
**POLITICAL POWER SECESSION AS A CAUSE OF CIVIL WAR IN MAXWELL
NKEM NWAGBOSO'S *THE ROAD TO DAMNATION***

SIDI CHABI Moussa

Associate Professor of Anglophone African Literature
Department of Anglophone Studies
Faculty of Letters, Arts and Human Sciences
University of Parakou (UP), Parakou, Republic of BÉNIN

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at examining critically political power secession as a cause of civil war through the lens of Maxwell Nkem Nwagboso's *The Road to Damnation*. Political power secession generally occurs in a country when there is a misunderstanding among politicians from the different regions of the country. This misunderstanding can lead to civil war, which inevitably has incommensurable consequences. This study therefore aims to pinpoint the ins and outs of the phenomenon. I employed the qualitative research methodology for this study. This approach has enabled me to identify relevant information and data through documentary research. I collected relevant data from the internet and the library to conduct this study efficiently. The literary theories employed are New Historicism and Psychological criticism. New Historicism is a literary theory that considers texts not only as a reflection of the culture that produced them, but also as a means by which that culture is produced, playing an active role in the social and political conflicts of an era. Psychological criticism primarily treats a literary work as an expression of the author's personality, state of mind, feelings, and desires. This study concludes that civil war is a destructive phenomenon that must be avoided at all costs.

Keywords: Politicians, Conflicts, Division, Refugees, Disadvantages.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research discusses the role of political power in causing civil war, and demonstrates how politicians and ordinary citizens act in their own interests. Their selfishness prevents them from facing facts and preserving peace, and they generally fail to promote peace in their countries and in Africa at large. Conversely, their actions are geared towards destroying social cohesion. Political injustice hinders the development of some regions in many African countries. However, political power secession, which leads to civil war, does not seem to be the solution to this problem, as it creates serious issues that hinder African societies. This necessitates examining it through the novel under study to unveil its ins and outs.

This study aims to explore and identify the manifestations of political power secession, and to denounce it as it occurs in the novel under review. Another aim is to critically examine and expose the causes and consequences of political power secession. Finally, this research will raise awareness among Africans of the need to avoid civil war resulting from political power secession which is harmful. The theoretical framework of the work comprises literary theories such as New Historicism and Psychological Criticism. The methodology employed is documentary research, incorporating both internet and library sources. The relevance of the

chosen theories and methods lies in their ability to provide an understanding of the chosen theme and to offer a literary appraisal of political power secession as a cause of civil war through an analysis of the selected novel. The study encompasses three aspects: secession and counter-coup as root causes of civil war; the economic impact of civil war; and the social impact of civil war.

2. SECESSION AND COUNTER-COUP AS THE ROOT CAUSES OF CIVIL WAR

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, "secession is the action of breaking away or formally withdrawing from an alliance, a federation, a political or religious organisation, etc." Through this definition, it is obvious that secession can lead to the outbreak of civil war. In fact, as shown by the author in the novel, it seems that some of the Nigerian religious groups do not want to be governed by others and have consequently tried to secede. This issue of secession has originated from Northern Nigeria and has paved the way for the civil war. J. R. Gubler and J. S. Selway (2012, p. 208-209) define civil wars "[...] as episodes of violent conflict between government and either politically organized groups (evolutionary wars) or national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities (ethnic wars)." The novel was written in 1982, following the Biafran War which lasted from July 6th 1967 to January 15th 1970 as a war of secession during which the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria sought to secede from Nigeria as a country and stand on their own as a separate republic or country. On May 30th 1967, Lieutenant-Colonel Chukuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria proclaimed "The Republic of Biafra" as follows:

'Now therefore I, Lieutenant-Colonel Chukuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, by virtue of the authority, and pursuant to the principles, recited above, do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory and region known and called Eastern Nigeria together with the continental shelf and territorial waters shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of "The Republic of Biafra".' (E. Amadi, 1973, p. 44)

The ensuing civil war was a bitter one. The history of that long civil war has been retold, albeit in a fictional way, by the author of the novel under study, namely Maxwell Nkem Nwagboso. The great havoc that the war has caused to Nigeria appears through the title of the novel, *The Road to Damnation*, which is reminiscent of the drawbacks of that bitter war. "Damnation" refers to the condemnation to the pains of Hell. By analogy, therefore, Nigeria was condemned to pains similar to those of Hell during the Biafran War. The narrator of the novel reveals something about counter-coup or secession in a follows: "But words are being thrown about once more and we hear rumors that our Moslem countrymen in the North are planning a counter-coup or secession or both" (p. 27). In addition, through two characters, Father Uche and Herbert Obiama, the author writes:

'[...] But I am afraid of the future, Herbert. We fought hard to bring independence to Nigeria and now it may break up.'

'All the victims I've talked to feel we should break away from Nigeria. There is talk of that everywhere now. People greet themselves with the words: 'Hail Biafra!'

'That will be secession [...].'

'Secede and you have war on your hands.'

'Don't secede, [...], and you have insecurity to live with forever.' (p. 29)

The ongoing quotation is an illustration that secession is capable of provoking a war. This clearly shows that people should avoid secession to preserve peace and harmony which

constitute the backbone of lasting development in a country. The novelist goes on to write through the two above-mentioned characters:

‘Now that is what is at the heart of the matter,’ he says. ‘Ask a Hausa why he distrusts and kills the Ibo and he’ll most probably tell you the Ibo threatens his security.’
 ‘And the Yoruba is not exactly in love with the Ibo, either. No tribe is in love with the Ibo.’
 ‘No two tribes in Nigeria are really in love, Herbert. And there are many tribes.’
 ‘They all say we Ibos are too forward. They’re united on that.’
 ‘Secession will lead to war; I see that clearly. It’s all a mess, I tell you. A tragic mess.’
 (p. 29-30)

From this excerpt, it is crystal clear that secession can lead to civil war. So, as long as people will continue to secede, they will live in insecurity as said by Herbert Obiama’s character during the conversation he has had with Father Uche about the civil war. Referring to the Biafran War, O. Oloyede (2009, p. 12) writes:

The war that terminated Biafra, the still-born, is widely seen as an ethnic conflict in the sense in which the goals of at least one conflict party are defined in exclusively ethnic terms and [whose] primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions. The goal was the secession of the south eastern part of Nigeria from the rest. It was a goal given energy by what might be better referred to as a sharpened politics of ethnic difference, anchored, in an invigorated political movement. Biafra secession was thus the political movement of an ethnic group that hoped to succeed and establish an independent state of its own on the territory on which it lived. It was a war that in general, was between the Hausa-Fulani of the North and the Igbo of the South East of Nigeria.

