

Internal Conflict, Ethnic Violence and Human Welfare in Nigeria

Olofin Olabode Philip

Faculty of Social Sciences, Dept. Of Economics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Abstract: Given the global concerns on the level of damages that conflicts inflict on the world economies, we examine the consequences of internal conflict (intconf) and ethnic violence (ethviol) on human welfare in Nigeria. We consider variables such as socioeconomic condition (condt), foreign direct investment (fdi), gross capital formation (gcf), agricultural value added (agva), technical cooperation grant (tecop) economic opportunity (ecopt) and agricultural machinery tractor (agcap) as important variables that are germane to the promotion of human welfare in Nigeria. We measure human welfare with gross domestic per capita income (gdpkc) of the Nigerians. Data on intconf and ethviol were obtained from the publications of Country Risk Guide, while data on gdpkc, fdi, gcf, agva, tecop, agcap and ecopt were obtained from the publications of World Development Indicators. We generate ecopt from employment level, government spending on education, school enrolment and financial institutions using principal component analysis. These variables are important for creating economic opportunities for both the haves and have-nots. We use Ordinary Least Square (OLS) for the analysis.

Our results show that ethnic violence (ethviol), socioeconomic condition (condt) and foreign direct investment (fdi) have negative relationship with human welfare. These results were not statistically significant. These results suggest their impact is minimal. We also found that intconf, gcf, hc, tecop, ecopt and agcap promoted human welfare. These results were statistically significant except gcf, hc and agcap. The results suggest that focusing more attention on improving on these variables may likely promote human welfare in Nigeria. The positive relation between internal conflict and human welfare may not be surprising in the sense that, government is usually quick in responding to the agitation of people by providing palliative measure whenever there is internal conflict in contrast to ethnic violence. The results of the study show that ethnic violence and internal conflict respond differently to human welfare. For a country characterized by multiple ethnics like Nigeria where socioeconomic conditions and economic opportunity are largely unequal, it is expected that internal conflict might exert more disruptions to the country than ethnic violence.

Keywords: Internal conflicts; Ethnic violence; Socio-economic conditions; Economic opportunities; Human welfare; Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of conflicts and violence in all countries of the world, including Nigeria, is as old as human kind. Internal conflicts in Nigeria can be traced back to the era of trade across the Sahara and North Africa when Islam was introduced to the Northern part of the country. By 1804, Othman danFodio had successfully established the Hausa-

Fulani ethnic group under the rule of the Sokoto Caliphate. The Sokoto Caliphate was used by the colonial leaders to unite and ruled the country. In 1962, the Tiv in the central part of the country revolted against their perceived domination of the northern regional government which is being controlled by the Princes in Sokoto. By 1964, following the federal elections, there was a serious violence based also on the belief that Northern People Congress which was in control of the central government rigged the election. In 1966, the first Nigeria military coup occurred. The conflict was led mainly by the Igbos who had the intention of eradicating Hausa-Fulani dominance. About six month later, a group of northern officers known as "revenge group retaliated and this resulted to the massacre of more than 50,000. This led to the declaration of Biafra republic by Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu in 1967. The defeat of Biafra by the Nigerian Army in 1970 led to the death of millions of people and this led to the years of military rule. The military rule which finally ended after a four year break until 1999 democratic election was able to suppressed the ethnic grievances. By 1990, may be, due to freedom of speech enjoyed under the democratic rule, ethnic group grievances started again. The Niger Delta boys started activating their grievances. Since the beginning of democratic rule, Nigeria has been experiencing her worst violence till date.

Recently, conflicts and violence in Nigeria has increased tremendously. Reports of 2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment (2017) in Nigeria have shown that "conflicts and violence have no territorial or geo-political bound. It ranges from insurgency and militancy as well as a variety of other cross-cutting, forms of inter-group and communal conflicts, including conflicts borne out of youth restiveness, sundry crimes against humanity, political conflicts, ethno-religious and inter-faith conflicts, intra-faith conflicts, conflicts across the North-Central, North East, North West, South East and South-West, to occurrence of pure, oil-based insurgency, militancy, inter-identity or sub-identity conflicts in the South-South, including the virtually ubiquitous, and often violent conflicts between herders and farmers (see Report of 2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria (2017). While conflicts and violence keep on increasing in Nigeria, human welfare continues suffering. Various studies have associated an increase in conflict and violence with rising deterioration in human welfare (see Justino and Verwimp, 2006). Most of these studies have failed to consider the multifaceted aspect of economic opportunity as important variable that can affect

