

Article

Mutually Hurting Political Violence and Peacebuilding in Edda, Nigeria

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Abstract: Political violence has remained a fundamental problem of nation building in the African continent. In many African states and communities, it has become a negative cog in the wheel of communal and national development. It manifests before elections, during elections and after elections in different parts of Nigeria. This study focuses on the place of political violence in Edda, southeastern Nigeria. It used primary and secondary sources to develop its content. The primary sources were randomly selected from the research setting. The study revealed that the last case of political violence in Edda was unique, as the actors were of the same political party as against the tradition of political violence been manifested between one political party and members of the opposition parties. The study therefore found that the violence unleashed by the apologists of the All Progressives Congress (APC) members in the community in 2022 undermined the communal peace within Ekoli Edda. This manifested through the shocking destruction of lives and properties. The study concluded by recommending sustainable political peacebuilding strategies that would be communally driven. These processes will help in healing most of the people that were affected directly and indirectly by the political violence to conquer the traumatic effects of the political violence.

Keywords: Peace; Party; Political violence; All Progressives Congress (APC); Edda

Introduction

Mutually hurting violence is a condition when parties to a crisis find themselves in a situation where they experience high degrees of pain, loss or damages which may not necessarily be at the same degree but total victory in the crisis or conflict that caused the hurt cannot be attained without each party sharing in the hurt or havoc or damages caused by it. Mutually hurting violence is characterized by negative peace and hurting experiences due to pains that were spread within the conflict environment during its period of manifestation. Such mutually hurting violence often had a history of causing the destruction of lives and properties on both sides of the conflict divide irrespective of the actors. Unfortunately, the cost-benefit-analysis at the level of mutually hurting violence leaves no-one in doubt of the realities of the destruction that are often unleashed on man and the environment in the course of violent manifestations in different geo-spatial environments due to mutually hurting cases of political violence.

This study will focus on the mutually hurting violent political crisis that manifested in an African society called Ekoli Edda and how its multiplier effect affected the wider communities that constitute the Edda clan. Edda, is one of the matrilineal societies found in the South-eastern part of Nigeria. It is a traditional African society where the people upholds the sanctity of human life, hence no son of the soil is willingly allowed to spill blood let alone to kill his brother. Hence, when that large scale political violence manifested

in a closely knit matrilineal Edda society, people wondered how politics could unleash such hurt on the strong bond of unity in the society.

Traditionally, the brevity of the traditional Edda man is seen in his craft as a warrior in other communities. This is because the matrilineal nature of the society bonds them closely in what is called *Ikwu* (lineage). The *Ikwu* system makes it more difficult for anyone to keep long time malice or bitterness against another, as they are largely matrilineal-connected. Thus, when conflict arises, and questions of origin are asked. This strong *Ikwu* connections helps to quickly douse tensions and create opportunity for crisis and anger management in the face of conflicting situation. The situation is reinforced by the fact that those not bonded tightly by the matrilineal could be bonded by the patrilineal lineage.

Unfortunately, the Edda people witnessed the huge negative effect of political violence that disturbed the peace of many Ebonyi people in Southeastern part of Nigeria very recently. The conflict can be well described as the clash of the political Titans within the community. It should be noted that the violent manifestations by many of the Nigerian power elite is often driven by greed, personal interest and a show of coercive authority (Folefac, 2022; Anyika & Ani, 2022; Ani & Uwizeyimana, 2022; Ani, Anyika & Uwizeyimana, 2019). The oral traditions of the people reveal that the central actors that drove the mutual hurting violence were of the same political party, same state and under same administration and so could not be described as opposition group or opposition party members. This is quite interesting because while political violence in the world is usually between parties, it can also occur within a party, especially very early in the electoral cycle when contenders of the same party vie for spot on the ballot (Seeberg, Wahman & Skaaning, 2018). It should be noted that Nigerian political violence is often fueled by party and ethnic differences (Ani, 2024). The same factors have been found to be active in the Cameroonian and other African political environment (Ani, Kinge & Ojakorotu, 2018).

