



Economic Implication of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970: A Comparative Analysis of the Economic and Strategic Losses between the Nigerian Government and Biafra

Grace N.M. Brown (PhD)

Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Civil War started on the 7th day of July, 1967 and ended on the 15th day of January, 1970. Although the Biafra forces surrendered to the federal forces, upon which the Nigerian Government won the war. The Civil War having ended, both parties incurred severe economic losses and several losses of lives and properties. About three million persons died during the period of the war, which figure does not include children. Due to the huge Economic losses incurred, the Nigerian government took over the challenges of rehabilitation, reconstruction and acts capable of cushioning the impact on both sides. This study will examine and analyze the comparative economic losses on both sides.

THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS FEDERAL FORCES)

During the reign of General Yakubu Gowon, the Igbos felt unprotected as a result of the domineering ethnic impact of both the Northerners and Yorubas. Their fears led to several

agitations that were unresolved by the Federal Executive Council and upon which the matter was tabled in Ghana and it reached a decision known as Aburi Accord. The Federal government failed to implement most of the decisions and which act led to several accrymonies on both sides and later emerged on a Civil War scale. The then Governor of South-Eastern State, Lt. Col. Odumegu Chukwuemeka Ojukwu became the leader of the Biafrans. The level of Economic losses, although the figures has not yet been quantified, were very high on both sides. Such Economic and Strategic Losses stem from loss of lives, damages and loss to properties, loss of military equipments, reconstruction and rehabilitation, loss of oil revenue, demages to schools and other government propeties, loss of new business oriented relationships, absence of banking transactions, non-guarantee of security of lives and properties and so forth. We will in this study, make a comparative analyses of these Econimc losses:

(A) LOSS OF LIVES

It was estimated that the Country lost about three million persons that died during the civil war. This figure, being an estimate, does not include children. These losses were on both sides, which includes innocent civilians, military and para-military personnels, which estimate cannot be clearly ascertained. For an African country, such as Nigeria, to have lost such amount of persons as a result of war, would be very trivial and costly. Also, included in this figure, are skilled and unskilled labourers, men and women, Nigerian citizens, allien residents and so forth. The war gave rise to several tramatic conditions which money cannot compensate. The loss of lives affected human capital resources and development.

(B) DEMAGES AND LOSS TO PROPERTIES

The demages to properties that ocured on both sides were incalcuable. Although the Biafra claimed to have been seriously devastated and badly affected. This demmages to properties includes landed properties owned by the federal government of Nigeria and that owned by various individuals and cooperate organization, it also included chartels and so forth.

Following the war, the Biafra government created vacant possession edict, which dispossed Non-Biafra owners from their respective ownership to properties. Also, the federal government of Nigeria created their abandoned property act, which dispossed Biafrans whose resgistrable instrusement were not valid in most states of the federation

(C) LOSS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENTS

During the course of the war, a lot of Military equipments, including machine guns, guns, military clothes or uniforms, ships, vehicles, government own companies, parastatals, multi national companies, helicopters, aircrafts and several other properties owned by both individual and the respectives governments, were lost. These military equipments were purchased with tax payers' monies on both sides.

(D) RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION

There are numerous consumption benefits from access to infrastructure for the poor. Most obviously, access to clean water and sanitation reduces mortality and illnesses. Availability

of alternative energy sources to animal dung and firewood or more efficient use of these energy sources can improve indoor pollution. Access to water and energy increases the productivity of the households, because less time and income is spent on their collection. A high proportion of the populations in war-affected economies are living in rural areas and often their only basis for survival is subsistence agriculture. Irrigation can help to increase the yield and crop diversification. Access to transport encourages farm households to produce marketable surplus and to sell their produce in markets and thus create cash income. Provision of infrastructure also expands the non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas. The rehabilitation of roads in war-affected economies is also important for famine prevention. Often food is available in some parts of the country, but poor transport infrastructure inhibits the relief efforts for famine regions.

To summarize, improved infrastructure services encourage growth through the reduction of production costs. Furthermore, access to infrastructure increases the productive capacity of the poor, in particular of women who spent much time and income in order to obtain water and cooking fuels and in carrying crops to markets. However, in order to achieve the two policy objectives infrastructure improvements have to be coupled with good policies. So far the discussion of the links between growth, poverty reduction and infrastructure services has assumed that the economy is at peace. For countries emerging from war the basic needs of the population have to be addressed first. During the transition period from war to peace food and safe water have to be provided for households, refugees and soldiers, many of whom may live in emergency shelter and camps. These emergency measures are coordinated and financed by international agencies such as the United Nations and by non-governmental organizations. Only urgent repairs on airports and ports are usually carried out in this immediate post-war phase. (World Development Report 1994 p.20).