According to *Merriam-Webster: America’s Most Trusted Dictionary*, “a counter-coup or counter-coup” is “a coup d’état to overthrow or alter a government that was established by an earlier coup d’état” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counter-coup>, 13 Feb. 2024). From this definition, it is apparent that a ‘counter-coup’ is an aggression or an attack geared towards the ousting of someone’s regime or power. So, this kind of attack can surely lead to war because those who attack make it in a violent way; and in turn, the aggressed people retaliate and a war ensues. As the narrator suggests, “When a counter-coup takes place, bloodily; very bloodily, there is, all of a sudden, confusion everywhere” (p. 28). In this quotation, the author uses the phrase ‘very Ibo-bloodily, there is,’ which means that many Ibo people have died during the counter-coup. He also mentions ‘confusion everywhere’, which means that this fierce attack has brought a great confusion or disorder in the country. In other words, it is a messy and nasty war. The writer refers to the counter-coup which has taken place in the novel as follows: “The Counter-attackers were a small band of Militia men. They were shooting from the nearest Government College building. They had made a faultless surprise assault but they were breaking cover now and running” (p. 209). C. Achebe (2012, p. 82) affirms:

Beginning with the January 12, 1966, coup d’état, through the counter-coup (staged mainly by Northern Nigerian officers, who murdered 185 Igbo officers) and the massacre of thirty thousand Igbo’s and Easterners in pogroms that started in May 1966 and occurred over four months-the events of those months left millions of other future Biafrans and me feeling terrified. As we fled “home” to Eastern Nigeria to

escape all manner of atrocities that were being inflicted upon us and our families in different parts of Nigeria, we saw ourselves as victims.

In the above quotation, C. Achebe tells us about the coup d'état and the ensuing counter-coup which have occurred in Nigerian and which have led to the Biafran War. As a writer, he has witnessed what has really happened during that period. C. Achebe (2012, p. 125) gives further details about the coup d'état and the counter-coup by stating:

By the time the Nigerian forces were done they had shot at least 1,000 and perhaps 2,000 Ibos [sic], most of them civilians. There were other atrocities, throughout the region. In Oji River, The Times of London reported on August 2, 1968, the Nigerian forces opened fire and murdered fourteen nurses and the patients in the wards. In Uyo and Okigwe, more innocent lives were lost to the brutality and blood lust of the Nigerian soldiers...

In the novel under study, Father Uche, one of the characters, sees the Nigerian people's love for words as a gear to the prevailing turmoil. He thinks that actions are on the wane in favour of words or are even inexistent. He has made it clear when Herbert Obioma has told him about his love for words:

'There you are ... words!' he explodes. 'Do you see the state of things in the country right now? It was caused by words. The federal government talked more and did less godly things and became corrupt. Now a group of young Army boys has overthrown it. But what happens? Words once more. The coup didn't quite succeed, everybody knows that; everybody knows too that the civilian government voluntarily handed power over to Ironsi as the Head of the Army although he had no hand in the coup. But words are being thrown about once more and we hear rumours that our Moslem countrymen in the North are planning a counter-coup or secession or both. And they rejoiced with the rest of the country when the politicians went down; so they should too, because after all, didn't the coup stop all the chaos caused by the rigged census and rigged elections? [...].' (p. 26-27)

In the ongoing quote, the writer denounces through his mouthpiece, Father Uche, the fact that the Nigerian government works with words rather than doing godly things to maintain social cohesion and consequently peace and harmony in the country. On the contrary, the government has eventually become corrupt because of its love for words rather than actions. He sees this as the main cause of secession and counter-coup in the country. The priest, Father Uche, goes on to refer to the counter-coup in terms of religious conflict because of people's speculation about that fact. He says:

'[...] But words are being tossed about and now they probably see the whole thing as a struggle between Moslems and Christians. For all they know, Ironsi being an Ibo, the coup might have been a plan by us here in the East to take the central leadership of Nigeria away from them. [...]. You see, they obviously think that we, the minority, want to lord things over to them, the majority. They distrust us and are afraid of us and that's why they are now killing Ibos in saban-gari after saban-gari up North. [...].' (p. 27)

The aforementioned quotation reveals that the civil war is considered as a struggle between Moslems and Christians. It has therefore been equated to an inter-religious war although the federal government is deeply implicated in it. This further justifies the fact that there is a great confusion in the country depicted in the novel, namely Nigeria.

Like other wars, the Nigerian civil war has been an important hardship for civilians. As revealed by the author, that war has brought a great confusion on Nigerian citizens and people have killed their countrymen out of tribalism or ethnocentrism. In fact, this makes the war resemble a tribal war. The excerpt below illustrates this fact:

Oh God! I know say we go win dis war but we no love ourselves; all of us — pretend until t'ings come too much, come cut all our belly for de world to see and now we fight Ibo. We fight dem and call dem Kobokobo and Nyamiri and some people say: 'Shoot anyt'ing dat moves!' But no be de end. Who no know go know. Onley a miracle go save us I swear to God. You no see? We no fit even fight with one mind. Hausa is against Fulani, Fulani is against Tiv, Tiv is against Yoruba, Yoruba is against Bini, Bini is against Ijaw, Ijaw is against Efik, Efik is against Ibibio, Ibibio is against — '... Ibo!' the farmer cut in coldly; all of you is against Ibo! (p. 227-228)

Through the above excerpt, the writer has shown the extent of tribalism or ethnocentrism in those tribes fighting against one another. Some of them even order their people to shoot everything that moves. This shows that there is a strong dislike towards other tribes on the one hand and an underestimation of others among them on the other hand. The Ibo people are particularly underestimated by the other ethnic groups as shown in the above excerpt. For example, there is the death of Emeka who is shot by an Efik although he is innocent. This death further unveils the manifestation of tribalism or ethnocentrism prevailing in the country. The following dialogue refers to the boy's death:

*'The Efik has killed the boy I took out' [...].
'He kill dat small boy?'
'He killed him.'
'Oh God! I talk say dis t'ing done too much!'
'Dis t'ing done too much-o! [...].'* (p. 226-227).

