

The Nigeria Civil War: A Historical Analysis 1967-1970

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Received 15 December 2023; Accepted 20 January 2024; Published 19 February 2024

ABSTRACT: The years 1967-1970 remained a major landmark in the history of Nigeria as it marked the period the nation (young) witnessed catastrophic unrest which shook its fabrics to its foundations. Lives and properties of no accurate count were lost, and trust and confidence were broken. National unity, therefore, has come under serious threat. The major question for this research is to interpret the historical event within the context of the post-conflict period Nigerian environment. Most of the writings on the Nigerian civil war fail to analyze the war and its effects on contemporary Nigerian politics. Therefore the research aims at; a contextual historical analysis of the Nigerian civil war in view of contemporary Nigeria's political stability. The research is designed as a pure qualitative work and data is obtained through both primary and secondary sources. The face-face oral interview is conducted among five elders who participated/witnessed the war (Creswell, 2015; Greg, 2014), the information gathered was manually corroborated with the available primary source materials in archives and secondary works found in both hard copy prints namely; textbooks, journals, magazines, and audio-visual programs. The findings show that since the war unity of the country has remained more fragile and mutual distrust exists among sections of the country. The significance of the research lay in understanding contemporary Nigerian politics and its relationship with the civil war. It is vital to politicians and administrators in addition to being a contribution to the maturity of the Nigerian civil war.

Keywords: Nigeria, Federalism, Igbo, Biafra, civil war, conflict, politics,

Citation: Rabi, J., and Ogbonna, C. L. (2024). The Nigeria Civil War: A Historical Analysis 1967-1970. *Direct Res. J. Edu. Voc. Studies* Vol. 6(1) Pp. 1-16. This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0.

INTRODUCTION

Civil wars are orthodoxly viewed as situations of coordinated, sustained violence between political entities that are subject to a common authority at the outset of hostilities (Kalyvas, 2005; Levy and Thompson, 2011). Following this widely accepted definition, civil war entails coordinated, sustained violence between a government and a rebel organization or between two or more insurgent groups. Civil wars are the most common forms of conflict since the end of the Second World War in 1945. Civil wars can be particularly destructive hence they take lives and tear apart families and communities, destroy physical infrastructure and human capital, seize socio-economic development, and leave behind indelible marks on the collective psyche of the people. The Nigerian civil war which took place between July 6, 1967, and January 15, 1970, was a fierce conflict between the

Nigerian state and the secessionist Biafra forces. The fracas has attracted many comments, analysis, and observations. It has equally reshaped the political, social, and inter-group relations in the country. The Federalists (Nigerian state) conceived of the conflict differently from Biafra and some portions of the international community. For the federalists, it was a secessionist war against the state while the Biafra viewed it as a fight for nationhood and liberation. To many in the international community, it was a religious war while many others saw it as an ethnic cleansing battle against the Igbo. Many writers Blattman, C., & Miguel, E. (2010); Falola, Mahdi, Uhomohi, Anyanwu (1991); Folade (2011); Obasanjo (1981) maintained that the crisis was not just a mere riot but the result of long and accumulated issues that had created animosity among the populace since the emergence of

the Nigerian state in 1914. These grievances hunted the country in different dimensions until the war ensured.

To the present era even after over fifty years since the conflict mutual distrust still exist between the Igbo and the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba. In general form, between the Eastern and Northern and the Western sections of the country. There is open contempt of each other and that is affecting national politics and consequently the nation-building process. The quest for leadership of the country by the Igbo is feared by the other sections. This is because historical events in the past have demonstrated that the Igbo have an ambition that is likely to unmake the Nigerian state.

The short period an Igbo led the country (under Ironsi 1966) the other two sections of Northern and Western Nigerian shared experiences that are only better imagined as the constitution and structure of the nation was changed from a federal system to a unitary type in addition to other happenings created much contempt among Nigeria and that still continued.

Falola, Mahdi, Uhomoihi, and Anyanwu (1991) observed that part of the remote reasons for the civil war was the imbalance in the educational and military manpower which the Igbo have a better advantage. They have about 80% of officers in both the army, and civil service and shrouded by a feeling of superiority towards other citizens Falola and Heaton (2010). Thus, the Igbo feels it is a natural destiny they have to lead Nigeria (Azikwe, 1966). On the other hand, the Northern region was perceived by the other two regions first as being too large hence it dominated parliamentary decisions given the number of Northern representatives in the house. This is equally enhanced by its population and land mass which the North commands hence its overwhelming position in the nation's politics.

The gap for this research is that while earlier writers emphasize the causes and causes of the war little attention has been paid to the contemporary effects of the conflict on the political history of Nigeria. The embattled Gowon regime though came up with the (3Rs) reconstruction rehabilitation and reconciliation with many institutional structures like; the NYSC and other physical and moral efforts yet, the quest for a Biafra country is still high in the minds of many Igbo to date.

Literature on the Nigerian Civil War

Much has been written on the Nigerian civil war like others across the globe. There are several civil or internal violent conflicts in different nations and at different epochs of human history some of which are: The American civil war 1860 (Britannica, 2020), the French civil war (1798), the Liberia civil war (1989-1997 and 1999-2003), Sierra Leone (1991-2002), Chinese (1927-1949), Spanish (1936-1939), Angola (1975-2002), Somalia (2006-2009), Rwanda (1990-1994), Congo

(1960-1965), Sudan (1955-1972 & 1983-2005), Malaysia (1948-1960) and Nigerian Civil war(1967-1970) among several others. Each of the variants has its own uniqueness which is at the level of causes, course, and effect.

The Nigerian civil war which is the subject of this research has received much writing by different scholars, non-scholars, actors, and spectators some of whom include: A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (1975) "The Genesis of the Nigerian Civil War and the Theory of Fear"; Adewumi Falode (2011) The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970; Falola and Heaton (2008). A History of Nigeria; Philip O. Okolo (2010) The Nigerian Civil War. Its cause(s), strategies and lessons and Olusgun Obasanjo (1981) My Command. An Account of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970.

Beginning with Kirk-Greene (1975) *The Genesis of the Nigerian Civil War and the theory of Fear* where he asserts that the NCW can be explained from different levels. He identified these levels as long term and immediate factors responsible for the crisis. Greene saw political competition covering inter regional economic rivalry, elite infighting, religious and class contradictions and struggles that brought about the civil war of 1967 to 1970 in Nigeria.

The article continued by noting that the federal government of Nigeria's opinion of the causes of the war was its view that the failure of the Nigerian constitution at independence in 1960 to recognize the feelings and aspirations of the minority groups and communities for self-determination which affected the balance of power at the Centre and that the age-long rooted problem consumed the first republic. Furthermore, the article maintained that both the Gowon's government and Ojukwu (Biafra leader) had their own umbrages of the defunct administration as they lament people's disillusionment in the civilian regime of Balewa. For Ironsi, his concern was with the rigid compliance with regionalism which was also largely responsible for the collapse of the first republic. Accordingly, he concluded that the Nigerian intellectuals have written off the first republic because;

The rulers used powers that they held constitutionally to do unconstitutional things, Nigerian census that were not censuses, elections that were not elections, and governments that were not governments.

Kirk-Greene agreed with the assessment of the world press on the causes of the crisis which erupted on 15th January 1966 as deep-rooted division of the country that gave political advantage to the North to gain supremacy over the other regions, the unholy romance between Akintola and Ahmadu Bello, Achille's heeling of Balewa's administration despite its celebrated corruption

that has become the most accepted way of governmental business.

