

The impact of financial currency warfare in civil war duration and severity: The case of the Nigerian-Biafran War

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Abstract

Currency warfare is an accounting concept used as part of a military campaign strategy, which can manifest in the form of counterfeiting, currency manipulation and other strategic accounting techniques. As a strategy, it can be used to cut off the enemy's war financing capability. Despite its strategic importance in military campaigns, there is a notable lack of research on currency warfare in internal or civil conflicts, with most existing studies focusing on international disputes. The current research examines the Nigerian Civil War to determine how currency changes by both the government and the rebel group (Biafran) influenced the duration and severity of the conflict. This study develops a currency warfare theory and establishes bankruptcy, arms shortage, loss of territory, limited access to foreign currency, hunger and famine, and static conflict zones as the underlying themes that influence the effectiveness of currency warfare on the duration and severity of wars. Our findings indicate that the currency change by Nigeria helped shorten the length of the war (duration) and caused more casualties (severity) on the side of the Biafran separatists.

Keywords

Currency, warfare, weaponisation, bankruptcy, counterfeiting, Biafra, Nigeria

Introduction

Currency warfare strategies employed by a state and a rebel group against each other have received little attention in conflict and accounting studies, particularly in situations involving a state versus a rebel group in Sub-Saharan Africa. Crespo (2019) developed the currency warfare implementation

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theory that explored the conditions requisite for a state's implementation of currency warfare. A broader perspective on currency warfare is often portrayed as a strategy for subversion, denying an opponent's ability to finance war and delegitimising the enemy's leadership (Crespo, 2018).

Currency warfare, as a military strategy, targets an enemy's monetary capabilities and can be employed in various formats. For example, paper currency was deployed as a war tool and in the acquisition of weapons during the US Civil War (Mayer-Sommer, 1988), the ISIS war, the Russo-Ukrainian War, and the Russo-Georgian War (Crespo, 2018). The merits of paper currency deployment in warfare have been viewed as a proportional method of waging war, targeting the enemy nation's financial institutions (Crespo, 2020).

In times of war, currency becomes a financial strategy used to win battles. This can be in the form of repeatedly converting and reconverting national currency, which Kornberger and Vaara (2022) refer to as 'statecraft and military prowess.' Pandey et al. (2023) add that the strategy also extends to the financial market, where parties in the conflict use financial prowess to inflict economic woes and cripple the financial survival of their opponents to sustain warfare. There is a synergy among border disputes, conflicts, war and financial markets as they operate in tandem to achieve the ultimate purpose of war victory. When combined with media warfare (Jiang et al., 2022), currency warfare can be a lethal strategy to undermine the enemy's economy and force it to surrender (Confidence, 2022). Liss (2008) explains that an attack on a state's currency is one means of destabilising and creating economic hardship. It can weaken or cripple a targeted state's ability to function and maintain its security.

Currency warfare research continues to suffer from a critical limitation that inhibits its theoretical, methodological and empirical capabilities. Given the theory's lack of attention to whether the weaponisation of currency impacts the duration and severity of civil wars, other intrinsic factors such as financing capability (Hegre, 2004), regime type and cultural characteristics (Lacina, 2006) ought to be considered. The theorising also suffers because currency warfare is portrayed as an exclusive reserve of the state and disregards other important actors like rebel groups. Liss (2008) identifies this state strategy of currency warfare as an efficient and comparatively inexpensive method for crippling or weakening another state's functional or security capability and as a state's stronghold in causing a currency squeeze against a rebel. Nonetheless, few studies have acknowledged the economic, political and cultural factors that motivate rebels' decisions to challenge a state's sovereignty through the use of currency (Owen, 2009). There is limited attention given to issues of secessionist campaigns, national identity creation and subversive strategies (Helleiner, 1998). There is rarely any attention to how this strategy could impact the duration of internal conflicts. The lack of research on the implementation of inclusive currency warfare makes it impossible to identify patterns and/or variations between state and non-state actors' currency warfare and the effects it may have on war duration and severity. Nevertheless, there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that currency warfare may influence these factors; for example, the limitation of an actor's ability to provide basic medical needs for its population and the ability of this strategy to diminish an opponent's capacity to procure necessary equipment to sustain military combat.

The Civil War is a significant part of Nigeria's history, like that of most Sub-Saharan African countries. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) was fought between the Biafran group in south-eastern Nigeria (dominated by the Igbos) and the Nigerian government, which was immediately triggered by the proclamation of the Republic of Biafra as an independent state from Nigeria. The Republic of Biafra was declared on May 29, 1967, by Lt. Col. Ojukwu in his famous speech:

Now, therefore, I, Lieutenant-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, by the authority, and under the principles, —, do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory

and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria together with her continental shelf and territorial waters shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of 'The Republic of Biafra'. (Vanguard News, 2017)

