conflict, that is the environment of conflict, in terms of resource conflict, cultural/religious conflict, system/ideological conflict, land/boundary conflict. It makes use of history extensively, especially oral traditions and resilient cultural forms.

At the moment among the Igbo, the traditional method has been coexisting with institutional mechanisms created by the state and which, from all intents and purposes, cannot be described as representative of the people's primordial cultural values (Udechukwu, 2003). One of the items for discussion by the Central Executive Committee of Oraifite Improvement Union in 2013 was the use of shrines in settling disputes in the town.

The position of the traditional rulers, as custodians of culture as well as TUs existing as institutional mechanism of community administration, prevail and function according to the degree of freedom allowed the institutions by the state. Both are established according to existing codified laws. The state creates an artificial barrier between the two institutions by making their functions appear mutually exclusive.

Unfortunately, the laws made by the state in this regard cannot be described as based on the cultural preferences of the autonomous communities having them (Adegbulu, 2011). Their existence has, however, enabled the government to manipulate the dynamics of local institutions at will, especially in communities it believes do not support it politically. This has been seen as a source of communal conflict in Anambra State (Nwosu, 2009; Ononiba, 2003; Okafor, 2010; Ibeanu, 2003). This development has led to a situation where many members of voluntary associations are not at home with the content of the laws governing how their associations are run. Adegbulu (2011: 13) captures the situation as follows:

A critical examination of the legal procedures involved in the creation of the autonomous communities and their 'traditional' rulers in Igbo land reveals the artificiality of these *Ezes*. For instance, a 'Traditional ruler' must be able to prove 'popular support' by being formally presented to the governor. Besides, an 'autonomous community' has to provide a written constitution and a code of conduct for the traditional ruler. However, the law makes little provision to define how in detail, these documents emerge, and who writes them-except by

rather vague reference to 'customary law'. The question then can be asked: Can the legal instrument which coerces communities to put into a fixed, written form what they regard as their tradition, pass for the people's tradition?

Udechukwu (2003) is correct in saying that, in Igbo society of old, leadership as championed by titled men was aimed at ensuring that decisions reached must protect collective values. The leaders understood well that their spiritual world influenced their secular equivalent and any observed miscarriage of justice can lead to unpleasant outcome or regrets. This is captured by the concept of *ofò* and *ogu* in Igbo cosmology. While the *ofò* symbolises rituals and political power, *ogu* symbolises the moral authority associated with leadership positions held (Udechukwu, 2003). Today, these values are in crisis and make leadership of Igbo communities a laughing stock.

This study tried to find out the prevailing and preferred method of conflict resolution by town unions in Anambra State.

## **2.8 Etiology of social conflict**

### **2.8.1 Social psychological theories**

Social psychologists look at personality make-up of individuals as influential in their observed pattern of role performance in the society. Personality here, refers to that stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determine those commonality and differences in psychological behaviour (thoughts, feelings and action) of people, that have continuity in time, which may or may not be easily understood, in terms of the social and biological pressures of the immediate situation alone" (Stark, 1996:161). Personality differences are explained by variation in variables like intelligence, sensitivity, temperament, vigour, and resistance (Eyo, 1995). There are commonality and differences in people's personality make up. The commonality can be explained by the fact that all humans are governed by the same law of nature (for example reaction to hunger and want). Observed differences in human behaviour may arise from their different abilities to learn approved cultural norms and values. This variation can be a source of conflict (Eyo, 1995; Stark, 1996).

Influenced by the social psychological model in their analysis of ethnic relations in South Africa, Odendaal et al. (2003:25) argue that apartheid thrived

for so long in South Africa because, “the white rulers considered the blacks of that country too thin intellectually a race to rule”. In the same vein, Alba (2000:841) submits that “ethnicity arises from deep-rooted human impulses and needs that are not eradicated by modernisation”. Quoting Kimball and Young, Nzimiro (2001:2-3), avers that an impulsive behaviour that explains ethnic conflict is the “in- group” versus “out-group” syndrome. The concepts are social psychological and tend to identify, define, establish, recreate, and defend “we” feeling among individuals in society.

“We” and “they” feelings harboured by individuals in a plural society tends to create social distance or an imaginary boundary of acceptance in their social relationship. Within the scenario, people tend to, and or, are expected to, identify with, and remain committed to ideals, values, attitudinal prescriptions of their in-group especially with regard to the out-group during conflict situations. The in-group feeling is transmitted through socialisation. It is the in-group and out-group feelings that nurture and sustain prejudiced and stereotypic feelings, which are the two concepts in use by social psychologists to explain ethnic conflict.

Sigmund Freud, quoted in Faleti (2007), located man`s tendency to be aggressive to the dialectical struggle between what he called **the eros** (man`s instinct to survive) and **thanatos** (man`s tendency to die). He remarked that conflict manifests whenever the eros tries to overcome the thanatos. Man`s tendency to be aggressive is just one of the ways of expressing his biological instincts. Man can be aggressive if confronted by a difference between expected need satisfaction and actual need satisfaction (Davies, 1962). In his Relative Deprivation Theory, Gurr (1970:24) posits that “the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result.”

Complementing the assumptions of relative deprivation theory is **Human Needs Theory**, as propounded by Maslow (1970), John Burton (1979), and Azar (1994). Maslow believed that man has a basic hierarchy of needs, which, when satisfactorily met, motivates him to live a conflict- uninfected life. These needs include: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem and self actualization. Burton identifies the needs to be response, stimulation, security, recognition, and distributive justice, meaning, need to appear rational

and develop rationality, need for sense of control and the need for role defence (Faleti, 2007). According to Burton (1979), man's need for food, shelter, sex, reproduction, identity preservation, affection, participation, protection and understanding are basic for his survival. If such needs are trivialized, conflict can arise.

The human needs theory helps us to appreciate why people can become confrontational to those associated with their social experiences of deprivation. One can say, in the light of the above, that concepts like marginalisation, ethnic domination, minority question, and even resource control or still, ethnic militias, and TU conflicts can be explained from the social psychological viewpoint. The approach is reductionistic, for it has not given much attention to history and social structure as variables capable of influencing individuals' behaviours. Little wonder that Skidmore (1979) observes that psychological theories locate the ontological reason for conflict on the individual in society. It has ignored social factors.

### **2.8.2 Social structure theories**

Social structural theories locate conflict outside the individuals comprising the social system. Important theories here are the evolutionary theory, the structural functionalist theory and the Marxian theory of social conflict. The evolutionary theory was advanced in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and reined up to the end of First World War. Before the emergence of the theory, scholars of the Scottish Enlightenment (notably Adam Smith, 1723-1790; Adam Ferguson, 1723-1816; John Miller, 1735-1801 and William Robertson, 1723-1816) had argued that beneath what might appear to be a chaotic social situation lies a definite structure which has to be understood for a meaningful resolution of social conflict (Swingepod, 1991:17).

These philosophers of enlightenment took interest in debunking medieval philosophy (which, to them, is at variance with critical reasoning). They were bent on challenging the immutability of nature and its inherent social arrangements.

Early evolutionary thinking regarded all societies as progressing from an undifferentiated to a highly differentiated and complex social forms, in which there is increased division of labour, specialisation and functional inter-

dependence of the differentiated parts. The process is unidirectional and non-reversible (Nzimiro, 1976; Mitchell, 1979: 74; Ake, 1996).

Against this background, evolutionary theorists have classified the development of human societies as a structural process capable of being compartmentalised into two polar opposites as can be seen in Ferdinand *Toennis-Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gessellschaft* (association) dichotomy; Robert Redfields' folk society and urban typology; Henry Mains' society of status and that of contract, Emile Durkheim's mechanical versus organic solidarity and so on (Olmsted, 1995:19; Nwanunobi, 1992).

Finer cultural accomplishments of man were associated with European cultural forms, those traditional culture forms, in their acquired colonies, were described and ranked derogatorily. Concepts like 'primitive', 'barbaric', 'savage', 'tribe' and 'uncivilised' were used to qualify African peoples' cultures. The qualification process was accompanied by corresponding glorification of European cultural values. Achebe (1974) discusses how this culture conflict led to the polarisation of the typical Igbo community because the freeborn who wanted to preserve the status quo could not convince the cult slaves to avoid early Christian missionaries.

Today, that fission is still a source of intra-ethnic conflict among the Igbo. It has influenced the pattern of infrastructural development (Animalu, 1995; Nwosu, 2009). Ifemesia (1980) and Anigbo (1985) among others have tried to show endemic anomalies in the evolutionary theoretical framework, especially its racist undertone, which accounts for its derogatory perception of societies with less material cultural accomplishments.

### **2.8.3 Structural functionalist theory**

According to Mayanaski and Turner (2000), functionalism is sociology's first theoretical orientation which was advanced by Western anthropologists charged with the responsibility of explaining the dynamics of societies with no written culture, within the world capitalist system. Turner (1977) claims that Auguste Comte is qualified to be called the founder of functionalism. This Mayanaski and Turner (2000) attributed to Comtes introduction of organismic reasoning in the study of sociology. Comtes analogy assumes that certain components of the social system can be likened to biological organisms. He

equated families with (cells); classes with (tissues) and cities and communes with gang. Comte`s division of sociology into social statistics and social dynamics is based on this affinity (Turner, 1977:2).

This emphasis on structural differentiations is the bedrock on which other theorists within the school have contributed their views. For example, H. Spencer, in his principles of sociology (1874-1896), used the principle of ‘organismic analogy’ to explain the concept of functionalism. In so doing, he tried to show the relationship between ecological processes (variation, competition and selection) and societal development. He saw this process as driven by war. Spencer talked of functional prerequisites, by arguing that super-organic systems reveal some similarities in their arrangement, just like biological organisms.

Herbert Spencer`s functional system is characterised by the need to secure and circulate resources; the need to produce usable substances, and the need to control and administer system activities. This is the pivot on which most functionalist sociological analyses revolve. Although Auguste Comte, H. Spencer, Charles Darwin and Emile Durkheim can be called precursors of functionalism, the first three, `` did not shed much light on how the social system can be studied empirically in establishing this systemic relationship`` (Nisbet and Bottomore, 1979:678).It was Emile Durkheim (1885-1917) who provided this missing link, in the study of human society. In his *Rules of Sociological Method*, he established what Labinjoh (2002) aptly describes as a founding fathers blueprint for research. In the work, he formulated procedures to be followed, in the collection and interpretation of evidence in the construction of explanatory hypothesis and in their validation (Labinjoh, 2002). Durkheim`s emphasis on empiricism is borne out of his conviction that the approach is a tributary to a scientific understanding of how individuals and groups in society are held together (integrated) by what he called social facts. This is the basis for his argument that sociological analysis must be capable of showing how phenomena function to meet the need of the social structure for integration (Alba, 2000).

Using Durkheim`s blueprint, Radcliff Brown (1881-1955) analysed how kinship functions to meet integrative needs of the Andaman society. An exponent of what he called comparative sociology, Brown emphasised the need for the discernment of structural principles governing human relationship, derived from

comparative study of social systems (Mitchell, 1979:154). This sociological study followed this tradition.

In a similar vein, Bronislaw Malinowski posited that a scientific study of human society should embrace fieldwork, if the sociologist should appreciate how cultural forms, enhance social integration. “Culture system here implies existing social institutions especially those with the following four attributes: production and distribution, social control and regulation, education and socialization and finally organization and integration” (Alba, 2000:1030). In this way, Malinowski not only seemed to be anticipating Talcott Parsons and his AGIL model, but “also became the first theorists to visualize cultural systems as one in which each of the parts was equally important, each playing a role in the final outcome” (Beals and Hoijer, 1971:40).

It is against this background that functionalists talk of functions as contributions, which the sub- systems (institutions or enduring roles) make in the sustenance of the social system (integration), for example Parsons’ functional prerequisites (Skidmore 1979:145). Emile Durkheim’s social facts refer to variables like beliefs, norms, mores (non-material social facts) and artifacts (material social facts) which man has created and shares in meeting his survival needs as vital components of the social structure. He sees social facts as “external to the individual, general to the society and constraining man in expressing his individual free will” (Durkheim quoted in Giddens (1977:293). Human problems can be better understood by analysing how social facts affect man, for it is the social structure, which determines the problems (Labinjoh, 2002). In doing so, the unit of analysis has to be the social group, which he saw as a reality transcending individuals comprising it. For this reason, he focused on problems of cohesion of groups and how variation in group behaviour “is a function of the social structure influencing the group” (Labinjih, 2002:41). In Durkheim’s view, ethnic conflict whether at the inter-or intra-level of analysis, is not only socio-structurally determined, but also influential on the harmonic nature of the social system. It is a deviant act that indicates how an anomic social condition is perceived and expressed by groups in conflict. TU conflict is an anomic social development. When it manifests in form of coercion, quality of life can be affected including life itself.



Besides Durkheim's emphasis on how the structure of a social group can affect the action of individuals in society exists the view of Robert Merton, often described as a neo-functionalists. Merton, often called a critic within the functionalist school, argued that his predecessors had not been scientific enough in using the concept of function. This, to him, can affect clarity of sociological analysis (Merton, 1968:74-5). Minimizing such errors entails that sociologists must be capable of using middle range theories (abstracted from grand theories) in conducting focused research. Through the abstracted middle-range theory, collection of data is easier for the researcher who, at that level, looks for specific types of data covered by the middle- range theory (Turner, 1977:70). For example, within functionalism as a grand theory of ethnicity, Alba (2000:841) abstracted middle range theories like: theory of assimilation; ethnic mobilisation and ethnic group resources. Each of these is concerned with a particular type of data that can ultimately be linked to ethnicity at a higher level of abstraction. Merton's definition of functionalism amply illustrates this point. A method of building, not only theories of middle range, but also the grand theoretical schemes, that will someday subsume such theories of middle range. (Turner, 1977:71).

Because of his passion for precision, Merton also argued that not only is the integration of the society a variable concept, even the issue of function has to be holistically viewed. For this reason he talked of functions and dysfunction (negative roles) of an institution of a social phenomena, as well as manifest (intended) and latent (unintended) consequences of an action. This submission is very relevant. It will help one appreciate how the very idea of 'common cause' as championed by the opinion leaders can be used to undermine the developmental processes of the people being led. For instance, Nzimiro (1996:234) observes that "the concept of Igboness is a hoax and a smokescreen for Igbo elite to pursue their selfish motives". Using his closeness to the former Biafran leader as an example, he claims that what Biafrans complained about in Nigeria, were evident in the defunct republic as the war progressed. This is attested to by the fact that the Biafran leader, the Governor of the Bank of Biafra; commandant of Biafran Airport, Biafra's ambassadors at large, the country's potential Prime Minister, the



leader's ghost speech writer and closest associate were all from Nnewi, Ojukwu's home town. Achebe (2012:125) puts it this way:

In Biafra, two wars were fought simultaneously. The first was for the survival of the Ibo (sic) as a race. The second was for the survival of Ojukwu's leadership. Ojukwu's error which proved very fatal for millions of ibos (sic), was that he put the latter first.

One can say that functionalism as a thought frame in doing sociological research assumes that the society exists as a holistic entity within which exist identifiable parts (institutions) that exist because of their usefulness (functions) in the system. The institutions are interrelated and in equilibrium. They are structurally restored to normalcy should a change occur within the social system. In effect, social conflict is a normal social process that does not constitute a serious threat to the continual survival of the social system (Ritzer, 1976:48; 1997:208).

To structural functionalist theorists, every society is held together by shared norms, values, roles, and people in context. The social solidarity which this social reality sustains is punctured by social conflict. Talcott Parsons quoted in Coser (1957:21), sees social conflict as a 'disease', and Durkheim, cited in (Weirviorka, 2010:3) contends that "conflict has a disruptive effect on the functioning of the social system". Even Simmel (1903:490) opines that "if conflict has broken out, it is in reality, the way to remove the dualism and to arrive at some form of unity". Wierviorka, (2010:3) observes that "conflict attests to the fact that although human beings are sociable, they are equally capable of opposing one another. This manifests when the interests of individuals and groups are at variance". Gramsci (1982) attributes the stability of Western democracies to the strength of their civil societies. It is through associations characteristic of civil societies that people are trained for leadership positions at the state level. Through the same associations, people are mobilised, conscientised, and empowered to be politically virile. Weivorka (2010) does not agree less.

Social conflict, like ethnic intolerance, uprising, racial riots, and religious conflicts can be understood by looking at variables like poverty of cultural assimilation especially in the cities (Nnoli, 2008; Sassen 2000); pattern of social

stratification of people in society (Odendaal, 2003); rigid recreation of primordial cultural forms like myths of origin (Nzimiro, 2001); and ascribed roles (Francis, 2007b). When this is associated with feelings of inequity, injustice, relative deprivation and repression, social conflict is likely to manifest.

Nation-states trying to control social conflict from the structural functionalist approach tend to play low historical wrongs, atrocities which tend to influence social unrest and poverty of social tolerance. In doing so, social forgetting is highly encouraged. Renan (1990) asserts that forgetting is an essential element in the creation and reproduction of a nation since to remember everything could bring a threat to national cohesion and self-image. To functionalists, forgetting is an essential part of reconciliation. Judt (2005) notes that the reconstruction of Europe after World War II was built upon deliberate forgetting of the past. The crimes of the Nazi period, the social amnesia surrounding the Nuremberg Trials are sustained by the agreement that too much remembering of the past can undermine inter-group solidarity (Misztal, 2010). Both the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) and Nigerian Human Rights Violation Commission (aka Oputa Panel), were conceptualised and handled from the same logic of social forgetting. It is from this intellectual orientation, that Collins (2008) notes that under conflict situation, people can still pursue, rationally, their aims and set-out goals. In effect, conflict may appear disruptive of the social structure, but it is not very right to see it as a negation of unity. Functionalism is a historical (Gupta, 2005).

#### **2.8.4 Modernisation theory**

This is a theory of development within the functionalist theoretical framework. In International *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (1968), modernisation can be seen as the process of social change that enables the less developed countries to acquire characteristics common to developed ones. As a theory of social development, modernisation theory as advanced by neo-functionalists like: Talcott Parsons, Walter. W. Rostow, Inkeles and Smith, contend like evolutionary theorists before them, that third world societies are passing through developmental stages already experienced by developed countries of the world.

Modernisation as a process of social change shapes both the economic trend and the social values of a country having it on issues like power, skill, enlightenment, rectitude, affection, cultural values and preferences. The institutional, technological and normative values of the developed capitalist countries of the world are the cultural epitome of man and an ideal to be aspired for, achieved, maintained and defended by societies of lesser cultural achievements.

Apter (1965) and Rostow (1960), aver that modernisation (that is this process of catching up with the West) is characterised by variables like mechanisation of agriculture, urbanisation, demographic transition, expansion and integration of the national market, and an increase in political participation. Inkeles and Smith (1975) note that modern people, unlike traditional ones, have a cosmopolitan world view, rather than a local orientation. They welcome rather than distrust change in the society; they are not culture-bound, and they recognise the value of Western education.