Hoglund and Nilsson (2022: 291) have argued that some violence is driven by “leaders’ personal motivations to remain in power and exploit the economic gains generated by a continuation of violence in their environment. Unfortunately, this particular crisis is significant because the alleged actors; Stanley Okoro Emegha was the Commissioner for Internal Security of the state and the party chairman of APC within the same Ebonyi state, while Eni Uduma Chima was a former chairman of the Edda local council and the then flag bearer of the APC for the House of Representative ticket targeting to represent Afikpo North/Afikpo South people at the lower legislative chambers in the Federal Capital Territory. The two individuals are known to command strong influence and control on their different subjects who are loyal to them and are willing to obey any form of order provided these great statesmen have told them to follow such path.

However, there is no gain saying the fact that the alleged attack on the life of the State APC Chairman, Stanley Okoro Emegha; the gruesome murder of his Escort Commander, Inspector Festus Akpan and the assassination of his younger brother Emeka Orji Ama were major immediate causes of the crisis. Noteworthy is that the Ebonyi state police report revealed that the arrested suspects in police custody gave statements that did not indict any of the above major actors. The state government led by the then Governor David Umahi maintained that chief Emegha and chief Eni were exonerated based on the confession made by the suspects arrested in connection with the alleged killings.

It is the complexity of this political violence that is intra-political in nature, as against the popular political and electoral violence that is often targeted on the opposition party and their members in Nigeria that makes this study fundamental (Anyika & Ani, 2022). It is also worthy of note that a strong matrilineal and patrilineal heritage system of the Edda people makes them closely-netted socially, thereby undermining the chances of conflict escalation in the area that also makes this violent political experience unique and worthy of academic interrogation. Again, the fact that the dynamics of the game of power unleashed unimaginable impact on the masses of Edda and the reactions that followed makes this study fundamental. It hopes to contribute to the body of literature on sustainable communal peacebuilding towards the management of political violence in Nigeria.

Literature Review

It should be noted that while many cases of political violence appear to be spontaneous, most studies reveal that political violence are often engineered by politicians, especially the incumbent politicians or their affiliates (von Borzyskowski & Saunders, 2022). A research found that 75% of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa are engineered by incumbents and their affiliates. The opposition and the incumbent affiliates generates 20% of the violence while the remaining 5% of the political violence are orchestrated by the opposition party alone (Straus & Taylor, 2012). The politicians often hire thugs and vulnerable members of the society to engage in political violence for them (Laakso, 2009; Matanock, & Staniland, 2018; Makumbe, 2002& Masunungure 2011). These set of vulnerable persons include the very poor in the society that would be ready to unleash any form of violence when given peanuts due to the decades of hunger that have undermined their perception of reality.

There are also the unemployed youths in the society, including graduates who have experienced years of frustration due to the inability to secure a job. These class constitute another army of people who will be ready to unleash any form of mayhem within the political space in a bid to get paid or at least join the network of boys that eat the little crumbs from the office of the politicians in the hope that when the political elite occupies an exalted office, he or she would be rewarded with a good employment (Laakso, 2009; Matanock, & Staniland, 2018; Makumbe, 2002& Masunungure 2011). The last group of people used in unleashing political violence are the militant young men and women who were known to be very violent in their way of life within the communities. Involving them in unleashing violence by the political elite would be happily appreciated by them as they approach such function with zeal and passion, considering that they would be paid for doing the same thing they have ordinarily done in the journey of life without been paid before.

Chief Stanley Okoro Emegha and Chief Eni Uduma Chima for long, have been said to be political rivals. This rivalry emanates from the quest to get a strong political base and followership and not necessarily that they were violent enemies. Incidentally, two of them are from the same community, Ekoli, in Edda. Ekoli is a hilly tiny but very populated community in Afikpo South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The fact that they came from the same origin did not guarantee their peaceful relations due to differences in political interest. It is even more interesting when it is stated that both actors are from the same ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) (Lawal, 2023).

