

**CHANGING NATURE OF CONFLICT IN IGBO COMMUNITIES: A  
STUDY OF CONFLICTS IN NAWFIA SINCE THE PRE-COLONIAL  
TIMES TO 2000**

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**Abstract**

*Conflict has been a conspicuous item of inter-group relations among Igbo communities sine the pre-colonial times. It has had different dimensions and it was either inter-communal or intra-communal. This study explicates the nature of conflict in Nawfia both in the times before contact with Europe and the periods after the Europeans had left. Empirical observations have shown that conflicts have continued to inform the dynamics of relationship between Nawfia and its neighbours, even up till the recent times. With the adoption of the eclectic method of research and the historical approach of documentation and analysis, this study finds that there have been elaborate military alliance system adopted by Igbo communities during warfare, and this alliance system had gone a long way to determine the outcome of conflicts. The Amakom War, which was a war between Nawfia and an alliance of several neighbouring communities, underscores the foregoing. The study also finds other causes of conflict in the contemporary Igbo society through the study of the leadership debacle in Ozo title institution and the kingship tussle in Nawfia.*

**Introduction**

One may boldly aver that conflict is a component of natural order of life. This is because human behaviour tends to breed or stimulate conflict situations. However, some thoughts believe that conflict can be kept at bay perpetually, in other words, man can exist outside conflict situations. In fact, Functionalists stress the importance of value consensus in society, and do not recognise that conflict may occur. To Functionalists, any conflict that does occur is seen as temporary and counteracted, as society becomes better.<sup>39</sup> Of course, one may argue that the Functionalist approach as seen above is basically utopian. Be that

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<sup>39</sup> P. Covington, "Marxism: Structural Conflict Theory," *Marxism: Structural Conflict Theory*/23/4/98/P.Covington/blue disc, 1994, (Accessed on 08/03/21)

as it may, the thought is liberal and progressive in political outlook.<sup>40</sup> However, one may not lose sight of the nature of man, which has shown to possess elements that could trigger conflict. In the light of the foregoing, Sigmund Freud captures the ever-presence of conflict in humanity in a statement which goes thus:

*The history of human civilization shows beyond any doubt that there is an intimate connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct; but nothing has been done towards explaining the connection, apart from laying emphasis on the aggressive factor in the libido.*<sup>41</sup>

While Freud appears to suggest that man is innately prone to hostility without any known remedy for the “ailment” in sight, Dalai Lama infers that the hostile nature of man could be tamed if the individual is made to be aware of the necessity of peace and peaceful co-existence. Lama’s words go thus:

*Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way. . . . Peace must first be developed within an individual. And I believe that love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world.*<sup>42</sup>

Nonetheless, it is important to make it clear that conflict is neither an ever-present fact of life, nor a mere sign of process dysfunction. Rather, conflict is the product of goal and behaviour misalignment between two or more parties.<sup>43</sup>

In explicating the dynamics of contact among the Igbo people since the pre-colonial times, authorities in Igbo history have provided insights into the nature of conflict situations that emanated at one point in history or the other among

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<sup>40</sup> John Holmwood, “Functionalism and Its Critics,” *Historical Developments and Theoretical Approach in Sociology*, Vol. 2, (2020): 1.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Webel, “Toward a philosophy and Metapsychology of Peace,” in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung (eds), *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, New York: Routledge, 2007, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Webel, “Toward a philosophy,” 3.

<sup>43</sup> Abuoma C. Agajelu and Stella C. Agbanyim, “Intra-Communal Conflicts in Post-Colonial Igboland, the Agulu Case, 1990-2002,” *KDJAS: Kenneth Dike Journal of African Studies*, Vol.1 (2) (2020): 181.

the divergent neighbouring groups. Elizabeth Isichei observes that the nineteenth century was a period of “almost continuous wars, war which emerge, in the oral traditions of its many little states, as perhaps the dominating fact of their nineteenth-century history.”<sup>44</sup> Even though wars and conflicts in Igboland appear to be more elaborate and costly by the nineteenth century, probably due to increasingly availability and use of firearms,<sup>45</sup> one would not lose sight of the nature of warfare in the enclave in the earlier times.