human welfare, especially in Nigeria. Using one variable such as financial capability or income inequality to capture economic opportunity might not really capture every necessary basic aspects of people; hence this study. In this study, we try to measure economic opportunity (ecopt) by combining employment level, government spending on education, school enrolment and financial institutions using Principal Component Analysis (CPA). These variables are important for creating economic opportunities for both the haves and have-nots, thus they are justified to be used as measures of economic opportunity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The consequences of violence and conflicts are difficult to measure, if not immeasurable. The effect of war goes beyond death and physical destruction. It extends far beyond destruction of present and future human capital; it can lead to forced migration, refugee flows, destruction of socio-political activities as well as total extinction of the society. One of the immediate consequences of violence is human welfare. In times of violence, every productive activity is grounded. According to Collier et al. (2003) in "Breaking the Conflict Trap", civil war has been described as development in reverse. They noted that after civil war of seven years, incomes would be about 15 percent reduced compared to when the war had not occurred. It has also been argued by Collier, (1999) that civil wars could be more damaging than international wars and that annual GDP growth falls by 2.2% during war. Armed conflicts have been noted for its consequences of destruction of infrastructure, assets and livelihoods, institutions, social cohesion etc. It has caused three times deaths more than inter-state wars between states since the World War II (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Studies have also shown that most households affected by armed conflict live in poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Stewart et al. 2001a, 2001b).

Various studies have tried to account for the disruptive effects of violence. These studies have come out with various findings. For example, in the study of Messer and Cohen (2004), it was noted that "conflict causes food insecurity", and that civil conflicts in Africa from the mid-1960s until 2000 cost the region more than \$120 billion worth of agricultural production". Some other studies have found conflicts to be a promoter of hunger and poverty. In the work of Sapir and Gomez (2006) which they carried out in Angola, it was discovered that malnutrition rates were severely

affected by conflict. It was also noted in the study that one year after the cease-fire, Angola was able to recover from high rates of crude mortality and malnutrition that was recorded by field survey during conflict. According to Brück (2006) in his work on Mozambique, it was reported that "39 percent of all children under 3 years of age were moderately or severely underweight". While Burkina Faso, which has similar GDP per capita but has largely avoided conflict, was affected with undernourishment of only 12% of the population. Also noted by the World Bank (2007) is the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa is a region with the most civil conflict in the world and that the region is seriously behind in the race to achieve Millennium Development Goal of achieving poverty reduction.

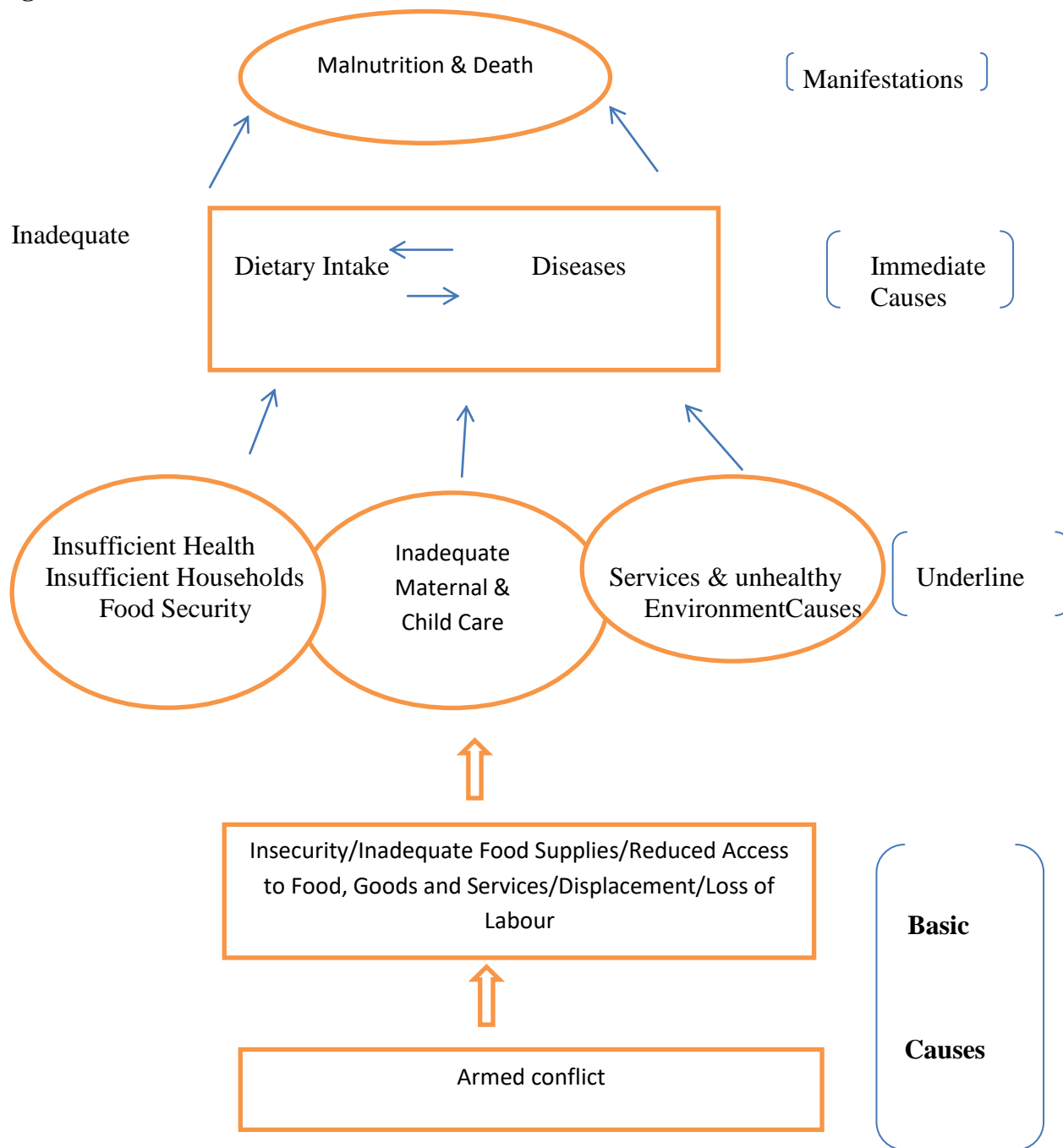
III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Starting from the work of Gurr (1970) on determinants of internal conflict in postcolonial states in Africa and Southeast Asia, it has been noted that the causes of violence ranges from discontentment in political system to the effectiveness of ruling class. According to Gurr's "theory of political violence", social, economic, and/or political circumstances may be conferred as common causes of different forms of political violence. Following this work, various forms of political violence have been associated with factional partial democracies and ethnic exclusion from power as common determinants of riots, coups, and civil wars (Bodea et al., 2017).