This dialogue is a proof of the boy's death. Even the Efik's fellow is upset by that murder because he wonders what this boy has done to deserve death. So, tribalism and ethnocentrism remain the most developed causes of secession and counter-coup which, in turn, lead to civil war. As Maitama Sule, a leading northern Nigerian politician, put it in the 1990s:

In this country, all of us need each other. Hausas need Igbos, Igbos need Yorubas and the Yorubas need the northerners. Everyone has a gift from God. The northerners are endowed with leadership qualities. The Yorubaman knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation. (C. Uwazurike, 1997, p. 273)

The preceding point signifies that the cultural basis of Nigerian politics is salient in exploring what made Biafra, *that* which was lost to the extent that it was traumatic in the collective psyche of the Igbo. The Igbo are gifted in commerce and trade because they are the most migratory of Nigeria's ethnic groups, settling in large numbers in all of Nigeria's major cities, and establishing their markets anywhere it seems reasonably possible to make a profit (D. J. Smith, 2005).

3. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CIVIL WAR

Civil war has a great economic impact on the country in which it occurs because it leaves an incommensurable number of after-effects. According to H. A. Ghobarah *et al.* (2003, p. 192):

Civil War is an extreme form of political instability that reduces economic growth. Poor economic performance cuts the pool of tax revenues that government can draw upon to finance health care. One study concludes that Civil Wars typically have a severe short-term (approximately five years) negative impact on economic growth. A weak economy and lower profit margins also decrease the contributions the private sector can devote to employee healthy and the resources individuals can draw on to compensate for reductions in state or employer contributions to health care. Civil Wars also deplete the human and fixed capital resources needed for a health-care system.

Through the ongoing quotation, H. A. Ghobarah *et al.* show that wars have tremendous consequences not only when they occur but also in the aftermath of their occurrence. What these authors have said lays the emphasis on the drawbacks of civil war that catch people in the morrow of events. For them, the consequences that people can undergo can be economic or social consequences because during wars, health care buildings such as clinics and renowned hospitals can be destroyed. All these setbacks are bound to break human development and the development of the country where civil war occurs, and the development of Africa at large.

The Biafran War, as it is called in the novel, is a war which has affected the Nigerian economics. It has made the economic life worse, causing people to live in starvation. There is a lack of relief food for the injured people and for healthy people as well. The author has also depicted how the scarcity of many things has raged all over the country during this war. He declares: "Meat was scarce and those sheep meant a fortune" (p. 4). This scarcity of meat is further proved through this quotation: "People have begun to eat dogs for meat" (p. 83). So, the war has affected the economic growth of the country.

After the lack of meat in the country, there is also a terrible lack of electricity. People live in darkness for a long time as illustrated in this quote: "The room was dark – since the war worsened, electricity has become a thing about which the less said the better – and I wasn't too sure of my sense of direction but I managed all right" (p. 39). From this quotation, one can infer that people live in darkness in the areas affected by the war. In other words, this typical example mirrors what is happening in the country at large. This lack of electricity, as a result of the civil war, can affect the economic development of the country. In addition, the author has shown how people are suffering economically in many parts of the novel. They are suffering because during wars, nobody can sell or go to market to do whatever he wants. When a war takes place, things become very expensive and rare around. Another example is provided when the narrator affirms: "[...] I began to need a cigarette. It cost five shillings for one. I had been economising" (p. 39-40). This quotation shows that there is an increase in the cost of cigarettes because of the civil war. So, traders take advantage of the situation to increase the price of goods. Paul Collier (1999, p. 1) refers to the economic consequences of civil war as follows:

The typical civil war in a low-income country lasts for nearly a decade. Overwhelmingly, the casualties from civil war are non-combatants: deaths from disease soar as a result of forced migration and the breakdown of health systems. War digs a deep hole in the economy from which it takes many years to recover. Indeed, many of the costs of civil war occur after it is over. Looking at this record, the rebel leader who claims to fight 'for the interests of the people' is generally deluding himself - or others. Further, the damage spills over onto neighbors. In the typical civil war more than half of the total economic cost is borne by neighboring countries rather

than by the country itself. Thus, the costs of civil wars are very largely not borne by those responsible for them: they are borne by non-combatants within the country, by future inhabitants, and by neighbors. Someone needs to represent the interests of all these people who lose from civil war. [...].

Through the above quotation, it is obvious that Paul Collier tries to show that when war takes place, people change their ways of doing things simply because all the goods become very expensive even in the neighbouring countries. In the morrow of war, people start economising things in order to supply their daily needs. Many things cannot circulate during war time; as a result, they become too expensive. During the war which has occurred in the novel under study, petrol has become very scarce. The following conversation illustrates this fact:

'What of petrol?' she said. 'Isn't it becoming scarcer?'
It's so scarcer these days that they call it spirit.'
'But we shall manage. A motorcycle, you know, takes less petrol.'
'What an irony, with us being one of the world's greatest producers of oil.'
'That's why they captured the oil areas first.'
'They knew it would hurt. All everybody is really interested in is oil.' (p. 43)

The above dialogue clearly shows how petrol has become so scarce that people call it 'spirit' although Nigeria is one of the world's greatest producers of oil. So, through this excerpt, the author shows how the Biafran War has created a kind of paradox in the country. People have suffered a lot for many things such as clean water, relief food, and care-taking. K. Imai and J. M. Weinstein (2000, p. 3-4) buttress this fact when they write:

Civil war affects the capital stock in two ways. First, internal conflict reduces the existing stock of capital. Residential structures, roads, bridges, ports, and factories are targeted and destroyed by competing militaries in wartime. The level of the capital stock is also affected over time by changes in investment and the rate of depreciation. In order for the capital stock to grow, the level of investment in the maintenance and expansion of the capital stock must outpace the rate of depreciation on the existing stock. Since civil war increases the rate of depreciation and reduces investment, growth in the capital stock is stunted. Civil war, therefore, reduces both the level of the capital stock and its rate of growth.

Both the civilians and the people who are in camps, including those who stay in hospitals, struggle a lot. Others get out to look for food because they are seriously hungry. For instance, the author writes: "Finding a farm that still had yams-or any crop at all was not easy. We had to go far into the bush to find one. Even then the yams were unripe. The farmer said so to the Efik soldiers" (p. 220). The ongoing quotation shows that the prisoners have gone far to look for yams to quench their hunger. E. Amadi (1973, p. 40) refers to food shortage during the civil war as follows:

When food was short, farms were popular targets for the combers. Yams and other crops were 'combed' out almost as a matter of routine. Farmers who objected to this practice were branded saboteurs. Some clever people soon learnt to harvest plantains and other fruit trees in their compounds just before combing operations were made in their areas. Although thieves and other criminals abused it, combing was on the whole a very effective deterrent against would-be saboteurs of the rebel cause.