Western capitalist-oriented institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), international Bank of Development and Reconstruction IBDR (a.k.a the World Bank); United States Agency for international Development (USAID); and the Paris Club are specialised agencies coordinating the dynamics of the modernisation process of the less developed countries within the world capitalist system (Nzimiro, 1976). They provide the ideological framework, the capital input, the technological outfit and political ideology for planning, pursuing and defining development in the less developed countries. This explains the external-oriented nature of the development process of these countries. It explains the tendency of their economy to be monocultural on the average and tend to be tilted to the production of cash crops which lack much value in the world market following advances in Western technology (Wilmot, 1995; Ake, 1996).

It is the sociology of the modernisation theory that is of interest to us in appreciating endemic conflicts within TUs in Anambra State. Eurocentric educational values have a disruptive effect on primordial cultural views of some of its recipients. So does the acquisition of Western material cultural artifacts that are associated with high status symbols. The quest for these values is associated: with communal conflicts (Akinyemi, 2003), primitive accumulation of communal

land (Anochili 2005), poverty of accountability of communal funds, chieftaincy disputes, cultural disorganisation and identity crisis (Anikpo 1998).

The inability of the state government to settle the conflict situation is also attributable to the ideological pursuit and preference of the state under modernisation. The state plays down the conflict using perverted logic of pattern maintenance and the use of state apparatus of coercion to suppress dissenting voices. The upsurge of ethnic militias in post-military Nigeria, the Aguleri-Umuleri War and so on have been suppressed in this way, without the state trying to capture the dialectics of the conflict situation. From this theoretical viewpoint, conflict is over when 'peace' 'order' 'unity' and 'harmony' prevail coercively. The model hardly investigates seriously the sources of the conflict and silent violence (Waltz, 1993). Functionalism and its modernisation ideological framework proved unable to analyze satisfactorily the wave of economic and political crisis in the world capitalist system in the 1950s and 1960s. It was a time America was facing racial riots from civil rights activists, in addition to the ideological challenges posed by the Cold War she was fighting with the East.

In the less developed countries, the elite were in quest of political self-determination. This antithetical movement challenged the theoretical adequacy of functionalism and modernisation. Symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer (1969) observes that functionalism is not at home with the processes of social interaction, especially the subjective aspect of interaction dynamics. Conflict theorists, especially the Marxist-inclined ones, like Lewis Coser (1959), Ralf Dahrendorf (1958), contend that functionalism is a reactionary theoretical approach to a dialectical process-social structure and social change. It is ahistorical in the analysis of social reality and therefore, theoretically deficient in capturing processes of development. The above notwithstanding, both the functionalist theoretical frame and the modernisation theory from it still serve as a paradigm for conceptualising and pursuing development in less developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

### **2.8.5 Structural conflict theory**

In sociology, some of the theorists put under conflict school (for example Machiavelli, T. Hobbes, R. Malthus, C. Darwin, K. Marx, G. Simmel, R. Dahrendorf, L. Coser) approached the problem of social conflict from different

standpoints. It is for this reason that we are yet to have an omnibus or an all-encompassing conflict theory in sociology, that is one in which the views of all the theorists classified within the framework can be found. Goldthorpe (1985:18) attributes this observation to the fact that social conflict is very diverse in scope and covers such issues as inter-personal conflict, class struggle, power struggle, international rivalry and war. It is within this context that Dahrendorf has argued that sociology has two faces (approaches) -conflict and consensus.

While functionalism and its middle-range theories (for example theory of ethnic stratification, ethnic segregation, theory of ethnic minorities, theory of ethnic pluralism) can be called integrative theories, the interest of conflict theorists revolves around conflict of interest and how these are coercively held together in society (Ritzer, 1976). Dahrendorf notes that there is an interrelationship between conflict and consensus, for there is a measure of rapport and understanding that should precede every conflict situation.

Dahrendorf argues specifically that the differential distribution of authority in society is a determining factor of systematic social conflict. He notes that sociologists should be concerned with the issue of authority, and positions in society. Their structural origin should be sought in social roles. To him, authority always implies both superordination and subordination. It is the expectations of those surrounding people in authority that make them to dominate. The expectations are attached to positions not to individuals.

Society according to Dahrendorf, composed of various units which he called imperatively co-ordinated associations. Authority and positions exist within each of these. An individual can occupy a position of authority in one unit and that of subordination in another. Those in positions of authority and subordination hold conflicting interest. The interests of the various groups are societally determined “social facts” (Ritzer, 1970:59-60). One of the effects of conflict of interest is that those at the top seek to maintain the status quo, while those at the subordinate level seek for a change. Dahrendorf talked of latent and manifest interest to mean unconscious and conscious role expectations, respectively. Conflict theory should analyse the relationship between these two.

To Dahrendorf, conflict groups can be quasi group and interest groups, which are made up of aggregates of incumbents of positions with identical role

interests. It is the interest groups that champion group conflict. Like every group, they have an organizational structure from which can arise conflict groups.

He added that variables like adequate personnel, prevailing political climate, existing communication network, manner of recruiting members, can all influence the emergence of conflict groups. He did not accept that group members recruited by chance can form a conflict group (for example touts joining students on a rampage). Instead interest groups, like ethnic militia, can form groups (Ritzer, 1976).

Conflict groups such as Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Supreme Egbesu Assembly (SEA), Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and Oodua People's Congress (OPC) according to Dahrendorf, engage in actions that lead to a change in the social structure. The rate of such a change is influenced by the intensity of such a conflict. Factionalised TUs can metamorphose into conflict groups.

Dahrendorf's contribution is helpful in understanding ethnic conflict and its changing forms because the conflicting ethnic groups pursue specific interests that are seen as ethnically specific. Scholars like Hodgkin (1966) and Achebe (1974) had argued that prior British colonisation of Nigerian ethnic groups, many of them co-operated and engaged in conflicts arising from incompatible interests. The Aro people were notorious for maintaining a network of group members that raided communities for slaves. Many of these Aro people were made warrant chiefs during colonial rule. They had very domineering influence among the Igbo, because many Igbo people dreaded the Arochukwu oracle.

Nnoli (1980:6) asserts that "the interest of the British as colonial masters was not to develop Nigerian cities, but to create structures that will enhance their economic interests in Nigeria". Inter-ethnic intolerance in the cities was facilitated by segregated residential patterns in them. In Igbo-dominated or Igbo-owned cities, the strangers and son-of-the-soil syndrome emerged to define the boundary of acceptance between the two interest groups. This was a source of conflict. Ethnic voluntary associations arose to pursue specific interests which often conflict (Nzimiro, 2001).

When the emphasis was on the acquisition of Western education, the voluntary associations awarded scholarships to brilliant people from their ethnic enclaves, to ensure that ultimately their competitive advantage in the national

political process would be enhanced (Okoroafor, 1990:7). It was the ethnic voluntary associations that metamorphosed into the political parties that vied for elections into regional assemblies and even the central legislative assemblies following the provisions of the 1951 Macpherson Constitution.

Even at independence, the political and economic elite who stepped into the machinery of running the state used group membership along ethnic lines to pursue power, economic and other interests often at variance with even development. As Nnoli (1980:135) puts it, "Their interest was petty bourgeoisie in nature and focused on relations of distribution".

Karl Marx (1818-1883) is famous in sociological theory for his theory of social conflict, especially its manifestation in industrialised capitalist society or what he called bourgeoisie society (Marx and Engels 1968). He formulated his theory as a reaction to Hegel's dialectical philosophy of social change. Whereas Hegel saw the world as an interconnected totality undergoing small, continuous and revolutionary changes, owing to internal conflict of opposing forces that have idealistic explanations, Marx attributed the propelling force for such a change to the materialistic advances of the society.

For Marx and Engels, social change and conflicts that accompany it in the society, can be understood as arising from the material or what he called the infrastructural base of the social system. Marx's theory of dialectics (conflict of opposites) explains how changes in the material affect the other sectoral (institutional) levels of the society in what Boguslavsky et al. (1980) describe as the law of transition from quantity to quality.

Marx's proposition assumes that social events like ethnic conflict, emergence of ethnic militias and ethnic cleansing are interconnected with other variables, especially the material condition of existence of the groups in conflict. This should be understood and addressed if an enduring solution to the problem is to be found. Marx assumed that the world is and should be understood as continuous balancing of polar opposites. Every phenomenon is in a state of conflict, occasioned by the dialectical relationship between affirmation (thesis) and negation (anti-thesis) the resolution of which gives rise to a new social order (synthesis). This, in turn, generates its own contradictions with time. It is an ongoing process and is Marx's theory of social change. A change from the slave mode of production to the industrialised mode of production brought an end to



the slave mode of production in the European plantations and the hunt for slaves in Africa.

Advances in industrialisation created economic hiccups that made the search for colonies very imperative. Each of these had their contradictions that gave rise to their specific conflict situations. Today, capitalism, in the words of Ernest Mandel (1980), has reached its explosive stage. This is euphemistically called globalisation. This again has its peculiar conflict situations that should be appreciated by analysing the mode of production and distribution of values.

The demands of various ethnic militias in the country, the privatisation of the state parastatals, the corruption question in the country, the increasing insensitivity of many people to the sanctity of human life and dignity, unemployment trap and so on can be appreciated as inextricably linked to the mode of production that marginalises Africa in the world market (Ake, 1996).

Marx's contention is that the working class in a capitalist society should get organised and address their subordinate class position by embarking on a revolution that will see them controlling the means of production and distribution of values in the society. Marx's theory of the possibility of man achieving a conflict-free classless society has been criticised for being utopian.

Neither Ralph Dahrendorf nor Karl Marx discussed the positive functions of social conflict. That is where George Simmel and Lewis Coser differ as conflict theorists. George Simmel, for example, argued that society (or a group) is an objective unity expressed in the reciprocal relations among its human elements. It can only be analysed and understood by looking at the process of interaction (Tomascheff 1957:121). Simmel argued that the subject matter of sociology should be, understanding interaction dynamics, he argued that conflict is functional for the social system.

Simmel cited in Tomascheff (1957:125) observes that:

Conflict functions to bring into open, negative feelings which if kept suppressed might continue to build and contribute to greater social disruptions. It also permits a more realistic appraisal of social relationships and of areas of agreement and disagreement by the participants.

To Simmel, conflict is not a negation of unity. It is in keeping with these functions of conflict that one should expect all the stakeholders in a conflict



situation to be interested in the activities of the contending parties. Ethnic associations, even during conflict situations, probe into the activities of the out-group to be able to appraise their situations and strategies of managing the conflict.

Political processes at various levels of the society in Anambra State have been heated up owing to informed criticisms arising from observed inequities in the distribution of values, along intra-ethnic lines (Nzimiro,2001;Ukah 2005).Lewis Coser amplified George Simmel's view on the functions of social conflict. He argued that in a loosely structured group, conflict may serve as a unifying agent. Illustrating this point, Ritzer (1976:64) noted that "the cohesion exhibited by Israel may in fact, be partly attributed to her continuing conflict with the Arab world. The disintegration of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) can be attributed to the end of the cold war".Coser (1976) avers that conflict has a communication function in society. It does this by clarifying positions and boundaries between groups in conflict. Through this process, groups know where they stand in relation to their adversary and become more informed to take a decisive action in the conflict situation.

While the informative function of conflict can be said to be true of Igbo society where settlement patterns, land dispute, caste-like social stratification, have been a source of communal dispute (Anozonwu and Obiajulu, 2000), it is doubtful if the presence of a common enemy can unify the Igbo people. The Igbo sabotaged their Biafra struggle. Unlike what Ali Mazrui (1998) observes that Africans have a short memory of hate, Igbo people, according to Anderson, quoted in Anigbo (1985:188), "hardly forgive their adversaries".

Conflict theory as seen from the above, lacks a unified theme and it can be said that the only thing that holds the theorists so classified is the concept of conflict. Conflict theory has been criticised for ignoring order and stability in society, for being less developed than functionalism, and for being radical (Ritzer, 1976).

Karl Marx (1818-1883), the most outstanding conflict theorist, noted that social conflict is an inseparable feature of every class society. Class, to him, is a position occupied by a group of people in a historically determined mode of production. Every class society operates according to three laws, namely: (a) the

law of transition from quantity to quality (b) the law of unity and conflict of opposites and (c) the law of negation of the negation (Boguslavsky et al., 1985).

Class rule, especially under capitalism, is characterised by use of state power according to bourgeoisie preferences and needs. Such needs particularly in Nigeria, is characterised by prebendalism (Joseph, 1991), political exclusion and identity politicisation (Gaye, 1999; Nzimiro, 2001; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005).

The logical pivot of Marxian theory of social conflict is aptly captured by the concept of economic determinism. The economic institution (also known as the infrastructure), determines how the political, educational, religious and other institutions (superstructure) operate. Gaye (1999), equates ethnic conflict in Nigeria with the national question, and also argues that, as material resources of Nigeria diminish, people compete for the few available ones. As the state fails to meet its basic obligations to the people, class fission ensues, sectional interests become pronounced in patterns of resource allocation. This, in Nigerian context, is called marginalisation.

Town unions exist to address problems of marginalisation. The Great Depression that occurred in the 1940s has been associated with the inability of colonial administrators to develop the colonies evenly (Nzimiro, 2001). The post colonial Nigerian state could not transcend the ancient regime because of the weak nature of the material base of the new state. It was dependent on the West (Okonjo, 1976, Igun, 2006).

### **2.8.6 Dependency theory**

In the 1960's, crisis of under-development in third World countries assumed conflictual and confrontational manifestations. That was the era of Cold War and violent resistance to racial policies endemic in colonial rule. It was the era of inter-ethnic conflict within the newly independent African states. Most of the conflicts arose out of the skewed distributive capacity of the state in infrastructural development of the newly independent nations (Achebe, 1970; 1980; Onimode 1981).

It was in reaction to the above that critical social scientists from Latin American countries advanced an alternative theoretical proposition to Third World countries developmental problems. Walter Rodney (1980) and Andre Gunder Frank (1967) observe that the assumptions of modernisation theory,

which is the thrust of development path of Third World countries is theoretically inadequate, policy-wise ineffective, and empirically invalid in alleviating the crisis of underdevelopment in the less developed countries. The core reasoning in dependency theory as advanced by the scholars so classified is that the analysis of world development has to be done holistically. The theory also claims that the world has a systemic relationship (Wallestein 1974) which when understood helps one to appreciate the material and cultural imbalance between them. In effect, the plight of Third World countries cannot be discussed outside the economic, political, technological, communication, military, social, cultural strings linking them with the developed countries (Okonjo, 1976). Third World countries maintain a relationship of dependency with the developed nations of the world. Dos Santos (1970:45) defined dependency as ‘a situation in which a certain group of countries have their economics, conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which their own is subjected’.

The dependency of Third World countries on the developed nations is attributed to their historical experiences like slave trade, imperialism (Onimode, 1981; Roxborough, 1983) which linked the social structures of both societies into one that is dominantly under capitalist influence.

Lenin, while extending Marx’s postulate in the Communist Manifesto, argued that it is naked selfish interest and quest for profit maximisation that compels the capitalists to be globe-trotting and gives cosmopolitan outlook to production, distribution and consumption of his goods in the process (Marx and Engels, 1968). Lenin identified the strategies through which this is done under imperialism to be “emergence and use of monopolistic practices, exportation of capital as opposed to commodities from the center to the periphery nations, partitioning of the world system amongst the imperialist powers” (Lenin cited in Roxborough, 1983; 56).

Nigeria is a dependent –capitalist state. Consequently, the country was structured to complement and enhance the ideals of foreign monopoly capital inherent in the dependency discourse. Okonjo (1976) analysed the structure of the dependency, which is at variance with even development.

In a dependent socio-economic situation, collectivities (nations, ethnic groups, town unions, individuals and so on) are split and related to each other in relations of both harmony and disharmony of interest.

- Dependency is also characterised by harmony of interests between the centre of centre nations and centre of the periphery nations.
- It has more disharmony of interests within the periphery than the centre nations.
- Under dependency, there is disharmony of interest in the centre and periphery of both center and periphery nations. For that reason, the centre grows more than the periphery in both nations.

Dependency, from the above, is a structural relationship that exists between the developed (centre) nations on the one hand and the less developed (periphery) nations on the other. It is both a vertical and an unequal relationship. The power of the centre is used to maintain the asymmetrical relationship as it affects less developed countries (LDCs).

Dependency relationship exists within the periphery nations when one critically evaluates sectoral dualism in the periphery nations. Unlike the dependency relationship between developed countries, which is characterised by interlocking of capital, through technological exchange (Mandel, 1980), dependency in the periphery nations exists because the national capital is acting as a metropolis to the regional areas. In Nigeria`s case, the character of the state is associated with the increasing wave of ethnic unrest in the country. It is a development which Marx and Engels (1968:9) foresaw in their communist manifesto:

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population, as compared with the rural and has thus, rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it had made barbarian and semi barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones.

Conceptually, development in Nigerian context is usually modelled Eurocentrically (Nnoli, 1980; Onimode, 1981). Acquisition of Western artifacts enhances one`s status symbol. It influences interpersonal social relationship, especially with regard to group formation. This is true whether one is concerned with political associates, business partners, aspiration to leadership positions or the possibility of being selected.

Cultural dependency is about creating the worldview of the periphery, after the image of the centre. It is a process euphemistically called civilisation or modernisation (Marx and Engels, 1968:9). Talking of abusing the Igbo language (Fanon, 1980), ethnic segregation and stratification in the cities (Nnoli, 1980; Nzimiro 2001), delivery of infrastructural facilities to the people using foreign experts (Onanuga, 1986:9), preference of foreign-made goods in the people's consumption habits (Ukoh, 1985), and reluctance to revive local technology (Black 1994:38) among others are all believed to be tributary to the poverty of integration of many Nigerians into the social structure today.

The cities are also believed to be the centres of transculturation. In them, the rural migrant is gradually being stripped of acquired tradition values, for, according to Louis Wirth, urbanism as a way of life is characterized by impersonality and transient and superficial social relationship. These arise because of the size of the aggregate population. The urban personality is averse to kinship demands (Wirth, 1938).

In criticising Wirth, Dike (1982) argues that urbanism in Africa is characterised by cultural resilience. Primordial cultural values are highly recreated in African urban areas. There is urban to rural interaction on regular basis. At the moment, conflicts within TUs validate the plausibility of Wirth's position. Louis Wirth's view appears to be true of many Igbo people in the cities especially the affluent, middle aged, and young ones. Many of these, factionalise family and village meetings, appropriate communal land without regrets, use police and even the military to intimidate their impoverished kinsmen, intimidate the elders with their well-washed exotic cars, incriminate blood relations who have served them, often for so many years, to avoid "settling" them, hijack town union affairs and use their external connections to collect facilities meant for their kinsmen. The rural areas are no longer safe. Many rural dwellers prefer the cities to the countryside at the moment because of the crisis. The above reinforces the features of the dependency syndrome stated above especially its tendency to split collectivities, hitherto considered culturally monolithic.