Falode Adewunmi James (2011) *The Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970: A revolution?* is of the view that the Nigerian civil war was a catastrophe that overtook the emergent Nigerian state from 1967 to 1970. The thirty (30) months of the civil war were a child of colonial and post-colonial crises. He also maintained that the origins of the civil war could be located in a multiplicity of factors spanning from the immediate causes which include the military coups d'état of January 15, and July 29, 1966. Further factors termed remote include; the British amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the census, the Richard Constitution of 1946 which gave the Northern region a size double the other two, the census crisis of the mid-1950s, the regional election crisis in Western Nigeria in 1965; the Tiv riots of 1964; the Federal Elections of 1964; the killing of the Igbo(s) living in Northern Nigeria from May to September 1966 (Cervenka, 1972; Oyeweso, 1992); the structural imbalance of the Nigerian federation; and, most importantly, the asymmetrical distribution of power among the various ethnic and geopolitical groups (Adeleke, 2008).

The declaration of the state of Biafra by Lt Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu on May 30, 1967, was very instrumental in the immediate escalation of the civil war. Nigerian polity was geographically divided into 3 regions namely the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions. The Igbo are domiciled in the Eastern region. Ojukwu's action excised the eastern part of the country from the federation. Thus, it is the duty of the federal government of Nigeria to maintain the unity and cooperate existence of the country and save it from the east's secession from the federation and Ojukwu's desire to ensure the survival of Biafra which started the civil war in 1967.

Philips O. Okolo (2010). *The Nigerian Civil War Its causes, strategies and lessons* were not different in stating the causes of the war.

He like other writers identified the factors on the basis of remote and immediate forces. In the introduction to the book, Okolo X-ray the multiplicity of the configuration of Nigerian society. In the words of Sir, Hugh Clifford described Nigeria as "a nation of independent native states, that are widely divided from one another, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers." The unification of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 like many speculators and writers was seen as the foundation of political imbalance and inconvenience for the so-forged state. He maintained that the Richard constitution of 1946 rather amplified regionalism than unified the country like the subsequent Macpherson constitution (1951) also maintained increased power at the regional levels and weaker central authority. 1953 epitomized the widening gap between the regions and between the central authorities following the split of

opinion over the quest for accepting an earlier date for independence which the North rejected the final result culminating into the Kano riots.

Philip agreed with Obasanjo (1981) that the failure of Willink's commission to recommend the creation of more states in 1958 for Nigerian federalism equally contributed to the instability in the evolution of Nigeria as a nation-state in the 1950s. The political leaders who had strong and firm political bases in their regions fought hard and intensely for maximum powers for the regions which weakened the central government hence they became not nationalistic but regionalist politicians. To that effect, the ugly embers of tribalism, ethnicity, and sectionalism that was so endemic, and fanned into a deadly flame by all the political leaders. Thus, the leaders re-opened the crest of these cancerous elements and ignorance of the people to power, at the cost of national unity and the nation.

General Olusegun Obasanjo a Nigerian Civil War veteran in his book titled: *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970* provides an eyewitness account of the war and was elaborate on the event surrounding the pre-war, wartime, and even some aspects of the post-war era. The work maintained that rather than regionalism ensuring and preserving national unity, it became its bane. Thus, there was diffusion as against the fusion of the three units (regions). According to Gen. Obasanjo: "The only point on which Nigerian political leaders spoke with one voice was the granting of political independence by the British- and even then they did not agree on the timing." (Obasanjo, 1981). Now with the granting of independence in 1960, all the dirt swept under the carpet resurfaced. Nigeria was now beset by strings of political problems that stemmed from the lopsided nature of the political divisions of the country and the type of the existing federal constitution, and the spirit in which it operated.

The first post-independence conflict was over the defense pact (agreement) between Great Britain and Nigeria, which was seen as "an attempt (by Britain) to swindle Nigeria out of her sovereignty", by contracting with Nigeria to afford each other such assistance as may be necessary for mutual defense and to consult together on measures to be taken jointly or separately to ensure the fullest cooperation between them for this purpose. It was viewed as an unequal treaty. Through student demonstrations and vehement opposition by the general public and members of the Federal House of Representatives, the agreement was abrogated in December 1962. The above episode was simple compared to later developments in the country's turbulent political history. The census conducted in 1962 was alleged to be riddled with malpractices and inflation of figures of such astronomical magnitudes that the Eastern Region found the result unacceptable. It was not but the second census carried out in 1963 was accepted, even

though there was a lot of reservations on some of the figures. Meanwhile, the people of the Middle Belt had grown increasingly intolerant of the NPC rule of the North. The Tiv, one of the major tribes in the Middle Belt, openly rioted for almost three years (1962 -1965). This was followed by the biggest crisis –the general election of 1964. The election was characterized by irregularities and thus, alleged to be neither free nor fair. It is important to note that, all devices unimaginable/unimaginable were said to have been employed by the ruling parties in the regions to eliminate opponents. Against this background, the Chairman of the Electoral Commission himself acknowledged that there were proven irregularities. The President, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, declined to appoint a Prime Minister in light of these allegations. Thus, the President and Prime Minister Sir, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, were both seeking the support of the Armed Forces independently.

This as a matter of fact marked the beginning of the first involvement of the Armed Forces in partisan politics. To this end, after four anxious days, the nation waited until the president announced that he had appointed the incumbent Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to form a broad-based government. The same could not be said of the Western Region election of 1965.

The rigging and irregularities in the election were alleged to be more brazen and more shameful. Law and order broke down completely leading to the complete state of anarchy. Arson and indiscriminate killings were committed by a private army of thugs of political parties. Law-abiding citizens lived constantly in fear for their lives and properties all through that period. This exactly was the situation/state of affairs when the coup of 15 January 1966 took place. Part of the immediate cause of the war points at the Western regional election of October 1965 which lit up the explosion of that day (Obasanjo1981). The aim of the coup was to establish a strong, unified, and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife. The outcome of the halfhearted and ill-fated coup was a change of political balance in the country. Major Nzeogwu's (the leader of the coup) aim for the coup was not borne out of its method, style, and results. All the politicians and senior military officers killed were from the North and Western regions except a political leader and a senior Army officer from the Mid-West and the East respectively.

According to Obasanjo (1981), "Nigeria Federation came at birth sick and the bedridden nation collapsed in January 1966." Since independence in Mid-West 1960 to January 1966, the country had been in serious chaos; but the situation became more grievous with the coup. Most of those who planned the coup were major in Eastern extraction, thus it was perceived particularly by the Northerners as a deliberate plot to dominate the country by eliminating the political heavyweights in the North. The high euphoria of the coup and ostensible relief given by it

in the south was brought to a halt when the succeeding Military Government of Maj Gen. J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi, an Easterner, brought to bear its plans. Things would have been different had Ironsi displayed a greater sense of understanding of the Northerners, he could have capitalized on the relief that immediately followed the coup. He did not only fail to take advantage of the initial favorable euphoria of the coup, but he also could not figure out what exactly to do with the ring leaders of the coup that were arrested. He neither knew how to treat them either as heroes or villains to be court-martial as mutineers and murderers. Although military Governors were appointed to take control of the administration of the regions, in the North, the anesthetized reaction in certain parts turned to premeditated silence and a "wait and see" attitude. This cold-footed reaction gradually turned to resentment, capping into the May 1966 riots in the entire North during which most Easterners living in the region were attacked and killed.

On 29 July 1966, the counter-coup staged by the Northern military officers had two aims: to revenge the East, and the breakup of the country. However, the wise advice of well-meaning Nigerians and influential foreigners prevailed. The coup in any case took the life of the Head of State, Maj. Gen Aguiyi Irons and many other senior officers of Eastern Extraction. Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, then the most senior officer from the Northern and then the Chief of Staff, of the Nigerian Army, emerged as Head of State after initial fear. The pace of chaos, confusion, and indiscriminate killings across the entire country was the result of the lack of planning and the revengeful intentions of the second coup. Even the organizer of the coup could not manage the general lawlessness and chat recklessness of looting and arson which spread through the North like wildfire on 29 September 1966. The situation was so horrible that Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, the then Head of State, in a broadcast to the people of the North in September said;

I receive complaints daily that up till now Easterners living in the North are being killed and molested and their property looted. It appears that it is going beyond reason and is now at a point of recklessness and irresponsibility. (Obasanjo, 1981).