It was alleged that their loyalists often clashed in erstwhile political events. This historical political division of their loyalists was believed to be the order of the day when they were in opposition parties until when the then Governor Dave Umahi defected from People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the APC and brought them together in his administration (Aliuna, 2023). Immediately, Governor Umahi appointed Chima, who was a two-term Ebonyi State Assembly lawmaker to the position of Caretaker Committee Chairman of the local government and later made him the substantive Chairman of the Council. He also appointed Emegha his Special Assistant on Internal Security, Commissioner for Internal Security, Border Peace and Conflict Resolution, and Caretaker Committee Chairman of APC before ensuring that he became the substantive Chairman of the APC party, a position that he is currently occupying (Aliuna, 2023).

Considering that these two men are major players in the APC administration, the people thought that the two political heavyweights would easily manage their differences and that of their followers but the public opinion and violence realities showed otherwise (lawal, 2023). It was alleged that during the primaries for the 2023 general elections; one Chief Okenwa Uka, who was a former Chima's loyalist but recently turned into an Emegha's loyalist, picked form to contest for the House of Representatives for Afikpo North/South Federal Constituency against Chima, who was contesting for the position (Aliuna, 2023). Immediately, the political supporters on the two sides of the divide began to react. It was also alleged that it was the then Governor Umahi that prevailed on Chief Uka to withdraw from the race and Uka had to surrender, considering the governors influential position as the head of the APC party in Ebonyi State. To this end, Chima emerged the candidate of APC for Afikpo North/South Federal Constituency. The tension that was heightened when Chief Uka picked the House of Representatives APC form to challenge Chief Chima therefore doused (Lawal, 2023).

However, it was stated that the tension resurrected after a youth group election was held in the community and Chima's loyalists allegedly emerged winners while Emegha's men lost out. The event that

followed recorded the election cancellation by Prosper Ekumankama, the local council chairman. The announcement of the cancellation was seen as an affront to the winners and they will not throw away their victory in a community election easily even when they neglected that community elections lies within the administrative influence of the local council jurisdiction. This Ebubeagu Security outfit is a form of state police or neighbourhood watch who were deployed to keep the peace in the area by the Ebonyi State Government (Lawal, 2023).

The Ebebeagu operatives allegedly arrived the community market square in the area in company of the Chief Emegha, they patrolled, shot sporadically into the air both to announce their presence and scare away the architects of violence and left the market square (Aliuna, 2023). Ironically, the development attracted youths of the community, who in consonance with some elders, announced that natives should go into their homes for safety as they were not certain of the source of shooting considering the wider culture of insecurity in the Nigerian state. The area was alleged to have experienced total gunshots battle between alleged boys loyal to Eni Uduma Chima (Vanguard) and Ebubeagu, who came in company of Stanley Okoro Emegha for a long time. In the course of the armed confrontations, many people died. The aftermath of the gun attack created a multiplier effect in which Chief Stanley Emegha's two buildings were razed down and his youngest brother, Emeka was killed. The same crisis witnessed the death of two policemen and two members of the Vanguard group. One of the police personnel that died was identified as Inspector Akpan. The AK 47 used by Inspector Akpan for his operational routine was also stolen but later recovered by the police. The police also lost their Toyota Siena vehicle in the incident. Hoglund and Nilsson (2022) have maintained that high-profile violence like the assassination of political leaders, massacres, attacks on buildings of strategic importance broadens the trend of violence within an environment.

1. Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted on elite theory. The theory maintain that community affairs are better managed by few persons. The theory maintains that the role of the communal elite in the management of communal matters is inevitable considering their existential experiences (Ani & Uwizeyimana, 2019). The theory also holds and maintains that social order in societies is maintained through consensus and conformity with the collective idea of the elite. Central in theory is the place of existential success of townsmen in sustaining societal order. It is the strong influence of the political elite and the need to defend their values and network that made the followers of the opposing actors to clash with each other leading to the loss of lives and properties in Edda. It should be noted that in political violence, the "targets and types of violence seem to vary widely and include the assassination of candidates, intimidation of their families and supporters, mob violence against certain communities and impact on bystanders" (von Borzyskowski & Saunders, 2022: 309; Chaturvedi, 2005; Collier & Vicente, 2012; Robinson & Torvik, 2009). The primary targets of a mutually hurting political violence include groups that are both partisan and non-partisan targets.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative study on political violence in the African community called Edda. It used primary and secondary data from the field to develop its content. A number of key informant interviews (KIIs) and field discussions from the violent environment were used to develop the subject of the research. A number of the key informant respondents presented their opinion anonymously.

