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**Representation of Ideology and Violence in Chinua Achebe's  
*There was a country and Ibrahim Bangura's the 24<sup>th</sup> son.***

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## **Dedication**

To our precious family

We dedicate this work to our beloved parents

To our Beloved brothers who supported us until the end of this work

We want to express to all of you our deepest gratitude

TAREK & AZIZ

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## **Abstract**

This research investigates the ideological stances and means of violence in the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean civil wars as depicted in Chinua Achebe's *there was a country: a personal history of Biafra* and Ibrahim Bangura's *the 24th son* (2023). On the basis of the three concepts issued by Karl Mannheim on ideology in his book *Ideology and utopia* (1936) and the theory of violence used by Danny Hoffman in his book *The war machine young man and violence in Sierra Leone and Benin* alongside Stathis N. Kalyvas's *The logic of violence in civil war* (2000), this research seeks to shed light on the implications of ideology and violence in the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean civil wars. We shall deploy a case study approach: the analysis of the ideological differences between the ruling parties, the role of ethnic tensions in the conflict, the use of violence, and their impacts on the populations. By applying this approach, we reached these findings: first, we identified the ideological stances and purposes of all the parties involved in the conflicts; moreover, we extracted the means of violence used during the conflict; and finally we explored the relation between ideology and violence as depicted in the two memoirs.

*Key words: Ideology, Violence, Civil Wars, Memoirs.*

## **General Introduction**

At the end of 1945, the world saw significant shifts in the power structures that had previously ruled over it. Indeed, the two World Wars revealed to the subjugated countries that the dominance and tyranny of the white man is a carefully crafted illusion of might, which when dispelled had far-reaching consequences across the world, notably in Africa. This disillusionment with the colonial powers is the spark that was ultimately needed in order for the various colonies to affirm their identity, endeavor greatly supported by the involvement of African colonies in the western conflict, that exposed soldiers, such as those from Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to novel concepts and ideologies, notably the notion of revolution. Consequently, on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1957, Ghana paved the road to the beginning of the scramble for independence in Africa, followed soon by all its neighbors. However, as these newly formed countries achieved their freedom, numerous factors, such as governmental corruption, inter-ethnic tensions, and the spread of different ideologies were among the many elements that brought many tragic and violent internal conflicts.

In both Chinua Achebe's *There was a Country*: a personal history of Biafra and Ibrahim Bangura's *The 24th Son*: a story of survival in Sierra Leone civil war the concepts of ideology and violence are central to the narrative bearing in mind a civil war and national identity. These texts offer an insight into how politics becomes ethicized, and social tenets and nationalisms responsible for resolving issues that destabilize nations and tear apart communities. Both present, convincingly, civil wars in which ideology is used as a weapon of violence, however, both works depict the majority of human suffering involved in such wars. In the end, all these books depict how ideology as a means of bringing political change can also go out of control and wreak havoc if the right ethical limits are not applied. Achebe and Bangura recount their personal history, which allows one to examine the role of ideology and violence in the civil wars raging across Africa.

## **Review of Literature**

There is a considerable amount of research done on Chinua Achebe's 'There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra' from a renowned Nigerian author whose works are famous worldwide, his memoir has been meticulously explored from various perspectives. To start with, in a research titled "Part Nigerians, part Biafrans: double consciousness and the tragedy of Biafra in Chinua Achebe's work "There was a Country" written by Charity O. Nwuga who explored the inter-ethnic and inter-religious causes of the conflict. The research shows the reality through the lenses of Achebe, presenting the double consciousness of Nigeria and Biafra that appeared in "the unequal power relationship between the north and the east" which created a rift still present in different sectors of society. (Nzuga. 2009, p.203)

"There Was a Country" was analyzed by V. Swarnalatha in "A paradise lost long ago: a study with reference to Chinua Achebe's there was a country: a personal history of Biafra" (2013). He discusses Achebe's attempt to confront the historical and spiritual roots of Africa's crisis, describing the "self-inflicted ignorance and superstitions that would have otherwise been completely lost as a waste product of Nature." (Swarnalatha, 2013, p. 2) The study highlights Achebe's sentiment on Nigeria's political upheaval, as he mourns Biafra and criticizes Nigeria's inadequate rule, which put his life at risk time and again and forced him to flee his country. Elaborations are presented on Achebe's thoughts and understanding of the war during and after the events, as the last chapter of Achebe's memoir is described as an "exhortation to better governance, in which he examines corruption, ethnic bigotry, state failure and the steps Nigeria must take to rehabilitate itself." (Swarnalatha, 2013, p. 5)

Another examination of the memoir was done by James Yeku, entitled "Chinua Achebe's "There Was a Country and the digital publics of African literature" (2019). He

focuses attention on the connection between digital technologies and contemporary writing in Africa, answering the questions of the influence of digital platforms on the behaviour of the audience and its impact on reality. Exploring the intersection of digital culture and African literary forms, using online responses to Achebe's memoir to track the trajectories of the new publics of African literature, showing how the ethno-politics that greeted the publication of Achebe's wartime narrative explicates the nature of digital publics.

Contrary to Achebe, Ibrahim Bangura's "The 24th Son: My Story of Survival and Sacrifice in Sierra Leone's Civil War" (2023) is a recent work and its author is young and substantially less known, for it holds no study or analysis done on it. In this work, we shall strive to unravel the historical, socio-political, and cultural perspectives surrounding the Sierra Leonean civil war.

From the review above on Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* and *The 24th Son: My Story of Survival and Sacrifice in Sierra Leone's Civil War*, we remark that the majority of the research is done from inter-ethnic and religious, historical, technological stance. However, to our knowledge, no work has been done explaining the ideology and violence that spread during that period. Therefore, this effort aims to explain and interpret the ideological and violent aspects of these two civil wars.

## **Issue and Working hypothesis**

A tremendous effort was put forth in the case study of both Nigeria and Sierra Leone's civil war. Extensive research has been undertaken to understand the dynamics of the different conflicts. Nonetheless, there is little to no material that focuses on Achebe's memoir and that of Bangura, especially concerning the ideology and violence that began, continued, and ended the conflicts. The issue is in regards to the lack of understanding of the international community in the African affairs, especially at the time of the hostilities, in all concerning socio-political, cultural, and historical circumstances of each country. Ignorance which allowed foreign meddling in the conflicts and prolonged the wars, hence, we shall strive to present the ideological stance of each side of the conflict and the violence they deemed necessary to preserve their ideologies.

To complete such a task, we are going to use Karl Mannheim's definition of ideology in his work "Ideology and Utopia" (1929) where he presents the three main shapes of ideology in society and the differences between them in identifying the various ideological stances of the countries during the civil wars. In his book "The War Machine" (2011), Danny Hoffman showcases the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's war machine theory. Deleuze and Guattari offer a unique understanding of this concept and also note its differences with the state. Likewise, Stathis Kalyvas, in "The Logic of Violence in Civil War" (2000), provides a portrait of violence and its implications, outlining - to a certain degree - civil war and its warring factions.

# **Theoretical Framework**

## **Methods**

### **I. Ideology**

#### **I.1. Genesis of Ideology**

The term Ideology is far from being a simple word. It can be studied throughout multiple angles, and multiple philosophers worked on it in order to shed light on its numerous facets.

First and above all, it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that this term emerged. Coined by a French philosopher called Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy in his work; *Mémoire sur la faculté de penser*. The word comes from the Greek words; “ιδέα” which means idea and “logos” which means discourse (Tracy, 1804, p.306). Tracy combined them to form the word Ideology which later became a core concept in philosophy which several thinkers developed, such as Karl Marx alongside Frederic Engels and Karl Mannheim.

For our dissertation, it is the vision or definition of Mannheim of the ideology that will be used to explain the ideological stance in Nigeria and Sierra Leone during their respective civil wars to understand through which means people got indoctrinated either to participate or to survive these awful conflicts.

In his book, *Ideology and utopia*, the sociologist Karl Mannheim says:

For most people, the term ideology is closely bound up to with Marxism, and their reactions to the term are largely determined by the association. It is therefore first necessary to state that although Marxism contributed a great deal to the original statement of the problem, both go farther back in history than Marxism, and ever since their time new meanings of the word have emerged, which have taken shape independently of it. (Mannheim, 1939, p.49)

According to Mannheim “the roots of ideology stems from the natural wariness one

hold towards their adversary during various stages of human history” (Mannheim, 1939, p54). Therefore, ideology is closely linked to human kind from the beginning of the establishment of communities.

## **I.2. Definition of Ideology according to Karl Mannheim**

Karl Mannheim was a renowned Hungarian sociologist and one of the founding fathers of sociology of knowledge. His most famous book as well as the most debated, was *Ideology and utopia*, in which he defines, categories, and traces back in history the uses of the term “Ideology”. Mannheim introduces the term ideology employing two terms; the first is called “particular conception” that he determines as:

The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes that we are skeptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests. These distortions range all the way from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwitting disguises; from calculated attempts to dupe others to self-deception (Mannheim, 1939, p. 49).

That is to say, despite the common ground present between two parties, there is an intentional and purposeful covering or changing of a part or a piece of knowledge and information known about a particular situation or subject in order to hold an advantage on the opposition, or the unraveling of such would greatly hinder and set back one’s profits, making interest the sole focus of one's mind. According to Mannheim, the origins of this idea can be found in the hesitancy and distrust that have been shown toward an enemy throughout history. But we only refer to an ideological stance when we are able to identify and acknowledge the deceit in their statements as well as trace its roots from their own distinctions and similarities in how they see and comprehend the world, rather than from deliberate or careful preparation. Since the particular conception of ideology is established

on a psychological level, it would not change the outcome of an analysis even when dealing with groups because all psychic phenomena have to be understood through the mind of an individual. This term deals with the similarity of the reactions or behaviors of a group of people who went through the same experience and mental burden or lived in the same social class, which gives them the same aspirations. Although the group ideology considers the individual's experience and responses a key component for its existence, its inner structure bypasses the need for the integration of these individual experiences. Mannheim concludes that to understand the intellectual structure of a given social group in history, we should not limit our observations to a single source and consider it the bearer of the ideology.

The second term used to define ideology is the "total conception," which, unlike the particular conception that has similarities and differences between the two parties, "total conception is used when dealing with two distinct world views, where one party calls into question the opponent's total world view and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he partakes" (Mannheim, 1939, p. 50). Mannheim clarifies that "total conception aims at a reconstruction of the systematic theoretical basis underlying the single judgments of the individual" (Mannheim, 1939, p. 52).

To find if an ideology follows the total conception pattern, we must follow the three main stages, presented by Mannheim, in the emergence of the total conception starting with:

### **I.3. The development of a philosophy of consciousness**

Also known as the social consciousness that is built up by a group through its own experiences and interaction with other forces (in the world). This structure changes with time as a person within the group learns more and acquires new knowledge and changes

his/her view of the world. This is how the group, or a society, learns to comprehend and constructs the meaning of the objective existence of the group itself, as Mannheim illustrates it clearly by:

Henceforth the world as “world” exists only with reference to the knowing mind, and the mental activity of the subject determines the form in which the world appears. This constitutes in fact the embryonic total conception of ideology, though it is, as yet, devoid of its historical and sociological implications (Mannheim, 1939, p. 58- 9).

#### **I.4. The ideology seen in a historical perspective**

Meaning to test the adaptability to historical changes occurring to an individual or groups during a considerable period of time, the resulting changes will be integrated into the system of thoughts as Mannheim summarizes:

During the enlightenment the subject, as carrier of the unity of consciousness, was viewed as wholly abstract, super temporal, and super social unity: “consciousness in itself”. During this period the Volksgiest “folk spirit”, comes to represent the historically differentiated elements of consciousness which are integrated by Hegel into the “world spirit” (Mannheim, 1939, p.55).

#### **I.5. When “class” took place of “folk” or nation as the bearer of the historically evolving consciousness**

A stage achieved in which social stratifications of a particular mentality prevail over the general public, influencing the organization of social relations and the exchange of ideas among different social strata. Then, by orienting the fundamental ordering of the system along hierarchical social lines, it may be said that either social consciousness or social ideology allows us to delineate two principles that are essential for the continuation of any system of society: the first one being the synthesizing and integrating one, which enables all the carriers of the consciousness to be brought together through a single prime axis in a dynamically arranged environment; and the second, being the axis of the first, the

attempt to modify and enhance the first axis so that it becomes beneficial to the individual. This ever-changing body of consciousness is what Mannheim describes as the adequate perspective to comprehend historical reality:

The result of this dual tendency is that instead of a fictional unity of a timeless, unchanging "consciousness as such (which was never actually demonstrable), we get a conception which varies in accordance with historic periods, nations, and social classes. In the course of this transition, we continue to cling to the unity of consciousness, but this unity is now dynamic and in constant process of becoming (Mannheim, 1939, p. 61).