Socio-structural theorists believe the resolution of social conflict has to be made at socio-institutional level. Hence conflict within town unions is often handled by the state creating new structures like caretaker committees and

judicial panels of inquiry. Very often, this is done after efforts of the state to suppress the conflict have failed (Albert, 2003).

### **2.8.7 Social definitionist approach**

Social definition process is about the meaning man gives to cultural forms around him. The cultural forms can be both material and non-material in character. It is the meaning man associates with such cultural forms that influence his patterns and processes of role performance (Ritzer, 2008).

The way the out-group is defined and related to in a plural society can be influenced by variables like stereotypes, prejudice, mythic-thinking, feeling of relative deprivation, envisaged risk factors in confronting the out-group as well as the expected gains in doing so. In explaining ethnic hostilities from this perspective, Clayman, (2001:6) asserts that ethno-nationalism, (claims to national identity) goes “beyond the construction of identities to the reproduction of enmity, demand that members place the nation ahead of other loyalties, and attempt to purge territories of those defined as foreigners”.

One of its exemplars, ethno-methodology, assumes that people, in context, make sense of their social world, act in relation to the same and, in the process, contribute to the production and maintenance of an intelligible social world. Thus, pattern and setting of language usage can be a source of conflict. Ethnocentric uttering has been associated with social conflict (Ibeanu, 2003; Nwosu, 2009). Nwosu (2009) shows how the *osu* institution in *Ifakala* influenced the disintegration of their town union. The union was unable to finish infrastructural projects it was constructing, because those defined as *osu* refused to contribute.

Symbolic interaction (Ritzer, 2008) is another exemplar of social definitions paradigm. According to Ritzer (2008), meaning and the symbols they are associated with can be modified according to man’s pattern of defining the situation he finds himself. The Igbo society is very high- achievement -oriented. As Achebe (2002:6) puts it “Among these people, age is respected but achievement is revered”. One of the ways of validating and recreating this mindset or world view, is through answering praise names. Oha (2009:3) claims that:

Praise names are very important means through which individuals in the Igbo society generally articulate and express their ideologies, boast about their abilities and accomplishments as well as criticize and subvert the visions of the other.

Those who lack praise names are generally looked down upon, and in most cases, seen as bereft of philosophy of life and their place in it. Such names form part of the social milieu that characterizes town union meetings. The names possess structure of meanings which often can be at variance with the Igbo world view. Onyensoh (2001: vi), in condemning Igbo leaders, elders and youths, notes how answering praise names like “okwu oto ekene eze”(the one that greets a king while standing), “ntu malu enyi”( the nail that pierced an elephant) and “aka malu efi ula” (the hand that slapped a cow) ,can be at variance with Igbo world view. He associates such senseless world view with leadership problem facing the Igbo at the moment. The leadership problem of the Igbo takes precedence over their other numerous problems because “without responsible leadership, little or nothing can be achieved as a group” (Onyensoh, 2001: vi).

Resolving social conflict from this approach entails use of dialogue, mediation, humour and such patterns of interaction that make parties to a dispute shift their positions make concessions for the sake of common good.

## **2.9 Empirical review**

Quoting Kimbal Young, Nzimiro (2001), observes that it is the feelings of prejudice and stereotype which underlie in-group versus out-group relationship or “we” against “them” syndrome characteristic of every intra-and inter-ethnic conflict in human societies. Udegbe (1997:3-4) illustrates the concepts further with respect to gender relations:

People subscribe to traditional stereotypes that characterise women as submissive, illogical, passive, talkative, emotional, easily moved to tears, etc. Men on the other hand are assumed to be competent, active, logical, independent etc. These stereotypes tend to reflect men and women as belonging to opposite ends of bipolar adjectives in which men have desirable qualities while women have undesirable ones. Such, category- based thinking tends to exaggerate similarities within women thereby minimizing their individuality and



also exaggerates differences between men and women. They also tend to ignore situational, individual and cultural variations in the behavior of people.

Among the Igbo, the feeling is associated with settlement patterns which, although occurred many centuries ago, had brought people of different lineages together. Thus, when a town is mentioned, it is erroneous to assume that they all descended from a single lineage. Quoting Ardennes's study of Mbaise-Igbo community, Nzimiro (2001:11) notes that the four communities comprising the town namely Inyogugu, Ahiara, Obima and Nguru "have little in common". They vary in size, pattern of relationship with one another as a group; there is internal differentiation and functions within the community. Myths of origin exist to rationalise observed socio-structural differences between them. The corporate principle prevails within the entire social structure. However, the degree of cooperations, defines the level of identity they have to a founding ancestor. It is a development that prevails in most Igbo communities. The maximal lineages to which other lineages are associated, tend to influence the identity definition of subordinate lineages.

Nzimiro (2001:12) also notes that "It is increase in human population, migration and formation of settlements which led to emergence of clan organisations" among the Igbo. While Lloyd (1974) observes that the Yoruba tend to have dense clustering in their urban settlements while the, Igbo people tend to spread out in their settlement pattern. This affects the corporate unity of the Ibo clans. As descendants of a founding ancestor break up, activities that hold them together become "gradually phased out" (Nzimiro, 2001: 13). Onwuejiogwu (2001) studied fifty settlement patterns among the Igbo and came up with three main categories each with subdivisions:

- (a) Villages – subdivided into simple, compound and complex types
- (b) Village towns – subdivided into amalgamated, federated and confederated.
- (c) Urban towns – subdivided into tradition, dual and hybrid.

In his 1012th "igu-aro Ndi – Igbo" festival held on February 19, 2011, the ruler of Nri kingdom, one of the communities studied in this work, claimed that people from his community, had dispersed, migrated and settled in 150



towns located in the present Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, and Delta States. He identified 11 countries in Latin America where their kinsmen had migrated to and settled in (Onyensoh, 2011). It is a development that is not peculiar to the Igbo. According to Osaghae and Suberu (2005:15), "Pre-colonial migratory patterns were perhaps more important than pre-colonial conquests and control in shaping the contemporary contours of identities and identity conflicts in Nigeria". They noted that it is the 19<sup>th</sup> Century migration of Modakeke *people* into Ife in search of safe haven, consequent on the internecine wars of Oyo Empire, which led to the settlement pattern and social conflict associated with Ife -Modakeke traditional social conflict.

Again, the movement of Urhobo and Ijaw *people* into Warri where the *Itsekiri* claim to be original settlers is associated with the social conflict occurring there especially on issues associated with resource allocation, decentralisation and devolution of power. The Zango-Kataf communal conflict is not different, as they associated it with the migratory movement of Hausa settlements in Zango into Kataf (Isumonah, 2003). Dike (1985), shows how the Awka people migrated to, settled, inter-married and remained in communities like Nsukka, Ehamufu, Idoma, Igala and many communities now put under Delta State.

During this pre-colonial and colonial social formations, the idea of Igbo identity did not evolve as it is now (Nzimiro, 2001). Town unions, however, existed as supreme body of Igbo village assemblies. It existed as an avenue of defining, recreating, validating myths of origin, rationalising settlement patterns with its attendant consequences in the allocation of values, especially land on which many depended for survival, political power and spheres of influence (Afigbo, 1972). The town unions were not democratic, as ascription, gender, and age defined and determined manner of its member's participation.

Colonial conquest and amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates witnessed more migration. Nnoli (2008) attributes this to the monetisation of the economy. It is a development that disoriented the colonised from their primordial economic orientations and reoriented them into complying with the demands of colonial economy.

The city, which has become a reflection of the character of colonial capitalist economy in material space (Sassen, 2000) became much sought for. As Osaghae and Suberu (2005) aver:

Cities like Kano, Kaduna, Zaria, Jos witnessed influx of Igbo migrants. The strangers were 'quarantined' in the Sabongaris or strangers' quarters. Similar creation was made at Ibadan to accommodate Northern migrants.

This development is not peculiar to Nigeria. Indeed, Appiagyei-Atua (n.d:7), observed the same development with regard to rural-urban migrants in Ghana during the colonial era. It is "the harshness, the uncertainties, and individualism associated with town and city life, the fear of losing one's identity and background and most importantly, of the rights they enjoyed under traditional rule that led to the formation of tribal lineage affiliations". It is because the social integration of these migrants was not total, that Coleman (1958:8) calls colonial cities "aggregations of tribal unions".

Basden (1938) asserts that, as urban dwellers, educated Igbo people imitated Western culture senselessly. This made many Nigerians see the Igbo as the most determined to present an outward image of being Westernised. It is when the educated Igbo discovered the limits of their being accepted by the British that they renewed their quest for their traditional associational life. In effect, the town unions emerged as an adaptive mechanism to the limits and challenges of urban living.

As voluntary associations most of them possess attributes of associational structures which Parsons (1971:24) view as "the societal collectivity itself, considered as a corporate body of citizens holding primarily consensual relations to its normative order and to the authority of its leadership". Primordial feelings associated with the emergence and persistence of the town unions was one factor in understanding the social conflict the urban migrants faced with the original settlers in their host communities. Nzimiro (2001:58) shows how in Onitsha the conflict manifested:

In 1954, a new Local Government structure was evolved in the Eastern Region and this affected Onitsha. Thus the Onitsha Town Native Authority became replaced by Onitsha Urban District Council

in 1955. Unlike the old body in which Obi (King) of Onitsha and the colonial authority ruled, the in-land town (populated by Onitsha indigenes) and the waterside (populated by non-Onitsha Igbo migrants) respectively, the new council made the Obi and six chiefs permanent members of the council, allowed seven other members representing Onitsha to be elected after every six months. It is the struggle for those who will fill the elective posts that precipitated the conflict between Onitsha indigenes and the non – indigenes. Today, Onitsha indigenes still refer to non-indigene Igbos as “Nwonyibo”, a derogatory term that connotes rustic behaviour.

The efforts of non-indigene Igbo residents to enhance their level of participation in the new administrative framework were resisted. It is very surprising, that when Dr. Azikiwe, a native of Onitsha, was requested to help the two factions resolve the conflict, he left the town clandestinely for Lagos before the day the two factions agreed to meet with him (Nzimiro, 2001). It is an action that is at variance with his view about the Igbo man as expressed in his autobiography. “The Ibo man and woman from *Okigwi* are not essentially different in their race, language and culture from the Ibo man and woman from Ibuzo, Aboh, Onitsha, Oguta, Owerri, Arochukwu, Nsukka, Bende and Udi” (Azikiwe, 1999:225).

It is this attitude of non-cooperation, leadership struggle, suspicion and mistrust which characterised interaction dynamics between indigenes and non-indigene urban residents on the one hand and between the two and the colonial masters on the other. Coleman (1971) notes that rural-urban migrants tended to seek company of those who came from the same area. In doing so, they developed stereotypes about other people as well as about themselves. They started to organise and associate along town unions. Urban migrants tend to place their loyalty towards the development of their homelands. This is because of the importance of the homeland to them, namely: the only place they can call their own and their final resting place.

The migrants were accused of paying taxes not in the cities or in their host communities, but in their homelands. It is a role that presented town union members as parasitic on urban ecology and development. It is a role that earned

the Ibo migrants sobriquets. Many Yoruba called the Igbo people “*ajenyan*” (cannibal) (Amadi, 1967); primitive and dirty people who at a temperature of 40 degrees centigrade will not mind dressing in a suit made of wool and riding bicycle going for town union meeting (Amadi, 1967). Other Nigerians viewed with suspicion the frequency with which meetings of Igbo town unions were held. Common Nigerian stereotypes claim that the Igbo were arrogant, obstinate, ambitious, domineering, money-minded, and deceitful and tend to value material wealth above all things (Albert, 1994).

According to Dahrendorf (1959), social conflict brings into play distribution, modification and maintenance of authority within human organisations. Wierviorka (2010) is of the view that beyond belonging to an organisation, beyond their interests, individuals and groups can be defined by their struggle for control, for the command of accumulation, for the direction of production, for the definition of cultural and cognitive models. Many recognise themselves in counter – projects.

The efforts of town union members to redefine their social existence as urban dwellers in the cultural meaning which their homelands as opposed to the city makes to them explains the various efforts they direct towards the development of their homelands. It is an action that is at variance with the demands of inclusive government of the cities.

### **2.9.1 Leadership issues in TU administration**

In community development, leadership is expected to help a people identify their needs, organise themselves, mobilise resources and address common problems through collective action. The issue of leadership within town unions is not unconnected with the character and quality of leadership in other aspects of the social system (Udechukwu, 2003).

The pre-colonial Igbo society was structured and administered according to myths and social institutional values sustaining the same. Before and during the Civil War, the leadership of Igbo society was described as: selfless, dedicated, visionary, committed, inspiring and people- oriented. The leaders were appointed by the people. They were also responsible to the people. If they were found wanting, they were replaced with more efficient and reliable leaders.

This, however, does not mean that egalitarian principles pervaded leadership selection process. In his study of Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in Anambra State, Ibeanu (2003) observed that the *Eri* myth of origin was a source of conflict between the people of Umuleri and Aguleri because of different interpretations given by each of the communities to the myth in question. Myth can prevent the development of a positive feeling among members of different ethnic groups living together whenever it leads to: a feeling of status inequality between the groups, when the groups hardly co-operate, when the contact position between the groups lack institutional support, when the groups hardly pursue compatible goals and when the possibility of a healthy friendship developing between the groups is highly diminished (Owolabi, 2003). It is according to the myth of origin that Onitsha people frown at being called Igbo. “For the average Onitsha person, their ethnic identity is Ado. In Onitsha, to be Igbo is to be poor, rustic and uncivil, it is to be a tuber rather than a fish eater” (Ibeanu and Onu, 2001:1).

It is the sociological outcome of the mythic thinking that is relevant in this study. As a mindset, which rationalises observed social structure, myth influence social action where it has rationalised superordinate and subordinate relationship; it breeds prejudiced and stereotypic relationship. These concepts hardly encourage even development, since they are change-resistant. They create a feeling of helplessness and frustrating social experience. These are conflict – precipitating (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2004).

Most communities in Anambra State have their myths of origin just like most ethnic groups in Nigeria have theirs. Ibeanu and Onu (2001) found that many communities in south-eastern states of Nigeria distrust governments’ ability to manage their conflict objectively. This is because government’s roles through their agents are always seen as negatively biased. Often, very influential people within warring communities use their social connection either directly as government officials or indirectly through their significant others to influence the interventionist role of the state during communal conflict. For example, Ibeanu (2003: 198) notes that during Aguleri –Umuleri conflict:

The chairman of Anambra Local Government caretaker committee, Chief Mike Edozie (an Aguleri man) used his position to arm Aguleri and ensure that the Divisional Police Command did

nothing to stop the attacks against Umuleri people. It is actions like this that makes many to avoid and distrust the police and other arms of the criminal justice system.

In his study of the same Aguleri-Umuleri communal conflict, Onwuzuruigbo (2009) implicated Aguleri Representative Council (ARC) for fuelling the conflict by “ignoring an order from the Anambra State Boundary commission to Aguleri to stop development projects including the construction of markets, and motor parks in Agu-Akor (ARC). If Aguleri had heeded the order of the commission, it would have avoided both the 1995 and 1999 rounds of destruction in the communities”. The TU was very catalytic in prosecuting the war on both sides of the divide. According to Onwuzuruigbo, members of ARC were taxed to finance the war, while in Umuleri, even those whose wealth was questionable saw the war as an opportunity to gain acceptance from their people by making donations towards funding the war. Those adversely affected by the war benefitted in this way. Those doing the actual fighting were sustained in this way. Logistics of waging the war was upheld by these contributions from members of TUs.

Onwuzuruigbo’s analysis of the role of the women wing of the TUs of both communities is very remarkable:

Like their men counterparts, women associations made financial and material contributions towards promoting the conflicts. The association of all married women in Umuleri, referred to as Oluokala, and Aguleri Women Development Association (AWDA), donated and contributed money to buy foodstuff for the combatants of their respective communities. The women were responsible for preparing and distributing food and water to the combatants. Although these activities may be conceived as reducing the effects of the war, they actually fuelled the war by strengthening the combatants. As the war progressed, few young and courageous women were used to transport and deliver arms into the communities (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

The above implies that the prevalence of myth of origin can be a source of social mobilisation during conflict situations. Today, in most Igbo communities,

there exists two dominant institutions for governance: the traditional Rulers and the town unions. Both are backed by enabling laws.

Nwosu (2009:3) opines that the relationship between the traditional rulers and the town unions is one of conflict in most parts of Igbo land.

There is conflict over the relationship between the town union (or its president) and the *Eze* (or traditional ruler). There is conflict over the accession and succession to the *Eze* stool which has tended to destabilize the town union. There is also conflict over the *Eze's* area of jurisdiction and the town union's area of jurisdiction. The gravity of the situation is perhaps evidenced by the numerous litigations on these matters pending in the law courts all over Igbo land.

Okonkwo (2007) attributes the conflict situations within TUs to corrupt leadership style within some of them. Illustrating how this prevails in *Ikenga* Community of Anambra State, Okafor(2010) notes that, in the town, the President –General of the TU and his secretary accused the monarch of conniving with contractors handling a water project in their town to change their remit to market renovation even as no contract was executed and the funds were diverted. The monarch was said to have confirmed the completion of a non-existing project. Consequently, they demanded for the withdrawal of his certificate of recognition by Anambra State Government.

In the opinion of Chikwendu (1992), part of the conflict which town unions face is that their activities are often shrouded in secrecy. Because of in-group feeling between its members, what they do tends to be invisible to the out-group who, in return, views its members with suspicion. They attributed this culture of secrecy to the fact that members of town union use local knowledge in handling emerging social realities before them, especially social conflict and public opinion. This reactionary role of town unions can affect the role processes of some of their members. In Achebe's' *No longer at ease* for example, Obi Okonkwo stops attending the meeting of Umuofia Improvement Union, not minding that he has benefited from their scholarship scheme. He feels the union is delving into his private life as a city dweller.

Adesoji (2008), while endorsing the transformatory role of town unions as agents of rural development, also asserts that this role has its dysfunctions. One



of this is that it often leads to silent competition among its members who are often, in quest of social relevance and approval. Town Union meetings and fund-raising ceremonies have come to be associated with members displaying their wealth, for them to be appreciated, respected, admired and supported by members of their in-group.

Even between two communities, an unresolved social conflict can affect what members of their town unions do. Thus, issues like land ownership, fishing rights can generate “bad blood” between communities and their town unions (Okolocha, 2002). Modakeke Progressive Union was formed by the youths, the educated class and the wealthy class, to address their development problems, the most outstanding of which is, their hostile relationship with *Ife* community.

Chikwendu (1992) and Onuorah (2011) aver that relationship within voluntary associations among the Igbo is one of domination. This prevails when its leaders control its rank and file and secondly when the association relates to the out-group. Unfortunately, the Igbo society is not easily amenable to such domination because of a prevailing culture of egalitarianism among its members.