The paper goes on to document and analyse the nature and changing patterns of both inter and intra-communal conflict in Nawfia through the pre-colonial era to the more contemporary times. Nawfia lies within the latitude 6°09'N and longitude 7°01'E, in the tropical rain forest belt east of the Niger River. The community is found in Njikoka Local Government Area in Anambra State and it belongs to the ancient Umunri clan. Other communities of Umunri clan include Enugwu-Ukwu, Enugwu-Agidi, Amawbia, Ora-Eri, Aguleri, and Igbariam. The community lies approximately five kilometres south of Awka and is bounded by Enugwu-Ukwu in the south, Amawbia in the north, Nise in the east and Enugwu-Agidi in the west.<sup>46</sup>

The paper is organised in sections. The first section examines the nature of inter-communal conflict in the Nawfia community at some periods in the pre-colonial time. The second section analyses the Ozo title controversies in the community, while the third section explicates the contemporary kingship tussle in Nawfia.

## **Inter-Communal Conflict in Nawfia in the Pre-Colonial Times**

### **Nawfia and its Neighbours.**

The study of inter-groups relations provides an insight into the aspects of the history of African societies, especially the aspect that examines conflict situations among various neighbouring communities. This is because in the study of inter-group relations, the political, social and economic history of the communities under study is covered. Because the study of inter-group relations in history has the tendencies of wide coverage, one may say that it has become an important aspect of African historiography. Similarly, the study of different

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<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People*, London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1976, 75.

<sup>45</sup> Isichei, *A History of the Igbo*, 75.

<sup>46</sup> C.K. Ekweozor, *Perspectives on Nawfia History and Jewish Connection*, Nawfia: Ezedumueme Book Publishers, 2001, 1.

aspects of Igbo history through inter-group relations has gone a long way to open up the interior Igbo communities to the world.

Nawfia and the communities that share a common boundary or close proximity with it have had various levels of relations since the pre-colonial times, including states of hostility and cordiality. Some of these communities include Abagana, Enugwu-Ukwu, Umuunnachi, Ukpo, Ifitedunu, Enugwu-Agidi and Awka.<sup>47</sup> The contacts among these communities continued in the colonial and post-colonial times. There are only some areas of changes brought about by colonialism and the Nigeria-Biafra war. Furthermore, Nawfia established relations with her neighbours in different aspect of life and these included the political, social, cultural, religious and economic aspects.

One of the importance of the study of inter-group relations between Nawfia and its neighbours is on the need to ascertain the possible ancestral link between any of the communities and possible causes of hostility that may have developed at some point in their contacts. For example, some sources claim that Nawfia, Enugwu-Ukwu and Enugwu-Agidi share a common ancestor.<sup>48</sup> This is predicated on the fact that these neighbouring communities belong to the same clan, which is the Umu Nri Clan. The evidence of the sustained contacts between Nawfia and its neighbours is seen in some of the similarities in the traditional institutions. For example, the rites and rituals of a female title institution known as *Ndindi* in Nawfia are closely similar to that of Enugwu-Ukwu.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, it is a popular and acceptable assumption that Nawfia, Enugwu-Ukwu and Abagana people share the same patterns of trade and industry, which has to do with civil engineering and construction.<sup>50</sup>

Relations within the Umu-Nri Clan. Generally speaking, the people of Nawfia interacted peacefully with their neighbours of Umu-Nri clan both before and after colonialism. Other communities of Umu-Nri Clan are Enugwu-Ukwu,

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<sup>47</sup> C.J. Udeh, "Nawfia and Her Neighbours, 1918-1991," An Unpublished B.A. Project Submitted to the Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 2016, 24.

<sup>48</sup> D.E. Aguoji, *Storms and Deaths in Nawfia, the Truth as it is*, Suleja: J.O. Collins Educational Press, 2003, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Aguoji, *Storms and Deaths...*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ikenna Okafor, 37years, Businessman, Interviewed at Nawfia on August 7, 2018.

Enugwu-Agidi, Amawbia and Agukwu-Nri.<sup>51</sup> These members of Umunri Clan have one contiguous landmass. The nature of their relations was economic, political, and social.

Economically, these communities had their major market days in such a way that they easily rotated their commercial activities among themselves. Thus, Enugwu-Ukwu had Nkwo market, Enugwu-Agidi had Eke market, Amawbia equally had Eke market, the people of Agukwu Nri established the Oye market popularly known as Oye-tolo, and Nawfia had Afor market also known as Afor Idengeli.<sup>52</sup>

Politically, the coronation of Eze Nri was always preceded by the visit of the incumbent candidate to Enugwu-Ukwu, Nawfia, Enugwu-Agidi and most importantly Agbanabo in Aguleri. In Nawfia, the candidate was received at the Ogilisi Okponu in Umuriam Obunese village. There the candidate would receive the blessing, loyalty and mandate of Nawfia to ascend the throne of Eze Nri. The Eze Nri was paramount to all members of Nri Clan. During the coronation ceremony and other important ceremonies like Igu-Aro, all the clan members were always represented.<sup>53</sup> These activities strengthen the bond of Umu Nri, thereby enhancing relatively cordial political relations between Nawfia and some of its neighbours.