The foregoing quotation shows that food shortage constitutes a serious difficulty for the rebels. In the novel under study, the man whose goiter moves up is utterly surprised when he discovers that the prisoners still have enough food to eat despite the starvation prevailing in the country. This passage is an illustration of this sad fact: "The farmer's goiter moved up and down with passion as he opened bag after bag, looking at long-unseen food with wide open eyes. 'God in Heaven!' he cried. 'Beans! Rice! Dried fish! Dried Meat! God the Creator! Look at salt! This is salt-o! Oh, Chineke, even cigarettes! Oh God in Heaven!'" (p. 218). Through this quotation, the author shows that the federal government provides the refugees with food, even though it is not sufficient. They are thus less affected by the starvation prevailing in the country than the other civilians. While talking about the consequences of civil war, M. Bosker and J. de Ree (2010, p. 2) have given a series of setbacks that civil war generates when it occurs as follows:

Civil war inflicts serious direct and indirect damage to a country's development process. Besides, destroying lives, physical infrastructure and living standards, it also has the potential to alter a country's socio-political circumstances and may leave bitter grievances, increasing the likelihood of a future recurrence of violent conflict.

This quotation reveals the consequences of civil war. M. Bosker and J. de Ree denounce the fact that civil war affects the development of the country where it occurs, affect its infrastructure and put an end to many lives. P. Collier (1999, p. 2-3) shows that there are many different ways in which war damages the economy of a country when he declares:

[...]. The most obvious way in which civil war damages the economy is through the destruction of some resources. For example, part of the labour force is killed or maimed and bridges are blown up. However, civil wars are usually fought with much lower technology than international wars and so tend to be much less destructive at least of physical capital. A second effect is the disruption caused by warfare and the often-concomitant social disorder. For example, some roads become unsafe and so extra costs are incurred in achieving the same outcome. [...]. A third effect is the diversion of public expenditure from output-enhancing activities [...]. Fourthly, to the extent that these income losses are regarded as temporary, there will be dissaving, an effect analytically similar to the destruction of the capital stock. Finally, in response to the deterioration in the economic environment, private agents will engage in portfolio substitution, shifting their assets out of the country. Here, assets should be understood to include human as well as physical and financial capital.

Through this excerpt, P. Collier shows the different ways in which a civil war affects the economy of a country. First of all, he has mentioned the way the destruction of the resources of a country occurs. Given the fact that the development of any economy depends on resources, if resources are destroyed, the development of the economy will break down with a great speed. In the same vein, R. Ransom and R. Sutch (1975) analyse the agricultural development in Southern Agriculture. For them, civil war undermines the development of agriculture which is capital for developing countries. They also mention that civil fighting has touched some factories, which affects the economy. They declare:

There is a widespread belief, which has been encouraged by historians' treatment of the Reconstruction period, that the Civil War devastated the South; that the loss of human life, work animals and other livestock was enormous; that the destruction of houses, barns, fences, bridges, railroads, and levees paralyzed agriculture; that the burning of cities, factories, warehouses and wharves crippled the Southern economy.

The well-known stories of Sherman's march to the sea; the burning of Richmond, Atlanta, Columbia, and Charleston; the raids into northern Alabama; and other, less dramatic, incidents add to the popular image of widespread destruction. Every account of the Reconstruction period comments on this devastation, and a number of historians and economists have asserted that the loss of Southern capital from the war severely affected the economic recovery of the South¹. According to the best available estimates, the per capita income of the South fell dramatically during the War decade and then grew sluggishly thereafter. (R. Ransom and R. Sutch, 1975, p. 1)

Civil war is therefore a phenomenon which destroys everything in the development of a country. N. Sambanis (2002) also shares the same point of view with R. Ransom and R. Sutch. He shows that civil war affects the economy once it takes place. He considers civil war as a huge problem that destroys the economic capacity of a country which is victim of it. For, that phenomenon is to be understood at all costs as the important problem stopping the economic growth. So, N. Sambanis (2002, p. 217) notes:

Civil wars have important regional contagion or diffusion effects, making civil war an important problem in the field of international relations. There are also huge economic costs to civil war. Civil war is both more likely in poor countries and, in turn, exacerbates economic problems by destroying economic capacity and reducing growth.

Through the ongoing quotation, N. Sambanis shows that wherever civil war takes place, it becomes an important threat on the economy of that country. Unbelievably, the consequences of that tragedy become unbearable and people start suffering from them. As the economy of each country is considered as the basis of construction, when that economy gets destroyed, the country in turn falls. The mission of every country is, therefore, to prevent all kinds of war in order to keep its economy safe. According to V. Bove *et al.* (2016), civil war causes economic catastrophes and kills many people once it occurs. Taking the example of Uganda under President Idi Amin's rule, they posit:

*In fact, on the one hand, civil wars can cause economic catastrophes, as in Uganda during the military dictatorship of Idi Amin from 1971-79, when up to half a million people were killed and the per capita GDP declined by 40% within one decade. On the other hand, however, civil wars are not identical, and the category encompasses different circumstances and realities; in fact, the number of battle deaths in many civil war countries is comparable to the number of homicides in stable and prosperous economies, like Russia or South Africa. (V. Bove *et al.*, 2016, p. 550-551)*

From the above quotation, it is clear that civil war is a great threat which damages the population, animals, vegetables, and other health infrastructures, commerce and transport. Finally, one can qualify civil war as the first dreadful phenomenon in the world apart from natural phenomena, such as natural disasters. C. Achebe (2012, p. 171) denounces the chaotic economic situation of Nigeria during the Biafran War as follows:

The agony was everywhere. The economic blockade put in place by Nigeria's federal government resulted in shortages of every imaginable necessity, from food and clean water to blankets and medicines. 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. The suffering of the children was the most heart wrenching.

In the novel under study, the author has shown that war profits economically some people to the detriment of the country at large when it takes place. He has depicted how people make illicit trades during war time. The Nigerian Civil War has been profitable for Mary and her club members. So, they consider this war as an occasion to make money at all costs. For instance, Mary and her club members have indulged in attack trading to make money. This trade makes them proud till Mary invites Herbert Obiama to join them in the dirty job. This conversation is a proof:

'Herbert, listen. Stay with me and let's make some money, too. Let's do trading.'
'What trading?'
'Attack trading,' she said easily. (p. 242)

The conversation clearly shows that Mary is implicated in attack trading in order to make money unduly.

