

**PRINT MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE ROLES OF  
WOMEN IN IFE-MODAKEKE AND AGULERI-UMULERI  
COMMUNAL CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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## **Certification**

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Chief Atudeume Raymond Ogbonna, *Lolo (Nne)* Kate Egoigwe Ehirim-Ogbonna and grand-mother, Ngechuka Ezionina Ehirim (1922-2003), for their ungendered roles and teachings.

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## Abstract

Print media representation of the roles of actors in conflict is a global phenomenon. In Nigeria, the print media reportage of community conflicts, including Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, revolves around the causes and nature of conflict and the roles of men as principal actors, with scant attention paid to the roles of women. This study was designed to examine print media representation of the roles of women in the Ife-Modakeke (1997-2000) and Aguleri-Umuleri (1995-1999) conflicts and explore their unreported roles in both conflicts.

John Galtung's War/Violence and Peace/Conflict Journalism Theory guided the study, while the case study design was utilised. The heterogeneous sampling technique was employed to generate data from five newspapers (*Nigerian Tribune*, *Daily hampion*, *The Guardian*, *Punch*, and *Daily Times*), two magazines (*TELL* and *The NEWS*) between 1997 and 2000 for the Ife-Modakeke conflict, and the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict 1995 and 1999. The first two newspapers were selected because of their proximity to the conflicting communities and others for national spread. Fifteen Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted with traditional leaders (one traditional ruler and five chiefs), two ex-fighters, two elders, three union leaders, one teacher and one researcher and four Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were purposively selected for their roles in each conflict. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data from print media, and a sixteen-item coding sheet comprising eight analytical categories for each journalism frame was used to content analyse information from news articles. Feminist curiosity was utilised to examine the camouflaged (unequal) gendering of power in the unreported roles played by women from KII and FGDs.

The percentage-point difference in the categories of reportage between Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts consists of straight news (76%; 70.19%), editorials (4.47%; 7.69%), Features (14.78%; 16.35 %) and letters to the editor (4.81%; 5.77%) respectively. In both conflicts, women were represented as victims of destitution and displacement. Conversely, their representation in the Ife-Modakeke conflict were as victims of rape, divorce, riot and arson, while in the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict, they were portrayed as victims of maternal mortality, forced marriages and subjects of traditional oaths to forestall divulgence of security information to relatives. Unlike being represented as victims, women in the Ife-Modakeke conflict were reported to be financiers of peace-making initiatives, peace petition writers and pellet removers. Likewise, in the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict, they were reported as peace brokers and participants in traditional oath-taking to resolve the conflict. The unreported roles of women in the four communities include similar roles as petition writers, protesters, information sources, medical providers, and advisers. In Modakeke and Ife communities, virgin girls and elderly women relied on *juju* to protect and enable the male fighters at the battlefronts, while in Aguleri and Umuleri communities, women served as disguised fighters and weapon-carrying aides.

Although the media largely portrayed women as victims in Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, the women described themselves as advisers, enablers, protectors and fighters. Therefore, journalists should interact directly with people in conflict settings to understand and accurately report the roles of different actors.

**Keywords:** Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, Women roles in conflicts, Nigerian print media representation.

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## **List of Acronyms**

AAPW	Academic Associates Peace Works
ARC	Aguleri Representative Council
ACC	Aguleri Caretaker Committee
AYA	Aguleri Youth Association
ATHU	Aguleri Town Hall Union
AWDA	Aguleri Women Development Association
CEDCOMS	Center for Development and Conflict Management Studies
CRESNET	Conflict Resolution Stakeholders Network
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
GIM	Great Ife Movement
IFRA	Institute of French Research in Africa
IDU	Ife Development Union
IYG	Ife Youth Group
IAC	Ife Action Council
IYM	Ife Youth Movement (Ife Youth for peace)
INTERPAC	Inter-Community Peace Advocacy Committee
NISER	Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research
NIIA	Nigerian Institute of International Affairs
NARECOM	National Reconciliation Committee
MAC	Modakeke Awareness Committee
MPU	Modakeke Progressive Union
MYV	Modakeke Youth Vanguard
MWC	Modakeke Welfare Council
MYM	Modakeke Youth Movement
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
OMATA	Onitsha Market Traders Association
OPC	Oodua' People's Congress
WORDOC	Women Research and Documentation Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	Umuleri Women Association

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Conflict is a human activity which entails hostilities over access to social, economic and political resources. Communal conflicts in particular, involve sustained fight between communities with shared territory disenfranchised over varied issues. These conflicts hold a powerful attraction for the print media<sup>1</sup> obligated as instruments of information dissemination to constructively transmit to the reader<sup>2</sup> accurate, objective and balanced information about the contentious issues concerning the different parties in a conflict as well as the roles of men and women as conflict participants.

Consequently, reportages about wars/conflicts revolve around killings, destruction of livelihoods, displacements and active roles played by men as conflict participants in contrast to women and girls<sup>3</sup> represented in stereotyped roles of victim and peace. The recurrent victim representations concern their roles as displaced fleeing mothers and wives with children, pawns of rape, prostitutes, and subjects of intimidation and conviction as the 'enemy' (Nordstrom, 1997; Leahy, 1997 cited in Zotto, 2002). While the few mentions of their peace role involvements mostly entail formal activities alongside men who were mainly the facilitators (Zotto, 2002; Soyinka-Airewele, 2004).

This reportage does the opposite of deepening public understanding about other roles women play in conflict situations. Also, although both stereotypical roles are typical of any conflict situation reality however, these 'realities' are ideological factors of the media instead of being a mirror reflection of reality (Ossome, 2011). Further, the concern with the victim role is its pejorative representation of women as passive,

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<sup>1</sup> This study refers to newspapers and magazines.

<sup>2</sup> These include those not connected to the conflicts exacerbation or resolution and those involved or affected by it.

<sup>3</sup> Mostly lumped together (with women) as a homogeneous group rather than as individuals with multiple identities and circumstances (Soiri, 1996; Pogson, 2012).

dependent, fearful bystanders in conflict situations, irrespective of how poignant the images projected evoke sympathy. Also, in many ways, these ‘victim’ role experiences foreclosed a myriad of resourceful and resilient roles of women as ‘survivors’ in the conflict situations. The query for peace roles concerns the unacknowledged dimensions of women’s (in) formal peace participation in conflict situations. Admittedly, the unquestioned acceptance of these dual roles is probably because “no one questions or examines what is obvious to all” (Arendt, 1969 cited in Hume, 2009) and the:

...cultural amnesia that follows the conclusion of a conflict that culminates into the contracting of central rather than peripheral roles played by women in the address of conflict as actors who either served the process by feeding the fighters and relinquishing their male children to the ‘cause’. And as ‘collateral’ voices of resistance, challenging any conflict through formal and informal organizational activities (Leahy, 1997; Tickner, 1996 cited in Zotto, 2002:142).

Ultimately, the above bias activated the reframing<sup>4</sup> of established narratives about seemingly similar yet dissimilar conflicts<sup>5</sup> between close-knit homogeneous sub-Yoruba communities of Ife and Modakeke in the South-West and Igbo communities of Aguleri and Umuleri in the South-East concerning the roles of women in contrast to roles played by men. The conduct of this inquiry converges with the African Political Science agenda to “(de)limit study of the formal and public sphere, and in turn expand the boundaries of what is political, to address the dialectics of the household and community, formal and informal”(Mama, 1996:26). In addition to this, is “a trend within feminist media scholarship to ‘shift the centre’ of emphasis from social structures to discourses and symbols of marginality in words and texts about those who have formerly been excluded or have simply remained invisible” (Andersen and Collins, 1998:12; Steeves and Wasko, 2002:17). Admittedly, women constitute the excluded or invisible ‘second sex’, ‘other sex’, ‘sex that requires explanation’ (De Beauvoir, 1972 cited in Tavris, 1992:16) in the reportage of both community conflicts.

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<sup>4</sup>Relabeling or redefining a particular concept or reality in a slightly different and more constructive perspective (Yarn, 1999).

<sup>5</sup>The resolution of the Ife-Modakeke conflict was on February 6, 2009, and the Aguleri and Umuleri on April 4, 2000.



Consequent to the above, this study examined print media representation of the roles of women in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts and investigated unreported roles played by women in the communities.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The gender analysis of any conflict is important particularly if the literature analyses the different gender roles concerning the power relationships between men and women in the conflict. The reason for this as proffered by Thompson, (2006) is none other than that if the specific circumstances, experiences, roles, vulnerabilities, and capacities of men and women in conflict are not understood; the tendency is that homogeneous approaches that do not address gender-based differences and generally tend to disadvantage women will be constructed. Thus, the making of women's experiences and roles visible is crucial because without doing that, the experiences in the context of shifting gender identities, roles, and power relationships in situations of conflict will be obscured.

This is true of discourse in the literature on Ife-Modakeke conflict that has revolved around land ownership, tenancy, chieftaincy, the creation of separate local government administrative units, human rights infringements issues, and the roles of men as participants in contrast to vulnerabilities of women and scanty representation of their roles in the conflict (Albert 1999; Ogbara, 2002; Soyinka-Aiyewe, 2004; Akanji, 2009; Folami and Olaiya, 2016). Similarly, the literature on the conflict between the two Igbo ethnic sub-groups of Aguleri-Umuleri was extensive with issues about indigeneity status regarding access to and ownership of "Agu Akor" land, siting of the administrative authority of Anambra East Local Government with headquarters in a disputed town of Otuocha, the failure of government to ensure accountability for extra-judicial executions and impunity over sundry violations. Accordingly, much of the literature was mainly about men's involvement as the main or sole actors in conflict, while stories about the roles of women were limited (Ibeanu and Onu, 2001; Fagbemi and Nwankwo, 2002, Onwuzuruigbo, 2009; Ibeanu and Mbah, 2012, Obiakor, 2016). This dearth concerning the little or no gender analysis regarding the roles women played in both conflicts is perpetuated because writers specifically fail to question the assumption that men's experiences and perspectives of conflict are universal.

In this appraisal of discourses on both conflicts, the gaps in the literature revolved around the dearth of gender analysis concerning the roles of women because most of the discourses have not been engaged from a gender-blind perspective. This study from a gender analysis perspective addresses the following problems. One is the account about women as victims which foreclosed their resourceful and resilient roles as survivors amidst the victim situation. Two is the portrayal of the peace-making initiatives of women alongside men projected as the main facilitators. Three is the gendered use of language (words and phrases) that affirmed men as fighters and obscured women's contributions in the same role.

The three problems precipitated the examination of the following research questions:

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research seeks to provide answers to the following questions.

1. What was the extent of reportage of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts?
2. In which roles were women dominantly represented in the reportage of both conflicts?
3. How did the use of language in the reportage of both conflicts obscure other roles played by women?
4. What unreported roles did women play in the four communities in both conflicts?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The broad objective is to review the print media representation of the roles of women in the Ife- Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri communal conflicts in Nigeria.

1. Assess the extent of reportage of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.
2. Identify the dominant role representations of women in the reportage of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.
3. Examine how the use of language in the reportage of both conflicts obscured other roles played by women.
4. Discover the unreported roles played by women in the four communities.

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

This study considered the reportage of Ife-Modakeke conflict (1997-2000) and Aguleri-Umuleri conflict (1995-1999) from Five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines selected were due to informed news quality, depth and spread while magazines were consulted for their advantage of reviews (Harris, 1994).

## 1.6 Justification of the Study

There are three justifications for this study. The first is to make women's diverse roles in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities visible beyond prevailing representations in the print media. The second is to enjoin writers, journalists and questioners<sup>6</sup> to be smarter<sup>7</sup> in the explicit gender (feminist) curious<sup>8</sup> sense that entails paying sustained attention to the roles of women that are un-headlined, undervalued and made invisible in conflict situations. The third is to demonstrate how language used in the writing and reporting of both conflicts affirmed the roles men played and obscured women's roles.

## 1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

**Women:** In this study, women include wives, mothers, daughters and daughter-in-laws, aunts, grandmothers and young girls considered as "the other". The reference to women here is not in relation to their fixed and biologically characterizations but as 'the other sex' whose roles need to be explained.

**Role:** This concept as defined in this study encompasses socio-cultural constructed expectations held about (in) formal legitimated responsibilities and aptitude(s) associated with the position and place of women as participants in conflict situations.

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<sup>6</sup> This refers to the readers/reading public who cannot claim to be unaffected by the subject of examination.

<sup>7</sup> In this context, transcend ignoring the true complexities of power, politics of masculinities and its consequences concerning the representation of women's roles in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

<sup>8</sup> According to Enloe, 2014 transcends asking "Where are the women?", "Why are they represented in a particular way and manner?", "Who benefits from such representation of women?" and "What do women think about being represented as they are?" The reason is none other than that it will constitute a waste of one's time. What is important is to question the complicit prejudices concerning (mis)representation of women's roles compared to men's in conflict situations.

**Print media:** This concept refers to media mediums such as books, journals, newspapers and magazines distinguished in the following four categories: binding, regularity, content and timeliness. Books refer to one-time, bound publications of enduring value on a single topic. Journals refer to articles which tend to capture the most recent scholarship. Newspapers are portable unbound daily reading publications with diverse timely contents and weekly magazines are on-going bound publications of continuing value with timely diverse topics (Cole and Harcup, 2010).

**Communal conflict:** This concept refers to conflict between ‘*sub-groups* of an ‘*ethnic group*’ that share territory, cultural tradition, and identity over political representation, farmland or territorial boundaries, development projects, siting and control of administrative government offices.

## **1.8 Chapter Outline**

Chapter One: This chapter contains the background, statement of problem, research questions, objectives, scope, and justification for the study and chapter outline.

Chapter Two: This chapter reviewed related literature on communal conflict in Africa, Nigeria’s Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, discourses concerning women’s roles and the theory adopted to provide relevant empirical data for the subject of study.

Chapter Three: This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in this study which includes the research design, sampling technique, size, study population, instruments utilised, validity, reliability, data collection methods and analysis.

Chapter Four: This chapter consists of the background information regarding what constitutes news content and the content analysis of reportages of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts from selected newspapers and magazines. It also illustrates the extent of reportage, dominant representation of women’s roles and language used in the reportage for the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

Chapter Five: This chapter contains the six unreported roles played by women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities. It also appraised the unreported roles vis-a-vis the represented roles to expose how power operates to sustain the gendered status quo.

Chapter Six: This chapter comprises the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter provides a survey of relevant literature on the concept of communal conflict in Africa particularly, Nigeria's Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts concerning the narrative about women's roles. The theoretical framework was also appraised.

#### **2.1 Contextualizing Communal Conflict**

Communal conflicts constitute one of the categories of local conflicts recognized as a prime source of instability that threatens civilians and undermines the political process (Krause, 2019). In the discourse of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, the usage of the term requires clarification because of its use interchangeably as social conflicts, intra-ethnic conflicts, communal antagonisms, rural communal conflicts, sub-ethnic violence, ethno-communal crises and even as community war despite "*the fact that such conflicts lack the visibility of inter-state wars and genocide*" (Soyinka- Airewele, 2004:7). Its reference as 'communal wars' may not be unconnected to the fact that such conflicts culminate into killing more than 1,000 victims per year (Krause, 2018).

Further to this is the ethnic problematic in the concept given the interchangeable use of phrases embedded with meanings which do not constitute similar meanings because each carries different and contradictory meanings residing more with 'ethnic conflict' conceived as "*political or social conflict involving one or more groups identified by some marker of ethnic identity*" (Crawford and Lipschutz, 1998). The conflation of communal conflicts with ethnicity is tricky because 'ethnicity' constitutes a part of a person's identity drawn from one or more 'markers' like race, religion, shared history, region, social symbols or language (Singh,2000).

Moreso, as "*an end-based concept it only makes sense if the motivating purpose of contention is some matter of specific relevance to an ethnic group*" (Gilley, 2004: 1158) which explains why conflicts revolving around it are conceived as forms of

organized violence conducted between informal ethnic militias that occur over 'local' issues and between 'traditionally hostile' parties (Raleigh and Kniveton, 2012).

The point is that to conceive, on the one hand, conflicts between sub-ethnic identities of relatively homogeneous communities of Ife and Modakeke as '*intra-ethnic*' and on the other hand, conflicts between Aguleri and Umuleri communities as '*inter-ethnic*' as if ethnic consciousness was a galvanizing factor for both conveys erroneous assumptions. The reason for this position converges with Gilley's (2004) argument that the mere existence of ethnic markers in a conflict cannot be the basis of alluding that the cases fit into 'ethnic conflict'. In other words, such conception is a superficial description. More so, if the concept of 'ethnic conflict' is to be considered same as communal conflict, it must provide information about what is happening beyond superficial appearances. And as it does this, it should be measurable or be rejected in some cases.

Ejobowah (2001 cited in Aiyewele, 2004) concurred by stating that the incorporation of diverse forms of difference, and issues is not necessarily synonymous with ethnicity. Accordingly, the position of World Organization against Torture and Centre for Law Enforcement Education (2009) is that community conflicts/clashes are the result of competition for scarce resources by the national or local elite that often cooperate, conspire and collude in pillaging societal resources. In this light, even though there is an outbreak of violence it has little to do with ethnicity or creed except to the extent that these factors are manipulated by the power elite for selfish ends. In the case of Nigeria, the spate of communal conflicts has been further compounded by the after effects of prolonged military autocracy and the concomitant militarisation of the country. This makes violence increasingly evolve into the only form of recourse because avenues for peaceful change were systematically destroyed of authority.

The conclusion therefore, is that communal conflicts do not occur between two ethnic groups even if they share territory, cultural tradition, and identity. It can occur within sub-groups with differences (Osaghae, 1994). Thus, the contestations between Ife and Modakeke exist as '*sub-groups* of a Yoruba '*ethnic group*' while that of Aguleri and Umuleri communities is between '*sub-groups* of Ibo '*ethnic group*'. Implicitly, communal conflicts occur within communities within a particular geographical area where people interact and engage in subsistence. Consequent upon this, a definitive

operationalization of communal conflict in this study aligns with Soyinka-Airewele's, (2003) conceptualization of it as spasmodic violence or contestations embodied in identity issues over unsettled grievances about real or imagined disenfranchisement between polarized communities with shared territory over benefits such as political representation, farmland or territorial possessions, development projects, location, control of political and administrative government offices.

Admittedly, within the contexts of these conflicts that revolve around boundaries and land women certainly play central rather than peripheral roles (Zotto, 202). In these lights, reviewed in the preceding sections are narratives about the portrayal of roles played by women in communal conflict literature in Africa and Nigeria's Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

## **2.2 Communal Conflicts in Africa and Nigeria**

The communal conflicts reviewed here are those that revolve around ownership of land and boundaries in Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan. Also assessed here are conflicts in Nigeria such as the Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State (1999-2001); Tiv-Jukun Wukari conflict in Taraba State (1999-2001) Ezillo-Ezza-Ezillo communal conflict of Ebonyi State (1982-2012) and Ife-Modakeke (1997/98-2000) and Aguleri-Umuleri (1995/1999) conflicts about the representation of the roles of women.

### **Africa**

Ojalammi's (2006) study described and analysed the inter-community land disputes over village lands of Loliondo and Sale Divisions of the Ngorongoro District in northern Tanzania between pastoral Maasai-Maasai and sedentary agricultural inter-group Sonjo/Batemi. It stated that the 1995 violence is linked to the 1991 re-creation of the boundary between Sale and Loliondo Divisions and the formalization of Maasai legal land rights in the Loliondo Division. Women were visible only in a footnote account concerning appending women and land rights to the Land Act and the Village land Act of 1999 by Tanzania Home Economics Association (TAHEA) and Tanzania Women Lawyer's Association (TAWLA). The other mention of women concerns their role in collecting wood from the forests which served as a building material for huts and also as fuel for household use, their engagement in ploughing, harvesting crops for home, selling at the local markets and housework activities.

Elfverson's (2019) chapter on 'Patterns and Drivers of Communal Conflict in Kenya' was an overview of major violent communal conflict patterns in Kenya since 1989 and in particular, how it has led to not only deaths, destruction of villages, displacement of thousands of people but large-scale disruption of education and economic activities in most regions. The article in explaining conflicts in the Rift Valley particularly accounted for how long-standing grievances over land created antagonisms between Kalenjin and Maasai groups against Kikuyu and Kisii. The discussion about the North rift and Northeast conflicts revolved around how poor security provision in conjunction with porous borders sparked off conflicts in neighbouring states over territorial control. The account of women's roles concerned first, their mediatory strategies through local community-based organizations (CBOs), nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations. And second, as members of the District Peace Committees (DPCs) made up of locally elected elders, youth, civil society organizations, and government representatives charged with regulating and managing minor disputes and preventing their escalation into violent conflict.

Krause's, (2019) analysis of the communal conflicts in South Sudan between Jonglei State and Upper Nile in South Sudan traced its complex historical roots to local practices of cattle herding and its subsequent deadly transformation by political elites. The implications of the conflicts for stabilization and peacekeeping were also addressed. The discourse about women's role concerned their extensive support in taking care of children, and the elderly, the preparation of special foods for their husbands, brothers, fathers and sons engaged in fighting and their provision of logistical preparations necessary for fighting for the men.

## **Nigeria**

Nwachukwu and Ojugbana's (2002) 'The Benue Killings' chronicled the dynamics and consequences of recurring inter-communal violent clashes for decades between the Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups in rural agrarian communities across the Benue Valley in Nigeria's Middle Belt. The accounts highlighted causes of the explosive competition dichotomy between those considered to be more recent "settlers" (Tiv) and "indigenes"(Jukun)as including disputes over land, traditional rulership, political authority, fears of domination and marginalization particularly, constitutional issues



of citizenship rights. Mentions about women's roles concern their victim status as wives and mothers who lost spouses and children as well as casualties of rape, displacement, disembowelling and as spoils of war.

Oji, Eme and Nwoba (2014) examined the protracted conflict between Ezillo<sup>9</sup> and Ezza-Ezillo<sup>10</sup> conflict of Ebonyi State highlighting the sacred relationship between the former as indigenes and the latter as settlers who were invited to resolve a land dispute between the indigenes and their Ngbo neighbour at Egu-Echara in the early 1930s. The article also explained that since the end of the dispute, the Ezzas have continued to live amongst their host community Ezillo although the relationships between the two groups<sup>11</sup> have not been harmonious as it has degenerated into several episodes of indigene-settler conflicts with the recent occurring on the 10th of May 2008. The issues of contention according to the Ezzas include an altercation between an Ezillo boy and a man from Ezza over the erection of a telephone booth sited at the *Isinkpuma* motor park and the denigration of Ezillo's culture and tradition. For the Ezza-Ezillo people, the confrontation was associated with the denial of infrastructural amenities and the occupying of strategic positions in government by Ezillo counterparts.

Women were conspicuously missing in the narrative of the conflict but for an excerpt concerning the "beating of the traditional ruler of Ezillo, *Eze* Chima Onyibe in 2008 and 1992 alongside his wife thereby desecrating the chieftaincy institution" (Oji, Eme, Nwoba, 2014: 519).

Ladan-Baki's (2015) discourse about the conflicts between Hausa settlers (Hausa-Fulani Muslims) and minority Christian in Southern Kaduna communities of Zango

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<sup>9</sup>Ezillo is one of the seven sub-ethnic communities in Ishielu Local Government of Ebonyi State that has one of the largest concentrations of sub-ethnic and dialectic groups in Ebonyi State. These sub-ethnic and dialectic groups are Agba, Ohofia-Agba (Ntezi dialect) Ntezi, Okpoto (Korri dialect), Ezillo (Ezillo dialect) Nkalagu, Nkalaha, Iyionu (Nkalaha), Azuinyaba (Ezza dialect). The community is made up of seven villages namely (in order of seniority) Amofia, Amaleze, Umuakpaa, Umuezeoke, Amuhu and Amorie. Ezillo community is located at the North Southern fringe of Ishielu LGA strategically located across the Enugu-Abakaliki Expressway and shares borders with Ngbo, Iyionu & Nkalagu communities in the North, Ntezi and Okpoto in the East and Inyaba in the south.

<sup>10</sup> Within some of the sub-ethnic communities are Ezza-settler-communities which include: Ezza-Ezillo, Ezza-Nkalagu, Ezza Ogboji-in Azuinyaba. The Ezza-Ezillo community people came from Ezza South & Ezza North LGAs of Ebonyi State is also made up of Umuezeoka and Umuezeokoha villages. The Ezza-Ezillo people came from Ezza South & Ezza North LGAs of Ebonyi State.

<sup>11</sup> manifested in the intense struggle for ownership of Ezillo and reticent reaction of the Ezillo people that strangers should not disposes them of their ancestral home land, marginalize and discriminate over resources which had always been skewed in favour and disfavour of the other parties such as creation of electoral wards, political appointments and development projects such as electricity, hospital and schools.

Kataf, a Local Government Area in Kaduna State concerns how it undermines the political development of the latter and indeed Nigeria. The paper elaborated on the historical animosities between the two communities linked to the pre-colonial economic imbalance and political structure of Hausa land and the character of the colonial and post-colonial<sup>12</sup> Nigerian state. Explored also, was the resurgence of crises in February 1992 and its degeneration into one of the most bloody communal disturbances. The issues of contention revolved around whether the town market should be relocated or allowed to remain in its old location while the subsequent fight in May 1992 concerned the allegations that Hausa people trespassed on a farm belonging to Kataf people and uprooted yam seedlings. This necessitated retaliation by the Kataf people. No explicit mention was made of women however, implicitly they constitute part of the “...estimated over 60,000 people who fled their homes” (Ladan-Baki, 2015: 175).

Agbu, Useini and Shishi (2019) studied the April 2019 conflict which erupted between Jukun-Tiv<sup>13</sup> at Kente in Wukari Local Government Area of Benue Valley Region in the Southern Senatorial Zone of Taraba State. The paper provided information concerning how the conflict consumed communities in Donga, Takum LGAs in Taraba State and some border communities in Ukum, Katsina-Ala and Logo LGAs of Benue State within three (3) months (April-June) and between April and December 2019. It also recounted the consequences of the conflicts such as hundreds

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<sup>12</sup> since the early 1900s to British colonialists, who after invading northern Nigeria, imposed District Heads from the minority Hausa ethnic group over the predominant ethnic groups of the area, the Kataf's and the Atyap's, in their famous indirect rule administrative system. This explains the Kataf's and Atyap's over time demonstration of contempt for Hausa traditional leadership appointed by, and under the patronage of, the Emir of Zaria claiming marginalization by taking over their lands.

<sup>13</sup> The Jukun speaking people of Nigeria that occupy the Benue Valley which falls within the Middle Belt region of Central Nigeria are largely concentrated in Taraba State with their capital at Wukari, the seat of their paramount ruler, the Aku-Uka. They are also in Local Government Areas of Taraba State: Ardo-Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo, Karim-Lamido, Kurmi, Takum, Ussa and Wukari. A great number of them are found in the towns of Abinsi, Oga, Adi and Makurdi in Benue State; Pindiga in Gombe State; Awe and Akyekura in Nasarawa State and part of Plateau State. The Tiv(considered settlers) bordered to the east by the Jukun, the north by the Arago and the Gomei, to the west by the Idoma and to the south by a number ethnic groups of the Obudu plateau, on the other hand, comprise a substantial portion of the undulating plains of the Benue Valley, are considered as the largest minority ethnic group in the central region of Nigeria, otherwise called the Middle Belt region. The (indigenous) Tiv's are predominant in Benue State and in Katsina-Ala, Kwande, Ushongo, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer-West, Buruku, Konshisha, Makurdi, Vandeikya, Ukum, Tarka and Logo Local Government Areas. Some (migrant) Tiv's are found in surrounding States of Nasarawa, Taraba, Plateau and Cross River. Both groups irrespective of which settled first in the Benue Valley have lived side by side engaging in inter-marriages and exchanging trade items prior colonialism and even combined forces to fight the Fulani expansionists showing the extent of solidarity and shared interest that characterized the relationship amongst these indigenous groups.

of dead people, homes and property obliterated, persons, displaced and disrupted economic and social undertakings of both communities.

Further explored were the cordial inter-group relations between both communities spanning pre-colonial and colonial times to create an understanding that the misunderstanding and 1991/92 and 2001/2002 conflicts were rooted in land and political intrigues. The allusion to women was in the following. One, concerning inter-marriages between the two groups particularly regarding how the Tiv who are more generous in giving out their daughters in marriage than the Jukun's brought long-lasting unity between the two groups in the pre-colonial period. Two, how Jukun and Tiv women not only bought but sold at markets of the two groups, the opening of food restaurants and hair dressing saloons in and around Wukari in the post-2002 years. Three, the chasing out of all Tiv women attending the Kente market on the 1st and 2nd of April 2019 and the holding of hostage in Kente of about sixteen (16) Jukun women on a business trip to Afyakot (in Benue State) by the Tiv. Four, women were represented as displaced persons.

### **2.3 Background to Ife-Modakeke Conflict**

Ife-Ife<sup>14</sup> and Modakeke<sup>15</sup> are neighbouring communities in Osun State of south western Nigeria have historical interactions of inter-marriages, business and development alliances. However, the homogeneity of both communities has not been without occasional reproaches, indictments and counter-indictments which culminate into aggressive disputation and communal clashes. Reasons adduced for the disputations revolve around citizenship rights often framed as a struggle over land ownership and boundaries between Ife 'landlords' and Modakeke's conceived as 'strangers/tenants' (Albert,2001; Ogbara,2002; Fatile and Awotokun 2009, Falola, 2010 and Ibenwa and Uroko, 2020).

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<sup>14</sup>Ife (native settlers/aborigines, also of the famous old Oyo Empire) is situated in Osun state in the south-west zone (made up of six states namely, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo) of Nigeria. The zone is traditionally inhabited by one of Nigeria's three largest ethnic groups, the Yoruba with strong cultural affinities and beliefs that trace their origin to Ife, which many of them regard according to legend, as the cradle of Yoruba nation.

<sup>15</sup>Modakeke ("migrants/strangers/tenants") of pre-colonial old Oyo Empire fleeing the invasion of Fulani Jihadists (from Northern Nigeria) around the 1840s during the reign of *Ooni* Adegunle Abewela who received, welcomed and conferred the title of Ogunsuwa (or Ogunsua) on their leader.

The contentious issues for Modakeke's revolve around perceived marginalization and their use as a source of cheap labour by the Ife's who later became envious as they progressed and became more prosperous. Further justification for this claim is the demand for payment of rent and royalties from the Ifes from the Modakekes. For the Ife's, the complaint among other issues included the recruitment of Modakeke settlers by Ibadan to intervene in their politics and alleged insubordination by the Modakeke's towards them as their landlord.

Contemporary accounts of tensions between the two communities revolve around the following: exploitation by successive governments and politicians evidenced first, in land/boundary dispute over the creation of L.G.A such as the 1981 defunct House of Assembly of the then Oyo State (until the creation of Osun State in 1991, the area of conflict was part of Oyo State), creation of 54 additional local government areas (LGAs) and claims that the political elite in the Ife community prevented the creation of a separate Modakeke LGA. This action necessitated subsequent massive decamping by the Modakeke's from the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), then the party of government in Oyo State, to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the rival party in Oyo State but the ruling party at the federal level. The embarrassment of this move by the Modakeke's prompted the incumbent *Ooni* to take drastic actions such as the renaming of streets in Modakeke and the downgrading of the title status of the *Ogunsua*. This chieftaincy dispute fueled further contention for the Modakeke's because of the high esteem in which traditional rulers are held.

Another reason is the refusal of the then Oyo state Governor, Chief Bola Ige to honour the recommendation to create a separate Modakeke LGA according to the judicial commission of inquiry headed by Kayode Ibidapo-Obe<sup>16</sup>. Added to this, is the alleged influence by the Ife elite against the implementation of the recommendation report of the Arthur Mbanefo Panel<sup>17</sup> which resulted in the siting of the headquarters of the new local government for the Modakekes, in Enuwa, the site of the palace of the *Ooni*. The subsequent protest by Modakeke's against this siting compelled the federal authorities to return the headquarters to Modakeke while the Ife's perceived

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<sup>16</sup>a judge of the High Court of Oyo State, constituted by the then government to investigate the violence, the massive voting by the Modakeke's in the general elections of August/September 1983 for the insurgent candidacy of Chief Victor Omololu Olunloyo of the NPN, enabling him to oust Chief Ige from the governorship of the old Oyo state.

<sup>17</sup>constituted by the then Federal Military Government on the creation of additional units of administration at the state and LGA levels and on boundary adjustments.

the move as humiliating for their revered paramount ruler, the *Ooni*, who doubles as the spiritual head of the Yoruba race, whose palace was within the boundaries of the new LGA.

In line with this, the Ife's registered their angst over the relocation of the headquarters of the new LGA from Modakeke to Oke-Igbo considered supposedly a neutral ground belonging to either Ile-Ife or Modakeke, via a radio broadcast on August 14, 1997. The aftermath of this announcement engendered an uprising by the Modakeke's who alleged that the then Military Administrator, Col. Anthony Obi, sided with the Ife's on the claim that Oke-Igbo was part of Ile-Ife and that the announcement by the Military Administrator was a poorly disguised attempt at maintaining the status-quo ante. The Modakeke's further accused the *Ooni* of using his enormous wealth and influence with the then ruling military regime to perpetuate his oppression of their community hence the organized protest march by Modakeke youths. This action snowballed into a full-scale conflict on August 18, 1997, with the resultant loss of lives, houses and properties worth hundreds of millions of Naira. Another outbreak between both communities occurred in February, 2000.

In light of all these, both communities claim victim status. In order words, neither community admits responsibility for the provocation and violations. However, the Modakeke people claim that the Ife people were the aggressors and bullies who were against their bid for autonomy and dignified citizenship. In all, the involvement of government into the conflict together with the assistance of elders and chiefs from both sides succeeded in bringing to a halt the conflict in 2009.

#### **2.4 Representation of the Roles of Women in Ife-Modakeke Conflict**

Albert's (1999a) 'Ife-Modakeke Crisis' re-counted the origin of conflicts between the two Yoruba communities as revolving around the preservation of the territorial integrity and refusal to allow the emergence of a hybrid culture in their domain for the Ife's. While for the Modakeke it concerns the preservation of their collective existence and identity which they claim to be distinct from that of the Ife people. The aspect of women's roles in the conflict remained largely invisible.

Further, the article 'New Directions in the Management of Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Insights from the Activities of AAPW' by Albert, (1999b) provided insights

about the transformation resolution processes of the Academic Associates Peace Works I(AAPW) in handling the conflicts between the Ife and Modakeke communities. The piece, however, did not have any specific account of women's roles.

Albert's (2001a) text 'USAID/OTI Nigeria intervention in Ife-Modakeke Conflict Building Peace, Advancing Democracy: Experience with Third Party Interventions in Nigeria's Conflicts' created further insights into successful peace intervention mechanisms of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Women's roles were made visible first, in "*the three-fold peace roles intervention process activity that included a broad spectrum of urban, rural young and old, literate and illiterate, male and female stakeholders within and outside Ile-Ife*" (Albert, 2001:65). Second, as members of the two community-based organizations (CBOs) namely Ife Development Board (IDU) and Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU) which include all categories of people ranging from "*young and old, male and female...actors that constitute the rallying point in the conflict situation in charge of everything, from human to material resources*" (Albert, 2001:68). Third, "a woman participant in the second and third phase meeting of the joint training on forgiveness, reconciliation and transformative leadership which included youth leaders, comprising of the actual militant/combatant groups in both communities who fought the war" (Albert, 2001: 74). And four, their official role capacities as representatives at the formal inauguration of the Ife-Modakeke Inter-Community Peace Advocacy Committee.

The women representatives include "Dr.(Mrs) Shan Hayatuddini, General manager out of the seven (7) representatives of USAID/OTI Nigeria; chief (Mrs) Anolola, *Iyalode* of Ife who constituted part of the fourteen(14) representatives of the *Ooni* of Ife and Mrs Omolayo A. Duduyemi who was added as a member following the increase of membership of the peace and advocacy committee/Ife-Modakeke Peace Advocacy Committee from eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) to accommodate some representatives of more interest groups in Ile-Ife" (Albert, 2001:80-84).

Importantly, the decimal insertion of women detracts from the goal of the conflict resolution workshop which claimed to be a forum where:

Knowledge is shared and agreement is reached on what the situation was, is and should be. More so, the workshop's principle of joint problem-solving entails everybody having a role to play in it because knowledge is freely exchanged so that all will be better informed about the conflict situation. Added to this, is its main objective of changing the dynamics of a destructive conflict and creating an awareness training programme geared towards making the workshop participants aware of some key issues in non-violent conflict resolution (Albert, 2001:115-124).

Mayowa (2001) explained the patterns, causes and parallel relationship dynamics of the Ife- Modakeke conflicts and other forms of ethnic-community conflicts in Nigeria. The article made no distinct reference to women. Ogbara's (2002) article on the recurring conflict between the Ife and Modakeke communities concerns human rights implications. Accounts about women were about how they constituted "30% of the killed, injured assaulted people...during the 1997 and 2000 crises particularly the inter-married who were victimized or killed for ritual purposes, raped and as victims of sexual assault employed as a means of expressing inter-communal differences across community lines" (Ogbara, 2002:47). Also, there was a footnote insertion of a "Mrs Elizabeth Pam" (Ogbara, 2002: 48) who served as a chair of the committee set up to study the Oputa Commission report and advice the federal government on its implementation while there were in-text citations of names of the men who chaired the four investigative commissions instituted by governments at both the state and federal levels.

