

An Appraisal of Intra Ethnic Conflict in Ebira Land: A Case of Ihima District in Nigeria up to 2007

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Abstract

The bend of this paper is to investigate the cause and impact of the violent crisis that engulfed the Ihima district in Ebira land. In carrying out this research, the study employed the following to collect data for the paper; fieldwork notes, thorough interviews of dramatic personae, eyewitness accounts, government investigation panels, other tertiary materials, and the view of stakeholders for proper understanding of the problem, the theory of Social Cubism is also employed in the study to help us locate the development in its proper perspective. To this end, the submission of the study is that the historical and belief system of the people which give cultural and traditional rights to the material and political control over the geo-political space cum the desperate need by politicians to sustain political support and loyalty with the return to democracy in 1999, were the causes of the violent conflict which led to massive loss of lives, property and the mutual distrust among the Ihima people of Ebira land.

Keywords: Conflict, Ebira-Land, Emani, Ihima, and Ohionwa.

Introduction

This study examines conflicts in Ebira Land with bias in Ihima's Emani-Ohionwa crisis, in present-day Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State in North Central Nigeria; the causes of the conflicts which have become recurrent, effects of the conflicts, it will also examine the view of stakeholders or principal actors, and the various measures adopted so far to resolve the crisis. The study also discerns that the conflict continued as politicians belonging to various political parties always exploit it for their political benefits.

Conceptual and Theoretic Analysis of Causes of Conflict in Africa Rural and Urban Settlements

To understand the complexity of the crisis in the Ihima district, it is appropriate to approach it from social cubism perspective. As a theory, social cubism has been adopted in fetching out challenges encountered in communities where violence has erupted and in assessing the appropriateness of the interventions invented to reduce the problem Social cubism was mostly used in explaining territorial conflicts, but this does not mean that it cannot be employed in explaining conflicts as a result of tussles between two antagonistic groups



because of control over the exertion of authority. It is a theory that posits that a critical understanding and interpretation of any phenomenon; will have to be seen from different angles or perspectives.¹

This approach is necessary for the understanding of the violent conflict that bedeviled the Ebira people of Ihima for a long period in Kogi state Nigeria. The theory explores conflict from historical, demographic, economic, psychological, religious, and political perspectives. Byrne and Carter posit that social cubism contains six interrelated aspects. These are also as follows:

The historical aspect of social cubism: That history is a powerful framework for understanding almost everything about human existence. As one aspect of social cubism, understanding historical factors helps people understand some of the reasons behind intergroup dynamics and relationships. This aspect fits in the Buffalo Tail conflict between the Emani and Ohionwa clans

The religious aspect of social cubism:- Religion is one of the most polarizing things known to man. For centuries, societies have fought and died because of religious differences. Concerning social cubism, exploring religious dynamics helps people comprehend how religious beliefs affect an intergroup relationship. In the case of Ihima the masquerade, a cult rivalry has shown how religious matters could lead to a crisis

A demographic aspect of social cubism:- Demographic factors are a crucial aspect of exploring ethnic conflict. At the centre of demography is the issue of population composition, especially the issue of who is in the minority or majority. The demographic expansion of the area's population was a serious challenge. A population explosion that is not managed can create conflict as history has demonstrated in the Mfecane in Southern Africa. In the case of Ihima, there has been conflict over farmland control and the numerical strength of the Ohionwa was a threat to the Emani in the face of democracy

The political aspect of social cubism:- The political landscape in any given society affects the way people and societies see each other. Societies, where political institutions are dominated by ethnic politics, run the risk of ethnic divisions that, if not dealt with properly, could eventually lead to group conflict. There was desperation between the groups to have political control over the community. Politically speaking, the division between the two clans over masquerade seniority, kola nut breaking, and custodianship of the Buffalo Tail affected the formation of party and candidature alliances since the return to democracy in 1999.

The economic aspect of social cubism: economic differences among ethnic groups have immense results on political stability in any given society. It is known that economic disparity exacerbates tension among people, communities, societies, and even nations, particularly among political institutions that practice favoritism and/or ethnic patronage. Just like the

¹Byrne S, and Carter,N "Social Cubism: Six Social Forces of Ethno territorial Politics in Northern Ireland and Quebec . Peace and Conflict Studies Vol. 3 (2) (1996)

Marxists will say it is the material condition of a place that determines its political worldview. The desire to control the economic resource of the area's antagonistic groups contributes to the constant political tension in the area thus its manifestation in the 2005 and 2007 crises as each group has wanted to control the area's economy via having to assess political, cultural, and traditional institutions.