The above speech, by its intent, ushered in the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War. It was warfare based on self-defence; Lt. Col. Ojukwu wrote his reasons for engaging in the secession and Civil War. Some studies on the cause of the war have identified ethnicity and group marginalisation as remote causes of the conflict. This is also sustained by the renewed agitation for a Biafran state under platforms such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). However, most research has focused on the causes of the conflict, such as ethnicity and group marginalisation (Achebe, 2012; Kirk-Greene, 1975). There is little study on the use of currency warfare during the Biafran War and how this strategy caused economic loss and disenfranchisement of Biafrans (Owen, 2009). Even fewer studies exist on the contributing factors of the war, which caused about a million deaths and massive destruction of material resources (Zezeza, 2008). The current study brings in a critical perspective on the extent to which Nigeria's choice of currency change as a weapon to weaken the rebels' financial strength and curb the 'misuse' by the rebels in financing the war (Awolowo, 1970), as well as the rebel's challenge and counter policy of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria (Daly, 2017), impacted the duration and severity of the Civil War. This study aims to investigate the impact of Nigeria's and Biafra's monetary policies on the duration and severity of the Civil War. The objectives of this article are, therefore, to:

- I. Investigate whether the currency weaponisation by the Nigerian government shortened the war's duration
- II. Examine to what extent the currency weaponisation by the Nigerian government impacted the war's severity in terms of deaths for the Biafrans and whether the counter-currency warfare by the Biafran rebels had an impact on the severity of the war.

Currency warfare is a phenomenon of international interest. In academia, the policy has been discussed in terms of 'why implementation occurs' (Crespo, 2019; Helleiner, 1998). Interest in the strategy has also been addressed in international conflicts (Fenaroli, 2016) and in the legal realities approach (Lin, 2016). Although these debates highlight the use of the strategy by a state in the international arena, they do not explain how these monetary policies could be deployed by state and non-state actors alike to achieve observable impacts on conflict duration and severity. This is important when an actor's ability to finance a war is considered. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying the critical strategic functions of currency warfare and examining its impact on the duration and severity of civil wars.

In the case of Nigeria, the war began shortly after the country's independence from the British colonial regime, whose accounting system was still foreign to the locals. The Nigerian accounting system before the Civil War was relatively underdeveloped, and the chaotic environment created by the Civil War led to the misplacement and poor preservation of accounting documents (Abba et al., 2022). In the quest to provide the country with a solid accounting foundation, the Nigerian Accounting Standard Board (NASB) was established in 1982 with the mandate of providing the legal framework for setting accounting standards in Nigeria (Uche, 2002). Before the Civil War, Nigerian accountants, trained mainly by professional accounting bodies in the United Kingdom, came together and formed a professional accounting body, which later became known as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) in 1965 with the responsibility for training accountants in Nigeria and fostering the development of the profession in the country (Olamide

and Ajibade, 2016). The ICAN was, therefore, at its formative stage when the Civil War began in 1967.

It was challenging to accurately account for the actual expenditure during the war, particularly for the Biafran government. For example, the Central Bank of Nigeria branches in Eastern Nigeria were confiscated by the Biafra army, and all accounting records and money were seized from several banks by the secessionist Biafra government (Stremlau, 1977: 221). There were also cases of embezzlement due to poor accounting records, and the rebels continued to use the Nigerian currency to prosecute the war even after the declaration of Biafra's independence (Zeze, 2008). The lack of organised accounting records led to a surge in forgery for survival in the Biafran region (Daly, 2017). Such a failure of the accounting system has been noted in the military (Miley and Read, 2012), and it was particularly evident during the Nigerian Civil War. The poor accounting system has been recognised in conflicts, especially in the purchase of arms and war tools (Heier, 2010). Our study focuses on the Biafran War, as previous studies on currency warfare have predominantly been conducted on international conflicts and non-African contexts. Thus, it is essential to examine the Nigerian Civil War and how the currency change impacted the duration and severity of the conflict. The current study contributes to the literature on conflict resolution using the accounting strategy of currency change.

Money as a financial element can be strategically deployed by warlords to destabilise the economy of the opponent, thereby gaining an advantage (Chwastiak and Lehman, 2008). As Liss (2008) points out, an attack on a state's currency is one means of destabilising and creating economic hardship. The article aims to illuminate the financial dimensions of war, which are often overlooked in reporting on the subject, which tends to focus on armies and weapons.

Our study finds that the use of currency warfare by Nigeria bankrupted the secessionist state of Biafra, thereby reducing their (Biafrans') ability to finance the war. Other factors contributing to the loss of the war by the secessionist state of Biafra include the inability to access foreign currency, which eventually limited their capability to purchase arms. As a result, Biafra was unable to defend its territory, protect its civilians or determine the locations of the conflict zones. The war caused widespread deaths, both military and civilian, with an estimated death toll of three million people, including children dying of starvation (McNeil, 2014; Korieh, 2018). The currency warfare by Nigeria led to the end of the Civil War with the surrender of the rebels, led by Philip Effiong, after approximately two years and seven months of resistance by the Biafran soldiers (Daly, 2020). Had the war been prolonged, the casualty number would have doubled, especially given the dwindling resources of the Biafran state (Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 1968).

The rest of the article is organised as follows. The next section provides a literature review focusing on currency warfare, the background of the Nigerian Civil War and the use of financial currency in warfare. The subsequent section is the theoretical framework, followed by the data and methodology section. The next section discusses the results, and the last section draws conclusions and implications of the findings.

Literature review

Previous research has examined the financial dimensions of war (e.g. Funnell and Chwastiak, 2015), the financing of war-related businesses (Funnell, 2006), and how under-costing warfare enables the human cost of war to become invisible (Chwastiak, 2008).