Babajimi (2003) discussed the Ife-Modakeke conflict as intra-ethnic and stated that the contention between communities concerns political, chieftaincy, land and boundary issues which revolve around the creation of a new local government area. Accounts about Ife and Modakeke women concern their role as "...participants at the conflict resolution training workshops and peace-building activities of the NGO, Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW)" (Babajimi, 2003:160).

Soyinka-Airewele's (2003) post-conflict article stated the perennial concerns about the Ife-Modakeke conflict and highlighted concerns about how the host community of Ile-Ife and the University of Ife as a social institution in an African community with its diversity and plural cultural underpinnings could achieve healing and rehabilitation. Women appeared as widows housed in a locally based non-governmental organization CEDCOMS clinic, a striking young woman straddling a baby staring from beneath an uninhabitable charred building and in prostitution. There were implicit inferences to women as victims of the high numbers of homeless, destitute and staff of the University of Ife married to individuals from the opposing side under pressure to either divorce their spouses or abandon them to be killed.

Soyinka-Airewele (2004) examined how the issues of contention in the Ife-Modakeke conflict impact reconstituting stable polities in the aftermath of inter-state wars and regional destabilizations confronting Africa. Inferences about women as victims were embedded in phrases such as: 'gendered forms of violence', victims of dislocation, and casualties of fractured communal and family structures'.

Akanji (2009) probed the human rights aspects of the conflict between two sub-Yoruba ethnic groupings of Ife and Modakeke and the responsibility of the Nigerian state in upholding their fundamental rights. Also, considered were the issues of contention which included the migration of Modakeke's to Ife territory and their quest for internal self-determination on one hand, and on the other, the quest of both groups to maintain distinct identities and control over their resources. The specific allusions to women include the official role of a Mrs S. Akinruyomi as a Presidential Peace Panel secretary and the marriage of a displaced Oyo woman to an Ife monarch, *Ooni Akinyemero* which resulted in the birth of Crown Prince Abegunle Abewela. Also, there was an implicit reference to women as constituting part of victims of "*killings, economic activities that were retarded, the wanton destruction of lives and property, displacement and break in family ties...*" (Akanji, 2009:45).

Asiyanbola (2009) discussed the conflict between both communities as an urban ethnic-communal conflict by focusing on the dynamics of landlord/tenant and indigene/non-indigenous status and its impact on the identity rights of citizens of both communities. The mention of women concerns their identity crisis experiences as inter-married persons and the depiction of their children as strangers considered enemies on either side of the community. There was an implicit reference to women's



role in encouraging their male and female children and spouses to attend community meetings as well as their roles in motivating other women to make a financial contribution to the community's purse.

Olayiwola and Okorie (2010) studied how integrating peace attitudes can reduce intolerant attitudes and engender better inter-group relations in the education of children from Ife-Modakeke communities. Paradoxically, even though children are always linked to their mothers yet there was no mention of mothers or wives.

Oyeniya's (2010) article explained that greed rather than economic factors and grievance constituted the predisposing factors of the Ife-Modakeke conflict. The victim status of women was implicit in the excerpt "*fleeing villagers in groups which comprised kings, chiefs, priests and priestesses...*" (Oyeniya, 2010:317).

Idehen, Olasupo, and Adebuseyi, (2013) focused on the March 2000 episode of the Ife-Modakeke conflict to x-ray the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among adolescent warriors as traumatized victims suffering from confusion, anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances due to flashbacks of killings and arson. Women were implicitly referenced as mothers of adolescent warriors who were victims of traumatic experiences.

Obiyan (2015) investigated the resilience and surviving initiatives at the household level of male adolescents who had either lost one or both parents during the Ife-Modakeke conflicts. Women were explicitly referenced in line with their relationship as victims of "*destructions of properties, farms and loss of many lives including children, spousal killings through betrayals and the giving up of partners or children from inter-marriages between the two communities*" (Obiyan, 2015: 181).

Elugbaju's (2016) exploration of the Ife-Modakeke conflict revolved around the traditional institution, the court system's peace committee meetings and the constitutive sources of "*idile*", which roughly corresponds to the nuclear family, headed by a bale. Also discussed are the extended family level and the village or town level (Chief-in-Council), i.e the "*ebi*", the extended (people who have blood ties) family headed by "Mogaji" which usually is the oldest or most influential person and lastly, the existence of several family compounds headed by a bale. Ironically, although women are key stakeholders within the family unit, they were only visible as a "*sample population of elderly women*" (Elugbaju, 2016:10).

And implicitly, as victims of “*the no fewer than 2,000 or so people who were killed in the 1997 crisis and among 10,000 farmers displaced from Modakeke farmlands, schools, public utilities and houses*” (Elugbaju, 2016: 14).

Adegbite, Balogun and Buba (2016) assessed the effect of the Ife-Modakeke conflict on the re-alignment of economic systems of both communities and the land use structure of the Central Business District (CBD), Ile-Ife which constitutes the nucleus of the city’s business, commercial and government hub. Women were not distinctly alluded to despite discussions about the expansion of economic and commercial activities.

The conflict account by Folami and Olaiya (2016) concerns the unsuccessful nature of varied methods of conflict resolution and the need to adopt positive peace-building tool (constructed in symbols, signs, gestures folktales, moonlight tales, songs, drama and entertainment) on the claim that it promotes co-existence, diffusion and self-understanding. The reference to women concerns a particular Judith Asuni’s ‘exemplary’ peace education programme for youths of both communities which attracted Ife and Modakeke women who shared opinions about how their accessibility to children as mothers helped them use story telling to make way for peace necessary for strengthening relationships between the two communities.

Table 2.1 is a representation of the roles of women in Ife-Modakeke communal conflict literature.

**Table 2.1 Representation of the roles of women in Ife-Modakeke conflict**

Literature	Victim Representation	Peace Representation
Albert (1999a)	----	----
Albert (1999b)	—	—
Albert (2001)	----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) a stakeholder in a peace intervention process activity</li> <li>ii) member of the Ife Development Board and Modakeke Progressive Union community-based organizations in charge of human and material resources.</li> <li>iii) a participant in the second and third phases of joint training on forgiveness, reconciliation and transformative leadership meeting;</li> <li>iv) representatives at the formal inauguration of Ife- Modakeke Inter-Community Peace Advocacy Committee</li> </ul>
Mayowa (2001)	----	----
Ogbara (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) women accounted for 30% of injured, pawns of rape, casualties of killings for ritual purposes</li> </ul>	Consultative role as chair of implementation of Oputa Commission report.
Soyinka-Airewele (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) constituted high numbers of homeless, destitute</li> <li>(ii) Staff members of the university married to individuals under pressure to divorce their spouses(wives) or abandon them or allow them to be killed</li> <li>(iii) disavowal and betrayal abuses of spouses(wives) married from either side of the conflicting communities</li> <li>iv) widows</li> <li>(v) displaced, desolate women</li> <li>(vi) a young woman with a baby</li> <li>(vii) prostitution</li> </ul>	—

Soyinka-Airewele(2004)	gendered forms of violence against women	_____
Babajimi (2003)	_____	i)participants in the Academic Associates Peace workshop on conflict resolution training
Akanji 2009)	_____	i) Secretarial role in the Presidential Peace Panel
Asiyanbola (2009)	i) The suffering of identity crisis by women and children ii) Displacement of married women	encouragement of both their spouses, male and female children, relatives and other women to make a financial contribution to the community purse; attendance at community peace meetings
Olayiwola and Okorie (2010)	_____	_____
Oyeniya (2010)	i) fleeing village women and priestesses	
Olasupo and Adebisi (2013)	i) mothers of adolescent warriors or vigilantes who were victims of experiences of trauma	_____
Obiyan (2015)	i) Destruction of lives of children and women to spousal killings of betrayals and giving up of partners or children from inter marriages between members of the two communities	_____
Elugbaju (2016)	i) Displace elderly women and farmers	_____
Adebite, Balogun and Buba (2016)	_____	_____
Folami and Olaiya(2016)	_____	i) facilitator for a peace education programme for youths in both Ife and Modakeke where women participants from both communities expressed their views concerning strategies for peace

Source: Author's Compilation, 2017

## 2.5 Background to Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict

Aguleri and Umuleri are two neighbouring communities without a clear delineation of boundary located along the eastern bank coast of Omambala<sup>18</sup> River about thirty-two kilometres from Onitsha, Anambra state of South-Eastern zone<sup>19</sup> of Nigeria. Conflicts between these two Igbo ethnic sub-groups that share culture and descent linked to *Eri*<sup>20</sup> their progenitor have lived peacefully before the arrival of colonial administrators dated to the long and complicated history of the two communities. For the two communities, the indigeneity status concern which of the two communities was the first to settle as well as their grouping under the administrative authority of Anambra East Local Government with headquarters in Otuocha,<sup>21</sup> a fast-developing commercial town with opportunities for trade which both Aguleri and Umuleri communities lay claim to (Ibeanu 2003; Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

Consequent upon the above position, it is evident that the economic interests in Otuocha land over its ownership and control constitute the source of the intermittent conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities. The first aspect of the conflicting notions of land is traceable to the European doctrine of land occasioned by the dual revolution of French and Industrial Revolutions in the late nineteenth century. The revolutions instituted the European doctrine of individualization, commercialization and privatization of land practice. With this European privatization of land practice traders, merchants and colonial administrators settled into Aguleri and Umuleri and turned land into a commodity owned by private owners which could be freely purchased and sold (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

The second aspect of the European doctrine of land concerns its impact on existing notions of land<sup>22</sup> practices as held by the people of Aguleri and Umuleri. In other words, new notions of land engendered misunderstanding and crises to existing notions

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<sup>18</sup> a tributary of river Niger from which the state derived its name

<sup>19</sup>Comprise Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo

<sup>20</sup> A claim which the Aguleri people strongly oppose arguing that the Umuleri's are descendants of Ulu Eri, the first fruit of an affair between Iguedo, the pretty daughter of Agulu, the first son of *Eri*, and Okebo, a trader from Arochukwu(Obiakor 2016:173).

<sup>21</sup> A major tarred road runs from Onitsha to Otuocha, with a greater portion of Aguleri on the right side of Otuocha and Umuleri while UmuobaAnam settlement is horizontally and vertically sandwiched between Aguleri and Umuleri communities in Otuocha. Otuocha is conceived not only as a beacon of modernization but an emerging centre of socio-economic activities with a hegemonic role in the political administration of communities in the Anambra River basin.

<sup>22</sup> The Igbo's are attached to land because they are a community of sedentary cultivators. In effect, there is no portion of land that was not appropriated by an individual, a family or lineage(Aligwekwe,2008:93).

of traditional land practices in the communities. The reason is because the history, social existence and ethno-geographical identity of each community to land practices land made it inconceivable for them to privatize and commercialize land (Tijani, 2006 cited in Onwuzuruigbo, 2009). Thus, to the Europeans the selling of part of Otuocha land to the Royal Niger Company in 1898 was considered a permanent transfer of right of ownership of the land. However, the claim of the local chiefs and elders of Umutchezi Umuleri who sold a portion of land to the Company was that they got engaged in the land agreement not knowing they were losing control of the lands of their families, kinship groups, clans and villages. In other words, the thought of Umuleri locals (Aguleri people inclusive) was that their claim that they were not schooled in European legal norms to appreciate the legal implications of their actions would make them reassert their right of ownership of the land in Otuocha. However, this was not to be because in 1900, the British colonial administration revoked the powers and authority of the Royal Niger Company through the Niger Lands Transfer Ordinance of February 25, 1916. This facilitated the transfer of the land titles of the Royal Niger Company to the colonial government (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

Specifically, section 2 of the Ordinance transferred the land Umuleri sold to the Royal Niger Company in 1898 to the Governor of Nigeria making the land Crown Land. The land transfer further stimulated bitter struggles between both communities over the control of the land. Subsequently, there were different interpretations of the intention and provisions of the Ordinance with Umuleri community interpreting the Ordinance as an invitation to exercise its hitherto suspended right of ownership of the land. The Aguleri people interpreted the Ordinance as an opportunity to reclaim the land which *ab initio* belonged to their community claiming that the Royal Niger Company did not enter into possession under the Agreement hence there was no act of ownership regarding the land (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

Within the above context, the unintended effect of the British administrations' land policies in Aguleri and Umuleri communities that were still engaged in private and primordial traditional land tenure practices further escalated the conflicts between the two communities. This conflict prompted the colonial administration by the beginning of the twentieth century to reverse its monetary value of land policy to communal owning of land.

The land policy reversal showed that the colonial administrators had limited power to eradicate the traditional land practices. This limitation prompted the need to strengthen Indirect Rule administration which emphasized the role of chiefs believed by the colonial administrators to hold land in trust for their communities. However, instead of the change in policy to amend the conflicts between both communities it rather complicated the situation between the communities. The reason for the disconnect revolved around how the implementation of the reversed colonial administrator's land policy to communal ownership of land favoured the Aguleri community. The favours include the 1910 elevation of Chief Raphael Akwuba Idigo, the traditional ruler of Aguleri to a Warrant Chief. With the new position, he aided the contract of land lease approval to European trading companies; made Aguleri grow richer from rents accruing to its leases of land in Otuocha and restrained the Umuleri people from having access to Otuocha land. This culminated in the August 1934, attack by Umuleri men on Aguleri women and subsequently their men who offered protection (Ibeanu 2003).

Another factor which contributed to the Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts is the failure of the Royal Niger Company to take possession of the controversial Otuocha land and the British Crown's reluctance to assume effective control of the land after the Niger Lands Transfer Ordinance of 1916 converted ownership of the land from the Royal Niger Company to the Crown. A Crown land is a private property of the government. The government is at liberty to use the land as it deems necessary. Two reasons were adduced for the Crown's failure to establish its presence on the land (eighteen) years after the Ordinance took effect. The first was the inconsistency of British colonial policy on land that revolved around land being, on the one hand, privatized and commercialized and the other, officially perceived as communally owned hence to be held in trust for communities by their chiefs and leaders. The second was the overt policy of minimal and selective development of the colonies. This was evident in the declined requests and petitions to the authorities to assist in developing facilities and upgrading existing infrastructure in Otuocha (Ibeanu 2003; Onwuzuruigbo, 2009). In sum, had the colonial government established projects on the unoccupied and undeveloped land and taken control of it, future struggles between the communities would have been avoided.

Added to the aforementioned, is the disarticulated land policy of the British colonial administration which constituted a dilemma for the colonial administrators and officials in Otuocha regarding whether to treat the land as Crown or communal land. This dilemma further ensued because colonial administrators invoked the status of the land as Crown land whenever Umuleri interest was at stake. Also, when there was a need to protect the interest of Chief Idigo of Aguleri, the European trading companies and missionaries, the land became communal land. The denial of Umuleri access to use of the land intensified the conflicts. Added to this, on the one hand, is the colonial government's policy of 'unobstructed withdrawal' which restricted Umuleri from interfering in the legal process to determine owning of land. And on the other, is the abandonment of the Crown's interest after the rights of land ownership have legally been determined in favour of either of the claimants.

Implicitly, the colonial administrator's were hesitant in attending to complaints and petitions from Aguleri and Umuleri communities on the conflicts. This encouraged each petitioner to take their complaints to the courts despite the slowness of litigations and considerable sums of money required to procure the services of legal experts (Chinwuba, 1981). The first recorded litigation on the land was in 1933 when the Mathew Eziagulu district of Aguleri lost its claim of ownership of the contested land despite the court's order that rents from the land be deposited in the government treasury. This order prompted Eziagulu to collaborate with the Aguleri community elite leaders such as Chief R. A. Idigo,<sup>23</sup> J.O. Agbalaka and Mathew Eziagulu to propose a solution(s) to the land case. This culminated in the planned attack of Umuleri by Umuoba-Anam and Aguleri after the Crown divested its interest in the land, legitimized and entrenched the control of elites over the land. However, the Aguleri elite faction that appeared aggrieved with protecting the interest of the generality of Aguleri were superficial, self-seeking and motivated by their desire to appropriate the land, rents from land leases and monies contributed by the Aguleri community to execute the land cases(Fagbemi and Nwankwo, 2002).

Thus, the polarized inter-elite competition between Aguleri and Umuleri elites and the intraelite rivalry for resources among Aguleri elites (already at war with itself on the

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<sup>23</sup> Chief R. A. Idigo was subsequently accused of misappropriating and embezzling Aguleri community funds set aside to prosecute Otuocha land cases and converting part of the land to his personal property and appropriating rents from land leased on behalf of Aguleri people (some Aguleri people slightly disagree with this opinion) to European companies.



land and in court) culminated in physical combat and legal battle in the court that reached its climax between 1936 and 1954. In sum, the contribution of the elite in promoting the conflicts did not dissipate even with the European trading companies relocating to other parts of Nigeria and the termination of colonial administration in 1960 (Chinwuba, 1981 cited in Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

Paradoxically, an elite curiosity which grew over land even beyond Otuocha land as they struggled to acquire and possess the land culminated in the 1995 clash between Aguleri and Umuleri communities. The conflict was claimed to have been precipitated by an Umuleri elite, Chief Dan Ekwevi's attempt in 1995 to construct a petrol filling station on a land acquired from Ikeli, a fellow Umuleri man who had bought the land from Ngwuka from Aguleri community. Aguleri elites who had an interest in the land resented what they felt was unwarranted interference of Umuleri elite in Aguleri land (albeit the particular land being about 10 kilometres from the disputed territory of Otuocha), goaded Aguleri youths who on September 30, 1995, stormed the construction site, attacked the builders and later engaged Umuleri youths in a fight that soon engulfed the two communities. Summarily, the 1995 conflict revolved around complaints over access to and ownership of land and allegations of discrimination which culminated in extra-judicial executions and associated sundry violations (Ibeanu and Mbah, 2012; Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

The reprisal attack on the Aguleri community by the Umuleri community culminated in the 1999 conflict which was linked to the government's failure to ensure accountability for the resulting impunity in the 1995 crisis. The cause of the crisis is the attack of a gang of Umuleri youths on sympathizers and mourners attending the funeral night vigil in honour of late Chief Mike Edozie (believed to have used his office to facilitate the Aguleri attack on Umuleri in 1995), an Aguleri and former Chairman, Anambra Local Government Area Caretaker Committee. The reprisal attack revolved around three factors. One is the non-implementation of the Justice Moses Nweje White Paper on the causes of the 1995 conflicts - which resulted in the 1999 clashes. The white paper berated the Aguleri Representative Council (ARC) brazen role in instigating the crisis despite an order from the Anambra State Boundary Commission to Aguleri community through Mike Edozie, who as an Aguleri served as Chairperson, Anambra Local Government Caretaker Committee to halt the construction of Market and Motor Park in Agu-Akor in 1994 to avert a bloody clash.

Implicated in the report was the 1948 protest by the Umuleri Youth Association against the inscription of 'Otuocha-Aguleri' (which amounted to officially bequeathing the right of ownership of Otuocha town which was still contested in the court to Aguleri) on billboards showing the location of the Royal Niger Company, CFAO, John Holt, Native Authority Dispensary, Agricultural Mill premises in Otuocha and milestones. Two, is the failure of the government to decisively deal with the conflicts because Wing Commander Emmanuel Ukaegbu (who replaced Col. Mike Attah) did not deem it fit to implement the White Paper. Three, is the denouncement of the government White Paper by the Aguleri people and their subsequent court injunction to restrain the government from implementing it. The inability of the government to decisively address these factors served as humiliation for the Umuleri community known for their preference to petition the government rather than be disposed to violence as their Aguleri neighbours (Obiakor, 2016; Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

The eventual involvement of the government in the conflict and the assistance of elders and chiefs from both communities succeeded in bringing to a halt the protracted crisis in 2004.

## **2.6 Representation of the Roles of Women in Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict**

Ibeanu and Onu's (2001) discourse on Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts focused on the contentions over land and indigeneity status between the two communities. Women's roles were not visible. Fagbemi and Nwankwo's (2002) focus were on the origin and causes of the conflict for the two Igbo communities with particular emphasis on access to and ownership of land, allegations of discrimination based on place of origin and extra-judicial human rights acts ranging from killings and acts of violence and violations. The representation of women oscillated between their victim statuses in the excerpt below:

the killing of an 86-year-old woman from the Umuleri community and the beheading of Mrs Anyaegbunam aged 91years whose head was allegedly ritualized by the Aguleri to enable them to inflict massive casualties on the Umuleri; high incidence of maternal mortality among women

whose pre-natal and post-natal needs were no longer met due to maternity homes destruction; deteriorated infant and pediatric care; abduction of some widows from Aguleri and married off against their will to Umuleri men during the crises of 1995 and 1999; target of women who had inter-married across the communities intending to break their marriages and their subjection to spiritual oaths meant to bind them from returning to their previous marriages. Reported threats to many who are still residents with their spouses and an Umuleri woman (later released) abducted by people of Aguleri (Fagbemi and Nwankwo, 2002: 59- 63)

Ibeanu (2003) extensively discussed how the conflict transcended its initial cause of resource control to animosity tussles over land issues, chieftaincy disputes and political differences to include the location of administrative headquarters of local governments. The article addressed peace initiatives of *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*, Anambra Peace Council and the Eri brothers' community association. Women were mentioned as "wives of the patriarch, Eri a great hunter, medicine man among whom according to Umuleri genealogy was Iguedo-the pretty daughter of Nri who had four sons which found three viable communities: Awkuzu, Umuleri, and Umunya" (Ibeanu,2003:186-7). There was also a "Mrs M.C. Emengo a chief legal officer, Ministry of Justice who served as a counsel in the five-person Judicial Commission Panel set up to ascertain the extent of loss of lives, property, sources and types of arms used in the conflict and examine ways of enhancing peace and progress in the two communities" (Ibeanu, 2003: 203). The role of women could be inferred from the Eri Brothers Community Association's peaceful resolution of the conflict through the use of traditional methods which were extensively drawn from *umudiana* and *umuokpu* bonds which are established traditional structures that interface marriage and blood relationships that have existed between persons from the two communities (Ibeanu, 2003:216). Eliagwu (2005) assessed the origin and causes of the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict. Specific representations of women were not evident.

Onwuzuruigbo (2009) explored the Aguleri and Umuleri conflict as an intra-ethnic one explaining its causes as including land struggles occasioned by historical inequalities over access to social, economic and political resources constituents and management interventions of government agencies, elites, civil society organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), and traditional methods of conflict resolution. Accounts

concerning women include being victims and the official role of “*Mrs M.C Emengo, a Chief Legal Officer in the Ministry of Justice out of the five constituted members of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry*<sup>24</sup> instituted to conduct an investigation into the aftermath of the 1995 crisis by the then Governor of Anambra State”(Onwuzuruigbo, 2009: 89). The other accounts about women include their church activities in women associations, community-based organizations (CBOs) and as *Oluokala* (community-based association of all married women in Umuleri otherwise known as Umuleri Women association) and Aguleri Women Development Association (comprising of all married women in Aguleri). Women also engaged in consultations, negotiations and resuscitation of traditional forms of conflict resolution particularly as the constitution of these organizations prescribed a range of fines for failure to participate (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009:93).

Moreso, these organizations inevitably confer membership in two civil society organizations on the women simultaneously as member wives of Oluokala associations and members of *Umuada* (association of women born in the same lineage and community) in their natal community (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009:103). The *umuada*:

...commands lots of respect and influence in the affairs of the community of birth; its members comprise all adult women (married or single) born in most communities in Igbo land. It is a forum for co-operation, interaction and intervention in the affairs of the community. It is influential to the extent that quarrels and disputes between individuals, husbands and wives, and families from clans and villages are referred them for settlement in the event of disagreement erupting over very important issues affecting members of the community or misunderstanding between groups. Its decision on any matter is final and binding on the affected parties (Ibewuike, 2006 cited in Onwuzuruigbo, 2009:104).

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<sup>24</sup> The judicial Commission of Inquiry constituted by the military governor of Anambra State, Col. Mike Attah was headed by Justice Moses Nweje. Other members of the Commission included Chief D.C Odenigbo, retired Permanent Secretary; Mr. S.S.C Oguagha, retired Director General and Mr. E. O Uchendu, Director of Personnel, Office of the Military Governor who served as Counsel and Secretary of the Commission.

In sum, the role of *Umuada* of Aguleri and Umuleri is as narrated below:

we have always cooperated as blood sisters and peacemakers. Although a few of us took sides with the men, most of our members did not allow the war to affect our relationship. In effect, we were able to bring the men together and get them to see reasons why they should stop the war after several meetings with elders of the community on the state of affairs in Umuleri. Umuada Association took the challenge of reconciling the gangs with the community on a certain condition that *Umuada* met. Also, *Umuada* reconciled the rival gangs who appeared to be above the law has already overpowered the Police. In fact, but for the intervention of Umuada which helped to secure peace they would have killed all our prominent men and may be burnt down the entire Umuleri. Their intervention partly helped to checkmate the criminal youth gang (comprising of jobless youths of Umuleri) and prepared the ground for ceasefire and peace negotiations between the warring communities and the continued search for peace after the end of the war (Onwuzuruigbo,2009:104-105).

Another noteworthy role is the spiritual option of fasting and prayer sessions for divine intervention by women as *oluokala* organization by being wives of either Aguleri or Umuleri men and as Anglican or Catholic Women Organization members of either community. Women were also acknowledged as victims of:

... diverse forms of abuse including rape following injury or killing of husbands, sons and brothers who to a large extent constitute the militant and the combative arm of the population; sabotage by the kinsmen either Aguleri or Umuleri depending where they are married of divulging vital security information to their parents, brothers and relatives; displacement who sought refuge in other places; on the run with their families in tow from their communities (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009:102-104).

Onwuzuruigbo's, (2011) exploration of the feelings of difference between Aguleri and Umuleri communities identified the root cause as historical inequalities occasioned by a dearth of access to social, economic and political resources. Most of all, women were represented concerning "losing children and husbands, those raped;

in complicated inter-marriage relationships; abducted<sup>25</sup>, those who divulged vital security information to their parents, brothers and relatives in either Aguleri or Umuleri and were compelled to take a traditional oath of secrecy irrespective of their religious persuasion” (p583). Women were reckoned to have increased the propensity and intensity of the conflicts by recounting and narrating painful experiences of previous bloody confrontations between the two communities to their children.

Ibeanu and Mbah (2012) brought to the fore material aspects of indigene's and settler's citizenship questions that affirm the principal economic interests that propagate primordialization and intensified contradictory cultural identities. And although women were not explicitly visible, however, there was an inference about their being “*victims of the estimated close to 1,000 deaths and among the half a million persons displaced from their homes during the 1995 and 1999 conflicts*” (Ibeanu and Mbah, 2012:1)

Ugorji (2012) explored the cause of conflict as a dispute over Otuocha by the feuding Aguleri and Umuleri communities and the role of Europeans in the creation and intensification of the dispute over the land. There was no specific reference to women in any role however; there were references to casualties, displacement and loss of property.

Udevi (2014) explained the strained relationship between Aguleri and Umuleri after the 1964 episode of conflict and how it precipitated a heightened level of violence in the 1995 conflict and its alarming proportion in 1999. The reference to women was about the marriage of ‘*Ulueri*’, the sole daughter of the grandson of *Eri* also called Iguedo for her exceptional beauty who was the product of an affair between Adamgbo<sup>26</sup> and Okebo of Arochukwu who had come to Aguleri for trading purposes.

To Obiakor (2016), the conflict between both communities was occasioned by the claim of each over land and *Eri* as their progenitor. Discourse about women concerns

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<sup>25</sup> The aim of the abduction was to break their marriages. Apart from this ill-treatment, there were threats to the lives of many women still living with their spouses in such marriages.

<sup>26</sup>. Adamgbo, who was residing with Agulu Eri at the time, bore her child and when she got married, the child remained with her brother, Agulu Eri... (Udevi, 2014:22).

the many wives of *Eri*<sup>27</sup> among who was Iguedo, a union that resulted in the birth of Ogbunike, Awkuzu, Umuleri and Nando (Obiakor, 2016:173).

Table 2.2 is a representation of the roles of women in Aguleri-Umuleri community conflict literature.

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<sup>27</sup> a warrior hunter and polygamist

**Table 2.2 Representation of the roles of women in Aguleri-Umuleri conflict**

Literature	Victim Representation	Peace Representation
Ibeanu and Onu (2001)	----	-----
Fagbemi And Nwankwo (2002)	<p>i)killing of an aged Umuleri woman;                      ii)beheading and ritualizing of an aged woman by the Aguleri's;                      iii) high incidence of Maternal mortality; women(especially widows) as targets of violence such as abduction for forced marriage to Umuleri men and subsequent subjection to spiritual oaths</p>	-----
Okechukwu (2003) Ibeanu	-----	<p>i) peace role of '<i>umuokpu</i>'                      ii)a legal counsel in the Judicial peace commission panel</p>
Onwuzuruigbo (2009; 2011)	<p>i) as victims who bore the burden of losing children and husbands;                      ii) displaced; diverse forms of abuse including rape; forceful subjection to take the traditional oath of secrecy to regain the trust and confidence of their husbands and kinsmen for alleged sabotaging activities of divulging vital security information to their parents, brothers and relatives in either Aguleri or Umuleri because of links of inter-marriages; victims of abduction.                       iii) women sustained the tempo of the conflict through painstaking and diligent recounting and narrating of the painful experiences of bloody confrontations between both communities</p>	<p>i) counsel role in a Judicial commission panel;                      ii) consultations, negotiations and resuscitated traditional forms of conflict resolution by Umuleri Women association or Oluokala (association of all married women in Umuleri and Aguleri Women Development Association,                      iii) prayer sessions by catholic and Anglican women through their church associations</p>
Ibeanu And Mbah (2012)	i) women as more of the displaced	----
Ugorji (2012)	----	----
Udevi, (2014)	i) as a victim of an affair between a woman called Adamgbo, or Iguedo and the founder of Umuleri who is the grandson of <i>Eri</i> that produced ' <i>Ulueri</i> ' - the sole daughter of the grandson of <i>Eri</i> the claimed progenitor of the two Igbo ethnic sub-groups, Aguleri and Umuleri	
Obiakor, (2016)	----	----

Source: Author's Compilation, 2017



## 2.7 Language Used in Describing Fighters in both Conflicts

This section is an examination of covert and overt language use that expresses bias in favour of one sex against the 'other sex' concerning roles as primary and shadow parties and the use of male-orientated pronouns in both conflicts.

The language referred to here, is not related to its characterization "as the primary or commonest medium of social behaviour and power", but "as a form of social practice" evident in the varied social identities of people in interactions, their socially defined purposes, social setting and complexity of the language dimensions or capacities<sup>28</sup>(Fairclough, 1989:3). The capacity relevant here, is parole which concerns what is written as it relates to language use which is determined purely by individual (not social) choices. That said, the discourse of language use (i.e parole) here concerns the individualistic notion (regarding what is written being determined purely by individual choices) which Ferdinand de Saussure deemed unsatisfactory converges with modern sociolinguistics conception of it as a product of 'social differentiation' (Ferdinand de Saussure 1966 cited in Fairclough, 1989).

Thus, language about the practice of male-orientated language use concerning the representation of primary or shadow participants in both Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri conflicts, in line with Fairclough's (1989) argument is not conceived simply as a system of sentences, but as discourse, action and practices constituted in large measures by struggles of power and professions(writers, reporters and publishers) not as guilds but as institutions whose conventions as ideologies are realized through such particular discourses. Of specific reference here, is the use of sexist language which expresses bias in favour of one sex (men) against the 'other sex' (women) treated in a discriminatory manner considering the conception of categories of parties in a conflict in excerpts with male-oriented pronouns below.

According to Albert (2001), the two main categories of parties in a conflict are primary parties and shadow figures or "stakeholders". Primary parties are known because media reports on the conflict often focus on them as direct participants in the

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<sup>28</sup> The capacities referred to here, concern the two standard distinction by Saussure namely *langue*:(a preference of linguistics) regarded as a system or code prior to actual language use which is also understood as something unitary and homogeneous throughout a society (although evidently there is no such thing as 'a language' that is unitary and homogeneous) and *parole* (what is actually said or written i.e language use, which is determined purely by individual (not social) choices((Ferdinand de Saussure...cited in Fairclough, 1989).

physical violence of killing and getting killed. The identities of shadow stakeholders in conflict are usually hidden because they prefer to operate behind the scene dictating to the primary parties how to respond to the conflict situation.

Prior evaluation of the portrayal of key participants in the documentation of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, it is pertinent to state that woman's roles as non-state actors are encompassed in both categories. This is because although the majority of persons who constitute frontline fighters are composed of men, however, a few women were committed with them for their community's 'cause'. As shadow actors, they were either helping to further the conflict through financial commitments, supporting their fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands, sons and daughter's commitment to fighting for the liberation of their community, collaborating as spies/informants and ensuring survival by providing food for children, sick, elderly and even fighters among others roles or contesting it through interventions that halt violence and restore peace and order.

These intricate and subtle roles of women as non-state actors in conflict affairs, feminist scholars recognize as being of the essence in the thorough understanding of the nature of any given war/conflict (Zotto, 2002).

Noteworthy is the sex which the writer wants to affirm as primary stakeholders in the Ife and Modakeke conflicts as evidenced in the italicized words in the excerpt below:

...usually include out-of-service *military officers*, civil servants and politicians. The *army officers*, whether serving or out-of-service, are seen as achievers in their communities. Their opinions, therefore, carry heavy weight. These *military men* often reside outside their communities. They come home once in a while to help the communities analyze their problems and to provide the necessary 'support' for the violent struggle... (Albert, 2001:50).

Precisely, acceptable and inclusive phrases such as '*military officers*;' '*army officers*' are common gender terms that can be applied to both sexes however, habitually the terms are associated with men or males. Accordingly, the use of such phrases in the excerpt above, at first, appears to be referencing men and women but for the specific use of the phrase, '*military men* which contradicts the fact that both sexes are being referred to as being part of the composition of the officers that

provided the necessary ‘support’ for Ife -Modakeke community’s cause. This obscuring of the presence of women in these professions or the army makes it apt to have to add “woman” as in woman officer or woman army officer before those names if we want to refer to the female of those professions (Lei, 2006).

Similarly, the composition of the intervenor, stakeholders and facilitator/organizer of a workshop in the under-cited excerpt is replete with the typical generic use of the pronoun ‘he’/ ‘him’ that restricts representation to the reference of one sex(men/males) as autonomous and sole active participants in contrast, to ‘the other’(female/women) made less favourable and invisible.

“...intervenor, stakeholders and facilitator/organizer of a workshop is powerless if the disputants do not endorse *his* roles...” (Albert, 2001:35); “...as regards what kind of people he needs to attain the objectives of the workshop, the organizer must specify for the community leaders assisting *him*...and, de-escalating a conflict when it is realized that the parties might not easily make themselves available for a straightforward resolution of the conflict, especially when the intervenor considers himself to be lacking in the power to make the disputants come before *him* formally for the resolution of the conflict” (Albert (2001:116).

First, the use of language which makes men visible and women invisible conforms to:

“common forms of sexism in English which includes the use of 'man' and 'he/him/ his' as generics—that is, nouns and pronouns referring to both men and women...asymmetrical naming practices, and stereotyped images of women and men as well as descriptions of (mainly) women, the claim being that English does not possess a third person singular pronoun which is gender neutral instead the 'masculine' pronouns 'he', 'him' and 'his' are generally used to refer to both men and women...”(Lei, 2006:88).

Second, language use identifies with how the

...stereotyped images of men and women are based on oversimplified generalizations of what they should be and how they should behave. Images such as that are often confusing and inaccurate because it makes women invisible as well as trivialize, denigrate their status and severely hamper the representation of the changing roles of the sexes in society... (Lei, 2006:89).

Further, the discourse of who the fighters in Ife-Modakeke conflict are adopted on one hand, seemingly gender-neutral phrases such as: “local combatants”; “local actors”; “youths of the community”, “self-named warriors”. And on the other, the use of male definitive terms such as “‘husbands’, ‘fathers’ or ‘sons’ concerning who the direct participants in the fighting are” (Idehen, Olasupo, and Adebusuyi, 2013; Obiyan 2015). Equally, for Aguleri-Umuleri conflict, most of the writers adopted gender-neutral terms such as ‘armed youths’; ‘fighters’ and ‘militants’ while Onwuzuruigbo (2009:102) used male terms as evidenced in this excerpt “*the Aguleri fighters were ...’ husbands’, ‘sons’ and ‘brothers’ who, to a large extent constitute the ‘militants’ and ‘combative’ arm of the population, often injured or killed...*”

As much, as the phrases ‘local actors’; ‘youths’ and ‘fighters’ seem non-discriminatory in the portrayal of the sex that directly participated in the fighting because they are generic terms that are assumed to apply equally to a man and a woman. However, as much as expressions such as ‘female youths’, ‘female local actors’, and ‘woman fighter’ may be avoided in contexts where the reference to a person's sex is irrelevant especially if gender specification is necessary, the use of adjectives ‘female’ and ‘male’ before the gender-neutral noun is to be preferred (Lei, 2006). The essence is that women can be shown as participating equally with men rather than confirming with the language used in discoursing about the conflicts that “*...in (any) society, men are considered the norm for the human species: their characteristics, and actions viewed as fully representing those of all male and female*” (Lei, 2006:87).