The psychological aspect of social cubism:-Ethnic tension and emotions are known to escalate during conflict or crisis. Concerning ethnic conflicts, psychologists often try to analyze how changes in people and societal behaviours and actions affect intergroup perceptions of others during tense moments. This theory is apt in trying to comprehend the development in the area. The psycho-cultural theory of conflict indicates that religious, psychological, and other cultural incongruities are the origin of war some scholars claimed that psycho-cultural conflict takes a long to solve. In this type of conflict, desire for the culture overwhelms motive and fuels conflict behaviour. It is the theory that expresses that conflict is made by the mission to defend one's identity. Cultural identity is an unshakable sense of self-esteem that makes life significant and consists of the feeling that one is socially, psychologically, physically, and spiritually safe. This is manifested in the struggle over what is perceived by each group as cultural and traditional denial of birthright in the area

To be fair to Byrnes and Carter (1996) their concept did not suggest that every conflict could be analyzed using these six metrics of social cubism. Instead, they acknowledge the fact that different situations contain factors that relate differently. However, the use of this concept in the research carried out in the place of study ensured that conflict exploration was approached from different points of analysis. Again, the adoption of social cubism seems to be driven by a variety of factors. Therefore the use of social cubism theory in this study makes the research identify specific reasons that lead to the crisis in the area.

The Location of Ihima People and their Emergence

Ihima's attempt to avoid going to War with his elder ones as suggested by his mother made his escape to his present location (Okehi) and the area was named after him. Another account given by Anataku, a health worker in Ihima, said it was Ihima's quest to know more as he had an inquisitive nature despite being the youngest, which prompted him into an adventure in hunting and hence he settled on top of a hill called Okehi. Omananyi, in another version, said Ihima was a farmer and hunter who in search of fertile land and hunting ground, settled on a hilltop called Okehi, so he could view animals and subsequently the area was named after him, hence the word Ihima². Though various accounts have been given on the emergence of Ihima by different sources, One thing however is clear, and that is they all agreed that Ihima was the youngest son of the father of Ebira and that he must have settled in the present location either as an attempt to avoid going to war or in search of fertile land for farming and hunting purposes. They also agreed that Ihima was the father and founder of the Ihima people which has become a major district in the entire Ebiraland.

Hamza lay in his testimony, said upon the arrival of Ihima at his present location, excelled so much in farming and hunting, and he eventually married

²James Ajanaku Ozigi, Clergy, Oboroke, Ihima,

three wives and had six children from the three wives. The first wife gave birth to three children Ure, Ogu, and Odumi, the second wife had a child called Emani while the third wife gave birth to Oha and Ohionwa. During a prayer session of the children, which involved the breaking of the kola nut, the eldest Ure, prayed on the Kola nut, but could not break it due to old age. The Kola was then passed to Emani who broke it and said whoever breaks the kola nut is the senior. He then took a portion and ate, Ure and the others did not react, but Ohionwa frowned at that and challenged Emani's action claiming that Ure being the senior should have taken his portion before others. Ure was said to have stopped the emerging argument and said that seniority was of less importance to him. On this account, therefore, Emani began to claim seniority over the other clans. But Ohionwa challenged this by saying "since you have no regard for seniority, my generation will never respect you. An account also had it that Ihima had three wives the first gave birth to a child called Emani who was the senior, the second wife gave birth to three children Ure, Oha, and Odumi, while the third gave birth to Ohueta and Ohionwa. According to this account, Emani was the first child of Ihima, while Ohionwa was the last. A common thing in these accounts is that Emani is believed to be the first son while Ohionwa is the last son of Ihima and the other clans agreed with this assertion.

Conflicts in Ihima

Conflicts in Ihima dates back centuries and have evolved over the years taking different forms and dimensions and in some instances have resulted in serious crisis. They have occurred as a result of a clash of interest, cultural practices, title disputes, political uprisings, etc. when most of these conflicts are not properly nipped in the bud they resulted in a crisis, which has led to the destruction of properties and killing of lives in Ihima. The most notable conflict resulting in a severe crisis in Ihima is the series of crises that involved the Emani and Ohionwa clans which date back to the pre-colonial era. It has evolved over the years, taking different forms and dimensions and the most disastrous of these crises was the 2005 and 2007, which spiraled out of the control of the elders and a series of committees set up locally to arrest the situation but all failed until the law enforcement agents were drafted by the state government and the state government afterward set up a peace committee to address the long-standing issues. The crises of 2005 and 2007 have come to be known as "Ihima Crisis", because directly and indirectly, other clans have been brought in and the non-Ihima indigenes living in the area were affected.

Another conflict in the area was the Odumi intra-clan, which had to do with two contending houses for the Ohiomata's stool. This did not take a violent approach and was therefore not injurious or devastating like that of the Emani and Ohionwa.