4. SOCIAL IMPACT OF CIVIL WAR

Once civil war occurs in a country, it leaves a lot of social after-effects. It brings about death, injury, misery, and hard struggles in human life. It has also a long-term impact that indirectly destroys the inhabitants after the war. The falling of artillery shells in Owerri, the target of the bombarding of the civil war in the novel, is very telling. The novel opens with this passage: "The first artillery shell that fell outside Owerri took us by surprise" (p. 1). Although "Soldiers walked about with civilians [...]" (p. 2), and "The evening was so normal and everywhere so peaceful that, except for the soldiers going to and fro there was nothing to suggest a war was on" (p. 2), it is evident that the falling of artillery shells in Owerri is a bad omen.

The first victims of civil wars are children who suffer from it more than adults do. For instance, school children have been rusticated because rustication seems to be the best solution for them. As the protagonist of the novel, Herbert Obiama, puts it, "[...] to go to school and have a bomb drop on you is a lot worse than rustication [...]" (p. 3). He says further: "[...] we heard the crack of the artillery shell. The shell landed just like that, as if it came from nowhere, and exploded" (p. 3) and "[...] we heard another *Boom!* It was the second shell and it fell nearer this time, exploding with a louder noise [...]" (p. 7). As he is about to get married with his fiancée, Edna, "[...] the third shell fell outside the town" (p. 12) at the right moment when the priest has begun to make the sign of the cross. Rather than being a blessing, the priest's sign of the cross foretells the tragedy which will follow the wedding. So, there is no wonder when another artillery shell has fallen at the right moment when the bride and the groom have said: "for better, for worse" (p. 31). To crown it all, Father Uche, the priest says after the wedding: "Well, I don't know when we shall meet again. Whatever happens, may God bless you both" (p. 33). Because of the war, "[...] curfew was strict in Owerri" (p. 34-35). When Herbert and Edna get home after their wedding, they have heard the crack of another shell as he "[...] began to pack the Peugeot in the garage [...]" (p. 35). The narrator figures out the outcome of the war in these terms:

[...] I kept thinking of what would happen should Owerri fall. We were barely in the second year of war but our losses were already tremendous. The will to fight was there. There was no doubt about that. But things were going badly. The new strategy of surround and by-pass was yielding a few gains, too. And except for Oguta we had lost practically every town or village that was ever besieged. [...].
Owerri had been shelled. Too bad, just plain bad. What if the town should fall? Too bad. It would affect morale, no doubt. There might be panic, even. There certainly

would be a big evacuation, that's for sure. Another loss. The enclave would get smaller. More people would swarm. (p. 49)

The falling of Owerri is evident through the above quotation. Although resistance is carried out by “The Militia [who] will enter the fighting if and when the enemy enters Owerri” (p. 97), the situation seems to get worse because the enemy is stronger. The bomb shells which fall here and there in Owerri are bound to kill a lot of militia and innocent civilians. Herbert’s analysis of the situation on page 13 while referring to the Militia is very telling:

Lord, these Nigerians knew how to advance. No matter what you did to them they kept coming straight on. You need to see them in battle. However much you snipped at them they just shouted ‘Oshe Bey!’ walked over their dead and kept advancing, standing bolt upright. I went with the Militia up to the battle front once and saw how they moved. (p. 13)

Anyway, the war is fought with unequal arms since the secessionists do not have enough arms and ammunition to fight. The narrator raises the issue in these terms: “The Commandos and the new Strike Forces were devils, though. Wizards at this kind of war. They fought very well at Ebenebe. With them there was hope. Only that this shortage of arms and ammunition was hell. It was as bad as the starvation, if not worse” (p. 49). As a result of the shortage of arms and ammunition, the secessionists find it difficult to retaliate. It is worth mentioning that the Militia fight without food and ammunition, to mention only these two things. Captain Opara, who has nearly run over the narrator, Herbert Obioma, and his wife, Edna, has denounced this sad fact as follows when the narrator has insisted that he should apologise:

‘Mr. Obioma, if you had to fight without food, without uniforms, with five bullets per man per day, you would not apologise for a little reckless driving. If you had watched a dear friend killed or badly wounded because you had no bullets to cover him,’ [...], ‘you would not now insist that I apologise.’ (p. 127-128)

Although there has been an apparent lull in Owerri, there is no doubt that the refugee casualties are legion. Their wounds are so bad that the narrator qualifies them with the adjective ‘foul’ in the quotation below:

War was in the air. Refugees from Lagos and the North were still returning. Those welcoming them home were taking to the streets, singing, ‘if progress is a crime, I’m a proud criminal!’ and chanting ‘hail Biafra!’ You look at the refugees, see and smell their foul wounds, see them still clutching ears and moving with eyeless sockets that have gone bad; you see these things and you say silently to yourself: ‘Hail Biafra.’ (p. 52)

As the writer mentions it, “[...] there is commotion and confusion everywhere. Through it all you can see war hanging in the air [...]” (p. 52). The imminence of a probable war or rather of the downfall of Owerri is justified by the fact that the shelling is getting more and more intense. “They began to shell Owerri again [...]” (p. 71), and ““the shells are landing nearer and nearer”” (p. 71). As the omniscient narrator puts it, “It is dangerous. They’re sure to follow up this shelling with an aerial bombardment” (p. 79). Owerri seems to be a dead town. The narrator and protagonist of the novel denounces this fact when he laments: “You felt you were in a town whose inhabitants had died of some horrible plague. All the huts and zinc-roofed houses on both sides of the road looked lonely, sad and desolate” (p. 81). The writer uses personification here to qualify the huts and zinc-roofed houses which seem to have been deserted by their inhabitants in search for shelter. In addition, there is a lack of electricity in

the town. As the narrator puts it, “[...] since the war worsened, electricity had become a thing about which the less said the better [...]” (p. 39).