These two terms are the most prominent definitions of ideology by Mannheim; however, he introduces another perspective for people to understand information, especially historical knowledge. Mannheim attests, that "because we cannot grasp the absolute truths about a social and historical situation and that this knowledge is relational knowledge that changes depending on the position of the observer, and so instead of searching truths from falsehoods, we apply what Mannheim dubbed non-evaluative general total conception of ideology" that does not treat ideas treated as right" or wrong" and oversimplifies the circumstances of a problem in order to establish a link between the mental structure or state of a patient and the social situation they exist in. Thus, to Mannheim, "ideas were products of their times and of the social statuses of their proponents" (Sagarin, 1969, p.292–302).

To put it another way, if one is an individual who has a network of social interactions, there would be a greater possibility of knowing his peers well; in the same way a given perspective and a set of ideas for that matter which are associated with and arise from a particular environment increases one's chances of uncovering the significance of that environment by virtue of the close interaction with it. (Mannheim, 1939, p, 71-2)

## II. Violence

Violence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has been present throughout human history. It is a universal human aspect, and all the cultures were affected by it in a way or another; therefore, to shed light on this common aspect of a human being, it is of a capital importance to provide some definitions of violence. First, according to the Oxford dictionary, "violence is the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy an instance of violent treatment or procedure." Another definition that can be provided, according to the same dictionary, is "behavior that is intended to kill or hurt someone, including physical or emotional energy and force." However, as said above, violence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can take multiple forms or facets, thus numerous scholars worked on the "concept" of violence to give a deep and concise understanding of it; for instance, in the wretched of the earth Franz Fanon says about violence:

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon (Fanon, 1961, p.35).

Based on what Fanon said, we understand that violence is a process through which decolonization goes and consequently achieves national liberation, but this is applicable only in the context of colonization. However, it is important to note that violence is characterized by its multiple facets, and we cannot narrow violence to only the physical dimension. Consequently, in the cases of the Sierra Leonean and Nigerian civil wars, violence was a different phenomenon. Marked by the emergence of new violent practices in both conflicts, violence in civil wars needs to be completely redefined; thus, multiple academicians from different disciplines worked on it in order to give a profound comprehension of the phenomenon. For instance, Stathis N. Kalyvas, a Greek political

scientist, in his book the logic of violence in civil war, defines violence as:

“Intentional physical violence against non-combatants that takes the forms of homicide, in the context where at least one actor seeks to take control of the population” (Kalyvas, 2000, p31).

Therefore, we understand that violence in civil wars plays a prominent role either to control or dispose of opponents within the country, such as in Nigeria, or to achieve a political purpose, such as in Sierra Leone.

Another definition of violence suitable to the Nigerian situation is taken from the political scientist Stathis N. Kalyvas’s book “The Logic of Violence in Civil War”. He presents violence as a phenomenon in itself, separate from other phenomenon as “war” or “revolution” because while revolution causes violence, a great deal of it is not done on the battlefield, meaning that the majority of it is not the work of the combatants of the two fronts but another variable altogether. Violence is a broad social phenomenon that unites not only physical harm but also other forms like: social and economic oppression, violence that destroys and persevere social order and any and all kinds of act that result in mental anguish. Mainly though, Kalyvas says violence is the intentional infliction of harm on others (Kalyvas, 2000, 41).

## **II.1. Types of violence**

As mentioned, there are various forms that violence takes beside the physical type, in its wide scope it unites any forms of oppression, social or economic oppression, that puts an individual above another in the confines of the community and violence that persevere or destroys the foundation of society, performed by various governmental bodies or terrorist organizations that want to topple the governing power, as well as, all action that inflict mental trauma to a person.

### **A. Violence that persevere and destroys social order**

### **a. "systemically functional" violence**

The idea behind “systemically functional” violence is a form of violence that serves a role and purpose in a social and political setting, this form of violence is called “functional” because it is necessary for maintaining social and political order in society. The ones with the right and duty of performing necessary violence are certain bodies and organization created and approved by the system to support its existence and goals, such groups include the police force, the intelligence agencies, the different bodies of the army and obviously the citizen himself. All these mentioned establishments follow the constitutional right of their given country and is thus used to maintain order, enforcing laws, or defending the state from external threats.

### **b. “dysfunctional” violence**

“dysfunctional” violence is mentioned when discussing violence that compromise the social order and threaten the working system. The term “dysfunctional” means not operating normally or properly, so it has a negative ramification on the system’s intended function. Thus, “dysfunctional” violence could be understood as violence that upsets the established order and impede the function of political institutions, in order to tear the existing system down.

## **B. Social and economic oppression**

This kind of violence occurs in the public sphere and can be either physical or mental, it breaches into three main components that make up the basis of society: social and political violence, cultural violence and economic violence:

### **a. Political violence**

This exemplar of violence tends to be the work of a very small group of people in

search of political gain, the study of this violence “covers everything from campus demonstrations to genocide” (Kalyvas, 2000, 44). As a subject of research political violence is conceptualized following certain criteria as the scale of violence, the approach used, the aim of the perpetrators or a particular historical or social context. It can cover violence of state against another state (war) or against civilians and non-state actors, as well as, politically motivated violence from non- state actors against state (coups, rebellion...) or civilians. The inaction of the government in rule during time of crisis can be seen as political violence. This category includes: ethnic cleansing, pogroms, riots, police brutality, reprisals, terrorism...etc.

## **b. Cultural violence**

This model of violence refers to certain characteristics of a given culture that could be used to legitimize direct or structural violence against it, creating cultural stereotypes, ethnic prejudice and racism or even to something like civilizing mission. The study of cultural violence focuses on the method put in place in order to bend the moral compass on the legitimacy of certain acts in society, usually a slow process, unless in extreme circumstance, that does not aim for complete acceptance of a specific deed but only it's necessity in a specific environment or with a defined culture, so all it needs is not to make violence seem right but merely not wrong (Galtung, 2008, p 2).

Cultural violence can be fractioned into two distinct categories: **direct violence** is any harm carried out in a direct confrontation of one individual against one individual or community against another community, it includes killing, maiming, torture, pogroms..., the other category is **structural violence** which is an intentional and deliberate ranking of members of society in relation to their cultural background, placing one ethnic or cultural group above another that lead them to benefit a lot more from the structure, it is seen in various forms like **Implantation** which is to place the topdog as first class citizen and the

underdog as second class citizen, **Segmentation** is giving the underdog a limited view or means of interaction in society, **Marginalization** which is keeping the underdog outside of society, **Fragmentation** that is keeping the underdog separate from each other preventing them from forming their community.

### **c. Economic violence**

Economic violence means the control, denial or destruction of a target's ability to earn, use and keep economic assets to endanger their economic stability, therefore their livelihood for personal benefit. This category of violence is of the indirect (structural) category, meaning it is not of the physical type, it could be seen implemented against individuals, as it is a widespread form of domestic abuse, and communities, like where one, usually minor, group, social class or organization appropriates the monopoly of all resources of a country to themselves. Economic violence is generally accompanied and the end result of the other two variety of violence, since in order to seize hold of an individual or even a country economic property, one needs to be "superior" in strength than the target. There is also the instance, where a far "superior" political or cultural jurisdiction showcases their might by their economic capacity.

## **II.2. Civil war**

Kalyvas quotes Grotius on the fragility of a working system in the absence of a uniting force saying "men are in a state of war as long as there is no "common power to keep them all in awe" (Kalyvas, 2000, p. 19). This term implies the meaning of a violent division as a result of a conflict marked by widespread violence, as Kalyvas defines it "as armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties, subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities" (Kalyvas, 2000, p.17).

The use of the term is part of the conflict itself, for it grants or denies legitimacy to

a party over the other, since during conflict the term is mostly used by the revolutionary to get legitimacy and denied by the official authority that label their adversary as the “bad guy” and describe the clash as terrorism, banditry, coups...etc.

In the end, the nature of the war is determined by the outcome. Since civil war is inside the border of a sovereignty, we can deduce that both parties hold a certain right to the authority of the state, such mode of thoughts result in a situation of dual rule that results in a physical division of the dominion into rival armed factions with their own territorial base, both with their own sovereign and authority that seeks to become the only jurisdiction. These conflicts are caused by various reasons from a contrast in belief and intellectual arguments to an ethnic and religious difference or to simply seize power, depending on motives and interest, the parties may be united or divided, internationally recognized or isolated or seeking to capture the state or divide it. There are two intellectual traditions when discussing civil war depending on the size of the sovereign, we discuss factional division and public discord when talking about small entities, such as city-state; on the other hand, rebellions are more common in large structures, such as empires.

### **A. Violence in time of war**

There are two kinds of violence in time of war, violence against combatants and non-combatants. The distinction between the two is made by their association with an armed group. Intentional and direct physical form of violence includes forms like “pillage, robbery, vandalism, arson, forcible displacement, kidnapping, hostage taking, detention, beating, torture, mutilation, rape, and desecration of dead bodies” (Kalyvas, 2000, p.20) Although, a great number of casualties could also be the result of no-violent causes such as famine or disease which become widespread during these perilous times. There are also cases, where violence may be performed with no goal in mind and where war may lead to violence outside the parties’ purpose but is a consequence of it such as revenge.

### **II.3. The aims of violence**

Violence serves various functions in different circumstance, in the war context violence serves purposes beyond the physical killing, for “Various literatures detail more than twenty uses for violence, including intimidation, demoralization, polarization, demonstration, radicalization of the public, publicity, the improvement of group morale, the enforcement or disruption of control, the mobilization of forces and resources, financing, the elimination of opposing forces, the sanction of cooperation with the enemy, and the provocation of countermeasures and repression” (Kalyvas, 2000, p. 23). This type of violence is called coercive violence and it is used when the aim of it is to exterminate or control the target of the violence. Coercive violence holds a role of communication with the target by means of intimidation, targeted assassination of a victim per goal to command the majority, for example in Sierra Leone the “cutting off of villagers’ hands and fingers inscribe, on the landscape and in the bodies of village people, a set of political messages rather more firmly than if they had been spoken over the radio” (Kalyvas, 2000, p.28).

Thus, at the very least the purpose of violence in the coercive sense is to frighten the subject. Then, there is the expressive violence which serves no instrumental purpose and is simply “strictly consummatory rewards of inflicting pain on one’s enemies or destroying a hated symbol”, such violence is often described as disoriented socially or nihilistic kind and is an “identity” based brutality, meaning it aims at people for who they are. We are citing killing for sadistic tendencies, revenge, hatred, honor, rituals, greed and consumption of alcohol and drugs.

### **II.4. Violence According to Danny Hoffman**

In his book “The War Machine”, Danny Hoffman an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Washington, on the base of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guttari work on nomadology from “a thousand plateaus” (1987), Hoffman used the

concept of The War Machine to explain the power dynamics and violent labor within the Sierra Leonean civil war. The term “war machine” is complicated to define, Deleuze and Guattari introduces it as a historical concept that rose against the governing state, its aim being not war, makes it prey to assimilate to the government. It develops into an aesthetic concept that embodies change from one situation to another, enabling it to transform. This concept is most adequate in the analysis of emerging power that has per goal to change or the change of something from one state to another.

## **Historical context**

### **Materials**

#### **I. Nigeria**

The Nigerian civil war was a cataclysmic episode in the history of Africa's most populous state. Known as the Biafran War, the conflict opposed the Federal Military Government (F.M.G.) headed by Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon and the Biafran eastern region headed by Lt. Col. Emeka Ojukwu. The prominent reason for the outbreak of this fratricidal war is that on May 30, 1967, seven years after the national independence, the eastern region seceded and declared independence.

Consequently, the statement prompted the F.M.G. to reclaim the territories occupied by "the rebels" to protect the territorial integrity and national unity of Nigeria. At the beginning of the conflict, it was expected that the war against the rebels would be over in a few weeks; however, the hostilities lasted over thirty months, thirty months marked by extreme violence, famine, and unjustified destruction that could have been avoided. According to Ian Smillie, a Canadian consultant, the Biafran war caused 100,000 military casualties, between 500,000 and two million civilian deaths from starvation, and the estimations showed that the number of human casualties was about 3 million.