Currency warfare

The currency warfare literature is an emerging one, even though monetary and financial reporting strategy is not new to conflict studies (Cobbin and Burrows, 2018; Gallhofer and Haslam, 1991;

Heier, 2010) nor accounting and finance (Chwastiak and Lehman, 2008; Helleiner, 1998; Miley and Read, 2012; Scott, 1957). Crespo (2018) defined currency warfare as the use of monetary or military force in a military campaign aimed at weakening an opponent's financial power. This type of warfare complements an army force in conflict or, as highlighted by Crespo (2020a), can become an alternative to a military force, especially when deployed by a state. Currency warfare can weaken or cripple a targeted state's ability to function and maintain its security (Liss, 2008). History reveals that currencies have been targeted in numerous attacks worldwide, and, as such, this strategy of warfare, though uncommon compared to military force, is not new in modern warfare (Bracken, 2007; Darshan-Leitner and Katz, 2018). Often, research attention is given to the military force, overshadowing the key role of these monetary strategies.

Currency warfare has roots in economic and political theory. As a type of military campaign, it is highly dependent on a state's monetary and/or military capability in achieving its objective, which can be strategic, operational, or both. Crespo (2018) argues that the intention to subvert an opponent's power through force from within influences the decision to engage in currency warfare at the strategic level. At the operational level, it is influenced by the intention to deny the enemy leadership or government legitimacy and/or deny the opponent the ability to finance the war. These intentions drive the motivation and encompass the decision to engage in currency warfare against an opponent. Forrest et al. (2013) and Crespo (2018) agree that currency warfare is rooted in gaining state control over the country's economic and political activities. However, these propositions of the manifestations of currency warfare are both at the international level, neglecting the applicability of similar or different tactics in currency targeting or weaponisation in intra-state conflict. Our article fills the gap by further exploring how currency warfare is deployed in intra-state conflicts such as the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. Currency warfare against an opponent involves the decision to either weaponise monetary instruments or launch a military attack on the financial powerhouse. Crespo (2018) highlights that currency warfare could be kinetic or non-kinetic. The non-kinetic approach involves the use of non-lethal monetary instrument weaponisation, whereas the kinetic approach is the traditional use of military power.

In much of the academic literature, currency warfare is portrayed as an exclusive reserve of the state. It is portrayed as a strategy available to a state and deployed against others, typically during or before a military conflict (Scheina, 2003; The Guardian, 2016). It has also been portrayed as a strategy deployed against non-state actors, often in the context of an external conflict. Less attention has been paid to the deployment of this strategy by non-state actors against the state, particularly in civil wars. In Sub-Saharan Africa, currency warfare has been evident in a handful of civil wars, ranging from Nigeria to Cameroon and Somalia to Senegal, amongst others (Foucher, 2020; Ochman, 2020). In most cases, these are ethnic civil wars with separatist aspirations. This, therefore, draws a line between the weaponisation and/or targeting of currency and national currencies, which is, in turn, tied to national identities.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970)

The Nigerian Civil War (otherwise called the Biafran War) has been claimed to be one of Africa's most lethal post-independence civil wars, with some calling it a genocide and others offering a plausible explanation for the genocide claims (Luepke, 2018). The war was one of the major internal conflicts in Africa during the decolonisation era (Bello, 2017). In the study of the causes of the war, Kirk-Greene (1975) has established that the genesis can be considered in the light of internal rivalry and competition ranging from political elite conflict, regional economic rivalry, religious struggle, ethno-regional conflict effect of colonialism and amalgamation, ineffective political

systems and problems with the golden age. However, a dominant and primary narrative of the war is that of an ethnic conflict. The war began with waves of massacres of Eastern ethnicities in June and September 1966 in Northern Nigeria, and there are claims that the deaths were as high as three million (Akresh et al., 2012). The dynamics of the war present a unique opportunity for understanding currency warfare and the larger economic warfare in civil wars.

Explaining the reasons for the Biafran secession, Ojukwu said:

The proclamation of the Biafran Republic was, at best, the delimitation of the people's last defensive position. The territorial delimitation of Biafra was a series of beacons..., if you will, to help a brutalized and persecuted people identify a haven and inspire them into making the final dash to safety. (Ojukwu, 1989: 175)

He further explains that 'The Biafran people never declared war on Nigeria. Rather, they reacted in self-defence and continued reacting in self-defence until it was impossible to continue' (Ojukwu, 1989: 179).

While the ethnic narrative appears to dominate the conversation on the war, Ejidoh (2019) asserts otherwise. He believes that the challenges faced by the socio-political system, regional ethnic conflict and political elite rivalry were mere triggers of the war. He asserts that the aggressive intervention in the South by the northern military was the primary cause of the war. While this appears to shift the focus of the war from an ethnic dimension to military intervention, it, however, reemphasises the regional dimension to the war, as noted by Rothchild (1997), which in turn feeds into ethnicity, given Nigeria's regional division along ethnic lines. In a comprehensive rebuttal to the notion that the Civil War was an ethnic conflict, Luepke (2018) presents it as a resource conflict. His analysis focuses on General Gowon's state creation on May 27, 1967, as an attempt to maintain Eastern Nigeria under Nigeria's control and to grant better ethnic representation to minority groups that had long clamoured for appropriate federal representation. He explains that this move weakened Ojukwu's powers and separated the core Igbo homeland from the Niger Delta area, which is home to the country's natural oil resources and was also an oil refining centre and a commercial location, especially Port Harcourt.