The narrator also refers to orphans’ plight in the novel as follows: “Father, the worst problem is the orphans. Many are so young [that] they don’t even know their own names. Who was your father? and they would reply: ‘Pa’; and your mother? and they would say ‘Ma’; where did you live in the North? and they would reply: ‘Home’” (p. 28). From this quotation, the author shows how the war has caused mere children to become orphans. As its title suggests, *The Road to Damnation* is a novel which alludes to ‘hell’ since the word ‘damnation’ refers to ‘hell’. It means that people have suffered the pains of hell during that war. So, generally, when war occurs, it inflicts great pains to people. H. A. Ghobarah *et al.* (2003, p. 189) declare:

The direct and immediate casualties from civil wars are only the tips of iceberg of their long-term consequences for human misery. That Civil War kills and maims people is hardly surprising. But it is not just a matter of direct war casualties during the conflict. Civil Wars continue to kill people indirectly, well after the shooting stops. These new deaths (and disabilities) are overwhelmingly concentrated in the civilian population. The death effects during specific Civil Wars are relatively well known, but the general and long-term impact is not.

From the above excerpt, H. A. Ghobarah *et al.* show that apart from the immediate consequences of civil wars, there is also the long-term impact it inflicts to people in the aftermath. In the same vein, B. Coghlan *et al.* posit: “Conflicts devastate life, health and living standards” (p. 4). Although anti-aircraft guns are mounted in Owerri, there are many deaths, mainly in the rank of the soldiers who are supposed to man them because they are very tired. The following excerpt is a proof: “We passed open army jeeps on which were mounted heavy anti-aircraft guns, mostly Bofors. The soldiers manning the guns looked very tired” (p. 130). “A good number of soldiers were strolled leisurely about with women and girls. It may well be that soldiers in action, conscious of the nearness of death, combined soldiering with womanising” (p. 142). People cannot go out in the daytime because of the counter-coup. Worse still, there is a curfew to which each citizen should comply as shown in this passage: “[...]. Everyone was hurrying; curfew time was drawing near. A few cars with shaded headlights moved about. Customers crowded outside shops that were lit with candles or kerosene lamps. Groups of men sat around here and there drinking palm wine and obviously discussing the Ilyushin bomber attack” (p. 142). Talking about the social consequences of civil wars, P. Domingues (2010, p. 3) argues:

Analyses based on mortality rates are useful to evidence the destructive power of civil wars and to stress the need for preventing them and protecting civilians. However, they are of little help for designing and implementing policies in the post-conflict period. For this purpose, it seems appropriate to focus on survivors. It should be kept in mind that civil wars do not only kill; but they also lead to many other human tragedies, as mutilations, starvation, forced migration, the spread of epidemics, the destruction of the sanitary and health infrastructures, and they deprive population of accessing the remaining infrastructures. Consequently, individuals surviving to a conflict do not only have a permanently damaged health capital [...], but they also have to live in an unhealthy environment. Survivors have suffered both from direct and indirect consequences of civil conflicts, and at the end of the war their health is deteriorated to some degree.

In this excerpt, P. Domingues shows how war affects social capital when it occurs. He shows that many people die when war takes place. In the novel, the civil war has brought a

great confusion among the citizens and the number of casualties is too high. Wars increase the number of widows and widowers in the victim lands. For instance, one of the characters says in Pidgin English: “Oh no sir! She be widow and she no get any pickaninny, so-derefore she be my gal” (p. 75-76). From the excerpt, it is obvious that this wife whom the character is talking about is a widow. However, she is not the only bereaved person. Even the main character of the novel has lost his wife when they are fleeing for safety. She has died through a bomber crack. The shelling has been so atrocious that it has eventually caused the untimely death of the protagonist’s wife, Edna:

As she finished speaking, there was a sudden crackle in the sky. I knew immediately what it was and my heart beat double time. I looked up and saw nothing but the crackle was now thunderous and it rippled like angry waves through the blue and white of the sky anti-aircraft guns opened up all over the place. [...]. I looked down, looked up again. It was then I saw the Ilyushin bomber. A bomber in the evening: a bomber when you thought you were safe. [...].

‘WHOOM! In front of us, the check-point was in pieces. Those who had manned it were in pieces. Nearby, there was a gaping chasm. I saw all this slowly, sheepishly. I found I had to make an effort to see and think clearly. Edna was no longer on the seat behind me. It took me a long time to realise this. [...].

It was on the grass, off the road that I found her. [...]. She was lying on her back and she had been burnt all over the hair and the face by napalm. Her right hand lay a few yards away. But she was still breathing. (p. 131-133)

The above quotation clearly shows that Edna has been seriously injured as a result of the bombarding. She is bleeding profusely and despite Herbert’s attempt to save her, she has eventually passed away. She has bled to death and that death has frightened the main character till he pissed in his cloth. The following quotation is an illustration of this fact: “I was shivering and hot urine was soaking my trousers. Go on ‘stop the bleeding, idiot.... Her blood was all over her and me” (p. 133). She has been buried on the spot, on Herbert’s request, by an ambulance driver and his co-workers:

‘True-true, Son, this your idea is good. I go help you. I get coffin here.’

I looked up at the man’s face.

‘Make you no surprise, Son. I get coffin inside down dere.’ – he pointed towards the ambulance – “I save it for my co-workers to bury me in when my time come but you fit use it.

‘I go buy anoder one.’

He walked over the ambulance, went in and carried out the white-wood coffin. After taking some measurements, he said it would fit. I offered to pay him for it. He refused. I made him take some money. I watched them put Edna and her hand in the coffin. I covered her and the hand with my coat. After the nailed and lowered the coffin I dropped some fresh earth in the grave. I stood back and watched them bury her. (p. 137-138)

This quotation shows how Herbert Obiama’s wife, Edna, has been buried like a dog. She has not been buried decently because of the civil war prevailing in the area. Apart from that, the war has caused many casualties most of whom are boys. The conversation that the narrator has had with the Sister-in-Charge at the hospital is very telling:

'Look about you.... These boys are casualties from the Owerri front. There are no beds for them. Some of them have been here for days.'