Further, phrases such as ‘militants’ and ‘combatants’ in the discourses concerning women are infused with debates about whether women participate in either conflict. The reason is not far removed from what Elshtain (1987 cited in Tavriss, 1992) has shown in *women and war* that throughout history women have been just as militant in wartime as men. They have always participated in wars, in whatever ways their societies permitted. Infact, the phrase ‘combatants’ echoes Enloe’s (2004) reminder that the term implies in the minds of too many people only one sort of militarized person, someone who has been issued a gun. But women and girls are not conceived as weapon-carrying fighters; instead, they are likely to be made invisible and ignored at every step of the process if the discourse is simply about ‘combatants’.

Admittedly, the silencing of knowledge about women as active role players while making visible passive stereotypes of victim and peace in the discourses of both conflicts used the strategy of “*language which both constitutes and reflects the social reality that is not separate from a linguistic reality*” (Bell, 1997: 249). The reason is that the actual language used in this study is a diversity of underlying social conventions characterized by power relations imposed by those who have power. The nexus between power and language which people are consciously not aware of is its exercise through acceptance evidenced in ideology<sup>29</sup> referred to here, as existing conventions or ‘common-sense’<sup>30</sup> assumptions. The sensitivity to language use, therefore, in the discourses about Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts concerns the imprinted meanings which revolve around the cultural narrative that both were a male story per excellence in contrast, to the images of women who served in every way.

Certainly, the representation of women “*legitimize existing social relations and differences of power through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted*”(Fairclough,1989:2). And, the social practice of this language used concerning the representations of men in contrast, to women as key participants of both conflicts is succinctly captured by the presupposition below concerning language:

...as constituting a part of society and not external to it that is, they are not two independent entities which come into contact occasionally. Thus, there is not an external relationship between language and society, but an internal and dialectical relationship. It is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena( or on the other hand, social phenomena are linguistic, in the sense that the language activity which goes on in social contexts is not merely a reflection of social processes and practices, it is a part of those processes and practices) of a special sort, and social phenomena are in part linguistic phenomena(which are social in the sense that whenever people write and read they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects(Fairclough,1989:23).

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<sup>29</sup> What is meant here is that “no language use or discourse is free from ideology because discourse is shaped by ideology and ideology is conversely shaped in discourse” (Allan, 2004; van Dijk, 1991a cited in Renström, 2012:1).

<sup>30</sup>In the Gramscian usage of ‘common sense’ power works to produce hierarchies that becomes sustained. In other words, it is the normalizing strategies of power that are productive of unequal power relations over time. Its hidden and subtle operations within social and political institutions fix notions of hierarchy as given or indeed render them natural and in the common interest.

It is apt to reiterate that any contradictory difference in opinion over the ideological working of language use in these expressions here, often conceived merely as preliminaries to or outgrowths from the apparent politics of representation are in reality nothing but politics which partly consists in the disputes and struggles that occur in language and over language alluded to previously. Again, the argument about the relationship between language (a strand of the social) and society (the whole) is that both are not symmetrical in other words, both are not equal facets of a single whole. This argument is premised on the supposition that “*whereas all linguistic phenomena are social, not all social phenomena are linguistic even though those that are not just linguistic typically have a substantial, and often underestimated, language element*”(Renström, 2012:1).

## **2.8 Appraisal of the Representation of Women’s Roles**

Leavis (cited in Selden, 1988: 469) posited that literature invites one “*not to “think about” and judge but to “feel into” or “become” to realize a complex experience given in the words*”. In line with this, the representation of women mainly in the victim and peace-support roles (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2 above) in discourses about the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts even by female authors (see Soyinka-Airewele 2003; 2004; Obiyan, 2015) compels one to condone and accept the depictions as “*normal, natural and right*” (Wylie, 1993 cited in Smith, 2005).

In conflict/war the women (with children included) are helpless and passive casualties/victims whose circumstances evoke sympathy moreso, the negative connotations of helplessness and passivity to Hayes, (no year), 'do not constitute ‘visibility’ and ‘voice’ for them because although ‘visibility’ and ‘voice’ conflates ‘seeing’ with audibility it functions in inverse proportion with ‘being seen and being seen’. Also, victim portrayal obscured resilient and resourceful roles of women caring for the sick, elderly and children despite their victim circumstances. These sensitive roles are significant given that the public needs a different perspective of roles played by women in conflict situations.

What is also ‘curious’ about the representations of women in peace roles is the arts of tokenism (two women in a peace committee of twenty). The insertion of a quintessential lone woman or two among a group of male representatives is problematic because this ‘obligatory visibility’ as explained by Enloe, (1997:4)

depicts “*cultural symbols...the story of one speaking to the ethos of war, political symbols: used as policy justification, propaganda and nationalistic declaration of loyalty*”. The literature discourses also underrated some roles played by women. The first is the secretarial role in the Presidential Peace Panel by Mrs S. Akinruyomi accounted for by Akanji, (2009). The fact that enough attention was not accorded to this role by other authors women inclusive, to make her remarkable secretarial role visible to Enloe, (2014) says a lot about the conventional presumption that the role of a secretary is not significant rather than the high-level key role that it is. This is because a secretary of the Presidential Peace panel must have ensured the meeting is effectively organized and minuted, clarified past practices and decisions, confirmed legal requirements and relevant documents concerning Ife and Modakeke communities on the conflict produced and archived professionally.

The second downplayed role accounted for by (Asiyanbola, 2009) concerns how women of Ife and Modakeke communities encouraged their daughters, other women, relatives that included their spouses and sons to make financial contributions to the community purse. The third and fourth downplayed fundamental roles cited by Onwuzuruigbo, (2011), on the one hand, concern the taking of an oath of secrecy by Aguleri and Umuleri women barring their religious persuasion to checkmate divulging vital security information to parents, brothers or relatives in either community. And on the other, the role of women in increasing the propensity and intensity of conflicts between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities by recounting and narrating painful experiences of previous bloody confrontations between the two communities to their children.

Also, the use of male-centric language/words in the conflict description of roles depicted men as fighters and obscured any role women must have played on the battle-front. The narrow representation of women in this manner supports the hegemonic<sup>31</sup>masculine view that upholds war/conflict in ideological differences that justify the symbolic component of the context of power relations between the two genders. In sum, the review reveals that both men and women authors are complicit in

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<sup>31</sup>Gramsci (1971) developed his study of hegemony (as distinct from domination) to understand the relations of power between elites and the working class particularly, why the working classes appeared to accept their subordinate position or more accurately, the apparent reluctance of the working classes to use violence to rebel against their disadvantage and to form alternative belief systems.

the “circuit of culture” (Hall, 1997 cited in Zotto, 2002) that depicts men as active participants in contrast to the portrayal of women mainly in victim and peace roles through the selective choice of words and images that describe either as ‘truth’ over time by readers. To counteract this framing of women in these two roles and change the public perception concerning women in conflicts, the exploration of unreported roles (see chapter five) by women from the communities became pertinent.

## **2.9 Theoretical Framework**

This section explains Galtung’s contrasting war/violence and peace/conflict journalism theory relied upon to comprehend and evaluate how the reportage of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri communal conflicts reflected and entrenched the representation of women’s roles as passive in contrast, to men’s active role representation.

### **2.9.1 War/violence and Peace/conflict Journalism Theory**

The ‘war journalism’ and ‘peace journalism’ approach in other words, ‘war/violence’ (or low road) and ‘peace/conflict’ (or high road) journalism<sup>32</sup> theory is a twofold way of looking at a war/conflict depending on whether the focus is on the conflict and its peaceful transformation or on the meta-conflict<sup>33</sup> and the question of characters involved in conflict/war and the details about who wins by Galtung<sup>34</sup>, (1998; 2002, Galtung and Fischer, 2013). The understanding of the orientations of this dual theory is rooted in Galtung likening conflict to a disease, seen as a natural, normal and expected fight between the human body and pathogenic factor, a micro-organism, trauma, stress and strain where sometimes one side or the other wins (although often times it is hoped that it is the body) with the gruesome details fully reported, particularly when it concerns elite persons.

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<sup>32</sup> Reporting violence and war, conflict and peace, is unique because all have one thing in common: they are relational. Violence takes place between perpetrator and victim, war between belligerents, conflict between goals held by actors and by implication between actors, peace between actors, as a peace structure, with a peace culture. The actors may be individuals or collectivities; either way, the basic measure of peace is what happens to human beings, the extent to which their basic needs and basic rights are met”(Galtung, 2013: 140)

<sup>33</sup> This comes after the war/conflict situation particularly the reporting of beyond-the-war/conflict situation issues such as the most effective strategies adopted in its facilitation or resolution A meta conflict approach is one which can address many facets of a conflict whether structural, political or constitutional.

<sup>34</sup> Johan Galtung is a mathematician, sociologist, political scientist and a pioneer of peace studies. This eminent Norwegian Professor founded the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (1959), the world’s first academic research Centre on Peace Studies.



The importance of understanding conflict from the nature of disease-oriented journalism is firmly rooted in the fatalistic and indifferent and apathetic tradition of making visible negative events concerning elites into news is fundamental to understanding how the highlight is often times not on how diseases might be overcome, except by an action/method as violent like open heart surgery, chemo-or radiotherapy as the disease itself while the softer or preventive approaches go under-reported. In this sense, the obligation of journalism is to report the fight between contending parties in a conflict objectively and impartially like a sports game where fair play means to give either side a fair chance, and not interfere in any way where the stronger eventually wins. Each of this dual theory's (see Table 2.3) five(5)classificatory indicators modified out of its original thirteen(13) and three (3) language indicators used to analyse the reportages of both conflicts (see Table 2.3) is discussed further in successive sections.

**Table 2.3 Peace/conflict versus War/violence Journalism**

<b>Peace/conflict Reporting</b>	<b>War/Violence Reporting</b>
<p><b>I. Peace/Conflict-oriented</b>  <i>Non-partisan-Neutral, not taking sides</i>                      Explore conflict formation, x parties, y goals, z issues; ‘win, win’ orientation; open space, open time; causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture making conflict transparent giving voice to all parties; empathy, understanding see conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creation and humanization of all sides; more so the worse the war the more proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs; focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</p>	<p><b>I. War/Violence-Oriented</b>                      Focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation closed space, closed time; causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone making wars opaque/secret ‘us-them’ journalism, propaganda, voice, for ‘us’ see ‘them’ as the problem, focus on who prevails in war dehumanization of ‘them’; more so, the weapon reactive; waiting for violence before reporting; <i>focus only on visible effect of war/violence (casualties/killed, Wounded and material/property damage).</i></p>
<p><b>II. Truth-Oriented</b>                      expose untruths on all sides uncover all cover-ups; <i>multi party orientation-gives voice to many parties involved in conflict.</i></p>	<p><b>II Propaganda(Differences)-Oriented</b>  <i>Reports on areas of differences that might lead to a worsening of conflict. Expose ‘their’ untruths; help ‘our’ cover ups/lies</i></p>
<p><b>III. People-Oriented</b>  <i>Focuses on common people as actors sources of information. Focus on suffering all over; women, aged, children. Giving voice to the voiceless give name to all evil-doers; focus on people peace-makers</i></p>	<p><b>III Elite Oriented</b>                      Focus on ‘our’ suffering; on able-bodied elite males, being their mouth-piece, give name of their evil-doer, <i>focus on leaders, elite (peace-makers) as actors and sources of information.</i></p>
<p><b>IV. Solution-oriented</b>                      Peace = nonviolence +creativity highlight peace initiatives to prevent more war focus on structure, culture the peaceful society Aftermath :resolution, re-construction, reconciliation: <i>reports on areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to conflict</i></p>	<p><b>IV Victory-Oriented</b>                      Peace=victory +cease-fire conceal peace-initiative, before victory is at hand, focus on treaty, institution, the controlled society leaving for another war, return if the old flares up  <i>*Focuses on here and now- reports about what, who, where and when issues of the conflict.</i></p>
<p><i>Stays on and reports aftermath of war-reconstruction, Rehabilitation and importance of peace treaty</i></p>	<p><i>Dichotomizes the good and bad-victims and villains</i></p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p><b>Language</b></p>
<p>1. Avoids victimizing language-Reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping</p>	<p>1. Uses victimizing language that tells only what has been done to people – For example, destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized</p>
<p>2. Uses demonizing language - Uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names.</p>	<p>2. Uses demonizing language–.For example, vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist</p>
<p>3. Avoids emotive words – Objective and moderate. Reserves strongest language only for gravest situation. Does not exaggerate.</p>	<p>3. Uses emotive language – For example, genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)</p>

**Source:** Galtung, 1998; Galtung and Fischer, 2013).

## **2.9.2 War/violence journalism**

This form of journalism also supported by Loyn (2003), Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), Shinar (2007), Ross and Tehranian (2009), Keeble, Tulloch and Zollman, (2010) among others is conformist in the reportage of conflict as a fight between two parties or conflict participants/ actors, in a fight to impose their goals. The dichotomized parties on the one hand, are combatants (fighters, warriors, enemies, participants (contributors, partakers) that is, winning protagonists and on the other, victims or conquests. Its reporting model which is in the ilk of a military command is thorough, detailed, systematic, comprehensive information about who advances in or capitulates short of their goals. The losses are limited to reporting how many were killed, wounded, and material damage.

Its perspective is zero-sum. This zero-sum approach drawing on sports and court( journalism) writing/reporting models sees conflict as sports arena or gladiator circus where ‘winning/victory(is all) is not only everything but the only thing’(or the only thing which matters is winning/or limited to reporting who is ‘winning’. This perspective is applied to verbal battles which ensue concerning who outsmarts the other or comes out closest to his/her original position usually associated with negotiations. In other words, the war focus in this traditional form of reporting will polarize and escalate, calling for hatred and more violence to avenge and stop ‘them’, in line with a neo-fascist theory of war termination: let them fight and kill each other till they get ‘ready for the negotiating table’.

A key aspect of this journalism according to Galtung, (2002) Hanitzsch (2004 cited in Sreedharan, 2013) is the fact that it contributes to escalation of conflicts through the reproduction of propaganda, lies (while claiming to be doing ‘investigative journalism’ that is objective and impartial) and promotion of war/violence. This it achieves by distorting truths to represent reality in a way that the dominant groups in the society prefer it. That is, presenting reality as it is perceived and described as it is. In other words, it does not give voice to all. This model of journalism takes cognizance of language and gender.



### **2.9.3 Peace/conflict journalism**

This is considered an ethical self-conscious alternative form of journalism because 'peace' is considered the first victim of any conflict rather than a contest. This is the position of its proponent (Galtung, 2002) and other advocates which include Lynch and McGoldrick, (2005); Shinar, (2007); Ross and Tehranian, (2009) and Keeble, Tulloch and Zollman, (2010).

This form of reporting identifies with three orientations of preventive advocacy. The first is its solution-oriented representation of peace/conflict issues. To this end, it draws on the health studies approach which places a premium on addressing the totality of an ailing person by integrating varied perspectives of multiple disciplines in the administration of therapy. The essence of this is to ascertain the probable cause of an illness and proffer remedies for eradicating it. The adoption of this approach in the documentation of war/conflict issues is geared towards helping to transcend national interest, patriotism, sexism and racism in the documentation of war/conflicts.

Second, it is people-orientated in its reporting hence it makes every effort to depolarize and de-escalate war/violence by exploring the issues about the conflict for both parties. Thus, voice is accorded to all parties in the conflict particularly, making visible the sufferings of conflict victims who are often overlooked civilian or non-elite persons rather than the policymakers. Thus, it is a deliberate creative strategy that makes visible routinely underrepresented facts and significant perspectives that are habitually unheard. The essence is to uncover issues that are not truths on all sides alongside striving to highlight the peace and conflict resolution activities. That is, it exposes untruths on all sides of the conflicting parties in a manner that does not place blames usually on one side.

Three, unlike the war/violence orientation the approach is opposed to media propaganda war and falsehood which fuels the continued festering of any war/conflict. In other words, it is rooted in a conscientious practice of objectivity which implies standard reporting that is serious, transparent and professional in its processes to all actual and potential victims without shaming.

Entman (1993 cited in Ottosen, 2010) supports the approach because it makes visible what is left out by the propaganda machinery through the giving of the full picture of

alternatives about peace and information about the consequences of war. For Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), the value of peace frame resides in the fact that editors and reporters make choices concerning what and how to make an issue or person visible and also how to report it. Particularly, it is preventive advocacy derived through writing choices of editorials and columns concerning what and how to report stories in a broader, fairer and in more accurate way. Also, the approach creates opportunities for society to contribute and value practical non-violent, developmental responses to war/conflict.

For a better-valued service to the public, the frame advocates adhering to broad practices and linguistic orientations of war and peace reporting. The broad practices and linguistic orientations of war and peace reporting revolve around fostering resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation rather than vengeance or retaliation. Additionally, the frame tones down differences by preventing conflict from escalating. It also accords voice to all parties involved beyond the opposing divides.

The applicability of this frame is further enhanced in this study because its scope transcends civil wars between states to include conflicts/violence between people and other groups. Added to this, is the fact that it engenders conscientious dissemination of information about war/violence issues beyond peace to include changing the attitudes of media owners, professionals, and readers towards war and peace.

## **2.10 Linking Theory and Representation of Women's Roles**

This section examines the nexus between the theoretical arguments of war/violence and peace/conflict journalism and the representation of women in victim and peace roles in Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

### **War/violence journalism**

In line with its philosophy, the reportage of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts conformed to making visible negative material and human consequences of both conflicts. Broadly, this revolved around destruction of properties worth millions, paralyzed the economy and victim experiences of persons from virtually all forms of violence. Specific negative consequences concerning women include 'arraignment for conspiracy, riot, arson', 'maternal mortality, 'prostitution', 'disembowelling', 'abduction of widows for forced marriage under oath, 'fleeing indigenes, female

teachers and married women who suffered disavowal and abandonment from spouses', 'pawns of rape', 'sufferers of identity crisis and the aftermath consequences alongside their children.

There was also a distinctive focus on the elites (women inclusive) such as Chief Mrs Awape and Architect Dupe Onosore (See Daily Champion, Table 4.1), leaders and matters that impact the traditional rulers, chiefs, elders, community association's leaders and government officials rather than ordinary community people. Equally, the reports aligned with the war/violence frame's zero-sum approach of dichotomizing conflict participants into winning protagonists considered to be men while the victims of conquests were women seen as the passive, helpless and desolate waiting to be rescued by fighter men considered as heroes. This generalist form of reporting conflict/war compels all to think along the supposed 'traditional' lines that the frontline fighters were solely men. Primarily, this perspective aligns with popular disguises of the universal male norm evidenced in the 'us-them' dichotomy which regards men and women as opposites thus according the former, power and agency and the latter, typically portrayed as passive victims who did not do anything. Implicit here is the understanding that women were merely conquests targeted for attacks.

Consistent with this, is language use which largely is the journalism frame's valued commodity in maintaining the status of hierarchical social order. In other words, through victimizing language use the information provided about women revolved around phrases such as 'destitute', 'defenceless' and 'demoralized victims of systematic brutal gendered mischievous attacks deserving of sympathy'. Specifically, through these taken for granted male-specific language use men were upheld as not only the active participants but the fighters in both conflict situations. This resonates with Lakoff's, (1990) position that men have written the rules of language thus making women become by default the quintessential other.

This form of framing which typically fit the traditional male narrative about women in both conflicts although claims objectivity is a truth of one perspective of documenting stories that confirms the view promoted in the society regarding considering actions of men in conflict situations as the norm in contrast to women's. Further, the popularity of negative victim story frames develops and shapes not only identities of women's roles in the community conflict situations but influences how women feel

about themselves and are perceived by others. Also, the result of the biased obligatory framing of women and young girls in the victim fold evokes emotion in the way that the dominant groups in the society prefer it. This frame is so powerful not only in its reproduction of misinformation but in its contribution to the promotion of distorted truths about them as stigmatized (victims) persons without identities, politics, morals and agendas for the conflict 'cause' of their communities.

Arguably, since this frame is not divorced from elite politics because most war/conflicts are provoked, instrumentalized or sustained by national or local political actors. Thus, the documentation tended to see the conflict situations through the supporting eyes of political elite men rather than the community women. To this end, it served a larger political agenda because it keeps the public focused on the image of women as victims and their circumstances whereas this one dimensional depiction is not the only normal reality. Admittedly, it is evident that this cannot be the case thus the sole reliance on this frame is not sufficient to tease out women's roles in both conflicts hence the resort to peace/conflict frame which offers new possibilities for women to be storied differently.

### **Peace/conflict journalism**

The peace/conflict frame is considered a fair and mindful substitute to the former because of its ability to make visible whatever is left out by the previous frame's propaganda machinery. This is achieved through giving the full picture of peace roles and consequences of the sole reliance on war/violence perspective. In contrast to the war/violence frame conformist assumptions that associated Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri community women and young girls victim roles solely with depressing qualities of helplessness, neediness and despondency, the peace/conflict frame transcended this one perspective which is stigmatizing and disparaging.

Thus, in line with its signature orientation of ensuring harmony of perspective, it's reporting of victim roles garners sympathy and support and also makes visible often muted beneath the surface strength and capabilities as active survivors amidst their suffering circumstances. This positive interpretation of the negative representations is solution-oriented in its reveal of the resilient roles which women continued to play as survivors. As a people-orientated frame, it ensures that voices are accorded the roles played by all parties in both conflicts particularly depicted in a depolarized way going



beyond war/violence propaganda and falsehood regarding the stereotype of men as protagonists of the conflicts while women were conquests and peace supporters. On the one hand, the stereotype of men as protagonists links its origination from the oldest division of roles in human society which put men in charge of war and the dominating, competitive, aggressive sex with a tendency to engage in destroying war/conflicts. On the other, women charged with raising children are associated with peacemaking or pacifism, being empathic and the non-aggressive sex with a tendency to prevent war/conflict (Travis, 1992).

However, as much as it is an undisputed and universal truth that men are more physically violent and more likely to engage in combat than women, Tavis (1992) contends that:

“...research has corrected the bias in anthropology that had emphasized the role of Man the Hunter, male competitiveness, and aggression with added insight that Woman the Gatherer was responsible for food necessary for everyday living. And that early human societies depended for their survival on cooperation rather than competition” (Tavis, 1992:74)

Implicit in this is an understanding that neither the everyday role of women nor the conceived riskier role of men in hunting in whatever guise is valued more highly than the other. What is valid is the fact that each role is critical in any war/conflict. In these lights, there is no disputing that the two reported role stereotypes are symbols of potentials however, each role frame is imbued with bias. One, the focus on men as those who facilitate and negotiate wars/conflicts and serve as fighters in the frontline overlook the role women play to support and endorse its negotiations and facilitation. This fact is evident in the frontline ‘shield’ and fighter role by women and even young girls for varied reasons for their community’s cause (see unreported roles in chapter five). Certainly, these roles which are unreported in print media confirm Travis’s, (1992) conviction that men and women do not differ in their willingness to go to war or have the tendency to the destruction of life. In other words, women are co-conspirators in the making of war/conflict although they may differ in the reasons that would make them willing to go to war/conflict.

Two, exclusive reliance on the entrenched male quality of aggressiveness also tends to overlook the fact that “*men are most of the greatest pacifists, negotiators and reformers in history*” (Travis, 1992: 67). This truism came to the fore in this study with men participating immensely as peace interveners, stakeholders and facilitators/organizers of reconciliation and transformation training/workshops (see finding ii in chapter six). Moreso, the depiction of women in peace roles because of their obligation as nurturers/primary caregivers who provide care to children, the sick, the elderly, and relatives has also been debunked by Travis’s, (1992: 63) claim that

“...to date there is no persuasive evidence that women are naturally or even actually more pacificistic, emphatic, or earth-loving than men. The reason is none other than new studies findings that the actions linked to men and women depend more on what an individual is doing and needs to do than on his or her biological sex”.

Also, Lakoff’s (1990) study which measured physiological (actual and behavioural) signs of empathy found a minute reason for concluding that the (self-described) sex differences in empathy is linked to an innate predisposition. In other words, the stereotype of women’s innate advantage in empathy derives from the different situations that they are in rather than their gender. From above, it is certain that if roles are reversed through circumstances beyond their control men constructed as the atypical sex to play these nurturant roles certainly would provide just as much support as women traditionally do. Thus, it is apt to say that it is merely thinking by many women and men that emphatic advantage resides with women that lead to the reporting of women more in peace roles. The position of peace/conflict perspective, therefore, is that framing of roles should be from the perspective that captures both men and women as having the capacity for empathy.

That said, the point remains that archetypal images of men’s and women’s roles as represented in the print media are not blueprints because either gender conforms to them depending on the war/conflict situation circumstance. This practicality is evidenced in findings of atypical roles played by women of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts who enthusiastically endorsed the conflict efforts both as facilitators and as peace agents different from the accounts in the print media (see unreported roles in Table 5.1). In sum, framing roles in terms of polarities, regardless of which pole is the valued one immediately sets up false choices for men and women

because the two categories are not unified opposites. Thus, the continued reporting of conflict roles of men and women in this dual manner obscures the fact that the opposing qualities associated with masculinity and femininity are problematic. Further, it perpetuates a misguided belief that there is something special and different about women's roles which paradoxically is an attitude that historically has served to keep women invisible in wars/conflicts situations.

Again through this frame, there were highlights of peace and conflict resolution activities by women and young girls alongside men (see columns on peace representations in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2). There was also an uncovering that women and young girls as representatives in workshops and training constituted less than the critical mass expected in peace activities (see finding iii in chapter six). This subordinated and passive rather than active involvement of women in the peace training and workshops in the discourses that at first appear not to show any polarity was made possible by the frame's creative strategy. The frame's ingenuity also helped provoke the critical scrutiny of the confusing misinformation concerning the male norm language use. In other words, the frame showed that although the language used in the discourses of both conflicts seemed acceptable and normal, they were subjective (see section 2.7 and demonizing language in Table 4.2 and 4.6).

To be exact, throughout the discourse of both conflicts the assumption that all primary and even secondary actors were men in contrast, to women certainly serves to perpetuate the status quo of male dominance. This subjective reality reinforces the subsisting nexus that linguistic realities are not independent of social reality. Also, just as therapists encourage clients to look outward to their environments and relationships and inward to their souls and psyches, this frame's therapeutic perspectives is geared towards engendering a broader, fairer change in the practices of publishing outlets that encompass media owners and professional's presumption that what is masculine<sup>35</sup> is most deserving of being made visible and prioritized. The need for a change in attitude is apt because both writers and reporters possess the *"power and near-monopoly to reconstruct social reality through providing information;*

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<sup>35</sup> No patriarchy is made up of just men rather the patriarchal systems have been so enduring, so adaptable, precisely because they make many women overlook their own marginal positions and feel instead secure, protected, valued. Thus, patriarchies-in all social systems may privilege masculinity, but need the complex idea of femininity and enough women's acceptance or complicity to operate and sustain their gendered hierarchies(Enloe,2004).

*forming attitudes by focusing attention on issues...that will expand people's system of beliefs...with courage and conviction"* (Cole and Harcup, 2010:4).

Consistent with the attitudinal change in reporting is upturning the sustained sexism in the discourses and reporting's of both conflicts that compel all to think along the supposed conventional lines without realizing it confirms the close relationship of language to social attitudes. Succinctly put,

...language simply reflects the social fact which is that the existence of sexist language is due to sexism in society. In society, men are considered the norm for the human species: their characteristics, thoughts, beliefs and actions are viewed as fully representing those of all male and female (Xiaolan Lei, 2006:87).

Importantly, the aim of peace/conflict journalism is not to assert that women's and men's conflict roles are the 'same' but 'different' yet 'equal'. Hence, the re-orientation in conflict role reporting for women should transcend the two-tiered pigeonholing system of classifying men into roles conceived as active and women's roles as passive which reflects and serves society's prejudices. The value of this conscientious practice is the extension of courtesy in making visible the victim role obligation of women in both conflicts without shaming. This practice makes it possible to accord visibility to the unreported roles discovered in this study (see Table 5.1). The essence of objectivity in framing women's victim roles is to help relieve the often muted traumatic sufferings which deprive them of full acknowledgement and justice for the varied forms of gendered violence which they have endured.

Drawing on the proffered explanations which link Galtung's theory and representations of women's roles in the print media, it is evident that it is neither useful nor accurate to continuously report roles played by women and men in an absolute and polarized manner. The reason as the peace/conflict reporting frame has shown is that the focus is not to replace men-centred roles with women-centred roles but the celebration of every role as normal and active.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the research methodology adopted in this study. These include the research design, sampling technique, size, study population, instruments utilised, validity, reliability, data collection methods and analysis. The procedures and instruments utilised helped to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What was the extent of reportage of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts?
2. In which roles were women dominantly represented in the reportage of both conflicts?
3. How did the use of language in the reportage of both conflicts obscure other roles played by women?
4. What unreported roles did women play in the four communities in both conflicts?

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

The 'Mixed methods' approach was adopted in collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data concerning print media representation of women's roles in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts and exploration of the unreported roles of women in the communities. The qualitative data was collated from newspapers and magazine articles, Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) from a wide range of persons with firsthand knowledge and the best information about the subject of study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data from the print media.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Case study research design was appropriate because it allowed for the examination of the content, meaning or assumptions regarding the traditions and values embedded in the print media representation of women's roles in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts. It was considered apposite for data garnered from interviews and focus group discussions to gain concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge to establish

the roles played by women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities during the conflicts beyond their representation in the print media.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques, Selection and Distribution**

The heterogeneous (purposive) sampling technique or maximum variation was appropriate to provide much insight as possible from the heterogeneous or dissimilar cases (in this study, newspapers, magazines and participants) concerning the roles played by women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities in the conflict situations. The inclusion criteria for newspapers and magazines selected were limited to the current years of both conflicts. The scope for Ife-Modakeke conflict is 1997-2000 while Aguleri-Umuleri conflict ranged from 1995-1999. The Five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines selected were due to informed news quality, depth and spread while magazines were consulted for their advantage of reviews (Harris, 1994).

The news articles from *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Daily Times* newspapers, *TELL* and *The NEWS* magazines were sampled for the reportage of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts and disparate dailies such as *Nigerian Tribune* were specific for Ife-Modakeke and *Daily Champion* for Aguleri-Umuleri conflict respectively. The independent daily, *The Guardian*, was selected based on its high-quality journalism, thoughtful editorial content and national outlook claim. *Punch* newspapers, for its popularity in promoting quality news and large circulation in Nigeria. *Daily Times* (became defunct in 2007) newspaper was chosen for its broad outlook while *Nigerian Tribune*, a privately owned newspaper was selected because of the claim to deliver unbiased news, spread in the southwest and nationwide. The privately owned *Daily Champion* was selected for its claim to be the voice of East of the Niger people in the reportage of news on community issues. *Tell Magazine* was selected for its in-depth, investigative feature stories and *The News* for its vibrant and knowledgeable reporting of issues and national reach.

The technique was appropriate in selecting KII interviewees and FGD participants not necessarily for the representation of views of a broad and diverse range of participants proportionately but unusual perceptions from the selected persons that have a wide range of information about the roles played by women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities in the conflict situations either as participants or eyewitnesses.

The KII interviewees included a traditional ruler, teacher, trader, researcher, battle-front liner/ex-fighter, community chief(s), elder(s) and leaders of community unions. The FGD participants comprised community persons ranging from women and men to young girls who either participated or were eyewitnesses. The total number for Modakeke and Ife is ten (10) and for Aguleri and Umuleri five (5) respectively, thus bringing the total number of key informant respondents to fifteen (15). The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) comprised community persons ranging from women and men to young girls who either participated or were eyewitnesses to provide a robust perspective based on personal and collective remembering. The four (4) FGDs conducted comprised nine (9) participants for Modakeke, ten (10) for the Ife community, seven (7) for Aguleri and six (6) for Umuleri. The total number of FGD participants amounted to thirty-two (32).

The research instruments, methods deployed a sample of KII respondents and FGDs participants are captured in Table 3.1 in Appendix I).

### **3.4 Sources and Methods of Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Sources of data**

The secondary data entailed a content review of newspapers such as *Guardian*, *Daily Times*, *Punch*, *Tribune* and *Champion*, *TELL* and *The NEWS* magazines. The source of data was from the National Archives Zonal Office University of Ibadan, Kenneth Dike, Institute of French Research in Africa (IFRA) and Women Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) Libraries, University of Ibadan. Other libraries in Ibadan include those of the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) Ojoo and *Tribune* Newspapers, Tribune House, Imalefalafia Street, Oke-Ado. The libraries consulted in Lagos were the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), *TELL*, *The NEWS*, *Punch*, *Guardian*, and *Champion*. Digital archive sources include JSTOR, RESEARCH GATE, EBSCOHOST and RESEARCH4LIFE.

### 3.5 Instruments Utilised

A sixteen-item coding sheet comprising eight analytical categories for War/Violence and Peace/Conflict journalism frames by Galtung (1998) shown in **Table 2.3** in chapter two was used to content analyse the news about the conflicts. The information from the news items was coded into manageable code categories for unitising or unit of analysis<sup>36</sup> with features such as type of news: news stories/straight news<sup>37</sup>, editorials<sup>38</sup>, OP-ED/features/feature columns<sup>39</sup>, analytical/advisory columns<sup>40</sup> and letters to the editor<sup>41</sup>.

The analytical classification to determine extent of reportage for both conflicts was evaluated from the number of news types and the dominant representation of the roles by women in the print media through frame types, content presentations and source of content. The obscuring of other roles which women played in both conflicts was analysed by examining the language used in the reportage. The interview guide provided for KII and FGD was pertinent in eliciting information from primary respondents about roles that women played in the communities in both conflicts. The interview guide shown in **Table 3.2** in Appendix 11) guaranteed that respondents used their perceptions rather than stereotype-oriented ones in expressing their feelings, perceptions and realities.

### 3.6 Reliability and Validity

The pilot study conducted with a sample of news items from newspapers and magazines on both conflicts helped in the reliability of instruments<sup>42</sup> utilized in generating data for this study. The research instruments were approved by the supervisor before their use.

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<sup>36</sup> This is the minute aspect of a content analysis appropriate because it involves defining, separating and identifying units in boundaries for subsequent analysis.

<sup>37</sup> Highlight facts or quote references on general information like who, what, when, where, why and how. It equally serves the surveillance function of journalism. The editorials play the correlation function of journalism.

<sup>38</sup> Writings by the editorial board which reflect the stance of the newspaper through opinion pieces that identify, define, articulate and address happenings and its controversies.

<sup>39</sup> OP-ED/Feature articles provides information in greater depth than news reports because it covers reviews, news background issues, analytical articles, think-pieces, profiles and interviews

<sup>40</sup> Its intent is primarily to expose and explain controversies/topical issues on virtually any subject at greater length and depth than in simple news reports. It is very dominant and defining in magazines.

<sup>41</sup> The feedback by readers mechanism reflects the interplay of views between the media and public agenda

<sup>42</sup> For example, the adoption of Galtung's coding categories for frames because of its previous adoption in studies in media and conflict reporting



### 3.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics provided information about the percentage-point difference in the categories of reportage concerning Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts. The eight analytical categories for War/Violence and Peace/Conflict journalism frames by Galtung (1998) shown in **Table 2.3** in chapter two was used to content analyse the news about the conflicts through frame types, content presentations and source of content to establish the dominant representation concerning the roles by women in the print media. The obscuring of other roles that women played in both conflicts were analyzed by examining the language used in the reportage. *Feminist* curiosity analysis (Enloe, 2014) was adopted to unravel the underlying meanings of the victim and peace role representations of women in the print media; explain how the reported roles determine the perception of women as participants in the conflict and what women think about such perception. The curiosity analysis was required to investigate: What forms power (here concerns the ideological and symbolic components of power relations) takes in determining the representation of the roles played by women in the print media? ; ‘Who wields the power that determines gender representation?; How is power (camouflaged in a way that does not look like power) wielded to make stereotypical roles of women visible and the unreported roles that women played in the four communities discovered from KII and FGDs invisible?

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTAGE OF THE CONFLICTS**

This chapter comprises the background to news content and a content analysis of the reportage of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts in the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines. Also, the extent of reportage, dominant representation of women's roles and language used in the reportage for both conflicts are presented in tables and figures.

#### **4.1 Background to News Content**

The largely agreed straightforward way to study media is through careful analysis of news content or news messages. This is particularly apt because news is not merely the reporting of issues and events but a synthetic, value-laden account which carries within it dominant assumptions and ideas of the society within which it is produced (Harris, 1994; McNair, 1996 cited in Allan, 2005). This is an important precursor because of the uncertain extent, kind and manner of cognitive effects (that may occur to change the ultimate meaning of what is known or reasoned) of reportage on the heterogeneous public who constitute an integral part of the media chain. The understanding here is that news content are produced within the context of a communication frame that is supplied through selection, language, emphasis and exclusion of any news issue (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem 2000 cited in Weaver 2007). Put differently, frame sponsors such as journalists, editors and owners in relaying selected and constructed stories in news columns use words, phrases, images, framing, representation and presentation styles that are loaded with ideological expressions that are by no means neutral (Hall 1997 cited in Zotto 2002).