Anazonwu and Obiajulu (2001) found that most adult members of the Igbo society will support a leader that is innovative, altruistic, honest, clean and intelligent. This finding negates the view that preference for money dominates the Igbo man’s political values. Scott (2006) contends that through democratic type of leadership, members of voluntary associations can be effectively mobilised to see problem-solving as their purpose. He also notes that self-seeking type of leadership can make voluntary associations to die.

Zimmerman and Rappoport (1988), quoted in Scott (2006), are of the view that purposeful leadership can make members of a voluntary association to participate in the achievement of well set-out goals. This happens because such type of leadership instils in its members lower feelings of helplessness. Perkin (1990), also quoted in Scott (2006), argues that participation at the group level is related to social cohesion, community satisfaction and some physical environmental variables, but definitely not to roles associated with social deviance.

In Igbo land today, many people believe that neither the leadership of TUs nor that of Traditional Rulers is about service to the people (Onyensoh, 2001; Ukah, 2005; Nwosu, 2009; Onyegbulu, 2011). Achebe (1983:48) mocks the



traditional rulers in Igbo land as “traders in their stalls by day and monarchs by night; city dwellers five days a week and traditional village rulers on Saturdays and Sundays.” The leaders see themselves on the average as overlords, who have assumed control of common resources and who ‘donate’ to the masses, what they can spare. In activities of town unions, struggle for leadership often tends to be a ‘do or die’ affair. The leaders tend to think locally and act globally.

In the same vein, leadership of the state has been associated with TU conflict. In communities believed to be political opponents of an incumbent governor, the state has been accused of infiltrating and destabilising not only their traditional institutions, but also the TUs. The state does this by virtue of its being the most dominant authority in any society. It has the monopoly of force with which it can exert its will even when the will is at variance with that of the governed. The state is able to manipulate the local institutions at will because the existing traditional constraints on doing so are weak. Often those who know nothing about customs and tradition ascend leadership roles of their communities. This has led to “a situation where some *Ezes* seek to encroach in to town union’s area of jurisdiction. Some seek to dissolve the town unions thereby instigating conflicts” (Adegbulu, 2011:21).

It is the way the Nigerian police have been used at different times to advance unpleasant policies of the state that makes many to detest coming in contact with the police (Beckman, 1985; Albert, 2003; Ukah, 2005). The state also regulates the social milieu in which activities of voluntary associations are conducted. It is a role it performs by certifying who becomes the traditional ruler of a community as well as supervising TU elections.

### **2.9.2 Determinants of peoples’ participation in TU affairs**

Parsons theorised that human action is goal oriented and involves making of choices in the midst of alternatives (voluntarism). The way it is exhibited and the social milieu of its exhibition affect the structural harmony of the society (Giddens, 1977; Skidmore, 1979). Hechter, quoted in Ritzer (2008), opines that not only does an individuals’ action impact on the social structure, the social action as exhibited impacts on the individual. Thus, as a social being, one is capable of evaluating how one’s role processes affect a desired motive. The choice one makes is rational to one. The making of rational choice, according to

Hether, is a function of variables, like value preferences in the midst of competing needs, opportunity cost of an intended choice, social prescriptions and proscriptions associated with an intended choice and available information facing the actor etc. It is the choice made that influences the role an actor performs.

In the process of consolidating state power, government can prescribe conditions for voluntary associations to operate. Such associations can be proscribed. According to Hackman, (2002:2) “When German troops reached Estonia in February, 1918, they occupied all the Baltic states of Russia as well as the Lithuanian region, the German troops under Ober Ost, ordered in May 1918, that all voluntary associations must be re-registered and apply for permission to convene”. Out of the 270 voluntary associations that complied, 8 were proscribed for political reasons. Hackman (2002) adds that when the Soviets annexed the Baltic States and modelled them into Soviet Republic, the lists of existing voluntary associations was compiled by the occupying authorities. Total dissolution of the associations was almost effected. The restraint prevailed in the Soviet Union throughout the socialist era (Hackman, 2002). Similar development was reported in Finland (Sisiainen, 2009), in Nigeria in 1966 (Ogunna, 1992; Honey and Okafor, 1998; Nnoli, 2008).

In such situations it becomes a deviant act participating in a proscribed voluntary association. Kaldi (2010) asserts that members of an association tend to participate in what is rational to them. This is usually the norm, when they are well-informed about issues of common interest and when they have confidence in how their common affairs are run. They can even volunteer their services and resources for common good.

In summary, one can see that conflict is an inseparable aspect of human life. People in conflict tend to react to issues in conflict according to prevailing psychological and social reasons. In a typical TU social milieu, members are faced with a duality (the traditional and the modern). The state is not able to create the enabling environment for members of TUs to part ways with their primordial cultural concerns. Conflict prevails out of value incongruence and roles supporting the same.

## 2.10 Theoretical framework

This work is anchored to the Marxian variant of structural conflict theory as it relates to the character of the state and the relative deprivation theory of social conflict as propounded by Gurr (1970). It is the conflict associated with the colonial and post-colonial patterns of using state power which necessitated the emergence of town unions as development partners of the state. The structure of the Nigerian state is such that production process is poorly integrated. Consequently, social relationship within the state is weak because primordial feelings, sentiments and attachments define interpersonal relationships. Ethnic voluntary associations became an institutionalised avenue of establishing, recreating and defending this mindset. It influenced the political process when political parties used them as channels of political mobilisation against the out-group. Emerging conflict from this social development could not be seriously investigated by the state because the theory of modernisation that is the thrust of her development process was very deficient in making such an investigation (Igun, 2006). Being Western-initiated and Western-oriented, modernisation theory believed in one-size –fits-all approach to development.

Unfortunately, the conflict of interests defining the economic and social relationship between developed nations (championing the modernisation of Nigeria) and Nigeria as a nation state influenced patterns of public service delivery in matters of state policy and direction (Rostow, 1960; Roxborough, 1983; Sievers, 1998). The prevailing methods of resource allocation, in the country were not based on demands of even development and collective well-being (Nnoli, 2008). Although town unions rationalise their emergence and role processes on advancing their common ancestry, structural conflict surrounds how the unions go about their business. Igbo society is traditionally structured around caste system (Imogene, 1993; Nwosu, 2009). Modernisation has not wiped out this (Achebe, 1960; Anazonwu and Obiajulu, 2001). Component villages comprising town unions often experience social conflicts arising from prejudice, stereotypes and horizontal inequality, These are usually rationalised with myths of origin (Nzimiro, 2001), settlement patterns (Okonkwo, 2007; Okafor, 2010), competition for scarce resources (Ibeanu and Onu, 2001; Ibeanu, 2003), caste membership (Onwuegbusi, 2011) and so on. The state has not been able to resolve most of these conflicts because her theoretical thrust of development

(modernisation) ignores such conflicts and or adopts a superficial approach to their resolution. Fashehun (2003:105) notes that:

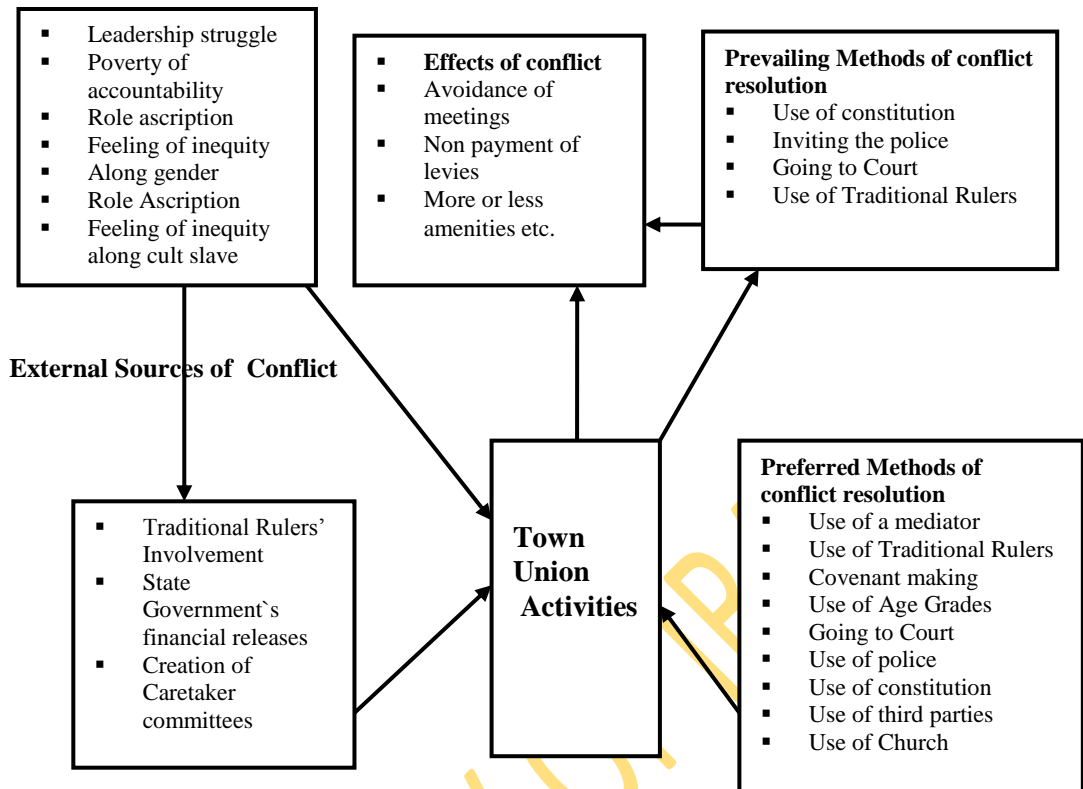
The gloom in which the country is enveloped today did not manifest suddenly like an eclipse of the sun. It is a socio political cancer, which while intermittently manifesting itself, took a long incubation. And now very malignant, is ravaging the Nigerian body politic in a manner which defies normal therapy. It is a disease of governance and its cause is structure of power in the federal republic.

Having ignored local realities generating social conflicts within town unions, the state has gone ahead to elevate the relevance of the unions in public service delivery. As a clearing house for public service office seekers, contestants approach the town unions with divergent needs, value preferences, and expectations. Periodic interventionist role of the state in community development often becomes infested by the horizontal inequality already existing in the local social structure. The relatively deprived can be conflict-prone (Gurr, 1970), in most cases out of a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2004). Many can decide to avoid active participation in town union affairs (Nwosu, 2009; Okafor, 2010).

This study is investigated internal and external sources of conflicts within town unions. Most importantly, it is concerned with how members of town unions define the environment of conflict affecting how the unions are administered and how the environment of conflict affects activities of the town unions especially in the area of infrastructural development. It examined how conflicts within the unions are handled.

## 2.11 Conceptual Framework

### Internal Sources of Conflict



From the conceptual framework above, it can be seen that the internal sources of conflict, namely leadership struggle, poverty of accountability, role ascription and feeling of inequity are assumed to be affecting the way town union activities are conducted. This assumption is premised on the endemic contradictions that characterise social formation which town unions stand for. The body may present itself as a harmonious entity, but settlement patterns myths of origin are variables associated with horizontal inequality and feeling of relative deprivation prevailing in the TUs.

Since town union activities are part of the social milieu facing both the traditional institutions and the state governments, what they do, is assumed to be of interest to both the traditional rulers and the state government. Hence this study assumes also that traditional ruler's interference, state government's role in enhancing operational activities of town union, can be a source of conflict. This assumption stems from the character of the state from the Marxian theoretical path that is a mere committee for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels, 1968).

Both the internal and external sources of conflict are seen in this study as the social milieu influencing how town union affairs are defined and handled. As a structured organisation, if it is meeting its set -out goals, its laws and conduct norms should be effective in constraining its members from acting out their freewill which is at variance with the prescriptions of the TUs. The problem of this study suggests that this is not true. Hence, this study investigated the prevailing methods of conflict resolution within the town unions. In doing so, the assumption is that the methods will vary according to the types of conflict being resolved.

In interrogating preferred methods of conflict resolution, the study assumes that if the variables associated with this are identified, an enhanced social participation of its' members will be achieved. This finding will enable one to appreciate how members of a tradition-oriented social organization like TU have adapted to the demands, challenges and dialectics of a 'modernising society.'

#### **2.12 Assumptions of the study**

In the light of the above, the following assumptions were made in this study.

1. Internal variables like leadership struggle, poverty 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.
2. External variables like traditional rulers' interference in town union affairs, state government's financial allocation and creation of caretaker committee will be perceived by town union members as sources of conflict in town union affairs.
3. Negative effects, such as lack of: amenities, factionalisation, and lack of contribution to project development, etc will be implicated as products of town union conflicts.
4. Methods used in resolving town union conflicts since 2000 will differ according to the nature of the conflict.
5. Indigenous methods of resolving social conflicts (for example use of elders, covenant making, age grades) will be preferred over foreign methods (for example, use of law courts, police, church) by members of town unions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Anambra State the Study Setting



**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. Its population density is put at 1, 500-200 persons per sq km. (ANSG, 2008). The state`s slogan is light of the nation. Her official website is [anambrastate.gov.ng](http://anambrastate.gov.ng). 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.

Anambra State has produced many outstanding Nigerians. These include: the first indigenous Governor-General of Nigeria, late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe; first President of Senate, late A. A. Nwafor Orizu; first Vice-President during the second republic Dr. A. I. Ekwueme and late Dr. Chuba Okadigbo. With this impressive profile, one would have expected the state to be living up to her slogan 'Light of the Nation'. Unfortunately, this is yet to be.

According to Ibeanu and Onu (2001), sixty- eight percent of communal conflicts identified in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, occurred in Anambra State. The dominant occupation of most residents of her cities is trading. Nnewi, one of the industrial towns of the state, is called `Japan of Africa`. Onitsha Main Market is described as the biggest in West African sub-region. There is no reliable police statistics on crime occurring in the state. However, violent crime is a recurring decimal in the state.

About 626 vigilante outfits are registered by the state government to help in curbing criminal activities in the 177 communities. The proscribed Anambra State Vigilante Service (a.k.a Bakkassi) was a big embarrassment to modern civilization when it used extra judicial killing to fight suspected criminals in the state. Males dropping out from primary and secondary schools remain a problem in Anambra State.

The quality of governance of the state has not been wonderful. One of the civilian governors, Dr. C. Mbadinuju (1999-2003), introduced the notorious *Bakkassi* Boys. He is a lawyer by profession. Dr. C. N. Ngige was kidnapped as a serving governor, for renegeing on agreements reached with his political godfather. It was a development that led to the destruction of public property and the reign of anarchy in the state (Ukah, 2005). While Mbadinuju, allowed public schools in Anambra State to be closed for about one year, ignoring striking



teachers, another governor, Mr. Peter Obi, allowed public health institutions to be shut down for over one year, in response to doctors' strike.

The above and more, indicate the nature of leadership problem facing the state. This is compounded by persisting corrupt practices of public office holders. The problem filters down to the grassroots. 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. Efforts to get the population of the community from National Population Census in Awka did not yield a positive outcome. 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. The community was selected because of its relative peace, a kind of research control group when compared to the other two communities.

### 3.2 Study design

Table 1 below, was got 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.

**Table 1: Communities with caretaker committees and their Local Government Areas (LGAs)**

Community	LGA
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 factionalised town unions, as got from the same ministry is shown.

**Table 2: Communities with factionalized Town Unions and their Local Governments Areas**

<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 used for the study. This method has been seen as very useful in designing and conducting studies that capture the demographic characteristics of a population under study (Burn, 2006); generate theory and a wide understanding of social processes or social action (Arber, 2001) and achieve active selection of people with competence in narrative production that serves to illuminate social contexts, interdependency and construction of reality (Holstein and Gaborim, 1995).

### **3.3 Scope of the study**

This study is limited to investigating sources, effects, prevailing and preferred methods of conflict resolution in the town unions of Nri, Isi-Agu, and Amansea communities of Anambra State, Nigeria. The study covered the period 2000 to 2011. The period marked post-military era in Nigerian politics. According to Ritzer (1978) conflict can be a unifying factor in a loosely integrated social group. End of military rule in Nigeria was characterized by both inter and intra ethnic conflict in Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2003; Okafor, 2010).

### **3.4 Study population**

Study participants in this research were the following

1. Members of town unions, whose membership had lasted for at least two years. These were people assumed to have witnessed at least two annual general meetings of their town union. For conflict affected towns, it is believed that such people must have got some information on substantive issues of interest investigated in this research work.
2. Perceived victims of insults during town union meetings were also included. This was to enable us to appreciate the precipitating factors to the conflict situations being investigated.
3. Data were also collected from ward leaders and officials. These were administrative heads of town unions at the lineage levels. They were the channels of communication between town union executives and community members.
4. Members of the community vigilante service. These were members of the organizational outfit used by town union executives to implement decisions reached. They personify authority of town union executives and can often bear the brunt of unpopular decisions reached by town union executives. They are often rewarded through the contributions of community members as well as periodic financial releases by the state government.
5. Officials of the State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters. The ministry oversees the activities of town unions in the state. Town union elections are supervised by the body. The ministry can nullify elections held. Its officials are, therefore, important stakeholders on how town union activities are conducted in the state.
6. Traditional rulers' representatives or cabinet members. Traditional rulers are entrusted with the preservation of cultural values of their respective communities. In doing this, conflict often arises between them and members of town union executive (Nwosu, 2009, Okafor 2010). Their views enabled this study to capture the conflict profile of selected communities from a holistic perspective.

### 3.5 Sampling process

From each town, ten wards were selected using the simple random method. This is justified by the fact that in relating to the 177 communities by the government of Anambra State differences in their population is ignored. The communities are regarded as equal actors. Even in the allocation of finance to the communities, they receive equal amounts from the same government, their observed differences notwithstanding.

From each ward, 25 households were selected as follows: homes owned by town union members who were rural residents (15), homes owned by town union members who were urban residents (10). This was done to ensure that rural residents who were believed to be more in number than urban residents receive more representation in the study. In this way, we had 750 study participants. This is got as follows (25 residents x 10 wards x 3 communities for the study).

In households that met our inclusion criteria, the questionnaire was given to its head. The sample frames of such households were drawn using list of lineage/ward members as held by the ward leaders. Where a selected household leader was unable to assist the research team, a replacement was made through drawing another item from the sample frame to replace that household.

Whereas the probability sampling method was adopted in selecting participants who were given the tool for collecting quantitative data, the non-probability sampling method was used in selecting participants for qualitative data. In this regard, convenience of availability of participants guided the selection of those who were given the qualitative tool. These were: (a) perceived victims of insult and assault during town union meetings (2 persons from each of the 3 communities = 6 persons); (b) ward leaders/officials (5 from each of the 3 communities = 15 persons); (c) members of vigilante service (2 from each of the 3 communities = 6 persons); (d) State government officials = 2 persons; and (e) traditional rulers representatives (2 from each of the 3 communities = 6 persons). These were purposively selected. Participants were then given the in-depth Interview (IDI) and Key Informants Interview (KII). In other words, three instruments were used for data collection: the questionnaire for quantitative data, the in-depth interview guide and the Key Informant Interview guide for qualitative data. Table 3 below is a summary of how the research instruments were administered on the study participants.