The respondents are made up of male and female gender. The researcher randomly selected a number of published newspapers, journals and other scholarly works in order to interpret the general theme of political violence and used them to develop the study. It should be noted that all the materials selected for the study were thematically interpreted and included in the part of the study where it validly explains a main idea.

Table 1. Stakeholders' Responses to Political Violence

Communities	% Response	Main Nature	Government Intervention	Individual Response	Main NGOs Response	Impact on the Environment
Owutu	100% KIs	Death Destruction of properties	Curfew, securitisation	Relocation Personal safety	None	Death Damages
Amangwu	100% KIs	Fear	Political Communication	Relocation Personal safety	None	hunger Damages
Ekoli	100% KIs	Fear, death, Destruction of property	Peace communication Curfew securitisation	Relocation Personal safety	None	Death, poverty Property Damages

Source: Author's fieldwork (2023)

The Findings

The impact of the Edda political violence is multi-faceted. First it led to the destruction of lives and properties. The killing of the State APC Chairman's Escort Commander, Inspector Festus Akpan as well as the innocent Edda people that died in the course of the development of the crisis remains highly regrettable. This is due to the fact that no live can be easily recreated by any man. Kalu Egwu, who lost a brother to the political violence maintained that the killing was senseless and premeditated, and adding that the community had been on lockdown as a consequence of the crisis in the area. The Prado jeep of Chief Stanley Emegha and the vehicles of Dr. John Ama Ibiam, Chief Simon Igwe Iroh and Mr. Okechukwu Eze as well as the Stanley's security backup Hilux van that was driven by Akpa Kelechi were all damaged in the historic political violence. The Hilux van was later burnt down to ashes on 30th December, 2022 along Omaghuzo Nkagbogo farm road possibly due to the inability to quickly sale it to those that buy second hand vehicles as its original documents could not be found. Another reason that could be stated for setting the vehicle ablaze is that it will help in covering up the disciples of the political violence as they could easily be tracked down by security agents in the car. The burning of Chief Stanley's twin residential houses at Ekoli Edda and the murder of his younger brother, Emeka Orji Ama, who was trailed to his house along Ugbo road, Ekoli Edda,

There was also the problem of unimaginable fear that was created when the Police, Ebubeagu and other armed persons began to shoot sporadically at the Ekenta Market Square, Ekoli Edda. That shooting created massive fear in the people (KII-2023, VIII).

This was bad for a community with incessant threats of IPOB attack and communal crisis with their Cross-River neighbor called Erei of Biase Local Government Area. The implication became that the possible first suspicion was that the hitherto historic enemies have invaded the community hence the Ekoli youths started sounding traditional alarm as warning to villagers of the danger that was imminent. This traditional alarm communication forced many of the villagers to start running out of the community, while others went to prepare with their agro-weapons to confront the assumed foreign enemy that have invaded their land. It was in the confrontations that followed which led to the unfortunate death of Mr. Eseni Kalu Egwu and critical attack on Onu Eku of Ekoli Edda, who later landed in the hospital under critical condition.

Sequel to the political violence in the area, the then Governor Umahi immediately directed the Commissioner of Police to arrest all the actors that were involved in the destruction of lives and properties and endeavour to bring them to justice (KII-2023, IV).

It was on the strength of the intelligence report at the disposal of the governor, which revealed that the political violence if not checked would turn into a dangerous intra-communal crisis that made him to suspension all forms of social gatherings in Edda until normalcy returned in order to control the further breakdown of law and order as well as the abortion of communal peace. Recall that under the leadership of

Governor Umahi, he often strategically arrests all political stakeholders and elite members of the community that are engaged in any form of communal or inter-communal crisis as a way of curtailing their influence in sponsoring crisis however, the strategy had not worked perfectly in many crisis-ravaged parts of Ebonyi State.

The Ebonyi State Governor at that time headed by Engineer David Umahi declaration of curfew in the community was a way of manage movements that would lead to further attack and counter attacks.