Emani - Ohionwa Clash

History has it that, Emani and Ohionwa are both children of the father of Ihima (Onotu). It was believed that Emani was the eldest son of Onotu, while Ohionwa

was a younger son. Others are Ure, Oha, Odumi, and Ohueta. These six became the founders of the six clans named after them.³

According to oral sources, these six procreated and grew into clans. The clans lived together, intermarried, interrelated, grew up, and expanded under the same cultural belief. But while other clans have been able to manage their differences, the Emani and Ohionwa clans had always been at each other's neck and this situation had been long-standing, and had degenerated into a series of crises, resulting in all forms of physical attacks, destructions of properties, maiming, and killings.⁴ Records have it that the Ohionwa despite being the second youngest of all the clans are more populous and this may not be unconnected to the fact that the clan permits intra-clan marriage, while other clans abhor it. However, Emani is the eldest and is therefore recognized, respected, and regarded accordingly⁵

The rivalry between Emani and Ohionwa was age-long and had defied several attempts and steps for settlements over the years. Several attempts had been made by other clans, community leaders, religious leaders, clan heads, governmental bodies, and non-governmental organizations, such as Ihima Welfare Association, Ebira People's Associations, etc, yet no meaningful resolution had been reached. At some points when it seemed a breakthrough was in sight and relative peace recorded, the crisis erupted over and over again. This has come to make Ihima a hot spot in the entire Ebira land. The young and emerging generations of the clans have come to develop hatred for each other, even when they were not born when the crisis started, perhaps the young generations had been brainwashed by each of their progenitors into believing that they are each other's enemies.⁶ The six clans in Ihima had adopted titles or nomenclatures by which they addressed their heads. The clan heads and titles are; Obobanyi of Emani, Ogasube of Ure, Obobanyi of Ohueta, Obobanyi of Ohionwa, Idu of Oha, and Ohiomata of Odumi. While the other four clans have not had any serious issues, Emani and Ohionwa clans had been in the eyes of the storm of crisis in Ihima as it were. Between December 2005 and January 2006, Ihima witnessed a series of clannish disturbances between the Emani and Ohionwa, which resulted in the destruction, and loss of lives and properties, mainly houses, thereby rendering many people homeless, resulting in the attendant rise of Internally Displaced People (IDPS).

Causes of the Conflict

Conflicts and crises do not just occur, they are always attached or traced to a cause or causes, which might not be the same in all cases and this is the case between Emani and Ohionwa clans. The causes are both remote and immediate.

³Peter Obaro Peter Omanayi, Business man and Farmer, Ebako, Ihima, 57 years. 14/03/2016)

⁴ibidem

⁵ibidem

⁶Comfort Jimoh, Teacher, Obeiba, Ihima, 50 years. 14/03/2016.

Remote Causes**The Buffalo Tail Account**

The remote cause of the crisis can be traced historically to the acquisition of a Buffalo tail some centuries back, it was agreed within Ihima community then that clans could only install their clan heads after performing the feat of killing a rare white buffalo. Oral tradition has it that an Ohionwa hunter, who had a maternal uncle from Emani, killed a white buffalo and gave the tail to his uncle, who then used it to install himself as Emani clan head. When the Ohionwa hunter realized his mistake, he cunningly took possession of the buffalo tail to his paternal clan who equally used the same buffalo tail to install himself as Ohionwa⁷ James Obaro corroborated this by giving the name of the Ohionwa hunter as Ejita, who killed the white buffalo. Ohionwa who felt that it was their biological son that has achieved this feat, thought otherwise and that the tail should be taken to Ejita father's house and that they were supposed to use the tail to install their clan head or chief. They, therefore, began to scheme how to retrieve the buffalo tail from Emani's clan. Eventually, Ejita was able to retrieve the tail from his maternal grandfather through gimmicks. (James Ajanaku Ozigi, Clergy, Oboroke, Ihima, 52 years. 10/03/2016.)

The account of Peter Obaro threw more light on the tricks of Ejita. He pretended to be ill as he refused to go out and even get up for days, this got his grandfather worried, and consulted Oracles that revealed nothing was wrong with the boy. This lingered for a while until he was asked to allow the boy to perform some sacrifices and this, the boy consented and requested that a buffalo tail be needed for the supposed sacrifice and he promised to return the tail immediately after the sacrifice was done. But it was a trick to sneak the tail to his paternal home. The next thing that happened afterward was the shout of celebration in the house of Ohionwa which announced the installation of their clan head. And the tail was never returned, since then the two clans have remained on each other's neck.⁸ Hamza Layi opined that the remote cause can also be traced to a time in history when the six children of Ihima who were the fathers of the six clans gathered for prayers that involved the breaking of Kola nut. Ure was said to be the eldest according to him and after praying on the Kola nut, but for lack of strength due to old age could not break the Kola nut. It was therefore passed to Emani to break and allow Ure to take his share first as tradition demands. But Emani broke it and took his share before others and he claimed that whoever breaks Kola nut is the senior. This Ure felt was nothing to him and therefore other clans were silent about it, but Ohionwa objected sharply and queried Emani immediately and concluded by saying that since Emani has refused to recognize seniority, the descendants of Ohionwa would never respect or regard Emani as their senior. This again set the stage for conflict between Emani and Ohionwa.⁹

This source was never corroborated by any other in the course of interviews. The choice of capturing it in this work was based on the other information given

⁷chief. Hon James Adeku Obaro, Politician, Iruvusechi, Ihima. 55 years. 10/03/2016

⁸F. Folaranmi, esq, Solicitor to HRH Late Siyaka Okaraga, No.1 Inoziomi Layout Okene. 11/03/2016

⁹Jimoh Alao, Brick Layer, Obeiba 62 years 14/03/2016

by the same source that was corroborated by many other sources including members of the two warring parties. The Kola nut incidence became the basis upon which Emani is regarded as the eldest.