Earlier on, attempt at preserving the unity of the nation and also stop the incessant killing of the Igbo, a conference of the representatives of the regions was held in Lagos on 9 August and the following recommendations were made:

- i) Immediate steps should be taken to post military personnel to barracks within their respective regions of origin.
- ii) A meeting of this committee or an enlarged body should take place to recommend in a broad outline the form of political association which the country should

adopt in the future

iii) Immediate steps should be taken to nullify or modify any provisions of any decree which assumes extreme centralization.

iv). The Supreme Commander should make conditions suitable for a meeting of the Supreme Military Council urgently as a further means of lowering tension.

Of these recommendations, the first was implemented in 13th August 1966 but marked the beginning of the end of unity among the military personnel as troops were redeployed to their various regions of origin, as aptly observed by Obasanjo (1981):

"This simple and seemingly innocuous action broke the last thread and split the institution symbolizing Nigeria's nationhood and cohesion which had been regularly tampered with by the politicians since 1962. The rift between the Eastern region and the rest of the country was total."

Thus, most of the civilians of Eastern Region origin that lived elsewhere lost confidence and returned home but only to become refugees (IDP Internally Displaced Persons) in their own country.

No other recommendations were fully implemented again except the nullification of the unification decree. There was the relentless pursuit of the policy with the implementation of the recommendation with regards to the posting of troops to barracks within their region of origin by the political leaders of the Western Region following the completion of the exercise in the Eastern Region. This was because of the fear that the Northern troop's domination and probably of the safety of personnel of Western Region origin.

With the relocation of troops and even the civilians within and abroad back to their home bases and the pipes already gushing oil the terrain was set for secession. The virulent exchange of words began with intensity between the North and Eastern Regions in their various Media. Early in 1967, General Ankrah of Ghana call a peace negotiation meeting of the Supreme Military Council of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Eastern Region Military Governor, Lt. Col. Ojukwu in Aburi, Ghana.

Ojukwu was so prepared and made his choices in his bargain or negotiation at the peace confab. Therefore Ojukwu scored a vital goal in his ambition. Walter Schwarz remarked: "Ojukwu got his way with little effort, by being the cleverest. He was the only one who understood the issue. Step by step the others came to acquiesce in the logic of Ojukwu basic thesis - that to stay together at all, the regions had first to draw apart.

Ojukwu understood that this meant, in effect, a sovereign Biafra (Eastern Region) and the end of the Federation. "Different interpretations were given to the Aburi resolutions by both the Federal Government of Nigeria

and the Biafra leaders each accusing the other of frustrating peace efforts. Ojukwu blamed the Federal Government for having bad faith and not keeping promises while the Federal Government accused Ojukwu of insincerity and manipulative tendencies. In a desperate move to deescalate tension, after a series of meetings and deliberations the Federal and Regional authorities came up with decree No. 8 of March 1967. Some of the features of the decree state viz:

On the other hand, the legislative and executive powers of the Regions have been fully restored and vested in their respective Military Governors. But the provisions of section 86 of the Constitution of the Federation ensures that no Region shall exercise its executive authority so as to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive authority of the Federation or to endanger the continuance of the federal government in Nigeria. 4. The provisions of section 70 of the Constitution of the Federation give powers to the Supreme Military Council to take over the executive and legislative functions of a Regional Government during any period of emergency which might be declared in respect of that Region by the Supreme Military Council, while those of section 71 gives the Supreme Military Council power to take appropriate measures against a Region which attempts to secede from the rest of the Federation, or where the executive authority of the Region is being exercised in contravention of section 86 of the Constitution. (<http://www.segundawodu.com/decree8.htm>).

As expected, Ojukwu completely rejected Decree No. 8 saying it is in contradiction with agreements reached at Aburi. The time has come that war seems inevitable hence every effort expended by such great statesmen and leaders as Gen. Ankrah, the late Emperor Hallie Selassie of Ethiopia, and the late Dr Martin Luther King yield no positive result, As Gen. Obasanjo observed:

Ojukwu was adamant, obstinate, and obdurate. He refused to attend the Supreme Military Government meeting called in March in Benin City, Nigeria to discuss outstanding issues and deliberate on the budget for the coming fiscal year. If he could not achieve his long-cherished ambition of ruling an independent Nigeria, he could break it up and rule an independent and sovereign "Biafra." Nothing could stop him.

As early as 7 June 1966, after the May incident in the North, Ojukwu was quoted as saying: *We are finished with the Federation. It is all a question of time.* "Ojukwu henceforth began to seize the Federal Government properties and funds in the region. A national commercial aircraft 'Fokker 27' was hijacked on a scheduled flight from Benin to Lagos. It was the culmination of all these and other reports that convinced the Federal Government of Ojukwu's planned secession bid hence Lt Col. Yakubu

Gowon, the Head of the Federal Government, enforced a total blockade of the East as war imminent. The situation on the ground therefore desired more serious military and administrative decisions so as to effectively break Biafra motives thus Federal Government Balkanized the country into twelve states instead dividing only the Eastern region which would have appeared inappropriate as earlier suggested. The 1967 decree and constitutional reorganization saw Eastern Region divided into three states Rivers, Enugu, and Bendel. Enugu reacted swiftly by proclaiming Eastern Nigeria as the independent sovereign state of "Biafra" on 30 May 1967. Throughout the month of June, both sides prepared for war. Each perfected its strategies and increase its military stockpile and mobilized troops to the points of confrontation awaiting the first bullet at the dawn of 6 July 1967 which came from the Federal side. Thus the battle has begun a new history of Nigeria has started.

The most comprehensive primary source document on the Nigerian civil war is that authored by one of the active participants in the war written by General Olusegun Obasanjo titled "My Command. An Account of the Nigerian Civil War" The work not only gave a detailed account of the remote and immediate causes of the crisis it also provides a first-hand explanation for each of the factors. The book shed light on the proceedings of the war by illuminating on every aspect of it development. In My Command, Obasanjo exposed the various intrigues within the body politics of both the Nigerian State and the Nation's military. He discussed the role played by mutual distrust and contempt among the rank and file of the military (with solid bases in their various regions/tribes of origin) in demoralizing the armed forces.

The book is detailed in explaining the military capability of the Igbo; their human and material preparedness, their compradors both within and outside the country, and above all their tactics clandestine as it was. The desperate condition of the rebels and their urgent need for survival was well epitomized in the work. Obasanjo's work is credited for its expositions on the hypocrisy of Western powers like the United States of America, Britain, Germany, France, and even South Africa. These and other not mentioned countries demonstrated support for the rebel and clearly denied the Nigerian state any assistance when most needed

THEORIES UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

Different reasons cause a civil war to occur in a given country as such scholars have theorized various polemics to explain such occurrence. Some of the claims point to economic, political, sociological (cultural, ethnic, and linguistic) and religious grounds. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) came up with the theory of "Greed and Grievance". In their earlier works, Collier (1998; 1999) and Collier and Hoeffler (1999b) emphasized a

possible distinction between two motives for civil war; "justice-seeking" and "loot-seeking". Politically, nations face either constitutional, representational, and or ideological challenges that result in civil crisis to the level of a civil war. This we have in the case of Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Syria, Libya, and Bosnia. Irrespective of the plethora of theories that explain the causes of civil war in society, this research settles for the greed proposition theory in its explanation and understanding of the reasons for the Nigerian civil war. Other theories are equally discussed to enhance further understanding by the readers and other scholars.