I looked about me. On the corridors, in the shade of the trees lay boys and men, some sleeping, others just lying there brushing away flies, their faces lacking all life or expression. In my hurry I had thought they were refugees waiting for relief food or for treatment as out-patients. (p. 87)

From the ongoing excerpt, it is clear that the injured people are suffering in hospital where many of them lack beds and are bound to lay down in the shade of trees. In addition, others are nearly dead because they lack food to eat. They also lack medical care because of their number in hospital, which leads them to death. Through what the Sister-in-Charge has said in the following passage, it clear that they choose the types of patients they want to admit at the hospital: “‘You should understand that you *cannot* be admitted,’ the Sister was saying. ‘Soldiers first, you know. We hear that the enemy is at Obinze — even Nekede ... only three miles away. We expect more casualties. We have had to turn away civilian bomb victims in very serious condition, believe me’” (p. 87). She adds further: “‘We have had no new drugs or equipment in the last three months, not even dressing! [...]’ — ‘many of these boys outside have died without so much as having their case-history recorded’” (p. 88). O. Oloyede (2009, p. 13) comments on the drawbacks of the Biafran War in these terms:

The central narrative in the literature on Biafra is one of grand scale violence, ruination, in Diamond's ([1970] 2007) phrase, of a “national culture at the moment of birth”, massacre (it is variously estimated that up to 2 million people, mostly the Igbos, died in the war) and mass starvation with the resultant trauma. The resultant trauma is not disputed even though there is hardly an extant literature on this; nevertheless one can make this claim given that there is hardly any war, no matter its scale, that does not bring about physical and psychological wound. The Biafra was not an exception as it left many physically and psychologically wounded. Psychologically, [...], it induced pain, anguish, fear, loss and grief to the destruction of a coherent and meaningful reality.

The new government formed by the secessionists does not want to acknowledge its defeat despite its failure to protect the citizens. Instead, it goes on inciting the poor masses to endanger their lives as shown in the quote below:

A Ministry of Information van equipped with loudspeakers was now outside on the road. A voice within was bellowing: ‘Hello! Hello! Hello! Every male over fifteen, please take your gun or machete or club and wait at the market place! Hello! Hello! Hello! All males over fifteen, please arm yourselves and gather at the market place!’ Almost before the voice stopped another shell exploded down the road. Before its loud boom had died down, other explosions followed in close succession: Boom! Boom!! Boom!! (p. 147)

In the above quote, the Ministry of Information of the parallel government formed by the secessionists is inciting the males over fifteen to take their weapons and join in the fight although the shelling is still on. Instead of protecting the civilians, the government is thus inciting them to expose themselves publicly and to endanger their lives. The narrator says further:

[...] but now the voice boomed somewhere around the market square: ‘Don’t panic! We must defend our homeland! There is no other place to go. Hello! Hello! Hello! It is time for bush-combing! All males over fifteen!’ — ‘The voice was drowned by more

shell explosions. Small arms and mortar fire mixed with the shelling and what you heard sounded like: kwara! kwara! kwara! unun dum! Wierdly [sic] it sounded as if the guns were speaking Central Ibo and says: pack! pack! pack! all of you! (p. 148)

Although the secessionists think that they should defend their homeland, it is awkward to send the poor masses to the abattoir to be slaughtered like sacrificial rams. While acting like that, they seem to ignore the drawbacks of the civil war they have created. E. J. Wood (2008, p. 555) has written about the drawbacks of civil war in these terms:

War changes the population structure of countries, often in profound ways. [...] It appears that war may also accelerate the transition to nuclear households from more extended forms as family networks disperse during the war. War often leaves an increased number of female headed households, not only because of the higher death rate of males but also because of the dispersion of families and the disruption of stable labor migration patterns. Labor relations may be transformed, even if there is some rollback to prewar forms. It is not always the case that women and girls retire to their prewar roles; they may remain to some degree in new occupations, particularly in the absence of male partners.

Through this quotation, E. J. Wood shows that when war takes place, the first thing it brings is disorder all over the victim country or land. Then, people face trouble while escaping from the territory although migration becomes the first thing to do in order to be safe. For him, war damages the structure of demography in a country once it occurs. In the same vein, according to P. Acosta *et al.* (2020, p. 2):

Civil conflicts are a source of huge devastation, ranging from loss of lives and forced displacement, destruction of human capital, physical infrastructure and private property to disruption of economic and political systems. Internal warfare has spillover effects in the form of refugees, crime and illegal trade into neighboring nations. At the macro level, countries often see growth slow down shortly after armed conflicts surge.

From the above excerpt, one can say that P. Acosta *et al.* show that civil war has a destructive power and that once it occurs, people destroy everything. Evidently, when war occurs it devastates lives and causes an important displacement of families who thus become refugees in their own country or elsewhere. In the novel, the narrator narrates how refugees are fleeing from danger through an evacuation organised by the secessionists:

Refugees all ragged and skinny, carrying mattresses and cooking utensils and battered suitcases, trudged past in battalions. Mothers ran, here and there, this place and that, cupped hands supporting their flapping breasts, herding together children who were all bone and no flesh; scarecrow children with wasted faces and fierce, accusing eyes and big balding heads that sported patches of dirty coppery brown hair — famished children, now turned caricatures, with bloated bellies bulging out as in pregnancy, their skin the colour, or non-colour, of water. The sick, the lame — they all filed along. Army amputees clothed in hospital gowns, with Rosary beads around their necks and relief food strapped to their wooden crutches did acrobatics as they went. Among them were shell-shock victims. These made trouble as they staggered along. (p. 148-149)

The aforementioned quotation shows that there are a lot of refugees as a result of the civil war. The forced displacement which the populations are subjected to greatly affects them.

Consequently, all those who are displaced are bound to face great difficulties in their lives. Some of the casualties, especially boys, become delinquents after the war. What the narrator says about the shell-shocked boys shows that they have become delinquents:

Crazy boys. Once, not so long ago, three of them stormed a refugee centre with rifles. Asked why they did it, they said they wanted to 'capture' the place. Crazy boys. Now, in this evacuation, they were pinching women on the buttocks and laughing and saying: 'I – i – it done happen! I – i – it done happen now!'

They stammered a lot, those shell-shocked boys. And they were a disappointment, I tell you. I was just beginning to look away from them when I saw one of them snatch something wrapped in brown paper from the woman whose behind he had been pinching. The woman had a baby strapped to her back with an Akwete cloth. The shell-shocked boy made to run off with the parcel he had snatched but was quickly grabbed by a well-built man in the crowd. The parcel, however, turned out to be the waste matter of the woman's baby and the well-built man smiled and released the thief without taking away the parcel from him. (p. 149)

As shown through the ongoing excerpt, the shell-shocked boys have become mere delinquents and are consequently “a disappointment” as the narrator has qualified them. It means that they may probably cause great havoc to their countrymen despite their social conditions. In the novel, the narrator further refers to the flight of the population in these terms:

There was no real panic. You had to flee from the North earlier, and thereafter, from three or four more towns here at home, so that you had solid experience in fleeing. You had come to accept flight as a matter of course; as a way of life; indeed as mere routine. It was even an art. You fled from one town to the next and in anticipation of another flight left your luggage intact, waiting; so that as soon as you heard an explosion all you needed to do was to lift the luggage onto your head or, if you had a car and had petrol, onto your roof rack and then drive away from explosion. From experience you knew that only mattresses, pillows, cooking things and clothes were worth moving to your unknown destination where you would have to barter some of them for food. You did not trust money too much when moving because you knew it was so worthless that market women might decline to accept it and you would then be reduced to waiting in long lines at relief food centres and stealing hens and raiding farms until the next move. Also from experience you did not need to be told to flee a town when the shell began to land inside; you did not wait to be told where to go; you did not wait to see what might happen. (p. 150-151)

The foregoing quotation clearly shows that the counter-coup has caused a great havoc in the society depicted in the novel or rather in Biafra, Nigeria. The narrator continues his description of the evacuation process in the excerpt below:

[...]. They went on shelling [...] and small arms went on firing. I had known that this might happen, had known in fact that it was bound to happen; the push towards Owerri had been a big one and those especially trained to defend the town had to go away to prevent the capture of Uli airport near Oguta. I knew quite well that Owerri would fall, although I kept hoping for some miracle. Still, face to face with it at last, it had a strong ring of unreality.

Only it was real enough. You could hear the whine of bullets flying close, now. I sat there [...] watching the unending line of refugees until it finally thinned down and a column of retreating soldiers followed. The retreat was orderly, silent and unhurried.

The soldiers were all tough and dirty, their faces thin and wild, their eyes sunken, and their shoulders dragged down under the weight of bolt-action rifles. Many of them had no rifles, only machetes. (p. 151-152)

The above excerpt shows that the federal Army has intensified the shelling of Owerri. Since many of the refugees and retreating soldiers have no rifles but machetes, it is obvious that they can do nothing to prevent the falling of Owerri. So, there is no wonder when Owerri has eventually fallen. The federal Army has captured it as shown in the quotation below:

The whole of the Housing Estate had been evacuated. The place was entirely without life or sound. I stopped in front of our house [...] and listened to the wail of federal bullets downtown. Owerri had fallen at last. Civilians had fled and soldiers had retreated. It was up to the Militia now to bypass the federal Army and gnaw away at their flanks. Afterwards, the guerillas would go behind their lines. Only you never heard again from the guerillas after they got behind the lines. (p. 154)

The falling of Owerri is nothing but the failure of the secessionists in their attempt to secede and live as an independent republic. Referring to Biafra, F. Chinedu (2014, p. 211) posits:

On the side of Biafra, there is the portrayal of a pathetic picture of a promising vibrant nation whose life was snuffed out before it could come into full life. Stanley Diamond calls it 'the ruining of a rare and genuine national culture at the moment of its birth' [...]. The British journalist, Richard West is quoted to say that 'Biafra was the first place I had been to in Africa where the Africans themselves were truly in charge'. He lamented that 'Biafra is more than a human tragedy' and expressed his belief that 'Its defeat would mark the end of African independence' [...].

After the falling of Owerri, the federal Army has captured some of the secessionists. They have then set up detention camps where they imprisoned the people they have captured. The narrator himself has not escaped the capture. He refers to this fact in the following excerpt:

My Tiv captor marched me to the nearest college playfield. There on the grass, under the morning sun, sat a company of federal troops. They sat in platoons and they were eating tinned food and drinking beer. They were very happy. A few yards away, inside a cordon, were about fifty people: men, women and children. They were captives and not in the least happy. They stood together. Their faces were sad but fearless. I looked at the captive children. They were bearing up very well; as well as their parents. You would think that a child in an open field full of adults happily eating and drinking, as the soldiers were, would assume that everybody was gathered for play and would consequently frolic about. But not these children. They saw the whole situation for what it was and were very sad and quiet. (p. 205)

The excerpt clearly shows that the federal Army has captured many secessionists, including children, who are detained in sheer deprivation. However, the Militia have not abandoned the captives. There has been a counter-attack following the capture as shown in the following quotation:

[...]. A grenade fell just then on the grass barely a few feet from where we were sitting. It fell softly but burst with such force that sand and blood shot in the air and fell again before anybody knew what had happened. I looked up to see more grenades coming at us like bees. At the same time bullets whistled past, pelting the football field and

splintering its goal posts. [...]. The Captain had already gone under [the desk] and was firing between the legs of the desk with the machine gun that had been on it. 'Take cover and return fire!' he yelled. His weapon was light but powerful and the recoil shook him and jerked his shoulders as he fired. [...]. His troops were in disarray. (p. 208)

This quotation indicates that there has been a counter-attack organised by the Militia who have thought it worthwhile to defend their fellow citizens despite the falling of Owerri. They do not want to let them down even though they are aware of the fact that they are weaker than the federal Army in terms of defence. The narrator goes on to give some explanation about the counter-attackers as follows:

The counter-attackers were a small band of Militia men. They were shooting from the nearest Government College building. They had made a faultless surprise assault but they were breaking cover now and running. They must have run out of ammunition. Federal bullets hailed lead at them as they ran. Nearly all of them fell. [...]. It was quickly over. A section of chargers returned from the College building with dripping bayonets. A young, moustached Sergeant who had led them reported twenty dead. On the federal side, troops twice that number or more had fallen. They lay about the field, each one motionless where he had fallen. [...]. Two of the captives in the cordon, both of them women, lay dead on the grass. [...]. (p. 209)

The above excerpt shows that the counter-attackers are not strong enough to bring back the situation to normal. They simply want to express their compassion to their captured countrymen. Of course this has caused more deaths on both sides.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to explore, identify and reveal the root causes and the economic and social impact of civil war as they occur in the novel under study. Another purpose of the study has been to examine critically and to expose the factors responsible for political power secession which inevitably leads to civil war. The paper has unveiled the reasons which are at the origin of political power secession and civil war and how they have been articulated in the novel. It has also disclosed the drawbacks of civil war not only on individuals, but also on society at large. The study has found that civil war causes a great havoc insofar as it usually has everlasting consequences. M. N. Nwagboso has used literary techniques such as flashbacks, personification, description and similes to convey his message. He has succeeded in impacting his readership through the use of impressive instances of the causes and drawbacks of civil in his novel. In addition, he has succeeded in conveying a powerful message that political power secession and its corollary, civil war, seriously affect African communities. The moral and physical predicaments that societies find themselves in due to political power secession, and consequently civil war, need to be prevented at all costs.

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