The Masquerade Cult Controversy

Another remote cause of the crisis was strongly enshrined in the cultural practices of the two warring parties. Masquerade outing has been a common cultural practice of the Ebira nation and Ihima was therefore not an exemption. In Ihima, each clan had masquerades that perform during traditional festive periods; the most popular of these festive periods are "Eche Ori" (New Yam festival) and "Ekuechi" (masquerade festival).¹⁰ For this work, we shall limit our scope of masquerade outings to Emani and Ohionwa only.

Emani was said to have masquerades like Kereni and Evako, there are other smaller masquerades in the clan, but these two are the most popular in terms of massive followership, spiritual significance, wider viewing, great sponsorship and are mostly recognized across the entire Ebira land. Ohionwa, on the other hand, had Arijanu and Ura who are considered to equally have massive followership, spiritual influence, wider viewing, great sponsorship, and a huge fan base.¹¹

A major characteristic of these masquerades is their ingenuity in terms of song compositions which attracted a huge fan base. These songs are highly philosophical and embedded in strong spiritual and moral wisdom. But records had it that they had also used their ingenuity in singing to compose songs aimed at attacking each other's clan and as such created a platform for a great rivalry between each other, this again increased the tension between the two. It is also important to know that some of these masquerades don't perform at the same period, while some do.¹² For instance, Ura of Ohionwa and Evako of Emani perform on the same day, and in one such outing, sometime in 1978, Ura supporters clashed with Evako which led to a serious crisis, and a life was lost. Similarly, in 1982, Ura and Evako clashed again which took the efforts of the police to disperse by the spraying of teargas at Oboroke. No life was lost in that incident but properties were destroyed.¹³

The activities of the fans and supporters of these masquerades also contributed to the rivalry between these clans. It has been reported that on various occasions the fans had openly attacked each other under the guise of masquerade festivals. When they could not attack each other in the presence of security personnel, they secretly attacked the houses and relatives of each other. For example, Comfort Jimoh gave an account of how some masquerade supporters went to a house to attack a man, but the man was not home and the

¹⁰Matthew Kehinde, Teacher, Obeiba, Ihima, 56 years. 24/03/2016

¹¹Hamza Layi, 25/03/2016

¹²Hon James Adeku Obaro, 25/3/2016

¹³Dr. Alexander Jimoh, Medical Director, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ihima Centre, Ihima, 59 years. 27/03/2016

attackers descended on his aged grandmother, got her amputated, and threw the man's properties inside a well in the man's compound.¹⁴

Chieftaincy Title

Another major cause of the crisis is the adoption of the title "Obobanyi of Ihima" as against "Obobanyi of Emani" by His Royal Highness (HRH) Siyaka Okaraga Lawal in 1984 when he was installed as the clan head of Emani. This generated serious controversy while Emani clan contended that the title had been used by their Chiefs from pre-colonial times, Ohionwa clan refuted any argument to prove the legitimacy of the title "Obobanyi of Ihima". The remaining four clans (Ure, Ohueta, Odumi, and Oha) in Ihima agreed that HRH Siyaka Okaraga Lawal is only the clan chief of Emani and not a paramount ruler of Ihima District, as the title suggests. In addition, Ohionwa clan alleged that by some manipulations, Emani clan chief had imposed himself over and above other clan chiefs, whereas all clan Chiefs had equal status.¹⁵ To corroborate the claims by Ohionwa, James Ajanaku, an Emani, testified that according to an oral source, the supposed buffalo tail was stolen from Emani by Ohionwa, instead of appealing; Ohionwa deceived Emani to get it. The way and manner were wrong, secondly, Ohionwa had never regarded or respected Emani as her senior and for this, Ohionwa had incited other clans against Emani for reasons unknown. He went further by saying that Ohionwa had always antagonized and attacked the nomenclature "Obobanyi of Ihima" which had always been their traditional title from time immemorial. How comes it is now that Ohionwa is seeing something wrong with that? Ohionwa was therefore beating the drums of troubles in Ihima by inciting other clans against Emani.¹⁶

The dispute over the nomenclature adopted by Emani was later taken to courts by the Ohionwa on the 14th day of February 1996. The case has lingered for years, after which the court delivered her ruling on the 15th day of October 2001. According to the court ruling, the clan head of Emani was asked to revert the title to "Obobanyi of Emani" and "not Obobanyi of Ihima". The case was later appealed by Emani and judgment has not been passed as of the time of this study.¹⁷ The place of leadership personalities can also not be overlooked, According to Jimoh Alao, while some of the leaders of the two clans were diplomatic and could sue for peaceful coexistence some others have not shown their interest to resolve the matter, hence, they made some provocative utterances that incited their subjects into taking up of arms against each other. While the Emani claimed that some Ohionwa leaders had not displayed maturity in handling issues, the Ohionwa equally accused some Emani leaders of fanning the embers of troubles and even aligned with their sons in high places to acquire arms. This allegation was on the part of both parties as testified by Emani, Ohionwa, and members of other clans.