The greed proposition theory

A plethora of recent articles, explore the relationship between the abundance of natural resources and civil war (Addison, Le Billon, & Murshed, 2002; Berdal & Malone, 2000; Fairhead, 2000; Fearon, 2005; Le Billon, 2001b; Lujala, Gleditsch, & Gilmore, 2005; Humphreys, 2005; Olsson and Congdon Fors, 2004; Renner, 2002; Ross, 2004a, 2004b; Smillie, 2002). Advocates of the "greed" proposition claim that rebels are quasi-criminals with an economic, rather than a political objective, and argue that countries with an abundance of precious stones, minerals, and drugs are more at risk because they contain better financial opportunities for rebellion. Most quantitative investigations fail to demonstrate such a relationship, although the evidence is more supportive regarding the duration of the conflict. Oil dependence, usually proxied by a dummy for major oil exporters, appears to be more robustly associated with the risk of civil war this was the case of the Nigerian civil war which one can explain as equally caused by the greed of the Igbo/Biafra secessionists. The late discovery of oil in Nigeria by the British colonial authorities inhibit further colonial domination of the country because almost all the necessary documents have been signed in respect of granting political independence to Nigeria. However the Igbo led by Ojukwu became greedy for the oil wealth which they saw as a natural benevolence and hence the desperate determination to either rule the country or secede. The theory is apt in its explanations as it illuminates the grievance of the Igbo for failing to achieve its greedy desire for the control of the oil wealth and which resulted in frustration and consequent secession bid which brought about the civil war

For Ross (2004a), the lack of conformity among studies of the resource conflict nexus is due to different conflict data being analyzed and by using "overly broad" measures of primary commodities and civil war. While we agree with this critique, we argue that there is a more fundamental problem with the applied measures, namely, the lack of spatial reference. For the abundance argument to really hold up, we should find that rebel groups operate in the resource-rich regions, whenever

possible. Similar thoughts have been proposed by Le Billon (2001b, p. 566), who emphasizes that “the spatial distribution and lootability of resources are crucial with regard to the opportunities of belligerents to seize or retain control over resource revenues.” Unless the rebels control areas of extraction or transport routes, they cannot exploit the lootable commodity for financial gains. This explains why diamonds, not oil, were the prime source of revenue for UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), whereas oil rather than diamonds is a major motivation for the separatist FLEC (Liberation Front of the Cabinda Enclave) movement in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda (see Le Billon, 2001a).

Poverty theory of civil war

The second factor that is investigated in further detail is the level of poverty in the society. Several dominant studies claim that the most prominent and robust factor associated with the occurrence of civil war is poverty (Collier, Elliott, Hegre, Reynal-Querol, & Sambanis, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; de Soysa, 2002; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates, & Gleditsch, 2001; Sambanis, 2004). The mechanisms through which wealth prevents conflict are less established, though. Some argue that poverty lowers the choice of rebellion. According to Collier & Hoeffler; (Gates, 2002) when wages are low and unemployment rates go high, in particular among young males, there arises income forgone for joining a rebel group is distinctively low. Other scholars maintained that per capita income is a substitute for state strength, implying that richer regimes are in a position better to check the population and conduct effective counterinsurgencies (Fearon & Laitin, 2003).

Inevitably, poverty and wealth are spatially clustered within countries; even in societies with low levels of inequalities, some regions are more prosperous than others. Drawing on the literature on inequality and instability (Alesina & Perotti, 1996; Cramer, 2001; Gurr, 1970; Sen, 1973), it is expected that groups in the underprivileged regions are to be most prone to rise up to alter their status quo. This is backed by Horowitz (1985), who remarked that “rich regions are not the leading secessionists. They are far outnumbered by regions poor in resources and productivity.” Unfortunately, we do not have good indicators of wealth or social and economic inequalities for the conduct of measurements yet drawing from liberal scholarly inferences, Marxist-Leninist literature teaches about class contradiction which was a clear issue between Ojukwu and Gowon. The relationship between poverty and conflict is most certainly a reciprocal one in that conflict might also lead to poverty (Alesina & Perotti, 1996).

Infrastructure presumably follows the spatial pattern of health and unemployment in that the most inauspicious regions are also the regions with the least developed

road network. Moreover, roads are essential to the projection of state authority, and nowhere more so than in Africa. This explains why, according to Herbst (2000), colonial leaders who sought to physically extend their power were obsessed with roads. Roads provide the only form of access to most rural communities. Populated regions with few or no road connections to the capital are likely to be disadvantaged, politically as well as economically. Moreover, remote regions are harder to reach by government forces and are therefore ideal for organizing a rebellion. This compares well to Murshed and Gates (2005), who find that the Maoist insurgency has been particularly severe in the less developed Nepalese districts.

Theory of location

An important factor that in fact lies implicit in much of the theorizing on civil war is location, or more specifically, periphery. “The fundamental problem facing state-builders in Africa”, Herbst (2000) writes, “has been to project authority over inhospitable territories that contain relatively low densities of people.” A major advantage of rebel groups vis-a-vis the governments is that they can choose the area of operation. Guerrilla tactics are designed to minimize the possible damage inflicted by government forces. This means exploiting remote and generally inaccessible areas. This is consistent with Fearon and Laitin (2003), who notes that the main factors determining civil violence are conditions that favor insurgency. Insurgency is here understood as a “technology of military conflict characterized by small, lightly armed bands practicing guerrilla warfare from rural bases”. Along the same line of reasoning, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) surmise that low population density, low urbanization, and a dispersed population inhibit government capability and thus facilitate rebellion. A government is less able to maintain control of the hinterlands because of the sheer distance from the center of state power, because of inferior knowledge of local conditions, and often because of lack of support from the local population.

Buhaug, Halvard and Jan Ketil Rød. (2006), have observed that civil war is caused primarily by conditions that facilitate insurgency. Interestingly this claim holds that most of the conditions are not spatially different within countries a fact that is largely unnoticed in the literature. The authors therefore argued that the empirical study of civil war often suffers from a disturbing mismatch between theory and analysis. Despite standard statistical research are conducted wholly at the country level, most hypotheses actually pertain to sub-national conditions. Accordingly, quite a few commonly held views about the correlates of civil war are yet to be tested in an appropriate manner.

Put generally, there is a tendency to neglect the

location context of social phenomena (Abler, Adams, & Gould, 1971; Anselin, 1999; O'Loughlin, 2001; Starr, 2003). An illustration here is that: rough terrain suggests inaccessible landscape (mountains, jungles, swamps, etc.) which is favorable to rebel groups as it provides protection from less mobile government forces and facilitates guerrilla activities. This means that due to similarities in many aspects between Norway and Spain except for the Norwegian rough and Forest Mountain, the former is more at risk of conflict than Spain. It may not necessarily be so yet, this is essential particularly when studies use aggregated country statistics to test the (local) rough terrain argument.

Another popular notion of civil war relates to rough terrain. Mountainous and forested terrain is generally believed to facilitate rebel movements by providing shelter out of reach of government forces. For example, Fidel Castro's at first puny rebel movement had no other option than to hide in the Sierra Maestra mountains upon arrival in Cuba. Only when the revolutionary force grew stronger did it manage to conduct a more open warfare and push westwards toward Havana and, eventually, succeeded in its quest to expel General Batista (Perez-Stable, 1999).

Recognizing this, several African state leaders have (unsuccessfully) attempted to redistribute the population by force through "villagization" (Herbst, 2000). In several recent wars, including the ones in Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, and Liberia, the main rebel groups operate from bases beyond the national boundaries, often with the tacit or spoken support of the neighboring regime. Access to foreign soil not only eases access to important trade markets but also acts as a safeguard against government intrusion.

