

Political Relations between Abajah and Her Neighbours 1970 – 2015

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Abstract

This paper examines political relations between Abajah community in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State and her neighbours in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State namely; Amaigbo, and Isu communities between 1970 to 2015. It intends to show the level of interactions between Abajah community and her neighbours and how the quest for elective political positions and appointments has affected the relations between Abajah and her neighbours in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State. Based on the foregoing, a qualitative research method was used to unearth the political relations between Abajah and her neighbours. The study made use of primary and secondary and tertiary sources of history. The primary materials came from personal interviews conducted by the researcher, archival documents, while secondary materials were textbooks, and journal articles. Materials from the Internet were also used in this paper. The study finds out that political relations between Abajah and her neighbours have not really been favourable to Abajah community because of lopsided appointments and winner takes it all syndromes. The work concludes that, in spite of the marked changes and challenges being faced by the people as well as lopsided appointments which have favoured Amaigbo community, the people have continued to maintained mutual relationship as people that share common ancestry. They have also continued to use the slogan “onye uzo ulo” as a mark of unity and identification.

Introduction:

Background to the Study

Inter-group relation is one which exists between two or more groups.¹ Inter/intra group relations are, indeed, very common among the various groups in Nigeria. One way or the other people of different ethnic backgrounds were at one time or the other engaged in some sort of relations. At one time such relation was peaceful, at other times, conflictual. But whatsoever shape the relations assume, it is important to uphold the fact that inter communal relations as well as inter-group relations existed and still exists between and among the different ethnic groups and also in Nigeria, and in various autonomous communities. These relations existed before colonial rule and they continued during and even after colonial rule. Among the different dimensions of inter communal and inter-group relations in Nigeria include but not limited to those characterized by the following; migration, marriage, trade, war, politics, and exchange of cultural troupes etc.

Abajah is a town in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria; the community is on the Amaraku-Orlu road and one of the border communities between Orlu and Okigwe senatorial zones. Abajah is bounded in the west by Amauzari in Isiala Mbano Local Government and Amaigbo in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State, in the south by Amaraku and Umunkwo in Isiala Mbano Local Government Area. In the east by Anara in Isiala Mbano Local Government and in the north by Isu in Nwangele Local Government Area.² The town is approximately 10 kilometers from Owerri and 15 kilometers from Okigwe.³ Abajah has a good topography as most of the territory is on the plain. However, there are some slopes. The slopes are between Umuoma and Umudiagba villages, Umudiagba and Umuishii villages, Odenaguma and Addi villages. The town has no streams or rivers; therefore, it has no natural source of water supply. The symbol of authority in Abajah town is the *Ofo* as in several other Igbo communities, The significance of the *Ofo*, is indeed a acquaintance of headship or “*Nwa di-okwara*” in a quarter or kindred group of a typical Igbo town. The writer believes that the holders of the *Ofo* share benefits of responsibility according to the order of seniority among the principal *Ofo* holders of which Abajah town is one.

Although, inter-group relations have a connotation of an affair between immediate neighbours, it is not limited to immediate neighbour only. However, the focus of this paper is on two immediate neighbours, namely: Abajah and her neighbours. Considering the creation of local government, Abajah is in Nwangele Local Government Area, while some of her neighbours are found in Nwangele Local Government Area and Isiala Mbano Local Government Area, both in Imo State. Thus, among Abajah’s neighbours, the following communities are her immediate neighbours; Amaraku, Umunkwo, Amauzari, and Anara in Isiala Mbano Local Government Area, followed by Isu and Amaigbo in Nwangele Local Government Area. It is important; perhaps pertinent to study the relationships that existed among these neighbours. However, the concern of this paper is the relations between her neighbours in Nwangele Local Government Area with the aim of investigating the areas of political, socio-cultural relations between 1970 to 2015.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is primarily to investigate and analyze the political relations that existed between Abajah and her neighbours between 1970 to 2015; it will also take a look at political relations in both in pre-colonial and colonial period. Furthermore, its purpose would be to consider how these relationships have affected the people of Abajah, either positively or negatively.

Theoretical Framework

Consensus Theory

This paper will be anchored on Emile Durkheim Consensus Theory. This is a social theory that holds a particular political or economic system as a fair system, and that social change should take place within the social institutions provided by it. Consensus theory contrasts sharply with conflict theory, which holds that social change is only achieved through conflict. Under consensus theory the absence of conflict is seen as the equilibrium state of society and that there is a general or widespread agreement among all members of a particular society about norms, values, rules and regulations.⁴ Consensus theory is concerned with the maintenance or continuation of social order in society.