¹⁴Ozovehe Hamza Abdurahaman, Public servant, Irivusechi, Ihima, 47 years 10/03/2016

¹⁵F. Folaranmi, esq, Solicitor to HRH Late Siyaka Okaraga, No.1 Inozioni Layout Okene

¹⁶Sheidu Salao, Farmer, Ege road, Obeiba, Ihima, 56 years. 11/03/2016

¹⁷Habibu Sani Angulu, Chieftaincy Declaration, and Succession Procedures: Some Customary Orders in Ebiraland, (Okene: Desmond Tutu Publishers 2011. P. 26-72

Provocative utterances by some prominent sons of both clans have also added to the fuelling of pockets of crisis as testified by Kehinde Matthew who is an indigene of Magongo, Ogori/Magongo Local Government, but resided in Ihima.¹⁸ These incidents had added to the build-up of crisis and had occasionally resulted in physical attacks on each other. The outbreak of physical combat in 1978, involving two masquerades from Ohionwa and Emani; Ura Vs Evako saw the four other clans back Ura. And in 1982, Ura's supporters clashed with Evako supporters which took an effort of law enforcement agents to arrest. Since then aspersions have been cast upon each other, for instance, Ohionwa has accused Emani of referring to their Obobanyi of Ohionwa as Obobanyi Ohianwa (timid Obiobanyi), which Ohionwa is not taking lightly.¹⁹

The result and consequence of the aforementioned had since then manifested in the political life of the area. The two had found it difficult to belong to the same party since the return to democracy in May 1999. The Emani has been seen as strong supporters of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) since its inception and hence, even gone ahead to produce the State Chairman of the PDP Eng. Uhuotu. On the other hand, the Ohionwa has been ardent supporters of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Action Congress (AC), and currently the All Progressive Congress APC. This has been the trend. In the account of James Adeku Obaro, if by chance they both found themselves in the same party, the choice of candidacy would naturally separate them as they have a history of a clash of interests. For instance, in 2007, the two clans presented different candidates to the House of Assembly. Ohionwa presented Hon. Adinoyi Aroke, aka (Take Over) for PDP, while Emani presented Hon. Idris Jatto aka (Aroga) for AC, and the former won the election. The choices made by the two clans have shown their vehement antagonism toward each other. Ohionwa was believed to be mostly AC but is now presenting a PDP candidate and vice versa.²⁰

A non-Ihima's account, Dr. Alexander Jimoh, Medical Director, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ihima Centre, opines that the alleged adoption of the nomenclature "Obobanyi of Ihima" by the Emani clan in 1984 is incorrect. To him, he has lived and grown up in Ihima since childhood, and the title Obobanyi of Ihima had always been in existence right from time. The allegation of the Ohionwa against the Emani on this ground is therefore not tenable. Moreover, the court case is still ongoing based on an appeal made by Emani. When contacted, Hamza Abdulrahman an Emani youth leader, confirmed that actually, Ohionwa took the matter to court, but the final verdict has not been passed, hence the Obobanyi of Ihima which is the traditional title of Emani clan head is still valid and that has been the case as far back as the pre-colonial era.²¹ The accounts given in defense of the case in court by the clan head and Obobanyi of Emani or Ihima as it were are as follows. The Obobanyi of Ihima title was created by Emani in the distant past. All other clans had their heads afterward; these heads were the creation of Obobanyi of Ihima who had always been the overall traditional chief for the six clans and clan head of Emani.

¹⁸National Archive Kaduna N.A.K./Lokoprof./File No.68/1923/57, Native Court Warrant P.3

¹⁹Jamiu Itopa. Student, Oboroke, Ihima. 27 years. 11/03/2016.

²⁰Saliu Yunusa, Architect, Ikueh, Ihima, 48 years. 23/03/2016

²¹Hon James Adeku Obaro

Therefore, HRH Siyaka Okaraga never arrogated the status to himself. He met the status in existence and stepped into it by succession and by the customs and traditions of Ihima and its people, Emani as the senior of the clans and the firstborn, exercises the right of the firstborn over all the other clans. Ebiras and by extension, Ihima operates the principle of Primogeniture.²²