**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 2	Nri 2	Amansea 2		Total 6
	-Members of vigilante services	2	2	2		6
						<b>12</b>
KII	-Ward Leaders	5	5	5		15
	-traditional Rulers Representatives	2	2	2		6
	Government officials					2
	<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>23</b>

### 3.6 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.

### 3.7 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.

### **3.8 Validation of the instruments**

The questionnaire had seven thematic areas. The first was on getting the consent of the participants. The second section was used to get data on demographic characteristics of the study participants. In section three, numbers 13-22 contained questions eliciting data on internal sources of conflicts within town unions. This was followed by section four which contained questions 23-28. Data got from this section were used to analyse external sources of conflicts in town unions. Questions 29-39 were used to derive data on effects of conflict on infrastructural development. To get data on prevailing methods of conflict resolutions within town unions, questions 40-47 were asked. Finally questions 49-59 were used to collect data on preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of town union.

The questionnaire and the in-depth interview guide were produced and given to six senior lecturers in Faculty of the Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, *Awka*. They were requested to evaluate whether the questions in the instruments captured the specific aims of the study. A hundred percent response in the affirmative was got from the lecturers' response.

The tools for qualitative data (Appendices 2 and 3) were also arranged to ensure the consent of the participants were got. The body of the Key Informant Interview Guide (Appendix 2) was also arranged according to our specific study aims. Questions 1 to 10 were intended to get qualitative data from government officials on the rationale and modus operandi of the caretaker committees. Questions 12-16, were directed at ward leaders, and traditional rulers' representatives on internal and external sources of conflict, its effects, prevailing and preferred methods of conflict resolution within the organizations.

In-Depth Interview Guide (Appendix 3) was used to collect data from perceived victims of insult during TU meetings and members of vigilante groups. Items 1-10 were used to collect qualitative data on internal and external sources of conflicts facing the TUs. Item 15 was used to collect data on the effects of TU conflicts on infrastructural development of the communities. Whereas items 12-14 were used to collect data on the prevailing methods of conflict resolution, item 16 was used to collect on preferred methods of conflict resolution.

### **3.9 Processes of data collection**

Nine research assistants (6 males and 3 females) were recruited, trained and used for data collection, cleaning and coding. Their training lasted for one week. Each community being studied had her indigene included in the research team.

Before the actual fieldwork, six preliminary visits were made by the principal investigator to the communities' was accompanied by a member of the research team from the community being visited. In this way we gained entry in Nri Kingdom and Amansea. In Isi-Agu, a member of the research team from the town could not persuade members of his out-group to participate in the study. It was an ex-President-General of the town union who was well known to the principal investigator that helped the research team work in the community. Public announcements were made in the churches and in the villages. The announcement emphasised that the study had no political undertone.

The ward leaders whose wards were sampled for the survey guided the research team in deriving the sample frame from which the selections of eligible study participants was made. From the list, homes of rural dwellers and urban residents were identified and stratified. In each selected household, the consent of its head was sought before the instrument was given. Those who could not read were assisted by the research team to fill the questionnaire.

In the homes of urban residents, the head was given the instrument if the person was around and willing to participate. In some instances, their wives were given the instrument to take to their husbands. This was facilitated by the fact that in August and September when the fieldwork was in progress, many urban residents in the state frequented their homelands either to take part in the August meeting (for the women) or to partake in New Yam Festivals (in the case of men). In recent times, town unions have used new yam ceremonies as one of the avenues of stock-taking in community development efforts. The ward leaders were also used to collect back the filled questionnaire.

In collecting the qualitative data, the research team introduced itself to a consenting participant before actual interviewing process. The team used notebooks and audio tapes to capture the proceedings of the interviews. At the end of each interview session, a summary of the proceedings was made to the participants by the moderator. In this way, some mistakes, misconceptions were



clarified. The tapes and notebooks were labelled to capture the communities and participating individuals. On the average, each interview lasted about 1hr. twenty minutes.

### **3.10 Problems encountered in the study**

Doing social survey in a conflict- infested community can be challenging. Firstly, there is this tendency of study participants' misconstruing the true motive of the research. Several trips to Nri and Isiagu were made before the research instruments could be administered. In Nri, the research team, during its` first three visits, was unable to meet the palace secretary who acts as the community's gatekeeper for the monarch. Nobody was prepared to disclose his phone number to the principal researcher and his assistant from Nri town. This is the norm in many communities of the state at the moment because of prevailing insecurity of lives and property. The research assistant from Nri town is not well known to his people. As a child of an urban based indigene of the town, he hardly visited home except on festive occasions. It was one of the community leaders that facilitated the exchange of phone numbers between the principal researcher and the palace secretary. Through phone call, an arrangement was made with the palace secretary before we visited the town again.

Also in Nri, the President-General of their recognized TU could not be reached, even on phone. It was the Administrative Secretary of Nri Progressive Union (NPU) who stood for him. In responding to some of our questions, he appeared very reluctant and uninformed.

The unrecognized traditional ruler of Akamkpisi section in Nri `conflict, (Eze Ogbummuo), passed on a few days after giving the research team audience and his blessings during the fieldwork. His death deprived the team of his informed input. It also delayed the movement of the team in the community, because the cultural prescription that no significant social activity in his domain should be held for four market weeks was observed. Data collection was continued after the expiration of the period. The research team made use of the ward leaders and members of the parallel TU (Ikenga-Nri) to get over the problem.

Sampling of the wards to be included in the study nearly degenerated to a physical confrontation in Isiagu. This is because of the prevailing mutual

suspicion, distrust and even hatred between some members of Umuzor and Ebe (the two factions to the conflict). Confronted with this problem, the team member from the town suggested that we make use of church officials. Announcements were made in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches to the fact that the study had no political motive and pecuniary attachments. Before this development, a member of the research team from the town was accused by his out-group of having appropriated resources meant for them for the research. This was refuted through the said announcement. Some wards excluded in *Isiagu* managed to fill some of the questionnaire. These were excluded during data collation and coding.

Male dominance syndrome constrained many women from participating in the study, just to remain loyal to their husbands. Some urban residents never returned copies of the questionnaire. Even in Amansea some of the participants accused the research assistant from their town of having collected money meant for the respondents. Town criers were asked by the President-General to move around the town to dispel the rumour and inform the people of the true motive of the study. He did. About 30% of the questionnaire distributed was lost because of these reasons.

### **3.11 Ethical consideration**

Each of the instruments used to collect both the quantitative and qualitative data had a section that sought for the study participant's consent to be part of the study. To get their consent, the motive of the study was disclosed to them. Again, gatekeepers like traditional rulers, their representatives, and officials of TUs, were consulted before the actual fieldwork was started. Participants in the study were not identified by their names in reporting the research findings. This was to respect the principle of anonymity which we assured them before the instruments were administered. Participants who wanted to decline were allowed to do so.

### **3.12 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 test. Specifically, for research questions 1, 2 and 3, 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 method's 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. Emphasis was placed on similarities and variations in the findings that shed much light on our study objectives, assumptions and theoretical thrust.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, statistical results as well as qualitative data collected with our research tools are presented in the following order: description of demographic characteristics of the respondents, internal sources of conflicts, external sources of conflicts, effects of conflicts on infrastructural development, existing methods of conflict resolution, and preferred methods of conflict resolution. Chi-square statistical test/presentation of the first, second and third substantive issues investigated were made for each of the three communities studied. A composite table was used to present the findings made. The statistical findings were interpreted and discussed using qualitative data derived from the IDIs and KIIs conducted.

#### **4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

In Table 4 below, out of 750 copies of the questionnaire administered, 524 were returned. Of this number, 515 stated their ages which ranged from 20 to 87 years, with mean age of 45 years and standard deviation of 12.78. The statistics output showed a good number of missing (no response) values that vary across demographic variables. This was not unexpected in field surveys since respondents do not usually provide all information requested.

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

Demographic Variables		Number	Percent
Age	Min. = 20, Max. = 87 ( <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 city?	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 1970's.

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.

#### 4.2 Internal sources of conflict within the town union

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
Struggle for leadership	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											
Lack of accountabilitys of TU monies	Yes				Yes 46(39%)				Yes 47(25.7%)			
	153(81%)				No 72(61%)				No 136(74.3%)			
	No	72.4	1	.001	Total 118	5.7	1	.02	Total 183	43.3	1	.001
	36(19%)											
	Total 189											
Role allocation along gender	Yes				Yes 9(7.4%)				Yes 4(2.2%)			
	24(12%)				No 112(92.6%)				No 180(97.8%)			
	No	115.5	1	.001	Total 121	87.7	1	.001	Total 184	168.3	1	.001
	176(88%)											
	Total 200											
Discrimination along osu cult membership	Yes				Yes 8(6.8%)				Yes 5(2.7%)			
	3(1.5%)				No 110(93.2%)				No 179(97.3%)			
	No	184.2	1	.001	Total 118	88.2	1	.001	Total 184	149.8	1	.001
	193(98.5%)											
	Total 196											
fFeeling of inequity as a source of TU conflict	Yes				Yes 44(36%)				Yes 9(4.9%)			
	30(15.2%)				No 78(64%)				No 175(95.1%)			
	No	95.3	1	.001	Total 122	9.5	1	.001	Total 184	149.8	1	.001
	167(84.8%)											
	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.*

##### 4.2.1 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 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. Before this development, our TU hardly witnessed leadership struggle. (IDI, victim of conflict, Isiagu)

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. (IDI, victim of TU conflict, *Isiagu*).

Also in the same *Isiagu*, a ward leader remarked that:

Onwa, from all indications, wanted to be the next traditional ruler of *Isiagu*. He wants to ensure that a stooge of his emerges as the President-General of our TU. He tends to forget that a rat does not consume the valuables of a vigilant person. (KII, Ward leader, *Isiagu*).

Another ward leader in the same *Isiagu* summarized the reason for the struggle as follows:

It is supremacy contest that is plaguing our TU in *Isiagu*. This became very pronounced since the



death of our traditional ruler (KII, ward leader, Isiagu)

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 (Akampkisi section) do not produce rulers of the town. According to Okonkwo (2007:46), “Diodo, the only *Eze Nri* that hailed from Akamkpisi died without a 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. Osaghae and Suberu (2005) view the struggle as a mere politicization of identities (*ethno genesis*).

Apart from the stated manifest reasons for the conflict, there were some underlying factors. Prominent among these were the history and settlement patterns of the sections of the communities in conflict (Ibeanu, 2003). In Nri and Isi-agu towns, the struggle is prompted by desire of some members of TU to ignore the demands of inclusive government in their quest to be influential in running the affairs of their towns.

Benabeh (2012) views leadership struggle in Africa as arising from debate over issue of citizenship. Ekeh (1975) and Igun (2006), note that, in Africa, the

state is weak. in constraining her citizens from acting out their ethnocentric world views on civic cultural matters. It is a struggle over identity retention, and social relevance. It is a struggle against political domination, arising, perhaps, out of migration and settlement patterns that occurred in the past (Davies, 1962; Nwanunobi, 1992; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Faletti, 2007; Onu, 2011).The struggle validates the view that, beyond TUs presenting an image of having a common ancestry, lies endemic primordial social formations, nurtured and sustained by prejudice and stereotypes (Nzimiro, 2001) which predispose members of TU to fission.

The above differs from leadership struggle discovered in Amansea Town Union. Here, the traditional ruler is believed to be working hand in hand with the President-General of the town union. Their conflict was associated with pull-him-down (PHD) syndrome existing between the incumbent President-General and his predecessors. An IDI with head of Amansea Vigilante noted that:

Those fighting the current President-General and the Igwe are enemies of progress whose administrative legacy in this town is greed, grab and graft. They must surely fail (IDI, Amansea Vigilante)

The office of the President-General of town union has come to be hotly contested in most towns of the state. Some of the reasons for people's quest for the office from our findings are desire to be known in the community as an influential person, desire to belong to Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU), and desire to preside over the allocation of communal resources (KII Government officials; and IDI Victim of Conflict Amansea).

The problem of leadership struggle among the Igbo has been criticized by scholars like: Achebe (1983), Nzimiro (2001), Ibeanu (2003), Udechukwu (2003)and Onyensoh (2001).The quest for material acquisition is highly pronounced among the Igbo. The acronym IBO 'I before others' or IGBO meaning 'I go before others (Okonkwo, 2007) seems apt. The prevailing quest for praise names and how this value manifests in town union meetings is an indication of social validation of the struggle.

In Nri town, leadership struggle manifests in form of

Clandestine and nocturnal meetings held before the general meeting of town union. It is during such sectional meetings that parties in conflict identify how an issue in conflict affects them. There also, they take their decision with regard to the other party before the general meeting (KII, Community leader, Nri).

A victim of TU conflict in the same Nri expressed a similar view:

In Nri, TU constitution is not respected. Sectional meetings are held before the general meeting. Decisions reached at the sectional levels are adhered to by members. It is, therefore, very difficult for compromise to be reached at the general level. This development was not like that before. It has arisen over the issue of who will become the traditional ruler of the town (IDI, Victim of conflict, Nri).

When members of TU attend general meetings with prejudiced mindset, the environment tends to be conflictual because of their coercive attitude in conflict (Vercovith, et al., 2009). In both conflict towns, feeling of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970) can be noticed among Akamkpsi people, in Nri, and Umuzor people in Isiagu. A KII with the Secretary of Ikenga Nri (the parallel TU) revealed this feeling.

What do you expect me to be discussing with a brother that decides to appropriate what belongs to two of us?

In Isiagu, a ward leader remarked:

This community belongs to all of us. Nobody has the preserve of dictating to others who should handle their affairs. Not even money can confer that right. That is the position of Umuzor (KII, ward leader, Isiagu)

#### **4.2.2 Issue of accountability of TU money**

Again this variable is perceived by 81% of respondents from *Isiagu* as a significant source of TU conflict in their community ( $\chi^2 = 72.4$ ). It was not so pronounced in Nri (39%) and Amansea (25%). It can be inferred as in leadership struggle that lack of accountability of TU money prevailed more in communities

with caretaker committees than in those with factionalised TUs. It is not a significant source of TU in Amansea.

In our KII with ward leaders in the three communities, most of them contended that lack of accountability of town union money is true of the town union leadership. In Isiagu, the research team was shown an uncompleted five classroom block which the caretaker committee initiated with two million naira given to the town by the state government for that purpose. According to a ward leader,

Nobody is informed about why the project has been abandoned (KII, ward leader, Isiagu).

This is an example of the poor level of governance and public service delivery from state level to the grassroots. A community leader in the same town remarked that previous efforts they made to ensure accountability of town union monies in *Isiagu* has been jettisoned by the youths who handled the affairs of their TU at the moment. As he put it:

Our legacy was to have an auditor audit the account of our TU before normal hand over. Later; this was upturned by those who wanted to be embezzling our money. This is one of the reasons why we were given a care-taker committee (KII, Community leader, Isiagu).

A former President-General of their TU, while disagreeing with the above views remarked that, *Isiagu* had been a very wretched community. For him those accusing past leadership of the TU of financial impropriety do not base their views on observable facts. This is not different from the reason given by the people of Ebenebe for removing the President –General of their TU. The people of Ekwulobia equally accused their monarch of creating a parallel TU to appropriate intervention fund meant for the community.

In Nri Kingdom, the problem is there. Participants from Akamkpisi contend they were not informed about how Nri Progressive (NPU) was being run when they were still part of it. Among members of NPU, a rift existed between the incumbent President- General, who was believed to be very rich, and the palace. The President-General and the palace, operated as bipolar opposites over who should influence policy matters. Definitely, this type of strained social relationship cannot create a healthy working environment for accountability.

Often, town union meetings are preceded by nocturnal and clandestine meetings meant to make the community ungovernable by sections that feel relatively deprived.

In Amansea, the incumbent President-General noted with dismay that:

It is only the handover note of my immediate predecessor that I have in my office. In the past, it is not an honoured practice for leaders of our TU, to account for their stewardship (KII, President – General, Amansea TU).

The above implies that although lack of accountability prevails in TU administration, members don't see it as a significant source of conflict facing the organisation.

#### **4.2.3 Role ascription along gender as a source of TU conflict**

In *Isiagu* a significant 88% of the respondent did not see this as a source of the TU conflict 88.0% ( $\chi^2 = -115.5; p .001$ ). In *Nri* the trend was not different 92.6% and in *Amansea* 97% of the respondents held a similar view. The results imply that role ascription along gender was not perceived by town union members as a source of conflict within town unions in the state. This can be attributed to persisting cultural value placed on patriarchy. Udegbe (1992) identifies stereotypic perception of women as a cultural construction which impedes access of women to leadership position in society.

Mbanefoh (1998) and Nwosu (2009) found that women wing of town union have remained submissive to the directives of the male equivalent of the same association. Some of our respondents claimed that the women wings of TUs were more functional than the male wing because of the high sense of discipline characteristic of women in associational life.

Most members of the women wing are wives of members of the male wing. Their interests are likely to be complementary so as not to lead to pronounced conflict in town union affairs. In keeping with the conflict tree model, their interest is likely to be based on having a functional TU that is not disruptive of the cultural prescriptions of their society. They are not likely to feel relatively deprived (Gurr, 1970) because of complementarities of power relations between them and the menfolks as captured below.

Women do not constitute a problem to our town union. How can a woman one has married with one's money turn around to direct one on how one can live with one's kinsmen. (KII, ward leader Isiagu)

In Nri

Men do not interfere with the workings of the women's wing of NPU. Although conflict prevails in our TU; we do not expect women to differ from the position of their husbands on the conflict issues (IDI, community leader, Nri).

This is not different from what a female community leader in the same town noted:

The men do not teleguide the activities of women's wing of our TU. We initiate our projects; invite them to support us if the need arises. Our members know what the culture expects of us as wives and daughters of the land (KII, female community leader, Nri).

In Amansea, a vigilante official not only agreed that a harmonious relationship exists between them and female wings of the TUs, but added that:

Women's wing of Amansea TU is more functional than that of men. This is because the women are capable of speaking with one voice (KII, vigilante official, Amansea)

The submissive nature of women is socially conditioned. Igbo society is patrilineal, patrilocal and has a high preference for male children. Women are referred to as *akumba* or wealth to be exported. This is sequel to a stereotypic mind set which scholars like Udegbe, Nzimiro have addressed. It is therefore not surprising that women wing of TU are mere social conforming institutional mechanisms that support and perpetuate the status quo ante.