Despite the last-minute attempt made by Ghana to reconcile the two opponents, multiple reasons had pushed the antagonists to go to war. The earliest reasons that paved the way to the Biafran war, was first, the numerous crises faced by the nation alongside governmental corruption that led to the military coup of January 15, 1967. In addition, years of colonial rule led to increased inter-ethnic tensions. Indeed, during the colonial period, Great Britain applied a policy that stipulated the division of the Nigerian ethnicities. Known as the amalgamation, this policy was initiated by Sir Frederick Lugard in 1914 as he says in the Dual Mandate:

The first and most important condition in maintaining an effective administration, cooperation is the keynote of success in its application- continuous cooperation between every link in the chain, from the head of the administration to its most junior member, – cooperation between the Government and the commercial community, and, above all, between the provincial staff and the native rulers (Lugard, 1926, p.1).

Therefore, all these factors combined led Nigeria to face one of the most tragic African civil wars.

## **II. Sierra Leone**

In the 1950s and 1960s, Sierra Leone was then a British protectorate, but the country was regarded as one of the most democratic nations in Africa. Indeed, it was the age of multiparty policy within the government, and elections were conducted most transparently. Despite some tensions (mostly due to ethnic tensions; Kriol and other ethnicities) among the government officials, the country was on the way to economic and intellectual development due to its wealth in terms of raw materials such as diamonds, gold, and also human resources. In 1951, illegal diamond mining was a pillar of the national economy. Despite this outlaw exploitation, which represented 60 percent of the national budget, the government succeeded in reinvesting this income in the development of the country; therefore, roads and bridges were built to replace boat transportation, and even a railroad project was started to link the country. In addition, from the end of the Second World War, the country witnessed a great increase in the educational rates; indeed, from 1945 to 1961, the number of students and teachers increased almost fourfold, and by the independence, 86,000 were attending primary schools, 7,500 were attending college, 1,200 were attending technical and vocational schools, and 300 were attending high-level education.

On April 27, 1961, the country finally achieved its independence through a pacific process, and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party elected its first president, Milton Margai. Then

the horizon seemed favorable for this rich country. However, after only three years as the lead of Sierra Leone, Margai died in office, which marked a turning point in the destiny of the nation. Succeeded by his half-brother Albert at the presidency, the latter's mandate was marked by corruption and misleading, and this weakened the country; therefore, in the election of 1968, Albert's policy caused the emergence of the principal opponent of the SLPP, the All People's Congress (APC), and the party was elected to the presidency of the nation. Meanwhile, Siakka Stevens was arrested a few minutes after taking office; his arrest was due to a military coup organized by the sergeants of the Sierra Leonean army. As a result, Brigadier Andrew Jackson Smith ruled the country for one year. In 1971, elections were held in Sierra Leone, and the APC won the elections with Siakka Stevens as the head of the state. Soon after his government established the single-party regime, which later led to military coups and the outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone. After 14 years of rule, Siakka Stevens retired from his functions, leaving the post for his successor Josef Saidu Momoh, who ruled for 7 years. But on March 23, 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), supported by the Liberian dictator Charles Taylor's party, attempted to overthrow Momoh's government and succeeded in their coup, which marked the beginning of 11 years of tragic civil war in the country.

## **Authors' Biographies**

### **I. Chinua Achebe**

Chinua Achebe, also known as Albert Chinualumogu Achebe, is a well-known Nigerian writer and poet. Achebe was born in Ogidi, Nigeria in 1930, and was educated in Igbo and Christian teachings. He studied in the University of Ibadan where he began to publish his first literary work, combining sketches, short stories, and essays. Achebe wrote his first book at the age of 28 years; *Things Fall Apart* was the book. He sought to go beyond the expectations of how Africa is often viewed and written about, for example, in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Achebe received his scholarship in the year 1953 and began working in Oba, Nigeria, as a teacher. He provided a classroom paper and worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) based in Lagos. By 1966, he had resigned as a result of the appalling political situation and the civil war in Nigeria. To resume his profession, he relocated to the eastern region of Nigeria and devoted himself to writing before heading for America to teach in the universities. After the Nigerian civil war in the 70s, Achebe made a come-back to Nigeria and was employed as an English lecturer in the university. He also managed two Nigerian publishing companies Heinemann Educational Books Limited and Nwankwa-Ifejik Ltd.

Achebe's approach to writing was both practical and pragmatic as he focused more on African societies and politics depicting them devoid of any colonial cultural approaches. He was persistent in his pursuit of writing and clearly ensured that he left a lasting pattern for the posterity.

### **II. Ibrahim Bangura**

Born on June 29, 1989, three years before the outbreak of the civil war in Sierra Leone, Ibrahim Bangura is the 24th son of a modest Sierra Leonean family. Bangura spent

his childhood surrounded by rebel forces and death. In fact, he was in the midst of the violence during these years of darkness, which pushed him to immigrate to Australia in 2005 and later attend school at Wyndham College (Senior High School); after that, he graduated from the University of Western Sydney with a bachelor of business and commerce in 2015. (Bangura, 2023.p 23) After his graduation, Bangura felt the urge to reveal his experiences during the civil war. Therefore, in 2023, he published his first book entitled "The 24th Son," where he relates his experience of violence in his early childhood and his journey throughout the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone. Thus, his book is a testimony on the brutality of both humans and war.

## **Summaries of Achebe's memoir *There was a country: a personal history of Biafra* and Bangura's memoir *the 24th Son: My Story of Survival and Sacrifice in Sierra Leone's Civil War***

### **I. Achebe's Memoir Summary**

Achebe chose "There Was a Country" to be about the most difficult time in his life, which was unsurprising given that it would be his final effort before passing away. In this first-person account of the Nigeria-Biafra struggle, Achebe describes his early years in eastern Nigeria, including his family situation, early schooling, marriage, and parenthood, as well as his ascent to prominence as one of Africa's leading authors. The book's primary goal, however, is to present the Biafran viewpoint through Achebe's eyes during the three years of civil war that pitted them against the Nigerian federal government. In this section of the memoir, Achebe describes the events that resulted in tension between the Igbo and the northern region, the Igbo's secession from the Nigerian government, and the violent retaliation they encountered, forcing Achebe and his family to flee until the republic's surrender in 1970.

### **II. Ibrahim Bangura Summary**

Bangura is one of the many survivors of Sierra Leone civil war. His book "The 24th Son" is about his harsh path towards survival and sacrifice that started from the tender age of three. The 24th Son lays the foundation of the Sierra Leonean society through the different stages of the conflict, from before the start of the civil war until Bangura escapes from the country it documents the diverse beliefs that govern the Sierra Leoneans' lives from the hierarchical order of the family to marriage to the economic structure of society. Bangura's book gives a different perspective to the official acclaims about the war by following the life of a three-year-old boy who was forced to mature rapidly and care for his sick brother in a war-torn country and the sacrifices that had to be made to ensure survival

in such harsh time.

## **Result**

Using the approach mentioned in the methodology section, we have reached the following findings. First, relying on the ideological concepts introduced by Mannheim in *Ideology and utopia* (1939), we identified the ideological stances (particular ideology) adopted by each ruling party involved in the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean civil wars. We defined the purposes of these particular ideologies because they helped each participant in the civil wars: to protect their interests, to assemble people for a specific purpose, and to legitimize the acts taken during these difficult years.

Second, relying on Mannheim's concepts of ideology, we discovered that the Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans responded differently to the hegemonic ideologies propagated by the ruling parties. Concerning Nigeria, during the start of the civil war, the government promoted a series of stereotypes on the Igbos, which fed enmity for this ethnicity. As a result of this propaganda, the state of Biafra proclaimed its independence. However, the Nigerian government worked to unite the north against this rebellious state. For Sierra Leone, even the ideology was similar to Nigeria, but the population tried only to survive from the R.U.F. They did not have the same Nigerian intellectual background to face the conflict.

Third, since the conflicts were characterized by extreme violence, Danny Hoffman's theory of violence was introduced in his book *The War Machine* alongside, Stathis Kalyvas's theory on violence introduced in his book entitled *The Logic of Violence in Civil*. We reached the following findings: one, we explored the means of violence used in the respective civil wars, in addition to that, the purpose of violence used by its perpetrators.

Finally, we look at the relation between the ideologies that characterized the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean civil war with the violence perpetrated by the different parties involved in these conflicts.

# **CHAPTER 01**

## **Representations of Ideology**

## **Representations of Ideologies in Achebe's and Bangura's Memoirs**

After the end of World War II, most African countries scrambled for their independence, as did Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Despite the restrictions and struggle that the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean actors of the independence faced from the British colonial power, they successfully emancipated their countries from colonial domination, and this was motivated by the emergence of new ideologies such as nationalism within the Nigerian and Sierra Leonean borders. However, these newly formed countries, soon after their independence, saw their political, societal, and economic environment slowly fall apart due to numerous reasons mainly related to the widespread corruption among government officials and the spread of several ideologies characterized by traditional behaviors like tribalism to dominate the populations. All this combined led Nigeria and Sierra Leone to face some of the most tragic civil wars in the postcolonial era. Therefore, this first chapter is devoted to the distinction and explanation of these ideologies.

### **I. Representations of Ideology in Achebe's Memoir**

To begin with, Nigeria after independence became the cradle of many ideologies, and it was afflicted by multiple governmental conflicts. The reason these issues emerged only after independence is because of the presence of the colonial power that acted as a "mediator" between the different ethnics, as Achebe said: "Nigeria was rocked by one crisis after another in the years that followed the independence" (Achebe, 2012, p. 67). Indeed, only six years after its emancipation from British dominance, the country was afflicted by two successive military coup; the first on January 15th and the second on 29th, July 1966.

These two events were the reasons that plunged Nigeria into a tragic civil war characterized by violence, ethnic hatred, especially toward the Igbo, and the spread of several ideologies on both sides (the Biafran government and the Nigerian government).

The January 15, 1966, coup was the key event that oriented Nigeria on the path of civil war, as Achebe said: “within six years of this tragic colonial manipulation, Nigeria was a cesspool of corruption and misrule. Public servants helped themselves freely to the nation’s wealth” (Achebe, 2012, p. 55). Certainly, in the years that followed the independence Nigeria was shaken by extreme corruption in the governmental sphere and chaos became the norm in the Nigerian society. However, before this coup and during the colonization, there was a certain preparation that the British had undertaken in her colonies. (Achebe, 2012, p.48) Their total conception of governance was one of the tools that led Nigeria to achieve its independence, to increase their working force and make them loyal to Britain, they gave high importance to education. This in turn, led to the emergence of highly intellectual political figures that, instead of being at the service of the colonizers, strove to change the ideological stance within the country, such as Herbert Macauley who is considered as the founding father of “Nigerian Nationalism”.

Despite the interval caused by World War II in the Nigerian organization of independence, it provided a great opportunity for some Nigerians to emerge as national heroes (based on what they achieved during the conflict), such as Nnamdi Azikiwe (Igbo) and Obafemi Awolowo (Yoruba). Both became the main political figures in the postcolonial era since the former became the head of the state after the independence with his political party the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. To this, Awolowo represented the main opponent to the NCNC and contributed to spreading an ideology, through his political party Action Group, which later had dramatic consequences on the Igbo people that Mannheim labeled as a “particular ideology”. According to him:

The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes that we are sceptical of ideas and representations advanced by our opponents. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests. These

distortions range from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwilling disguises; from calculated attempts to dupe others to self-deception. (Mannheim, 1939, p. 49)

Through the Action Group, Obafemi Awolowo attempted the restriction of ethnic pride; therefore he sought the support of other minorities that feared the prospect of Igbo political dominance, which marked the beginning of ethnic tension that unfortunately led to civil war. However, he soon faced the intellectual inequality between the North and the South; in addition, he also faced difficulties choosing Northern-educated politicians. Hence, to overcome this handicap, he pulled together an assortment of leaders in the Islamic territories under the same ideology that Karl Mannheim entitled “group ideology” and he defines it as follows:

The term group ideology occurs frequently, to be sure, in popular speech. Group existence in this sense can only mean that a group of persons, either in their immediate reactions to the same situation or as a result of direct psychic interaction, react similarly. Accordingly, conditioned by the same social situation, they are subject to the same illusions. (Mannheim, 1939, p.52)

Consequently, he succeeded in pulling together all the Islamic leaders under the same banner; the hatred toward the Igbo, as Achebe said in his memoir: “To protect the mainly feudal North’s hegemonic interests it was critical to form a political party capable resisting the growing power of southern politicians” (Achebe, 2012, p.50). The consequence of his strategy, alongside the political division in the Southern political parties NCNC and the Action Group; is that it gave a free field to (NPC) to hold the majority of seats in the post-independent parliament (Ibid). Furthermore, the colonial power was well aware of all these interethnic divisions and adopted multiple subterfuges to maintain their domination over their colony, and “by 1951 they had divided the country into the Northern, Eastern and Western region with their respective houses of assembly to contain this rising threat.” (Achebe, 2012, p.51) Yet they failed to maintain their dominance in the colony.