Consensus theory serves as a sociological argument for the furtherance and preservation of the status quo. It is antagonistic to conflict theory, which serves as a

sociological argument for modifying the status quo or for its total reversal. In consensus theory, the rules are seen as integrative, and whoever doesn't respect them is a deviant person. Under conflict theory, the rules are seen as coercive, and who transgresses them is considered an agent of change. This theory which offers a contrasting approach to understanding social and political relations is to emphasize the vital role of consensus in society.

Durkheim argued that the most interesting aspect of society is not its various dysfunctional elements but, rather, the fact that it functions at all – something that he attributes to the primacy of consensus in successful, healthy social relations.⁵ Social cohesion is founded on the interdependence of peoples, forged by social ties that range from kinship to the exchange of services. This functionalist interpretation sees all parts of society as working to uphold its solidarity and to minimize instability. Societies survive, Durkheim argued, by commitment to a common set of beliefs and practices – a form of ‘collective conscience’ thus functions as the bedrock of social order. Consensus has always been perceived as a better way of avoiding conflicts amongst communities who share common Political interests. Therefore, political relations between Abajah and her neighbours should be built on consensus as having consensus on critical matters builds trust and confidence and serves as a better way of avoiding conflicts.

Conceptual Clarifications

Relations:

In this context, relations imply the various connections in which people are brought together. Relations in intergroup relations refer to interactions between individuals in different social groups, and to interactions taking place between the groups themselves collectively. Intergroup relations refer to the way in which people in groups perceive, think about, feel about, and act toward people in other groups.⁶ If you replace the word "group" in intergroup with, for example, the words "national" or "ethnic," then what is meant by intergroup relations becomes clear. For instance, international relations refer to how nations view other nations, and how nations act toward and treat one another.⁷ Relations at the international level are often fraught with conflict and exploitation, and characterized by intolerance and prejudice; same can be ascribed to relations at the community or ethnic levels; which are intrinsically ethnocentric. Relations between groups can also vary widely in their frontier – from harmless generalized images, tolerance, and friendly rivalry to deep-seated hatred, intolerance, and violent conflict. Therefore, the great challenge for humanity is to reduce conflict and exploitation, and banish intolerance and prejudice, and to replace these with beneficial competition and social harmony. This is an awesome challenge where the stakes are enormously high in terms of human suffering.

Intergroup behavior tends to be competitive and ethnocentric. In intergroup contexts people generally behave so as to gain or maintain an advantage. Although intergroup relations are fundamentally jingoist, relations between groups can vary widely in their extremity - from harmless generalized images, tolerance, and friendly rivalry to deep-seated hatred, intolerance, and violent conflict. Because the latter form of intergroup behavior is responsible for the most appalling injustices and inhumanities the study of intergroup relations has tended to focus on this extreme form of intergroup relations - prejudice, discrimination, bigotry, intergroup aggression, and so forth.

Neighbours:

Literally means people who live near another or people or things that are near another. In the context of intergroup relations, neighbours entail contiguous neighbours, which are communities or states sharing common borders. Maintaining good relations with neighbours is the first priority for any community, state, or country. The credibility of a country's global posture is undermined if it is seen as embroiled in conflicts with its neighbours; same can be said with contiguous communities. While in theory the need to have a peaceful, stable and friendly neighbourhood is clear, what that means in practical terms is a different question. Building good relations poses some questions like; is a smaller neighbour always right in its demands? Can good relations be built unilaterally? These are not the only issues that arise in an examination of the conditions in which neighbouring communities relate to each other, the role of external factors in determining those conditions are as critical. In the case of Abajah and her neighbours these considerations matter even more because of historical and geostrategic reasons. How much is Abajah perceived by her neighbours and how they have related are the major issues to be discussed.

Political Relations between Abajah and Her Neighbours

Abajah in the then Okigwe Division, During the Colonial Rule

From facts, all about the arrival of Colonial Masters commenced at Okigwe, which was a Division in Owerri Province. The classifications were – Provinces, Divisions or Districts. And to make governance and control easier, it became quite necessary for Divisions to be carved out from Province – which was Owerri Province, and to make things more cushy and facile, there also arose the need for creation of other divisions from the larger Divisions and clans from Districts.