#### **4.2.4 Role ascription along cult slave as a source of TU conflict**

A significant number (98.5%) of the respondents from Isiagu ( $\chi^2 = 184.2$ ), 93.2% in Nri ( $\chi^2 = 88.2$ ) and 97.3% from Amansea ( $\chi^2 = 149.8$ ) did not see discrimination along osu cult slave as an internal source of their TU conflict.

Just like gender, cult slaves (*osu*) was not seen by the participants as a source of conflict in town unions.

Most of the participants in the three communities argued that discrimination along cult slave membership is not a source of internal conflict within their town union. A ward leader in Nri remarked that the practice of cult slave does not exist in Nri town. The palace secretary gave the reasons for this.

Nri has been a safe haven for threatened Igbo people. The community abhors bloodletting. Nri priests used to be invited for purification of desecrated Igbo lands. The town is always seen as a holy ground (KII, palace secretary, Nri).

In *Isiagu*, a victim of town union conflict noted that:

The practice of cult slave has never existed in *Isiagu*. What we have is Ajana cult which is different from *osu*. (IDI, victim of TU conflict, *Isiagu*)

Findings on this variable are the same in Amansea community. This finding is at variance with Imogene, (1993); Francis, (2007); Nwosu (2009) viewed cult slave institution and practices among the Igbo as a source of social conflict in Igbo associational life. Although they did not investigate how the phenomenon prevailed in town union activities of Anambra State, this study fills gap in knowledge by doing that.

The findings suggest that, in town union of the state, modernisation process is on course. However, Nwanunobi (1992) avers that the problem with cult slave institution is that discriminatory practices associated with it, especially since its proscription in 1953, has been very clandestine. The finding is at variance with the third law of social dynamics associated with Marxian theory of social conflict (Boguslavsky, 1985). The law assumes there is always an element of the past in the present. The non- discrimination of cult slaves does not suggest relative deprivation in this regard.

#### **4.2.5 Feeling of inequity as a source of TU conflict**

In *Isiagu*, 84.4% ( $\chi^2=95.3$ ); Nri 64% ( $\chi^2=9.5$ ) and Amansea, 95.1% ( $\chi^2=149.8$ ) did not perceive this variable as an internal source of TU conflict. It means feeling of inequity was not perceived as a source of conflict within town unions in Anambra State.



In Nri.

What do you expect me to be discussing with a brother who decides to appropriate what belongs to two of us? (KII Secretary, Ikenga-Nri).

While in Isiagu, a ward leader remarked that:

This community belongs to all of us. Nobody has the preserve of dictating to others who should handle their affairs. Not even money can confer that right. That is the position of Umuzor (KII, ward leader Isiagu).

In Amansea, the attention of the research team was drawn to the practice of the residents of the town not fencing their residential buildings. The above viewpoints are not indicative of superordinate and subordinate relationship that suggests a feeling of inequity. Feeling of inequity was not highly pronounced in the associational life of the people.

As you can see, in this town, many of us can drink using one cup. We don't fence our homes because we believe in sharing what we have in common. (KII, President-General, Amansea TU).

These findings indicate that town union members perceived leadership struggle within the organization, as an internal source of conflict in conflict towns Isiagu and to an extent Nri. Lack of accountability of town union money/ was also seen as a source of internal conflict in the TUs of conflict towns. Role ascriptions along gender and cult slaves (*osu*) dimensions, as well as feelings of inequity among members, were not seen as sources of conflict. In this regard Study Assumption 1 was partly supported.

In summary, appropriate answer to research question I is that leadership struggle is an internal source of conflict within town union in the state. Going by findings made through in-depth interviews, the struggle may not be unconnected with inordinate ambition of some privileged members of the society to control and dominate others. Accountability is not a notable aspect of handling TU activities in the communities studied. Prevailing poverty of accountability also influences the quest of some members of TU to struggle for its leadership.

Unlike these variables, role ascription along gender and cult slave membership, are not pronounced sources of internal conflicts within town union.



In the same way, although feeling of inequity was not perceived as a significant source of internal conflicts within ‘no conflict’ towns, it remains a source of silent conflict (Waltz cited in Adalakun, 1989), existing in ‘conflict towns’ studied.

### 4.3 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	$\chi^2$	Df	P	Responses	$\chi^2$	Df	P	Responses	$\chi^2$	Df	P
State governments` financial allocation	Yes 152 (75.6%)	52.8	1	.001	Yes 57 (46.7%)	.53	1	.5	Yes 3 (1.6 %)	39.5	1	.001
	No 49 (24.4%)				No 65 (53.3%)				No 181 (98.4%)			
	Total 201				Total 122.				Total 184			
Creation of Caretaker Committee to run TU	Yes 114 (57%)	3.9	1	0.5	Yes 26 (21.1%)	41	1	.001	Yes 37 (20.1%)	43.3	1	.001
	No 86 (43%)				No 97 (78.9%)				No 147 (79.9%)			
	Total 200				Total 123				Total 184			
Traditional Ruler`s Insistence on producing P.G. of TUs	Yes 53 (26.4%)	44.9	1	.001	Yes 17 (13.9%)	63.5	1	.001	Yes 11 (6%)	168.3	1	.001
	No 148 (73.6%)				No 105 (86.1%)				No 171 (94%)			
	Total 128				Total 122				Total 182			
Traditional Rulers as sources of Conflict	Yes 40 (31.2%)	18	1	.001	Yes 12 16.7%	32	1	.001	Yes 12 (6.6%)	164.5	1	.001
	No 88 (68.8%)				No 60 (83.8%)				No 170 (93.4%)			
	Total 128				Total 72				Total 182			
Traditional Rulers Influencing of citing of amenities	Yes 27 (13.5%)	106.6	1	.001	Yes 19 (15%)	56.9	1	.001	Yes 9 (4.9%)	149.8	1	.001
	No 173 (86.5%)				No 102 (85%)				No 175 (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.*

#### 4.3.1 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 ( $\chi^2.53$ ; 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 Government's financial releases to TUs is a source of conflict in conflict towns Isiagu and to an extent Nri.

The Secretary of Ikenga Nri (that is the parallel TU to NPU) 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 unions 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 compelled 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 governments' 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*).

This shows that in Nri kingdom the financial release is a source of conflict within members of NPU and between them and members of Ikenga-Nri the parallel TU.

In Isiagu, the contention was that neither the members of caretaker committees nor elected town union officials had been able to utilise the financial releases for the intended motive. A school block initiated by the caretaker committee, with two million naira released to them by the state, could not be completed. Both members of caretaker committees, and elected TU officials never explained to anybody, how they spent the fund released to their town by the state. A ward leader captured the situation thus:

Leadership of our TU has been characterized by the leaders trying to intimidate and silence those who tried to probe into how the financial releases were utilised (KII, ward leader Isiagu).

This finding is congruent with why the people of Ebenebe dissolved their TU and created a caretaker committee when the President –General could not give as satisfactory account of the fund made to the town by the state government. It is not different from what we identified in Ekwulobia where a parallel TU was created and the fund meant for the town was collected by the new TU. This is part of poverty of accountability of TU money which we identified under internal sources of conflict facing the TUs.

In Amansea, the financial release was not seen as a source of conflict by President-General of the town union. He contended that the traditional ruler did not get involved in the utilisation of the fund. This is at variance with what we found at Nri and what a government official involved in the disbursement remarked.

To exclude royal fathers in the disbursement of such monies is to put cracked palm kernels in a perforated sack. Royal fathers exist to ensure the finance is judiciously utilized. (KII, government official).

Lack of accountability is indicative of corrupt role processes. Nigerian leadership has been criticized for being incurably corrupt (Joseph, 1992; Beckman, 1985; Nzimiro, 2001). Scholars like Gaye (1999), Igun (2006) associated the corruption to the character of Nigeria's capitalist economy. It is an economic arrangement that encourages skewed distribution of collectively owned resources by agents of the state. This study showed how the practice prevails at the grassroots.

#### **4.3.2 Creation of caretaker committee as a source of TU conflict**

In Isiagu, 57% of the respondents saw the creation as an external source of TU conflict ( $\chi^2=3.9$ , p 0.5). In Nri, 78.9% of respondents did not see such a creation as a source of TU conflict. This is not different from the responses got from Amansea where 79.9% did not see the creation of caretaker committee as a source of TU conflict. Again it can be inferred that but for Isiagu where respondents were divided on this, the creation of care taker committee was not seen as a source of TU conflict in communities without such a committee in Anambra State.

The finding is not at variance with some of our respondents' view during the KII and IDI sessions. In Isiagu, (the only community that experienced the caretaker committee), the source of the conflict was inordinate ambition of the self-styled kingmaker to dictate how TU should be run. Caretaker was an aftermath of this quest as shown below.

In 2007 the traditional ruler of our town died. In 2008 while the town union election was in progress, a money bag (very rich man) from Ebe (one of the factions to the conflict), stormed the venue of the election with a team of mobile policemen, including a DPO from Awka. The man was opposing a candidate nominated and presented by Umuzo (another party to the conflict), according to the constitution of our town union. They were asked to leave. They did. On hearing that the election had been held, the man used his connections with the state governments' ministry of local government and chieftaincy matters to nullify the election and impose a caretaker committee on us. We challenged the government by obtaining court injunction restraining the government from imposing the caretaker committee. Government ignored this court order and imposed the committee on us. (KII, Emeritus President-General Isiagu).

Nri and Amansea had not experienced caretaker committee. Nri people attributed this to their cultural proscription of shedding human blood. Their land abhors bloodletting (Okonkwo, 2007). In Amansea, the traditional ruler is said to be working hand in hand with the president general.

The position of Isiagu community on the caretaker was not different from that expressed by the people of Alor, Umuoji, Ekwulobia, and so on. In these communities the imposition was resented, opposed and even resisted. Unfortunately, many of the communities did not prevent the State Commissioner of Local Government to remove the caretaker committee. This finding reveals the use of state power to coerce 'dissident' members of the state into complying with directives from above. This is conflict suppression. It is congruent with the functionalist model of social control which emphasizes pattern maintenance of the status quo without probing and or addressing prevailing endemic sources of social conflict. Scholars like Gaye, (1999); Nzimiro, (2001); Albert, (2003) and so on have shown how this model is not a wonderful approach to conflict resolution.

It is an expression of social conflict arising from unequal power relations. Those disadvantaged in this way are likely to be relatively deprived.

#### **4.3.3 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).

#### **4.3.4 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 favourably 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.

#### **4.3.5 Traditional rulers influencing where amenities should be cited as a source of TU conflict.**

Table 6 above shows that, with respect to this variable, 86.5% of respondents in Isiagu, 85% in Nri and 95.1% in Amansea did not perceive traditional rulers as influencing where amenities should be cited as a source of TU conflict. The view that this variable is not a source of TU conflict is statistically significant. The study assumption is therefore rejected. In line with the main result, most IDI and KII sessions in the communities never implicated this variable as a source of conflict.

However, one of the victims of TU conflict in Nri, drew the attention of the research team to the fact that the only functional water borehole in the town was the one cited inside the palace of Eze- Nri. This was donated by Lever Brothers Nigerian Limited. This suggests the traditional ruler can influence the location of amenities in the town especially that not provided by the TU. Again, our respondents never showed or expressed the feeling of the traditional ruler of Nri town over the exclusion of Akamkpisi quarters in the provision of tarred roads and street lights in Agukwu by Governor Peter Obi and Hon. Joy Ekwunife. These amenities made the excluded section of Nri town, feel relatively deprived (Gurr, 1970). Overall, it was only the need-based variable, that is, state

government's financial allocations to town unions, that was implicated as an external source of conflict to the town unions.

In the light of the above findings on external sources of conflicts facing town unions, only state government's financial allocation to town unions and creation of caretaker committee were perceived by town union members in Isiagu as a source of conflict. Traditional rulers' insistence on who becomes the town union President-General, and where amenities should be sited, were not seen as sources of conflict in the three towns. Study Assumption 2 therefore, was supported only on state government's financial allocation to town union as well as creation of caretaker committees as sources of conflict in communities with caretaker committees.

#### **4.4 Effects of conflict on infrastructural development**

Study Assumption 3 states that negative effects of conflict such as lack of amenities, factionalisation, lack of contribution to project development, and so on will be implicated as outcomes of conflict within TU. The results are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Effects of Conflict on Infrastructural Development**

Variable	ISIAGU				NRI				AMANSEA			
	Responses	$\chi^2$	df	P	Responses	$\chi^2$	df	P	Response	$\chi^2$	Df	P
Conflict unwillingness to contribute to development projects	Yes 108 (53.7%) No 93 (46.3) Total 201	1.1	1	.3	Yes 46 (38%) No 75 (62%) Total 121	7.0	1	.08	Yes 14 (7.6%) No 170 (92.4%) Total 184	132.3	1	.001
Conflict caused more amenities in your village	Yes 14 (7%) No 187 (93%) Total 201	.9	1	.001	Yes 9 (7.3%) No 115 (92.7%) Total 124	90.6	1	.001	Yes 2 (1%) No 182 (99%) Total 184	176.0	1	.001
Conflict leads to fewer amenities in your village	Yes 84 (41.8%) No 117 (58.2%) Total 201	49.5	1	.02	Yes 42 (14.7%) No 79 (65.3%) Total 121	11.3	1	.001	Yes 38 (20.7%) No 146 (79.3%) Total 184	63.4	1	.001
Conflict causing one to join a faction of TU	Yes 51(25.2%) No 151(74.8%) Total 202	49.5	1	.001	Yes 54 (44.3%) No 68 (55.7%) Total 122	1.6	1	.20	Yes 15 (8.2%) No 169 (91.8%) Total 184	128.9	1	.001
Conflict constrain new Development projects	Yes 145 (72.1) No 56 (27.9) Total 201	39.4	1	.001	Yes 54 (43.5%) No 70 (56.5%) Total 124	2,1	1	.15	Yes 54 (29.3) No 130 (70.7) Total 184	50.9	1	.001
Conflict cause you not to attend the TU meeting	Yes 105 (52.5) No 95 (43.5) Total 200	.50	1	.48	Yes 47 (38.8%) No 74 (61.2%) Total 121	6.03	1	.01	Yes 44 (24%) No 140 (76%) Total 184	50.9	1	.001
Conflict cause you not to pay TU levies or fines	Yes 84 (41.8%) No 117(58.2%) Total 201	5.4	1	.02	Yes 33 (27%) No 89 (73%) Total 122	25.7	1	.001	Yes 36 (19.6%) No 148 (80.4%) Total 184	68.2	1	.001
Conflict prevented you from getting your entitlements	Yes 123(61.8%) No 76 (38.2%) Total 199	11.1	1	.001	Yes 49 (39.8%) No 74 (60.2%) Total 123	5.1	1	.05	Yes 47 (26.9%) No 128 (73.1%) Total 175	44.0	1	.001
Conflict responsible for no new schools, hospitals etc. since year 2000	Yes 101 (50%) No 101 (50%) Total 202	.001	1	1.0	Yes 49 (39.8%) No 74 (60.2%) Total 123	5.1	1	.02	Yes 55 (30.1%) No 128 (69.9%) Total 183	29.1	1	.001
Conflict has led to no scholarship since year 2000	Yes 79(39.1%) No 123(60.9%) Total 202	9.6	1	.002	Yes 53 (43%) No 70 (57%) Total 123	2.4	1	.13	Yes 36 (19.6%) No 148 (80.4%) Total 184	68.1	1	.001
Conflict has led to bad roads since year 2000	Yes 122(60.4%) No 80 (39.6%) Total 202	8.7	1	.003	Yes 59 (47.6%) No 65 (52.4%) Total 124	.29	1	.6	Yes 31 (16.8%) No 153 (83.2%) 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.**



#### 4.4.1 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. A ward leader in the community remarked that:

People don't easily respond to voluntary donations when solicited for by members of our town union, especially since the death of our traditional ruler and the prevailing court case. (KII, community leader *Isiagu*).

In *Amansea*, members contribute for the upkeep of their town union. Although some deviants exist, these can be coerced by the vigilante to obey the directives of town union. In *Nri*, NPU was not associated or known for imposing levies on its members. The President-General was not favourably disposed to the levying of town union members on any development project.

We are not levied in *Agukwu* by NPU. The President-General of our TU does not approve payment of development levies by indigenes of the town. He is so rich that he even ignores collecting financial releases by the state government. In fact he pays for the community as the need arises (KII, ward leader *Nri*).

The research team observed that apart from the water borehole sunk in the palace by Lever Brothers Nigeria Limited, there was no other functional bore hole for public water supply in the town. This raises an important question on the sincerity of the President-General of NPU, who is said to be living in Lagos, to provide the needs of his community as stated above.

#### **4.4.2 Conflict leading to more amenities for some sections of the town**

In the 3 communities, conflict did not lead to more amenities being provided in the villages of the respondents by the TUs. Responses from Isiagu (93%), Nri (92.7%) and Amansea (99%) attested to this. The responses were statistically significant at .001. This is supported by our qualitative findings. For example, it was seen that even in Nri where Akamkpisi section felt marginalised, in producing a king for the town, the NPU was being run on the bases of inclusive government. Some offices of NPU have been zoned to the Akamkpisi section.

IDI findings also show that, the tarred road network existing in Agukwu section of the town, and which did not get to Akamkpisi, was not done by the town union. The road was rather done by an affluent indigene of the community as well as the then State Governor, Mr. Peter Obi. The governor was said to have used the road to appreciate the judge who decided a court case that saw him reclaiming his mandate from ex-governor Chris Ngige of Peoples` Democratic Party (PDP).The judge hails from Agukwu section of *Nri* town. Peter Obi belongs to All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

The tarred roads and street lights in Agukwu were not provided by NPU as claimed by Akamkpisi quarters. It is our daughter Honourable Joy Ekwunife and Governor Peter Obi that provided the amenities for our people (KII Ward leader Nri)

In Isiagu, the respondents believed that amenities provided by their town union when the going was good, were centrally located. An IDI with a victim of conflict from the town, attributed the centralisation of amenities to the prevailing non- segregation pattern of residence in Isiagu community. In Amansea, the observation was not different.

#### **4.4.3 Conflict leading to fewer amenities for some sections of the communities**

Again their responses with regards to whether TU conflict had led to fewer amenities in their villages did not uphold our study assumption here. Most respondents from Isiagu (58.2%); Nri (65.3%) and Amansea (79.3%) did not see TU conflict as leading to fewer amenities in their villages. The responses were statistically significant However, it can be inferred that our hypothetical statement was more prevalent in Isiagu than the rest of the towns studied.

The KII with the secretary of Ikenga-Nri (the parallel TU) revealed that it is only the prevalence of conflict in their town that could explain why the roads that led to Akamkpisi were not tarred, and the street lights not installed. In reaction to their environment of conflict, they claimed to have forfeited amenities they built together with Agukwu people when they were still part of NPU. The view expressed earlier on the provision of the tarred roads, questions the feeling of relative deprivation by the Akamkpisi section on this issue.