However, the colonial power was not willing to leave this wealthy country to the

hands of its native people and by extension, leave their economic interests in the region. Therefore, despite the departure of all the government ministries, and public and privately held firms corporations, those who held the commercial sector and oil business stayed “The civilised behaviour of their brethren made this an acceptable development” (Achebe, 2012, p.52). Additionally, when the British decided to hand power, they changed the governor-general and brought to take rein in Nigeria, Sir James Robertson from Soudan (Achebe, 2012, p.53). As a consequence, on the eve of independence, Sir Robertson “threw his weight” behind Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who became the first prime minister of Nigeria and marked the beginning of corruption, and political, and ethnic instability.

The six years that followed the independence, were characterized by a societal malaise since corruption spread within every sector of the government as Achebe said: “Corruption was widespread, and those in power were “using every means at their disposal, including bribery, intimidation, and blackmail, to cling to power.”” (Achebe, 2012, p. 73) This contributed immensely to the rise of new tensions that were threatening the stability of the country, such as the clash between the leaders and intellectuals of the eastern region who claimed the idea of a unified Nigeria and the northerners led by the Sardauna, followed by the Action Group led by Awolowo, who objected to the idea of a unified Nigeria. Although, the Nigerian prime minister did nothing to save the country from the chaos, a group of vigilantes would make it their mission. Due to all this impending chaos, a group of officers mainly Igbo, at their head Chukwuma Nzeogwo, perpetrated a revolt that would throw the country into a period of turmoil that would inevitably cause civil war. This particular period showcased a clash of two different doctrines, the federal government’s way and Nzeogwo’s group that rose against it, but due to the illegal method used by Nzeogwo, the general populace would find their motives to be dubious and untrustworthy, a fact that is confirmed months later with the counter-coup

that led to the deaths of many Igbo. Thus, this particular period falls under the same doctrine that Mannheim labeled as a particular ideology.

Indeed, it was the main group ideology that dominated the Nigerian ethnicities, after the coup, the majority of the northern and western hemispheres of Nigeria saw in it an attempt from the highly educated Igbo ethnic to seize power, rumours of an “Igbo coup” found acceptance in the mind of the other ethnicities. In addition, after the independence, most of the important positions were held by the Igbo, combined with their advancement and prosperity in many fields; “they were seen as Jews” (Achebe, 2012, p. 75). Soon resentment and rumors toward the Igbo emerged alongside years of ethnic tension. The coup was attributed to them, and the overt jubilation was quickly interpreted as a mistake, it led to anger, which was fanned by British intellectuals and radical northern elements in places like Ahmadu Bello University toward the Igbo, especially those who were in the west.

The particular ideology that was the cause of the coup was simple; it consisted of disposing of the achievers, the Igbo, and “replacing them with less qualified individuals from the desired ethnic background to gain access to the resource of the state” (Achebe, 2012, p.77). The ones that stand to benefit from the rise of tensions against the Igbo used various methods to alter public perception; thereby, intensifying the animosity of other ethnic groups towards the Igbo. For instance, in 1966 the northerners issued a publication entitled “The Nigerian Situation: Facts and Background.” In it, the Igbo people were portrayed as forceful, unfairly dominating nearly every sphere of Nigerian society (Achebe, 2012, p77). In an attempt to boost the publication's impact, the Northerners created a biased paper that highlighted certain Igbo characteristics, like the fact that 45% of managers were Igbo and that their number was projected to rise to 60% by 1968, still, they omitted all the components of the Igbo culture which allowed them to attain such positions.

All of these political, ethnic, economic, and ideological elements worked against Nigeria and generated an atmosphere of unrest. Therefore, only 7 months after the former military coup, Nigeria was again the setting of a second military coup. After numerous negotiations with Aguiyui Ironsi, the state's head who assumed office in May 1966, particularly regarding the unification decree which outlawed the political parties, thus, eliminated Nigeria's federal structure and put in place a unitary republic, known as the infamous Decree 34 and the punishment of the leaders of the January 15, 1966 coup, the northerners were tempted to regain control of their country and end the pseudo- hegemonic Igbo dominance. Thus, on July 29, 1966, the Nigerian army, under the lead of Murtala Muhammed, a Nigerian general, organized a military countercoup, which resulted in the capture of Ironsi in his friend's house, Lieutenant Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, while he was on a nationwide tour to calm the growing tensions within the state, and ended up with his death, as Achebe said: "What is well known is that in a matter of hours the bullet-ridden bodies of Ironsi and Fajuyi were discovered in the bush" (Achebe, 2012, p.83). This marked the beginning of the thirteen-month civil war, known as the Biafran War.

## **II. Representations of Ideology in Bangura's Memoir**

Similar to Nigeria, Sierra Leone likewise struggled for freedom following World War II. On April 27, 1961, a year after Nigeria gained independence; Sierra Leone freed itself from British rule. However, this newly free country experienced numerous issues shortly after its independence, leading to an internal battle between the Sierra Leonean army and people and a foreign guerrilla from Liberia known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

As in Nigeria, Sierra Leone was among the many African countries that were purposefully destabilized by the colonial entity, to easily return and manipulate the colony after independence. The destabilization stems from the many ethnic groups that occupied

such a small land without the necessary philosophy of consciousness that would unite them, this is reflected in the multiparty policy, and the conduct of the elections in a “transparent” manner. Furthermore, as in Nigeria, the colonial ruler implemented the same ideological paradigm in Sierra Leone to keep control over it, which is, educating Sierra Leone under British culture and values. However, instead of producing qualified pawns that would manage the colony on behalf of the British government, it made national elites who fought for Sierra Leon's independence.

As a result, on April 27, 1961, the Sierra Leonean Peoples Party (SLPP) led the decolonization process, with Milton Margi becoming the state's first president and putting an end to years of foreign dominance. Unfortunately, 3 years after taking office Margai died and was succeeded by his half-brother Albert Margai, a succession that marked a turning point in Sierra Leone’s history. Indeed, it was the beginning of the critical period that would sweep Sierra Leone for 11 years of civil war, marked by the display of extreme violent practices and the spread of ideologies. Witnessing the tragic political and economic situation of the country, a political party emerged as a direct opponent, called The All Peoples’ Congress (APC). At its core, the APC's supporters had a common ideology: to save Sierra Leone from the corrupt government. In 1968, when the country held elections, the APC emerged as the clear winner, led by Siakka Stevens, after successfully uniting Sierra Leoneans around their shared philosophy (group ideology).

Compared to Nigeria's 15, 1967 coup, the APC’s leader was arrested a few minutes after taking office by the sergeants of the national army at their head Brigadier Andrew Jackson Smith, and this event marked the downfall of Sierra Leone into one military coup after another. Then in 1971 other elections were held and another time Siakka Stevens won the elections and became the president of Sierra Leone but as soon as he took office he imposed the policy of a party regime that guaranteed him 14 years of governance. Then in

1985, Stevens left his seat to his successor Josef Saidu Momoh but the country was already weakened by years of corruption and unqualified leaders. Therefore, in 1991 seeing the weak position of Sierra Leone, Charles Taylor, Liberia's leader overthrew the local government with the RUF as his armed force and plunged Sierra Leone into 11 years of civil war.

At first glance, the Sierra Leonean civil war appears to differ slightly from the Biafran war, but if we examine both events thoroughly, we may see that the reasons for the civil war beginning are similar. For example, despite Biafra's secession, raw goods such as fuel were at the heart of the struggle, much as diamonds were in Sierra Leone's civil war. Furthermore, ideologies played a prominent role as much as raw materials during these tragic years of civil wars.

Hence, the Nigerian government chose to feed a "particular ideology" based on hatred toward the Igbo people to unify the rest of Nigeria. The rebel forces opted to use the group ideology; which consisted of mass kidnapping and recruitment of children and manipulating them to increase the number of their militias. During this period Sierra Leone's population counted 44.5% under 14, which made them a prominent force to exploit for both the rebels and the SLA, quoting from Bangura: "This was a strategy implemented by the RUF because they knew the opposition would hesitate to kill children .... Children were the greatest weapons and shields" (Bangura, 2023, p.106).

This raises the question of how these rebels successfully recruit young boys into their ranks. The answer is fundable throughout the process of ideological indoctrination. While the Nigerian government was against a common enemy in their war and railed all the other ethnic groups against the Igbo, the RUF identified one of the weakest categories in the nation and used it as their armed hand.

In his book, Karl Mannheim presents an accurate and precise definition of the

concept of ideology and its numerous subtleties. According to Mannheim, there are two main distinguishable ideologies: “total” and “particular.” First “particular” ideology, Mannheim said about it:

When we say we are sceptical of the opponent's views, we are implying a certain definition of ideology. They are considered as a more or less conscious concealment of the true nature of a situation, which would be detrimental to his interests if revealed.” (Mannheim, 1939, p. 49)

In addition, Mannheim adds that “ the particular conception of “ideology” makes its analysis of ideas on a purely psychological level” (Mannheim, 1939, p.49). Therefore, this conception of ideology focuses on a particular age and historical social group for instance; a class.

In every war, each social category adopted a specific, particular way of thinking in reaction to the conflict. During the Biafran war, the Igbo adopted a particular ideology to survive the attacks of the Nigerian government; first, they declared their secession, then they armed themselves to face the Nigerian army. But in Sierra Leone, despite the similitude with the ideology, the population adopted a different way of thinking, which consisted of individualism, and as Bangura said: “it would be every man for himself” (Bangura, 2023, p.108). Consequently, the adoption of the survival instinct is a matter of course as Mannheim said: "The ideological elements in human thought are always bound up with the human's existing life situation" (Mannheim, 1939, p.103). Bangura gave the perfect example to reinforce this statement; as the villagers they were left with, he and his brother would purposefully avoid them because of his brother’s periodic seizures which would call the attention of the rebels towards them. That being the reason, the villagers in a stressful moment of survival chose their person first and foremost, as Bangura testifies: “Whenever we were hiding, everyone would try to avoid staying in close proximity to us” (Bangura, 2023, p.125).

Likewise, Achebe demonstrates in his book how Biafra faced the civil war by facing Nigeria as one man. Bangura also concludes that he embraced this survival mindset when he says, "The reality that forced us to learn survival before we could count"(Bangura, 2023, p.131). These words demonstrate that throughout the civil war, the whole Sierra Leonean people embraced self-preservation over the moral compass to protect themselves and their families from the rebels and live.

During the Biafran war, the particular ideologies of the Igbo were to survive the Nigerian army, and the latter fought the secessionist state to prevent the separation of the state. In Sierra Leone, the rebel forces imposed a particular ideology neither to survive nor to face a common enemy; it served the purpose of indoctrinating and attracting people to their cause, especially children. This particular ideology imposed by the R.U.F. consisted of enrolling youth by promising a better life; as Bangura said, "Our people were brainwashed into taking up arms against the government and fellow citizens with the promise of a better life" (Bangura, 2023, p.105). Furthermore, to ensure the compliance of their cannon fodder, the rebel troops utilized substances to remove any inhibition or conscience, allowing them to perpetrate the crimes directed by the rebel commanders, a modus operandi described by other sources, as Mitton reports from his journalistic investigation: "An often described horror of the Sierra Leone conflict was the brutal excesses of child soldiers 'out of their minds on drugs' (according to both victim and perpetrator testimony), indiscriminately maiming and killing civilians without warning or provocation" (Mitton, 2015, p. 25). In addition, the use of opiates, the rebel forces distorted the ancestral educational standards, and imposed group ideology, as Bangura said: "boys were raised to continue this cycle and priority was given to raising male child who could shoulder the responsibility of manhood without complaining"(Bangura, 2023, p.116). By distorting this tradition, the rebels connected masculinity, which defined a man providing

for his family, with violence, which drove the boys to commit arbitrary killings, rapes, and massacres, and the more aggressive you are, the higher you rise in the rebel ranks, as Bangura said: “the more heinous the act, the better the rebel leaders treated them; they were often given Command and authority as rewards” (Bangura, 2023, p.105).