Ethno-national groups theory

A considerable number of contemporary civil wars involve fighting between members of different ethnic groups. The first step in uncovering systematic differences between ethnic and non-ethnic wars is to define these categories clearly. A natural starting point from which to begin is therefore a definition of ethnicity. In his seminal work on ethnic conflict, Horowitz's (1985) explains: Ethnic groups are defined by ascriptive difference, whether the indicator is color, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof. This is an inclusive concept of ethnicity [that facilitates] comparison (Horowitz 1985). Ethnicity "is close to Max Weber's conception of a 'subjective belief' in 'common descent'... ethnicity embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers 'tribes,' 'races,' 'nationalities,' and casts (Horowitz 1985). Drawing on this definition of ethnicity, I understand ethnic war as wars among communities (ethnicities) who are in conflict over the power relationship that exists between

those communities and the state. Kaufman also uses this definition in arguing that "opposing communities in ethnic civil conflicts hold irreconcilable visions of the identity, borders, and citizenship of the state. They do not seek to control a state which identify all sides accept, but rather to redefine or divide the state itself" (Kaufmann 1996, 138). However, not all wars that involve ethnic groups as combatants should be classified as ethnic wars. The issues at the core of the conflict must be integral to the concept of ethnicity as defined above. It is also pertinent to bear in mind that a significant determinant of an individual's identity is language which plays important part in ethnic politics (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983), People with distinctly different native languages are less likely to share a strong feeling of common identity. Language and other cultural distinctions are prone to be amplified by political and rebel leaders in order to rally support and recruit soldiers. Minority language is further likely to be associated with political discrimination. :

According to Sambanis (2001), roughly two-thirds of all civil wars between 1960 and 1999 are "identity conflicts", i.e. they are rooted in ethnic or religious differences. Still, the empirical evidence linking country-level ethnic composition to civil conflict is actually quite weak. Some studies claim a parabolic relationship, where polarized societies are more at risk than homogenous and highly fractionalized countries (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000; Ellingsen, 2000). Easterly and Levine (1997) further find that ethnic fractionalization has adverse effects on economic policies, and thus indirectly on conflict. Others fail to find a systematic link between ethnicity and risk of conflict (Fearon, 2005; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). This lack of general support which, of course, is strongly at odds with popular belief has led some to consider conditions under which ethnicity might be linked to conflict.

Sambanis (2003) maintained that the regional distribution of ethnic groups may be more important than the extent of ethnic fragmentation in the country as a whole. This corresponds well to Melander (1999), who finds that violent conflict is more likely if an ethnic minority makes up more than 70% of the population in its home region, and similar results are reported by Toft (2003). If this is indeed a general pattern, Africa should be particularly predisposed to identity conflict since African minority groups are more spatially concentrated than minorities in other regions (Herbst, 2000).

There are several theoretical perspectives on the causes of ethnic violence. Primordialists interpret ethnicity as an exceptionally strong affiliation that charges interethnic interactions with the potential for violence. Believers in ancient group hatred argue that ethnic conflict is rooted in old sources of enmity and memories of past atrocities that make violence hard to avoid. Proponents of primordial sociality theory argue that the strength of kinship ties promotes altruism in favor of the

genetic evolution of the group. The clash of cultures (or civilizations) theory suggests that irreconcilable differences due to cultural gaps cause fear and conflict that beget violence. Fear is also at the heart of the theory of the ethnic security dilemma, which suggests that territorial intermingling and mutual vulnerability exacerbate assurance problems that may lead to preventive wars by ethnic minorities who want to secede to increase their security.

Modernization may also cause conflict as economic and social change can accelerate and intensify group competition for scarce resources. This explanation may be particularly relevant where class cleavages and ethnic cleavages overlap. Finally, ethnic conflict may be the result of mobilization of ethnic groups by ethnic entrepreneurs or elites pursuing private interests and capitalizing on the availability of ethnic networks –i.e. ethnically defined groups that reduce transaction costs and uncertainty with respect to the enforcement of contracts. Elites may also socially construct ethnic identities or reinforce racial, religious, or linguistic cleavages in such a way as to produce new sources of friction and conflict.

While none of these perspectives can fully explain the causes of every ethnic war, each of them can help shed light on one or more wars. Together, they all share a conviction that ethnicity is a critical variable in explaining civil violence. Theories of international relations – neorealism and neoliberalism— are not fully capable of explaining the particularities of ethnic civil war. Neorealism is better at explaining war dynamics once war occurs, but cannot explain why ethnic divisions occur in the first place within the state since neorealists typically assume the state is a unitary actor. State failure parallels international anarchy, so neorealism –with its focus on the implications of anarchy— is relevant in explaining systemic influences on patterns of civil war.

However, neorealism cannot explain the role of ethnic divisions in the collapse of the state and anarchy is an endogenous outcome in the case of civil war, not a pre-existing structural condition. Further, neorealism cannot explain the role of leadership in mobilizing ethnic groups. Finally, according to some neorealists who believe in the stability of bipolar systems, the end of the Cold War bipolar system would be expected to cause an upsurge in internal conflict. Neoliberalism, by contrast, would not necessarily see the end of the Cold War as a catalyst for domestic conflict and would focus more on the role of domestic institutions as variables that might explain patterns of internal war. Neoliberalism is better able to explain why war breaks out, or how war can be prevented by cultivating political institutions that increase government legitimacy and defuse the potential for violence due to ethnic conflict. It is also a theory that lends itself to a better understanding of the role of non-state ethnic networks as well as of the ideological and

affective motives in ethnic conflict. Neo liberalism also explains the importance of economic motives in civil war since neorealism's hierarchy of interests would limit its focus to security motives as causes of civil war. Thus, it is important to borrow from these I.R. theories a concern with systemic and international variables and to integrate these with the various theories of ethnic conflict surveyed previously.

The commonalities of these theoretical perspectives can be usefully combined in a theory of ethnic civil war that enriches the economic theories of civil violence that have recently been formulated in influential papers by Collier and Hoeffler (2000) and Fearon and Laitin (2000). These economic theories view war as the outcome of an expected utility calculation: potential rebels evaluate their expected gains from war, given their grievances, and compare these expected gains to the expected losses, which include the opportunity costs of foregoing productive economic activity. Rebellion is therefore a rational decision and what determines whether or not rebellion will be observed is the financial viability of a rebel organization, which depends on the material benefits of rebellion. Warring parties are assumed to be rational though not infallible; war is assumed to generate private and public gains and losses that are unevenly distributed among the parties; and private gains explain why war may be rational for some groups when it is collectively irrational.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000) draw on insightful small economic literature on rebellion⁸ to model the demand for rebel labor as the outcome of underlying grievance and the supply of rebel labor as the result of an expected utility calculation of the economic costs and benefits of rebellion. As per capita income rises and as the taxable base increases, the opportunity costs of rebellion also increase, as does the government's ability to defend itself. At the same time, the greater the tax base the greater the potential economic gain from rebellion, which should increase the expected utility of rebellion.

Financial support from Diasporas and an abundance of lootable resources facilitate the financing of rebel movements and increase the probability of rebel victory. Finally, there are transaction and coordination costs to rebellion, which the authors proxy by the degree of ethno linguistic fractionalization (ELF). Following much of the literature on ethnicity and kinship, they argue that ethnic kin groups facilitate within-group coordination and hinder cross-group coordination. Thus, they hypothesize that coordination for rebellion is easier at low levels of ELF and it becomes harder as ethnic fractionalization increases. Thus, the authors argue that the more diverse a society, the less likely it is to experience a civil war.

Fearon and Laitin (2000) also argue that the determinants of insurgency are mainly economic and not political. They test the empirical fit of their theoretical model and find that primordialism, nationalism, and

cultural or civilization cleavages have no explanatory power as determinants of civil war magnitude or prevalence. They contradict neoliberal theory by arguing that lack of democracy is not an important determinant of war prevalence once they control for the level of economic development and economic growth, which they find to be the most salient determinants of civil war prevalence. Fearon and Laitin (2000) consider economic development (which they measure by per capita income) as a proxy for (a) the economic opportunity cost of rebellion and (b) the level of resources and relative competence of the state; in both ways, a higher level of economic development should reduce the risk of civil war. They also argue that civil war will occur when its economic opportunity costs are low and that lack of democracy and ethnic fragmentation are non-significant correlates of war.