#### **4.4.4 Conflict and formation of a faction of TU**

With regard to conflict causing one to join a faction of TU of their community, 74.8% of respondents from Isiagu, 55.7% from Nri and 91.8% from Amansea objected to the statement. In Nri which had the highest number of respondents affirming this view, two TUs exist namely: Nri Progressive Union and Ikenga-Nri. The response from the town was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.6$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .20$ ). This means that conflict within town union did not lead to the formation of factions within the union.

Our findings via the IDI showed that in Nri, (the only community studied that has a parallel TU), the formation of this body, was not directly linked to how the NPU is run. Its emergence is out of what Varcovitch calls value-based conflict. The Akamkpisi section felt marginalised in terms of traditional rulership of the kingdom. It is a development that has arisen out of zero-sum game.

Following a court action we had over the traditional stool, that lasted for over 10 years before Mbadinuju came to power in 1999, as the state governor, our town union became so polarized that we demanded an autonomous status from the state government. (IDI, secretary, Ikenga Nri).

Also in the same Nri, another community leader from Akamkpisi remarked that:

How can we explain one person excluding the other in the sharing of a jointly owned valuable? It is Unacceptable to us and we decided to form our own town union. Asking us to go back to Agu-Ukwu is like asking the Israelites to go back to Egypt. ( KII, community leader, Nri).

Of the three communities studied, it is only in Nri that two town unions exist. Varcovitch et al. (2009) asserts that value-based conflict, such as those arising from beliefs and ideologies held tend to be very conflictual. Also Anigbo

(1985) notes that Igbo people tend to have a very rigid mindset over conflict situations that challenge their value preferences. In such a situation, they can be very unforgiving. Value based conflicts are characterized by zero-sum game. What one gains the other loses. It can be inferred from the above that it is a feeling of relative deprivation that led to the formation of a faction of the TU. The conflict arising from the kingship dispute is responsible for the feeling. Formation of a faction of the TU is a direct reaction to how the dispute affected associational life of the people in their TU.

#### **4.4.5 Conflict and ability of TUs to embark on new development projects**

Has conflict within town unions made it difficult for its members to embark on new development projects? Table 7 shows that conflict constrained the commencement of new development projects more in Isiagu (72.1%) than in Nri (43.5%). In Amansea, (70.7%) of the respondents contended that conflict within TU did not have a constraining effect on their tendency to embark on new development projects. Conflict within TUs, therefore, tended to constrain the commencement of new development projects in communities with caretaker committees than in others. Responses to this question from Nri was not statistically significant ( $X^2 = .21, p < .15$ ), meaning that members are undivided in terms of whether or not conflict constrains the development of new projects.

Findings from our in-depth interviews showed that conflict situation was adversarial to development efforts of town unions. In Amansea, the town union can be described as very functional. This was attested to by the fact that their town union constructed a primary school and assisted their youths to be admitted into Nnamdi Azikiwe University, using the catchment area policy. It is only in Amansea that town union assists the youths to be employed in the same institution. In the same town, the president and the traditional rulers have helped the community benefit from rural electrification policy of the state. These are associated with the fact that the current President-General opened a bank account for the safe keeping of town union money, unlike his predecessors.

The above is at variance with what prevails at Isiagu and Nri Kingdom (the conflict towns). In Isiagu, no meaningful infrastructural development has been embarked upon by the town union since 2000. According to a ward leader in the town,

Before the conflict, the town union had successfully built a central market in 1986, a postal agency in 1990, initiated the release of a 500 acres of land to Anambra State Government for infrastructural development in 1999. A rice mill built in the land was later abandoned following the conflict that has engulfed the town union; there is a court case which makes many to avoid attending the town union meetings (KII, Ward leader, Isiagu).

In fact a victim of town union conflict in Isiagu remarked.

What type of meeting do you expect me to be having with a person in court with me? Unless the court case is withdrawn nothing meaningful will be happening in the TU (IDI, victim of conflict, Isiagu)

In Nri, the Palace Secretary asserted that because of the conflict in the town, no meaningful development has taken place in the town since 2000. What has been said earlier about the tarred roads validates the view of the Palace Secretary that, apart from what the palace is doing developmentally, the TU is not very wonderful in developing the town. The research team was given a copy of the brochure used by the palace to celebrate 2011 Igbo Lunar year. That was what the palace was believed to have done developmentally.

Going by the Marxian theory of social conflict, it can be inferred that, in conflict towns, a dialectical relationship prevails between the conflicting parties. Where this has taken a structural manifestation, as in Nri Kingdom, some measures of infrastructural development can be observed. For example, members of Ikenga-Nri, the splinter town union, noted that, although they had left facilities jointly built while they were members of NPU, they had been able to initiate and complete some development projects for their section of the community. One of their leaders averred that:

Today we have left the amenities we owned together for Agu-Ukwu people. We have built our own market (Ogininese market or what is the problem market), we have our own town hall, and we fix our roads. We believe this is better than shedding human blood which is an abomination in our land (KII, community leader, Nri).

This development shows how conflict can influence the trend of new development projects, when its dialectical nature has reached what Fishers cited

in Best (2007) call outcome situation. In Isiagu where it is still in its confrontational stage, because of the court action, no meaningful development is occurring at the moment.

#### **4.4.6 Conflict on tendency of members to attend TU meetings**

More participants remarked that conflict prevented them from attending TU meeting more in Isiagu 52.5% ( $\chi^2 = 50.50$ ), than in Nri 38.8% ( $\chi^2 = 6.03$ ) and Amansea 24% ( $\chi^2 = 50.9, p < .001$ ). It is only the responses from Amansea that were statistically significant. Thus in communities with caretaker committees, members tend to avoid attending TU meetings in Anambra State.

In Nri, the conflict in NPU notwithstanding, members attend the meeting with conclusions reached at their caucus level. They insist on having their way in town union meetings in a manner that validates struggle for leadership. Within this setting, the meetings usually end inconclusive.

In *Isiagu*, the threat of the self-styled 'king maker', using the police to intimidate the less privileged, made some members of the town union to keep their distance in terms of attending TU meetings. Many still attend, especially meetings associated with the celebration of Isiagu day at the end of the year. In *Amansea*, the meetings of the town union are often well attended. However, members of the vigilante do search members at the gate for hidden weapons. This is captured in this excerpt.

During our town union meetings every member is searched at the gate for hidden weapons. Some of the detractors of the president general and traditional ruler can go to extreme to have their way. They can even go to cities like Lagos, Kano to slander these rulers (IDI, vigilante, Amansea).

#### **4.4.7 Conflict and willingness of members of TU to pay union levies and fines**

From the table, it can be seen that 58.2% of the participants from Isiagu ( $\chi^2 = 5.4$ ), 73% from Nri ( $\chi^2 = 25.7$ ) and 80.4% ( $\chi^2 = 68.2$ ) from Amansea contended that, even in the face of TU conflict, they paid their levies and fines as imposed by their TUs. Isiagu had the highest response rate of participants (41.8) who said that TU conflict made them not to pay such levies. The response from

the community however was not statistically significant. The inference is that conflict does not deter members of town union from paying their levies.

In *Isiagu*, our IDI revealed that members tended to pay levies imposed by town union because it was through such levies that the vigilante group was maintained. It is through such monies that the community settles the electric bills from Power Holding Company of Nigeria PHCN. Very remarkable was the fact that such contributions were carefully documented and displayed for public viewing. In this way, many people tried to avoid being defined as deviants.

In Nri, for reasons already stated, the imposition of levies is not a pronounced feature of their town union. In Akamkpisi section, members are said to be up and doing in conforming to the policy directives of the splinter town union (Ikenga Nri). They believed they could achieve more if the state government grants them the autonomous status they have been clamouring for.

We have left Agu-Ukwu for good. They (Agukwu people) are even fade up with our case they have agreed that we become an autonomous community. I think the problem is with the state government (IDI, vigilante member, Akampisi Nri)

In Amansea, it is through the contributions made by members that the town union addresses their initiated development programmes. Deviants know that, they must be compelled by the vigilante to pay whenever they have cause to embark on any social activity in the town.

In *Isiagu*, Akamkpisi Nri and Amansea, it can be inferred that members participate in terms of paying levies and fines imposed because it makes sense for them to do so (Ritzer, 2008) and they can be compelled to do so (Okafor, 2010). Compliance prevails because members cannot rise above their social structure (Marx, 1968).

#### **4.4.8 Conflict and members getting their entitlements**

In *Isiagu*, a significant 61.8% of the participants held the view that conflict within their TU prevented them from getting their entitlements. Conversely, in Nri, 60.2% held a contrary view. In Amansea, 69.9% of the respondents also said TU conflict never prevented them getting their entitlements. With the exception of *Isiagu*, it can be inferred that town union members did not see the conflict as preventing them from getting their entitlements.



In our in-depth interview in Nri, it was found that Eze Nri tried to run an inclusive government. The structure of NPU accommodates the *Akamkpisi* section the conflict notwithstanding. In fact according to the Palace Secretary, it is an Akamkpisi man that holds the position of Secretary-General at the moment because it was zoned to them constitutionally. It is an arrangement that is rejected by the Akamkpisi section. The section defined the secretary of NPU as a `sell out` to their quest for an autonomous status.

In Isiagu, when the going was good, amenities were centrally located. The town union had ensured that families whose land was donated to the state government were partly compensated. The land housing the non-functional rice mill is being considered for the construction of a befitting palace for their traditional ruler when one eventually emerges. Indeed, it is their belief that a section of the community (Umuzor), whose right it was to produce the President General of the town union, should be allowed to do so without being manipulated, that made them resist the self-styled kingmaker *Onwa*.

In Amansea, conflict in terms of, denying members their entitlement is not pronounced. Gurr (1970) in his relative deprivation theory postulates that a feeling of relative deprivation by a people, no matter how marginal, can lead to social conflict. Nri people deprived their Akamkpisi brothers the chance to assume the throne of Nri Kingdom. This caused the conflict. In Isiagu, conflict in the town union arose because the entitlement of Umuzor to produce the President-General was challenged.

#### **4.4.9 Conflict and members of TU embarking on new development projects since 2000**

In Isiagu, the participants were undivided on this issue. Their response is not statistically significant. However, in Nri, 60.2% of the participants, and 69.9% of the same from Amansea, said TU conflict had not led to the stoppage of these infrastructural facilities. The responses were statically significant in Amansea.

During our KII session in Nri, it was found out that in Akamkpisi Nri, the conflict with Agu-Ukwu Nri, notwithstanding, members have successfully built a new market, a town hall a school block among other achievements. Also in Agukwu Nri, a good road network exists and has been provided not by the town union, but by the state government. Also part of the road construction was done



by member representing Anambra central senatorial district in the Federal House of Representatives, Mrs. Joy Ekwunife. She hails from the Agukwu section the town. The town union did not provide the amenities, hence the contention of the palace secretary, that

Apart from what the palace is doing developmentally, the TU is not doing anything (KII Palace Secretary, Nri).

The availability of these amenities must have influence the trend of quantitative data collected on this variable.

In Isiagu, the same government of Mr. Peer Obi has constructed a road network that has linked the community with its neighbours. It has empowered the caretaker committees to renovate their primary schools. In Amansea, the town union was equally as functional as their limited resources could allow them. The state government has also tarred some sections of their road networks. It can be inferred that conflict does not always prevent the provision of new amenities in troubled communities. In fact, the state, by meeting its obligational commitment to the people, can minimize the impact of town unions not providing development indicators to their communities. Our finding showed that the state as the most predominant social formation can shape the character of its constituent communities by improving the quality of service delivery to its citizens even when conflict prevails amongst them.

#### **4.4.10 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.

Our finding, through the in-depth interview showed that the town unions in the three communities do not see the offering of such scholarship scheme an important aspect of their functions at the moment. According to a member of the vigilante, from Amansea:

I cannot remember our town union deliberating on such an issue like scholarship since year 2000. What occupies the mind of our town union officials on the average is how to make money (IDI, member of the vigilante, Amansea).

In the same Amansea, a covenant was said to have been made by their forefathers with a deity that protects their land .Consequently, natives of the town never embraced Western education on time. Those who deviated died prematurely. According to the president of Amansea TU:

Before 1976, any indigene that tried to violate the covenant made by our ancestors and the deity protecting our land, by aspiring and obtaining higher educational qualification, must die prematurely. It is only when this covenant was broken in 1976 that we started having university graduates in Amansea. Our TU has never seen scholarship issue as very important.(KII, President Amansea, TU).

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.

#### **4.4.11 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, Akamkpisi 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 is credited to the Anambra State government. 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.

#### **4.5 Current methods of conflict resolution since 2000**

The Study Assumption 4 states that methods of conflict resolution since year 2000 will differ according to the nature of the conflict. Quantitative data shown in Table 8 below revealed participants response to the questions relating to the variables. In the table, each of the various types of conflict facing town unions has five methods of conflict resolution as choice options. The number of respondents that chose an option was tallied and the resulting frequency distribution ranked to find out the most prevailing method of conflict resolution.

**Table 8: Types of Conflict and Frequencies of Members Endorsing Conflict Resolution Method used since Year 2000**

<b>Types of Conflict</b>	<b>Resolution Methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Ranks</b>
Leadership Problem	- Inviting police	78	5
	- Going to court	159	3
	- Use of constitution	394	1
	- Use of traditional rulers	142	4
	- others	164	2
Sharing of amenities	- Inviting police	66	5
	- Going to court	127	4
	- Use of constitution	399	1
	- Use of traditional rulers	152	3
	- others	184	2
Members neglect of duties	- Use of constitution	403	1
	- Inviting police	57	5
	- Going to court	117	4
	- Use of traditional rulers	171	2
	- others	160	3
Use of force in running the association	- Inviting police	106	5
	- Going to court	184	2
	- Use of traditional rulers	270	1
	- Formation of new union	116	4
	- Others	176	3
Violation of the Constitution	- Applying punishment	380	1
	- Inviting police	42	5
	- Going to court	93	4
	- Use of traditional rulers	158	3
	- others	165	2
Unequal distribution of amenities	- New union leadership	117	3
	- Going to court	73	5
	- Inviting the police	100	4
	- Petitioning government	237	1
	- others	124	2

Table 8 shows that the constitution was the most used or prevailing method of conflict resolution since 2000 with respect to conflicts relating to leadership problems, sharing of amenities town union members' neglecting their duties and punishing deviants. Next was use of traditional rulers in resolving conflicts due to use of force in running the association. Finally, conflict arising from unequal distribution of amenities, was addressed by petitioning the state government.

To answer research question 4, is essentially on identifying the prevailing methods of conflict resolution within TUs in the state. The results showed that

use of elders and court action was prevailing method of conflict resolution when the issue was about use of force to run the association. It existed in Isiagu between Onwa of Ebe, his supporters and Umuzor when the first mentioned tried to use the police to manipulate TU elections. Elders were used to restrain the police. In Nri, it is elders from Akamkpisi that decided to form a parallel TU to avoid shedding human blood when they felt relatively deprived over the kingship dispute. Very remarkable is that court action is the second prevailing method of resolving conflicts associated with use of force to run the association. This prevails at the moment in Isiagu between Onwa, his supporters from Ebe and Umuzor. In Nri, it is existing between Akamkpisi and Agu- ukwu. Court action according to Nwosu (2009), Okafor (2010), drains resources meant for infrastructural development. There is no pending court case in Amansea.

This finding suggests that although town union members resort to their constitution in resolving conflict over interest based issues, the proliferation of conflict among them implies the constitution is not constraining them enough. Onyegbulu (2011), remarked that constitution of TUs are made in a manner that suggests that its contents hardly capture the cultural and value preferences of its members. To *Onwa of Ebe in Isiagu*, the constitution does not make sense. His wealth elevated him to influence pattern of using state power against his people. The constitution of NPU did not capture the value preferences of *Akamkpisi* section. Conflict arose when this preference was expressed and trivialized.

Our IDI in Isiagu shows that the constitutional method of selecting the president general was not respected by the Ebe kingmaker and his loyalists. When his action threatened communal peace, many took to their heels for fear of being detained at Abuja by the police.

I don't want to be detained at Abuja. That is why I don't attend IDU meetings (IDI, victim of TU conflict, Isiagu)

Even at that, it is through the use of traditional approach that the police was asked to leave the venue of general election of the town union in 2008. The community took to court action to protest the nullification of their election and the imposition of a caretaker committee.

In *Nri*, it is the feeling of inequality associated with holding the office of *Eze Nri* that led to the value based conflict. Their approach was congruent with

our findings. Their request for an autonomous status was granted by Governor Mbadinuju in year 2003. Governor Ngige reverted the decision in year 2003. They formed a parallel town union with an alternative traditional ruler. The case is still pending in court. Happy enough, their culture abhors violence and bloodshed. This perhaps explains why a caretaker committee was not imposed on the town.

In Amansea, the prevailing silent conflict was resolved by applying the constitution because the issues involved were interest- based.

#### **4.6 Preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of TU**

The Study Assumption 5 stated that indigenous methods of resolving social conflicts (for example. use of elders, covenant making, age grades) will be preferred over foreign methods (for instance, use of law courts, police, church) by members of town unions.

The Linear Multiple Regression Analysis (enter method) was used to test the assumption. The test determined the relative contribution of each of the ten independent factors, in terms of standardized beta coefficient, to the total variance of preferred resolution methods. The results in Table 9 below are ordered from highest beta coefficient to the least as measures of preferred method of conflict resolution.

**Table 9: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis on Preferred Methods of Conflict Resolution**

<b>Conflict Resolution Method</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t value</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Preference Level</b>
Allowing those in dispute to nominate a mediator	.33	166928589.54	.001	First
Use of elders including traditional ruler	.31	155438236.92	.001	Second
Covenant-making ( <i>Igba ndu</i> )	.30	165337235.52	.001	Third
Use of age grades	.29	144006109.04	.001	Fourth
Inviting a third party to listen to both sides	.27	149013843.27	.001	Fifth
Inviting church officials to administer oath with bible	.27	149493771.94	.001	Fifth
Use of physical force (thuggery)	.26	142131227.16	.001	Seventh
Going to law court	.25	130790174.86	.001	Eighth
Using the police	.25	128365814.30	.001	Eighth
Applying town union Constitution	.24	130438054.92	.001	Tenth

An examination of the standardized beta coefficients in Table 9 above, reveals that apart from the highest preferred resolution method - allowing those in dispute to nominate a mediator, which can be classified either as indigenous or foreign, the next three preferred methods of resolution (use of elders including traditional rulers, covenant-making and use of age grades) are clearly indigenous.

On the other hand, the three least preferred methods of resolving town union conflicts (application of town union constitution, use of police and going to law court) are undoubtedly foreign in nature. These results aptly confirmed Study Assumption 5.