The period of curfew witnessed the heavy presence of security men in the community and wider Edd clan at large (KII-2023, III).

To lockdown a community due to the effect of the political violence created many forms of multiplier security effects especially on poor farmers and those men that depended on daily income to feed their families. When the government locks down a bread winner through the declaration of curfew, the man or woman that must go out to fetch his or her means of survival, will find it extremely difficult to feed his or herself as well as his or her dependents. Within the period, the government sent a combined team of the police, army and the Ebubeagu security outfit, who were meant to create a buffer situation and reduce the chances of further mayhem. It should be noted that in addition to keeping the peace of the society, the activities of the joint security team also intensified fear and militarized the area thereby preventing a number of persons from going for their normal businesses even when the state government had lifted the ban on social gathering in the area. The killing of Esien Kalu Egwu on the alleged suspicion that he was imposed on the people as the new Home Branch Youth Chairman created leadership crisis and fear. It also reduced the public participation of liberal youths in community program. There were youths who will never want to be associated with any forum characterized by threats and the implication remained the winding –down in the number of youth activeness and membership in the community. Unfortunately,

Esien has suffered historic abuse and attack in the community when he was nearly beaten to death at Ekenta Ekoli Edda on 23rd August, 2010 by unknown criminals after destroying his motorcycle (KII-2023, IX).

It is generally known that those who fear political violence tend to be passive on matters relating to politics (Ani 2013; Anyika & Ani, 2022). It is also worthy of note that this was not the first time there is an assassination attempt on the life of Chief Stanley Okoro Emegha.

It is on record that he narrowly escaped death on 23rd July, 2013 during the councillorship primary election at Ogboaja Ndi-Nnachi Ekoli Edda. It turned out that as he was addressing his audience, trying to explain to them the reason for the disqualification of one of the aspirants for the primary election, the gang allegedly led by Ndukwe Ukpai Mba, Kalu Nnachi Ugwu and Chima Etta Eseni confronted him brandishing guns. In an attempt to escape from the scene, the gang blocked the road with obstacles. One of his strong supporters, Kalu Ogbu who attempted to remove the barricade was shot dead (KIIs-2023, VII).

Surprisingly, apart from the fact that Eni wrote a petition through a lawyer on behalf of the wife of the deceased, accusing Stanley of the murder, many of the local actors of administration in the community who were supposed to uphold justice were suspected to have compromised their office. Instead, a number of them joined to organize a demonstration at the State Police Command Headquarters, Abakaliki, where they demanded for the arrest and prosecution of Stanley as the killer of Kalu Ogbu. The women folk as a group in the protest was led by Lilian Akanu; Ekoli Band of Hope Union was led by their President and Ama Okoro Uche while the traditional institution was allegedly led by Chief Oji Egbeke. The Commissioner of Police declared Stanley wanted on account of the demonstration at that time. However, the evidence of Chukwudi Okoro Ette (aka Afaeto) who was with Kalu Ogbu at the time he was shot was the game changer that exonerated Stanley from blame.

Today in Ekoli and Edda at large, there is currently a great diversity of opinions and ideas on the peace process. This is due to the complexity and interwoven nature of the popular and unpopular actors in the Edda political history. There is also a high degree of fragmentation amongst the real agents of mayhem and those

they are particularly angry with. And these have the capacity to make the violence intractable, thereby pushing historic mayhem to manifest in other ways in the future. Competition or close election date have remained a fundamental driver of political violence (von Borzyskowski & Saunders, 2022) as also documented earlier in this study. The competition for state power or power within the political party can even drive higher risks of violence and higher intensity of mayhem (von Borzyskowski & Saunders, 2022). One of the fundamental interpretation on the role or otherwise of the two powerful APC elite in Edda is that of political competition for increased influence communal politics. The second explanation could be the quest to be very influential in determining the push and pull effects of APC party dynamics in Edda. Consequently, the next part, which is the central focus of this study would centre around the path to post violence peacebuilding.