Therefore, Emani reserved the right over all the others, hence it was Emani who instituted the Obobanyi Stool in Ihima, they are the first chief priest in all the traditional festivals of Ihima, acts as custodians of all Ihima lands and apports various lands to other clans, he is also the custodian of all historical shrines and relics and gives titles to the head of another clan who by tradition have to receive the blessing of an incumbent of the Emani stool. The other clans also pay tribute to Emani on the above principle. Emani again claimed that the other five clans in Ihima had been attacking them always; this had been led by Ohionwa for reasons not known, that Ohionwa and four other clans demanded Ohi of Ihima to be rotated among the six clans in Ihima district to phase out Obobanyi of Ihima and that they were aided and supported by the then Deputy Governor, (Chief Philip Salawu) and Ihima Welfare Association.²³ The title Obobanyi was exclusive to Emani and has remained the same over the years. The other clans have changed their titles along the line, except Odumi and Ure who have maintained theirs. Otaru Ohionwa was the title of head of Ohionwa, the adoption of the title Obobanyi in the recent past had created a problem in Ihima. He went further to say that Ohueta's title was also Otaru, but was recently changed to Obobanyi. Odumi's title has remained Ohiomata and Ure has also maintained Ogasube.

On the Chieftaincy tussle concerning the adoption of the nomenclatures Obobanyi of Ihima by Emani as claimed by the Ohionwa, it is clear that conflicting and contradictory shreds of evidence were given by both sides. The Kwara State Gazette on the Inauguration of the Emirate/Traditional Council of The Local Government reform dated 29th June 1977, concerning Okene and Okehi Traditional Council, showed that Chogudo Apana as the Obobanyi of Anemani (Emani people).²⁴ (Another document retrieved from the National Archive, titled Native Courts, Appointments of members, dated 5th October 1936. Gilbert George Feagay appointed Simpa as the Obobanyi of Obeiba to be and act as a member of the native court of the Atta of Igbirra. Ogebeiba which is now called Obeiba is said to be the dominant residence of Emani clan.

From the foregoing, and as testified by both Clans and others, the remote cause of the crises can be traced to an age-long rivalry that concerned buffalo tail. The title and cultural disputes manifesting in masquerade outings and clashes are all tied to the buffalo tail. Perhaps if that did not happen, there would not have been conflicts between the two clans which have resulted in a series of a crisis affecting the entire Ihima district and Ebara land by extension.

²²Chief I.A Jegede, Retired Teacher, Ohueta, Ihima, 72 years. 11/03/2016

²³Peter Obaroocit

²⁴Dr. Alexander Jimoh,

Immediate Causes*Party Politics and Loyalty*

The immediate causes of the crisis have also been given in different versions by members of the two warring clans and neutral bodies. The immediate cause is traced back to the 1st and 2nd December 2005 incidents, when Ohionwa people were suspected to have blocked Kereni fans and supporters from passing Ohionwa dominant area, during the night of 1st and 2nd December 2005. The attempt by Kereni fans and supporters to force themselves through to the shrine of the Kereni where the masquerade box (Irapa) was located was aborted by Ohionwa. Again the ordering of Emani masquerade, Kereni's box (irapa) to be removed from Ohionwa's territory and the refusal of Kereni's custodian to obey the order resulted in the 3rd December 2005 clash. According to the report, one of Emani and Kereni fans lost his life in the process.

It has also been discovered that masquerades were being used by politicians and prominent people in Ebira land and Ihima to settle scores with perceived opponents. In some instances local musicians were used by clans to abuse each other and make provocative utterances, inciting quarrels among clans. This factor was heavily dominant in the Ihima Crisis.²⁵ The lingering seniority tussle between Emani and Ohionwa clans was still on and perhaps in December 2005, the incident was an opportunity they used to unleash mayhem on each other. But since the December 2005 incident, Ihima never remained the same again, it had been from one crisis to another, which lingered up until 2007. The law enforcement agents could not resolve the crisis and several local, clans, associations, and committees were set up by concerned individuals until the state government waded into the crisis, which ended the mayhem. Ihima became a hot spot in Ebira land²⁶

The 2005 crisis lingered up to January 2006, and even when concerned elders waded into the matter, it was eventually arrested by the effort of the state government by deploying military men to Ihima. Afterward, the State Government set up an Administrative Panel of Enquiry with Ref. No SKGSCOS Vol. 11/1645 dated 19th January 2006, to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the violent crisis that erupted between Emani and Ohionwa clans in Ihima Okehi LGA on December 1st and 2nd 2005 and make appropriate recommendations to the government.²⁷

After January 2006, there was relative peace enjoyed in Ihima, however, according to Obaro, underground moves were ongoing by members of the two clans to spark off another crisis. The crisis assumed a political dimension which led to the 2007 violent and bloody outbreak by the two clans. The build-up to the 2007 crisis is manifested in the followings, there was an alleged arm building or racing by the two clans with a heavy political undertone. In the testimonies of Obaro, during the gubernatorial campaigns, of which Emani was majorly A.C. supporter while Ohionwa was pro-P.D.P., so in 2007, Action

²⁵Administrative Panel of Inquiry into Ihima the Emani-Ohionwa Crisis in Ihima District, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, April 2006