### **III. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the ideologies that dominated Nigerian and Sierra Leonean societies before and during the outbreak of their respective civil wars. We sought to understand the main ideologies that dominate the governments and societies of Nigeria and Sierra Leone. To comprehend the reasons behind the behaviours of those who sparked these civil wars or the responses of the citizens to them.

For Nigeria as for Sierra Leone, the analysis shows that after the independence, the administrations elected managed their countries with a particular ideology that consisted; of helping themselves with the nation’s wealth, which paved the way to unrest within the nation. For Nigeria, the emergence of a spirit of revolt among the military officials led on January 15, 1966, the country to witness its first military coup. Then 9 months later, a second coup took place that threw the nation into the 30-month war known as the Biafran War. All these events, alongside the spread of different ideologies, especially the common idea that the Igbo were responsible for everything that happened in Nigeria, served to destabilize an already frail system. For Sierra Leone, it was also the misleading of the nation that motivated the military forces to plan the coup influenced by radical beliefs and ideologies, but, as the coup took place, the world witnessed how the spread of numerous ideologies served the interests of the rebel forces to recruit and manipulate youth to become soldiers.

**CHAPTER 02**

**Means of Violence**

## **Means of Violence in Achebe's and Bangura's Memoirs**

Since war is waged with a predetermined goal in mind, violence is a common occurrence during times of conflict and may be tailored to the needs of its users. The Sierra Leonean (1991–2002) and Nigerian (Biafra 1967–1970) wars stand out among these in terms of the parallels and divergences that led to, extended, and concluded the fighting.

Therefore, based on Achebe and Bangura's personal testimonies in their memoirs, we will ascertain the forms of violence employed by both sides of the conflict to obtain an advantage over one another, the rationale behind the use of these tactics, and whether the war machines' tactics contributed to the achievement of their goals.

### **I. Means of Violence in Achebe's memoir**

In African literature, Chinua Achebe is a name that garners much admiration and respect as a public figure, a poet, and a writer. His literature focused on challenging and disproving the image Africa was seen as by the world, presenting the rich and diverse cultures and traditions, the social hierarchy, and the beliefs of African society.

At eighty-one years old, Achebe speaks about the conflict in which he played a prominent role, in his book titled *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. In this work, Achebe, who is best renowned for his fiction, ventures into non-fiction to examine his strong connections to the Biafran cause and the carnage that ripped Nigeria apart. Work that will be our cornerstone in identifying the types of violence he most likely was at receiving end, hence, this segment of the dissertation is dedicated to the means of violence presented by Achebe in his memoir.

#### **I.1. Political Rigging and Coups**

Violence is a multi-faceted tool that is not only limited to its physical aspect but its meaning can be derived from indirect and mental harm, for example; structural and

systematic violence. Achebe described how the Nigerian issue started even before independence and how the use of systematic violence by the British, led to the deterioration of the social relations across the country, which in turn created a chaotic political climate that, continued long after their liberation and was the first omen of the hardships that awaits the country. The first case designated by Achebe is from the period following the handover of power and declaration of independence in the Nigerian colony. Britain, seeking future interest; decided to a change at the highest level of the Nigerian government, by replacing the governor general overseeing the country with Sir James Robertson who would stay in that position for a whole year after independence and would later be said of, to have been tasked to increase the tension between the ethnic groups in this defining moment.

The moment was the election of a new prime minister who would represent the whole of the citizens of Nigeria. However, the country during this period was portrayed as bursting with unease and, politically split into three different regions, between Ahmed Bello's Northern People Congress (NPC) made in 1940, representing the majority Hausa-Fulani and other minorities and Muslims of the north, the Action Group led by Obafemi Awolowo who reunited the western Yoruba and other minorities that shared the similar fear of an Igbo take over and the Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) who represented the eastern hemisphere of Nigeria (Igbos, Christians, and other minorities). All influential parties hold even odds for the position. Still, the balance between these parties was tipped to the benefit of the north with the new governor-general arranging the rigging of Nigeria's first-ever election, "so that its compliant friends in [Northern Nigeria] would win power, dominate the country, and serve British interests after independence." (Achebe, 2012, p. 53)

Rigging, that was instrumental in the NPC gaining power by supporting Abubakar

Tafawa Balewa, who had been tapped to become Nigeria's first prime minister. This dishonest and fraudulent gain of political influence is what Kalyvas named "dysfunctional" political violence because it not only destabilizes the already shaky social structure by putting one ethnic group over the other and creating discord in the new system but also proves the power of the colonial regime still holds over the colony. It is this interference, according to Achebe, that saw the decline in all sectors of Nigerian society; from blatant political corruption, appropriation of resources by foreign businesses, and even more predominantly, an internal power struggle among the ethnic groups which further widened the gap between them. The overall condition of the country would inspire certain officials, out of a displaced sentiment of patriotism, to cleanse the rot of the system which brought the country to experience its first coup.

This is a fate-altering day in the short history of Nigeria which is characterized by a turn into physical violence; by the scheme of a small group of 11 junior officers whose apparent leader was Chukwuma Nzeogwu. His character was known among his colleagues as a disciplined, anti-corruption kind of soldier, an attitude that, with the knowledge of all the corruption happening, may have appeared as his duty to oppose and in the recruitment of his fellow conspirator. So a plan was set to cause mayhem in the three main ethnic regions and take over several military bases in Kaguna in the North, Lagos in the West, and Enugu in the Est. In addition to this, assassinations were carried out aimed against prominent figures of each ethnic group but General Aguiyi-Ironsi, who was one of the targets, was notified and prepared for an eventual attack, which unbeknownst to Nzeogwu caused the failure of the revolt. Achebe vehemently denies Nzeogwu as part of the Igbo ethnicity, for he was raised and nurtured in the north with northern values and culture. (Achebe, 2012, p. 67)

The coup resulted in the death of the leading northern politician Ahmadu Bello, the

premier of the West Samuel Akintola but above all the death of the prime minister of Nigeria Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. This caused the plummet of socio-political relations between the East and the rest of the nation; with easterners being victims of a series of attacks, both at random and in organized fashion. What was foresaw by Achebe after the coup was the soaring of tensions and the blaming of the Igbo for the coup, with the emergence of theories of an "Igbo coup". He explained that it is attributed to several factors; the lack of revolt and the sense of elation the coup inspired in the east, where several authors and poets wrote works dedicated "to the heroes of January 1966", and the ascension of General Aguiyi-Ironsi to the position of head of state made the image of an "Igbo coup" begin to find acceptance in the mind of the other ethnicities. The revolt is described by Achebe as a "naïve coup" (Achebe, 2012, p. 83) that was used by the other ethnicities as justification to act on their hatred towards "Igbo who led Nigeria in every sector" (Achebe, 2012, p. 77). The assumption proved to be true six months later.

During the events of May 1966, Achebe recounted the hostility and enmity that preceded the ascension of General Aguiyi-Ironsi to the position of head of state, a period distinguished by the infamous Decree No. 34 that outlawed all political parties and imposed a unitary republic. This marked the first time a federal military government was in control in Nigeria. The new government was not received well by the northern ruling class who over several months held private meetings, in which they put together a series of demands that included; the revocation of the unpopular Decree 34 and punishment of the leaders of the January 15, 1966, coup.

Ironsi, alarmed by the idea of these gatherings and the internal instability of the nation, would embark on a nationwide tour to soothe the growing pressures and bring an end to the times of agitation. It would be during these times of uncertainty and tension that General Ironsi would be illegally arrested by Captain Theophilus Y. Danjuma, a

Northerner, and summarily executed. This incident would be known as the counter-coup to January 1966 instigated by the northern politicians to reinforce their hold on the country as described by Achebe; the easiest way to keep it is by:

The social malaise in Nigerian society was political corruption. The structure of the country was such that there was inbuilt powers struggle among the ethnic groups, and of course those who were in power wanted to stay in power. The easiest and simplest way to retain it, even in a limited area, was to appeal to tribal sentiments, so they were egregiously exploited in the 1950s and 1960s (Achebe, 2012, p. 55).

Element reinforced by the promotion of Yakubu Gowon, a northerner, several ranks and elected head of state in Nigeria's most vulnerable time.

It would not be long before the eastern region announced their secession from Nigeria because of Ironsi's assassination and the Pogroms in the north, under the name of the Republic of Biafra. This republic is spoken of as the Igbo dream and shelter from persecution, but secession as convenient as it is a choice, would not be allowed by the federal government as it held economic assets in the region that could not be separated from, and were politically and socially pressured firstly, from the Yoruba of the west, then led by Obafemi Awolowo who "warned Gowon's federal government that if the Eastern Region left the federation the Western Region would not be far behind" (Achebe, 2012, p. 87) but also by high placed officials and politicians who wanted the orchestrators of the coups to be held accountable. These events would mark the prelude to the start of the Civil War.

This portrayal of events from Achebe depicts that the violence that erupted during the Biafran war all stemmed from British imperialism and the political instability that followed Nigeria's independence in 1960 from; an ethnically fractured society to the power struggle between the three main regions. The military coup of 1966, followed by the counter-coup, served as the turning point in the scale of violence and triggered massacres

in the north known as pogroms targeting the Igbo population. Thus, Achebe critiques the violence as not merely physical but also as a manifestation of the political and systematic failures that marked Nigeria's government.

## **I.2. Pogroms and massacres**

In his text, Achebe compares the Igbo's predicament in different ways to the Jews; a highly cultured group who were shunned and persecuted by those around them. Pogroms are one of the parallels between the Jews and the Igbo, describing the violent attacks on the Jews during the Russian Empire to massacre them or expel them from the land. This term reunites different heinous kinds of violence from lynching, maiming, looting, raping, and all in all, aiming for a certain ethnic or religious group. The Igbo, following the 1966 coup, were judged too ambitious and so were made unwilling masterminds of a failed rebellion aiming to take Nigeria's sovereignty. As a result, it led to the counter-coup of May 1966, during which not only General Aguiyi-Ironsi was assassinated, but a series of calculated, violent attacks occurred all over the northern region. Reports of violence were recounted by fleeing easterners describing Hausa-Fulani "youths armed with machetes, knives, and other instruments of death attacked unsuspecting civilians, mostly Igbo" (Achebe, 2012, p.81). Achebe ties these attacks to the federal government, whom he accuses of having riled their citizens to rise and turn against their Igbo compatriot, to reinforce their hold on the power.

Hence, Achebe describes how the army was mobilized and the forces who swore to defend their country and citizens, treacherously turned against them in a gruesome manner, officers turned against their eastern colleagues and civilians were arbitrarily executed, raising the civilian casualty to the thousands. In addition to this, Achebe described the premeditation factor in way of the high-ranking and influential figures prioritization in "capture", seeing as soldiers were deployed to apprehend them and their relatives in their

domicile, like the chairman of the Nigerian Coal Corporation, Okechukwu Ikejiani, who had to disguise himself as a woman to pass through the Nigerian border to Dahomey and Achebe himself was pursued for his prophetic book *A man of the people* which the climax happened to be a military coup that overthrows a corrupt government.

All these massacres and persecution, “Colin Legum” of “The Observer (UK)” would be the first to describe them as a pogrom. Pogroms which continued for a good while of six months since 1966, during which thousands upon thousands of easterners were arbitrarily killed, numbering in total “thirty thousand civilian men, women, and children were slaughtered, hundreds of thousands were wounded, maimed, and violated, their homes and property looted and burned—and no one asked any questions” (Achebe, 2012, p.83). Even more fled towards the east, which quickly became crammed with refugees from all over Nigeria, “It was evaluated then, that nearly a million Nigerian citizens were fleeing from other parts of the nation back to Eastern Nigeria” (Achebe, 2012, p.83-4).

These staged attacks, hold the characteristics of political and cultural violence, for deployment of the army in the first place betrays a clear political agenda to reduce the political influence of the Igbo, made more evident by the inaction of the federal government in the defense of their citizens whom were getting ethnically cleansed. Whereas, the northern citizens have committed acts of Barbary against the easterners at large and Igbo in particular mainly because they hail from that part of the country and are affiliated to certain ethnic group, making the disruption of public order for political and cultural motives the description of these pogroms.

Soon after the declaration of secession, Achebe explains that the Gowon's government used the pretext of restoring its authority in the eastern region to execute a military move aiming to retake the Biafran border towns. This offensive was met with a fierce Biafran resistance that managed to push them back, however, the eastern army, in a

surprise maneuver, took advantage of their momentum and took a large portion of the mid-western region of Nigeria. However, this advance was not the work of soldiers or trained personnel. However, it was perpetrated by over "a thousand easterners, in familial cars or work-related, wearing civilian's clothing, with barely any training and arms surpassing the performance of a trained militia with regional and international backing" (Achebe, 2012, p.121). Achebe laid Ojukwu's motives for occupying this region, later named Benin, to be a strategy to continue West in the direction of Lagos where Gowon resided, and end the persecution.