It is pertinent to note that the white men, who visited Abajah in 1905, came from Okigwe to Oka in Ugiri clan, from where they set out to Abajah.⁸ Another version of the tale, revealed that they – the Colonial Officials came from Okigwe to Umuduru in the present Isiala Mbano in the 1902. But the effective occupation of the area came up in 1904 – 1905, after a lot of unimaginable turbulence.⁹ And this made it necessary for them to station troops at “Oka” Ugiri in the same present Isiala Mbano for brisk intervention, in case of any recrudescence of troubles by the indigenes who became ferociously violent to them at “Umuduru”. It was from Umuduru, in the present Isiala Mbano that they got to Oka, from the two white men visited Abajah, Abba and Isu – Mr. Fox Strangeways¹⁰ and affirmed by Chief H. Iwuoha¹¹, Chief Nwanguma¹² and Pharmacist Akaogu.¹³ All these should attest to the veracity of the claims that Abajah, Abba and Isu in the present Nwangele Local Government Area were then under Okigwe Division with their headquarters at Okigwe where the colonial officials settled on arrival. Orders and biddings were imparted from Okigwe to various places. It is noteworthy that it was from Umuduru in Isiala Mbano that the British Colonial officials left for some other places in the present Nwangele L.G.A. This therefore suggests that Abajah, Isu, and Abba and some other places were indubitably under Okigwe Division.

The story had it that – when the colonial officials came to Abajah, a certain Uchegbu Nwagooma co-operated with them and so started working them on the directive of the Colonial Masters, to the chiefs to register their towns and their compound villages at

Okigwe,¹⁴ it was the same Uchegbu who registered Abajah town and the villages at Okigwe, being that he represented Abajah at Okigwe. This undisputedly tells that Abajah, like some Towns was under Okigwe Division, before other Divisions were later created by the Colonial Officials for easier and better governance. Orlu Division that embodies Abajah, Abajah, Amaigbo, Owerre Nkworji, Isu and others was subsequently carved out of Okigwe Division in the year 1937,¹⁵ and this brought to the end of the then fact of Abajah being under Okigwe Division.

Today, Abajah in the present Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State is in Orlu District, following the creation of Orlu Division from Okigwe in 1937, but was in Okigwe Division before the year 1937 under the Colonial Officials.

From 1960 to 1970

Politically, these communities under study are aggregated from 1960, when Nigeria had not started the practicing the executive democratic system – Parliamentary act of democracy was then practiced. Orlu was the main and real seat of government. But in sub-division, Nkwere was the sub seat of government for Abajah, Isu-Njaba, Abba, Isu and Amaigbo. Before the sub-division of governmental seats propinquity to the populace, Orlu as earlier said was the real seat of the government in the then county council government when a councillor represented each of the communities in Isu, Njaba, Abba, Abajah, Nkwere and Amaigbo.

At this juncture, there was and there are indisputable relationships among these communities. The political relationships among these communities – Abajah and her neighbours prior to 1960 had Orlu as the common seat of government. From 1960 to 1966, the local government area to which they belonged to was the Isu County Council. Isu here does not mean the same Isu as mentioned above. Isu clan then was rather a larger clan made up of the present Nwangele, Nkwere, Njaba, Isu and Orlu Local Government Areas. Since 1970, the three communities have existed in the local government areas in succession: Nkwere Division, Nkwere/Isu, Nkwere, and finally Nwangele Local Government Areas. Nwangele L.G.A today is made up of Abajah, Abba, Isu, Umuozu and Amaigbo. This is to say that prior to 1960, political bond was Orlu (the pivot of this government), then, same political interests were shared among these communities.

Political Relations from 1970 to 2015

From 1970 to 1976, Abajah and her neighbours were in Nkwere Division in the defunct East Central State led by Ukpabi Asika. Following the creation of Imo State from the old East Central State came in 1976 by the Murtala Mohammed/Obasanjo administration and the subsequent creation of Nkwere/Isu Local Government Area with headquarters at Nkwere, Abajah and her neighbours under study found themselves in the same local government, the same political configuration continued till the creation of Nwangele Local Government Area by the General Sani Abacha military administration in 1996. The choice of Nkwere as the headquarter was to guarantee proximity to the populace from Abajah, Isu, Njaba, Abba, Isu and Amaigbo. The same political interest was shared among them also. The Councillors from these communities had common re-union for common political dividends.