Significantly, the zero-sum frame of content of news reports, editorials, features, among others which is akin to agenda setting creates public awareness about specific aspects of reality as salient when in their reports emphasis is placed on one issue leading to the demise of another. Accordingly, the analysis of news contents of the varied news items revolved around 'what constitutes news?' concerning women's

roles in the reportings of both Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts. This is because there are two aspects of news namely hard news and human-interest stories. The former is associated with any “report of an event (which need not be recent although it usually is) that happened or was disclosed within the previous 24 hours and treats an issue of ongoing concern” (Jamieson and Campbell, 1992 cited in Harris 1994:141). Thus, the event may not be new (although usually, it is) but it must involve some novel revelation or previously unknown connection. The latter, concern universal issues and are less tied to place and time (Harris, 1994:142). Succinctly, the latter “reports about things that people want or need to know without taking sides” (Vivian, 2003:3). What is apt, from the first aspect of news which is of concern in this analysis is its informing function which is:

fulfilled when things are found out and told about not only in as accessible a way as possible to all citizens but in finding out fresh, unpublished, unusual and generally interesting information on matters of public interest and relaying it as accurately as possible to readers in an honest and balanced way. This is very important because without fresh information no matter how interesting and perhaps stimulating news may be, it will merely be a commentary on things already known; and comment is not news. What is news, is information in the form of raw news, opinions, and all else such as the dissemination of facts or details about issues and events (Rusbridger 2002; Randall 2007 cited in Cole and Harcup2010).

It is evident from the above, that the purpose of news in reality is “what is construed as (social) ‘reality’ deployed through perceptions, facts and statements constructed in a way that makes sense in media communication (Agbaje, 1992). Therefore, to ascertain if this perspective about news held sway in the reportage about both conflicts and depictions of roles played by women, a content analysis of newspapers and magazines news items is the focal point of the next section.

## **4.2 Reportage of Ife-Modakeke Conflict**

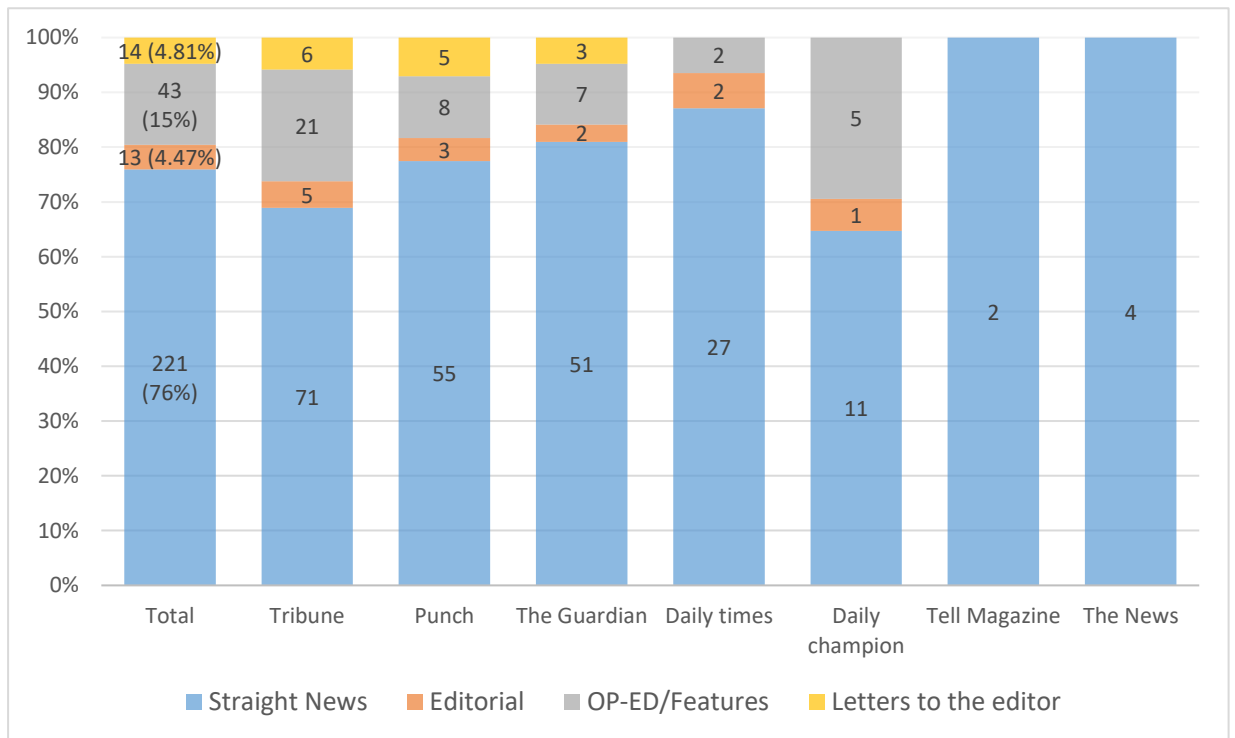
This section states the extent of news items garnered for the conflict according to news types and the news items that align with war/violence and peace/conflict journalism frames from the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines.

### **(i) Extent of reportage**

**Fig 4.1** shows the number of news items garnered for the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines according to news types. The total of news items that amounted to two hundred and ninety-one (291) was calculated with percentages. The news items/articles are straight news, editorial, OP-ED or Features and Letters to editor concerning the Ife-Modakeke conflict. Straight news which provides general information about issues concerning the conflict between the two communities accounted for two hundred and twenty-one (221) articles is an approximate 76%. Editorials that serve as opinion pieces about the conflict had a decimal entry of 13(4.47%). The reason for editorial reportage not exceeding 4% may not be unconnected to the fact that it reflects the stance of the news media owner(s). OP-ED/Feature articles that should provide greater in-depth than news reports provide information about the conflict because it covers reviews, news background issues, analytical articles, think-pieces, profiles, interviews and the analytical/advisory column recorded 43(14.78%). Letters to the editor which reflect the interplay of views between the news media and public agenda garnered only 14(4.81%). Paradoxically, the two weekly magazines that should have highlighted their review ability with dominant and defining feature articles yielded mere 4 and 2 news items, an approximate 100% of straight news only.

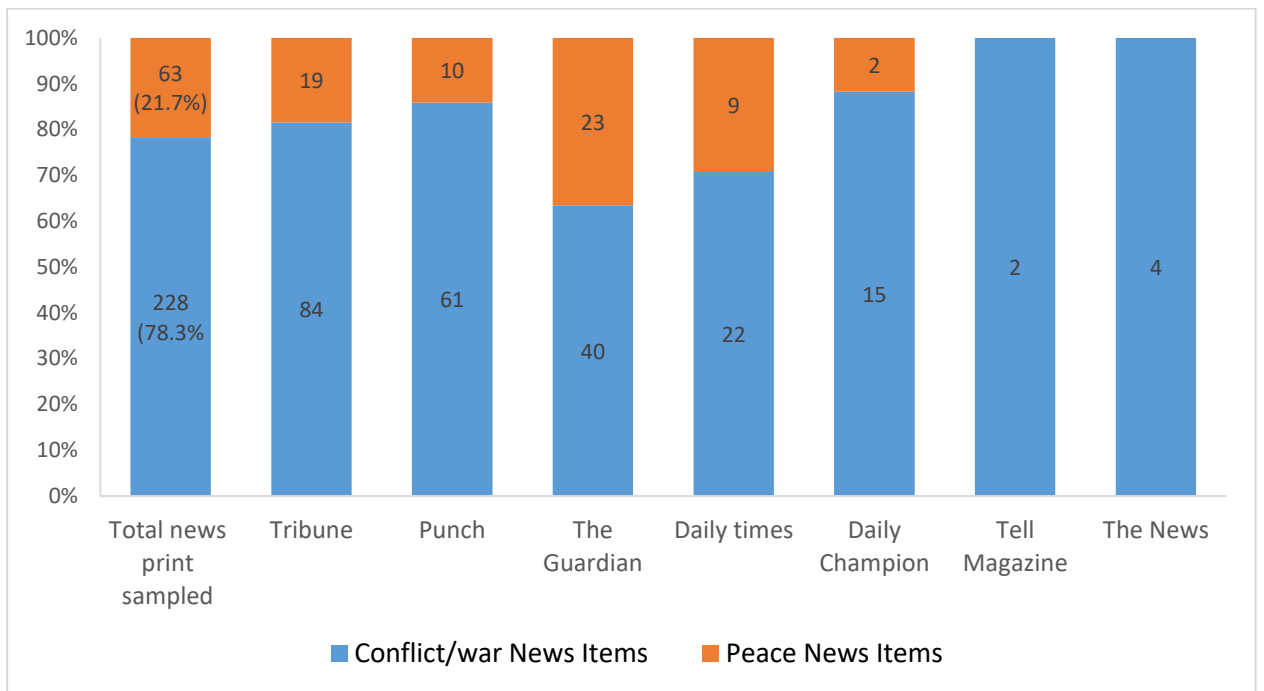
### **(ii) War/violence and Peace/conflict journalism**

**Fig 4.2** shows that out of the 291 news items retrieved for Ife-Modakeke conflict, two hundred and twenty-eight (228) news items which is approximately 78.35% align with war/violence frames/orientations. The news items with peace/conflict frames amounted to sixty-three (63) which is approximately 21.65%.



**Source:** Author's compilation, 2016

**Fig. 4.1: Number and types of news items for Ife-Modakeke conflict**



**Source:** Author's compilation, 2016

**Fig.4.2: War/violence and Peace/conflict frames for Ife-Modakeke conflict**

### **4.3 Analysis of News Items that Depict War/Violence Journalism**

This section examines the information about Ife-Modakeke conflict using indicators from war/violence journalism perspective (see **Table 2.3**). The news contents were investigated using a variety of markers as adduced by the frame which includes indicators such as visible consequences of the conflict, reports on leaders and elites, different orientations about the conflict and areas of differences that might have worsened the conflict. Also, explored are matters about who played what role, where it occurred and when issues of the conflict, dichotomy between the victims and villains in the conflict and victimizing, demonizing and emotive language use in the reporting of the conflict.

#### **(i) Visible effects**

The evident consequences reported are as follows: (i) high fatality figure, most of them were women and children;(ii) injured persons; (iii) destruction of properties (iv) disruption of life; low productivity, dwindled family incomes, unemployment; increase in crime (v) fleeing of indigenes of both communities to neighbouring towns and villages like Ilesha farm lands, Edun Abon, Ipetumodu and Osogbo; (vi)brutal aspect of the conflict on marriages especially its effect on women who were married across the two conflicting communities and were forced to flee because their husbands were ordered by their kinsmen to kill their wives and children if need be as proofs of loyalty to their communities, (vii) rendering of thousands of people homeless and destitute which made them seek refuge at Atakumosa and Ayedaade villages (viii) fleeing secondary school teachers; (ix) adverse impact on the pupils of primary, students of secondary, technical and university: about 5,000 students from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife residing outside the campus whose homes were razed;(x) migration to Ilesha, Ipetumodu, Moro and Edumagbonof displaced people from Modakeke and Ife (xi) displacement of about 1,000 members of staff of the university residing outside the campus;(xii) desolate struggles of Modakeke's because of the stalling of efforts to reinstate them to their places of employment at Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife by their Ife Colleagues; (xiii) nocturnal skirmishes and silent moves to terminate perceived enemies among indigenes of both communities.

## **ii. Elite-oriented**

The focus of reports was on privileged such as traditional rulers like Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade and Ogunsua of Modakeke, Francis Adedoyin and influential leaders such as Yeye Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo, Chief Ayo Adebajo and Otunba Theophilus Owolabi Sobowale Johnson, Chief G.O.K Ajayi. And, federal government delegation comprising of Chief Bola Ige, and Chief Afolabi, former minister of External Affairs, Prof Bolaji Akinyemi, former governor Bisi Akande and his deputy, Otunba Iyiola Omisore and commissioners, former governors of Osun and Kwara States, Otunba Isiaka Adeleke and Cornelius Adebayo.

## **(iii) Differences-oriented**

The accounts recounted here, are diverse opinions of traditional rulers and Community Based Organization (CBOs) leaders from both communities that engendered hatred. Of note is the advertiser's announcement by Modakeke community averred through Messers A. Oyewole and Ayo Isawuni, president and secretary, Modakeke Progressive Union that:

Modakeke is a town distinct from Ile-Ife. The union insisted that Modakeke, like Ife, has its own Central Mosque, and its own Muslim Praying ground (*Yidi*). It has its own separate District Church Council, its own Customary Court, its own traditional festivals, different from the Ifes, and, a completely different dialect of the Yoruba language, with different customs. Thus, the Ifes have been dominating the local government council's chairmanship between 1955 and 1980 having produced seven chairmanship candidates within the period, while Modakeke indigenes occupied the position only twice, with those from Edumagbon and Ipetumodun producing one each. The only way to lasting peace is to grant Modakeke its own distinct local government (Daily Times, Saturday August 23, 1997: 10).

Another opinionated position is that of the Ogunsua of Modakeke, Francis Adedoyin who claimed the resolution of the conflict resides in the government giving Modakeke people their own local government. The reason he proffered was that there cannot be peace between both communities without Modakeke having its own local government



(Champion Newspapers, 8th of March, 2000). This position was further reiterated thus:

“...no aggression, intimidation, or confrontation would force his people out of their town. It was God who put us here as His children and as descendants of Oduduwa. And as long as...Ife remains the cradle of the Yoruba race, Modakekes will remain where they are by the grace of God Almighty like other Nigerians who were displaced by inter-tribal wars but who still remain in their various settlements without being molested. Moreover, Ife East was carved out of Ife North and not Ife central hence the government must once and for all prove to all that local government is not the property of any traditional ruler but for the grassroots people (Guardian, Thursday, March 16,2000:15).

In denouncing this standpoint the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade argued that “it amounted to an abomination” for Ife indigenes, the original landowners, to have the headquarters of a local government belonging to them located in Modakeke community who are their ‘settlers’ (Guardian, Thursday, March 16, 2000:15).

Accordingly, the president of Great Ife Movement (GIM), Chief Akin Adetumbi claimed that:

any peace with Modakeke will be peace of the graveyard. The best and lasting solution is that Modakeke should be ejected from Ife. We cannot continue to cope with them. We cannot even co-exist with them again; let them go to where they came from. We gave them land to live and farm but in return they want us out of our land. This is unacceptable. We don't have to bother our feelings, if the government want peace let them ask Modakeke to leave our land, we have had enough of them. The only path to lasting peace between us is that Modakeke should see themselves as tenants (or as ‘strangers’ and ‘settlers’) in Ife land who should continue to pay royalties to their Ife hosts. The Ife indigenes will under no circumstances forego their inheritance (The Guardian, Thursday, March 16, 2000:15).

In addition to this, is the poignant position by the co-ordinator of Modakeke Awareness Committee (MAC), Mr Soji Akinyemi that it is a misnomer to call Modakekes refugees in their home of about two hundred years migrants by the Ife's

who like the Modakekes are migrants too. Further, the Modakeke have come to stay permanently hence deserve a separate local government council (The Guardian, Thursday, March 16, 2000). Other manifestations of dissimilarity in orientations was the lining of streets by thousands of Modakeke youths with banners bitterly denouncing Ife as their rival and the stationing of hundreds of Ife youths outside *Ooni Sijuade's* palace, chanting violent anti-Modakeke slogans.

**iv) Here-and-now reports about what, who, where and when issues of the conflict**

Issues here, concern the origin of Ife and Modakeke as homogeneous neighbouring Yoruba communities with a shared language, culture and ancestor called Oduduwa. Noteworthy too, in the origin accounts is the forceful return of loyalists (migrating refugees) of the founding General and first ruler of Ibadan, Chief Okunade Maye (an Ife indigene) to Ife kingdom following his overthrow and their quarters of settlement, Modakeke. Emphasis also, was on the fractured relationship between native Ife and the post-war Modakeke community re-settlers particularly in 1909, precipitated by a Treaty of Peace brokered by the British between Ibadan and Ekiti Parapoin 1886, their evacuation to Ode-Omu between Gbongan and Ede to be administered by the Ibadan Native Authority among other issues that culminated into wars which remained latent and perpetual from 1893 through the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914.

The experiences of this action and subsequent creation of Ife Native Authority in 1916 and its proclamation next to Ibadan Native Authority with jurisdiction over the present West Senatorial District of Osun State engendered the process of perfect assimilation which took place among the two generations of the people of Ife and the Oyo of Modakeke particularly for the sixty years between 1920 and 1980. The only exception is that each community remained identifiable through traces of her dialects within the Yoruba language. Other ensuing issues about the disagreement between Ife and Modakeke communities concern the dynamic scenarios heightened in 1981 regarding how many local governments the then Oranmiyan Local Government should be divided into in line with the recommendations of the Justice Alao Commission for the creation of more local governments in the old Oyo State.

The Ife who conceived themselves as “authentic landlords” claimed they wanted the area to remain as one local government, while the Modakeke people demanded a

separate local government of its own- a situation that provoked the opening of new wounds on matters of land-ownership and geographical boundaries. Of note is how the then Oyo State House of Assembly refused to create new local governments from the then Oranmiyan; and new wars were fought in form of protests and riots in 1981 and 1983. The crisis of local government demand became accentuated by the seeming indecision of creating Ife East Local Government by the military authority in 1997 out of the Ife-Central Local Government which the same military authority created in 1989 without addressing the questions of land-ownership and boundaries which have always been the perennial bone of contention. The defunct Late Sani Abacha Regime created the Ife East local government and located its headquarters in the precincts of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade's palace at Enuwa. A creation that was contrary to the stipulation of the constitution that a new council would comprise a mixture of some quarters of Ile-Ife and Modakeke.

Predictably, the Modakeke people who claim to have inhabited the area for close to 150 years, denounced this move with a protest insisting that Decree 37 of 1996 and Decree 7 of 1997 explicitly stated that the headquarters of the disputed local government carved out of the former Ife North local government be cited in Modakeke. Ostensibly to douse the tension created, the Osun State Government later announced a change of heart by relocating the headquarters from Enuwa to the palace of the Baale of Modakeke in line with the gazetted decrees. Expectedly, Ife indigenes renounced the re-location while angered prominent Ife leaders comprising of Obalufe of Ife, Chief J. Omisakin and Apena of Ife, Dr Toso Eluyemi, who doubled as representatives to government, in a memorandum presented to the Arthur Mbanefo committee on States and local government creation requested for Ife East local government with headquarters in Enuwa. The Modakeke people opted for Ife North-East local government.

Of note too, was Otunba Iyiola Omisore's argument that government was ill-advised on the council seat relocation from Enuwa to Modakeke. He proposes that Ife East basically belongs to Ile-Ife with seven wards against Modakeke's three hence there is no rationale behind establishing the headquarters in a community that controls less than 30 per cent of the local government. This traditional posture by customary overlords of Ife provided the tenable ground to deny Modakeke people (whom they conceive as settlers and should accord them greater deference and acknowledge their

hierarchical precedence) the full status of a local government headquarters.

The premise of this stance being if Modakeke is to be made the headquarters of any local government, then Modakeke must resettle on a neutral land and leave Ife land on which they had settled for years as customary tenant-farmers for generations. Further to this, Colonel Anthony Obi administration's move to relocate the council headquarters from palaces of both the Ooni(at Enuwa) and the Baale of Modakeke to a 'neutral' location, Oke-Ogbo in Ilode quarters on the outskirts of Ile-Ife on the way to Ifewara the 'border' of both communities(where it was operating) was resisted by the Ifes. This act enraged youths of Modakeke community who embarked on a wild protest march insisting that the local government maintains its base at the Palace of Ogunsua.

The Modakeke people's resistance was premised on not destroying their identity, rights to self- determination, autonomy and distortion of their history. The claim by Modakeke was that although they accord recognition and respect to the Ooni as the occupant of the throne of Oduduwa, however, they reiterated that the raging conflict is hinged upon the fear by Ife people concerning losing their privileges accruing from the tributes paid to them as isakole (or rent) in exchange for the right to grow economic crops like cocoa, kola nuts, oil palm etc as customary landlords. Colonel Theophilus Bamigboye was among the key stakeholders reported to have meditated in the conflict in 1998 through organized meetings with both communities and subsequently recommended for the creation of a separate council area. The recommendation was partially fulfilled with Chief Bisi Akande administration creation of an Area Council carved out of Ife East Council Area with 30 per cent of the Ife East Local government area allocation going to the Area Council for its development. This reported development reinforced the need to agitate for full autonomy and insistence that its traditional ruler, the Ogunsua, be elevated to the status of an Oba and be allowed to wear a beaded crown and return of farms taken over by the Ifes.

The Ooni, as the paramount ruler under whose jurisdiction Modakeke falls, was averse to recognizing the Ogunsua as a beaded crown royal father claiming that Modakeke as a satellite of Ife does not qualify to have an Oba. The stalemate and hostile environment resulted in protests and the subsequent burgeoning of the first contemporary clash which started on August 16, 1997, and raged on until January

1999. And, also the second bout which erupted on March 3, 2000, and lasted close to three weeks over sundry reasons over the erection of a sign-post at a disputed piece of land at Akarabata area.

v) **Dichotomy between the good, bad-victims and villains**

Accounts about which community constitute the villain point to the Ife, acclaimed “authentic landlords” because of their traditional posture that Modakeke people whom they conceive as settlers should accord them greater deference and acknowledge their hierarchical precedence concerning the issue of the full status of a local government headquarters. And the victim, Modakeke’s because of their demand of a separate local government which provoked new wounds on matters of land-ownership and geographical boundaries.

#### **4.4 Language Used in the Reportage to Represent Victims**

**(i) Victimizing use of language**

**Table 4.1** shows the language (italicized) that highlights the victim representation of women in the Ife-Modakeke conflict.

**(ii) Demonizing use of language**

**Table 4.2** shows the demonizing language used (italicized) in the reportage of the conflict to portray persons conceived as fighters in the battle/frontline.

**(iii) Use of emotive language**

**Table 4.3** illustrates the emotive language used in the reportage of Ife-Modakeke conflict to highlight the emotional experiences of women as victims in the conflict.

**Table 4.1 Language used in representing women as victims**

Name of Print Media	Language Used in Representing Women as Victims
Nigerian Tribune	scores of inter-married women indigenes across communities (even in the Ife four principal ruling houses) were victims of <i>summary termination</i> of their marriages
The Punch	<i>wailing</i> lady over burnt business ventures; <i>termination</i> (of women's marriages) as perceived enemies;
The Guardian	significant number of <i>vulnerable</i> people, most of them women huddling children”
Daily Champion	‘young ones resorting to <i>prostitution</i> ’ <i>razing</i> of houses among which are those belonging to the PDP women leaders: Chief mrs Awape and Architect Dupe Onosore along Aserifa Ola Estate.
Daily Times	“ <i>arraignment</i> of Folake Oguntola, a 40 year old woman before an Ife chief Magistrate over charges of conspiracy, riot and arson specifically on the 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> of August,1997”
TELL Magazine	“ <i>uncontrollable wailing</i> by a young woman believed to be the owner of one of the popular hairdressing salons, at Mayfair complex”; “ <i>razing</i> of a drinking point opposite Mayfair hotel owned by a woman known as Ola-mummy”
News Magazine	“ <i>razing houses and business</i> centres owned community men and women

**Source:** Author’s Compilation, 2016

**Table 4.2 Language used in representing fighters**

Print Media Name	Language Used
<b>Nigerian Tribune</b>	Irate, rampaging <i>agile males</i> , Militants, <i>combatants</i> , Warrior youths or <i>young Kinsmen</i>
<b>The Punch</b>	<i>Fighting men</i> ; warriors; <i>combatants</i> ; militants, armed restive youths.
<b>The Guardian</b>	Warriors, <i>irate combatants</i> , militants, group of <i>armed men</i>
<b>Daily Times</b>	<i>Combatants</i> , militants
<b>Daily Champion</b>	Militant youths, <i>combatants</i>
<b>TELL Magazine</b>	Assailants
<b>The NEWS Magazine</b>	<i>Cruel</i> warriors

Source: Author's compilation, 2016

**Table 4.3 Language used in representing emotive experiences of women**

Print Media Name	Language Used in Representing Emotive Experiences of Women
Nigerian Tribune	scores of <i>displaced</i> community people, mothers with their children; <i>fleeing</i> women with loads and babies strapped at their backs
The Punch	<i>killing</i> of nine women and a four year old child; <i>Migrating</i> community women to neighbouring communities
The Guardian	women and children are the unprecedented number of the <i>dead and displaced</i> ; <i>gunning down</i> of a woman and her child of about 2 years; <i>beating to coma</i> , a woman for refusing to feast on dead bodies “ <i>brutal attack</i> on two men and their wives, one expectant, the other a mother with a teenage girl and a six month old baby”
Daily Champion	<i>fleeing</i> women farmers
Daily Times	a <i>dead mother</i> with her <i>wailing 2-year old child</i> still strapped to her back. ‘ <i>disembowelling</i> of pregnant women’ <i>systematic rape</i> of women inter-married across community lines
TELL and The News	<i>fleeing</i> of indigenes and children’

Source: Author’s compilation, 2016



#### **4.5 Analysis of News Items that Depict Peace/Conflict Journalism**

This section examines the information about Ife-Modakeke conflict using indicators from the perspective of Peace/Conflict journalism (see Table 2.3). The examination focused on common people as actors and as sources of information, areas of agreement concerning solution, according voice to many parties involved in conflict, being non-partisan, aftermath of conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and importance of peace treaty. Equally, scrutinized were if victimizing language was avoided by reporting what has been done and could be done by people and coping strategies, conformity with the use of more precise descriptions, titles, or names and the avoidance of emotive words by being objective, moderate and not exaggerating.

##### **(i) People-oriented**

The reports about the peace intervention roles of persons in the conflict were replete with community actors who also doubled as sources of information. They include traditional rulers such as *Ooni* of Ife, *Oba* Okunade Sijuade and *Ogunsua* of Modakeke, Francis Adedoyin, *Yeye* Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo and leaders of the Community Based Organization (CBOs): Ife Development Union (IDU) and Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU).

##### **(ii) Agreement oriented**

There were ample accounts about peace agreement initiatives by the traditional rulers of both communities. Noteworthy, is the widely reported submission in almost all the newspapers that the Ife monarch stated that as a person of peace he was terribly embarrassed and highly scandalized by the upheavals in the ancient city. More so, his role at both the state and national levels concerning unity, peace and understanding has always been a great personal cost to his reputation. In furtherance to that stance, are accounts of excerpt from his speech through Apetumode of Ipetumode, Oba James Adegoke at the formal inauguration of conflict resolution and management programmes by USAID and OTI.

The excerpt which culminated in the setting up of the Ife/Modakeke inter-community Peace Advocacy Committee (INTERPAC) is:

I have never been annoyed with the Modakeke. Our story is like that of twins whose characters differ. I am the father of the Ife and Modakeke hence I urge the people in the two communities to feel free and live in peace like in the past. The spirit of Oduduwa (the progenitor of the Yoruba race) would punish any person who tries to re-enact the crisis again (The Punch: 18/9/2000).

The Ogunsua of Modakeke offered assurance too by agreeing to support the Federal Government's peace initiatives. Of note too, is president Obasanjo's peace meeting with the *Ooni* of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade and other Yoruba leaders including *Yeye* Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo and chief Ayo Adebajo and Otunba Theophilus Owolabi Sobowale Johnson and Chief G.O.K Ajayi(The Guardian, Tuesday, March 28,2000:8). Also, poignant is the brokered reconciliation moves by Presidential Conflict Reconciliation Committee under the chairmanship of National Reconciliation Committee (NARECOM), Chief Alex Akinyele and the Peace Committee of chaired by Chief Gabriel Agbe. The latter achieved the following:

the enlightenment of people, instituting of three secretariats in the two communities to serve the inter-community peace advocacy committee, warding off of an inter-community fight in November 2000 and in January 2001, training received by members of the committee assisted them in tracing the causes of the tension that might have developed into fighting, building of confidence across the two communities and importantly the identifying of communal problems and efforts being made with a view to solving them permanently(The Punch 27/8/2001).

The reports were specific about how leaders of community-based unions such as Ife Development Union (IDU) and Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU) and other unnamed community groups urged youths not to allow historical antecedents and other petty issues to destabilize their future so that peace can reign. The spirited efforts of leaders from both communities not only culminated into assuaging frayed nerves but enjoined leaders from both communities into agreeing to a ceasefire and giving their approval to the composition of peace committees and pledged to suspend fighting forthwith bearing in mind that without peace there can be no dialogue(The Punch March 25, 2000).

There were also varied accounts from all the newspapers about the committee which was chaired by Bishop Gabriel Ojeleke Abegurin of the Osun State's Catholic Diocese and former vice-chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the South-West Zone, Commodore Olabode George who helped trace the immediate cause of the crisis to the creation of Ife East Local Council in 1997. There were also accounts of the indictment of the then state Military Administrator, Col. Anthony Obi (rtd.) for relocating the headquarters of the council from Enuwa, Ile-Ife to Modakeke and later Oke-Ogbo, as being responsible for the violent reactions in the area. Consequent upon this, the committee advised that an area office of Ife East Council be created in Modakeke to serve the interest of the people, while the council's headquarters remained in Oke-Ogbo.

There were also ample news about efforts at dousing the community feud including those of federal government delegates such as Chief Bola Ige, and chief Afolabi, former minister of External Affairs, Prof Bolaji Akinyemi, former governor Akande and his deputy, Otunba Iyiola Omisore and commissioners, former governors of Osun and Kwara States, Otunba Isiaka Adeleke and Cornelius Adebayo. There were also accounts of the resolution agreement meeting facilitated by then state administrator, Colonel Theophilus Bamigboye for pertinent reasons. One, it was the first of its kind in three years the war lasted. Second, that it resulted in the two traditional rulers worshipping with their chiefs at a mass celebrated by Reverend Vincent Alazemi, at the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Lagere, Ile-Ife. This meeting was amply reported as being important to the enthroning of peace and unity in the town because it facilitated the paying of homage by Ogunsua Francis Adedoyin to the Ooni who subsequently blessed the former in the full glare of the congregation that included chiefs from either community. The meeting further engendered joint prayers for peace held in the Ooni's palace as well as the Ogunsua's palace.

### **iii. Multi-party orientation**

There were prominent reportings about initiatives of community based organizations (CBOs) through anchor persons such as Mr Funso Adewale, coordinator Modakeke Youth Vanguard (MYV), Chief Akin Adetumbi, leader Great Ife Movement (GIM) also known as Ife Youth Group and Mr Dauda Ijiyode, executive secretary Ife Development Union (IDU). Others include Mr Lawrence, leader Ife

Youth Movement (Ife Youth for peace) and Chief Akinyemi Atetedaye, acting president Ife Action Council (IAC). Others include Mr Wole Animasaun, the spokesman of Modakeke Youths Movement (MYM), Mr Richard Yoade and Mr J. A. Akande (active member) and Dr Wale Fadare, the National President of Modakeke Welfare Council (MWC)/Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU).

Also, amply reported is the key role of Gani Adams-led faction of the Oodua' People's Congress (OPC) particularly the seven-day ultimatum given to Yoruba elders to wade into the feud between both communities once and for all or face the wrath of exposition of the financiers of the protracted conflict. There were also significant peacemaking initiatives from diverse perspectives (financial and moral efforts) of various non-governmental organizations such as the Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Office of the Transition Initiative (OTI).

Table 4.4 illustrates news accounts of peace initiatives that involved women.

**Table 4.4 Representation of women in peace roles**

Newspaper and News Magazine Name	Peace role representation
Nigerian Tribune	<p>Official Peace meeting by Yeye Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo and distinguished Yoruba leaders.</p> <p>the role of Kemi Fawole, a lone woman member (among others who are men: Deji Adedini, Banji Adeyemo, Adebayo Olagunju, Kunle Awosanmi, Depo Eluyera) of the peace broker petition as products of Ife-Modakeke inter-marriages to the Osun State government Lt Colonel Anthony Obi</p>
The Punch	<p>Peaceful co-existence rally by the International Federation of Women lawyers led by former deputy governor of Lagos State senator Kofoworola Akerele Bucknor who mobilized. 5,000 members drawn from its membership from Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Ogun and Lagos states.</p> <p>government peace meetings with Yoruba leaders including <i>Yeye</i> Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo</p>
The Guardian	<p>Peace appeal by the daughters, wives and mothers through the Modakeke Ladies Circle.</p> <p>Peace advocacy by the association of women lawyers group.</p> <p>‘Two women’ in the pictorial display featuring the end of peace talks with the Ife traditional ruler, <i>Ooni</i> of Ife Oba Okunade Sijuade.</p> <p>Federal Government peace initiatives/meeting with traditional rulers, other Yoruba leaders including <i>Yeye</i> Oba of Ife, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo</p>
Daily Times	<p>*an elderly woman who removed a spent pellet from a wounded policeman at Modakeke.</p>

**Source:** Author’s compilation, 2016

#### **iv. Non-partisan**

The conflict accounts were relatively neutral particularly, concerning initiatives by committees, community unions, individuals and groups.

#### **v. War-reconstruction, rehabilitation and peace treaty**

Noteworthy, is the Olusegun Obasanjo instituted presidential peace treaty committee which looked into the issues of the conflict in its entirety and eventually proffered the lasting solution which engendered the restoration of peace eventually on Friday, February 6, 2009, following a pact entered by the two traditional rulers at the palace of the Ooni of Ife. The importance of this landmark event was acknowledged by the lead peacemaker governor of Osun State, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola who reiterated that the peace treaty resolutions should be sacrosanct. Some of the proffered solutions include: elevation of Ogunsua of Modakeke to the status of an Oba under the paramount ruler of Ife, the Ooni, the return of the Modakeke displaced farmers to their farms, farmers to accord their landlord's full recognition and respect and the agreement concerning the carving of a separate local government with headquarters in Modakeke. Some broad form of initiatives on reconstruction and rehabilitation of displaced were reported too.

### **4.6 Language**

- i) There was no prejudice in the language used in reporting government activities and initiatives through committees, initiatives of traditional rulers, and CBOs concerning the coping strategies of indigenes.
- (ii) The language was non-demonizing but distinct and specific regarding gender, name and designation of stakeholders. These are within all the peace indicators explained above except for the non-partisan indicators.
- (iii) Overall, the language of reportage was not emotive but dispassionate and temperate.

## **4.7 Reportage of Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict**

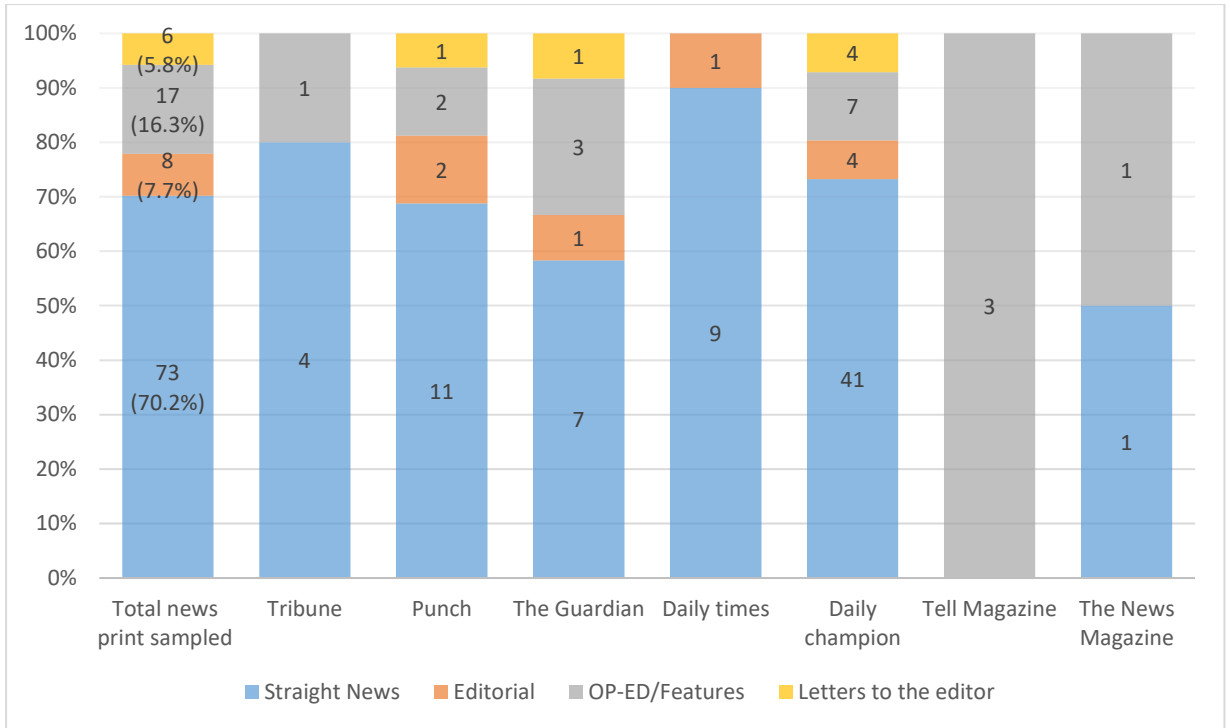
This section states the extent of news items retrieved for the conflict according to news types as well as the war/violence and peace/conflict frames for the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines.