This started the period in which the republic of Biafra turned into a War Machine against the government of Nigeria to put an end to the war, going so far as to involve civilians and no armed military personnel. However, due to a lack of resources and trained military men, the operation was stopped halfway through, to the great disappointment of Ojukwu who put great importance on this operation. The circumstance of the Biafran republic as an armed group seeking a change in their disadvantageous position against the state matched Hoffman's definition of the War Machine and would operate as such until the finish the conflict.

The taking over of the Mid-West is considered a "dysfunctional" political move for the civil unrest it caused in the near regions as well as in the locality itself as Major Okonkwo, the one put in place to rule the Mid-West, imposed martial law, curfews, and limited accessibility. Adding the fact there were cases of assaults for group resistance, it all contributed to the rise of hostility and discontent towards the Biafra soldiers, as Achebe relates the thoughts of many Mid-Westerners on the Biafra offensive as follows:" We, on the one hand, were being told by the Biafran propaganda machinery that we were being liberated from tyranny, but on the other [we were] feeling like an occupied military zone under martial law" (Achebe, 2012, p.123). With the failure of the operation, Achebe

expressed his disappointment in the needless undertaking of the operation and his leaders' lack of pre-emption for the capabilities of the troops; the conquest of the Mid-West merely complexified the problem and involved bystanders. The loss was taken as a humiliating defeat by the federal government whom would in the course of the war pay retribution in the forms of; the Asaba massacre and Calabar massacre, deploying its best units decked with soviet and British armament which would besiege the Igbo in the city of Umuahia. This marked the start of the second wave of cultural violence against the Igbo, called by Achebe the post-pogroms, during which a large number of Igbo from common to high social standing were targeted specifically and the perpetrators showed little to no remorse and suffered no repercussion for their actions, which broadened the gap between the Igbo and the rest of Nigeria.

Thus, in an attempt to preserve its reputation on the international stage, the federal government displayed its might by capturing and reintegrating the eastern region into Nigeria. In the process, they committed massacres aimed at the Igbo under the pretext of restoring their authority in the eastern region. General Gowon made a military move against the Biafran border towns deploying its best military units, armed with British weapons, which took back Benin and launched a counter-offensive, until reaching the city of Asaba

Ordered to retake the region at all costs and as retaliation for the humiliating loss in the mid-west, after arriving in the predominant Igbo city of Asaba in 1967, the federal army committed its first official, documented atrocity called the Asaba massacre. This event consisted of armed soldiers mercilessly shooting unarmed, powerless civilian men, women, and children, from both high and common spec of society and the disposal of their remains with utter disregard in mass graves, elevating the toll of loss to " five hundred, others as high as one thousand." (Achebe, 2012, p.126), marking it as an abhorrent

memorial for the residents of Asaba.

However, the newly appointed major General Ibrahim Haruna in a testimony at the Justice Oputa Pane of Nigeria expressed complete apathy towards the lives he has taken, describing it as a soldier's purpose and duty in time of national crisis against rebels. This was the first of many massacres the federal government was responsible for, as they continued the reintegration of the land. Encountering minor resistance, they swiftly gained ground on the state of Biafra, using the heavy armament provided by the British and Soviet Union, by then the capital of Biafra, Enugu, was conquered so it was relocated further south in Umuahia.

The use of the soldiers' duty argument to commit horrendous acts towards the Igbo is within the bounds of the cultural violence, as it is framed as a necessary act to bring everlasting prosperity to Nigeria even at the cost of, mostly, Igbo lives. The highlight of the propaganda machine of the government's side over the republic which brought the first greater support further isolated the other.

A year after the Asaba massacre, the government militia reached the city of Calabar in the southeast of Biafra, bordering Cameroon. This city is known for its multicultural origins, reuniting different ethnicities which make it "a beautiful cultural mosaic of traditions and dialects" (Achebe, 2012, p.130). It holds a strategic point for future operations of the government. The events that transpired in the 1968 takeover of the region, remind Achebe of the "Nazi policy of eradicating Jews" (Achebe, 2012, p.130). In a pure anti-Igbo sentiment, the militia massacred over two thousand Igbo, most of whom were civilians, sparing nobody, even those defended by international law, like medical personnel, sick patients, and more.

The casualties were even more gruesome in the surrounding cities of Uyo and Okigwe west of Calabar, which marked the beginning of a major strategic operation aiming

to cut Biafra from the sea coast. Thousands of troops headed by Colonel Benjamin Adekunle began\_ an air, sea, and ground onslaught westward towards Port Harcourt in the Niger River, a duration "characterized by military atrocities—rapes, looting, outright brigands—Port Harcourt fell to the Nigerians on May 12, 1968" (Achebe, 2012, p.130).

From there, the soldiers traced their way north with the blood of their victims towards the market city of Aba, directly south of Umuahia, which fell in August 1968, and further north to Owerri, west of Umuahia, which also fell in September of the same year. Effectively, as they aimed, cutting what remains of Biafra from the Gulf of Guinea. The total count of the losses is unknown on account of the extreme brutality shown, as Achebe informs:

On entry into Aba, the Nigerian soldiers massacred more than 2000 civilians. Susan Masid of the French Press Agency reporting this horrifying incident had this to say: "Young Ibos [sic] with terrifying eyes and trembling lips told journalists in Aba that in the villages Nigerian troops came from behind, shooting and firing everywhere, shooting everybody who was running, firing into the homes (Achebe, 2012, p. 130).

Colonel Adekunle, much like Major General Haruna, would gain international infamy as a ruthless and sadistic commander when relating to warfare, with statements that caused international uproar such as "seeing international humanitarian aid as unwarranted... and the death of children as mere casualty of war" (Achebe,2012,p.131).

This prompted the Gowon government to apologize and work to relinquish their services. From northeast of Umuahia, Mohammed Shuwa's troops raided the region of Abakaliki in the direction of Afikpo northeast Umuahia, making the capital the only remaining secessionist and stronghold for the Igbo, enclosed in a three-point blockade; Aba, Owerri, and Afikpo, isolated from the world by all fronts and at the mercy of their assailants.

The easily prevented high toll of casualty from both massacres fueled by a distaste

towards, mainly, Igbo civilians shows the culturally motivated actions of the federal government's army, made more apparent by the remorselessness of the executives of these two massacres with the repeated use of the "soldier's duty" argument. Through his descriptions; he not only documents the horrors of war but also critiques the Nigerian government's deliberate policies that exacerbated civilian suffering. Achebe strongly condemns these atrocities against the Igbo, disclosing the intent behind them as a way to dispose of the Igbo identity, beginning with Biafra.

### **I.3. Blockade and Discriminatory policies**

With Umuahia becoming the final last leg of Igbo refugees all over Nigeria, the concentration of the populace created a humanitarian crisis of great magnitude. The escapees, old and young, with only the clothing on their person, roamed the land with no specific destination for days on end to the point of injury, with the basic resources becoming ever scarce, the latest rumours of provided shelter and food fueled their desperation, as Achebe testifies from his personal experience:

They traveled by foot, by truck, by car, barefoot, with slippers, in wheelbarrows, many in worn-out shoes. Some had walked so long that their soles were blistered and bleeding. As hunger and thirst grew, so did despair, confusion, and desperation. (Achebe, 2012, p. 156)

This, however, often made them targets of the government's air force. It is estimated that more than thirty-five thousand people died of bombing and famine during the start of the blockade. What remained of Biafra was dismay, the embargo put in place prevented any food, clean water, and medicine from getting in, which gradually diminished the livelihood of the Biafrans as "the rations had gone from one meal a day to one meal every other day—to nothing at all, widespread starvation and disease of every kind soon set in" (Achebe, 2012, p. 184). Gowon expanded his army in the three cities encircling Biafra "Aba, Owerri, and Afikpo" numbering two hundred fifty thousand soldiers, to end

the Igbo nation by the end of 1968. He was met, however, with fierce resistance from the eastern combatants, who by determination or desperation, continued to fight for their freedom. The Biafran churches reminded of the persecution of the early Christians and Jews riling people up to join the Biafran army chanting "Ojukwu give us guns to fight a war." (Achebe, 2012, p. 158) Sadly, due to the barricade circumstance, Ojukwu had no guns to give.

Thus, where the federal government counted on overwhelming power to win, the Biafran militia, outnumbered and outgunned, chose guerrilla warfare and sniper fire, out of Che Guevara manual, where they would separate the conflict zone into smaller areas and gain advantage with their familiarity with the land—managing to push the government forces and recapture the city of Owerri, west of Umuahia giving the Biafran soldiers space and time to reorganize their forces. During this period more than one hundred thirty thousand Biafrans died per week because of starvation, diseases, and attacks from Gowon's army, making moral decline exponential in the frontlines and inside Umuahia rendering Biafra's military leader prone to impulsive decision-making.

Anti-war sentiment throughout the world rose to its highest during the blockade, images of malnourished and starving babies and women bombarded regularly newspapers and televisions, sparking demonstrations in the world capitals against the war. Uganda meddled between the two parties to find an agreement for lasting peace. Nixon's administration pressured the Nigerian administration to clear routes for relief agencies, after the insistence of numerous congressmen and the protests of American people reacting to the horrifying news updates on their screen.

However, this international goodwill would halt and decline during the events of May 1969, in which Biafran commandos detained foreign oilfield workers for "providing sensitive military information to the federal forces—about Biafran troop positions,

strategic military maneuvers, and training" (Achebe, 2012, p.201). This offensive would kill 11 Italian workers and have 14 Italians, 3 Germans, and one Lebanese as captives awaiting trial by the Biafran court. The death sentence for support of enemy troops would shift the flow of moral support and minimize the little help the secession received internationally, with the United States, Britain, and the governments of Italy increasing pressure on Biafra for clemency. A turn of events, the head of the office of Biafra, Ojukwu would comment by:

For 18 white men, Europe is aroused. What have they said about our millions? Eighteen white men assisted in the crime of genocide. What do they say about our murdered innocents? How many black dead make one missing white? Mathematicians, please answer me. Is it infinity? (Achebe, 2012, p.202)

It would take a letter from the pope in June 1969 and an increase in the international backlash for the Biafra administration for the detainees to be released. They were flown out of the country in the custody of the African supporters of Biafra, Ivory Coast, and Gabon.

This costly distraction that Gowon's army capitulated on to put an end to three years of combat with the operation "Tail-Wind" (Achebe, 2012, p. 205), where they marched towards Umuahia from both the north and the south, meeting little confrontation from the famished and weakened populace, successfully seizing control of the city. Millions in Biafra confirmed the end of the conflict with the announcement of Ojukwu on the radio. He departed in the direction of the Ivory Coast, where he received asylum from his friend president Félix Houphouët-Boigny, with French backing. The negotiations of peace and assimilation to the government were left in the hands of the second in command, military officer Philip Effiong who formally announced the surrender and the end of the Republic of Biafra.

There is no precise number for the Igbo losses during the blockade but it is

estimated to be around three million lives lost, mostly to famine and starvation. The director of health services for Biafra at the time of the war, Dr. Aaron Ifekwunigwe, who documented the impacts starvation had on Biafra's population, reported that of the three million; eighty-nine percent were children under five years of age and the remaining eleven percent were from five up to fifteen years of age. At least, three hundred thousand of those children, according to an investigation conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, died of marasmus and kwashiorkor disease which are due to the lack of protein in a diet. To add to the loss, is the number of mentally scared individuals that survived the conflict, which must have gone through physical and mental torment, seeing as the numerous cases of "mental illness: major depression, psychosis, schizophrenia, manic-depression, personality disorders, grief response, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, etc.—on a scale none of us had ever witnessed" (Achebe, 2012, p.181). The Biafran conflict concluded in a defeat on all fronts.

The blockade put in place had per goal the complete isolation of Umuahia from land, air, and sea, preventing goods from going in and out including weaponry. This decision shortened the duration of the war exponentially, while drastic this is a requirement in times of conflict which puts the blockade in the economic violence category. This part of Achebe's text creates a harrowing picture of a nation at war with itself, in which he particularly emphasizes the use of hunger as a weapon of war, with the infamous image of starving Biafran children becoming one of the most potent symbols of the conflict. Achebe's connection to the war intensifies the psychological violence portrayed in the text, as he reflects on the trauma experienced by those in the conflict, not only as victims of violence but also as witnesses to the collapse of Biafra. Arguing that the psychological violence is as enduring as the physical violence.