The military incursion into the murky waters of Nigeria politics grossly affected political activities in the area till 1978 when political activities returned with the with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly led by eminent lawyer, late F.R.A Williams, which was subsequently followed with the lifting of ban on political activities by the military administration of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo.¹⁶

As stated above, political relations between Abajah and her neighbours in this study are centered on Abajah's neighbours in Nwangele Local government area namely: Amaigbo, and Isu. This is because since the creation of Imo State, these three communities have always found themselves in the same political zone. Presently, the three communities apart from being in the same local government are also in same Federal Constituency as well as the same Senatorial Zone. It is pertinent to note that in the past, these communities were all towns. Following the policy of the Imo State Government some years ago, all towns in the state are known as autonomous communities today.¹⁷ Isu, for example is made up of four autonomous communities, Abajah and Amaigbo still retain their original status each. However today, Abajah, Amaigbo and Isu are regarded as clans.

From 1996 to 2015, the seat got to Amaigbo of Nwangele L.G.A comprising of Abajah, Abba, Isu, Amaigbo and Isu this time, a common L.G.A. chairman takes charge. Each community has Councillors according to number of wards it has. Since, numerous political wards have been created this time. Abajah – two wards, Amaigbo – five wards, Isu – three wards, Abba, a ward and Umuozu one ward. This tells that there are a whole of eleven Councillors representing these communities for common political scope.

Above all, besides these facts, the same indivisible political relationship remains between Abajah and her neighbours as of then and now. Orlu remains the main fulcrum in the senatorial seat – same senator, same senatorial zone that bind Abajah, Isu, Amaigbo, Njaba and Abba. Abajah, Abba, Nkwerre, Njaba, Isu and Amaigbo also share the same representative in National Assembly, Osuala, C.C Iwuala, Juliet Akano; Jones Onyereri represented these communities prior to 2015.

Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1979, after 13 years of military rule. Upon return to civil rule, 5 political parties were registered by the then Federal Electoral Commission; these parties were Nigeria Peoples Party, National Party of Nigeria, Unity Party of Nigeria, Peoples Redemption Party and Great Nigeria Peoples Party. Nigeria Advanced Party was later registered to contest for the 1983 elections.¹⁸ The people of Nwangele then in Nkwerre/Isu Local Government pitched their tents to the two most dominant parties in the southeast namely; Nigeria Peoples Party and National Party of Nigeria. Reason for this decision according to Dr. Jones Amadi¹⁹ was because the people of the sympathy the people of area had for Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and late Chief Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe who were seen then as demigods in Igboland, he further said that those who were after money politics pitched their tents with National Party of Nigeria (NPN). His assertion could be because Hon. Joseph Agbarakwe who was a former of Imo House of Assembly was a member of Nigeria Peoples Party.

In the words of Prince Nwaka,²⁰ the area was predominantly dominated by Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) because notable politicians in the area pitched their tents with the party immediately after its formation. He stated further that the major reason was not necessarily because of Zik but the love the people of the area had for Mbakwe, who fought for the Igbo's

abandoned properties in Rivers State immediately after the Civil War. There had been political consciousness in the area since the defunct Second Republic. Pa Maurice Ohaegbulam²¹ asserted that the political activities in Nwangele predated the Second Republic. He said, he witnessed the political campaigns of Late Mazi Mbonu Ojike and Late R.B.K Okafor at Amaigbo in the 1950s.

The Nwangele River serves as a boundary between Amaigbo community in Nwangele and other communities. Presently, there are 11 autonomous communities in Nwangele Local government; namely: Amaigbo, Abajah, Kara-na-Orlu, Isu Ancient Kingdom, Dim-na-ume, Umuozu, Isiala Umuozu, Umuokwara Abba, Ogwuaga Abba, Ekitiafor Abba, and Umudurunna Abba. Prior to the recent creation of autonomous communities, there were only 5 autonomous communities in Nwangele, namely: Amaigbo, Abajah, Abba, Isu and Umuozu. The Nwangele River divides Amaigbo and the rest of the communities, hence the term “*ndi ofe mmiri*” meaning people inhabiting across the River. This is the term Amaigbo people use to identify to the rest of the communities in Nwangele local government area.