### **(i) Extent of reportage**

Fig 4.3 shows the number of news items which amounted to one hundred and four (104) and the percentage (%) of each according to news type for the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines for the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict. The news items are straight news, editorial, OP-ED/ Features and Letters to editor concerning Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict. The news items collected for straight news amounted to 73 (70.19%), 8(7.69%) for editorials, OP-ED/features, 17(16.35%), letters to editor accounted for 6(5.77%) while TELL Magazine garnered 3(2.88%) and NEWS Magazine 2(1.92%) straight news respectively. The glaring feature from the table is that straight news which centres on general information about the community conflicts amounted to close to 74% of the reportage while editorials that serve as opinion pieces meant to define, articulate and address the conflict and its controversies was 8(7.69%). Feature articles which typically are analytical and advisory garnered 17(16.35%) and letters to the editor was 6(5.77%). The entry for the two weekly magazines respectively was abysmal.

### **(ii) War/violence and Peace/conflict journalism**

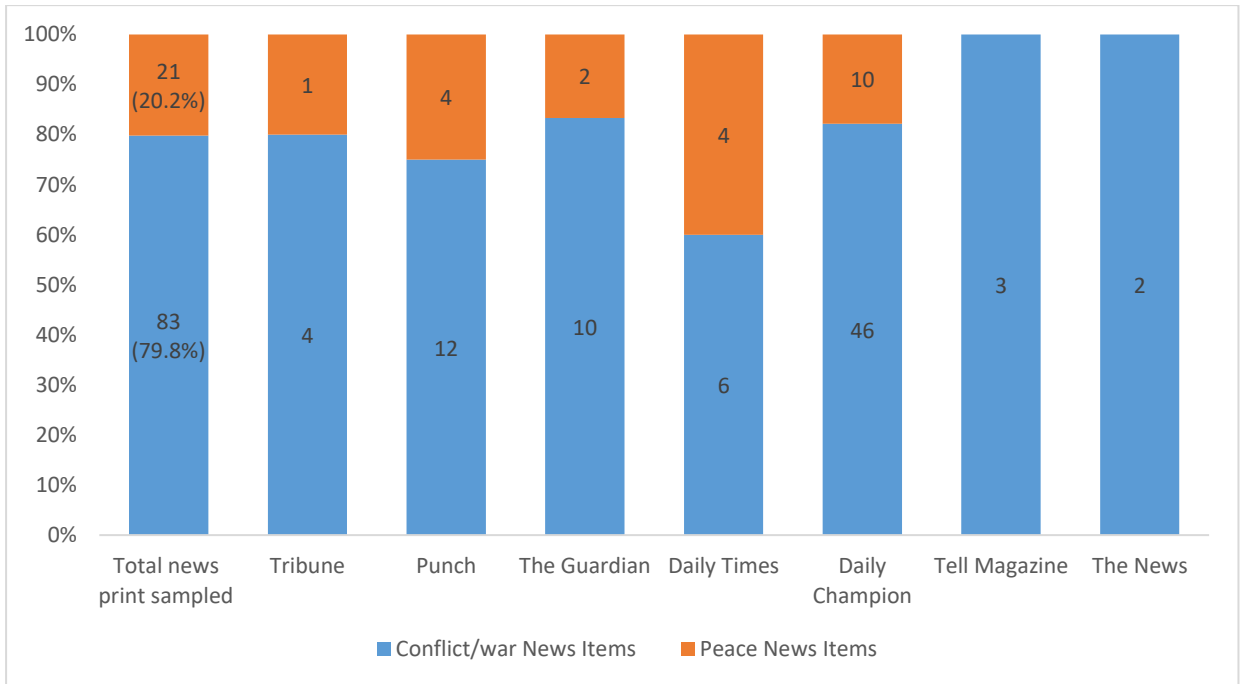
Fig 4.4 shows the extent of news items garnered with war/violence and peace/conflict frames from the one hundred and four (104) news items retrieved for the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict and the percentage (%) of each according to newspapers and magazines. The news items with war/violence frames amounted to eighty-three (83), an approximate 79.81% while news items with a peace/conflict frame amounted to twenty-one (21) articles, a percentage of 20.19%.



**Source:** Author's compilation, 2016

**Fig. 4.3 Number and Types of news items for Aguleri-Umuleri conflict**





**Source:** Author's compilation, 2016

**Fig. 4.4 War/violence and Peace/conflict frames for Aguleri-Umuleri conflict**

## **4.8 Analysis of News Items that Depict War/Violence Journalism**

In this section, the content of news reports about the Aguler-Umuleri conflict is analysed in line with indicators of war/violence journalism frame (see Table 2.3). The markers used for analysis include visible consequences of the conflict, focus on leaders and elites, different orientations about the conflict and areas of differences that might have led to the worsening of the conflict. The other indicators show who played what role, where and when in the conflict, dichotomy between victims and villains in the conflict and victimizing, demonizing and emotive language use in reporting the conflict.

### **i. Visible effects**

Accounts by varied news media about discernable consequences of the conflict include (i) massive killings and beheading of people (there was specific accounts of Umuleri's Messrs Chieke and Anthony Mbuesi-both nephews whose beheaded heads were paraded in Aguleri) which characterized the September/October 1995 conflict; (ii) ritual sacrifices and killings during the 1995/1999 episodes of the conflict; (iii) fracas at the funeral rites of Chief Mike Edozien, Executive Officer of Anambra East LGA; (d) Estimation of about 1,000 numbers of deaths (including children) in both communities and neighbouring town of Otuocha; (iv) significant number of wounded and injured persons; (v) displacement of about half a million people (including women and children); (vi) estimate of public buildings and privately owned the 1995 crisis put between 250 million naira and unspecified billions of naira for the two communities: about Aguleri 200 houses were said to have been damaged, while at Umuleri nearly every structure ranging from private properties to major public buildings some of which include churches: Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church and St. Gabriel Anglican Church; Umuleri Community Bank, Umuleri Post Office and Town Hall; (vii) consequence of the conflict on school pupils and students were reported as being twofold: one, the non-sparing of students among the killed and as victims of internal displacement. Two, destruction of schools in Umuleri town where reports had it that no single primary or secondary school (both private and public) were spared.

There was also the mention of the razing of Obunetti Primary School, Umuleri and 1995 razing of government technical college in Aguleri; (viii) the consequences of all the destructions on pupils and students who had to resort to receiving classes under

trees; (ix) high incidence of general traumatic experience;(x) induced health problems such as heart attack or blood pressure; (xi)maternal mortality occasioned by destroyed health and pediatric care facilities;(xii)forceful abduction (either on their way to the markets, farms, places of work and worship) for the marriage of a great number of Aguleri women(widows inclusive)who previously had inter-married across either community by Umuleri men who further subjected them to ritual oaths meant to bind them from returning to their previous marriages.

### **ii. Elite-oriented**

The news reports referenced more elites such as traditional rulers, chiefs, elders, community association leaders and government officials rather than ordinary community people. The same circle of elites served as preferred sources of information about the conflict.

### **iii. Differences-oriented**

Accounts in the newspapers and magazines of the different orientations about the conflict revolve around issues such as: findings and recommendation report of Aguleri-Umuleri Disturbances judicial commissions of inquiry of Justice Moses Nweje in 1995 and Justice Araka in 1999.The recommendation entailed (a) how the reprisal attacks on Umuleri by Aguleri was not orchestrated but planned; (b) indictment of the Local Government Chairman as well as the police especially the Divisional Police Officer(DPO) for not trying enough to nip the conflict in the bud;(c) government's trivialization of the listed measures to avert subsequent conflicts which culminated into the gruesome 1999 conflict;(d) the constitution of Otuocha as a separate and distinct Local Government Area;(e) relocation of traditional rulers of both communities to the hinterland to checkmate upsurge of conflicts;(f) that government should see to the rebuilding of private properties destroyed while Aguleri as the aggressors should bear the brunt of any damage done to their property as well as rebuild most of the destroyed public property in Umuleri.

Aguleri community faulted Anambra State government on the grounds of poor conflict management and complicity.Reason proffered in the news accounts were not unconnected to the apparent favouring of the culprit Umuleri community which fueled the disturbances following illegal filling station construction activity on a disputed land belonging to Aguleri. Another variation, concern the oppositional

stance by the Igwe of Aguleri-Alphonsus Idigo 111 concerning the extension of Otuocha Urban Area and relocation of his official residence to Aguleri. An additional discrepancy which further prompted the call for a review of the recommendation and a follow-up court action protest in 1998 is the bias claims which include how governments in its communiqué failed to adhere to the recommendation but directed both state and local government to move public projects more to Umuleri than Aguleri. There was also non-adherence to the recommendation that there should be a distinct demarcation of the boundary between Aguleri and Umuleri particularly recommendations concerning the implementation of accountability for violations committed in the communities.

The probable reason for this is not unconnected to the indictment of most senior government officials and the Chair of Anambra East Local Government Council, Chief Mike Edozie who used his position tacitly (instead of aversion) to support his Aguleri kinsmen against Umuleri during the 1995 violence. An issue of disagreement for the Umuleri's was concerning the pretentious behaviour by the state government over the directive by Nweje's commission of Inquiry that Mike Edozie be admonished for his actions which the government not only refrained from but failed to specify the form of admonition meant until his demise. This action further fuelled speculations of the conspiracy between Aguleri and the government against Umuleri.

The perceivable issue with Justice Araka, 1999 judicial commission of inquiry concerned its findings and recommendations which were not made public as well as non-issuance of whitepaper report by Anambra State government. Admittedly, this created issues with Umuleri community and obviously their Igwe Nelson Okoye who not only condemned government's lackadaisical attitude but also its failure to implement decisions of the commissions it instituted. The recommendations included disaffection over the question of boundary demarcation, which defined the extent of control inherent in each community.

Another reported issue of disagreement includes the action by Christopher Alphonsus Idigo of Aguleri which was claimed to be divisive so much so that it resulted in the disbanding of the executive council of Aguleri Representative Council (ARC) and its replacement with the Aguleri Caretaker Committee. The act reportedly further fuelled the antipathy between the two communities until the state government intervened and not only proscribed the committee, however, reiterated that the former remained the

only recognized town union in the community. Expectedly, this action among other forms of resistance affected the taking of decisive actions at resolving the problem, one of which is the delay of the white paper on the boundary adjustment that not only experienced a delay in scaling through but when it eventually did, some of the recommendations had already overtaken it.

There were also reports about how the Umuleri elite mobilized their community youths to fight against intransigence on the part of Aguleri elites and attempts to continue to exercise control over the Otuocha land with the erection of billboards which portrayed Otuocha as their territory. Media reports also indicated that the Aguleri elite promoted the otuocha land conflict by creating the Aguleri Youth Association (AYA). Also reported is the provision of funds to sustain the supply of arms to the combatants by wealthy indigene elites on either side of the warring communities as a contributing factor which further fuelled the community conflicts.

#### **iv. Here-and-now reports about what, who, where and when issues of the conflict**

The contents here revolve around the conflict between two Igbo sub-groups with shared ancestral lineage located in Anambra East Local Government Area with headquarters in Otuocha, Anambra State of South-Eastern Nigeria. And, cause(s) of the conflict associated with indigeneity status and land. For the former, it was reported that both communities were indigenes irrespective of how each tries to misrepresent its version of the origin story as regards which community first settled. The latter revolves around which autonomous community had superior claim over the Local Government Area sited at a valued territory called Otuocha and by extension ownership of a disputed piece of land known as ‘Agu Akor’ imbued with government presence, financial institutions and private sector activities.

Although reports established that the disputed land is owned by both communities yet the struggle to own, control and access the land which engendered employment opportunities resulted into repeated land litigation which dates back to 1933 when Umuleri community lost out of a lawsuit against the Aguleri community over Otuocha land which had earlier been sold to the Royal Niger Company Limited. Obviously, the Umuleri community not being at home with the court’s non-declaration of the title of the Otuocha land in their favour sued Aguleri in 1935 and 1950 claiming exclusive ownership of the disputed land. The suit of 1935 was also

not favourable to Aguleri for lack of evidence about the exclusive ownership of the land given the ample evidence that both communities not only co-habited but tilled the land alongside each other. The varied suits by both communities to claim ownership of the contested land continued until 1964 when Umuleri community forestalled the attempt by the defunct Anambra County Council to alter the Otuocha headquarters to Otuocha-Aguleri. For the Aguleri community, the 1975 suit case was important although the community subsequently lost the quest for sole ownership of the contested land.

However, following unfavourable fallout of the High Court suit Aguleri community appealed to the Court of Appeal and got a reversal of the decision to the chagrin of Umuleri community that initiated an appeal to the Supreme Court. The ruling in 1984 was that the two communities should continue to co-exist and that neither of them should claim ownership of the parcel of land called Otuocha. Despite the fallouts of these litigations, Aguleri emerged from each richer and stronger given the rents accruing to its leases of this land which they considered officially their own in both words and actions.

The reason is not unconnected to the inscribing of 'Otuocha Aguleri' rather than 'Otuocha' on milestones indicating mileages to Otuocha and billboards showing locations of important establishments such as the Royal Niger Company, John Holt, Post Office etc. by colonial administrators. These actions to Umuleri community clearly amounted to bequeathing Otuocha to Aguleri in the mindset of colonial government hence they were not pacified and felt frustrated that it could not have unrestrained access to the land. Certainly, the long history of both communities dismissing each other's claim to Otuocha land as frivolous culminated into deadly skirmishes from 1920, 1934, 1964 and contemporary episode in 1995.

The conflict in 1995 was occasioned by encroachments on the land by the reported first culprit Aguleri community situating a motor park in 1994 on the Agu Akor land and also encroached into the Otuocha land removing all signboards bearing Umuleri leavings theirs. These actions prompted the revenge attack by the Umuleri armed youths conceived as mercenaries but were, however, checkmated by the drafting of Policemen to Otu-ocha between December 1994 and April 1995. The deployment of troops did not deter the indigenes of the Aguleri community from attacking Umuleri at different times from September 30 – October 1995 on account of an attempt by Dan

Ekwevi, an Umuleri man, to build a fuel-dispensing station on Aguleri land which was considered a violation of territorial integrity and the purported singing and dancing by Umuleri people chanting “Aguleri *ipo*” (Aguleri weaklings).

Subsequently, Umuleri four years later embarked on a reprisal attack in the early hours of April 3, 1999, against Aguleri primarily to disrupt the funeral and attempted to abduct the corpse of an Aguleri man Mike Edozie, the former chair of Anambra local government (as it was called then), considered an architect of the 1995 mayhem for failing to avert the conflict. The mission of abduction (although foiled) was planned by Umuleri youths even though the deceased mother is from Umuleri. Also, were the allegations of political marginalization by Umuleri people who claimed that since the local government reforms introduced by Obasanjo in 1976 and the subsequent creation of local government areas, specifically Anambra Local Government, Umuleri was cheated in producing a chairperson. The premise being that Aguleri had held the post during four separate periods and by the extension used the privileges of powerful positions in government to embark on actions that jeopardize Umuleri community interests. Aguleri condemned this stance claiming that Umuleri community had meted out greater injustice and political marginalization especially in the delineation of electoral wards and allotment of councillorship positions in the local government council. There were also records that showed Umuoba-Anam, a third of the three communities which constitute Otu-ocha and had always served as a buffer between both communities, ironically was involved with Aguleri against Umuleri based on the claim that nine of their sons were shot during the 1995 conflict.

#### **v) Dichotomizes the good, bad-victims and villains**

The reports indicate Aguleri community as the initial oppressive wrong doer and the villain based on the following reasons. The siting of a motor park on the Agu Akor land, encroachment into the Otuocha land to remove all signboards bearing Umuleri and launching of attacks which culminated into full-blown conflict. The Umuleri community was reported as the victim of Aguleri’s impetuous and aggressive encroachments and subsequent attack albeit being blamed for reprisal attacks too. A third community, Umuoba-Anam a buffer neighbouring community that constitutes Otu-ocha was also not exonerated for its involvement in the conflict.

## **4.9 Language Used in the Reportage to Represent Victims**

### **(i) Victimizing use of language**

**Table 4.5** shows the victimizing language (italicized in red) used in the reportage which epitomize the victim experiences of women in the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict.

### **ii) Demonizing use of language**

**Table 4.6** shows the demonizing language (italicized) used in the reportage of the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict to portray battle/frontline fighters.

### **iii) Use of emotive language**

**Table 4.7** shows the language (italicized) that highlights the emotions experienced as victims in the conflict.



**Table 4.5 Language used in representing women as victims**

Name of print media	Language used in representing women as victims
Daily Champion	*reports about claims of the “ <i>abduction of Aguleri women particularly widows for forced Marriage</i> ” on oath by Umuleri men
Daily Times	<i>Oath taking</i> by women not to divulge information
Guardian	*Reports about threats to many women in inter-marriages across Aguleri and Umuleri communities.
Punch	Fearful, helpless women selling goods in the markets
TELL Magazine	*Scores of <i>defenseless</i> wives.
The NEWS	* Mothers with children who were made <i>destitute</i>

**Source:** Author’s compilation, 2016

**Table 4.6 Language used in representing fighters**

Name of Print Media	Language used
Daily Champion	Warring indigenes, <i>kinsmen, combatants</i>
Daily Times	'indigenes in arms; fighters, <i>Combatants</i>
Guardian	Warriors
Punch	<i>Combatant</i> youths
Nigerian Tribune	Youth fighters
TELL Magazine	<i>Wide-eyed male</i> mercenaries
The NEWS	Restive youths

**Source:** Author's compilation, 2016

**Table 4.7 Language used in representing emotive experiences of women**

Name of News Media	Language used in representing emotive experiences of women
Daily Champion	trauma on families, mothers after the destruction of about 200 houses at Aguleri, an estimation of about 2,000 <i>deaths</i> (including women and children) in both communities as well the neighbouring Umuoba-Anam.
The Punch	<b>deaths and casualty</b> rate of <i>people</i> (including women and children) in both communities and Umuoba-Anam. abduction and killing of a police officer from Anam returning from his in-laws funeral at Mgbede Umuleri by armed youths from Umuleri (incidentally his in-laws) in the presence of their mighty deity <b>amidst all pleas by his wife (their sister) to spare her husband's life</b> . a high level of <i>displacement</i> of people which affect women and invariably children
The Guardian	<i>displacement</i> of about half a million people (including women and children) from their houses  <i>fleeing</i> men and women with children at their backs
Daily Times	<i>wide spread deaths</i> among whom is a 78 year old Aguleri Woman- Mrs Ugodigwe killed on August 3, 1997 at her farm in Ivite Aguleri  <i>Displacement</i> of scores of indigenes (including women and children) from places of abode
TELL Magazine	<b>Maternal mortality</b> occasioned by destroyed health and pediatric care facilities;
The News Magazine	Estimated <i>deaths of 1,000 persons</i> (including women and children) in both communities and neighbouring town of Otuocha

**Source:** Author's Compilation, 2016

#### **4.1.0 Analysis of News Items that Depict Peace/Conflict Journalism**

This section examined information about Aguleri-Umuleri conflict with indicators from the Peace/Conflict journalism (see **Table 2.3**). The perspectives revolved around focus on ordinary people as actors and sources of information, areas of agreement concerning solution, giving voice to many parties involved in conflict, being non-partisan, conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and importance of peace treaty. It was also pertinent to scrutinize if the reports avoided victimizing language by reporting what was done or could have been done by people. The coping strategies, precise descriptions of titles or names and if the emotive words were avoided by objective, non- exaggerating and moderate reportage were also examined.

##### **(i) People-oriented**

Reports about such people oriented activities entailed roles played by community people through community-based associations such as well-established traditional structures of 'Umudiana' and 'Umuokpu' (these structures interface marriage and blood relationships), Aguleri Representative Congress (ARC), Umuleri Community Association, *Ohaneze Ndigbo* and women and youth groups. The leaders of these community associations served as communal sources of information.

##### **(ii) Areas of agreement with a solution to the conflict**

The news reports were prominent about Commissions of Inquiry such as the 1995 Justice Moses Nweje commission and 1999 Justice Emmanuel Araka (a retired High Court judge) commission<sup>43</sup> that were treaties of resolution. Even though the Umuleri community suffered defeat in the 1995 conflict it still appreciated the Nweje Commission Report and the recommendations of the White Paper as a victory on its part. This is despite the state government's demonstration of little or no interest in implementing the recommendations.

There were reports about the settlement pact facilitated through Aguleri Town Hall Union meetings that included elites such as Chief A. G Umeadi and Professor Udedibie, former President of Aguleri Representative Council and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor

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<sup>43</sup> The panel of inquiry constituted by the civilian administration of Chinwoke Mbadinuju included others such as Chief S.A.G Umeadi and Chief Igwah, Chiefs Emmanuel Egwuoba, Ignatius Udalor, V.N Nwasi and Rev. Emmanuel Mmuoba.

of Federal University of Technology, Owerri. There were prominent accounts about the support of the duo at the end of the 1999 conflict for implementation of Government White Paper recommendations of the 1995 Nweje Commission of Inquiry which blamed the late Anambra Local Government Caretaker Committee chairperson, Mike Edozie, for culpable acts of omission and commission. Also, accounted for in the reports was the noteworthy role of a lone woman Mrs M.C Emengo, Chief Legal Officer, Ministry of Justice (counsel) was among the 5 commission members, peace pact of NGOs, community people and traditional rulers that culminated in the resolution of the conflict subsequently with the traditional means of oath-taking adopted at Otuocha on April 4, 2000.

**(iii) Multi-party orientation**

The news accounts captured different parties in conflict such as Aguleri Representative Council (ARC) also known as Aguleri Caretaker Committee, Aguleri Youth Association, community unions in Umuleri and elite representatives among others.

**(vi) Non-partisan**

The resolution initiatives of both conflicting communities were reported in a neutral and unbiased manner. For example, reports about investigations conducted by police and State Security Service (SSS) were subtle in indicting culprits given that there were no resultant prosecutions of perpetrators of violence and abhorrent violations. Similarly, there was disinterest in the non-stipulation of any specific punishment for late Anambra Local Government Caretaker Committee chairperson, Mike Edozie in Nweje's 1995 Commission of Inquiry. To this end, even the direction to the state government on the need to admonish his actions which the government refrained from specifying what was actually meant in practical terms was muted. In other words, the government was not really projected as appearing not to be committed to the gross violations of human rights visited on both the warring communities.

**V. War-reconstruction, rehabilitation and peace treaty**

Reports focused mainly on the establishment of Otuocha Communal Clash Victims Fund and Relief Law 1999 by Anambra State government geared towards assisting the reconstruction of conflicting communities.

#### **4.1.1 Language**

- (i) The language used in reporting activities of commissions of Inquiry, Town Hall Union meetings and coping strategies of school pupils who resorted to receiving classes under trees were devoid of bias.
- (ii) The language was non-demonizing but distinct concerning any personality being referenced (see indicator iii above).
- (iii) The language of reportage was not controversial and did not amplify issues.

#### **4.1.2 Evaluation of News Reportage on Both Conflict and Representation of the Roles of Women**

Overall, the chapter drew attention to the causes, diverse orientations, impact of destruction on community members and resolution initiatives issues about both conflicts. The reportage about women in the conflicts oscillated between their victim roles as vulnerable fleeing wives and mothers with children, helpless women inter-married between warring communities and peace supporters. The accounts about women's roles were less in-depth in contrast to the noticeable reportage of every minutiae activity of men. The prevailing stereotype roles constitute what has been described as 'gendered' because the workings of masculinities and the politics of misogyny are made visible (Enloe, 2014). The reason may not be unconnected with the supposition that reportage of these roles reflects conflict situation 'reality' when in reality what is represented is only scanty knowledge that is not only biased but distorts beyond the surface information about each role.

Admittedly, this status quo scenario prompts a few questions around: Why do the media find it 'natural' to identify women with these dual roles that do not transcend what is known?; Why is the news media besotted with such misleading images which obscures other aspects of reality? The first reason resides in the notion of "banal journalism", a form of routine print journalism often invoked to reify the deep-rooted and complex structure of values, beliefs, themes and prejudices prevailing in a sociocultural environment (Billig, 1995 cited in Allan, 2005). The second is the 'cultural' approach to the production of news (Schudson, 2000) that agrees with the fact that the shaping of

news and duties of reporters by the media are consequent upon the culture in which it operates. Journalists as subjective individuals by nature are infused with cultural strengths and weaknesses hence can scarcely remain untouched by selective constructions despite trying to be objective, impartial and fair in their professional functions.

This dilemma will persist given the tradition which regards men and women as opposites in the binary of 'us' (here, refers to the preference in the reporting of mainstream activities of men naturally dominant in society) in contrast to 'them' (here, concerns women confined to recurring predictable roles of negativity and passivity). Noteworthy, is the definitive use of terms depicting battle-front fighters as men. The explicit use of male-centric language lacked sensitivity to women, even if it is not a calculated ploy to make the roles played by women anything but passive. The linguistic representations masquerading as 'routine' journalistic practices is irrevocably masculine and is capable of naturalising sexism and exclusion that is not harmless (Arendt 1963 cited in Allan 2005). This is evidenced in the consistent non-neutral language use ritual embedded in particular sets of meanings for readers with values placed on 'one' gender against the 'other'. The consciously or unconsciously written expressions of men as active fighters convey an ideological message to readers laden with hegemonic and counter-hegemonic symbols that mirror media politics of meaning even if the claim is that they are 'neutral' or 'un-ideological (Miliband, 1977 cited in Agbaje, 1992).

Further highlighted is the conspicuous absence of women as official sources in the reportage of both conflicts. The reason for non-sourcing of 'official' information from women compared to men relied upon as acceptable official source(s) is not unconnected to the media's consideration of them as unofficial news sources who are non-objective, untrustworthy and touchy (Eldridge, 1995 cited Zotto, 2002). The ambivalent position 'victimizes' women irrespective of denials that it is rare for journalists to be openly prejudiced towards certain sections of society (Sonwalkar, 2005). The first ambivalence linked to 'official source syndrome' (Lemert, 1998 cited Zotto, 2002) brings to the fore the gendered dichotomy of the 'official/unofficial' news source which show that much of women's conflict activity is conducted through 'non-official' channels. The second issue concerns the resort to women as sources only about juxtaposition to confirm a counter-

argument with an ‘official’ government source such as traditional rulers, elite leaders, heads of community associations and government officials who are men.

Ironically, the apparent speaking for and on behalf of women in the telling of the conflict stories despite the existence of a few leading women such as HID Awolowo, *Erelu*, *Iyalodes*, *Igwe’s* wives portrayed them as victimized women who did not act but were are acted upon. Moreso, the rare resorting to women as sources (even when women as sources exist) as primary sources may not be unconnected to the crafted presumption that only men have things to say about anything that makes sense of (Enloe, 2014). Also problematic is the ‘un-naming’ of two women in the pictorial display featuring the end of peace talks with the traditional ruler-*Ooni* of Ife Oba Okunade Sijuade (who paradoxically was the only man in the committee (Guardian Newspapers Tuesday, March 28, 2000:9). The naming of men affirms that ‘*words can tell us facts*’ (Long, 2003: 609-612) however, the omissions of the names of the two women which further search revealed one of them as Chief Abiola Dosumu who incidentally is an “*Erelu whose duty is to represent the interests of the town*” (Morton-Williams, 1960 cited in Mba, 1982:4) affirm Long’s, (2003: 609-612) position that:

“... a photo is a fixed image which give the real meaning... much better than words can...in the context of news ,one no longer has the right to ignore the persons... Further, documented photograph is a very powerful thing, and its power is based on the fact that it is real because a real photograph gives a window on *history*. This is because it gets power from the fact that it represents exactly what the photographer saw through the medium of photography. The raw reality it depicts....the power of a photograph comes from the fact that a real moment in time is captured as it happened, unchanged (Long, 2003: 609-612).

Nonetheless, the proportion of erasing peace mediation roles of both women in the Ife-Modakeke conflict but for the means of photography reaffirms the argument by ABC, War photographer, Christen Frei cited in Cottle (2005) that the strength of picture(s) lies not only in its ability to evoke a sense of humanity but be powerful enough to overcome the deluding effects of the mass media as well as shake them out of their indifference. This unequal representation which encourages critique of media reportage reveals the



dilemmas and ethical difficulties behind news production. The portrayals of women is simply not a chance consequence but a phenomenon which resonates with the “power to determine the nature and direction of news content remaining firmly in the hands of men: political men who make news and media men who write about it, the latter at the invitation of the former” (Ross, 2005:3).

In sum, if the women in the conflict communities are newsworthy only in so far as their vitality is reduced to victim and peace roles and paradoxically no other pointer to ‘active’ roles as captured in chapter five, the image that will exist will be what already is. Thus, the narrative about women in both conflicts is anything but the truth because what is evident is a media that is susceptible to the familiar accusation levelled against it as being guilty of both of the sins of omission, that is, stories not covered; and the sins of commission, that is the way stories are covered (colleen, 2002)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EVALUATION OF UNREPORTED ROLES PLAYED BY WOMEN IN IFE, MODAKEKE, AGULERI AND UMULERI COMMUNITIES

This chapter provides the six (6) unreported roles played by women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities. It also critically appraised the unreported roles vis-a-vis the represented roles to expose how power operates to sustain the gendered status quo and which gender benefits from the gendered status quo.

#### 5.1 Introduction to Modakeke, Ife, Aguleri and Umueri<sup>44</sup> communities

The field study was carried out in closely-knit neighbouring communities of Ife and Modakeke (see Fig 5.1) in the inland State of Osun, one of the six states in the south-west zone<sup>45</sup> of Nigeria with associated Yoruba language, shared inter-marriages, means of subsistence<sup>46</sup> and business partnerships. My introduction to Modakeke was facilitated by Mr Adedamola Odumakin a micro-credit cooperative co-ordinator in the community who provided an introduction to Chief I.A Olaoye (the secretary Modakeke Council of Chiefs and personal secretary to the *Ogunsua* of Modakeke) who ensured the interview with the monarch Oba Francis Adedoyin, Olaogbin 1, *Ogunsua* of Modakeke was conducted. From him, other interviewees and discussants were sourced.

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<sup>44</sup> Interview, Elder Chief Aniegbuka, 2020. This Umueri community historian and chairperson insisted that his community has resorted to the use of 'Umueri' the original name of the community instead of Umuleri (with the letter 'L' added by the Europeans to become 'Umuleri' and 'Aguleri' due to their inability to pronounce the initial words) is to substantiate their claim of being the direct descent of Eri, their acclaimed progenitor. Aguleri community cannot return their name to 'Agueri' according to him because it will show who they or rather that they are not the rightful and direct descendant of Eri. This is because 'Agu' means a farm thus Agueri pre-supposes people who live in the farmland of 'Eri' people that is the Umueri (the children of Eri). This is so because traditionally, the Agueri people relocated from Igala land into Umueri farmland.

<sup>45</sup> Made up of six states namely Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oskun and Oyo

<sup>46</sup>For both communities include the cultivation of yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, vegetables, fruits, corn and beans and cash crops such as cocoa and kola nuts, forest resources (various species of wood which promote lumbering activities).

The imprint about Modakeke community's dependence on contribution of women was formed from observing the Ogunsua holding 'court' with men and women of the community (*ara-ilu*). Also, while waiting prior the interview his secretary persuasively argued that "*our mothers, wives and daughters cannot but play their parts within the family and community just like our men because the conflict had an impact on everybody*" (**KII, Man, Chief Olaoye, Secretary Modakeke Council of Chiefs**).

The introduction to the Ife community was not distinct. The secretary of Ife Development Union (IDU) also doubled as one of the many secretaries of the paramount ruler, *Ooni* of Ife, His Royal Majesty, Oba OkunuadeSijuade, Prince Gbenga Omiwole, expressed willingness for an enquiry about women of the community and further facilitated other interview sessions and focus group discussions with the community people. In this community, the statue of Moremi Ajasoro (a princess from the town of Offa married to the *Ooni* (king) of Ile-Ife), heroine of the pre-colonial era welcomes one into the palace grounds of the Ife kingdom. Moremi's significant role in liberating the Ife kingdom was evident in the sacrifice of her marriage and only son to the river god, uncovering the undercover methods used by the neighbouring Ugbo raiders who looted the market<sup>47</sup>, abducted Ife people for enslavement and inflicted fear on the people of the kingdom (Anoba, 2019). Re-affirming her role and the remarkable roles of women Prince Omiwole stated that "*the early role of Moremi and other women following in her stead in wars/conflicts charted the way for the commitment of Ife women during the contemporary episodes*" (**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and Secretary of the *Ooni* of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

Aguleri and Umueri are two neighbouring communities without a clear delineation of boundary located along the eastern bank of the Coast of Omambala River about thirty-two kilometres from Onitsha, Anambra state (see Fig 5.2). In acknowledging the roles which Aguleri women played during the conflict, the source-person Mr Makasi during the trip from Delta to the community boasted that "*the 1999 conflicts in my community highlighted the delicate, indirect and risky roles of our women*".

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<sup>47</sup> The market in Ife is considered the mother of all markets in Yoruba land due to its location within the sacred Kingdom of Ife and its commercial vibrancy.

My introduction to Umueri commenced at the palace of *Oke-Ebo II* of Umueri, HRH Igwe Sir Benneth Izuchukwu Emeka JP who warmly welcomed and assisted me with contacts particularly, that of the historian and chairperson of the community. His response concerning the role of women in the conflict was with a rhetorical question “*can there be a war/conflict without the active input of women in all aspects*”<sup>48</sup>.

These different preliminary impressions about women and their roles in the four communities foreground them as active participants which the unreported roles further confirmed.

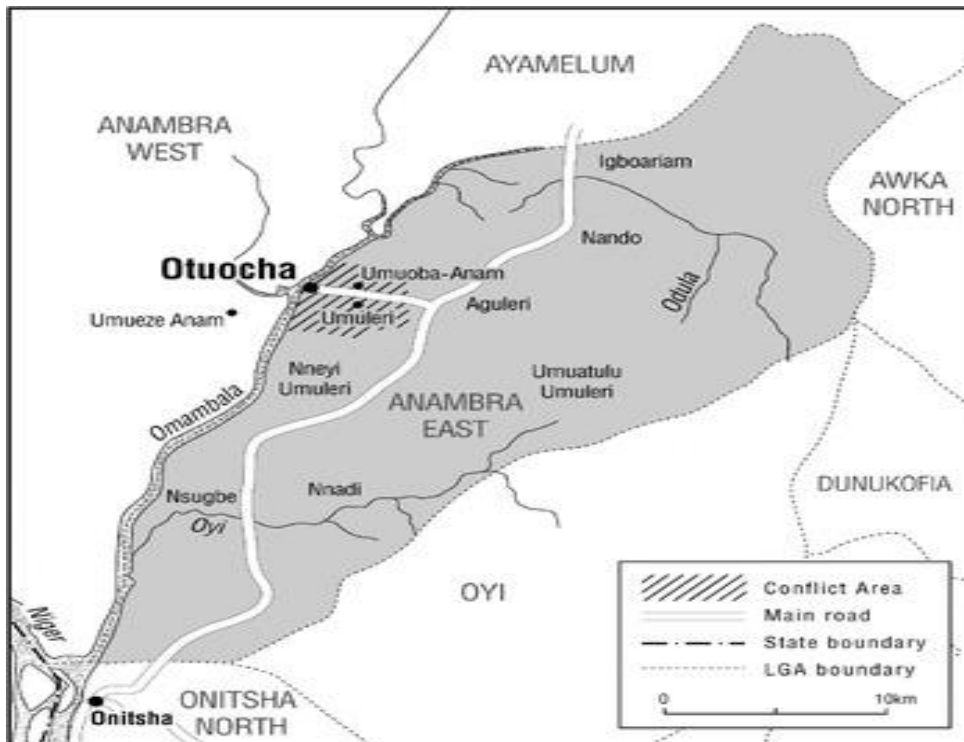
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<sup>48</sup> Formal conversation held at his Palace #Igwe Sir Ben Emeka, Shell Road, Udabor Umueri. Wednesday 19 February, 2020.



Source: (<http://caterinademediafrica.com>)

**Fig. 5.1: Map of Osun state**



**Fig. 5.2: Map of Anambra state (Onwuzuruigbo, 2011)**

## 5.2 Unreported Roles Played by Women in the Four Communities

In this section, six (6) roles which women of the four communities played are discussed.

### i) Survival role

Traditionally, ‘most women as wives and mothers put their families first’ both in peace and conflict situations. This explains their commitment to providing food even at the expense of their safety in order to solve the added dependence on them for subsistence. Precisely the role enabled those involved in the battle-front to engage in the struggle of securing their community knowing full well the home front is taken care of. The primacy of this role by women is confirmed by *Ogunsua* of Modakeke’s statement that although conflict involves everybody however, women were depended upon for continued sustenance of family and community.

What I mean is that the role of our women as mothers and wives in various ways to ensure survival through food provision is just like the fighting roles of our men at the battlefield to secure our community. So, I can boldly say that during the conflict between our community and our Ife neighbours our wives and mothers were heroines who endured the burden of the pain of sustenance in different ways that cannot be quantified. Many of them assembled at this palace expending time and energy assisting in cooking for *awon ara-ilu* (community people and the fighters who have relationships with the women –be it as husbands, sons and relations) or ensuring there was no lack of food through ensuring that food stuffs were available at the market (**KII, Man, HRH Adedoyin, *Ogunsua* of Modakeke**).