After the war, one would expect the federal government to try and mend the bridge

between the two parties involved in a show of good faith at least, however, in a measure described by Achebe as "to stunt, or even obliterate, the economy of a people" (Achebe, 2012, p. 215) Gowon's cabinet adopted a banking policy which terminated any bank account used by the Igbo during the time of war and a crippling £20 flat fee given to every Biafran wanting to convert their Biafran currency back to the Nigerian Naira, regardless of the amount deposited. To aggravate the situation, the government approved "The Enterprises Promotion Decree" of 1974, known as the Indigenization Decree which required any foreign holders of shares of national enterprise to transfer their assets, and stocks to local businesses, knowing full well that a great number of Igbo could not be part of it. This policy had only worsened an already bad situation for the former Biafrans, preventing them from building an economic sector and shifting the balance of economic power away from the East. This measure, hence, was put in place to prevent the easterners from getting any economic comfort after a period of turbulence.

While the blockade served the purpose of bringing an end to the conflict, the banking policies put in place against the Igbo demonstrated that there was still a gap between the East and the rest of Nigeria, which took shape in the form of grudges against them. These characteristics are what define economic violence in its restriction of the victim's assets to put at risk his economic stability. The resolution of the conflict is far from the united country aspired to by Achebe, for the Igbo were marginalized both socially and economically and the cycle of governmental corruption continued in all fields after the war.

#### **I.4. Conclusion**

Thus, we can say that the secession procedure undertaken by the Republic of Biafra is legitimate in a period where the federal government not only could not guarantee the lives of its citizens but played a major part in the events that brought about that danger, as Achebe summarizes it "a government that failed to safeguard the lives of its citizens has no claim to their allegiance and must be ready to accept that the victims deserve the right to seek their safety in other ways— including secession" (Achebe, 2012, p.94). Hence, the violence took to ensure the safety and well-being of the republic is coercive violence, for the Republic of Biafra is the side that has their actions match their goal, which is independence from Nigeria, and had a systematic plan to reach it, which made it mandatory the taking over of mid-West and making of homemade bombs, hence, their violence is done with a certain political or otherwise result in mind, which makes it coercive violence. The federal government, however, has perpetrated both coercive and expressive violence but their actions generally lean towards the expressive kind as it is believed by Achebe, which targets an individual or group for who they are, as demonstrated by their use of ethnic tensions against Igbo for political gain and persecution of Igbo before and after the war, and while they did accomplish their aim of uniting Nigeria, they also achieved their hidden agenda of lowering the social standing of the Igbo, making most of the violence aimed towards them, because of who they are and what they accomplished, hence, the violence is expressive.

## **II. Means of violence in Bangura's memoir**

Ibrahim Bangura shares one of the many testimonies on his childhood during a war considered “one of the most violent wars in Africa” the Sierra Leonean Civil War (1991-2002). He is the youngest son of a typical, big Sierra Leonean family. He was raised and nurtured, together with his disabled brother, with proper “Salone” principles and beliefs that made him very mature at an early age; he would live his first seventeen years under deplorable and dire conditions until he and his family relocated to Australia where he would dedicate his first book titled the 24th Son to his brother who did not make it out of the war. Bangura relates the numerous kinds of violence he and his brother experienced at an early age, the perpetrators behind them, and the powerlessness of the government, much less himself, could oppose. Therefore, relying on Bangura's book *The 24th Son* (2023), we will attempt to identify the different actors that took part in the civil war and which is the war machine that strove for change and discerns the kinds of violence said change promoted.

### **II.1. Child soldiers**

Child soldier is not a term relatively new and various wars in the past saw a considerable percentage of its combatants as children. The difference with the Sierra Leone conflict lies in the instruction of these children in the art of violence from a young age, so much so, that it becomes a way of life. During this period, children were the greatest human resource that formed the government and the rebels' ranks. Nearly half of the RUF army and a quarter of the government armed forces were children (Williams, 2001, pp. 73-82). These kids would prove themselves essential in the political stage, in a period where political violence and ethnic wars are constant, as politicians would hire these “lumpen youth” into their ranks, many of whom were thugs, to have a militia force to impose their view by force or simply dispose of the opposition, to a point where “party thugs” and

“election by unopposed” (Williams, 2012, p. 19) are regularly used terms during elections. The youth was a large percentage of the total population and its alienation was a factor in the breakout of the war, to the point we are talking about a “lost generation” which stems from the violent background they grew up in; lack of education from the destruction of countless town, villages and educational institution and the economic and political mismanagement of the affairs of the state that led to the feeling of “a sense of hopelessness and intergenerational betrayal, the country’s youths were looking for the way out, but without a viable corpus of intellectuals to lead the struggle for national renewal, they turned to ‘lumpen leadership’, which turned their legitimate cry for change into an orgy of violence” (Williams, 2011, p.20).

This was understood by the high-rankers of the RUF which went to great lengths to pressure these youths on their side. These children who seek a stable and secure life were drawn in by the promises of a safe place, means to defend themselves, and a possibility of high positions in the militia, however, if the peaceful approach failed they were not above taking a child even between “the arms of his mother” (Bangura, 2023, p. 109). These children were given alcohol and hallucinogenic drugs that turned them from innocent children to soulless and dangerous war machines, all to further the goals of the RUF. Bangura describes the recruitment method of the RUF as “forceful recruitment of young boys and killing of those who refused. It was a do or die mission” (Bangura, 2023, p.109). These youths, thus, were victims of a failed system, an unforgiving environment, and influences that encouraged committing savage barbarity to rise to the echelon as Bangura affirms that

They were pressured into engaging in brutal violence against civilians. The severity of the act determines their rank as a reward. These acts would guarantee the exclusion of the kids from society. Leaving them no shelter except with the rebels. This scheme was used by the RUF because they knew the opposition would waver

from killing children. During the war, children were the greatest weapons and shields. (Bangura, 2023, pp 105–6)

The opposition referred to by Bangura is the Sierra Leone Army which during this period was at its lowest in terms of capability and resources. This was the result of the policies put in place by the previous heads of office like; Albert Margai who caused the spark of ethnic tensions in the country that inevitably split the national army ethnically; Siakka Stevens who would inspire his successor Joseph Saido Momoh, constantly downgraded the army while funding expensive annual meetings like the OAU and worked on getting the support of the chiefs of the ethnicities that supports him, the Temne and Limba of the north being the biggest supporters of the APC which directed the majority of economic and social beneficial reforms of the party including military security to centralize in the north.

This created an imbalance in terms of security between north and south which caused the predominance of the rebels in the south, from Mende land reaching the capital Freetown. The soldiers permitted in were considered “citizens in uniforms” (Williams, 2012, p. 118) because they did not receive adequate training in the military, nor how to respond and adapt to the different environments of their country. Adding to the fact that there was no proper cooperation between the different ethnicities’ military, they were left with no choice but to get help from the locals of the different regions they came to in navigating the territory, this habit turned with time into full conscription of children in the military. In uniform these children were treated poorly by their superiors, as there have been reports of physical, mental, and sexual abuse towards them, going so far as to execute them if there was a chance of them turning to the rebels, treatment these youths replicate towards their victims.

All in all, regardless of the side they take, these child soldiers were the origin of the most gruesome part of the violence during the war, and oftentimes, not to gain any

strategic advantage over the opponent but for their entertainment, commonly, while being highly intoxicated, these armed children let loose on civilians without warning or provocation marking history with the most heinous acts in the period of war as Mitton puts it:

An often described horror of the Sierra Leone conflict was the brutal excesses of child soldiers ‘out of their minds on drugs’ (according to both victim and perpetrator testimony), indiscriminately maiming and killing civilians...In acts of extreme brutality whereby combatants tortured victims for their entertainment, socio-political grievances, or economic and military strategies, are also uncomfortably absent. One former child soldier interviewed explained: ‘I was wanting the atrocity, to be killing people—I just loved that’ (RUF combatant G) (Mitton, 2015, p. 11).

Therefore, on the above testimony, we understand these children were both victims and perpetrators of the brutality, and that the degree of violence reached a level of sadistic pleasure. After the end of the war, it is said that of the 75,000 combatants that were going to be reintegrated into society, 20,000 were children, the total death toll of the child soldiers during the 11 years of war is to this day unknown. The image Sierra Leone made of itself regarding this issue was such that it was called the war of the “perversion of innocence” (Mitton, 2015, p. 18) which relates to the images of children wielding AK-47s.

## **II.2. Pillaging, Abduction, and Mass Killing**

During the conflict, Sierra Leone was the scene of extremely violent practices marked by pillaging, abduction, and mass killing. The phenomenon that brought so many children into the battlefield is due to the ruthless methods the rebels as well as the army were prepared to use to win the war, at the expense of the regular citizens. When the violence started to get out of control and the fighting spread to encompass the surrounding villages, the rebels had a steady gain in both, resources which came from outside the border, as Hoffman relates from a youth survivor of the war “One eats well in war. The

traffic in violence makes the distribution of goods— goods that belong to “the people”— more efficient.” (Hoffman, 2011, p.133) and men, but that did not stop them from seeking an inside source of men and resources which marked the start of a series of looting and pillaging of surrounding villages, leaving no house standing or man alive, taking all resources of these already poor citizens from farm animals, harvests and especially, the abduction of children, the manpower of the villages. These attacks were so frequent that Bangura testified that the “sound of gunshots and smell of gunpowder have become a common occurrence. Smoke from burning villages, and screams from fleeing children are a daily view. The cries from powerless mothers and fearsome voices of rebel soldiers have followed the victims in their slumber (Bangura, 2023, p.126-7).

The main reason for these raids in remote villages was to boost the RUF’s ranks with fearless little soldiers, who quickly earned themselves a fearful reputation for exceptional brutality and indiscriminate violence. This abundant human resource who was easily impressed and manipulated would grow to nearly half the rebel forces and were a great means to spread mayhem by turning the younger generation against their family as a rite of admission into the rebels “The more heinous the act, the better the rebel leaders treated them; they were often given command and authority as rewards” (Bangura, 2023, p.105).

The soldiers of the Sierra Leone Army were not without their share of blame, the SLA (the Sierra Leone Army) was increasingly involved in brutal violence. Soldiers carried out summary executions of suspected rebels and rebel sympathizers, and as SLA soldiers became disgruntled over little or no pay and a perceived lack of appreciation by civilians, they also began to loot villages and impose illegal taxes on civilians as a form of collaboration to the army, illicit mining and trading of diamonds erased the difference between members of the SLA and the rebels they supposedly fought against. Sierra

Leoneans quickly grew distrustful of the SLA, and the resulting mutual enmity further perpetuated violence.

That is what led the populace to take the matter into their own hands and put countermeasures, that is the creation of small independent communities inspired by the ancient hunters “The Kamajors”; these groups dispose of their own arms and goods suppliers from the south and were tasked with the protection of the villages from both the RUF and the SLA. In these 11 years of conflict, mass killings and bloodshed were common, so much so that according to Bangura 90% of the Sierra Leoneans were “experiencing a form of mental illness, particularly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)” (Bangura, 2023, p. 106). Even if the Sierra Leone Army became halfway tormentors of the same people they were to protect, the majority of the violence was perpetrated by the rebels that led several campaigns against civilians and armed forces alike, the most infamous for its brutality and perverse violence during the front of the war was operation “No Living Thing” on the capital Freetown, whose goal was not the recapture of the city but its destruction.

On 6 January 1966, a group of rebels from the RUF/AFRC stormed the city from the eastern half, with units such as “Cut Hands” or “Burn House” living up to their names, the mass killing or amputation, a common occurrence throughout the war, took another ampler during the three weeks of the operation with over 7000 death count, more than half being civilians, in addition to the most gruesome and perverse forms of violence as reported by Mitton that “the atrocities reported after this offensive were especially gruesome, even by the criteria already seen of the Sierra Leone conflict. During battle civilians were used as human shields, rebels carried out mass executions, mutilations, and rape in the streets, and burned houses crowded with those seeking refuge (Mitton, 2015, p. 6). This offensive was instigated with the assistance of foreign aid, like Liberia leader

Charles Taylor who devoted 2000 of his personal NPFL commandos to join the rebels in the attack with the addition of recruited South Africa strategists and Ukrainian mercenaries to carry out the mission.