The next pressing issue is the resettlement of displaced persons and the demobilization and re-integration of ex-combatants. Refugees and veterans are in need of transport services in order to return to their communities and they usually need help to erect some simple accommodation. In a number of countries the re-integration of refugees and veterans and the rehabilitation of infrastructure are linked. For example in Liberia “jobs for guns” persuaded the fighters to lay down their arms and provided labour for the infrastructure rehabilitation projects (European Commission (1997) Second Liberia Rehabilitation Programm.). In Ethiopia “food for work” programmes support infrastructure rehabilitation (GTZ (1997a, 1997b)).

Once the country is at peace and normal economic activity can commence infrastructure rehabilitation can begin on a wider scale. There is little research on the sequencing of infrastructure reconstruction. Uganda, a country emerging from 15 years of civil strife and which has enjoyed high growth rates (about 7 per cent per annum during 1987-1997, World Bank Country Profile - Uganda) first concentrated on roads rehabilitation, but at present Uganda’s main production constraints are the supply shortages energy sector. Thus, since the production of most goods needs infrastructure inputs from different sectors, all sectors will need to be rehabilitated in the long run. Furthermore, infrastructure services are complementary: one sector cannot provide services without the others and infrastructure measures tend to be highly correlated (Canning 1998). Rehabilitation

Programme unconditional relief aid should be phased out once the conflict is over and emphasis be given to operations which strengthen the delivery of basic services at community level and stimulate local population capacity for self-help. Within this programme it is planned to strengthen the Liberian Water and Sewer Corporation's management capacity and to put in place a new management and revenue collection system which is both accountable and transparent. Household and commercial water tariffs have been set for Monrovia in order to start raising sufficient income to maintain the service and a study for a more comprehensive investment programme is planned. Water is still provided free of charge for humanitarian reasons to the displaced in Monrovia. (European Commission (1997) Second Liberia Rehabilitation Programme)

The amount spent by government to carry out rehabilitation and construction are colossal.

(E) LOSS OF OIL REVENUE

Nigeria has been exporter of crude oil since 1958, having discovered oil in 1956. During the war, the Nigerian government employed various forms of strategy or tactics to stop the Biafra government from interfering or taking hold of any part of the oil terminals and locations. The strategies employed by the Nigerian government is the use of blockades and embargoes on ships and other sea worthy vessels from entering the Nigerian territory through its waterways. The Nigerian government utilized its Naval forces and war fair. During its period, it place embargo on importations and exportations of its oil, thereby losing huge sums of money. Nigeria aliens, made up of Britain, USA and other Europeans that assisted the Nigerian government during the war were paid during the supply of crude oil. There were several lose of oil revenues.

(F) DEMAGES TO SCHOOLS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PROPETIES

As a result of the war, both sides bombed and damaged various government own schools and properties, either in search of their respective enemies or to dislodge an dislocate its side, without minding the huge amount and resources in rebuilding such property. It is only at the end of the war that both sides usually expressed regrets of the huge damages or impact they have suffered. During such period of war, both sides are usually aggressive and will employed every measures to offend each other.

(G) LOSS OF NEW BUSINEE ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

During the war, all efforts, thinking and activities are geared out ensuring that each sides wins the war. Therefore, there will be no time for each parties to engage in a new business relationship or to woo any new businesses to themselves. No foreigner or any foreign business associates will want to embark on a business with any country at war; since their investments will not be secured or protected.

(H) ABSENCE OF BANKING TRANSACTIONS

Foriegn businesses are usually paid through banking transactions, where letter of credits are opened between parties. Balance or trades and balance of payment are also opened through various commercial banks and also the central bank of Nigeria

usually play key roles in such international transactions. There will be no workers coming to work as each worker usually run for the safety of his or her lives. Therefore, even though any business engagement in being woeed, no bank will be wiling to open, talkless of engaging in such payment exercise.

(I) NON-GUARANTEE OF SECURITY OF LIVES AND PROPERTIES

Lives and properties are usually unsafe and so everybody is running for the safety of his life and that of their respective families. Government efforts as such period of war are geared at guaranteeing security of lives and properties. Due to such non-protection everybody adopts their respective means or measures of their safety.

CONCLUSION

We have in this study, examined the various economic losses suffered by both the Nigerian government and that of Biafra, irrespective of their territories in a comparative analysis. We have seen that both sides, whether those victorious or not, also suffer from economic and strategies losses. Therefore, war is not the best option for any country to engage upon, as the losses to be suffered by both parties are usually very huge and cannot be compensated for monetarily. It is therefore necessary for each intended conflicting parties not to use war as a measure for settlement of dispute, as there are other dispute resolution mechanism that must be adopted and resolved by them. The post conflict measures which we have analyzed in this study, through rehabilitation and reconstruction, are usually the end exercise of an outcome of war and which acts or sums of money invested are usually colossal or huge and at the end parties will left with regrets, for haven lost their love ones. The experiance in the Nigerian – Biafra Civil War should not repeat itself again.

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