This resulted in the Igbo being placed in a disadvantaged economic position, which served as the basis for General Ojukwu's declaration of the independence of the Federal Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967. This position corroborates Ojukwu's post-war statement that renunciation of Biafra was possible if Gowon had cancelled the state system in favour of the regional system (Luepke, 2018). Thus, this perspective for explaining the onset of the war critically negates the claims of ethnic conflict made by Rothchild (1997) and many other scholars. Luepke (2017) brings to the forefront the largely overlooked immediate trigger for the Civil War, aligning with one of the prevailing perspectives on the war (Kirk-Greene, 1975).

The counter coup of July 1966, which brought General Gowon to power, was perceived as revenge by the northern soldiers against the killing of their kinsmen by soldiers from the Igbo region (Eastern region). According to Heerten and Moses (2018), following the bloody coup that brought in General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, the Igbo media repeatedly showed provocative stories and cartoons of slain northern soldiers. This insensitive media action, coupled with the decision of the government to abolish the federal system for a unitary system of government, led to the coup of July 1966 and the subsequent Civil War. The counter coup caused a pogrom of Igbo residents in the northern part of the country, with the government doing little to stop the killings. As a result, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odugwu, who was the military governor of the Eastern region, threatened to pull away from Nigeria to form the Republic of Biafra.

The Republic of Biafra was recognised by several countries within and outside Africa, such as Gabon, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Zambia, Haiti, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Others, such as Israel, France, and Portugal, gave some military support to Biafra during the war (Hurst, 2009). However, the overwhelming military supply of arms to Nigeria by Britain was too much for the Biafran secessionist group to withstand. Biafra, on the other hand, was cut off by the sudden change of currency and could not procure sufficient arms to defend its territory (Madiebo, 1980; Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 1968). General Ojukwu subsequently fled the country to the Ivory Coast, where he remained until his return in 1999 (Nwangwu et al., 2020). Although the United States government was largely neutral, there was significant support from student communities and anti-war activists for the Biafran group (Campbell, 2017). The US government could not ignore the mass death of civilians caused by starvation. The British and Soviet Union were staunch supporters of Nigeria and supplied it with sophisticated weapons (McNeil, 2014).

Nigeria's victory in the war cannot be attributed solely to the superiority of its army or fighting prowess, as many would have expected Biafra to be defeated in a few weeks. The Huddersfield Daily Examiner newspaper (1968: 12) noted that: 'Despite the strategic and tactical superiority of the federal forces, they have made little progress since Biafra's capital of Enugu was captured'. After all, the Nigerian army at the start of the war was poorly equipped for the conflict. Liss (2008) reports that the military had about 7000 soldiers, a few officers, little armour and no tanks. Biafra, on the other hand, had stashed approximately £40 million in foreign banks (De St Jorre, 1972).

Biafra's defeat was mainly due to the military strategy deployed by the Nigerian soldiers. A significant part of the strategy was the use of the financial currency warfare policy in which the Nigerian currency was suddenly changed to starve the Biafra state of funds and devalue any local currency held by the secessionist state. However, because of the currency change, Biafra could not afford to buy the arms necessary to prosecute the war. Regarding the purchase of arms and lack of funds, the Huddersfield Daily Examiner newspaper (1968: 12) observed the following about the Biafra army:

Biafra's 50,000-man army ... are running short of arms and other vital equipment. Men leaving the front for rest have to turn over their guns to the men relieving them. ... The would-be nation's credit and currency reserves are fading rapidly.

This also corroborates Major General Alexander Madiebo's Statement about the Biafran defeat 'The Biafrans financial disaster ... was the single most important reason why we lost the war' (Madiebo, 1980).

Proving the effectiveness of the currency warfare strategy employed by the Nigerian government and its impact on the Biafran reserves, The Scotsman (1968: 9) reports on how Biafra made a last-minute effort to change its currency in the Swiss market.

More than \$20 million worth of currency was unloaded on the market. As a result, the free market value of the Nigerian pound dropped from seven Swiss francs to 60 centimes within a few days. ... The Nigerian pound is nominally at par with the sterling at \$2.40. The present Nigerian currency becomes worthless on January 22 in a conversion move undertaken by the Federal Government to make the Biafran currency reserves valueless.

A significant amount of money was exchanged on the Swiss market (Daily Mirror, 1968), and the period allowed for the change to the new currency notes was a short 19 days (Awolowo, 1970). This strategy was used in combination with other kinetic military operations. For example, Biafra was cut off from all forms of communication with the outside world. According to Heerten and Moses (2014), the blockade strategy employed against Biafra, combined with the heavy supply of arms by the UK and the Soviet Union, significantly contributed to Biafra's defeat. There were also internal wranglings within the rank and file of the Biafran army, leading to distrust and

Table 1(a). Timeline of the Nigerian civil war.