The new economic theories of civil war do not consider if different war types have different causes and their research designs, which aggregate all civil wars in a single category, implicitly suggest that there are no such differences. In what follows, I will draw on the theories of ethnic conflict surveyed previously and on I.R. theory more generally, to develop testable hypotheses that will lead to a more systematic test of the differences between war type and will question the applicability of the economic theories of civil war to the subset of ethnic civil wars.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000) use the concept of ethnic fragmentation as a proxy for the coordination costs of a rebellion. They argue that, the greater the ethnic fragmentation, the greater the coordination costs and the lower the risk of onset of civil war. They present empirical evidence that ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF) is actually not a significant determinant of the onset of civil war; and that ethnic dominance is actually harmful since it allows an ethnic group to oppress the minority and significantly increases the risk of onset of civil war. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2001) find a significant parabolic relationship between ethnic fragmentation and the prevalence of civil war, which lends support to the Collier and Hoeffler (2000), but this analysis combines the concepts of war onset and duration and should not be contrasted directly with the findings on war onset. Fearon and Laitin (2000), focusing on prevalence and conflict magnitude, find no evidence of a significant association between civil war risk and the degree of ethnic heterogeneity. These studies do not ask is if we should expect ethnic diversity to have the same impact on all types of civil war. If ethnic fragmentation is a proxy for the coordination and transaction costs that are associated with mounting a rebellion, then we would expect these costs to be lower or non-existent in rebellions that are mounted by a single ethnic group aimed at satisfying demands/grievances of that group only. Such rebellions are closer to my definition of ethnic war rather than of

revolution or other resource-driven war. It follows that ethnic war should be less costly to organize than revolutions, which supports my hypothesis. The inverse-U-shaped relationship that exists between civil wars defined broadly and ethnic heterogeneity need not hold for ethnic civil wars, since greater ethnic fragmentation need not discourage a single ethnic group from mounting a rebellion.¹⁰ The costs of coordinating across ethnic groups—which, if high, could discourage ideology-based revolutions that are prone to collective action problems—are not relevant if the war is mounted by a single group for the benefit of that group. Thus, the relationship between ethnic war and ethnic divisions should be linear and positive.

So, contrary to the economic theory of civil war, I would expect that ethnic heterogeneity should be among the most significant and robust determinants of the onset of ethnic war. Drawing on Horowitz (1985, 42-49), I argue that no single attribute of ethnicity need be more important than any other in determining group cohesion. Previous studies have focused disproportionately on linguistic differences and this may have biased their findings. In this paper, I use a more inclusive definition of ethnicity that combines racial, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity in a single index. This allows me to test my hypothesis using a measure that corresponds more fully to the concept of ethnicity shared by many theorists of ethnic conflict.

Next, I consider the relationship between civil violence, democracy, and poverty or under-development. Following the economic theorists of civil war, I hypothesize that economic opportunity costs are also relevant in ethnic war: the greater these costs, the lower the likelihood of civil war. However, theorists of ethnic conflict have not been able to identify a straightforward relationship between economic antagonism and ethnic conflict. According to Horowitz (1985, 134-35): Economic antagonism explains much more about conflict at the top than at the bottom of developing societies. Beyond that, the pursuit of economic interest in ways that might lead to ethnic conflict is actually impeded by certain features of ethnic pluralism itself... Much more obviously, economic theories cannot explain the extent of the emotion invested in ethnic conflict. Finally, materialist theories leave unexplained the striving for such goals as domination (or autonomy), a 'legitimate place in the country,' and 'the symbols of prestige,' all of which may take precedence over economic interest in developing group behavior.

While poverty and low levels of economic development could increase ethnic conflict as they would other types of conflict, ethnicity is a concept much more closely associated with political and cultural identity than with economic rights or class—hence the absence of class-based theories of ethnic conflict. Thus, one might expect a weaker relationship between

poverty/underdevelopment and ethnic war. Moreover, in the case of ethnic war, the rebels' motives are typically not simply economic. If ethnic war is defined as a struggle over the survival of ethnic identity, one would expect that rebels care more about changes that are likely to protect their identity.

Such changes are typically political and not economic. While the economic logic of opportunity cost should still be relevant, it should be less important in wars that threaten the survival of ethnic identity. In such wars, individual and group interests coincide and rebels derive utility from preserving the group's cultural identity and political freedom. A desire to preserve one's ethnic identity may therefore lead a potential rebel who might otherwise require the promise of loot to fight a war to offer his/her rebel labor for free. This might help explain why we have observed some of the longest or more intense ethnic wars in countries with relatively higher standards of living and development as compared to the average of all countries that have experienced a civil war (e.g. Israel, Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Cyprus). The protection of ethnic identity is much more closely associated with protecting political rights and supporting democracy than with economic gain. Ethnic grievance is likely to be exacerbated by the lack of political and civil rights, by collapsing mechanisms for the peaceful adjudication of disputes, and by an inability to nurture diverse ethnic identities within a given cultural and political system.

Greater democracy rather than greater economic opportunity should have a more significant impact on issues at the core of ethnicity (i.e. preserving regional autonomy, linguistic education rights, ethnic representation, or religious freedom). I would therefore expect the lack of democracy to be a more robustly significant determinant of ethnic civil war than the lack of economic development. In this sense, I agree with neoliberal theorists who conceive democratic institutions as offering solutions to defuse ethnic conflict and prevent its escalation to large-scale violence. Survival of ethnic identity has utility in itself and can explain why members of an ethnic group would offer "free" labor to the rebellion as economic opportunity costs are outweighed by the higher expected costs of suppression of ethnic identity. I would therefore expect political variables to be much more robust and significant determinants of ethnic war than economic variables.

It is important to note that the relationship between ethnic civil war and political rights may not be linear. Hegre et al. (1999) develops a model which explains war as the result of political grievance and opportunity for violence. They show that countries at the middle of the autocracy-democracy spectrum are most at risk of civil war because they are neither autocratic enough to suppress any opportunity for rebellion, nor democratic enough to prevent significant grievance. Their model is

not as successful is in identifying the economic determinants of the opportunity for rebellion. Civil war aimed at the overthrow of a regime is in effect a public good for the rebels (and a public bad for everyone else). As such, it will most likely be under-produced since its outcomes are non-exclusively consumed yet its costs are disproportionately born by those doing most of the fighting. Hegre et al. (1999) sees the same political grievance as generating both the opportunity for war and the motivation for using violence. In empirical tests of the association between political rights and civil war onset, it will be important to test for any non-linear effects.

Beyond these economic, social, and political determinants of ethnic war, I would also expect that regional characteristics should also influence patterns of civil war. It has long been thought that some regions are more war-prone than others, perhaps due to their ethnic make-up, their resource endowments, their geography, or the degree to which they include meddlesome countries. Neighboring ethnic groups in particular may become involved in ethnic conflicts in other countries. Moreover, wars in neighboring countries may increase the risk of war in the country in question through contagion and/or diffusion effects (Lake and Rothschild 1996). Good and bad neighborhoods can be distinguished by the openness of their political institutions and their proneness to internal conflict. Bad neighbors will have weak political institutions, which can only cause or exacerbate political and economic grievance in other countries as a result of uncontrolled domestic ethnic antagonisms. Good neighbors, by contrast, are able to help neighboring states overcome their political problems, offering guarantees and mediation that prevents conflict escalation. Moreover, in the case of war among ethnic groups in bordering regions, neighbors with good institutions may be better able to prevent their own ethnic groups from becoming involved in the fighting. Finally, in addition to regional influences, neorealist theory would suggest that broad systemic forces and the balance of power may also influence the likelihood of civil war. Scholars have argued, for example, that the Cold War effectively bottled up ethnic conflicts and that there was an explosion of such conflicts with the end of the Cold War. At the same time, we would also expect other time trends to influence ethnic conflict. Specifically, there has been a positive time trend in the economic development and democratization of most countries and this trend may have reduced those countries' propensity to war. Such a trend would work against the negative impact of the end of the Cold War, according to the previous hypothesis. Therefore, the net effect of time on the risk of civil war occurrence may not be easily identifiable.