Discussion

The complexity of the political violence in Edda and the mutually hurting stalemate it has generated on communal peace makes it fundamental that the path to peacebuilding will involve the conflict resolution approach, security approach, the right-based approach and other strategies. The question remains; how can the best possible balance between carrots and sticks approach to peace be used in promoting communal peacebuilding in Edda? It is often a combination of strategies that creates the opportunity for inclusion and exclusion that is needed in peacebuilding irrespective of the conflict terrain (Paffenholz, 2014). There is therefore the need to manage the negative wind of globalization and its impact on African political culture (Ani, 2014). The machiavelinisation of Nigerian politics using realist approach to power should be largely discouraged amongst the power elite in Edda. Community leaders need to encourage their townsmen that are into politics to follow the path of peace and ethical politics in the quest for power at all level bearing in mind that they collectively own the community and the greater percent of the population will retire home to the Edda ancestral land, alive or dead.

The path to post electoral violence peace is not self-implementing hence, it needs to be strategically followed and acted upon by the erstwhile or hitherto political enemies through persuasion and negotiations. It is the period of ripeness that Edda communal actors can fruitfully ensure the planting of the peacebuilding, some years after peacemaking that stopped the political violence. There is also the need for a strong communal or party driven mediation initiative (Zartman & Soto, 2010). Mediation initiative here will focus not on already achieved reconciliation but wider peacebuilding. This will help in de-escalating Edda as a place with the regular manifestation of electoral violence. This communal driven peacebuilding is fundamental as it will have wider influence on the townsmen as against party-driven peace processes. Again, the influence of power and wealth influence is likely going to be better managed using communal peacebuilding that will directly affect the people considering that power strategies in de-escalation has multiple advantages but goes with inherent challenges (Zartman & Aurik, 1991).

The Edda people need to “incorporate more specificity about the measures to prevent, deter and suppress such different forms of violence during peace process” (Hogland & Nilson, 2022:301). A neutral committee should be set up to properly mediate and arbitrate the case between the two gladiators. The focus of the communal settlement of the two political heavyweight would be to attain elite settlement (Burton & Higley, 1992) and that can only work if driven by non-partisan elite from Edda. The community leaders if they feel that they do not have the expected elite or social status can create a mixed team of ‘peace brokers’ (Touval, 1982) or peace negotiators (Zartman & Berman, 1982; Touval & Zartman, 1985).

Expiatory service and ritual should be organized and conducted by the elders of the community with Oat taking to appease the gods of the land over the desecration of the land by the spilling of blood by ‘brothers.’ A reconciliatory service should be conducted, where the two must be present after dialogue and reconciliation have been achieved. The role of spoilers of peace in such communal driven reconciliation should be undermined or eliminated by communal elite. According to Stedman (2003) spoilers can be found on the inside as well as outside of a peace process.

Again, the use of security approach by the then Ebonyi State Government in managing the violence has faced strong criticisms. First, the security forces failed to understand the multiplier negative effects of their presence and they could not recognize the deep political nature of the conflict (Hogland & Nilson, 2022).

The security forces rounded up as many youths as possible and unleashed coercive force on them, which naturally pushed them more towards further reliance on violence (Bhatia, 2005; Haspeslagh, 2021). There is the need for dialogue with the communal youths, especially those that suffered one form of harm or another in the course of the violence. That will create the sense of psychical healing in their minds, which is necessary for their continuous pursuit of peace and not creating the bank of revenge in their hearts and minds.

The conflict resolution approach that would be championed by the elite of the community must extend beyond the two key popular actors and involve others that were affected by the multiplier effects of the hurting mayhem directly. This conflict resolution approach and right based approach will involve long standing debates and dialogues on peace versus justice as well as a strong debate between those who wants idealist approach to communal peace and those that desire realist security approaches (Zarman, 1989). Hogland and Nilson (2022) maintains that the conflict resolution strategy is widely criticized by scholars for been so soft on the violent actors. The truth remains that if the community says your sins are forgiven to the young men that championed the violence, they may likely be re-enforcing such violent behaviours however, if a mild normative sanction was meted on them without necessarily breaching the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it will send a message of deterrent to future sons of violence. Rather than punishing them crudely, dialogue should be combined in the quest for peace so that they will not been seen as wilding the stick or carrot alone could be seen as a way of rewarding violence.