Geo-politically, there is asymmetry in terms of power sharing in the area. Amaigbo community sees herself as one political entity and the rest as one political entity, though this formula has been altered since 2011. Prior to 2011, Amaigbo people usually made use of their numerical strength to lord it over other communities. Till today in Nwangele local government area, only Abajah and Amaigbo communities are still maintaining their original status of autonomous community. Nwangele local government area has 11 political wards, out of which Amaigbo community has 5, Abajah 2 while the remaining communities still maintain one political ward each despite the balkanization of their communities. This unfair and unequal sharing of political wards has made Amaigbo community to gain upper hand politically in the local government; and has been responsible for the community occupying more elective positions more than the other communities put together including producing the leader in Nwangele legislative assembly. Prior to 1996, when Nwangele local government area was created by the military administration of late Gen. Sani Abacha, Amaigbo community did not influence the political decisions in our area much. This was because, the area known as Nwangele local government today was under Nkwerre local government area. During this period, the political entity referred to as “*ndi ofe mmiri*” by the Amaigbo community had political alliance with Nkwerre people. Nkwerre community, though small in land mass and population had political big wigs like the late Sen. M.J.C Echeruo, Dr. Obidike Izuogu, Chief Sam Iheakwoaba, Chief John Anyaehie etc. Jones Amadi stated it was as a result of this political alliance that made late Sam Onunaka Mbakwe to concede the House of Assembly ticket to “late Hon. Joseph Agbrakwe in 1979 when he came for political campaign in the area.”²²

Nze Sam Onyeiwu affirmed the view expressed by Dr. Jones Amadi, though he admitted that it was wrong to have given the House ticket to Hon. J. O. Agbarakwe, because there were other better alternatives, but Chief Mbakwe insisted on giving him the ticket to contest under the platform of Nigeria Peoples Party because of his popularity amongst rural voters as he was also a known philanthropist, a grassroot politician and a great mobilizer.²³ This unfair and unequal power sharing formula in Nwangele local government has been responsible for the lopsidedness of political appointments in the area. It is right to say that there is no love lost between Amaigbo and the rest of the communities. Till today, Amaigbo indigenes are being perceived as power grabbers, and political jobbers in the local government.

On the creation of Nwangele Local Government Area in 1996 by late General Sani Abacha, there are still speculations that Dr. Walter Ofornagoro, former Minister of Information during this time, used his position to influence the choice of Amaigbo to be the headquarter of Nwangele local government area despite the fact that Amaigbo is not in the center of Nwangele local government area. Sir Willie Onuoha²⁴ in his view on the siting of the headquarters of Nwangele Local Government Area, said that ‘credit should be given to Dr. Walter Ofornagoro for using his position as a Minister of Information and Culture under late Gen. Sani Abacha to attract a separate local government area from Nkwerre, but, he failed to consult other stakeholders in their prior to the siting of the headquarters’. In the account of Njoku Nwachukwu, “the five communities applied for the creation of local government area, agreeing unanimously that the name would be Nwangele, while the name of the headquarters would be *Onu-Nwangele*”, but during the process of creation, the people of Amaigbo influenced the change of the name of the headquarters to Amaigbo instead of the agreed Onu-Nwangele.²⁵ This action annoyed other four communities marking the beginning of conflicts between Amaigbo and the other four communities. There is high level of political consciousness and participation in Nwangele local government area. This consciousness and participation has continued till today.

It is worthy to note that before the creation of the Nwangele local government, Amaigbo community complained of political domination by Nkwerre community. Despite the size and population of the community they were seen as political and economic Lilliput. This political domination gave rise to this popular saying “*Ka anyi soro Nkwerre maa Amaigbo aka nti*” meaning “let us join Nkwerre in slapping Amaigbo”. But in recent times Amaigbo people have turned the saying to suit them by saying “*Ka anyi soro Amaigbo maa Nkwerre aka nti*”.