Ideology based civil war theory

Strong ideological beliefs among people either politically

or socially inclined can lead to violent crisis that can result into a civil war especially in countries that are feeble and fragile in their structural framework. When an armed group is built around an overarching ideology, this ideology can shape the patterns of violence in which it engages, especially with regard to civilians. In some cases, ideology may lead a group to be more selective and restrained in its targeting of civilians. Drake found ideology to determine terrorist groups' target selection, while leftist and other nonreligious ideological commitments have been found by Asal and Rethemeyer to be significant in terrorist groups' decisions not to commit lethal attacks. In South Africa, Goodwin found that while theories of terrorism would have expected the African National Congress to engage in terrorist attacks against the population of "complicitous" white civilians, an ideology of "nonracial internationalism" restrained the group and forestalled such terrorism. These findings, however, have not been significantly explored in relation to violence in civil wars.

Most frequently, ideological commitment is strongest among elites in an organization, while lay members are more self-interested and adhere to "only fragments of [the] larger ideology." The political and military leadership of a group attempts to instill ideological commitment among ground-level forces through a process of indoctrination and training, or 'military socialization.' A breakdown in ideological commitment among elites will result in a loss of ideology's effects among lower-level individuals through indiscriminate recruitment, a failure to socialize recruits, and a loss of discipline as leaders set ideologically inconsistent examples. Thus, if a group is committed to an ideology that promotes restraint, we should expect to see a) an emphasis on civilian protection in discourse and training; and b) a diminution of ideological commitment to result in increased, more indiscriminate violence. In the cases of Frelimo and the MPLA, non-racialist, anti-imperialist ideologies that evolved into commitment to Marxism-Leninism led the groups to be initially restrained in their perpetration of violence against civilians, using primarily targeted, rather than indiscriminate, violence. Both groups existed as sociopolitical entities prior to militarizing, so they already had some popular support and ideological underpinnings before evolving into insurgents. When they did take up arms, Frelimo and the MPLA indoctrinated cadres with their collectivist ideologies in order to instill discipline and, as in other Marxist-Leninist groups, to subordinate individual interests to ideological goals, with Frelimo's Centre for Political and Military Training described by leader Samora Machel as a place "not to produce 'killers,' but to train true revolutionary fighters." The groups opposed the racism and repression of the Portuguese colonial regime by emphasizing inclusion and freedom for all Angolans and Mozambicans, regardless of race or ethnicity. Simple national liberation may have been the

goal of many cadres, but the Marxism-Leninism of the leaders shaped the groups. This message of unity was reflected in the attempt to wage "people's wars," a strategy which demands "avoidance of violence against the people by the liberation forces." Marxism-Leninism provided a more organized ideological framework for the battle against imperial oppression, a call for "social harmony and widespread popular participation." This dictated a strategy for Frelimo and the MPLA of maintaining good relations with the population in both the wars of independence and the civil wars, curtailing violence against civilians. Kalyvas and Balcells found that Marxist-Leninist groups during the Cold War, such as Frelimo and the MPLA, engaged in a particular form of 'robust insurgency,' with revolutionary ideals and a goal of mass mobilization and governing territory in accordance with their ideology. While Marxist-Leninist insurgent and national liberation groups during the Cold War engaged in longer wars with more battle deaths, they were also characterized by a high degree of discipline. Wood has found that Marxist-Leninist groups are often more restrained in their use of sexual violence; in the cases of Frelimo and the MPLA, I argue that each group's specific ideology initially promoted restraint across the spectrum, leading violence against civilians to be targeted mainly against those actively opposing the groups, before becoming more indiscriminate as ideological commitment waned. Theories that attempt to explain violence by reference to features of war itself—population control, resource extraction, battle losses, etc.—may be appropriate in other cases, but are inadequate for predicting observed levels of violence against civilians by Frelimo and the MPLA. Only by examining these groups' ideological commitment and shifts in it over time can we understand the overall pattern of restraint and variations in the violence against civilians that was committed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of study

The study area is Nigeria hence the topic Nigerian civil war. Nigeria covers an average of 923,669sq km with a current population of about 230 million seated on the coast of guinea. It is the most popular and populous African country blessed with enormous natural resources including petroleum. The Nigerian civil war torched every corner of the country and impacted as such in all ramifications. Therefore the study analyzed the war from a historical and holistic standpoint hence our area of study is the Nigerian state.

Population and sampling techniques

The population in this context implies group of people

with same characteristics (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the population for this study comprises of people who have lived in Nigeria and have either participated or witnessed the civil war. They are so chosen because they are eye witness to the event being reported. The sampling technique to be adopted is the non-probability sampling. This is because a few out of the huge population of Nigeria will be representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004). Nigeria has a population of about two hundred and thirty (230) million (NBS, 2022) Interview was conducted across the populace to avail the researcher a wider view of the society. A total Six (6) oral interviews were conducted based on open ended/semi-structured question regarding the Nigerian civil war. Of this number Four (2) retired military personnel who participated in the war, Four (2) Igbo participants in the war and two (2) civilians who were mere onlookers were interviewed. The (6) people selected for the interview was to have a manageable size that covers every aspect of the civil war in the history of Nigeria and a broad narration of the events that took before and during the crisis. The justification for the number chosen is in line with Franklin, (2013); Creswell (2012) and Anol (2012) who maintained that in making such selection considerations be given for time and cost. All the participants in the interview are men of over seventy (70) years hence they witnessed and some even were active participants either at the side of the federal government of Nigeria or the Biafra side. The essence of this selection that, the groups represent the diverse population that can with every authority speak on the Nigerian civil war (Table 1). Each person is therefore a primary source because of the closeness to the event and are prepared to provide the required information (Claire and Flaire (2016; Creswell, 2007). This is in line with Plummer (1983), Marshall and Rossman cited in Creswell (2007) advocates of maximum variation sampling which provides four aspects of sampling as thus: event, setting, actors and artifacts.

Table 1: Respondent and method of data collection

FGN Military men	2 Interview
Biafra soldier	2 Interview
Civilian eyewitness	2 Interview
Total	6

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2023)

Method of data analysis

Information collected from the oral interviews is scrutinized and synthesized by checking on the reliability of the sources and their consistency. The result is corroborated with other sources for authenticity and validity before interpretation. Based on the strength of the

sources the most reliable is utilized for the research. Validity is a very crucial aspect of research hence it provides the criterion and degree to which the instrument employed measured correctly what it is supposed to measure. We shall use content validity as a means of measurement, because its determinations are primarily judgmental and intuitive. It would be based on the adequate use of these sources that the analysis is made easier.

Sources of data

For the purpose of this research both primary and secondary data are collected and utilized so as to arrive at a better informed and reliable conclusion. The primary source involves the conduct of oral interview with six (6) people that in a way either took part in the prosecution of the war or witnessed it. The semi-structured interview was drafted in two sections of A and B. The section A comprised of the personal data of the interviewee as follows: name in full, age, locality, tribe/ethnic group, religion, occupation, role in the war. The section B comprised of five (5) questions that are open ended in nature. The secondary source of data is from the both electronic and printed materials found in libraries, internet, archives and other private collections. These materials include; textbooks, journal articles, monographs, radio and television broadcasts.

Method of data collection

The researcher applied for an introduction letter from National Open University of Nigeria Minna Study Centre. After that, the researcher booked an appointment with the interviewees and fixed an appointed date, time and place of the interview. Before the conduct of the interview, the researcher gave instructions to respondents and assured them of confidentiality of the discussion. The interviews were conducted individually and in the most comfortable atmosphere at the place of their own choice. The discussions were recorded in a tape recorder and later transcribed manually. The reason for recording is to ensure that no part of the information is lost.

DISCUSSION

Causes of the Nigerian Civil war

There are several reasons responsible for the war, for retired Captain Ishaya these factors are both of long and short term dimensions. He maintained that Nigeria as country was started on faulty beginning. The forceful colonization and subsequent unification of people who hitherto were independent of each other in 1906 and 1914, the types of constitutions developed particularly the

Richard (1946) and McPherson (1951) that enshrined regionalism in federalism brought about polarization of ethnicity in the nations' politics. Ishaya continued that the January 1966 coup and July counter coup as well as the nature of inter-group relations between the Igbo and the other Nigerians especially the North was responsible in quickening the explosion of the war. These claims confirm the existing literature like Obasanjo (1981) *My Command*; Okolo. *The Nigerian Civil War: Its causes, strategies and lessons for the future*; Chidiebere (2016).