Sequence of events	Date
1. Military coup led by Lt. Colonel Patrick Chukwuemeka Kaduna Nzeogwu (who hailed from the southern part of Nigeria) and four others, killing 22 people, including the Nigerian Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (who hailed from the northern part of Nigeria) (Stremlau, 1977).	15 January 1966
2. Following the coup and the death of the Prime Minister, the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army, General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (who hailed from the southern part of Nigeria), took over the leadership of the country as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces (Stremlau, 1977).	17 January 1966
3. General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi was murdered by a group of northern Nigerian military officers led by Major Theophilus Danjuma in a counter coup. The coup was led by Murtala Mohammed (from the north) (Nafziger, 1972).	29 July 1966
4. Following the coup, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon became the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Offices. He was a northern Christian (Madiebo, 1980).	1 August 1966
5. Meeting held in Aburi, Ghana, to discuss the disagreement between Chukwuemeka Ojukwu (the leader of Biafra) and Yakubu Gowon (the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces) (Rothchild, 1997).	4–5 January 1967
6. Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon divided the three Nigerian regions into 12 states: North-Western State, North-Eastern State, Kano State, North-Central State, Benue-Plateau State, Kwara State, Western State, Lagos State, Mid-Western State, and, from Ojukwu's Eastern Region, a Rivers State, a South-Eastern State, and an East-Central State. This was done to checkmate the influence of Chukwuemeka Ojukwu's government in the Eastern region (Ojukwu, 1969).	5 May 1967
7. Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the administrator of the eastern region, formally declared the secession of the Eastern Region, known as the Republic of Biafra (Stremlau, 1977).	30 May 1967
8. Lt Col. Yakubu Gowon declared war against Biafra (Uche, 2002).	6 July 1967
9. Chukwuemeka Ojukwu fled the country to the Ivory Coast while his next in command surrendered to the invading Nigerian army (Achife, 2016).	9 January 1970
10. After 30 months of bloody war, the civil war ended with Yakubu Gowon describing the Biafra surrender as 'no victor, no vanquished' (Kobo, 2021).	13 January 1970

dysfunctional operation. Moreover, most Biafran soldiers were not adequately trained; they were conscripted and joined the military without the willingness to fight the war. These factors, combined with the starvation experienced in the region, culminated in the inevitable loss of the war by the Biafrans (Heerten and Moses, 2014). Despite the foregoing narrative, the duration of the war was impacted by the deployment of financial monetary currency warfare, which crippled the spending power and capacity of Biafra to purchase arms (Liss, 2008; Madiebo, 1980). Table 1(a) and (b) provide the timeline and key actors in the Nigerian Civil War.

As shown in Table 1a, the civil war, which began on July 6, 1967, ended on January 13, 1970, with an estimated death toll of three million lives (Akresh et al., 2012; Zeleza, 2008). The two key actors in the conflict were Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, leader of the Nigerian government, and Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the leader of the Biafrans (see Table 1b for a summary of the key players in the war).

Accounting, currency, and warfare

The restriction of accounting and changes in currency have previously been used as a war tool to paralyse the purchasing power of the opponents. Berry (2018) explains that one negative impact on

Table 1(b). Some key actors in the Nigerian civil war.

S/N	Name	Details
1.	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu	Lt.-Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu was the military governor of the Eastern region. He led the secession against the Nigerian nation, culminating in the Civil War. He proclaimed the Biafra Republic and became the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Biafra. He was a key person in the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War (Bello, 2017).
2.	Yakubu Gowon	Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon was the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Nigeria during the Civil War. Following the counter coup of July 1966, Yakubu Gowon was appointed by the military coup plotters to head the government. He was later overthrown by another coup on 29 July 1975. He is a Christian from the north (Campbell, 2017).
3.	Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu	Lt. Col. Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu was the leader of the 15 th of January 1966 coup that overthrew the first elected government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He was a Christian from the Eastern region. He led the execution of the main political leaders in the north, including the Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and Ahmadu Bello, the premier of the northern region. He died on 29 th July 1967 during the Civil War (Ojukwu, 1969).
4.	Nnamdi Azikiwe	Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was the President of Nigeria before the military coup. His government was overthrown in the January 1966 coup. He was from the Eastern region (McNeil, 2014).
5.	Ahmadu Bello	Sir Ahmed Bello was the premier of the Western region and was killed in the January 1966 coup. He was from the Northern region (Ojukwu, 1969).
6.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the Prime Minister and was killed during the January 1966 coup. He was from the Northern region (Ojukwu, 1969).
7.	Johnson Aguyi-Ironsi	General Johnson Ayuyi-Ironsi became the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces from January – July 1966, following the coup of January 1966. He was overthrown and killed in a coup led by Lt Col. Murtala Mohammed on 29 th July 1966 (Ojukwu, 1969).
8.	Murtala Mohammed	General Murtala Mohammed was the leader of the July 1966 coup that overthrew the General Aguyi-Ironsi military government. He was from the Northern region (Kobo, 2021).
9.	Alexander Madiebo	General Alex Madiebo was commissioned into the Nigerian Army in 1956 as a 2 nd Lieutenant, and he rose to the position of first Regimental Commander of the Nigerian Army Artillery. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, he became ADC to the first Nigerian Governor-General, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. After the Nigerian Civil War broke out in July 1967, Madiebo, who had narrowly escaped the pogrom in the North, became the Commander of the 51 Brigade. He was later promoted to become the General Officer Commanding of the entire Biafran Army. He held that role until the cessation of conflicts (AWKA Times, 2020).