²⁶Interview: Chief I.A Jegede

²⁷ibidem

Congress (A.C.) went to Kabba for a State rally while the PDP was in Ihima for the Central Senatorial District rally, and their supporters were armed. Whether it was known to the state government then was not too clear. The A.C. was a dominant party in Ihima. While A.C. members were returning from Kabba to Ihima, they were attacked by P.D.P. armed thugs and a crisis broke out, which led to the killing of an A.C. member popularly known as Sekenchi. That led to the 2007 crisis in Ihima.²⁸

In the account of Peter Obaro, there had been another long-standing political issue that involved Emani and Ohionwa which had to do with when the Late Dr. Lawal was a Commissioner for Health in the then Kwara State. He was alleged to have used his position to produce five Counselor seats from Ohionwa out of the six allotted to Ihima district. This allegation was said to have emanated from Emani. Obaro explained the situation as not intentional, to him, the Ohionwa are more in number and are located in every sub-district of Ihima. He claimed that since politics is a game of numbers, the Ohionwa had a better chance of producing more Counselors than any other clan.²⁹

This allegation was also confirmed by a non-Ihima indigene who resides in Ihima, Dr. Jimoh Alexander. It is believed by various testifiers and eyewitnesses, that 2007, crisis has come to be the most devastating and bloody not only in Ihima, but Ebara land as a whole. When attempting to inquire how these firearms were acquired, the two parties accused each other's politicians and prominent citizens within and outside the state to have sponsored the acquisition of arms, and both Emani and Ohionwa members refused to cite an example and refused to mention names.³⁰

Effect of the Conflict

The effect of the crisis was devastating and colossal in terms of loss of lives, destruction of properties, internally displaced, distrust, and suspicions among others. On the 1st and 2nd of December 2005, a crisis unleashed serious mayhem on the entire Ihima as caused by the two warring clans. By the 3rd of December, houses have been burnt down the police station in Ihima was raised down, cars were destroyed, several people were injured, and lives were lost. After relative peace was restored in 2005, there was another outbreak of the crisis in 2007, which shows that the problem was not over despite several interventions.

Some of the lives lost during the crisis include:

1. Amodu Sadik, a Resident of Obeiba, died on 14th Jan. 2006 from a knife injury at General Hospital Okene.
2. James Ojo Ogereva, Resident in Obeiba, cause of death Gunshot date 22/1/2006.
3. Lasisi Yusuf, Resident in Oboroke cause of death -Gunshot. Date 17/1/2006, General Hospital Okene

²⁸Report of Peace Committee on Ihima Crisis, June 2007

²⁹Report of Peace Committee on Ihima Crisis, June 2007

³⁰Administrative Panel of Inquiry into Ihima the Emani-Ohionwa Crisis in Ihima District, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, Report April 2006

4. Anoze Dada, Resident in Oboroke, cause of death Gunshot. Date 14/1/2006, Died in the cause of defense.(Field Notes Report July 2016)

Below is the list of some persons affected in Oboroke and Obeiba. It is said that Oboroke was the stronghold of Ohionwa, while Obeiba was the stronghold of Emani.

Conflict in Ihima 2005

Table 1

Oboroke

S/N		
1.	HardusAdeiza Omolowo	House burnt, properties looted/burnt.
2.	Alh. Idris Gambo	House burnt, vehicle burnt.
3.	Hon. AdinoyiAroke (JP)	House and properties burnt.
4.	Joshua M. Omeiza	House burnt, properties destroyed.
5.	Pa. Maliki Isah	House burnt, properties destroyed.
6.	Julius Avidime	House burnt, properties destroyed.
7.	Mrs. Sarah Avidime	House burnt, properties destroyed.
8.	Alh. Musa Akande	House burnt, properties destroyed.
9.	Hon. Onivehu M. siyaka	House burnt, properties destroyed.
10.	Hon. I.D Omomoba	House burnt, properties destroyed.

Obeiba

1.	Audu Siyaka Bako	House, properties looted and body fractured.
2.	Siyaka Bello	House, properties destroyed
3.	Madam Hassana Adekute	House, properties destroyed

4.	Hon. Bello Mustapha	Properties looted
5.	Adeku Momoh	Properties looted
6.	Mr. Omeiga Omogun	Properties looted
7.	Usman Abdula Azeez	Properties looted
8.	Isah Ohida	Properties looted
9.	Lawal Ademoh,	Properties looted
10.	Onipe Salawudeen	Properties looted

NON EBIRA

1.	Vincent Eze	Properties looted.[1]
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Source: Field Note Report July 2016

The effects of the 2007 crisis in Ihima were first of all the burning down of the Oboroke Central Market, the mass exodus of Ohionwa people from Obeiba to Oboroke, likewise the exodus of Emani in Oboroke to Obeiba, thereby creating a dichotomy in the settlement pattern between the two clans.