However, it would be self-denial to state or assume that the political relations between Nawfia and its neighbours were bereft of conflicts. Conflict is bound to arise in any human relations. Nawfia, therefore, fought several wars with some of its neighbours.

### **The Amakom War**

It was reported that war erupted between Nawfia and Enugwu-Ukwu in the pre-colonial times and Nawfia warriors routed their counterparts from Enugwu-Ukwu and decisively defeated them.<sup>54</sup> Enugwu-Ukwu people went ahead to harbour vendetta against Nawfia. The former secured a military

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<sup>51</sup> C.K. Ekweozor, *Perspectives on Nawfia History and Jewish Connection*, Nawfia: Ezedumueme Book Publishers, 2001, 54.

<sup>52</sup> Ekweozor, *Perspectives...*, 54; corroborated by Eric Okafor, 65years, Ozo title holder/businessman, interviewed in Nawfia on January 20, 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Ekweozor, *Perspectives...*, 54; corroborated by Henry Meniru, 98years, Retired civil servant, interviewed in Nawfia on October 20, 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Okeke Nnabuenyi, 97years, Retired hunter and farmer, interviewed in Umuriam, Nawfia on October 19, 2018.

alliance with eight other communities. These communities included Awka, Nimo, Abagana, Abba, Enugwu-Agidi, Ukpo, Nise, and Okpuno. It was reported that among the contingent neighbours of Nawfia only Amawbia and Nibo stayed away from the coalition.<sup>55</sup> The coalition besieged Nawfia and the only outlet for non-belligerents was the Amawbia and Nibo routes. This enhanced the high casualties recorded on the side of Nawfia.<sup>56</sup>

It is popularly believed that the coalition was easily formed because most of the neighbouring communities were not happy that Nawfia was situated amongst them. This may be precipitated by the allegation against Nawfia by its neighbours of inviting the war-like Ada group, who were Aro mercenaries, to invade them on several occasions. In addition, the Awka people claimed that when the Ada group invaded them they identified a man from Nawfia among the invaders. However, the accusations leveled on Nawfia community could be caused by the friendly relations which appeared to flourish between the people of Nawfia and the itinerant Aro traders. It was said that one of the prominent leaders of the Aro, Okoli Ijoma was married to a maiden from Nawfia. The Ada group, therefore, used Nawfia as a resting place whenever they invaded any area within the Awka axis. The alliance then agreed to remove Nawfia from amongst them and confiscate their farmlands, as well as to enjoy some level of immunity.<sup>57</sup>

According to reports, for many months Nawfia was besieged from many corners. The people remained behind their fortified walls and avoided frontal battles. As the war raged on, Nawfia was hard-pressed from all fronts. The community's leaders of thought from all the villages converged at the Eke central square and took far-reaching decisions on how to turn the tide of the war on their favour. One of the decisions taken was that any village or family that would make Nawfia win the war should henceforth possess the Isi Ozo indefinitely. The Isi Ozo was the head of Ozo title institution in Nawfia.

The Umuriam long distance traders, buoyed by the pronouncement of the leaders of thought, left in the town in search of a powerful medicine man (*dibia*) to prepare some effective war charms for the Nawfia warriors. The outcome of this venture was that many *dibia* were brought into Nawfia and they constituted themselves into a college of *dibia* that prepared various dangerous charms and

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<sup>55</sup> Aguoji, *Storms and Deaths...*, 35; corroborated by Ekweozor, *Perspectives...*, 58 and Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

<sup>56</sup> Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

<sup>57</sup> Ekweozor, *Perspectives...*, 58; corroborated by Aguoji, *Storms and Deaths...*, 36.

spells with which the invading coalition was incapacitated. The coalition subsequently withdrew and disbanded.<sup>58</sup>

Some notable Nawfia heroes of the Amakom war were Ichoku Oma, who was said to have gunned down a powerful *dibia* that led the coalition. The *dibia* was said to have been fortified with a kind of “bullet proof”, but his magic craft could not save him as Ichoku Oma may have been equipped with a more potent charm. Other heroes were Ekwena Osaeke, Ilikwu Igbo among others.<sup>59</sup>