the currency after a war is that it costs a government more money to either continue using a previous currency or change to a new one. During wars, currencies are often totally withdrawn from circulation or have lower values than those minted at the time of war breakout. In the case of the Nigerian pound, the value dropped in the free market from seven Swiss francs to 60 centimetres within a few days (The Scotsman, 1968). As a war policy, the Nigerian government changed its currency to frustrate the secessionist Biafran government (Daly, 2017). Within the accounting history literature, Djatej and Sarikas (2009) examine how the Soviet Union employed several emergency wartime

accounting measures that contributed to its victory during World War II. The Soviet economic position early in the war appeared worse than it initially seemed to the Western Allies, but this only led to the introduction of simplified transactions, new accounting techniques, and innovative forms of presenting financial reports.

The use of accounting as a warfare strategy is not new (Chwastiak and Lehman, 2008; Heier, 2010). For example, during the Cameroonian Civil War of 2017–2019, the rebels engaged in currency warfare using cryptocurrency (Atabong, 2021), the AmbaCoin, and the government used military and bank policies against the insurgents (Vine, 2004). Beyond Sub-Saharan Africa, we also see similar currency warfare in the Yemeni Civil War between the government and the Houthis (Aljazeera, 2021; Freeman, 2009). The current study establishes the application of currency change as a strategy to influence the duration of war and conflicts. Gallhofer and Haslam (1991) theorise about the auratic and conflict-enhancing potential of accounting, which can be applied to the application of financial tools in fighting civil wars. Such a strategy is similar to the approach used by the former Soviet Union, where accounting and finance were concentrated on achieving victory. These tools were strategised to ensure significantly simplified allocation procedures, create new accounts and safeguard finance and assets (Djatej and Sarikas, 2009).

Within the accounting history literature, studies consider government strategic decisions around financing, for example, in the imposition of new taxes to address immediate fiscal needs and to promote a sense of collective responsibility, as part of broader wartime economic measures to mobilise national resources efficiently (Rutterford and Walton, 2014). Accounting is shown to play a role in strategising wars (e.g. McBride et al., 2016) and during warfare (Billings and Oats, 2014; Miley and Read, 2017). The strategic roles of finance, money and currency in conflicts are intriguing areas of study in both warfare and accounting. Miley and Read (2021) demonstrate how accounting records were utilised as a war strategy during the 1914–1918 war by the British Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) to track the incidence of shell shock among British Army soldiers who fought. Thus, the army evaded accountability with the strategic aim of not jeopardising the outcome of the war (Miley and Read, 2021). Similar incoherent accounting records during wartime have been reported in the Nigerian Civil War (Daly, 2017).

Following the Civil War, a London-based audit firm, Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., submitted an audited report on July 1, 1970 (hereafter referred to as the Peat (1970) Report), to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Relief Operations in Nigeria. The report revealed the monetary flows, cost efficiency and the politics of budgetary processes during the war. As Aaronson (2013) explains, as of June 1969, approximately \$160 million had been donated globally to the Nigerian-Biafran War, with \$77 million of this amount coming from organisations and residents of the US and the remaining sum contributed by all other countries combined. However, by 1970, the total amount of relief donations received had reached \$170 million for both the ICRC and the Catholic-Protestant Joint Church Aid, which were the major aid agencies during the war; accounting and managing these donations were extraordinary for their organisations.

However, some accounting costs were not captured in the financial cost of the war. For example, donated foodstuffs were often valued below their market prices, and volunteers, priests and other missionaries helped in the distribution of the aid and with the wages of some medics. The audit report reviewed that some administrative costs were absorbed at the agencies' headquarters as operating costs rather than being charged to the relief operations. The cost efficiency, as well as the administration of the donations and relief materials, were severely criticised. The Nordchurchaid expenses had a lower cost-to-efficiency ratio compared to other agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This is due to their prudent management of donations and effective accounting mechanisms. For example, whilst the cost of a chartered

flight to deliver aid to the Biafra territory was \$590 for ICRC, it cost about \$362 for the Nordchurchaid agency. These inefficiencies in the management of resources played significant roles in the severity of the war, causing starvation and increased death figures (Lloyd et al., 1972).

The Nigerian accounting system also contributed to the severity of the Civil War due to its lack of financial control, particularly in the Ministry of Defence, which faced a shortage of trained personnel and a weak internal control system. Omolehinwa (2012) narrates how the accounting system became even more porous with no line of accountability during the civil conflict. In a bid to ensure that funds got to the front line of the war, the intended recipients were starved to death due to the bureaucratic process. Thus, payrolls were thumb-printed with toes and fingers; the tender process was circumvented on the altar of expediency. This bureaucratic process in the accounting system inevitably increased the severity of the conflict, with people dying while waiting for funds to be approved and released.

The strategic roles of currency can be viewed in the role that accounting plays during warfare. Chwastiak and Lehman (2008) noted the silent war of economic sanctions, arguing that accounting supports the role of money-making at the expense of the casualties of wars or conflicts (see also Ighile and Nwodo, 2013). This argument is consistent with later studies that claim currency warfare is a tool for increasing the number of casualties in wars. Crespo (2020) posits that the decision to engage in currency warfare through counterfeiting is motivated by a strategy of subversion aimed at undermining an adversary's ability to govern, which is not the most effective policy approach for resolving wars or conflicts. The Biafran secessionists also engaged in the counterfeiting of currency as a strategy and weaponised currency power by minting the Biafran currency during warfare (Daly, 2017). The final aim of such situations is always to force the government or a warring party into compromise (Crespo, 2020).