Anigbo (1985) ravers that the source of appeal of traditional methods of conflict resolution remains its emphasis on reconciling parties in dispute in such a way that they will continue their cordial relationship after the conflict. This is at variance with the foreign equivalent which is mostly interested in knowing facts of the matter and using the same to resolve the conflict. It is not concerned to a large extent with what happens to the relationship of the disputants after the conflict. Equally important is the fact that the criminal justice system in Nigeria is never known not to be repressive of the downtrodden. The traditional method uses commensality to ensure that social relationship prior the conflict is not

disrupted. The high cost of litigation associated with modern method, makes the traditional equivalent more cost- effective.

By endorsing this preference for traditional method, this study shows the disdain with which the criminal justice system in the country is seen. It shows that, even the constitutions with which most TUs operate, do not make sense to their members (Onyegbulu, 2011). It suggests a shift in paradigm to ensure town unions are structured according to cultural preferences of their people. A community leader in Isiagu asked: ‘What type of meeting do you expect me to be having with somebody who sued me to court?’ In the communities studied, the police are dreaded and avoided. Hence they were asked to leave in *Isiagu* for the general election of TU officials to proceed. It is the fear of being detained by the police, which makes some indigenes of Isiagu to avoid attending their TU meetings.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1 Summary**

The desire to know what constitutes internal and external sources of conflicts facing town unions in the state, motivated this study was carried out. Two conflict towns: Nri Kingdom and Isiagu were sampled as conflict towns. Amansea, seen as relatively peaceful was selected purposively as a no conflict town.

**5.1.1 Internal sources of conflicts within TU in Anambra State**

Findings on internal sources of conflicts facing town unions showed that leadership struggle among its members, was a pronounced factor. It was more pronounced in conflict than in no conflict towns. It was associated with traditional institution in conflict towns. It prevailed there due to variables like: settlement patterns, myths of origin, superiority contest, desire to be recognized in the community as an influential person, desire to belong to Anambra State Association of Town Unions (ASATU) and desire to appropriate collective wealth. In the no- conflict town (*Amansea*), it manifested as silent violence (Waltz quoted in Adelokun 1991), Pull Him Down Syndrome (PHD), quest for money and reluctance to accept defeat after TU elections.

This study also found that conflicts within town unions can be generated by how the history of a community has affected their associational life. In communities presumed to be culturally monolithic, myths of origin, settlement patterns and prejudice prevail. They determine interaction dynamics in associational life of the TU. This observation has been associated with ethnic conflicts in Nigerian cities by scholars like Nzimiro (2001), Osaghae and Suberu (2005) and Nnoli (2008). Also, Benabeh (2012) sees it as central in discussing issue of citizenship in Africa. This study showed how the conflict between ‘strangers’ and ‘sons-of-the-soil’ prevails in rural areas, and how it leads to conflict within town unions.

Analysis of in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted, showed poverty of accountability of town union monies as a source of conflict within the organizations. Many developmental projects the study assumed were abandoned

by town unions were in fact abandoned because of poverty of accountability by government officials and their private partners involved in policy implementation at the grassroots.

It was also found in this study that role ascription, along gender and cult slave membership, was not a pronounced source of internal conflicts within town unions in the state. This study had shown that *osu* phenomenon among the Igbo, is not a cultural universal in the area. It is not practiced in the research settings of this study. It is therefore with great caution that people should read the contributions of scholars like (Achebe, 1960; Imagene, 1993; Francis, 2007; Nwosu, 2009), on the *osu* caste system among the Igbo.

### **5.1.2 External sources of conflicts facing TUs in Anambra State**

State governments' financial allocation to the communities has been found in this study, to be an external source of conflict in town unions. In-depth interviews revealed that the reason for the release, according to government officials, is to enable governments influence reach the grassroots, especially during festive periods and in this era of Millennium Development Goals implementation.

The latent consequence of the financial release has been the increasing frequency of misgivings, infightings and silent conflicts among members of town union. This study failed to establish traditional rulers as external sources of conflicts facing town union. In fact, the struggle for traditional rulership which affected the smooth functioning of town unions of Isiagu *and* Nri kingdom arose because of the death of their traditional rulers and the appropriate method of filling their position. In Amansea (the no- conflict town) a rapport existed between the traditional ruler and the President-General of the town union. The Anambra State Edict No.22 of 1986 separated the two institutions in community administration. In communities where the separation is highly emphasized, conflict tends to arise. The Anambra State Government, through her agents, often influences the conflict. In no conflict towns the two bodies tend to work hand in hand. Government tends to play divide and rule function in the event of conflict arising among members of town union. Its institutions can be manipulated at will to ensure the disadvantaged groups are dominated in troubled communities. Government can ignore court orders restraining it from carrying out

undemocratic policies. This is not at variance with what is happening at the national level. In fact, in Amansea where relative peace prevails, the Anambra State Government deprived the community of getting guns and patrol vehicles for their vigilante services. The traditional ruler is said to be, not in good terms with the then governor over election related conflict.

This finding lends support to that of Obikwelu (2008) and Okafor (2010) where the state government was accused of creating conflict within communities it believes does not support it politically.

### **5.1.3 Effects of TU conflicts on infrastructural development**

This study has shown that due to conflict facing town union, they don't easily initiate and pursue new development projects. While some members avoid town union meetings, some attend to advance sectarian decisions.

It is not correct to assume that because of conflict, members of town union will not pay their fines and levies as imposed by town unions. Again it is found that conflict is not associated with uneven allocation of amenities by town union within their communities. Conflict according to the findings, does not constrain members of town union from getting their entitlements. It does not inhibit the provision of new amenities to the communities. In fact the state can reach out to troubled communities as part of her responsibility to the governed.

Unlike in the past, when TUs offered scholarship to children of indigent members of their communities, our findings through IDI and KII showed that town unions do not consider such scholarship gestures as part of their responsibility to their people at the moment. Many villages and indeed families, now have well-off members who can assist indigent blood relatives in this regard. Finally, town union conflicts have not had negative effects on rural roads in the state.

### **5.1.4 Prevailing methods of conflict resolution within TUs in Anambra state**

It is also evident from this study that conflicts due to clash of interests from year 2000 till date, tend to be solved using the constitutional provisions of town union. Conflicts arising out of value incongruence tend to be addressed by using machinery of civil society administration. This includes traditional rulers

and in extreme cases, coercive agents of the state. Value related conflicts are characterized by zero-sum game. It is a win or lose situation, for e.g conflict over *Eze Nri*. In such situations, the state is resorted to because it is the ultimate source of political authority. It is a right it exercises through such measures as recognizing traditional rulers, monitoring and legalizing town union elections, imposing caretaker committees when it feels the need arises. Unfortunately, because most policy makers at the state level come from different communities of the state, the objectivity of the state in conflict handling can be compromised. Thus, Ibeanu and Onu (2001) found that about 68% of conflicts in communities in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria occur in Anambra State. It is important to note that from year 2000 to date, the constitution is a pronounced method of resolving conflicts relating to leadership problems, sharing of amenities, and members neglecting their duties.

#### **5.1.5 Preferred methods of conflict resolution by members of TUs in Anambra state**

This study answered the fifth research question by endorsing the Study Assumption 5 which stated that the traditional methods of conflict resolution will be preferred over the foreign equivalent. Use of mediators in event of conflict is an accepted method of conflict resolution among the Igbo. It is at variance with the values placed on going to the court or even inviting the police. Application of the constitution was least preferred. This outcome suggests that the current use of the constitution in resolving town union conflicts is not satisfactory to many members of TUs in the state.

## **5.2 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. Poverty of accountability, 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.

### **5.3 Study Recommendations**

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

First, 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. This also implies that, Presidents-General of town unions are to be encouraged to work hand in hand with the traditional rulers of their communities. Existing legal framework that separates the two institutions at the moment should be reviewed.

Second, 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.

Third, 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.

In general, much advocacy has to be made towards conscientising agents of the criminal justice system (like the police, court and prisons) on the imperatives of respecting institutional values of the state. Most importantly, public office holders should be encouraged to appreciate the need to be public service-oriented as opposed to being self-seeking, which prevails at the moment not only in the leadership of the state, but also that of TUs within its` components communities.

It is with caution that people should discuss the cult slave institution among the Igbo. Since it is not a cultural universal among the people, a study is hereby recommended to ascertain situational realities underlying its` emergence and possible persistence.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Sociology,  
University of Ibadan,  
June, 2011.

Dear Respondent,

I am a student in the above institution. I am carrying out a study on sources and effects of socio- political conflicts facing town unions in Anambra State. I also want to know existing methods of conflict resolution as well as preferred conflict resolution methods by members of town union in the state.

Your community and you have been selected for the study. Please assist by answering the questions below as honestly as you can. Your name is not required. The answers you will give, will not be used against you, your family, village or town.

Thank you.

**Obiajulu, Andrew**

Please show your answer by ticking the option that suits your view.

1. What is your sex?  
(1) Male ( )  
(2) Female ( )
2. What is your age last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_yrs
3. What do you do for a living?  
(1) Civil Servant ( )  
(2) Vigilante service ( )  
(3) Community Leader ( )  
(4) Politician ( )  
(5) Religious Leader ( )  
(6) Others ( )
4. What is your highest formal Educational attainment?  
(1) No formal education ( )  
(2) Primary School ( )  
(3) Secondary School ( )  
(4) Above Secondary ( )
5. What is the name of your town? -----
6. What is the name of your village in your own town?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your marital status?
- (1) Married ( )  
 (2) Single ( )  
 (3) Widowed ( )  
 (4) Separated ( )
8. What is the name of your religious group (denomination)?
- (1) Catholic ( )  
 (2) Anglican ( )  
 (3) Pentecostal ( )  
 (4) Others ( )
9. Where do you live most of the time?
- (1) In the city ( )  
 (2) In the village ( )
10. Were you born & raised in the city (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
11. Are you a member of the town union of your community?
- (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
12. How long? (1) Less than 2yrs ( ) (2) 2 yrs and above ( )  
 In each of the statements below, show by ticking (√) in one of the options, how you see it as a source of conflict within your town union.
13. Is struggle for leadership position by members of your town union a source of conflict within it?. (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
14. If yes is your answer give three reasons why the struggle occurs. (1)-----  
 ----- (2)-----  
 ----- (3)-----
15. Do you see inability of your town union officials to give a good account of how they handle town union monies and other affairs as a source of conflict within it?
- (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
16. If you agreed to the last question, mention three instances when your town union leaders could not give an acceptable account of their services since year 2000.
- (1)----- (2) ----- (3) -----  
 -----
17. Is assigning certain functions to males and females within your town union a source of conflict within it? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )

18. If yes is your answer, mention three instances where assigning such functions have led to conflict in your town union since year 2000.  
 (1)----- (2)----- (3)-----  
 -----
19. Do you see Cult ‘slaves’ (Osu) descendants have limited roles to play in your union as a source of conflict within it. (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
20. If yes is your answer, mention three instances when conflict has occurred in your town union because of such discriminations since year 2000.  
 (1)----- (2)----- (3)-----  
 -----
21. Is unequal distribution of amenities (hospitals, bore holes, road construction etc) in your town by your town union a source of conflict within it?  
 (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
22. If Yes is your answer, mention three instances when members of your town union have disagreed because of unequal allocation of amenities since year2000. (1)-----  
 -----(2)----- (3)-----
23. Is State government’s financial allocation to your town union a source of conflict within it?  
 (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
24. Does the state government creating a caretaker committee to run the affairs of your town constitute a source of conflict within it?  
 (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
25. Has the Traditional Ruler of your town ever insisted on approving who becomes the president –general of your town union?  
 (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
26. If yes is your answer; do you see this as a source of conflict?  
 (1) Yes (2) No
27. Has the traditional ruler of your town ever disagreed you’re your town union officials over where amenities should be cited in the town?  
 (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )

28. If Yes is your answer, mention three instances when such disagreements have occurred since year 2000 (1)----- (2)-----  
----- (3)-----
29. Is it correct to say that because of conflicts within your town union you don't feel like contributing to development projects the union undertakes?  
(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
30. Can one say also that because of conflicts within your town union, your village in your town has received more amenities than before?.  
(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
31. Has conflict within your town union made your village of your town, not to receive more amenities (e.g. roads, borehole, schools etc) like others?  
(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
32. Has conflict within your town union made you to form or join another faction of your town union? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
33. Can you say that conflict within your town union has made it difficult for the organization to begin new development projects? (1) Yes ( )  
(2) No ( )
34. Is it correct to conclude that because of the conflict within your town union, you hardly attend their meetings? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
35. Can one also conclude that because of the conflict in your town union you hardly pay your fines and levies as imposed by the union?  
(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
36. Has conflict in your town union affected your ability to get your entitlements as a member of the union? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
37. Can one conclude that because of conflict in your TU, no new amenity (school, hospital, pipe borne water etc) has been built by the town since year 2000? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
38. Has the conflict prevented the town union from offering scholarships to indigent students since year 2000? (1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )
39. Can you conclude that because of conflict in your TU, amenities like rural road network have been in a bad shape since year 2000?  
(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )

How have the following types of conflicts with your town union been resolved since year 2000? Tick more than one option if applicable.

40	Leadership related conflicts	Inviting the police	1
		Going to court	2
		Using the constitution of the town union	3
		Involving the traditional rulers	4
		Others	5
41	Conflict over sharing of amenities.	Inviting the police	1
		Going to court	2
		Using the constitution of your town union	3
		Involving the traditional rulers	4
		Others	5
42	Conflict arising from members neglecting their duties.	Applying the constitution	1
		Inviting the police	2
		Going to court	3
		Involving the traditional rulers	4
		Others	5
43	Conflict arising from use of force by some members to run the association.	Inviting the police	1
		Going to court	2
		Involving the traditional rulers	3
		Forming another town union	4
		Others	5
44	Conflict arising from violating your constitution.	Applying punishment provided	1
		Inviting the police	2
		Going to court	3
		Involving traditional rulers	4
		Others	5
45	Conflict arising from inability of your town union to provide amenities fairly to all sections of your town.	Selecting another leadership of the union	1
		Going to court	2
		Inviting the police	3
		Petitioning the government	4
		Others	5
46	Are there conflict situations in your town which your town union ignores to address?	(1) Yes ( ) (2) No ( )	
47	If yes is your answer please list four of such cases	(1) ----- -----(2)------(3)------(4)-----	



**In the statements below show by ticking any of the options, how you prefer each of the statements as a method of resolving conflicts within your town union.**

METHOD	LEVELS OF PREFERENCE			
	1-not preferred	2-slightly preferred	3-highly preferred	
48	Going to law court	1	2	3
49	Using the police	1	2	3
50	Applying constitution of your town union	1	2	3
51	Covenant-making (Igba ndu)	1	2	3
52	Inviting a third party to listen to both sides	1	2	3
53	Use of age grades	1	2	3
54	Use of elders including traditional rulers.	1	2	3
55	Use of physical force (thuggery)	1	2	3
56	Allowing those in dispute to nominate a mediator	1	2	3
57	Inviting the church officials to administer an oath using the bible	1	2	3
Thank you for your kind assistance				

## APPENDIX 2

### KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Department of Sociology  
University of Ibadan  
June, 2011.

Dear respondent,

My name is----- and I am working with-----  
----- and----- .We are here to discuss with you,  
your views on how the influence of financial releases by the state government  
and the imposition of care taker committees on some town unions(TU) influence  
conflict profile of TUs in Anambra state. This is to enable us know if these roles  
of the state, affect negatively members participation in TU affairs. You have been  
selected for this discussion in recognition of your various contributions to  
ensuring peace in many communities of the state.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** The questions you are going to be asked are purely for  
academic purpose. Your name is not required. Nobody is going to use any of the  
views you are going to express against you or any member of your family, village  
or community.

#### **RULES**

Our discussions will last about an hour and half. It is our intention to capture the  
discussions on audio tape. This is to enable us remember most of the things we  
are going to say.

#### **CONSENT**

Can we proceed?

Yes (Interview proceeds)

No (Interview terminates)

For government officials

1. In your view, why does the Anambra state government make periodic  
financial releases to TU when the local government is supposed to care for  
their needs?

Probe for demands by traditional rulers, presidents-general of town unions,  
agitation from communities.

2. Are there guidelines for such releases? Please list them.
3. Has your ministry received complaints from members of town unions with  
respect to such releases?

Probe for demands for involvement by the traditional rulers, presidents –  
general of TU, .community/ward leaders in its utilization.

4. How are such complaints handled by your ministry?

5. What is your view on the statement that such allocations have caused conflict in TU?
6. Under what conditions does the state government create caretaker committees for TU?
7. What types of complaints do some members of TU make against the committee?  
Probe for corrupt enrichment, taking sides in a dispute, misinforming the community and the state.
8. What is your view on the statement that members of the committee do not carry many members of TU along in running the affairs of the organization?
9. Can members of the committee, initiate, execute and stop development projects in communities they operate?
10. What is your view on the statement that some members of TU do not want to be involved in what the committee members do with the TU?
11. Please suggest ways through which conflicts facing TU can be minimized and active participation of its members promoted.

For other participants (traditional rulers` representatives and ward leaders)

12. What are those reasons behind internal quarrellings within Town Unions in Anambra State? Probe for leadership struggle, role ascription along gender. How does such a conflict prevail in your community?
13. What are those things that exist outside your TU, which makes its members to be quarelling since year 2000? Probe for traditional rulers interference, creation of caretaker committees, financial releases etc.
14. How has the conflict in your TU affected what the organization does to improve your town e.g. building of new schools, hospitals, etc?  
Probe for distribution of amenities, getting of entitlements, etc.
15. How are conflicts like leadership struggle, violating the constitution, using force to get ones way, handled in your TU at the moment?
16. What type of conflict resolution do you think will make your TU more peaceful? Probe for use of mediator, use of elders, the police, court etc. How do you think TU will be made to walk better?

Thank you for your patience and kind co-operation



3. Do you think that there are activities of your traditional ruler which makes your town union to disagree with him?  
Probe for his insistence on influencing leadership of the town union: where amenities should be cited, empowering or not empowering the culturally disadvantaged in running town union affairs etc
4. Are satisfied with the ways your town union is administered?  
Probe for reasons for satisfaction and or dissatisfaction.
5. How is the PG of your TU union chosen?
6. Is your traditional ruler involved in the selection process?
7. In what areas does the traditional ruler of your town receive poor co-operation from members of your TU?
8. In what areas do they work hand in hand?
9. Has the state government intervened in the running of the affairs of your TU?  
Probe for reasons for this development are you happy with the way the state government relates to your TU?
10. What makes you satisfied?
11. Why are you dissatisfied?  
Probe for the effects of financial allocations to the TU, creation of caretaker committees, judicial panels of inquiries
12. How does your TU handle conflict within its members?
13. Are there conflict situations they have successfully resolved?
14. Identify the conflict situations they have been unable to solve.
15. How has the conflict facing your TU affected its activities?  
Probe for its effects on member's participation in its affairs, especially provision of infrastructural facilities etc.
16. How do you think that your TU should be made more viable?  
Suggest some ways through which conflicts within your TU can be handled to achieve greater participation of its members  
  
Probe for preferred methods of conflict resolution.

Thank you for your kind assistance.