...it is our duty as women to sustain the home and community so that generations will not be wiped out. The reason is not far fetched; the children were born by us so we have to keep them alive even if in exchange for our lives. So, women assisted in the palace to prepare food which individual families came to collect including the fighters...this ensured the survival. Our daughters played complimentary roles such as fetching water, hauling firewood...(KII, Woman, Chief (Mrs) Dorcas Adedoyin, estranged wife of HRH Adedoyin, *Ogunsua* of Modakeke and battle-front shield).

Further, the valuable nature of women's contribution to 'survival' in the conflict cause was amplified by the current National President of Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU) who claimed that the women of the union that has almost two thousand five hundred members within and in diaspora contributed their dues in cash and kind thereby ensuring steady supply of food for the community and the fighters. Further amplifying this role, he stated that:

The cushioning impact of this role is evident if one recalls the 1967-70 Nigerian civil war and how the withholding of food resulted in hunger that weakened even the healthiest of fighters. This example makes it clear that a hungry group of fighters cannot win any battle. So women who through varied means amidst all odds ensure availability of food during these situations in the family, community and fighters are uncelebrated heroines of the conflict (**KII, Man, Alhaji Oke, National President of Modakeke Progressive Union**).

...our wives, mothers and sisters as members of Ife Development Union (IDU) catered for larger 'families' in this union headquarters large compound which served as the central coordinating unit for those assembling to cook. This sustained the elderly and fighters at the battle front (**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

For mothers and wives, ensuring survival for the children and family by not depriving them food even if on the run due to displacement is a continuous role unlike the men whose fighting role ends at the battleground (**KII, Woman, Chief (Mrs) Areule, Otun Iyalode of Ife**).

In Aguleri and Umuleri, interviewees validated the fact that women had to bear the extra burden of ensuring survival in the home and community.

In Aguleri, I doubt if an outbreak of starvation would have been prevented during the conflict if women did not provide food for the home and particularly for fighters of the community. A particular woman named *Mrs Ezeuche* should be appreciated for ensuring that all the children of women involved in the battle-front had constant supply of food (**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadieze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community**).



Women assembled in turns at *Amaeze*, a designated place where everyone converged for nourishment from the food cooked for the aged and vulnerable who had no one to feed them and the community fighters. Even those who were not cooking contributed financially to the food supply (**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwakasi, Teacher and Secretary Aguleri Women Development Association**).

...in any conflict scenario no individual can do two things at once such as to be at the battlefield as a fighter and be engaged at the homefront as a mother. It is clear that as fighting was ongoing, women sourced for means of survival even as if they are displaced, fleeing or taking refuge in relative's abodes(**KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, Chairperson of Umueri community and cabinet chief in the Igwe's Palace**).

Accordingly, focus group discussions from the four communities indicate the price which the survival role cost women.

...how can one even think that women would not play any role during the war? Are the fighters not from families with mothers, wives, grandmothers, aunties and sisters who will not give up sourcing for any means of survival in the crushing conflict circumstance?(**FGD, Woman, co-ordinator Micro-credit Cooperative society Modakeke Community**).

...like mother hen during the conflict women ensured the availability of the best armour which is provision of food for the home-front, cooking services at the Headquarters of our community union and other available places. This protected the community from experiencing kwashiorkor outbreak. By this I mean even with more or less no shelter due to destruction and displacement mothers obviously did not abandon their children even while fleeing a woman does so with load such as clothing's, basket which contains basic food, cooking utensils, plates...(FGD, **Woman, Mrs. Oyewande Folake, Ooni of Ife Palace worker**).

This important role as articulated in the narrative below was not without its costs particularly in Modakeke community concerning the 'voluntary' offering of oneself in exchange for money. One woman who owned up to having experienced this 'bodily gratification for money' said:

I am a Modakeke woman married to an Ife man. When the circumstance of my being a ‘non- indigene’ became a threat during the conflict, I fled to my community for safety with my three children. When the issue of feeding became difficult and life was not easy because you see almost everyone in the same condition fleeing with children, so I ‘voluntarily’ offered myself to the MOPOL(mobile police who were meant to protect us) in order to receive what they offered. It was mutual... it was a conflict situation and my husband was not aware. It was not force or rape but a free decision by me. Food was scarce...I do not regret it although I speak for myself but it happened not only to me...I am sure that there were others too... who may not be outspoken and daring to recount it... it ended with the conflict too because it is not a means of survival I am proud of ...  
**(FGD, Woman, Herbal Trader Modakeke).**

Significantly, the ‘voluntary’ body favours for monetary exchange liaison choices to make ends meet purportedly may not have been the ‘reality’ for Ife, Aguleri and Umuleri women as the under cited views reinforce:

“it is true conflict bites hard on all particularly, widows ...even those with husbands were under burden particularly as our men had little or nothing to offer for sustenance. So the ‘offering of self’... mind you (which I did not hear happened here)... as we all know may occur in conflict situations... however, we are not here to blame those involved...because it would not be fair. What it shows is what some women endured to survive hunger...  
**(FGD, Woman, Elderly Ooni of Ife Palace worker).**

...during the conflict I did not fight I was committed just like other women to cook for the fighters and ensuring their sustenance at a particular place in Amaeze called ‘camp’(a designated place of convergence for a ‘refill’ to catch breath’ and ‘calm nerves’ after fighting ). Other women (old and young-daughters, sisters) also assisted due to the rallying effort of *Ada Eri* (Chief Ejiuche Adimora), a very resourceful woman who enjoined these women who ordinarily were fearful and would easily have buckled over and fled their homes and communities to assist in cooking for the fighters and ensuring the sustenance either by fetching water, fire wood, providing cooking utensils, contributing cooking ingredients and even money(**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwaksi, Teacher and Secretary Aguleri Women Development Association**).

...if you do not have food in your stomach, can you survive, can you fight...also if you are fighting and have nobody taking care of the family how will you concentrate? A key woman worthy of mention is Mrs Ejiuche who ensured that all the children were 'fed'. Also, the *Umuada* (daughters of the community) helped by mainly cooking and contributing money from every nook and cranny to facilitate survival. Those outside the community especially Onitsha and Lagos sent food items because there was no market to buy and sell most times and paid bills for the treatment of the wounded in hospitals (FGD, Woman, Mrs Obunso, Retired teacher, Aguleri Community).

...you have to realize the community houses everyone so it is without doubt that women rallied around to ensure survival of the family and community by their cooking and the associated role of keeping children in check which is synonymous with any role played by men during the conflict ...And, we were not aware of possible trade-offs to make sure food was in constant supply...although it was not really of concern to anyone...survival was the goal(FGD, Woman, Mrs Mbukwesili, Business woman, Umuleri).

## (ii) Support roles

The roles discussed here include releasing of husbands, fathers, sons and daughters, advisory, financial, protest roles, spy collaborators and caring for the wounded. Many women openly supported their communities because no conflict account can be authentic without the back-up support roles of women. According to the *Otun Iyalode* of Ife, mothers, wives and daughters took a stand with the community by releasing their entire family to the cause.

On the one hand, releasing our husbands, fathers and sons to be fighters to secure the community at the cost of widowhood which eventually became a reality by time the conflict was resolved is an important support. And on the other, the release of our young daughters to play some routine ritual roles at the battle front surely constitutes key support roles (KII, Woman, Chief Areule, *Otun Iyalode of Ife*).

Also, almost all the interviews confirm the significant role of women as advisors because they were considered as wise, trusted and reliable allies for and against the cause of their community. An interviewee stated that all the past and recent conflicts in Modakeke community were not embarked upon without relying on the advice of our mothers, wives, married sisters and daughters. Their counsel on whether to go ahead or not with any conflict was important because any defiance to their advice would be at a grave cost to the community. And the repercussion is not worth it.

I will recount a story to explain what I mean. It concerned the defiance of a warrior of our community named Adepoju over the advice by our 'women' not to embark on a particular combat mission between our community and our Ife neighbours until some 'sacrifices' had been carried out to forestall 'a looming catastrophe'. He disobeyed and the result was his death at the battle front in the hands of the aggressors beside a river near Ifewara opposite where the contentious local government council is now sited. This is an example of the disaster that could befall our community if the advice of our women is ignored. Also, I recall that before the evacuation of our community (Modakeke) in 1909, with the great warrior Adepoju dead, his male co-fighters became afraid to forge on but for the intervention of a courageous woman known as Efuniyi. This woman organized other women who carried clubs to the various homes of these men to encourage them not to relent in fighting on. She also took them to an 'antique traditional type' drum which was stocked-pilled with both guns and ammunitions for occasions of conflicts. This role not only bolstered the courage of men who were already overwhelmed but facilitated the eventual defeat of their Ife adversaries (**KII, Man, HRH Adedoyin the Ogunsua of Modakeke**).

In Ife community, the women who served as both informal voices of support in resisting the conflict include: chief Mrs. Aramide Oladimeji (Iyalode of Ife), Chief Mrs. Obawole Areule (Otun Iyalode of Ife) Mrs. Akinpetu; market women leader (Iya Loja), late mama Kingibe who was very active all through the conflict and the women leader of the Ife Development Board (IDB) among others who championed the cause of the community as well as represented the interests of other women(**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and Secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

...since the history of the community in any conflict situation our women play key advisory roles...particularly the *Iyalode*'s (actually there are three of them namely: *Iyalode*, *Otun Iyalode*, and *Eketa Iyalode*) who offer spiritual advisory insights on the tactics to be used in battle so that their opponent does not overpower them. The *olori*, wife of the king called *Yeyeluwa* was not left out in this aspect too... (**KII, Man, Chief Akintibubo, Ife Traditional Chief**).

I do not think much head way would have been achieved in convincing the aggrieved youths to down tools if not for the constant advice from our women to them to desist from acts of violence even if they engaged in protests during the conflicts (**KII, Man, Barrister Rotimi, and Former National Secretary of Modakeke Progressive Union**).

Also, “*women of Ife community proved their sense of community and responsibility through their financial contributions which ensured survival of their kith and kin engaged in the fight for their community’s autonomy*” (**KII, Woman, Mrs Oladimeji, Head, Ooni of Ife Women Palace workers**). In Aguleri, the advisory role of women positively influenced the psyche of youths engaged in looting from the opposing community to desist from the act (**FGD, Man, Mr Chiatula, Retired civil servant, Aguleri**). In Umuleri women “*made financial contributions both individually and in groups to the common purse. I consider it a big commitment because during this time our men especially were not too forthcoming in this aspect*” (**KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, Chairperson of Umueri Community and Cabinet Chief in the Igwe’s Palace**). The writing of petitions was another form of support by which women registered their angst in connection with their communities.

According to National President of Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU), “*women were partners whenever the union wrote protest petitions and engaged in outright protest against the relocation of the local council which affected their children’s future*”(KII, Man, Barrister Rotimi, and Former National Secretary of Modakeke Progressive Union). Ife women “*identified with defending the autonomy of this community by protesting under the umbrella of Ife Development Union (IDU) against any encroachment.*” (**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and Secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

The role of women organizing as persons who identified as part of the community was affirmed by one of the oldest interviewees for this study.

Initially, we threw stones at our opponents and attacked with sticks when necessary. Infact, women picked up the stones for the men who joined us in stoning the opponents. Importantly, as a form of protest women tied their wrappers inside out (*odi aso*) aimed at registering our displeasure to the people of the village that there is no gain in fighting and exposed their breasts amidst shouts that war brings suffering on our families and that as long as it continues many lives and property in both communities will be lost (**KII, Woman, Mrs Oladimeji, Head, Ooni of Ife Palace women workers**).

In Aguleri women engaged in demonstrations to stave-off Umuleri people anytime they advanced including creating barricades at strategic points, using bamboo sticks and pelting of stones (**FGD, Man, Retired Principal, Aguleri**). Accordingly, Umuleri women claimed they were the strongest supporters of the community's cause through activities which included organizing prayer sessions and help groups in cooperation with the men to form a formidable force to resist any incursion (**FGD, Woman, Mrs Umeadi, Teacher, Umuleri**).

Within this context, is the very poignant view that:

...anybody can attest to the fact that our women were the back bone of men because for the duration of the conflict they came together and protested particularly by accosting the Aguleri intruders by pelting bottles and stones prior the joining by men who became active out of shame after the promptings of their wives and by so doing were not seen in the ilk of a saying in our community that "*if a woman does like a man, a man will do like a spirit*". This channel of resistance included ironically even women married in Agueri who supported their kith and kin from Umuleri (**KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, chairperson of Umueri community and Cabinet Chief in the Igwe's Palace**).

Another form of support was the organized capabilities of women at uplifting and maintaining the morale of fighters and their commitment to their community's autonomy.

In the four communities, there were attestations to women's commitment to this task.

“...when people are fighting at the battle front the chanting of songs by women helped them to march on and reduced depression...this is because the chanting of war songs gives morale and power to forge on” (FGD, Man, Chief Abayomi, Ooni of Ife Palace).

The *Iyalode*'s played a committed role in boosting the morale of fighters by rallying women together and enjoining them to use words of encouragement to enhance their courage (FGD, Woman, Mrs Oyewande, Ooni of Ife Palace worker).

... the fighters were made to know that we were behind all their struggles by hailing and chanting morale boosting songs to encourage them. These positive cultural cheering renditions songs were very important because if the fighters see nobody cheering them their morale will not be boosted. The cheering also was directed at community leaders too as a way of supporting their decisions concerning the conflict (FGD, Man, Mr Chiatula, Retired civil servant, Aguleri).

“Women in the different community unions assembled and showed commitment by ensuring that the morale of community fighters was not low...” (FGD, Woman, Community Member, Umuleri).

Women were very valuable spy collaborators against the ‘enemy’ in their respective communities. This surreptitious operation was rife in Ife and Modakeke communities because “... *inter-marriage relationships links between both communities...and girl-friends relationships facilitated the informant role which made one community know what the other community was planning*”(KII, Man, Mr. Bolarinwa, Research fellow).

Equally, the devastating nature of the conflict tested the will of women in Aguleri and Umuleri in serving as informants of their community. For an Aguleri interviewee, the divisive nature of the conflict between people in my community prompted me to gain access stealthily into the midst of the opposing community to gather information about their camps.

...after gaining access into the opposing community's meeting camp I not only eavesdropped in their discussions but disarmed them without their knowing.

With this strategy, at *Umuoba* I disarmed male fighters numbering more than 20 seated in groups in the compound of a man named Emezue. Similarly, at *Ihetemodu* I gained access into the midst of six men ‘unnoticed and collected their six guns and the men were looking askance but none dared to challenge me by asking how and when I came into their midst’ because I had hypnotized them. Also, I foiled attempts to infiltrate the Aguleri community through Aguleri women who were ‘hypnotized’ by their Umuleri husbands through the use of ‘traditional spiritual means’ **(KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadieze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community)**.

...women who had nerve tried particularly as their kinsmen made them swear to the oracle and threatened to end their marriage if any of them married in the Umuleri community alerted their Aguleri relations of their imminent attack...during the 1995 conflict a woman known in this community as the mother of *Ihetenze* was forced by her husband’s people (Umuleri) under oath to take a concoction to her community *Egbezulu* in Aguleri. Disguised beyond recognition she entered the village and commenced the sprinkling of the concoction medicine which would have facilitated the advancement of the Umuleri people easily into Aguleri at strategic points. They would have met us unprepared. When I got wind of it, I accosted her as a saboteur against her ‘community-Aguleri. Her eyes were filled with tears while she motioned to me she was under compulsion to obey or face the consequences. When I discerned that she was truly under a ‘traditional spiritual spell’ I comforted her with the news that there is an antidote to the spell and repercussion on her. I administered an antidote to neutralize its influence and attendant consequences on her before telling her how to make the already sprinkled concoction ineffective. The method of de-activation entailed her having to urinate on all the spots and squat on the spot for a minute or two. She complied and this eventually neutralized the potency of the concoctions and the spell. However, later I heard that on her way back she was pelted with stones and drumsticks by the fighters who were about to advance into Aguleri in tow with her upon a signal but were disappointed **(KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadieze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community)**.

“women spied on the plans of the other community on false pretences and obtained information about their



operations. The relationship of inter-marriage helped this 'information gathering' process prior and during the conflict as you can see there is no distance between both communities. In fact during the conflict instead of the marriage connection being a disadvantage, it was a plus irrespective of what was reported because women have sympathetic hearts. More so, our children had links to the *nwuye* (daughters, sisters who were now mothers and wives of opposing Umuleri community) who in Aguleri were umuada (daughters of the birth community) so they were not outright saboteurs. Some gave information that helped to foil plans” **(FGD, Woman, Mrs Obunso, Retired teacher, Aguleri Community).**

Caring for the wounded is a major support involvement of women which helped alleviate the challenges occasioned by limited medical facilities. The commitment to this role in Modakeke community is as captured in the narratives below.

“...when the conflict commenced, we bore the nursing of all involved in the fighting. We nursed emotionally, psychologically and bullet wounds... **(FGD, Woman, Mrs Adeleke, Trader, Modakeke community).**

‘...how possible can it be if our women do not get involved in attending to the wounded? If they do not who then will? Who are better nurses and native medicine providers necessary for treating wounds, even the wounds that are not obvious to the eyes, if not women?(FGD, Man, Mr ‘Senator, Civil Servant, Modakeke community)

In Ife, women were committed in varied activities such as attending to the wounded, sick and delivery process.

*Mrs. Omodobi* (now late), a matron who not only assisted unrelentingly to see to the wounded, sick and the delivery of children in the hall of this secretariat which served as a 'sick bay' as well as a temporary abode for the displaced. She also ensured the smooth coordination of the disbursement of money from the secretariat especially as at when due from the common purse. These supportive activities calmed the nerves of the male fighters and I must say it was psychological as well. The others include nurses, traditional healers, aged mothers and daughters and sisters who assisted in all capacities attending to the wounded at no cost here in Ife Development Council Headquarters(**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and Secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**)

Two interviewees who were ex-fighters succinctly captured the diverse support activities by Aguleri women which entailed buying and repairing guns, removing pellets of bullets, carrying guns for fighters, and carrying, treating and providing a guard for wounded fighters.

...I am a yam vendor and out of my proceeds, I bought three guns (and was even locked up for three days until the community secured my release when I went to relinquish them to the police after the conflict) to support the fighting. I was also engaged in repairing guns with the assistance of other women. I also removed pellets of bullets from the wounded and equally treated the wounded. Three episodes stand out my removal of pellets from wounded fighters. At *Umungalagu* and *Anam* I excised nothing less than twenty from wounded men, at *Umuoba* I excised bullets from four people and treated their wounds with the 'concoction' which not only served as a balm on the wounds but was very potent for stemming bleeding. Of note is the support role of women such as : *Chukwuto*, a woman from Ifite, who carried guns for the fighters most of the time; *Nwanne Isieke*, walked miles in defiance of gunfire carrying on her back the wounded irrespective of the weight of each to a safe abode to be treated with the 'concoction medicine'. *Ndidi Nwakaeyeoma* helped in nursing the wounded fighters and also fetched endless buckets of water amidst the heavy shooting to clean the wounded up as well as provided a sort of guard over them"(**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadioze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community**).

“The main attendants to any of the fighters who were wounded were women. In fact, when the fighters get wounded and we the men try to overlook them and move on, the women quickly come to the aid of the wounded fighters and also apply Mrs Teresa’s concoctions which immensely granted relief till the time the wounded person got better attention”(KII, Man, Mr Mbedife, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community).

### iii) Spiritual role

This activity channelled through the church, mosque and traditional rituals was played by women in the four communities. The secretary Council of Chiefs pointed out that different congregations in Modakeke community assembled for prayer sessions in the palace grounds.

...our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters who were Christians, Muslims and traditionalists assembled to pray for the autonomy of the community and the safety of the fighters both in the palace and in their various prayer places when the opportunity allowed it as the war raged. The traditional women who assembled in this palace carry out sacred acts served to enhance the effectiveness of the woman (whom no other woman accompanied) who was at the battle ground as a shield to the fighters”(KII, Man, Chief Olaoye, Secretary Modakeke Council of Chiefs ).

Ife community women strongly supported the conflict through varied forms of religious activities.

Women did not give up the responsibility of praying non-stop for the community for peace to reign. They gathered in groups offering prayers. The palace did not cease from an assemblage of women engaged in different forms of spiritual activities? (FGD, Woman, Ife Community).

Again, for the Ife people, a very vital aspect of the ‘spiritual’ role is its potency in the front line because of its aid concerning the seizing of guns and help in removing bullets from persons.

First, the ‘juju’ aided the seizing of guns from Modakeke’s by women who went to assist men in the battle-front. Second, with the help of ‘juju’ gunshot bullets were removed. I mean when there is a bullet inside the flesh they women will prepare ‘juju’ to put on that spot and the ammunition will come out from their

flesh without any operation. See, during conflict both women and men have specific roles because the community belongs to us all. So, in battle there are women that are braver than men. They go to war front alongside the men not really to fight with gun. This spiritual thing plays a key role to the success or failure of any conflict. I would have mentioned names but it is not advisable to mention names because of security reasons... war is inevitable- so if this happens and the enemy is armed with the names targeting the individuals will not be impossible...particularly as they have 'spiritual' powers. So I will decline mentioning names- not even that of men if you ask me. So to lets appreciate them as 'a group of women who were not 'ordinary' that went to the front carrying 'charms' on their body defending and safeguarding the cause of the community. This role can be understood in relation to when there is 'mutiny' both sides will be ready to face each other. So if you have power and you see your opponent oppressing your people you can't but come to assist to overcome such situations (**KII, Man, Chief Akintibubo, Ife Traditional Chief**).

Consistent with the above, are reinforcing excerpts that show front line spiritual role capabilities of adult women and young girls who were valuable contributors to the traditional spiritual aspects during the conflicts in both communities.

"...traditional women did not embark on any spiritual venture during the conflicts without the young girls who must be 'virgins' to ensure 'potency' of the sacrifices offered"(**KII, Man, HRH Adedoyin, Ogunsua of Modakeke**).

...from what I witnessed prior any combatant action, women played what I would term 'front line spiritual roles'. For instance, I witnessed on a number of occasions half-dressed women either standing on wooden mortar or advancing making incantations while the men fighters remained at the rear. This role by women is believed to clear the coast of any omen and fortifies the fighters. Another role of women in this guise was one that I witnessed at Modakeke when house(s) of the opponents-the Ife community were to be set ablaze, the women (whom I learnt must not be observing any monthly cycle so as to make the medicine potent) often led by a very old woman with little or no teeth had their clothes upturned while throwing eggs on the wall of any

house they wanted to ignite. I must reiterate that young girls played spiritual roles in either community. I witnessed the deployment of girls between the ages of 7-11 years (who should be virgins) adorned in white cloths with calabash on their heads preceding the middle-aged and old women similarly dressed in pure white or red cloths preceding the fighters. The reason for this procession was to make the fighters outing a success and for resistance to any incursion. The role of young adolescents is not only important but their purity is paramount for 'traditional spiritual prowess in conflict situations **(KII, Man, Mr. Bolarinwa, Research fellow)**.

The young girls referred to here are those yet to be married and may not necessary be virgins who carry charms...and if it is medicine prepared for the wounded they must not be menstruating because it neutralizes any charm. And, only brave youths can come out and most of the girls are relatives of herbalists who know about charms and how to defend themselves **(KII, Man, Chief Akintibubo, Ife Traditional Chief)**.

The church as an arena of mobilization for spiritual armor was another channel explored by women of Aguleri community.

...daughters of the land of both communities played important roles by assembling most times to sue for peace through prayers. You cannot underestimate the role of prayer-both the traditional and Christian way. At least you have read that the late Fr Iwene Tansi is from our community-that will show you we are people of prayer **(KII, Woman Chief Adimora, Aguleri Community)**.

...traditionally church and prayer are important to women of Aguleri so during this war prayers in church groups were not missing to protest the ills of it and for the protection of the future of our children...it is good to note the commitment to this cause by Assemblies of God women prayer sessions although there was resistance by committed women of other congregations...women participated even through traditional means... **(FGD, Woman and Man, Mrs Obunso and Mr Chiatula, Aguleri Community)**.

The spiritual prowess of women during the cause of the conflict was also reinforced in Umueri in connection to the community's spokesperson's position that "*among the composition of Umueri fighters, the men desisted from having to eat food cooked by women so as not to neutralize the charms on them*" (**KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, Chairperson of Umueri Community and Cabinet Chief in the Igwe's Palace**).

**iv) Mediation role**

The impact of attacks, captures and provocation which became everyday life of the four warring communities left many women with no option but to be involved in intervening for peace. The responsiveness of Modakeke community women according to their monarch, the Ogunsua can be likened to that of an infant who does not speak but reacts to discomfort either by crying or being aggressive in such way that will prompt the parents to attend to the desired need to ensure peace.

In essence, our wives, mothers and daughters were engaged in mediations and appeals to the aggrieved parties to sheath their swords. Networks and strategies of mediation were formed to sustain peace included ensuring that Ife women who were married to Modakeke men were not harmed (contrary treatment obtained at Ife with responsiveness Modakeke women married to Ife men) when they declined to abandon their homes and return to Ife while the conflict lasted. Ironically too, despite the discord mothers in my community were accommodating enough not to resist inter- marriages entirely because some occurred during the conflict although in secret (**KII, Man, HRH Adedoyin, Ogunsua of Modakeke**).

In addition, the majority of Modakeke Development Union women members mobilized support for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

...women's peace support utilized the Modakeke Progressive Union's committees on negotiation channels including the one instituted by the Osun state Governor Aregbesola. Also, through the platform of this union, our women linked with other community unions who helped to reach out to their mates in Ife community to sue for peace. Of note, is the maternal responsibility of advising the youths who evidently are their children (daughters, sons and relatives) to desist from acts of violence...they also engaged in peaceful protests themselves(**KII, Man, Alhaji Oke, National President of Modakeke Progressive Union**).

For Chief (Mrs) Dorcas, attending peace talks served to lend a voice to the peace advocacy of Modakeke community women concerning checkmating threat of the conflict on the wellbeing of all particularly, our husbands, children and relatives on either side of the community.

Women of Ife community identified with negotiations for peace because they had no other community to rely on. Amongst those who were active alongside others include:

... 90 year old fearless woman leader named: Chief Cicilia Aramide Oladimeji (the *Iyalode* of Ife) who was active even up to meeting with the Modakeke fighters to negotiate. She also assisted the fighters, of course with the help of other women. One of them is her 'deputy' Chief Mrs Obawole Areule, the Otun Iyalode of Ife and the chief (Mrs) Moni Ojuade (who died after the conflict), whose active mediation entailed her meeting with fighters at the battle-front(**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

In Aguleri community, women were committed to resolution of the conflict through varied channels however, mediation activities revolved majorly around Chief (Mrs) Ejiuche Adimora (also known as Ada Eri<sup>49</sup>see picture inset) for her 'to-down-tools' negotiating skills with armed youths of both Aguleri and Umuleri communities.

...madam Ejiuche from Enugu Aguleri and married at Umuagama-Aguleri breached all bottlenecks and rallied women together for the resolution of the conflict between our community people and the other community...Her role was important that she was celebrated by the late Igwe Christopher Idigo (**KII, Man, Mr Mbedife, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community**).

Ada Eri-Chief (Mrs) Ejiuche Adimora from Enugu Otu, Aguleri played a lot of role on the psyche of youths to make them surrender their arms and looted goods ensuring the restoration of peace through extensive mediation between the two communities(**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwakasi, Teacher and Secretary Aguleri Women Development Association**).

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<sup>49</sup> A title bestowed on her by the late Igwe Christopher Idigo for the outstanding mediation roles during the conflict



**Plate 5.1 Chief Ejiuche Adimora of Aguleri (Ada Eri) (with permission of the interviewee, 2012)**



The widow chief (Mrs) Ejiuche Adimora reinforced perceptions held about her caretaking interventions in Aguleri community (and by extension neighbouring Umuleri community) stating that depleted means of income, destroyed homes and strained relationships informed her resolve to make a difference.

My voluntary mediation during both conflict periods included mediating between both communities reminding them that the conflict was not between strangers but our children, their mothers, wives and husbands. Another responsibility which I took on apart from appeasing the aggrieved youths was supporting them with monetary palliatives to start business activities no matter how small as a peace settlement so that they can lay down their arms for peace to reign and putting an end to the looting and confiscation of property in either community for sale in the guise of conflict situation. This was achieved following series of meetings in both communities as well as sending emissaries advocating that no property should be transferred through water without proper clearance. This was to forestall the stealing or looting property to re-sell to either community **(KII, Woman Chief Adimora, Aguleri Community)**.

...I resolved to commit almost all my business proceeds to the cause of securing not only Aguleri community but Umuleri because the fighters were our children whose future was at stake. This philanthropic roles was not all I did helping to sue for peace. I also rallied women together creating a consciousness about the impact of the conflict on our children and marriage/family relationship as a community. The gatherings eventually paid off and women later agreed to sue for peace. This duty was not without its share of challenges because during the conflict, not only was the car I use to facilitate my business burnt alongside my house, my business steadily declined especially with the withdrawal of money to settle combatant youths in either villages so that they can lay down their arms for peace to reign as well as to cushion their urge to loot **(KII, Woman Chief Adimora, Aguleri Community)**.

And finally to the focus group participants of Umueri community, the commitment to peaceful mediation geared towards ending misery on families and rekindling community unity was achieved through various community and church women's groups.

**v) Battle front woman 'shield' role**

The dissatisfaction over conflict with the neighbouring community Ife left a particular Modakeke community woman no option to remain an outsider but be drawn into the fight. The capability of this exceptional woman named Chief (Mrs) Dorcas Adijatu Abike was to provide help through the deployment of 'juju' protection at the battlefield composed of men. The role of this lone woman, who did not directly take part in the physical fighting served as an important channel of resistance which prevented the over-run of Modakeke community in the battlefield. As *Ogunsua* of Modakeke, the supreme authority around whom the community life revolves pointed out

...I can tell you that in all the conflicts our community have been involved with other communities our women have been in the fore-front...I am proud to tell you that the 1981 and 1983 conflict battle was led by a widow who was a daughter-in-law. Again, the 1997/1998 conflict was not different because a woman named Chief Dorcas Adijatu Abike who incidentally was my wife during the conflict (we are separated now and she currently resides at Ore, Ondo state) accompanied the fighting group as their leader and as a spiritual protector (**KII, Man, HRH Adedoyin, *Ogunsua* of Modakeke**).

Furthermore, in explaining her role alongside the men, Chief (Mrs) Dorcas Adijatu Abike stated that her role did not involve actual gun fighting *per se* but entailed the fortification of the fighting troops through the use of 'juju'.

I am a professional battle-field 'front woman' because of the protection I offer during conflicts. I have this prowess because of my lineage to 'awo'a 'spiritual' dynasty with a history of courageous warriors...that is all I can tell you... I have been engaged in previous conflict situations of Ilaje and Ijaw communities which were successful because *Eledumare* (Almighty God) empowered me. In the conflict between my community Modakeke and Ife I shielded the fighters so that no gun

shot fired at them would be effective or harmful to any of them through the use of traditional spiritual means. What this means is that... at the battle front, I never shot at anybody because I was not armed for that...I did not have any gun on me however, I protected our fighters from being harmed from the pellets from the guns fired at them by our opponents-the Ife people. I was armed with traditional amulets and charms of protection ... I say no more. I will not disclose specifically how I warded-off pellets from the guns but the photograph of my regalia on my wall which I will allow you snap...( see insert of her photograph below)will show more about the traditional weapons which I go to the front with. ... I will not go into details about how I protected the fighters because you will not understand... **(KII, Woman, Chief Dorcas Adedoyin, estranged wife of HRH Adedoyin, Ogunsua of Modakeke and battle-front shield).**

...my role at the front as a 'protector' is as important in the context of the fighting as the fighters who were men. Of course, the fighters tried their best but without my support which is fortifying them traditionally it would have been tough. My presence in their midst provided the traditional protection they needed as fighters particularly as a safeguard from being shot indiscriminately and barring the take over of our community. I was the force to contend with. This explains why no woman accompanied me. It takes a courageous woman who can endure the traditional rituals and circumstances entailed in this task in order to be spiritually fortified to give protection **(KII, Woman, Chief Dorcas Adedoyin, estranged wife of HRH Adedoyin, Ogunsua of Modakeke and battle-front shield).**



**Plate 5.2: Chief Dorcas Adijatu Abike (with permission of the interviewee, 2011)**

The motivation to see an independent community confirmed two Modakeke interviewees informed the *Ogunsua's* estranged wife's valuable commitment to the community's cause.

...the 'traditional spiritual' role of this Olori...our Ogunsua's wife also known as *Iya Rushie*<sup>50</sup> among the men is equal if not more than the role of the community fighters. I do not know how to explain her role at the battle-front but without it many lives would have been lost (**KII, Man, Alhaji Oke, National President of Modakeke Progressive Union**).

...Iya Rushie is known to all Modakeke people as the heroine of the war between our community and Ife more than the male fighters because of how she spiritually checkmated the battleground calamities...(KII, Man, Mr Rotimi, Barrister and Former National Secretary of Modakeke Progressive Union).

The orientation of her role which does not include being armed with a gun is by no means secondary to the men's. This was further reinforced by focus group respondents who claimed that though her operations were done in secret, however, community people were aware of her very important involvement among the fighters.

...standing in gap to protect the fighters is engagement in fighting to me...Iya Rushie was with them all through even though we heard she did not shoot any gun but with spiritual prowess she fortified the fighters(FGD, Man, Mr 'Senator, Civil Servant, Modakeke Community)

She was not the one shooting gun but she played a direct role ...I mean Ogunsua's former wife ... I believe the Ogunsua must have mentioned her as his olori...this good mother was important in the fight as a principal companion of the fighters at the battle front' (FGD, Woman, Mrs Adeleke, Trader, Modakeke Community).

...women fighters...everyone in the community and even in Ile-Ife knew a woman was the strong spiritual force in the midst of the fighters who were men. She was even the Oba's wife...(FGD, Woman, Mrs Ajisegiri, Cocoa Trader, Modakeke Community).

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<sup>50</sup>Nickname called by her customers who rush her bean-cake (akara) delicacies

A further attestation to her role is that of the *Otun Iyalode* of Ile-Ife who claimed that “*I heard of a fearless Modakeke woman among the fighters but I do not know her name and role as I was not at the battle-front*”. The position of Prince Omiwole and Mr. Bolarinwa is that:

“I cannot affirm categorically about a woman being in the midst of the Modakeke fighters because I am stationed in Ife...although it could be a possibility given that in a conflict situation anything can play out...particularly as assisting fighters ‘spiritually’ by women particularly in my community-Ife was a strong point” (**KII, Man, Prince Omiwole, Barrister and Secretary of the Ooni of Ife and Ife Development Union**).

...as a witness to the conflict between the two communities I can say that women mostly were custodians of traditional charms which assisted the fighters during battles (**KII, Man, Mr. Bolarinwa, Research fellow**).

Further to this, were implicit corroborations by FGD participants in Ife community who agreed that a woman being among the Modakeke male fighters could not be ruled out because women indeed were the bearers of the traditional ‘charm’ which fortified and shielded the fighters in the conflict period in both communities.

...as a witness to the conflict between the two communities I can say that women mostly were custodians of traditional charms which assisted the fighters during battles (**KII, Man, Mr. Bolarinwa, Research fellow**).

#### **vi) Battle front fighters and aides roles**

In contrast to the stereotypes which puts men solely in charge of fighting are Aguleri women who were in disguised camouflage amongst the male fighters. Among them is one well-known woman volunteer fighter, Mrs. Teresa Nwigbo Amadi Uchechukwu Nwadieze (see Plate 5.3).



**Plate 5.3: Mrs Teresa N. A. U. Nwadieze (with permission of the interviewee, 2012)**

She is described by a fellow ex-fighter as ‘an exceptional asset in all the outings against the community’s opponents.’ As a matter of fact, he recounted:

She did not only participate in most outings against our opponent, she was a spy and a provider of a distinct concoction medicine which was potent when applied to the barrel of a gun in battle against the opponent. It works in such a way that once any gunshot is released and gets in contact with any person, it immediately makes the person drowsy thereby ending the gun battle for that day... **(KII, Man, Mr Mbedife, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community)**

Alongside her were a few other brave women who endured challenges of the battlefield in the defence of their community as fighters and as aides engaged in different tasks on the battleground. The patriotic women (most fighters prefer to remain anonymous) include “*Mrs. Anapuru...an Ezi Aguleri woman who joined the troop following the killing of her brother (Okengborogu) during the conflict and other women among the fighting troop*”**(KII, Man, Mr Mbedife, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community)**. When asked about her role, the widow Mrs. Teresa Nwadieze explained that the dire circumstances in her community Aguleri definitely ensured she could not just stay aloof without fighting to secure it in any way.

... My role in the battlefield apart from gun battle exchange from which I sustained these three gunshot wounds (see one on my arm and lap she pointed them out to me)...one was sustained at technical college, Aguleri during a fierce exchange between the two communities...infact, the gun battle was so fierce that I had to rush home to administer the potent traditional concoction to stem the blood flow and be alive...include sojourning into the bush with other fighters on arm bush scouting to counter Umuleri opponents and command them to retreat or have the bad fate of facing the wrath of the god of ‘*Ugwu Ani*’. Importantly, I administered a medicine which I concocted with tips from my mother to the tips of the gun so that when a shot is fired at the opponent it makes them drowsy and disarming them can be possible. Also, I repaired any faulty gun amidst any fighting outing...**(KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadieze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community)**.