When used inaccurately, financial tools such as accounting can increase war casualties. Woodham-Smith (1977) and Funnell and Chwastiak (2015) confirmed how accounting checks and authorisation delayed the processes of authorisation during wartime, thereby causing huge casualties. Due to its bureaucratic applications, it can retard the efficiency of military operations as approval for the procurement of arms may be delayed. Gordon (1935) explains how rules and regulations were created to ensure accountability during the Crimean War and to reinforce tight control over spending. However, these resulted in an exceeding delay in the release of funds for public service. Funnell and Chwastiak (2015) add that Commissariat-General Fidler refused to acquire and issue wood for heating and cooking despite the desperate need of the men. Such a financial accounting system led to a high number of casualties and deaths.

Finance creates an opportunity for funding to become a strategic partner in warfare budget planning, both in the procurement of war equipment, destabilising the opponent and to keep the war running (Heier, 2010). Cobbin and Burrows (2018: 488) note that financing has been used as a wartime strategy in managing war durations and that:

Wars are fought by those involved in the profession of arms but typically managed jointly by those in that profession at various levels of command, and a disparate coterie of civilian officials and politicians. The latter group provides direction to ensure resources are maintained at levels sufficient to maximise the chances of ultimate victory while accounting for the economic resources consumed.

Theoretical framework

The puzzle of this work is to investigate whether currency warfare reduces or increases the impact and duration of armed conflicts. Our study is underpinned by Chartalism (the state theory of money and the geography of money), a theory encompassing an actor's ability to achieve an operational impact (Peacock, 2003). Chartalism is a monetary theory that advocates state control over currency

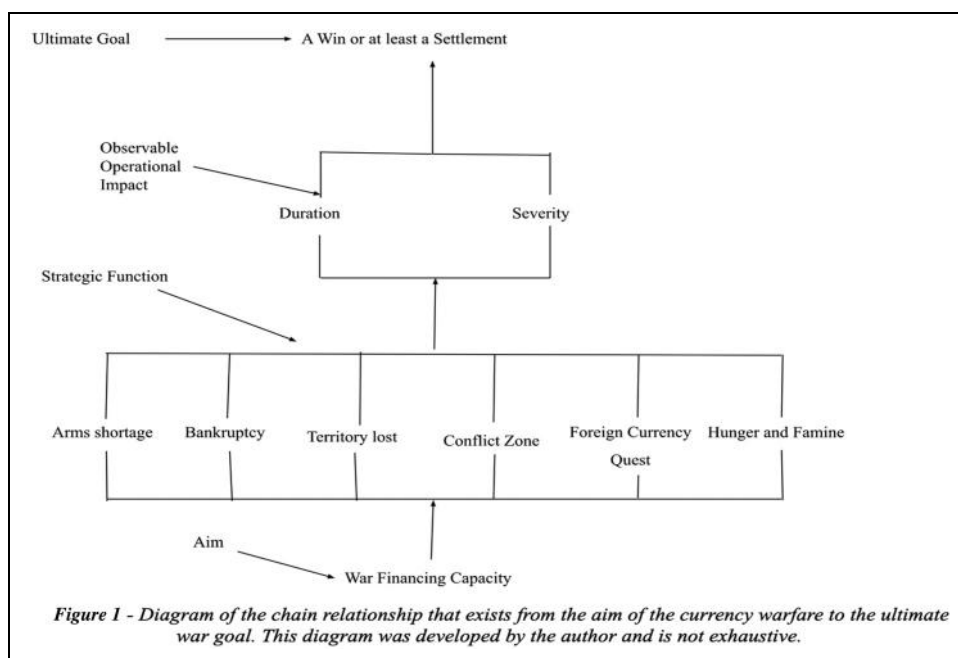


Figure 1. Monetary policy yimpact on duration and severity.

Source: Authors.

and fiscal activities. This is achieved by ensuring that the state does not issue currency to a total value lower than that which it wishes to collect in tax (Febrero, 2009). The theory is derived from the conceptualisation that the state exerts unlimited authority over fiscal activities, including currency policies. In the case of the Nigerian Civil War, the control of money is the prerogative of the federal government.

Through the Chartalism theory, this research develops a currency warfare research question that currency warfare by a state and/or rebel group could impact civil war duration and severity. The argument presented in this article is that to achieve the intended impact, a currency warfare has the impact of degrading an enemy's financial worth, as well as control of the conflict zones, access to arms, foreign currency and food, and leading to the loss of territory, as depicted in Figure 1. Our article argues that in a civil war, the use of currency warfare as a war strategy by a government would be effective in determining the duration and severity of the war against a rebel group. This does not work in isolation but in combination with other factors.