Potent weapon of warfare within the area at the time appears to be deadly charms and spells. It was said that the warriors, who mostly consisted of members of younger age grade, were fortified with charms before engaging the enemy. In addition, some of the *dibia* were stationed at the warfront to plunge the invading forces in to confusion and disorder with their magic spells. While the younger groups fought at the warfront, the community elders stayed behind at the Eke central square performing the necessary sacrifices for the success of the warriors.<sup>60</sup>

The women also played important role in the war. Even though they were not directly engaging the enemy in battle, the women engaged in providing important welfare supplies for the fighting warriors. They equally engaged in economic activities that helped to community to sustain throughout the period of warfare. Interestingly, it is claimed in some quarters that at some point during the war, some able-bodied women were conscripted to fight. Nonetheless, those conscripted mostly served as sentries when there was a lull or a kind of break from engagement.<sup>61</sup>

The Amakom war caused heavy causality on Nawfia. The population of some kindred were said to have been drastically affected by the war. The kindred affected included Umu-Anugama, Umu-Ilikwu, Umu-Aga and Umu-Etele all in Umuriam village. The Umuriam kindred suffered most of the casualty because it was believed in some quarters that they nearly fought the war alone while other villages were protected.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Ozo Title Controversies**

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<sup>58</sup> Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

<sup>59</sup> Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

<sup>60</sup> Ekweozor, *Perspectives...*, 59.

<sup>61</sup> Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

<sup>62</sup> Kachi Ekweozor, 72years, Retired principal, interviewed in Nawfia on October 19, 2018.

The Ozo title institution was the highest socio-cultural institution in the Nawfia traditional society. However, the headship of Ozo Nawfia came under a highly contested debacle. It is popularly believed that the quarrel for the headship of the Ozo institution in Nawfia was as a result of the excesses of a man named Nwankwo Ekenye. However, some other people believed that the Umuriam Obunese people were laying undue claim to Isi Ozo thereby alleging Ekenye of fanning the embers of discord through his claims.

It is popularly believed that Ekenye claimed the Isi Ozo, which he did not have the customary right to be. The account has it that he wanted to snatch the Isi Ozo from Umuriam Obunese. To achieve his objective, Ekenye lured the rest of other village: Mmimi, Umukwa, and Ifite Mkpuise against Umuriam Obunese. He viciously wanted to end what he believed to have been undue dominance by Umuriam. The activities of the group put together by Ekenye gave rise to division and the concept of "Ifite-Enu na Ifite-Ani". Ifite-Enu consisted of Mmimi and Umukwa villages while Ifite-Ani comprised of Ifite Mkpuise village.<sup>63</sup>

It could be recalled that during the Amakom war, the leaders of thought in Nawfia agreed that any village that could help the community turn the tide of the war in their favour, the village would be made the perpetual head of the Ozo title institution (Isi Ozo). The people of Umuriam then took the initiative to find a means through which the war was won and were duly made perpetual Isi Ozo. C.K. Ekweozor buttressed this assertion in the following words:

*The perpetual headship of Ozo title institution Nawfia by Umuriam Obunese village was achieved and not prescribed. Nawfia town as a whole conferred the headship on Umuriam Obunese village as a reward for safeguarding the town during the "Amakom War" (Coalition war against Nawfia) a war during which nine neighbouring communities laid siege on Nawfia for many months with the intention of wiping out the people and sharing their farmlands.<sup>64</sup>*

Being aware of the motives of Ekenye and his group, Umuriam Obunese was said to have put up a stiff resistance. After a period of bitter debacle, Umuriam Obunese was subjected to swear an oath at a deity. Each of the kindred group

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<sup>63</sup> Cyril Ekweozor, 83years, Retired civil servant, interviewed in Umuriam village Nawfia on October 19, 2018.