Retired Warrant officer 2 Ninyom Nabila who also fought as a federal soldier agreed with the above claims and even added that to some extent it was the domineering bid of the Igbo that drove them into conflict with the Nigerian state. They were educated and very ambitious to lead the country. They saw the civil regime as incapable and corrupt politicians that should be wiped out. The first republic rulers were envied as they roll about in their limousine and motorcade In the light of dwindling national economy and security.

However, for Mr. John a Biafran veteran it was the fear of Hausa domination that pushed the Igbo to fight for their freedom. The size of the Northern region was double the two southern hemisphere of the country thereby giving the North opportunity to always overwhelm them in taking national decisions. Moreover, the killing of the Igbo in the North during the months of May/June and the counter coup of July during which Igbo officers were equally killed did not go down well with the Biafran fighters.

When asked whether the war was tribal, to Mr. John like other interviewees it was a mixed feeling. The average Igbo or Hausa in the village saw it as tribal even some elites viewed it as an ethnic conflict. To many propagandists of the Biafra, it was a war of genocide against the Igbo or Easterners a means which attracted a lot of international sympathy especially Western Europe, Canada, United States of America and South Africa among others. This is clearly corroborated by the existing works example Obasanjo's *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil war*. Being an active participant in the war at planning, commanding and fighting levels he is also a strong and reliable primary source on this subject. Mr. Anyanwu was blunt among the interviewees on the real time causes of the Nigerian civil war. He maintained that irrespective of the primary or secondary, long term or short term reasons for the war, economic factor must be given a special place. Anyanwu argued that of all the issues raised about censors, revenue distribution and allocations, the central point was the discovery of petroleum. That the resource was found around the eastern region was convincing to the thinking and desire to control a larger percentage of its proceeds. Again this was confirmed by Ojukwu himself as cited in Obasajo's *My Command*. The Biafra taught if they cannot control the huge revenue to come from the oil sector, then, they can secede to with a smaller population having the black

gold.

The civil war and the contemporary Nigerian Society

Captain Ishaya maintained that to very large extent the NCW has tremendously reshaped the politics of Nigeria. To him since the emergence of the war, mutual distrust and polarized ethnic difference has become endemic in many quarters. The Igbo is still aggrieved with results of the NCW and vent such anger in the continued demand for Biafra. Ninyom maintained that the NCW has brought to light the desire and ambition of the Igbo and that has affected the body politics of the Nigerian state. The federal government Balkanized the three regions into 12 states in a bid to forestall the Igbo ambition and it worked for it and that actually was a setback to the Biafran ambition. He maintained that the NCW explicitly exposed the desire of each of the major ethnic groups in the country. The war was a setback also on the nation's foreign image as wrong information concerning the causes and execution of the war were wrongfully spread.

General impact of the war on Nigerian society

Reverend Samson Adekunle highlights that the NCW was in the known history of post independence Nigeria the only unquantifiable catastrophe that the nation have witnessed in terms of human and material resources. On the both sides the loss was irredeemable as each side lost dear ones and valuables. Infrastructures, bonds and relationships were destroyed. Women, children and the aged were exposed to unprecedented hardship with hunger and diseases being the common features of the era. Samson is corroborated by the speech of Maj Gen. Philip Effiong in his surrendering statements as thus:

"Our people are now disillusioned and those elements of the old regime who have made negotiations and reconciliation impossible have voluntarily removed themselves from our midst. I have, therefore, instructed an orderly disengagement of troops" I urge on Gen. Gowon, in the name of humanity, to order his troops to pause while an armistice is negotiated in order to avoid the mass suffering caused by the movement of population. We have always believed that our differences with Nigeria should be settled by peaceful negotiation. A delegation of our people is therefore ready to meet representatives of Nigerian Government anywhere to negotiate a peace settlement on the basis of OAU resolution".

The impact of the NCW on the economy of such a young country that got self rule barely six years ago was considerably high as movement of people as well as goods and services was tremendously affected and in some cases destroyed. Mallam Idrisu Yahaya who trade

Onions between the North and the South maintained that the 30 months conflict affected every business activity in the country. For those who engage in inter regional business our lives and property was endangered. Many lives and of course goods worth priceless sums were lost. He maintained that during the period of impasse prices of goods and services soured, schools had to close down especially in the urban and heavy fighting areas so were also the public and private institutions. The implication was negative results in the gross national domestic product. Socially, Mallam Idrisu said the war broke the age old mutual relationship between the Northerners and the people from the East. Earlier relationship between the two sections was very cordial characterized by trust and mutual harmony. Each of the parties had personal investments in either of the regions. A major aftermath consequence of the NCW is the distrust on the leadership capability of the Igbo people. Mallam Idris, WO2 Ninyom and retired Captain Ishaya all acknowledge that the behavior of former Igbo leaders both military and civilians shows in the people a desire to either dominate solely the national economy (petroleum wealth) either as a nation or through tactical and force secession. This believe among other Nigerian leaders makes it difficult to support any leadership bid by the Igbo. They maintained that the leadership of the country can easily be attained by either a Muslim or Christian from the North or South and possibly South-south but doubtfully the core Igbo because previous historical antecedents.

Conclusion

Civil wars are usually intra state conflict resulting out of some internal discontent or structural failure. Economic, political and socio-cultural reasons are usually the chief super structures of the society out of which civil and other kinds of conflicts emerge. The research therefore concludes that civil war erupts out of some discontent in one or more super structure of the society. The Nigerian civil war it is here concluded though have many age long reasons that bedeviled the country but the discovery of petroleum in the south eastern Nigeria and the greed by the Igbo elites to control the surplus as well enjoy lootability of the resources really pushed for the war. The federal government haven denied the opportunity for lootability and manipulation of the oil wealth created frustration and grievance among the insurgents (Biafra) thus the elite among Igbo military and civilians out of that pain opted for a secession from the Nigerian state. It is submitted hereby that the war made Nigerians understand themselves more than ever before and on that basis choose to live together despite the differences. The war exposed the greed of the Biafra to control the emerging oil wealth, unreliable attitude of the Igbo given

political mantle of authority and the political domination ambition of the North which colonial division of the state had initiated. The war shows who are the true friends of the Nigerian state as the western powers including Britain of all and the United States of America refused to identify and support the Nigerian state during the war. This brought the research to conclude that the romance between Nigeria and these western capitalist countries have remained strictly selfish and exploitative. It was observed that the western powers side with the Biafra simply because they wanted to intensively partake in the looting of the petrol wealth. A great lesson for the country but unfortunately it was not learned for soon after the war, Russia that gave support to Nigeria was abandoned for the west and the nation's wealth is being exploited recklessly. As part of the federal government effort at deescalating the crisis, the Nigerian state was Balkanized from the preexisting four regions to twelve states thus; answer was provided for those areas that felt marginalized. Our conclusion therefore is that in a situation whereby natural resources become the sources for disharmony among the people it is best to pieces the area in question into more fragmentation so as to reduce the excessive claim to indigenious ownership of the location.

Recommendation

At the end of the day the research hereby recommends that:

- i. Nations need to abandon some colonial policies especially those that set to create differences among the people. Most colonial powers left their colonies with deliberate centrifugal problems so that they will always rely on the colonial masters for the resolve of the issues. Before the British grant independence to Nigeria, it left behind many problems for the young nation which finally culminated in the civil war.
- ii. Nigeria must know who are her friends and ensure sincere and close relationship with them.
- iii. There is the strong need for justifiable and equitable distribution of wealth. Concentration of national wealth in the hands of a few in avoidably breeds violence. Poverty is not a friend as such it can fuel young men to recruit into militia forces.

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