The dialogue and mediation approach with the little stick approach will contribute in managing the violent power-race in the community. There is no doubt that the violent-power-race in Edda has the capacity of cementing the existing power relations in the community towards a 'cold war' level. The truth remains that when violent actors in a community irrespective of their status are allowed to determine the pace of communal peace, negotiations and security, it will foster the absolute corruption of coercive power within the community as well as the open and covert impunity that goes with it. It should also be noted that the rise of military rule and democratic governance, which gave the governors right to appoint traditional rulers strengthened the use of security approach in peacebuilding notwithstanding the inherent fear created therein. The diversity that liberal democracy has brought to peace process are numerous (Baker, 2001) and the Edda community should leverage on that starting from the transformation of communal leadership, where apostles of peace that are cut across different economic strata should be appointed. The elderly Edda politicians that are octogenarians must also consider retiring home or closer home in order to give leadership to younger politicians and guide the youth when necessary on how to uphold communal peace.

The truth of peacebuilding dilemma remains that peace negotiations sometimes involves or could involve a trade-off in terms of controlling the actors in the hurting violence, unravelling injustices and seeking solutions to address the injustices and heal the psychology of violence on the people (Touval, 1995). In traditional Igbo societies, communities and clans had their traditional leaders that were selected or hereditary due to the legitimacy conferred on them. These rulers in turn strengthened the age grade and other social security groups that have to work fearlessly in ensuring that sons and daughters of violence and crisis are eliminated from the communities. However, considering that many of these legitimate and heroic leaders cannot accept to be pushed around by the governors, many state governors began to create autonomous communities with kings appointed by the governors. These politically appointed kings are often unofficially forced to say or do whatever the governor wants as a way of ensuring that they continue to drink from the spring of largess flowing from the government houses thereby undermining their peacebuilding and developmental influence in their communities.

There is also the need for Edda societal leaders to identify the foot-soldiers in addition to the main actors that undermines communal peace. In this area, focus should be on those Stephen Stedman call "leaders and factions who view a particular peace as opposed to their interests and who are willing to use violence and undermine it" (Stedman, 2003). The first approach will be to dialogue. At this stage all the people who were direct and indirect actors in the hurting violence are brought for peace negotiation at segmented or class-based negotiation meetings in order to manage the ego and interest of the elite involved in the violence. Inclusion of all the actors and exclusion of spoilers to the peace process in the peace negotiations can be achieved by community leaders if they engage in segmented peace talks (Paffenholz, 2011). Recall that when many of the

townsmen are collectively arrested using the strong military or police instrument, they are often kept in long police detention or remanded in prison for months without trial, thereby denying them opportunity to contribute in constructive discussion on the path to communal peace. The reality remains that their contribution towards peacemaking is often insightful considering that they have advanced information or knowledge of the violence dynamics in the community that the liberal townsmen are not privy to. Again, they will hardly accept any form of peace mediation from the persons that have initially used the military or security path to peace on them. Again, the use of security strategy by the Ebonyi State Government also creates its peculiar human right abuses on the society. The activities of the security personnel in the bid to ensure peace in Edda did threaten and undermine the right of a number of innocent Ekoli Edda people in the wake of the mutually hurting violence.

Conclusion

This study has presented the immediate and remote causes of the Edda political violence. It revealed that what started as an intra-party crisis by two major political gladiators of the APC in Ekoli Edda grew in its form and scope to affect the wider members of the Edda clan. It led to the loss of lives and the destruction of properties. It also threatened communal peace and youth leadership. Consequently, the study used the elite theoretical framework to analyze the content of the data collected from primary and secondary sources in developing the article. The paper therefore outlines the different policy postures that could be used in the quest for peacebuilding while recommending the combination of the carrot and stick approach as a more sustainable path that should be driven by the community heads and octogenarian politicians in that area. The limitation of the study remains the limited willingness of many respondents to comment on the violent political experience that shock the peace of the community. This unwillingness to respond easily to interviews was rooted on fear of misrepresentation and possible attacks from opposition groups within the community.

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