The fighting activity was not without sacrifices. According to Mrs. Teresa Nwadieze, it entailed “*not drinking water from the community for the duration of the fight and just as other fighters in the troop a restraint from ‘intimate relationship’ with the opposite gender as a form of fortification in the combat activity. Any breach amounted to no guarantee at the front*” (**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwadieze, Ex-fighter, Aguleri Community**). Further, the ex-fighter recounted that other women worthy of note among the troop include the wife of Anapuru Okechi, an Ezi-Aguleri woman married at Ifite Aguleri and Chukwuto from Ifite who also assisted with weapons and others who wish to remain anonymous. Although no other ex-woman fighter was available to be interviewed however; the account of two interviewees and a focus group participant from the community debunked any doubt about the existence of women among the presumed-only-men battlefield-liners.

It is wrong to hold on strongly to the opinion that the fighters were men. I am saying this because all the fighters were in camouflage and for sure in this community there is no doubt concerning women being among the fighters (**KII, Woman Chief (Mrs) Adimora, Aguleri Community**).

...of course, particularly during the 1995 conflict women were part of the fighters. One that is known among the few women is Mrs. Teresa Nwigbo who commands the respect in the community for her role...of course there were a few others too....(**KII, Woman, Mrs Nwakasi, Teacher and Secretary Aguleri Women Development Association**).

I can tell you that our women were fighters for our community which also was composed of men’. The issue is that the painting of faces in camouflage made it impossible to differentiate between men and women. We, in Aguleri community know that among the fighters is an Avu Aguleri woman, the widow Mrs. Nwadieze and others which only the fighters themselves can talk about (**FGD, Man, Mr Chiatula, Retired civil servant, Aguleri**).

Corroborating the possibility of a few women being among Aguleri fighters, Elder Chief Aniegbuka (the Umuleri historian) recollected the “*role of a particular Mrs. Ejiuche Ilezuike (whose identity was revealed because her husband was known to some Umuleri fighters) who was a custodian of a dangerous substance which affected some of Umuleri*

*fighters” (KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, Chairperson of Umueri Community and Cabinet Chief in the Igwe’s Palace).* Further, Elder Chief Aniegbuka confirmed the role of daughters (*umu-ada*) and wives (*nyemu*) of Umuleri community who volunteered in the battlefield alongside their husbands and sons.

...our women volunteered (because the Ibo man cannot ask his daughter to go to war) to fight with the men during the 1995/1999 conflict because of annoyance over what is not right. I am sceptical in giving names...but considering it again... the brave among them that fought side by side with the men include young ladies like Miss Ekwutosi Mokwugwo and Miss Baby Ikeli...others were aides in varied assignments. I have to say that traditionally, in Igbo land women do not go to war...unless in rare circumstance where annoyance makes them to stick their neck to die for what is not right....that is how our women who volunteered (because the Ibo man cannot ask his daughter to go to war) partook in the fighting with the men(**KII, Man, Chief Aniegbuka, Historian, Chairperson of Umueri Community and Cabinet Chief in the Igwe’s Palace**).

The tabular illustration of the unreported similar and dissimilar roles played by women in both Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri Communities is shown Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1 Unreported roles of women in Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities**

Communities	Similar Role(s)	Dissimilar Role(s)
<b>Ife</b>	<p><b>Survival:</b> Primary care-givers responsible for children, extended family and sustenance of community (<i>male fighters inclusive</i>).</p> <p><b>Support:</b> wrote protest petitions and engaged in outright protest; hailing and chanting morale boosting songs for the fighters; attended to the wounded; collaborators against the ‘enemy’ community.</p> <p><b>Advisory:</b> ‘spiritual’ women, royal wives/mothers and <i>Iyalodes</i></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> contributed their dues in cash and kind which ensured steady supply of food for the community</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> prayer intercessions by Christians and Muslims and traditional practitioners</p> <p><b>Mediation</b> negotiations for peace; interventions through community based organizations, and meeting (<i>with fighters at the battle-front</i>).</p>	<p>Women traditionalists and young girls <i>juju</i> ‘sacrifice’/rites’ to enable the male fighters</p>
<b>Modakeke</b>	<p><b>Survival:</b> primary care-givers responsible for children, extended family and sustenance of community( <i>male fighters inclusive</i> )</p> <p><b>Support:</b> wrote protest petitions and engaged in outright protest; attended to the wounded; Informants against the ‘enemy’ community.</p> <p><b>Advisory:</b> by spiritual women, royal wives/mothers</p> <p><b>Financial:</b> contributed their dues in cash and kind which ensured steady supply of food for the community</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> prayers mediation by Christians and Muslims and traditional practitioners</p> <p><b>Mediation:</b> attending peace talks; interventions through community based organizations</p>	<p>Pre-battle ‘sacred acts’ by traditional women to enhance the effectiveness of the lone woman ‘shield’ at the battle ground with the male fighters.</p> <p><i>‘juju’</i> enabled shield/protector role among the male fighters on the battle-ground</p>
<b>Aguleri</b>	<p><b>Survival:</b> primary care-givers responsible for family and community(<i>fighters inclusive</i>)</p> <p><b>Support:</b> engaged in demonstrations to stave-off Umuleri opponents : creating barricades at strategic points, using bamboo sticks and pelting of stones; attended to the wounded; spies )</p> <p><b>Advisory:</b> indirect roles of mothers and wives to leaders of the community.</p> <p><b>Financial:</b> contributed their dues in cash and kind which ensured steady supply of food for the community</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> church women’s groups and traditional practitioners</p> <p><b>Mediation</b> through community based organizations and traditional structures</p>	<p>Disguised Fighter(s) and weapon-carrying aides.</p>

<p><b>Umuleri</b></p>	<p><b>Survival:</b> primary care-givers responsible for children, extended family and sustenance of community(<i>fighters in this community did not eat food cooked by women so as not to neutralize their charms</i>)</p> <p><b>Support:</b> accosted the Aguleri intruders by pelting bottles and stones; attended to the wounded; collaborators(not outright saboteurs despite being subjected to oaths)who gave information that helped to foil plans against Aguleri</p> <p><b>Advisory:</b> (in) directly as mothers and wives to leaders of the community.</p> <p><b>Financial:</b> contributed their dues in cash and kind which ensured steady supply of food for the community.</p> <p><b>Spiritual:</b> church women’s groups and traditional practitioners</p> <p><b>Mediation</b> through community based organizations and traditional structures</p>	<p><b>Fighters</b></p>
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**Source:** Authors Compilation (2020)

### 5.3 Appraisal of the Unreported Roles Played by Women

The six (6) unreported roles played by women (young girls inclusive) of Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities in the conflicts constitute a significant departure from the representation of women as playing mainly victim and peace roles (see chapter four). By volunteering, women as individuals and in groups as wives and mothers through their community associations cooking at palaces, union headquarters and food camps and the deployment of finances for the provision of foodstuffs not only countered hunger but ensured survival for families and the community. To Onwuzuruigbo (2009), although these activities reduced the effects of the conflict however, the donation, contribution of money to buy foodstuff for the fighters of their respective communities and preparation, distributing food and water to the fighters of the community by association of all married women in Umuleri, referred to as Oluokala, and Aguleri Women Development Association (AWDA) actually fuelled the war by strengthening the fighters.

The role of the women in ensuring survival beyond the boundaries of the household boundaries for the sustainability of the family and community is likened to “*war/grab bag family*” arrangements (Troger, 1986; Fitzpatrick, 1994 cited in Epp, 2002) that entails the coming together of individuals with or without a blood relationship to share housing, food, and other resources for survival under wartime conditions..

The mothering roles which entailed struggling to establish homes in the bid to survive with children not only transcends conventional understanding of the role as a mere silent and passive activity but makes it visible as an active role in the ilk of “radical motherhood”(Lewis, 1992 cited in Soiri, 1996:91). Equally, the sobering account of women in a particular community who felt that they had no choice but to engage in ‘volunteering selves’ for survival is conceived as “*survivalist compliance*”(Dunkerley, 1988 cited in Hume, 2009:55).

The mediatory roles of women include the strong, helpful role of *Ada Eri* of Aguleri who facilitated the return to normalcy for youths by supporting their return to trade financially and the *Iyalode(s)*<sup>51</sup> role as the principal spokesperson (through which the voices of women in the community were heard) in the council of chiefs for the community. Other stated functions include mobilizing women in support of wartime

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<sup>51</sup> The queen of the ladies is a title bestowed upon the most distinguished lady in town(Johnson, 1978 cited in Denzer,1998:13

campaigns and regulations and the routine business of operating the market system intermediary (Johnson, 1978 cited in Denzer, 1998). Of note too is the influential peacemaker roles of women born in the same lineage and community known as *umu-Ada* are reminiscent of the respect accorded the association in most communities in Igboland because decisions reached on any matter of disagreement erupting over important issues affecting family members or individuals in a community is binding on the affected parties (Onwuzuruigbo, 2011).

Also, highlighted are the important contributions of medicine women with healing concoction for treating the wounded and claimed potency in excising bullets without any surgical procedure in Ife and Aguleri communities. The latter resonates with other accounts of Yoruba women healers conceived as powerful with titles such as *Iya Onisegun*, the woman who makes medicine (Akintunde and Labeodan, 2002). And in Igbo land/traditional society, *dibia-Ogwu* (doctor of medicine) of which includes the herbalists: *Dibia-Ogwu-ahihia* who cures by the use of medicinal herbs and *dibia-Mgborogwu* who cured by the use of plant roots (Aligwekwe, 2008:389). Within such terms, the Aguleri woman Mrs Teresa Nwadieze accumulated the three forms of *dibia*, that is, her potent traditional medicine concoction which could stem the blood flow of injured fighters and be applied to the tip of guns to cause drowsiness and hence could be all at the same time: a *dibia-Ogwu*, *dibia-Ogwu-ahihia* and *dibia-Mgborogwu*.

Underscored in this chapter are other intrinsic roles which include stave-off demonstrations by Aguleri<sup>52</sup> women against Umuleri people anytime they advanced by creating barricades at strategic points and women of Ife who lined the streets dressed in tattered clothes and wrappers turned inside out chanting songs of support for the fighters and organizing protests for or against actions bordering on the exclusion of its people from the territory they already occupy or an attempt to transfer part of their land to their neighbours.

The discussion also focused on women's necessary and sacred assemblage as Christians and Muslims to restore balance and harmony between the physical and

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<sup>52</sup> The organizational role of these women is reminiscent of protest march roles of 1929 by Aba women in answer to British demands that they should pay tax that spread from Owerri in Eastern Nigeria to Calabar irrespective of the fact that they did not even speak the same language, and it included all the towns in the area to Onitsha by the river Niger and went further across the river to include those from the Asaba area (Emecheta cited in Petersen, 1988).

spiritual worlds. Noteworthy among these rituals, is the traditional religious aspect evidenced in the deployment of ‘cosmic spiritual prowesses’ in warding off gunshots from Ife aggressors by Modakeke’s Mrs Dorcas Adedoyin (*Iya Rushie*) lone role amidst Modakeke fighters, the use of ‘juju’ in seizing guns from Modakeke’s by Ife women and the excising of bullets without any operation. Similar to this, is the ‘spiritual buffer’ of traditional concoction applied to the tips of the guns of Aguleri fighters which makes their opponent drowsy when shot at on one hand, and on the other, is its potency in excising bullets. In addition to this, is Mrs Nwadieze’s ‘spiritually assisted’ claim of foiling attempts to infiltrate Aguleri community by ‘hypnotized’ Aguleri women married to Umueri men and the allusion by the Umueri Historian that fighters did not eat food cooked by women so as not to neutralize their ‘charms’.

Of note also, within the ‘spiritual’ role narrative is a significant number of virgin girls or unmarried young women who were strategic harbingers of charm at the frontlines. The reality of this spirit-empowered rituals or sacred roles played by unmarried young girls and virgins aged between 7-11 years adorning white cloths with calabash on their heads preceding middle-aged and old women similarly dressed in pure white or red cloths preceding the fighters as fore-bearers or ‘front line spiritual aids’ is the fact that their roles effectively disempowered the opponent.

Similar to the above, is the “‘spiritual buffer’ role of (king) mother Idia of the Benin Kingdom, credited for assisting her son, Esigie’s (who controlled Benin City) to fight against neighbouring Igala contenders who wanted to control the Benin northern territories following the death of Oba Ozolua. The (king) mother Idia was reported to have used mystical powers and medicinal knowledge to mobilize an army which helped defeat Arhwaran<sup>53</sup> on the battlefield, conquered the Igala, re-established the unity and military strength of the kingdom and enthroned Esigie as the 16th Oba(Bortolot, 2003).

The potency of this spiritual force was alluded to by Albert, (2001:120) thus “ some of the so-called “grassroots’ or “ordinary” people who are the unseen hands behind many of the community conflicts although may not have any social, economic or political importance, nonetheless play important roles as war commanders and charm

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<sup>53</sup> One of mother Idia’s sons based in an equally important city of Udo) in dispute with Esigie over succession.

makers”. The scientific realities of this ‘spiritual powers’ used to fortify the woman and by extension, the young girls find justification in Nwolise’s, (2012a:2 cited in Nwolise, 2013:12) position that “...the fact that the microscope of science cannot as of today capture the spiritual force or element...juju,... and others, does not mean that these things do not exist. It does not also mean that people and nations do not on daily basis contend with these forces...” Again, he reiterated that “*it is important to understand the spiritual not only because it is superior to the physical, but also because it positively reinforces the physical, and can also endanger the physical under certain circumstances...*” (Nwolise, 2013:17).

The role of disguised women among the fighters of Aguleri and Umueri communities and those who served as aides of fighters, assisting in weapon carrying, guarding the wounded and serving as spies confirms Onwuzuruigbo’s (2009) position that as the war progressed few young and courageous women were used to transport and deliver arms into the communities while in Aguleri some women actively participated in the 1999 war by joining the fighting force of Aguleri. The women fighters in disguise is amply illustrated by De Pauw (1998); Lovenduski and Karam (1998) that women have fought in wars disguised as men and become indistinguishable from them due to the camouflage. In other words, by relinquishing their gender and becoming androgynous fighters they become “honorary men” or “surrogate men” thereby eschewing “feminine” behaviour or being involved in covert operations to gain information.

Importantly, the evidence of this role confirms the fact that “*not much academic work has been done about fighting...in communal conflict*” (Peters, 2003:151 cited in Imobighe, 2003). Further, the volunteering aspect of this role by women of these communities refutes the notion of their involvement as one occasioned by “manpower” shortage or the commonly held view that their service is a “*camouflage to women’s liberation*” (Enloe 1983:6). The implicit point here, as political scientist Jean Elshtain, 1987 posited that “over time women have always participated in wars, in whatever ways their societies permitted: as resistance fighters, defenders, labourers in the workforce to produce war materials, as supporters of their warrior husbands and sons...they have been all too willing to join in the glorification of their land above family” (cited in Tavis, 1992:67).



The allusion to the participation of women as fighters and defenders is reminiscent of Queen Amina<sup>54</sup> of Zazzau of pre-historical Nigeria whose exploits in battle as the leading warrior in the Zazzau Calvary became a force to reckon with. Her brilliant military strategist roles include making neighbouring rulers her vassals, introducing metal armour to her army and useage of earthen walls<sup>55</sup> to fortify all her camps(Pulse, 2020).Finally, these ‘unreported’ roles encompassing compassion, spirituality, cooperation, pacifism and harmony show that women “*were not just acted upon but were actors*” (Enloe, 2014:35).

#### **5.4 Analysis of the Gendering of Power between the Represented and Unreported Roles**

Beyond comparing the representation of the roles women played in both conflicts in the print media and discovering unreported ones (a justification for questioning the former), feminist curiosity analysis required the following: One, unravelling the underlying meanings of the victim and peace role representations. Two, explaining how the reported roles determine the perception of women as participants in the conflict and what women think about such perception.

The provision of answers to the questions required addressing: ‘What forms power takes’ in determining the representation of the roles played by women in the print media? ; ‘Who wields the power that determines representation?; how is the power (camouflaged in a way that does not look like power) wielded to make stereotypical roles of women visible and the unreported roles that women played in the four communities invisible? The reference to power here, concerns the ideological and symbolic components of power relations that shape most of the taken-for-granted representations that define reality as regards the perception of victim and peace roles as ‘normal’ to women.

Admittedly, people would prefer not to think it takes power to represent women mainly as ‘helpless wailing/fleeing victims of displacement, forced or terminated

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<sup>54</sup> Amina ascended the throne in 1576 after her brother Karama died after ten years. She was on the throne for 34 years and was successful in many military campaigns.

<sup>55</sup> The walls known as ganuwar of Amina can still be seen in Zaria, a metropolitan city in Nigeria which lies within four local government areas in Kaduna State, the capital city to the Zazzau Emirate Council. Zaria is one of the original seven Hausa city-states and a major city in the state.

marriage amongst others in both conflicts. The query concerning these conforming portrayals of women is not to negate the fact that women constitute a high percentage of conflict victims but to reiterate that negative stereotypes of helplessness and powerless make readers feel depicting women as passive victims rather than active participants in the conflicts is natural and normal. This victim perspective makes it hard to see beyond the surface and acknowledge other roles that women must have played within the victim role circumstances. One-dimensional representation of women as victims also deprives the public of knowledge concerning the resourceful and resilient roles by women above.

Similarly, the non-inclusion of women as facilitators, and resource persons in peace panels, workshops/training is linked to the wielding of power. The gendered power at play when women are hardly resorted to as 'serious' 'official' sources in conflicts presupposes the consideration of women as eye-catching photo images who do not need interviewing. The reason is that the media considers them as unofficial news sources who are non-objective, untrustworthy and touchy (Eldridge, 1995 cited Zotto, 2002; Enloe, 2014). This non-sourcing of 'official' information from women compared to men who are relied upon as acceptable "official source(s)" (Lemert, 1998 cited Zotto, 2002) 'victimises' women irrespective of denials that it is rare for journalists to be openly prejudiced (Sonwalkar, 2005).

The undercut regarding the consideration of women as sources only concerning juxtaposition to confirm a counter-argument with an 'official' government source such as traditional rulers, elite leaders, heads of community associations and government officials who are men reinforces the gendered dichotomy of the 'official/unofficial' news source which shows that much of the information about women's conflict activity is collected through 'non-official' channels. The use of male-specific language to depict fighters in both conflicts as men while women fighters among the presumed-only-men battlefield-liners/fighters were made invisible is not a chance consequence. Rather, it is a power-infused contrivance conveyed through ideological messages to readers laden with hegemonic...symbols that mirror media politics of meaning even if the claim is that they are 'neutral' or 'un-ideological' (Miliband, 1977 cited in Agbaje, 1992).

In reality, the politics involved in making visible roles played by a particular gender is reinforced by news frame sponsors such as journalists, editors and owners who select and construct stories in news columns using words, phrases, and images with ideological expressions that are by no means neutral (Hall 1997 cited in Zotto 2002). In other words, gendered and masculinity-affirming representations do not take place in the abstract. Reportages of news are determined by the 'cultural' approach to the production of news (Schudson, 2000) which agrees that the shaping of news and duties of reporters by the media is consequent upon the culture in which it operates. In this context, journalists as subjective individuals by nature are infused with cultural strengths and weaknesses and hence can scarcely remain untouched by selective constructions despite trying to be objective, impartial and fair in their professional functions.

This position absolves women reporters blamed for making men more visible (in contrast to women), because the dominance of men as active in most of the portrayals draws from the sexism in society, just like every stereotype about women. Thus, reinforcing instead of subverting these forms of gendered portrayals in the print media requires alliances which include authors and reporters and a combination of willing allies such as media producers/executives, publishers holding and promoting patriarchal<sup>56</sup> ideas. The point here, is that the manipulation of patriarchal ideas legitimised by certain kinds of masculinised standards, organizations and actions expose "*the power to determine the nature and direction of news content is firmly in the hands of men: political men who make news and media men who write about it, the latter at the invitation of the former*" (Ross, 2005:3).

For feminists, the point of this analysis is not to paint a pessimistic picture of media's influence but reiterate Lindner's (cited in Redfern and Aune, 2010) concern that exposure to gender role stereotypes...often influences gender-stereotypical attitudes' which affect people's psychological well-being and encourage the seeing of the differences as 'real', essential in nature and as a way gender can be learned. In this

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<sup>56</sup> No patriarchy is made up of just men rather the patriarchal systems have been so enduring, so adaptable, precisely because they make many women overlook their own marginal positions and feel instead secure, protected, valued. Thus, patriarchies-in all social systems may privilege masculinity, but need the complex idea of femininity and enough women's acceptance or complicity to operate and sustain their gendered hierarchies (Enloe,2004).

light, the depiction of women either as objects of power in peace activities or as helpless victims that do not go against prevailing standards in society should not be seen as objective facts simply because they are reported in the news media given that reporters have always both reflected and reinforced attitudes and practices of the society.

Thus, the aim should be prioritising or analytically making visible the diverse roles of women in conflict or post-conflict situations. This is dependent on changing the presumption of publishing outlets that consider that which is masculine most deserving of being made visible and prioritized. The position of this study is that authors and reporters (both men and women) should take stock of their writing and reporting practices and evaluate how they either support or subvert mainstream representations. In otherwords, publishers should uphold fair and balanced representation of roles in conflict in a way that transcends the depiction of women merely as victims at the bottom of the hierarchies of reportage.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Summary

This comparative study examined print media representation of women's roles in the Ife-Modakeke (1997-2000) and Aguleri-Umuleri (1995-1999) conflicts vis-a-vis their discovered unreported roles in the conflict. As previously stated, the objectives were to assess the extent of reportage of the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts, identify the dominant representations of women's roles in the reportage of both conflicts, examine the language used in the reportage of both conflicts which obscured other roles of women and discover the unreported roles played by women in the four communities.

John Galtung's War/Violence and Peace/Conflict Journalism Theory guided the study, while the case study design was utilised. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from KIIs. The total of (15) respondents who participated in the KIIs included one traditional ruler and five chiefs, two ex-fighters, two elders, three union leaders, one teacher and one researcher for their knowledge and roles in each conflict. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) held in Ife, Modakeke, and Aguleri-Umuleri communities.

##### **(i) Extent of reportage for Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts**

A synthesis of two hundred and ninety-one (291) news items were sampled from the selected five (5) newspapers and two (2) magazines for the Ife-Modakeke conflict (see Fig 4.1) and one hundred four (104) news items for the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict (see Fig 4.3) totalled three hundred and nine five (395) news articles.

**(ii) Dominant representations of women's roles in the reportage of both conflicts**

The prevailing representations of women's roles in both Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts consisted of victim and peace roles. The representation of women as victims of displacement, prostitution, disemboweling, rape, brutal attack, arraignment and summary termination of marriages in the Ife-Modakeke conflict was elicited from language used in the reportage shown in Table 4.1 and Table 4.3 The representation of women as victims of displacement, abduction, oath taking, trauma, maternal mortality and as fleeing victims with children in the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict was drawn from the language used in the reportage of their victim experiences shown in Table 4.5 and Table 4.7.

Consequent upon the above, it is pertinent to clarify some issues concerning the fixed social reality of the victim stereotype projected to the public. First, while the victim roles galvanized public sympathies and had the potential to prod consciences and help bring to public notice the devastating (social) injustices that women experienced, it was a one-dimensional perspective. Second, it did not deepen the understanding regarding embedded roles within the victim experiences that denote experiences of harm in the form of physical injury, expressive suffering, trauma, pecuniary loss or substantial impairment of human rights (Soyinka-Aiyewe, 2004). Three, in many ways, there was a foreclosure of a myriad of resourceful and resilient roles played by women as 'survivors' of the many dishonouring and humiliating experiences in the conflict situations.

At this point, it is important to draw some distinctions from the victim depictions of women as "*Wailing/Displaced/Fleeing*". Phrases such as these expectedly convey to the public the helplessness and weakness of women as victims in both conflict situations. However, what the reports do not highlight is what it takes for a woman as a 'displaced' mother or wife 'wailing' and 'fleeing' with young children huddled by their side or strapped to their backs or seated on their laps suckling at their breasts as well as with head-load (often containing cooking pots, plates, bundles of food and clothes), escaping a conflict situation to reside in tent camps or at relations and friends abodes may have endured to survive. Paradoxically, the role of mothers and wives continually "mothering/nurturing" children that transcends instinct but rooted in the

intense physical and psychic rite of passage of pregnancy and childbirth (Rich, 1976) is considered merely as “*private*”, “*domestic*”, “*local*”, or “*trivial*”(Enloe 2014).

The phrases: ‘*Summary Termination of Marriages*’ of women, who inter-married across Ife and Modakeke communities, and “*abduction of Aguleri women particularly widows for forced Marriage*” though seem different however, are intertwined in its simplistic portrayal of the women as victim conquests in both conflict. For the former, what it did not make clear is the resilience or the coping strategies adopted by the women involved regarding the painful weighted choices they had to make concerning either having to leave their marriages, give up or flee for their lives with children probably branded ‘enemies’. Also, beyond the denotation of helplessness in the latter phrase is the obscuring of probable ‘enforced’ roles the women may have been compelled to do in the ‘ego-stroking wife roles’ for the Aguleri men. One of the roles could be compelling women to serve ‘behind the scene’ as ‘forced spies’ helping to further the conflict by getting security information from their relatives (inclusive of children, if any) or dousing it in either Aguleri or Umuleri communities given their long-standing tradition of marriage.

This position which shows that women may have served as spies albeit forced, is opposed to their representation as victims who were passive was not assumed *a priori*. Rather it resonates with Onwuzuruigbo (2011:282-583) position that:

...the burden of women during the 1999 clash was complicated by the existence of marriage relationships between indigenes of Aguleri and Umuleri. The two communities have a long-standing tradition of marrying among themselves...wives of Aguleri men are indigenes of Umuleri, just as many women who are mothers and wives in Umuleri come from Aguleri. At the height of the crises, these categories of women were accused by their husbands' kinsmen of divulging vital security information to their parents, brothers and relatives in either Aguleri or Umuleri. And, to discourage their being viewed and treated as saboteurs and regain the confidence of their husbands' kinsmen, the women were compelled to take a traditional oath of secrecy irrespective of their religious persuasion...

Thus, for a ‘forced woman’ to refuse to do the bidding of an abductor or to escape from the confined situation cannot be assumed.

The phrase: ‘*young ones resort to prostitution*’ failed to pay close attention to the living conditions of the ‘young ones’ with no specified age range in the conflict situation and did not highlight that the act could not have been voluntary but coerced. Thus, even if a ‘young one’ can be said to agree, it is not to be deemed consensual as in prostitution but to be conceived as a crime or “*an unconscionable atrocity*” (Nordstrom, 1997:38). Besides, prostitution refers to “*a woman who is performing commercialized sex with paying male customers*” (Enloe, 2014:76) thus making it “*a consensual agreement: a business transaction*”. Further, a ‘young one’ as a ‘youth’, is a term which is not reducible to any definition or label by even international organizations. Although the United Nations and World Bank consider individuals under the age range of 15-24 as youths, World Health Organizations defines a ‘youth’ as being in the age range of 15-34’. Conversely, within this context, the reportage of ‘young ones’ under the age range of 15 in a conflict situation as victims of prostitution is questionable because youngsters cannot engage with adults on an equal basis for any sexual exchange even within a conflict situation for monetary sustenance.

The peace role representations of women in the Ife-Modakeke conflict are illustrated in Fig 4.4 while reports about the peace roles for Aguleri-Umuleri conflict (no tabular depiction) revolved around peace activities of Aguleri Representative Congress (ARC), Umuleri community-based associations, traditional structures of ‘Umudiana’ and ‘Umuokpu’ which interface marriage and blood relationships, *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*<sup>57</sup>, women and youth groups. Also, reported is the lone role of Mrs M.C Emengo as Chief Legal Officer, Ministry of Justice amidst five members<sup>58</sup> of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry instituted to conduct investigation into the aftermath of the 1995 crisis by the then Governor of Anambra State.

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<sup>57</sup>This is a pan-Igbo cultural-political organization founded by renowned Igbo political, intellectual, business and cultural elite as a platform for redefining the Igbo position in national affairs. It has among its 7 aims and objectives in Article 2 of its constitution “...to settle intra-Igbo disputes and promote peaceful co-existence with other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria (Ojukwu 2012:96 and 113). For example, Ibeanu’s, (2003:213) citation of the names of persons from *Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo*, the first civil society initiative to resolve the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict that met at Enugu in April 1999, on the conflict and on 20 April 1999, issued a communiqué was signed by Chief K. Onyioba, Professor Ben Nwabueze, Chief Austin Ezenwa, Chief Desmond Oguguo, Chief L. Ejinkonye and Chekwes Okorie.

<sup>58</sup> Members of the commission, headed by Justice Ayo Irikefe were Hon. Justice Moses O. Nweje (Rtd), Chairman, Chief B.C. Odenigbo, and Mr S.S.C Oguagha as members( Obiakor, 2016).



The women-themed peace role representation of women in the Ife-Modakeke conflict illustrated in Table 4.4 was distinct. Reports concerning their roles in diverse peace making initiatives which included financial and ethical efforts through various non-governmental organizations such as the Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Office of the Transition Initiative (OTI) were indistinct. That said, if one fails to pay close attention, the women-themed representations and camouflage about roles of women in the non-governmental organizations would seem ‘normal’ and miss that there far more issues (concerning the politics of who wields power and for what ends concerning the reportages) than the conformist news reports imply. Consider, for instance, the composition of a lone woman, Kemi Fawole, among the men who petitioned the government to broker peace (see Nigerian Tribune, Table 4.4) or the inclusion of only *Yeye Oba of Ife*, Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo in the peace meeting with the President, traditional rulers and other Yoruba leaders <sup>59</sup>(see Nigerian Tribune, The Punch and the Guardian, Table 4.4).

People would prefer to think that the ‘obligatory’ insertion of a quintessential lone <sup>60</sup> woman among a group of men is a cultural<sup>61</sup> symbol: the story of one speaking to the ethos of war., not a political (choice): used as policy justification, propaganda and nationalistic declaration of loyalty (Enloe 1997: 2014). And to imagine that the ‘un-

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<sup>59</sup> President Olusegun Obasanjo, *Ooni* of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuade, and other Yoruba leaders: chief Ayo Adebajo and Otunba Theophilus Owolabi Sobowale Johnson and Chief G.O.K Ajayi(The Guardian, Tuesday, March 28, 2000:8).

<sup>60</sup> This “rhetorical add women and stir” (Hume, 2009: 12) situation was also evident in the ratio of representation between the male and female participants in joint training meeting with a broad spectrum of stakeholders “young and old, literate and illiterate, urban and rural within and without Ile-Ife... with youth leaders commenced with participants which included *only one female* and actual militant/combatant groups in both communities who fought the ‘war’ (Albert, 2001a:65-74). The meeting focused on forgiveness, reconciliation, mediation and ‘transformative leadership’ aimed at changing unjust social relationships by focusing on how human perceptions, communication and structural problems which produce a conflict situation can be addressed and a long-term development agenda causing a change through empowerment in the individuals involved in the conflict(Burgess and Burgess, 1997:285-286 cited in Albert, 2003:28) (Burgess and Burgess, 1997:285-286 cited in Albert, 2003:28). The workshop organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Office of Transition (OTI), neutral ‘third party intervention’ mechanism (achieved a great measure of success in controlling the spiraling out of control of the Ife-Modakeke conflict) that supposedly had ‘gender representation’ as one of the four criteria taken into consideration in choosing the participants for the joint training”(Albert, 2001a:73) provided the first opportunity for so large several people from the two sides to meet face-to-face since the commencement of the ‘war’) with the youth leaders.

<sup>61</sup> Enloe, (2014:263) maintains that “imagining anything as “natural” takes it out of the realm of politics”.

naming' of 'two women'<sup>62</sup> in the pictorial display featuring the end of peace talks while the Ife traditional ruler and other male members of the committee were named<sup>63</sup>(see Guardian representation in Table 4.4) is merely a social, even aesthetic, matter, not a political choice. In reality, it is political because "*one common journalistic trivializing device is using a photograph to illustrate a news story*" (Enloe, 2014:18).

Many women and men would prefer to think that the brokered reconciliation moves by Presidential Conflict Reconciliation Committee chaired by National Reconciliation Committee (NARECOM), Chief Alex Akinyele and the Peace Committee<sup>64</sup> chaired by Bishop Gabriel Ojeleke Abegurin of the Osun State's Catholic Diocese and former vice-chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the South-West Zone, Commodore Olabode George and other efforts to douse flame of the community feud which included federal government male delegates<sup>65</sup>, are immune to political manipulation. Yet, the tendency is that many gender-incurious commentators underestimate the power it has taken to create and perpetuate the masculinized peace negotiation account in the print media.

It is also not incidental that the majority of the leaders of community-based unions are men<sup>66</sup> and all-male facilitators<sup>67</sup> for the peace transformation leadership

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<sup>62</sup> Further search revealed the name of one as Chief Abiola Dosumu, an "*Erelu* whose duty is to represent the interests of the town"(Morton-Williams, 1960 cited in Mba, 1982:4)while the other remain unknown.

<sup>63</sup> *Ooni* of Ife Oba Okunade Sijuade and other men (Guardian Newspapers Tuesday, March 28, 2000:9).

<sup>64</sup> Traced the immediate cause of the Ife-Modakeke crisis to the creation of Ife East Local Council in 1997, indicted the then state Military Administrator, Col. Anthony Obi (rtd.) for relocating the headquarters of the council from Enuwa, Ile-Ife to Modakeke and later Oke-Ogbo, as being responsible for the violent reactions in the area and subsequently advised that an area office of Ife East Council be created in Modakeke to serve the interest of the people, while the council's headquarters remained in Oke-Ogbo.

<sup>65</sup> such as Chief Bola Ige, and chief Afolabi, former minister of External Affairs, Prof Bolaji Akinyemi, former governor Olabisi Akande and his deputy, Otunba Iyiola Omisore and commissioners, former governors of Osun and Kwara States, Otunba Isiaka Adeleke and Cornelius Adebayo.

<sup>66</sup> The initiatives of different parties such as Mr Funso Adewale, coordinator Modakeke Youth Vanguard (MYV), Chief Akin Adetumbi, leader Great Ife Movement (GIM) also known as Ife Youth Group and Mr Dauda Ijiyode, executive secretary Ife Development Union (IDU). Others include Mr Lawrence, leader Ife Youth Movement (Ife Youth for peace) and Chief Akinyemi Atetedaye, acting president Ife Action Council (IAC). And, Mr Wole Animasaun, spokesman Modakeke Youths Movement(MYM), Mr Richard Yoade and Mr J. A. Akande(active members) and Dr Wale Fadare, National president the Modakeke Welfare Council(MWC)/Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU) (The Punch, March 25, 2000).

<sup>67</sup> Mr Dauda Ijiyode and Mr Agbe for the Ife and Chief Toriola and Alhaji Tajudeen Oke for the Modakeke" (Albert, 2001a:69). Similarly, the resource persons for the USAID/OTI joint training on

workshop/training. Similarly, the ratio of representation at the formal inauguration of the Ife-Modakeke Inter-Community Peace Advocacy Committee<sup>68</sup> was composed of a “Dr. (Mrs.) Shan Hayatuddini, General Manager, out of the seven (7) males<sup>69</sup> representatives of USAID/OTI Nigeria, a chief (Mrs.) Anolola, Iyalode of Ife out of the 14 male representatives<sup>70</sup> of the *Ooni* of Ife and a Mrs Omolayo A. Duduyemi out of twenty-four male representatives” (Albert, 2001a:80-84). These “*rhetorical add women and stir*” (Hume, 2009: 12) exposes masculinized status, and masculinized control (Enloe, 2014).

Further, to foster certain bases of ‘social order’, the constituted stakeholders of Peace Committees/ commissions/ panel of enquiries were men<sup>71</sup> except for a peace education programme organized by a woman named “Judith Asuni whose “exemplary” organization of a peace education programme for youths in both Ife and Modakeke included women participants from both communities and decimal number of women in other committees.

The core lessons of this finding are two-fold. One, at the core of these mainstream, seemingly “inclusive” peace role commentaries is the taken for granted involvement of women in conflict transformation trainings. As Albert, (1996 cited in Albert, 2003:57) maintains “...women...are hardly involved in peace processes. This non-inclusive practice needs to be discouraged. The first step is to provide them with the opportunity of training in conflict transformation”.

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forgiveness, reconciliation, mediation and transformative leadership facilitated by CRESNET was directed by Dr Isaac Olawale Albert, with the assistance of Honourable Akin Akinteye. The other resource persons were Barrister Rotimi Vaughan, Professor Sola Olowu, Dr Wale Oyedele and Rev. Akin Akinyemi. The project assistants were also men: the four Ife and Modakeke leaders that facilitated the earlier...meetings’ (Albert, 2001a:73).

<sup>68</sup> Established to resolve the conflict by consolidating the gains of the ‘peace intervention training’ and keeping faith with the agreements which include peacebuilding and ‘total reconciliation of all aggrieved parties of the two communities.

<sup>69</sup>Donald M. Krumn, Acting Deputy Country Director, Carmenza Becerra, Senior Grants Manager/Louis Berger Representative, Chom Bagu, National Coordinator and Joseph Shopade, Programme Manager.