<sup>64</sup> C.K. Ekweozor, *Nawfia and its Controversies from the Early Times to 1999 A.D.*, Nawfia: Ezedumueme Book Publishers, 2001, 5.

in Umuriam presented a representative for the oath-taking. The representatives and the villages they represented included:

- Esike family – Ichie Nwokoye Udeh
- Etele family – Ichie Oko Nwafor
- Anugama family – Ichie Nwabueze Udeaku
- Aga family – Ichie Enemuo Obidigwe
- Ilikwu family – Ichie Nwaegbunonu Nwankwo-Ntolo<sup>65</sup>

The claims on the seeming irresponsibility of Nwankwo Ekenye are partly predicated on the report that he suddenly disappeared on the day of the oath taking. According to Ekweozor's account:

*It is important to note that early in the morning of the day the oath was to be taken elder Nwankwo Ekenye sneaked out of Nawfia to a place very close to Nkwo market Enugwu-Ukwu where he was seen drinking palm wine and cracking jokes. In the evening he was equally seen trekking down from Enugwu-Ukwu across Umuriam Obunese village back to his house at Mmimi village.<sup>66</sup>*

There are some indications that Ekweozor's account may be near accurate as there are no ready counter-claims to it. Even though Ekenye's allies went on to administer the oath, the absence of their leader during the oath taking made the intents of the group opposing Umuriam Obunese's claim to Isi Ozo questionable.

Furthermore, it was believed that if the Umuriam Obunese people were guilty of usurping the Isi Ozo, the deity upon which the oath was administered would inflict mayhem on the representatives who took the oath on behalf of their respective kindred groups or even the entire Umuriam Obunese village within the year when the oath was taken.<sup>67</sup> The nature of the mayhem was a sudden death of the oath takers or male children in Umuriam Obunese. However, after one year there were no deaths among the representatives of Umuriam Obunese who took the oath. What is more, there were also no deaths recorded among the male children in the village.<sup>68</sup> In reaction to the foregoing, Ekweozor wrote, "...it was a glaring significance of the innocence of the oath takers in accordance with Umunri custom and traditions thus vindicating Umuriam Obunese

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<sup>65</sup> Cyril Ekweozor, interview cited.

<sup>66</sup> Ekweozor, *Nawfia and its Controversies*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Cyril Ekweozor, interview cited.

<sup>68</sup> Cyril Ekweozor, interview cited; corroborated by Okeke Nnabuenyi, interview cited.

village.”<sup>69</sup> The above incident brought to an end the Ozo title controversy in Nawfia and the Umuriam Obunese retained their position as Isi Ozo.

### **Kingship Tussle in Nawfia**

There was a rather protracted debacle related to succession to the throne of Eze Okpalariam of Nawfia in the recent times. The debacle started with the death of Chief Samuel Nwoguno in 1979. After his death, Nawfia was plunged into internal power tussle. Even though there was evidence of mutual suspicion and skirmishes, especially between Umuariam Obunese, who held onto the claim of headship, and some other villages, the quarrel became pronounced when the national party political struggle between the Nigerian People’s Party (NPP) and National Party of Nigeria (NPN) crept into the community. A complex situation where people from different villages laid claim to kingship and people of the same political party supported their member aspiring for kingship, ensued. This state of confusion and aggression further crept into the Nawfia Progressive Union (NPU).<sup>70</sup>

With the death of Chief Nwoguno, the executive of NPU agreed that the kingship of Nawfia would cease to be hereditary but instead be based on elections. However, in 1983, the town union government and the Igwe’s cabinet appeared to be unable to conduct a credible election. What is more, the domineering tendencies of Umuriam Obunese continued to manifest. They appeared to be influencing the governmental activities of NPU. As a result of the foregoing, most of the villages came together in what seemed like a conspiracy against Umuriam Obunese. Consequently, Umuriam became conspicuously isolated in the scheme of things in the community.<sup>71</sup>

Reasons averred for the conspiracy and isolation of Umuriam was that the village’s leaders wrote an application letter to the NPU nominating a man from the village, Ozo G.A. Ikebudu for the crown. It was alleged that without waiting for a response from NPU to their letter, the leaders of Umuriam went ahead to crown Ikebudu and paraded him as king.

The other villages faulted the actions of Umuariam Obunese on several grounds. They claimed that Umuriam went against the constitution that established the elective principle in the Nawfia monarchical system. They alleged that Umuariam directed their application letter to the NPU instead of the Igwe’s cabinet as indicated in the constitution. The norm was that

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<sup>69</sup> Ekweozor, *Nawfia and its Controversies*, 6.