The next development was the high rate of internally displaced created by the crisis as a result of the burning of houses and properties. Several people were rendered homeless and had to flee Ihima. Because the crisis had taken a political dimension, the 2007 crisis had an overlapping effect that spiraled into the other areas in Ebira land. It was said that all the Local Governments in the Central Senatorial District of Kogi state apart from Ogori-Mangongo, were indirectly affected, as party supporters took sides with either of the warring parties.(Field Notes Report July 2016)

Another effect of the crisis was the creation of the Ohi title in Ebira land to oversee each district. That of Ihima, became an answer to the yearning and aspiration of the five other clans spare headed by Ohionwa.⁴³

The followings are the names and addresses of some of those whose properties were destroyed in the 2007 crisis. Source: (Field Note Report August 2016)

Conflict in Ihima 2007

Table 2

Oboroke

S/N	Name	Address
1.	Akaaba Yusuf	Opp. IhimaNurs/Primary School, Oboroke.
2.	Mall. Isah Abdulazeez	Ubeina Sales Trading Store, Oboroko-

		Esako, Ihima
3.	J.O Oyibo,	Oboroke Ebe, Ihima
4.	Siyaka Usman,	Oboroke Eba, Ihima

Obeiba

1)	Obaudus, Abdulrahaman	Ovapara, Obeiba, Ihima
2)	Mall Isah Ohida	PRD/Hos/467, Osikoi, Obeiba, Ihima
3)	Isa Ajana Ojoro	PRD/Ihje /12 Obeiba
4)	Audu Opara Arama	Obeiba, Ihima.
5)	Mall Salawu Onubaiye	Oride, Obeiba, Ihima.
6)	Pst. Kehine Mathew	Obeiba, Ihima.

Table 3

Some of those alleged to have led and perpetrated the crisis and destructions are:

1.	Siyaka Musa aka SKINA	Clan not stated.
2.	Abu Arudi aka SHAKILLER	Clan not stated.
3.	Ohuei Baiki	Ohoinwa.
4.	Musa Raufu	Ohoinwa.
5.	Abu Onotu	Ohoinwa
6.	Abbof (Son of Mall. Yakubu Abu)	Emani.
7.	Lukeman Isah	Emani

Source: Field Note Report August 2016

Conclusion

Finally, this paper through the theoretical frame work it adopted, and the methodology employed opines that conflicts don't just occur as seen in the case of Ihima. When conflicts are not resolved and nipped in the bud early enough, the resultant effect is usually manifested in violent crises at times, what leads to serious mayhem are issues that can be and should be ignored. This work, therefore, has examined the conflicts in Ihima, The Emani, and Ohionwa clash

and conflicts, the cause which is both remote and immediate, the effects have also been examined, we also looked at the views of principal actors and stakeholders, and the various methods and measures that have been taken to resolve the series of crisis in Ihima, which did not yield a positive result.

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S/N	Name	Age	Address	Occupation	Date of Interview	Mode
	Amina Saliu	38	Ikuehi	Trader	11/03/2016	Direct
	Anataku Yakubu	50	Abobo	Health worker	08/03/2016	Direct
	Arch. Saliu A. Yunusa	48	Ikuehi	Architect	24/03/2016	Direct
	Chief I.A Jegede	72	Ohueta	Rtd Teacher	11/03/2016	Direct
	Chief Peter Obara(Sunpet)	79	Oboroke	Farmer	11/03/2016	Direct
	Comfort Jimoh	50	Obeiba	Teacher	14/03/2016	Direct

	Dr. Jimoh Alexander	62	University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ihima Centre	Medical Doctor	27/03/2016	Direct
	Hamza Layi	62	Rtrd Public Servant	Lokoja	15/03/2016	Direct
	Hon James Obaro	55	Iruvusechi	Politician	10/03/2016	Direct
	Ismaila Umar	52	Ikuehi	Panel Beater	13/03/2016	Direct
	James Ajanaku Ozigi	52	Oboroke	Clergy	10/03/2016	Direct
	Jamiu Itopa	27	Oboroke	Student	10/03/2016	Direct
	Jimoh Alao	62	Obeiba	Bricklayer	14/03/2016	Direct
	Kazeem Maliki	55	Ikuehi	Teacher	11/03/2016	Direct
	Kehinde Matthew	56	Obeiba	Teacher	24/03/2016	Direct
	Mrs Deborah Otaru	65	Ikuehi	Rtrd. Nurse	08/03/2016	Direct
	Mrs Jimoh Aino	41	Obeiba	Housewife	14/03/2016	Direct
	Mrs Victoria Omananyi	65	Ebako	Trader	21/03/2016	Direct

	Ozovehe H. Abdulraha man	47	Iruvusechi	Civil Servan t	10/03/20 16	Direct
	Peter Omananyi	56	Oboroke	Busine ss Man	14/03/20 16	Direct
	Robert Otaru	49	Lokoja	Civil Servan t	15/03/20 16	Direct
	Seidu Salao	56	Ege Road Obeiba	Farmer	08/03/20 16	Direct

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