There were two distinct intentions from this bloody onslaught, Taylor wanted first, to pressure Kabbah's government into releasing the detained RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, who was arrested in Nigeria and was to be executed in Freetown in 1997, through unleashing terror, "The attack on Freetown can thus be understood as being in part a strategic move to force the government into a negotiated settlement, a calculation that proved entirely effective" (Mitton, 2015, p.200). On July 7TH 1999, the Lomé Accords were signed which recognized the RUF as a political party "the RUF" and named Sankoh the chairman of a new Commission for Mineral Resources. This newly made position gave Sankoh immunity from all persecutions and gave him vice-presidential power as Hoffman affirms that "the post gave Sankoh vice-presidential status and essentially put him in charge of the nation's diamond resources. Lomé also stipulated that there would be no prosecutions of the AFRC and RUF for war crimes" (Hoffman, 2011, p.73).

This generous treatment is mostly due to foreign intervention, especially the United States' envoy Jesse Jackson who was criticized for "comparing Foday Sankoh to Nelson Mandela, and the RUF to the African National Congress." (Hoffman, 2011,p. 73). Critics believe that Kabbah was strong-armed into signing the agreement as it was described by the United States Ambassador Joseph Melrose as "the best that could be negotiated under the circumstances" (Hoffman, 2011, p.73).

The second purpose intended by the RUF for this attack is a form of "revenge for the RUF's earlier expulsion from the capital, fueled by a desire to humiliate those who had brought this shame upon the rebels and their allies." The RUF combatants have a perceived image of how the population views their behavior and identities as deeply shameful; they

in turn came to associate society and its residents as a form of an infestation and obstacle that prevents them from reaching their utopian state, and the only instrument to reach said utopia is through extreme violence. “In this way, the RUF actively primed its combatants to behave brutally when entering the world beyond its enclaves, and in particular when entering towns and the capital where disgust-threats were rife” (Hoffman, 2011, p.231).

So, there is a perceived alienation and shame felt by the rebels and the only way to cleanse off such shame is by inflicting it on others, a strong proof of this is the time the rebels took during the retreat to inflict as much despair and harm upon their victims as Mitton clarifies the documentation of “groups that laid harm on civilians during the retreat. Harm is performed due to anger and shame from the rejection of their family and society. Those judged to have shamed the rebels are now exposed to shame (Mitton, 2015, p.267). This proves the mindless use of violence, rather than serving a greater cause since the RUF would not accomplish any benefit to the regular citizens after becoming a political party, but would continue in its ego-centered ways.

### **II.3. Mass War Rape**

The structure of the Sierra Leonean community before the war was a male-dominated one; males were raised as the priority for them to shoulder the responsibility of the household. The Sierra Leonean society defines a man by how little he complains and expresses himself and the quality of material life he provides his family regardless if the circumstances are beyond his control, Bangura describes in his book the circumstances in which men are raised in, saying “that men were the main provider in the family. This was how his manhood was measured. Even if the events are beyond his control, he must still produce for the family. Boys were raised on these principles, so that they could take on the responsibility of the house without complaining, breaking down, or opening up about their struggles. Men who did those things were stereotyped as weak males and were used as a

negative example by others in the community (Bangura, 2023, p.115-6).

This way of bringing up children is in great part to blame for bringing up another notorious offender amid war; women accounted for 30% of the combatants, and their collaboration sped up the recruitment of new combatants for they were easier to approach than armed men, thus they were a steady source of young men and children for the rebels. However, inside the hierarchical order of the rebels, only the leader was above the rules and women were at the very bottom of the spectrum, all kinds of depraved and immoral sexual violence was regular, especially within the RUF who were responsible of 93% of the sexual violence during the 11 years of conflict, Hoffman stresses the degree of violence:

Although a few men were also victims of sexual violence, women were the main targets for sexual assault according to Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) (2002). Of the female respondents who reported sexual violence 89 percent were raped, 33 percent gang raped, 15 percent experienced sexual slavery, 9 percent were forced into marriage, 4 percent had objects inserted into their genitals, and 23 percent were pregnant at the time of these abuses (PHR 2002: 2). Consequently, 51 percent reported suffering bodily injury or physical disability while 43 percent either contracted or feared they had contracted a STD/AIDS. Twenty percent suffered either a miscarriage or reproductive complications while 6 percent became pregnant as a result of the assault (ibid.: 50). But Pratt et al. (n.d.) found that a much higher number (27percent) became pregnant as a result of the rape; however, due to abortions or death, only 15 percent of the babies survived (Hoffman, 2011, p.172).

Female combatants were expected to provide sexual services and although there were in the encampments, the RUF, frequently, raped civilians. The main reason such acts prevailed is due to the internal structure of the RUF, while crossing from Liberia, the RUF was a trained militia composed of veterans, and survivors of the Sierra Leone and Liberia wars, during the beginning of the confrontation, when the rebels wanted to show a clean image, the RUF executed anyone suspected of the act for staining their image as relayed by Mitton that “at the beginning, the offenders were stealthily doing their crimes because they

knew if they got caught raping, they would be executed for disgracing the image of the RUF. (RUF combatant E)” (Mitton, 2015, P. 83-4).

When they started to assimilate desperate, untrained civilians to their cause, the rebels were losing bit by bit the control they exerted on their combatants, the punishments for abuses became less and less relevant and if applied it was more to show the power of the commander or impress him than any concern on punishing an abuser, as Mitton relates from rehabilitated soldiers that:

Testimonies are describing the lack of control regarding sexual assault or rape. Here counted having witnessed a high-ranking member of the RUF Issa Sesay executing three RUF men for gang-raping a girl, but then said he thought this had been more an effort to make Sesay look strong in front of his tribesmen than any real effort at discipline for rape (Mitton, 2015, p.90).

These testimonies show that despite the pseudo-hierarchy that was reigning within the rebel force, however, it was anarchy rather than discipline, in addition to this, punishment was used to ensure and strengthen their position as leaders among their fellows.

#### **II.4. Amputations and Executions**

During the volatile and tense times of war, the SLA and the RUF employed drastic measures to keep its members and civilians in line. Arbitrary executions were carried out by the RUF during their abduction of younglings, where they forced their recruit to kill their family members, so, to mentally scar and shun them from their family cycle and chain them to the rebels. Executions were also done to demonstrate the leader’s power and authority over the camp or to punish any flitting prisoners or combatants when they went against the rules, as Mitton suggests that “those that challenged their superior’s position or questioned orders were the primary targets of executions, and this method is seen as a way of maintaining control over the combatants” (Mitton, 2015, p.147). SLA soldiers carried out summary executions of suspected rebels and rebel sympathizers.

Bangura recounts the experience of one of his sisters who was taken by rebels when

she developed feelings for one of them and carried his offspring, they decided to run away, for their fate would be sealed among the RUF, Bangura recounts that “after his sister, Baida became pregnant. Ismalie, the father, had to make a major decision. They would flee from the camp. It was the only way they could both stay alive and even have a chance of continuing their love affair (Bangura, 2023, p.142). Generally, however, executions are merely another form that this mindless violence takes for the rebels to get rid of their perceived shame as Mitton explains the logic of RUF strategy:

A similar logic can be detected concerning disgust. To avoid uncertainty and moral doubt over killing, brutal forms of violence may have been used by perpetrators to render their victims disgusting objects. This approach may be particularly useful in explaining why many atrocities and executions were extremely brutal and cruel rather than clinically efficient (Mitton, 2015, p. 186).

After the end of the conflict, besides mental trauma, the most noticeable scars of war were amputations, it was the most common scene presented during the coverage of the Sierra Leone war. The most strategic use this practice had been put to was the amputation of a large number of civilians during an election period considered politically unfavorable as happened during the 1996 election Mitton reported that “1996’s elections, the opponents displayed massive brutality characterized by amputations of civilians hands to prevent them from voting or punish them for doing so” (Mitton, 2015, p. 19).

Other than sending a political message to the population, amputations were a rash form of revenge the combatants performed against their enemy for a brief rush of pleasure or simply to diminish the number of future enemies if they decided to join one side of the scale. Creating, also, a climate of terror for easier control and conscription of the populace or to further political schemes, were among the many scenarios reported, Bangura recounts one of his most traumatic experiences during his escape from Medina to the capital Freetown, demonstrating the banality and routine the use of violence has during the civil war, he relates his experience with a boy who “asked a subordinate of his, that was a grown

man, to bring him an axe. Looking straight at me, the boy asked, “Long hand or shorthand?” [...] Then I realized. I was going to lose my hands! And in the most casual of ways. He had simply asked me which tool I preferred. Whichever one I chose would determine how much of my arm he would chop off. I then realized why he was their commander (Bangura, 2023, P.168-9).

Another common reason behind this deed is simply the rebels taking revenge for past losses, that is to say, if they suffered heavy casualties during a confrontation and had to retreat, the RUF would, in the next battle if won, take the degree of violence to such, it would be counterproductive for their mission as Mitton clarifies:

Gberie again notes about the January 1999 attack that combatants preferred to use blunt machetes to heighten the suffering of victims. Yet this actually may have been ‘strategically unwise’, since amputations took more time at a point when the RUF was facing counter-attacks... (Mitton, 2015, p.75)

These hate-driven actions were the result of a great sense of shame that pushed the rebels to great lengths to get rid of, and that is by bringing a great deal of suffering and torment to the mundane folks, going so far as to choose to inflict pain over the completion of a mission, which suggests a psychotic quality to the infringement of suffering.

## **II.5. Conclusion**

Bangura's book on the Sierra Leone civil war does not mention any ethnic group, despite its significant role. The APC party, backed by northern ethnicities, widened the gap between the north and south, favoring rebels during invasion. The federal government's powerlessness and promises of a better system initially led to the rebels' popularity. However, violence against citizens and lack of planning led to the loss of purpose and goals. This uncontrolled violence perpetuated a vicious cycle, and the violence continues to haunt the country today and the little political purpose certain form of violence served did not liberate the country from its problems which makes all the forms of violence presented on Sierra Leone expressive violence.

## **General Conclusion**

In conclusion, throughout the analysis of Chinua Achebe's memoir "There was a country: A personal history of Biafra" and the autobiography of Ibrahim Bangura "The 24TH son: My story of survival and sacrifice in Sierra Leone's civil war" and following the definition of ideology by Karl Mannheim's ideology and utopia and violence by Stathis N. Kalyvas's book *The logic of violence in civil war* and Danny Hoffman's book *The war machine*, we have identified among each party involved the ideological stances they hold and the violence required to impose their stance on the other. The purpose of the analysis of the memoirs is to analyze these brutal conflicts, seeing them through the eyes of the everyday citizen. With this, we are introduced to the standard beliefs and basic routines of these different communities and their position in it. Through these works, we learned the ideologies the other sides of each conflict adhere to and the distinction between general, particular, and group ideology. This led to the rise of tensions and the counterforce to the state. This counterforce is called the war machine. We can conclude that the Republic of Biafra and the Revolutionary United Front are the change-seeking forces that opposed the corrupt Federal Government of Yakubu Gowon and the Federal Government of Saidu Momoh respectively, and that other than the State of Biafra, the violence performed by all in both wars is expressive violence.

To reach such a conclusion, we searched and put together this memoir primarily composed of two chapters. Our work focuses on ideology and violence in both Nigeria and Sierra Leone and its first chapter is titled: representations of Ideology. This chapter is about the context that sparked the start of the civil wars; such as the socio-political, economic, and cultural factors in both countries, all through Achebe's and Bangura's understanding of the circumstance and the relation between ideology and violence. The second chapter on the other hand is dubbed: means of violence. It serves the purpose of categorizing the violence that ensued in both the Nigeria and Sierra Leone civil wars and identifying the

war machine that rose against the state. This chapter acknowledges the types of violence, either direct or indirect, that could be inflicted on an individual, as well as, its role in a good or bad function of society.

Thus, regarding future research, we advise on Achebe and Bangura's vision for Nigeria and Sierra Leone respectively. The authors offer reflections on reconciliation and healing. The conclusion of the text, which calls for reflection, accountability, and a collective re-imagining of their countries, suggests that Achebe and Bangura see hope for the future, despite the violence that shaped the nation's past.

In the end, Violence is the fuel to the machine of war, to bring change to a perceived injustice, two independent parties commit great violence for their ideologies, but there is a need for a beneficial end goal to give meaning to actions committed, otherwise, it would be just backward barbarism that would create more complications than solve.

## **Abbreviations**

**F.M.G.:** Federal Military Government

**SLPP:** Sierra Leone Peoples party

**NPC:** Northern People Congress.

**NCNC:** National Council of Nigeria Citizens.

**SLA:** Sierra Leone Army.

**RUF:** Revolutionary United Front

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