According to Bodea et al., (2017), whenever the ruling class is designing ruling coalitions and deciding on the number of ethnic groups to be included in power, it should be noted that there is a trade-off between increasing or reducing the chances of coup d'état and civil wars interchangeably. In the work of Powell (2014), it was suggested that attempts to combating one type of internal conflict can lead to promoting the likelihood of another. He then argued that "coup-proofing" strategies such as inducing ethnic and/or political fractionalization and abating military capacity, can cause highly unstable political institutions which can lead to potentially civil wars. It was also noted that increasing conflicts has its consequences on the welfare of the citizens. For example, during war, productivity is ceased. This will cause insecurity/inadequate food supplies/reduced access to food, goods and services/displacement/loss of labour and at the end the society's human welfare is likely to suffer. Below in figure 1 is the conceptual framework adapted from UNICEF.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1



Adapted from UNICEF Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 above shows what conflict and violence can cause. As earlier discussed, when there is conflict or violence, every economic activity will be grounded. Insecurity becomes order of the day with inadequate food supplies, inadequate care, diseases and poor health, malnutrition and death. This could also have serious damage to the present and future human

capital in the sense that socially, psychologically, emotionally etc., everyone will be affected. Children are usually more affected than adults. After the war, the damages on the children may be difficult to repair if not impossible. Any palliative measure may not be effective in restoring what has been damaged. For example, spending on education which is

meant to improve human capital may not be effective to a damaged brain. Evidences have shown that one's cognitive and noncognitive personality traits are important factors that are contributing a lot to one's educational success, labor market success, health, other personal outcomes, and even criminal activity (Almlund et al 2011). Once personality traits are affected during conflict and violence, regaining them back may prove abortive. This invariably could lead to permanent loss of human welfare and vicious circle of poverty.

IV. METHODS, DATA MEASUREMENT, SOURCES AND MODEL SPECIFICATION

We measure human welfare with gross domestic per capita income (gdpkk) of the Nigerians. Data on intconf and ethviol were obtained from the publications of Country Risk Guide, while data on gdpkk, fdi, gcf, agva, tecop, agcap and ecopt were obtained from the publications of World Development Indicators, (2017). We generate ecopt from employment level, government spending on education, school enrolment and financial institutions using principal component analysis. These variables are important for creating economic opportunities for both the haves and have-

nots. We use Ordinary Least Square (OLS) for the analysis. Given the connection between conflict and human welfare, we can specify our model as:

$$y_t = \alpha_1 + \alpha_1 ethviol_t + \alpha_2 cond_t + \alpha_3 fdi_t + \alpha_4 gcf_t + \alpha_5 Hc_t + \alpha_6 tecop_t + \alpha_7 ecopt_t + \alpha_8 agcap_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