<sup>70</sup> HRH Oba James Adedokun Adegoke, Apetu of Ipetumodu, HRH Oba TiamiyuAdegbite, *Olubosin* of Ife, Chief Yaya Elugbaju, Obajio of Ife, Chief C.O Awoyefa, Laadin of Ife, Chief Saka Odebola, Eredumi of Ife, Chief A.O.E. Fadiora, Obalaaye of Iraye, Ife, Chief Makoronwale, Araba Agbaye, Ven. Ayo Banmosun, Chairman, C.A.N. Ife territory, Oba(Dr.)Abioye Oyeniyi, Olumore of Moro-Ife, Catholic Bishop of Oshogbo, Chief Tiamiyu Kolawole, Jagun of Modakeke, Chief Bisi Olarewaju, Chief Imam of Ife and ASP Ayodeji Oluwole.

<sup>71</sup> namely chief Alex Akinyele-led committee, Honourable Justice Kayode Ibidapo Obe’s Judicial Commission of Enquiry, Commodore Olabode George’s led committee, the peace initiative of the traditional rulers Olayiwola and Okorie, 2010; Folami and Olaiya, 2016:5).

The reason is none other than that

...some international development agencies in Nigeria are already providing this kind of opportunity do so by inserting ‘gender sensitivity’ clauses in the funding agreement they sign with Nigerian non-governmental organizations working in the area of women's interests. What we have noticed however is that most of these NGOs do not effectively implement the gender sensitivity aspects of such agreements. Only a few women are involved in the many conflict transformation projects done across the country even though they are the primary targets of such exercises. Even where women are trained, they are hardly empowered to see what roles they should play in conflict management. They are only taught what “anybody” could or should do. For this reason, the few women that are trained often find it difficult to apply such skills. They are hardly involved in peace processes because of their supposed gender-related handicaps. This trend needs to be changed.... They should insist, whether individually or as groups, on being involved in peace processes. Male leaders should also learn to involve women in peace processes they are involved in. That is the only way to build a balanced world” (Albert, 2003b cited in Albert, 2003:57).

Two, the need to pay serious attention to the many wielders of power (for instance, who determines all-male stakeholders, facilitator) and for what ends concerning women’s peace roles.

The excerpt<sup>72</sup> “peace oriented activities played by Aguleri-Umuleri community people entailed roles through community-based organisation (CBOs) such as Aguleri Representative Congress (ARC)<sup>73</sup>, Umuleri Community Association, well-established traditional structures<sup>74</sup> of ‘Umudiana’ and ‘Umuokpu’ and civil society organisation like the *Ohaneze Ndigbo*, women and youth groups” seemingly appears to be an un-gendered reportage. However, the ‘distinct’ allusion to “women groups” and ‘indistinct’ representation of roles of men or women in Aguleri Representative Congress (ARC), Umuleri Community Association, ‘Umudiana’ and ‘Umuokpu’, *Ohaneze Ndi Igbo* and youth groups is not incidental.

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<sup>72</sup> Sourced from all news media with peace orientation/frame on Aguleri-Umuleri conflict

<sup>73</sup> also known as Aguleri Caretaker Committee

<sup>74</sup> that interface marriage and blood relationships

It is a gendered wielding of power camouflaged in conventional commentaries<sup>75</sup> in a way that does not even look like it by men who wield influence in terms of their positions in the organizations that easily makes invisible/women's roles (alongside men). For *Ohaneze Ndigbo*, according to Ojukwu, (2012:96-122), the constitution of *Ohaneze Ndigbo* states that “membership shall be open to all adult Igbo...among others... comprised in the seven (7) levels<sup>76</sup> of its organizational structure...” that include the town unions<sup>77</sup> and affiliate organizations, wings and Traders wing (OMATA<sup>78</sup>) comprise women, youth, transporters and traders with the function of effectively bringing the organization down to the grassroots(i.e the town unions, the autonomous community associations, market associations, women and youth associations) for support and mobilization.

The analysis of *Ohaneze Ndigbo*'s organizational structure depicts the involvement of women as full members in peaceful resolution of the conflict which differed markedly from how it is represented in the print media. Thus, it is evident women played roles within the town unions and grass root mobilizing roles through the *Ohanaeze-women Wings* because:

“... in the Igbo system of exogamy, women have affiliations of two kinds. They are affiliated as married women to the village of their husbands and as “*Umu-Ada*” daughters to the village of their birth (i.e

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<sup>75</sup> by non-feminist reporters

<sup>76</sup>Ohaneze levels: town unions and affiliate organizations, local government Area Ohaneze, state ohaneze, ohaneze in non-Igbo states, national ohaneze, ohaneze wings and Ohaneze standing committees (See Ojukwu,2012:113).

<sup>77</sup> Effectively bring the organization down to the grassroots (the town unions, the autonomous community associations, market associations, women and youth associations ), and to encourage active participation of followers in decision making”( p ). The town unions are expected to create the *Ohaneze* consciousness in the people and establish an effective communication channel between the leaders and the people at the grassroots... In fact, as a people' umbrella organization committed to the improvement of the general wellbeing of the people..., *ohanaeze* relies on the town unions and the various welfare development associations for its grassroots support and mobilization...” (this comprise all town unions in core Igbo speaking, Igbos in on-Igbo speaking areas, and affiliate associations to particular states). \*Platforms for elite politics, struggles and contributions to the affairs of their communities... or a voice of home towns expected to act as the articulator of the interest of the former” (Trager, 2001; Ezeani and Ayichi, 2002 cited in Onwuzuruigbo, 2009:94). Ohaneze levels: town unions and affiliate organizations, local government Area Ohaneze, state ohaneze, ohaneze in non-Igbo states, national ohaneze, ohaneze wings and Ohaneze standing committees (See Ojukwu,2012:113).

<sup>78</sup> This represents all Igbo traders across the country and beyond. The wing covers all Igbo business elites. Its primary role is to assist in funding the organization. It is the body's 'financial powerhouse'. The wing is part and parcel of grassroots mobilization given the nature of members' profession; they are closer to clans, villages and towns in Igbo society.

they have dual citizenship). These are both intra and inter-village in character with important consequences for Igbo life. Thus, the wing is perceived as a driving and binding force in *Ohaneze*, and its role is mainly to settle disputes and intervene in any matter that appears insoluble. The wing also involves itself in grassroots mobilization (Ojukwu, 2012: 121).

In other words, women serve as financiers through their membership of the Traders wing (OMATA) that primarily assists in funding the organization. Thus, as the organization's 'financial powerhouse', it is part of grassroots mobilisation (that is clans, villages and towns in Igbo society) given the nature of members' profession.

Again, according to Ibeanu (2003:216) "for a long time, there have existed people from the two communities who supported a peaceful resolution of the conflict using traditional methods which draw extensively on well-established traditional structures of 'umudiana'<sup>79</sup> and umuokpu<sup>80</sup> that interface marriage and blood relationships". Yet, important roles of women concerning peaceful resolution of the conflict through both traditional structures were not revealed. The reality is that *umudiana* that is, *umu(children) diala* (freeborn) constitute all the members(adult men and women<sup>81</sup>) of the lineage/community with the right to attend the assembly(normally the market square or certain less serious cases, in a public square easily accessible to all parts of the village)(Aligwekwe, 2008:163).

With this clarification, women certainly were involved in peace resolution activities through this structure albeit through a proxy "*due to certain serious flaws in the Igbo democratic process women were permitted only a passive voice because they could only present a case or speak in the assembly except through a man*" (Aligwekwe, 2008:408). Also, all the women who are supposed to leave the lineage in respect of the law of exogamy<sup>82</sup> were called *Umuokpu*, a *nwaumuokpu* (singular of *Umuokpu*). They are obliged to leave to go to their husband's home and belonged from thence to the husband's lineage and be given the right of a full member.

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<sup>79</sup> *umudiana* that is, *umu(children) diala* (freeborn) constitute all the members(adult men and women of the lineage/community with the right to attend the assembly(normally the market square or certain less serious cases, in a public square easily accessible to all parts of the village)(Aligwekwe, 2008:163).

<sup>80</sup> the womenfolk: all the women who are supposed to leave the lineage in respect of the law of exogamy(the custom of marrying outside a community, clan or tribe) were called *Umuokpu*, while *nwaumuokpu* is singular...(Aligwekwe, 2008:163).

<sup>82</sup> Custom of marrying outside a community, clan, or tribe

In other words, the *nwaumuokpu* was never cut off totally from her *Umunna*<sup>83</sup> of origin though integrated entirely at all levels in the lineage of her husband right from the day of marriage. This explains the etymology of the double word *nwaokpu*: *Nwa*=child, *okpu*=something original or permanent (Aligwekwe, 2008:66; Ojukwu, 2012: 121). The *Umuokpu* women were a source of enrichment who were treated with great respect in their patrilineage of origin particularly if they were *Ada* (the first daughter of the nuclear family) and they are very much listened to perhaps because of their experiences; from the fact that they were also living among and belonged to elsewhere (their husband's home), outside the *Umunna*.

Similarly, in the Aguleri-Umuleri community peace negotiations were masculinised. For instance, the peace settlement pact meetings held through Aguleri Town Hall Union<sup>84</sup> was dominated by men.

### **(iii) Language used in the reportage of both conflicts obscured other roles of women**

The predominant language used in the reportage of both Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts was distinctly male-orientated. For Ife-Modakeke Conflict, the italicized phrases in Table 4.2 and for the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict the italicized phrases in Table 4.6 shows the bias in favour of the roles played by one gender (men) against roles of the 'other' (women) particularly as it concerns fighting in the battle/frontline. For instance, as depicted in the tables while phrases: 'Warriors'; 'Youth fighters,' militants'; 'combatants'; 'indigenes in arms/warring indigenes' appear seemingly gender-inclusive of men and women, male-definitive phrases: '*Wide-eyed male mercenaries*'; '*young Kinsmen*'; '*armed/fighting men*' shows men as the fighters.

Similarly, in the discourse about the Ife-Modakeke conflict Idehen, Olasupo, and Adebusuyi, (2013; Obiyan 2015) used seemingly gender-neutral phrases interchangeably with definitive words such as "*husbands*", "*fathers*" or "*sons*" concerning who the direct participants in the fighting are. Equally, in the discourse of

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<sup>83</sup> Patrilineage, the ultimate protector of land. Each male member of the lineage had the right to possess a portion of this land for himself or for his family. Except in certain cases, land was never sold out right. (Aligwekwe, 2008:93).

<sup>84</sup> Chief A.G Umeadi and Professor Udedibie, former President of Aguleri Representative Council and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Federal University of Technology.

the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict, Onwuzuruigbo (2009:102) succinctly stated that “*the Aguleri fighters were ...’ husbands’, ‘sons’ and ‘brothers’ who, to a large extent constitute the ‘militants’ and ‘combative’ arm of the population, often injured or killed...*” The stereotype about masculinity was also evident in the description of categories of parties in a conflict by Albert (2001) depicted in the italicised word in the excerpt below:

“parties to a conflict can be divided into two main categories: the primary parties (those that directly participate in the physical violence; they kill and get killed; the focus is always on them or their identity) and shadow figures or “stakeholders”(those people or groups(s) behind the primary parties who have a stake in the causes, courses or outcome of the conflict... who supply the combatants with moral, ideological and financial support. This group also could stop the physical violence by withholding their support). Shadow parties/stakeholders in community conflicts in Nigeria usually include serving or an out-of-service army/military officers, civil servants and politicians who are seen as achievers in their communities whose opinions carry a heavy weight. These military *men* often reside outside their communities. They come home once in a while to help the communities analyze their problems and to provide the necessary ‘support’ for the violent struggle...” (p.49-50).

This conception obscured women’s roles as non-state actors paradoxically played in both categories because even if the majority of persons who constitute frontline fighters are composed of men however, women were also committed to their community’s ‘cause’. As shadow actors, they were either helping to further the conflict through financial commitments or supporting the cause of the conflict by relinquishing their fathers, brothers, uncles, husbands, sons and daughters to fight for the liberation of their community. As shadow participants, they collaborated as spies/informants and ensured survival by providing food for children, the sick, the elderly and fighters while playing others roles. These intricate and subtle roles of women as non-state actors in conflict affairs, feminist scholars conceive as being of the essence in the thorough understanding of the nature of any given war/conflict (Zotto, 2002).



Arguably, the argument is that the phrases which makes men visible as fighters and women invisible conforms to

“common forms of sexism in English which includes the use of 'man' and 'he/him/ his' as generics—that is, nouns and pronouns referring to both men and women...asymmetrical naming practices, and stereotyped images of women and men as well as descriptions of (mainly) women, the claim being that English does not possess a third person singular pronoun which is gender neutral instead the 'masculine' pronouns 'he', 'him' and 'his' are generally used to refer to both men and women...”(Lei, 2006:88).

In other words, the claim concerning male-specific referents is that ‘he’ means “he or her” and that “she” is used if the referent is specifically female. This explanation is far from the truth because the male marking in either excerpt not only picks up extra meanings that stress that language and culture are particularly unfair in treating women as ‘unmarked’ participants. Hence, Fasold maintains that “*if language reflected biology, grammar books would direct us to use “she” to include males and females and “he” only for specifically male referents. But they do not*” (cited in Silverman and Rader, 2003:422). Thus, the use of male-specific language/words conspired to make invisible roles of women in the front line or as battle-front fighters.

Also, the phrases: ‘militants’ and ‘combatants’ can be said to be gender-inclusive concerning women as fighters in the conflicts based on what Elshtain (1987 cited in Tavis, 1992) has shown in *women and war* that in history women have been just as militant in wartime as men. They have always participated in whatever ways their societies permitted. However, the phrase ‘combatants’ maintains Enloe (2004) in the minds of too many people represents only one sort of militarized person, someone with a gun. Women and girls are not (really) conceived as weapon-carrying fighters; instead, they are likely to be made invisible and ignored at every step of the process if the discourse is simply about ‘combatants’.

Implicit in these phrases that make other roles played by women invisible is a diversity of underlying social conventions characterized by power relations imposed

by those who have power. Therefore, the nexus between power play and language that people are consciously not aware of is its exercise through acceptance evidenced in ideology<sup>85</sup> referred to in this study as existing conventions or ‘common-sense’<sup>86</sup> assumptions. The language use, therefore, in the reportage about Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts highlight the imprinted meanings which revolve around the cultural narrative that depicts the roles of men as a story per excellence contrary to the victim images of women who indeed served in every way.

The point of this finding is that phrases: ‘youth fighters’; ‘indigene in arms’; ‘militants’; ‘combatants’ seem non-discriminatory in the portrayal of the gender/sex that directly participated in the fighting because they are generic terms that are assumed to apply equally to a man and a woman. However, although expressions: ‘women/female youth fighters’, ‘women/female indigene in arms’; ‘women/female combatants’ and ‘women/female militants’ may be avoided in contexts where the reference to the sex of a person is irrelevant if gender specification is necessary, the use of the adjective ‘female’ and ‘male’ before the gender-neutral noun is to be preferred (Lei, 2006). With this, women become visible as having participated with the men in both conflicts rather than the conformist perception that the “*actions of men fully represent those of all male and female*” (Lei, 2006:87).

#### **v) Roles women played in the four communities in both conflicts**

Illustrated in **Table 5.1** are the six (6) unreported roles which women of Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri and Umuleri communities played. The similar roles in the four communities include petition writing, protesting, information sources, providers of traditional medicine and advisers. In Modakeke and Ife communities, virgin girls and middle-aged women relied on *juju* to protect and enable the male fighters at the

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<sup>85</sup> What is meant here is that “no language use or discourse is free from ideology because discourse is shaped by ideology and ideology is conversely shaped in discourse” (Allan, 2004; van Dijk, 1991a cited in Renström, 2012:1).

<sup>86</sup>In the Gramscian usage of ‘common sense’ power works to produce hierarchies that becomes sustained. In other words, it is the normalizing strategies of power that are productive of unequal power relations over time. Its hidden and subtle operations within social and political institutions fix notions of hierarchy as given or indeed render them natural and in the common interest.

battlefronts, while in Aguleri and Umuleri communities, women served as disguised fighters and weapon-carrying aides.

The six unreported role findings which transcend victim and peace roles played by women as represented in the print media foreground the aim of this study to make visible the roles played by women within the communities in both conflicts. An example is the role of women who assembled at designated places at the expense of their safety to cook for the aged and vulnerable that had no one to cater for them including those fighting equal the battlefield role of the fighters to secure the community. Also key, is the role of women in the Ife community, as ‘traditional’ practitioners (who must not be observing monthly cycle to ensure the potency of the charm) and young girls (yet to be married who may either be ‘virgins’ or not but must not be menstruating so as not to neutralise the potency of any charm) who cleared the coast of any omen and fortified the male fighters in Ife community through the use of *juju* ‘sacrifice/rites.’ The young girls are mostly relatives of herbalists who know about charms and how to defend themselves also carried the *juju* ‘medicine’ ‘charms’ that aided the seizing of guns from the Modakeke by women who assisted the men on the battlefield to excise pellets of gunshots without any operation and relieved the wounded.

The role of Chief (Mrs) Dorcas Adijatu Abike (also known as *Iya Rushie*) as ‘protector/shield’ amid male fighters in the conflict between her community Modakeke and Ife is noteworthy. The role entailed safeguarding those fighting in the battleground from being harmed by warding-off pellets from guns fired at them by Ife opponents and preventing the over-run of her community on the battlefield through the use of traditional (*juju*) amulets and charms of protection(see **Plate 5.2** ). The dire traditional rituals for spiritual fortification and her warrior lineage of the *awo* ‘spiritual’ dynasty strengthened her forte. The fortifying procedure justified why other traditional women did not accompany her to the battlefield but assembled in the palace to carry out pre-battle ‘sacred acts’ that enhanced her effectiveness as a ‘shield’ at the battleground to the fighters.

In the Aguleri community, women (most of whom preferred to remain anonymous were disguised in camouflage like the men), except for a widow Mrs Teresa Nwigbo

Amadi Uchechukwu Nwadieze (see Plate 5.3) described by fellow ex-fighters as ‘an exceptional asset’ in all the fighting outings against Umuleri opponents. The fight for her community, Mrs Nwadieze acquired three guns from her yam vending proceeds, sustained three gunshot wounds during a fierce exchange between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities and was locked up for three days until the community secured her release when she went to relinquish the guns to the police after the conflict. In addition, she did not drink water from the community for the duration of the fight and restrained from ‘intimate relationship’ (a breach amounted to no guarantee at the front) as a form of fortification in the fighting activity like other fighters in the troop.

Mrs Nwadieze also served as a spy who stealthily gained access into the midst of the meeting camp of the Umuleri community to eavesdrop on their discussions, gather information and disarm the fighters without their knowing. The same charm, she foiled plans to infiltrate the Aguleri community through (disguised) Aguleri women ‘under a traditional spell’ by their Umuleri husbands. To neutralize the influence of the ‘spell’ and attendant consequences on the women, Mrs Nwadieze has to squat and urinate on all the spots for a minute or two. Apart from participating in most outings against the Umuleri community, Mrs Nwadieze provided a traditional ‘concoction’ medicine that made opponents sleepy enough to be disarmed and possibly portend an end to the gun battle for that day when a shot released from any gun the ‘concoction’ is applied on.

The other women who served as aides in different tasks include Mrs Anapuru Okechi, an Ezi Aguleri woman married at Ifite Aguleri and Chukwuto from Ifite, who carried guns and other weapons for the fighters most of the time amidst the heavy shooting, attended to the wounded and served as a guard. Mrs Nwanne Isieke as a battlefield aid walked miles in defiance of gunfire with the wounded fighters on her back despite their weight to safety for treatment with the ‘concoction’ medicine. Ndidi Nwakaajeoma helped nurse those fighting with wounds, fetched endless buckets of water amidst the heavy shooting to clean the wounded up and waited on them. Ejiuche Ilezuike sprayed a dangerous substance that incapacitated the fighters of the Umuleri community. Ezeuche ensured that all the children of women involved in the battlefield had a constant food supply.

In Umuleri community, daughters (*umu-ada*) of the community such as Miss Ekwutosi Mokwugwo and Miss Baby Ikeli served as aides in varied assignments. Also, wives (*nyemu*) of the community served as volunteer fighters alongside their husbands, sons and attended to the wounded, sick and pregnant.

In the Ife community, matron Mrs Omodobi (now late), was unrelenting in nursing (with the assistance of other nurses, traditional healers, aged mothers, daughters and sisters) the wounded, sick and the delivery of children in the Ife Development Union(IDU) secretariat which served as a ‘sick bay’ and temporary abode for the displaced.

In addition, the role women of Chief Mrs Aramide Oladimeji (Iyalode of Ife), Chief Mrs Obawole Areule (Otun Iyalode of Ife) Mrs Akinpetu; market women leader (*Iya Loja*), late Mama Kingibe (who was very active all through the conflict) and the women leader of the Ife Development Board (IDB) among others who championed the cause of the community and represented the interests of other women. Also, there were also peace negotiation roles by a 90-year-old fearless woman leader named: Chief Cicilia Aramide Oladimeji (the *Iyalode* of Ife) meeting with the Modakeke fighters to negotiate a ceasefire with the help of other women, one of whom is her ‘deputy’ Chief Mrs Obawole Areule, the *Otun Iyalode* of Ife and Chief (Mrs) Moni Ojuade (who died after the conflict), for her mediatory meetings with fighters sometimes at the battlefield.

In the Aguleri community is the ‘voluntary’ mediation activities of an Enugu Aguleri woman Chief (Mrs) Ejiuche Adimora, known as *Ada Eri*, a title bestowed on her by the late Igwe Christopher Idigo. Mrs Adimora committed almost all her business proceeds to the mediation activities that culminated in the youths of both the Aguleri and Umuleri communities surrender their arms. The mediation activities included rallying women together to create a consciousness about the impact of the conflict on youths and marriage/family/community and appeasing the aggrieved youths with money palliatives to start any business of their choice and lay down their arms. The mediation in both communities by sending emissaries who advocated against ferrying properties through water without proper clearance put an end to the looting and confiscation of property in either community for sale in the guise of conflict situation.

The challenges she experienced playing this role include the decline of her business, burning of both her house and the only car she used to facilitate the business transactions that generated money to settle the fighting youths in either community to lay down their arms.

## **6.2 Limitation of Study**

The first limitation encountered was locating key informant interviewees as well as the daunting task of assembling focus group discussion participants.

The second was assuaging the nerves of interviewees who were uptight about bringing up memories of the conflicts. Specifically, in the interview with the Modakeke Chief Dorcas Adedoyin, estranged wife of the *Ogunsua* of Modakeke, I was asked on arrival to pick and hold for at least a minute some pre-arranged cowries in a fine porcelain plate covered with a white cloth to verify the genuineness of my mission, especially as she had no aversion to her photograph captured on camera and her voice on tape. I obliged to the ritual although hesitantly looking askance with fear while she intoned some incantations and explained that it was an innocuous traditional ritual in honour of remote ancestors.

The use of Yoruba language by some respondents constituted a challenge because some of the dialect used by respondents was beyond my grasp. The assistance of an indigene assistant who served as my interpreter and translator helped resolve this issue.

In addition to the above, during the interview with Chief Ejiuche Adimora (*Ada-Eri*), I was also asked to hold on to a plate containing five twenty-naira notes, three bulbs of kola nuts and a mould of native salt as she prayed to her ancestors to be at home with my visit (see Appendix IX). The ritual ceremony ended with her insistence that the naira notes that amounted to a hundred naira were a gift from her ancestors to me as a contract of agreement.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

This study examined print media representation of the roles of women in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts. It noted that while the men were reported as active players, women were in victim and peace roles.

Specifically, the problem concerning women in both conflicts revolved around the foreclosure of their resourcefulness and resilience as survivors amidst their victim experiences, their seeming involvement in peace negotiation training, committees and panels facilitated by men and gendered language use that affirmed men as fighters and obscured the contribution of women in the same role.

The study findings confirm the four research questions and the following conclusions drawn:

- i) The one-dimensional victim stereotype foreclosed resourceful and resilient roles women played in the conflicts.
- ii) Token (one or two women in a workshop, training, panel of twenty) involvement of women in the peace processes does not constitute inclusive representation.
- iii) The involvement of women as resource persons in the peace negotiation workshops, panels and committees was a camouflage because of their masculinized nature.
- (iv) The use of male-specific language (his, men, sons, father, and husband) that affirmed men as fighters and obscured roles played by women reinforced how beneficiaries of any patriarchal system sustain the system with gendered practices.
- v) The discovered unreported roles of women as advisers, enablers, protectors and fighters highlight the importance of journalists interacting directly with people in conflict settings to understand and accurately report the roles of different actors. It also highlighted the ‘camouflaged’ power operating to sustain the gendered status quo in the print media that portrayed women as victims and the gender affirmed by the status quo.
- (vi) Implicit in the representations of women in the two-fold roles in the print media and language used in the reportage is the exercise of power operated in camouflage by people (authors, reporters (inclusive of women complicit in the makings of these representations) and publishers who benefit from the public (girls, women (inclusive of men) internalizing these particular feminized role depictions as the ‘reality’ without questioning.
- (vii) The study is not geared towards denigrating the roles played in the conflicts or creating a comparison about the difference in the roles played by men and

women but demand that journalists interact directly with people in conflict settings to understand and accurately report the roles of different actors.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

Consistent with the findings, the actions to take include:

- (i) Commissioning books and news reports with more positive representations of women by publishers and media owners. The expectation is that by seriously considering women and their roles, stereotyping will be checked and the impression that the role of women merits less consideration than roles presumably played by men in conflict will be improved upon.
- (ii) Instituting a feminist–gender consciousness awareness campaign for authors and journalists to reject ‘normal/natural’ stereotypes about the roles of men and women in conflict and everyday life.
- (iii) Organize seminar sessions at schools, universities and organizations concerning the need to make a conscious effort to eliminate the use of masculine words in conflict narratives by ensuring the use of updated language (“men and women”; sons and daughters”; “girls and boys”). The reason is that the choice of words distorts the message about the parties in a conflict. Thus, although there can be no solution to the problem of sexism in language, the difference sought from this study is that the reporting of conflict roles should be androgynous and reciprocal visibility given to women just as to men.
- (iv) Campaign for the acquisition of feminist books for schools and university libraries and added to academic reading lists as well as more feminist courses be taught.

## **6.5 Contributions to knowledge**

This study advanced knowledge in the three following ways:

- (i) Highlighted foreclosed resourceful and resilient roles of women amid the victim experiences and exposed the camouflage concerning the purported involvement of women in highly masculinized peace process workshops, panels and committee activities.
- (ii) Discovered unreported roles which women played as advisers, protesters, enablers, protectors and fighters in both conflicts. This original finding



debunked the standard representation of men as active participants and women as passive conflict participants.

- (iii) Challenged the explicit and implicit use of male referents as the norm that pervades much of what the public learns about the participants in conflict situations.

## **6.6 Suggestions for Further Study**

This study serves as a good resource material for researchers, diplomats, government officials, conflict experts and gender scholars interested in print media representation of women's roles in conflicts. Subsequent research can focus on the following:

- (i) What forms of gendered power relations determine the reportage of conflicts?
- (ii) Who gains what from the wielding of a particular form of gender-infused power representation; and
- (iii) Why are there issues in non-biased reportage of roles in conflict?

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

**Table 3.1** Research Instruments, Methods Deployed, Sample of KII Respondents and FGDs Participants by State and Selected Community and Sample Size

S/ N	State(s)	Geo-political zone	Community	Area(s) of Field Work	Instruments for data collection	Sub-Sample of each	No	Gender
1	Osun	South-west	Modakeke	Ita-Afin	KII	Chief Olaoye I.A (Secretary, Council of Chiefs and Ogunsua's).	1	Man
2					KII	Oba Francis Olatunji Adedoyin, Olagobin 1, Ogunsua of Modakeke.	1	Man
3				Oke-Yidi	KII	AlhajiTajudeenOke(then NationalPresi Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU)	1	Man
4				Oke-Yidi	KII	Barr. Akinrotimi GokeRotimi, former N Secretary of ModakekeProgressive (MPU).		Man
5			Ife Community	Afin Ooni, Enuwa	KII	Prince Gbenga Omiwole(Secretary to Ooni of Ife, His Royal Majesty, Oba Okunuade Sijuade and Ife Development Union(IDU).	1	Man
6				Moore	KII	Chief (Mrs) Obawole Areule(Otun Iyalode of Ife).	1	Woman
7				Ooni's Palace Enuwa	KII	Chief Akintibubo Jacob	1	Man
8				Ile-Nna Ooni's Palace Enuwa	KII	Mrs Latifatu Oladimeji (Head, Palace women workers).	1	Woman
9	Ondo		Ore	-----	KII	Olori-Chief (Mrs.) Dorcas Adedoyin, the estranged wife (Olori) of His Royal Highness Oba Francis Olatunji Adedoyin, Olagobin 1, Ogunsua of Modakeke	1	Woman
10	Lagos		Victoria Island-	NIIA, Kofo Abayomi	KII	Mr. Bolarinwa Segun (Research fellow, head of the division of Security and Conflict Resolution)	1	Man



11	Anambra	South-East	Aguleri Community	Enugu-Aguleri	KII	Mr. Peter Chukwuka Mbedife (Ex-Fighter)	1	Man
12				Enugu-Aguleri	KII	Mrs. Teresa Nwigbo Amadi Uchechukwu Nwadieze (Ex-fighter)	1	Woman
13				Agbalaka Aguleri	KII	Chief (Mrs.) Ejiuche Adimora ( <i>Ada-Eri</i> )	1	Woman
14				Pius Idigo Street, Amaeze, Aguleri (Urban)	KII	Mrs. Angela Ejoh Nwakasi (Secretary General, Aguleri Women Development Association (AWDU))	1	Woman
15			Umuleri	Odakpu, Umueri	KII	Elder Chief Mike Edozieuno Ndive Aniegbuka (Historian, chairperson of the Umuleri community and cabinet chief in the Igwe's Palace).	1	Woman
					<b>FGDs</b>			
16			Modakeke	Ondo /Ife Road	FGD	Community persons	9	Seven Women and two men
17			Ife	<i>Ile-Na</i> , Ooni's Palace, Enuwa	FGD	Community Persons	10	10 women
18			Aguleri	<i>Amaeze</i> Aguleri	FDG	Community persons	7	Five Women and two Men
19			Umuleri	<i>Odakpu</i>	FGD	Community persons	6	Six Women

## Appendix II

**Table 3.2** Question guides, Instruments and Analytical Technique(s)

Sample Research Questions	Instrument(s)	Analytical Technique
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established roles which women played during the community conflicts.</li> <li>2. Extent/dominant roles which women played</li> <li>3. Specific types of roles: advisory, medicinal, peace and battlefield roles</li> <li>4. The personality of the key players</li> <li>5. Roles of women as royal wives, and mothers, through the church, community associations, markets groups</li> <li>6. The conception of what victim, peace, and fighter roles signifies</li> <li>7. Distinct and specific roles played by young women</li> <li>8. The rationale for women playing varied roles during the conflict</li> </ol>	(a)KII and FGDs	(a)Thematic analysis

### Appendix III

#### Chapter Five List of Interviews and Discussions

Interview. Chief I. A. Olaoye. Secretary, Council of Chiefs and personal secretary of the Ogunsua of Modakeke. Wednesday 6 July, 2011. Palace, Ita–Afin, Modakeke.

Interview. Prince Gbenga Omiwole. Barrister and secretary of the Ooni of Ife, His Royal Majesty, Oba Okunade Sijuade and Ife Development Union (IDU). Friday 8 July, 2011. Ife Development Union (IDU) Headquarters, opposite *Afin Ooni*, Enuwa.

Interview. His Royal Highness Oba Francis Olatunji Adedoyin, Olagobin 1, Ogunsua of Modakeke. Wednesday 6 July, 2011. Palace, Ita –Afin, Modakeke.

Interview. Chief Dorcas Adedoyin. ‘*Juju*’ enabled Battle front shield/protector and Estranged wife of His Royal Highness ObaFrancis Olatunji Adedoyin, Olagobin 1, Ogunsua of Modakeke. Monday 11 July, 2011. Ore, Ondo State.

Interview. Alhaji Tajudeen Oke. National President of Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU). Thursday 7 July, 2011. MPU Office. Oke-Otubu, Modakeke.

Interview. Chief Obawole Areule, Otun Iyalode of Ife. Friday 8 July, 2011. Moore, Ile- Ife.

Interview. Mrs Teresa Nwigbo Amadi Uchechukwu Nwadieze.Ex-fighter. Widow from Avu Aguleri. No formal schooling. Yam Vendor. Friday 14 September, 2012. Enugu Aguleri.

Interview. Mrs. Angela Ejoh Nwakasi. Secretary General, Aguleri Women Development Association (AWDU). Teacher. Eri Primary School Amaeze, Aguleri. Thursday 20 February, 2020. Pius Idigo Street, Amaeze, Aguleri (Urban).

Interview. Elder Chief Mike Edozieuno Ndiva Aniegbuka. Historian, chairperson of Umuleri community and cabinet chief in the Igwe's Palace. Wednesday 19 February, 2020. Odakpu, Umueri.

Interview. Chief Akintibubo Jacob. Traditional chief from Moore who supports the *Ooni* in resolving issues. Tuesday 10 March, 2020. *Ooni's* Palace. Enuwa.

Interview. Barrister. Akin Goke Rotimi. Former National Secretary of Modakeke Progressive Union (MPU).MPU Office. Thursday 7 July, 2011. Oke-Otubu, Modakeke.

Interview. Mrs. Latifatu Oladimeji.70 year old elderly woman. Head, Palace women workers. *Ile-Naa*. Wednesday 11 March, 2020.Ooni's Palace. Enuwa.

Interview. Mr. Segun Bolarinwa, Research fellow, Head, Security and Conflict Resolution Division. Friday 19th of July, 2013 Victoria Island-Kofo Abayomi street, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos.

Interview. Mr. Peter Mbedife. Ex-fighter. Community trader. Friday 14 September, 2012. Enugu -Aguleri.

Interview. Chief Ejiuche Adimora (Ada-Eri). Widow. Inter-community Trader. Saturday 15 September, 2012. Agbalaka, Aguleri.

Focus Group Discussion. Modakeke Community. Comprised seven women and two men. Thursday 7 July, 2011. Ondo road, Modakeke.

Focus Group Discussion.Ife Community. Comprised 10 women. Wednesday 11 March, 2020. *Ile-Nna*, *Ooni's* Palace. Enuwa.

Focus Group Discussion. Aguleri Community. Comprised five women and two men. Mrs Caroline Obunso. Retired primary school teacher. Amaeze. Thursday 20 February, 2020.

Focus Group Discussion. Umuleri community. Comprised six women. Odakpu. Wednesday 19 February, 2020.

## Appendix IV

### Key Interview and Group Discussion Photographs

- (i) Oba Francis Olatunji Adedoyin, Olagobin 1, *Ogunsua* of Modakeke (with the researcher at his Palace Ita –Afin, Modakeke. Wednesday 6 July, 2011)(with permission of the *Ogunsua*).



## Appendix V

(ii) Focus group Discussion at Modakeke. Ondo road, Modakeke. Thursday 7 July, 2011(with permission of the respondents).









## Appendix VI

(iii) Group Discussion: Ife Community. *Ile-Nna*, Ooni's Palace. Enuwa. Wednesday 11 March, 2020 (with permission of the respondents).



## Appendix VII

(iv) Interview (l.-r.): Mr Basil (Facilitator); researcher and Mr Peter Mbedife, ex-combatant (interviewee), at Enugu-Aguleri. Friday 14 September, 2012 (with permission of the interviewee and facilitator).



## Appendix VIII

- (v) Interview (l.-r.): Ex-Fighter, Mrs. Teresa Nwigbo Amadi Uchechukwu Nwadieze (and researcher) at Enugu-Aguleri. Friday 14 September, 2012(with permission of the interviewee).



**Appendix IX**

(vi) Interview (l.-r.) (Researcher) with Chief Ejiuche Adimora (Ada-Eri). Agbalaka, Aguleri. Saturday 15 September, 2012(with permission of the interviewee).



## Appendix X

### Letter of Introduction



UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, NIGERIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Head of Department**

**Professor V. Adefemi Isumonah**  
B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D., Pol. Sc. (Ibadan), Diploma,  
Conflict Resolution (Uppsala)  
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6<sup>th</sup> February 2020

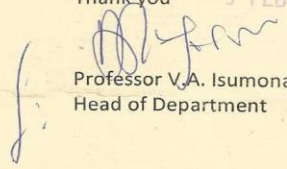
**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

This is to certify that Mrs Ifeyinwa Maureen Ogbonna, Matric No. 75193 is a Ph.D student in this Department. She requires your kind assistance to conduct interviews whilst on her field trip.

Kindly give her all the legitimate assistance that she may require.

Thank you - 5 FEB 2020

  
Professor V.A. Isumonah  
Head of Department

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8<sup>th</sup> July, 2011

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**  
**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

This is to confirm that the bearer Mrs. Maureen Ogbonna Nwaogu is a Ph.D Student of this Department. She is current working on a research project titled: “**Media and Women in Communal Conflict in Nigeria**” which investigates the roles of women during conflict which media did not report.

Kindly give her all the legitimate assistance she may require.

Thank you.

**Dr. O.B.C Nwolise**  
**Ag. Head of Department**