It is not wrong to say that Amaigbo community was at the forefront of the agitation for the creation of Nwangele local government. Prior to the creation of Nwangele local government, No Amaigbo man occupied the position of chairman of Nkwerre local government, rather an Isu indigene in the person of Chief Eddie Francis Akano was elected as the chairman during the ill-fated Third Republic. Before the creation of Nwangele local government, Nkwerre community had political alliance with the communities generally referred to by Amaigbo community as “*ndi ofe mmiri*”

In the words of Nze Oparaezioka, ‘the brazen display of political arrogance by Amaigbo community and the subsequent siting of the local government headquarter on their soil was an act of impunity copied from Nkwerre. He went further to say that the community has been using her numerical advantage to intimidate other communities in Nwangele local government area. He said “I am yet to understand the rationale behind Amaigbo having five political wards while the rest communities share the remaining six”.²⁶

The daunting disposition of Amaigbo and the consequent marginalization of Abajah, Abba, Isu and Umuozu prompted the four to form Ndi-Eze and Leaders of Nwangele South Movement and applied to the state government for the creation of Nwangele South Local Government Area. This was upon the plan of the Ikedi Ohakim administration to create Local Government Areas in Imo State. However, realizing its legal or constitutional handicap, the State Government created Development Centres instead. Nwangele South Development Centre with headquarters at Umuozu was one of them. It is right to say that since the creation of Nwangele Local Government Area, and Nwangele State constituency,

there have been competitions and rivalries amongst these communities. Each aspires to outsmart others. Often Amaigbo using her number and political dexterity manipulates others. She is often able to get one of the other three smaller communities of Abba, Isu and Umuozu to her side, at the detriment of others.

The political relationship has produced some advantages and disadvantages for Abajah. In terms of advantages, Abajah has been able to achieve easily her objectives at the old local government areas through the assistance of others before the creation of Nwangele Local Government Area. When Nwangele South Development Centre was created, Abajah was able to attract adequate benefits, an example of which was the siting of a shopping complex at the *Orie*-Abajah market square. There are disadvantages too. Abajah has never produced any elected chairman of Nwangele local government area since its creation in 1996. She has not also produced any member of the Imo State House of Assembly since its creation. Even though Abajah is the second in terms of population, she has been losing out to Amaigbo and often others because of the ability to galvanize support from other communities, and using money to bribe some members of the Abajah community to the detriment of her own people. The return to civil rule in 1999 did not curb the level of political domineering by Amaigbo community against the rest communities in Nwangele Local Government Area. In 1999, late Chief Oliver Akpaka was elected as a member representing Nwangele State Constituency in Imo State House of Assembly. He was succeeded by Chief Amaechi Nwoha in 2003, which held forth the position till 2011, when Chief Ugonna Ozuruigbo from Umuozu community (*ofe iyi*) was elected. He was subsequently re-elected for a second term in 2015.

The election executive chairmen and appointments of transition chairmen in Nwangele Local Government Area have always gone in favour of Amaigbo community except the period late Chief Benji Azike and Barr. Celestine Etukemka were elected and appointed to that position. The election of Benji Azike happened during the Achike Udenwa administration while that the appointment of Barr. Etukemka took place in 2011 during the first tenure of Owelle Rochas Okorochoa, which was a compensatory appointment for contesting the Imo State House of Assembly Elections under the platform of 'All Grand Progressive Alliance' (APGA).

In terms of political affiliation, there has never been a general consensus as to which political party the people of Nwangele will belong since and before the creation of the local government council. Under Nkwerre local government, people belonged to different political parties of their choice. This trend has not changed up till this moment. Freedom of the association amongst the communities under study existed. Political positions amongst these people have not evenly been distributed; hence, it has deeply affected relationship between these neighbours. The political system in Nwangele equally provided scope for individual mobility in which the society was in all senses greater than the individual. The area of the present day Imo state, just like the entire Igboland, was egalitarian and republican in nature during this period.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

It is evident that a great deal of political interaction existed between the Abjah and her neighbours. They have enjoyed longstanding relationships with their neighbours in terms of historical origin, and politics, trade etc. Political relations amongst these communities have not really been favourable to all the parties, as there are clearer cases of one group lording it over others. Cordial relations and political equity are necessary tools for peaceful coexistence especially in this era when most communities in Imo State are engulfed in one political crisis or the other.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations

- Political dominance by a large group over other smaller groups has led to the collapse of so many societies and should be avoided for mutual co-existence to continue to flourish between Abajah community and her neighbours in Nwangele Local Government Area of Imo State.
- There should be wide consultation amongst major stakeholders before certain key decisions are taken as it is necessary for preventing conflicts amongst neighbours.
- The politics of winner takes it all syndrome should be viewed as an antiquated way of politicking in the 21st century.
- Consensus both in the choice of appointments and siting of certain infrastructures should be adopted as it is a better way of avoiding conflicts amongst communities who share common political interests.

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