Where y = human welfare, ethviol = ethnic violence, cond= socioeconomic condition, fdi = foreign direct investment, gcf = gross capital formation, Hc = agric value added = rural output, tecop=technical cooperation grant, ecopt=economic opportunity and agcap = agricultural machinery tractor.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before the analysis of the data, we first examined the summary statistics of our data both in raw and log form. We discovered that deviation of the data set from the mean is minimal for the variables in log form. This suggests that they are good for the regression analysis. The results of summary statistics are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of our variables

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Gdpkk	28	8.083198	.4031331	7.625595	8.684402
ethviol	28	1.571429	1.168366	0	4
intconf	27	7.179259	1.738576	4.58	11
condt	27	.8794048	.5320517	.4054651	1.94591
fdi	28	3.42e+09	2.63e+09	5.88e+08	8.84e+09
Gcf	28	29.12614	11.66927	14.90391	53.18668
hc	28	2.57e+13	1.18e+13	1.14e+13	4.33e+13
Tecop	28	1.74e+08	1.12e+08	9190000	3.77e+08
ecopt	19	-6.67e-09	1.467863	-1.586025	3.733227
agcap	18	5.65094	.6419912	4.816667	6.702703

Our results show that ethnic violence (ethviol), socioeconomic condition (condt)and foreign direct investment (fdi) have negative relationship with human welfare. Even though, these results were not statistically significant, it is similar to that of Collier &Hoeffler (1998, 2004a) and Fearon&Laitin (2003) where they observe that per capita income and conflict are significantly and negatively correlated. Our results suggest that impact of our variables on human welfare is minimal. We also found that intconf, gcf, hc, tecop, ecopt and agcap promoted human welfare. These results were statistically significant except gcf, hc and agcap. These results suggest that focusing more attention on improving on these variables may likely promote human welfare in Nigeria. Our results show that ethnic violence and internal conflict respond differently to human welfare. The positive relation between internal conflict and human welfare may not be surprising in the sense that, government might likely respond quickly to people's agitation

by providing palliative measures whenever there is internal conflict. Positive effects of coping measures have been noted in the literature (see Townsend (1994). The reason for our results also could be the perception that internal conflict is general, in contrast to sectional perception of ethnic violence. Aside from this, studies have shown that risky activities are likely to be minimized in times of conflict (see Brück 2004a). According to Morduch (1995) and Dercon (2002), rural household might likely return to subsistence farming in time of violence especially those who hold little or no liquid assets (Deininger 2003; Brück 2004b; McKay and Loveridge 2005). For a country characterized by multiple ethnics like Nigeria where socioeconomic conditions and economic opportunity are largely unequal, it is expected that internal conflict might exert more disruptions than ethnic violence which could likely occur due to discontentment within a section of the country. These results corroborate that of McKay and Loveridge

(2005) where they report that, during the genocide in Rwanda, in 1994 and subsequent insecure years, the retreat to more autarkic modes of production and the focus on subsistence

crops was associated with the improved nutritional status of children in the post conflict period.

Our results are shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 Results of the Study

Gdpkk	Coef.	Std.	Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
ethviol	-.0430072	.0439936	-0.98	0.507	-.6019989	.5159845
intconf	.0258691	.0039682	6.52	0.097	-.0245523	.0762905
Condt	-.0152109	.0447999	-0.34	0.792	-.5844481	.5540262
fdi	-4.12e-12	6.52e-11	-0.06	0.960	-8.32e-10	8.24e-10
gcf	.0087214	.0086432	1.01	0.497	-.1011014	.1185442
hc	1.55e-14	1.25e-14	1.24	0.431	-1.43e-13	1.74e-13
tecop	9.46e-10	2.03e-10	4.66	0.135	-1.64e-09	3.53e-09
ecopt	.0537896	.0131693	4.08	0.153	-.1135423	.2211215
agcap	.2836343	.1864768	1.52	0.370	-2.085778	2.653047
_cons	5.447644	1.348583	4.04	0.154	-11.68773	22.58302

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the consequential effects of internal and external conflicts on human welfare in Nigeria between the period of 1990 and 2017. The study employed PCA to generate economic opportunity index and OLS method for the regression analysis. The study concluded that ethnic violence is detrimental to the welfare of the Nigerians. We therefore suggested that policy makers should watch closely and promote those variables that impacted positively on the welfare of the Nigerians and address those that are expected to promote the welfare, but failed to promote it. It is also necessary to prevent the occurrence of internal conflicts since its effects can also be detrimental to human welfare.

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