<sup>70</sup> Okwudili Njike, 60years, Pharmacist, interviewed in Onitsha on January 24, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Okwudili Njike, interview cited.

applications go to the cabinet, which goes ahead to conduct a scrutiny and either accept or nullify the request based on the aspirants' qualifications for the kingship stool.<sup>72</sup>

Another allegation levelled against Umuriam Obunese was that they ignored the due process taken in the case of death, ill-health or long absence of the king. It was said that the kingship constitution at the time stipulated that by the death of a king; his absence due to sickness or other reasons, the head of the Igwe's cabinet should control the affairs of the community as the regent, till the successor could be declared. In other words, the appointment or conduct of the election of a successor was a part of the regent's duty.<sup>73</sup> The Umuriam were, therefore, accused of neglect this aspect of the provisions of the constitution.<sup>74</sup> The regent at the time was F.B.C Nwankwo, who formed a faction that rejected the crowing of Ikebudu. The community was subsequently torn into two factions, one aligning with Ikebudu while the other aligning with Nwankwo.<sup>75</sup>

At the height of the debacle in 1985, the Anambra State Local Government Board intervened and dissolved the NPU, the Igwe's cabinet and consequently suspended the kingship campaign pending six months of tentative reconstruction. On account of this, sixteen-man panel of caretaker committee was set up to control the affairs of the community. One man represented a ward in the sixteen wards in Nawfia. According to the code of conduct sent by the Njikoka Local Government on behalf of the Anambra State Local Government Board (nos. 4 and 5) "in the interim, the chairman of the caretaker committee shall be the accredited representative of Nawfia to this Local Government (at Abagana) and to work out the modalities and logistics for the reconstitution of the NPU and its formal executive."<sup>76</sup> As such, they were sent as novices as concerned the government of Nawfia community to ask questions and dig into fundamental grievances of the people. They were, however, assigned each man to his ward and to later on chose two different wards to ascertain their opinion on the impending problems and give reports.

In addition, the caretaker committee, which was bent on finding out the problems and device lasting solution to them, set out to organise seminars and meetings throughout the Christmas period of 1985. According to the committee, the initiative was adopted to "clear up the impediments or hurdles

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<sup>72</sup> The Constitution of Kingship in Nawfia, 30.

<sup>73</sup> Okwudili Njike, interview cited.

<sup>74</sup> Okwudili Njike, interview cited.

<sup>75</sup> Okwudili Njike, interview cited.

<sup>76</sup> Njikoka Local Government, Abagana. (Ref: NJLG/S.9/S.1/61) December 22, 1985, 1.

that may militate against the reign of peace in the society.”<sup>77</sup> These efforts culminated in a relatively peaceful solution and calm that subsequently returned to the community.

## Conclusion

Inter-group relations in some Igbo communities, as could be seen in this paper, is multi-faceted and through its study, one would be able to identify the nature of inter and intra-communal conflicts between different Igbo groups at different eras in history. Nawfia had its fair share of rifts with neighbours, and through empirical studies, the approach to state of hostilities were identified. For instance, during the Amakom War, the Nawfia people were faced by a formidable military alliance of several communities which constituted its neighbours. Even though the community (Nawfia) was known to have had powerful warriors, it was eventually routed. The losses recorded by Nawfia in the Amakom War underscores the role of geographical location in war strategies. The war goes on to show that military alliance was not basically a Western strategy, but that many entities which existed in the pre-colonial Igboland employed some of the war or defense strategies attributed to the West in the contemporary times.

The study goes on to explicate various weapons of warfare in the pre-colonial Igbo society. Nawfia people were known to make use of diviners known as *dibia*. What is more, basically involve in warfare were younger age groups, who made up the crux of the active belligerent warriors, while the elderly ones were known to have stayed back performing important rituals to ensure success or war victory. The foregoing provide further insight into the pre-colonial war strategies and tactics of the Igbo east of the Niger River.

Also identified in this study is leadership of the traditional title institutions as a major cause of conflict in Igbo societies, both in the pre-colonial and contemporary times. Of course, the Ozo title institution was the most highly revered institution in Nawfia, therefore, it was expected that its leadership may cause group or individual rifts in the community. The debacle for the headship of the Ozo title institution went ahead to cause intra-communal conflicts in the Nawfia community and the conflict appears to reflect on the relationship between villages in the community up to the contemporary times.

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<sup>77</sup> N.P.U. Caretaker Committee, Nawfia (Ref: N.P.U./cc/S.16) December 22, 1985, 3.

Kingship tussle has equally come to be a recurring conflict factor in most Igbo communities. As could be gleaned from the study, Nawfia had its fair share of kingship tussle and the tussle has equally stand out as a significant event of the community's contemporary history. In all, one could deduct the near absence of fisticuffs and bloodshed during intra-communal conflicts in Igbo communities in the contemporary times. This could underscore the communal togetherness of the people, which has been identified as pre-Igbo factor that pre-dates European incursion.