The Chartalist theory (Peacock, 2003; Febrero, 2009) offers an opportunity to consider currency and monetary policies as an instrument of warfare. This emanates from the postulation that currencies are a creation of a sovereign authority, making it a state creation, exhibiting power, creditor and debtor relations, and resting on social stratification (Bell, 1998; Tcherneva, 2016: 3, 8). Through creditor and debtor relations studies (Odell, 2014), it becomes clear that currencies and monetary policies are instruments of manifesting power, sovereignty, dominance and fighting wars. This theorising supports manifestations of currency warfare in internal conflict. A sovereign, self-acclaimed or recognised state can utilise this power dimension as a battle channel, particularly in a secessionist conflict where actors attempt to claim sovereignty. In considering how currencies and monetary policies play out in the international arena, Cohen (2018) challenges the traditional view that the influence of money can be reflected through a sovereign's territorial control. In contrast, he presents a

global manifestation of a strong financial position, with claims of fewer and fewer border restrictions on currency transactions and a challenge to the sovereignty of another state. This highlights the power and influence of money in determining a state's sovereignty. This recalls Minsky's position on money. He posits, 'Everyone can create money; the problem is getting it accepted' (Wray, 1987: 228). Through the lens of Chartalism, we can conclude that the acceptability of money and or the effectiveness of monetary policies are dependent on and a reflection of the power of the issuing sovereign.

When you consider how a country's victory in traditional warfare is dependent on its military might, the same also applies to currency warfare. This is because the intention behind currency warfare is to complement a military force, or, as expressed by Crespo (2020a), it is intended to be an alternative to a military force before a military conflict. With state currency being the recognised currency of the entire territory with its Central Bank controlling the currency and monetary system, the state is expected to be the superior currency power. The state controls its currency and usage and arguably has military hegemony over the rebels within its territory. Given its military powers, currency, and monetary authority, the sovereign state can make warfare decisions through its currency and monetary policies to undermine the war-financing ability of rebels. Conversely, a rebel group or secessionist group can also launch a currency war to establish its authority in the territory or challenge that of the government as part of its military campaign. This was the case with the Biafran currency, which was minted by Nigeria's currency change strategy during the war (Owen, 2009).

Considering the impact of targeted or weaponised monetary and currency policies on war duration and severity, an actor executing this strategy sets out the aim to cut off the war financing capacity of an opponent. With that, the monetary and currency policy has adverse effects in the form of strategic functions against the enemy (see Figure 1), ranging from bankruptcy, arms shortages, loss of control of conflict zones, loss of territory, famine and limited access to foreign currency to sustain the war. This culminates in ripple effects, resulting in observable operational impacts on the war in terms of severity and duration. The eventual outcome is for the rebels or the government to win, or at least for the war to end in a settlement.

Therefore, the use of currency warfare in the targeting or weaponisation of monetary or currency policies by an actor in wartime (to cut off the enemy's war financing capacity) aims to affect war duration and/or severity. Currency warfare refers to the use of currency and monetary policies as a strategic tool in warfare and a means of financial influence. Figure 1 shows the chain relationship between the war, the aim of a currency policy in a civil war, the strategic function and the operational impact. As shown, the strategic function against an enemy manifests in bankruptcy, limited or disrupted access to foreign currency, arms shortages, control of conflict zones, loss of territory, and hunger and famine. One function may lead to another, but the functions may not always align.

We analyse the severity and duration of currency warfare in Nigeria during the 1967–1970 Civil War and the sovereignty tussle, which is reflected in the analysis of currency changes and new currency adoption as acts of war. The change to a new currency by the Nigerian government shows a drive to cut off the war financing capability of the rebels as an attempt to end the war quickly and cause the needed casualties that would contribute to ending the war. For the rebels, the adoption of a new national currency represents an attempt to counter the Nigerian offensive and sustain the war as long as possible until they achieve complete secession. It also shows their quest to protect against the expected casualties of the Nigerian offensive and possibly inflict casualties on Nigeria.

Data and methodology. This study employs a qualitative research method based on the currency warfare framework developed. Data was collected from library and archival materials that were available both online and offline. The research employs a single-case study method (Barzelay,

1993). The case study method allows for a focused examination of a specific event (Burham et al., 2008), in this case, the Nigerian Civil War. This method has been previously used in studying accounting during war (e.g. Cunha et al., 2022). This presents an opportunity for an in-depth examination of the Nigerian Civil War, considering how the government's and rebels' monetary policies contributed to the duration and severity of the conflict. The research deploys content analysis as it offers the opportunity to systematically analyse textual information, including official documents, personal accounts, frontline newspaper reporters' accounts and secondary data (Halperin and Health, 2020). Through qualitative content analysis, the article examines the impact of currency changes on war duration and severity. The article provides an examination of how currency warfare contributed to the duration and severity of the civil war. The article incorporates secondary sources to supplement the personal accounts and policy documents. Using data obtained from public libraries and other online sources, rich and relevant materials were gathered through online and offline means. Given the limited data on monetary policies during the war, secondary data gathered primarily consisted of books, newspapers and documentation. This provides a supplement to the analysis of the primary data, triangulating (Denzin, 1970) and building a robust analysis along the lines of the themes developed (Carter, 2014; Patton, 1999).

Freedman (2010) notes that other data collection options can be silenced by heavy reliance on policy documents. Thus, it becomes imperative to adopt other archival and library materials, such as the rebels' accounts, which help build on the themes of the research and bring clarity to the broader political and historical context. The London Library and the University of Glasgow Library provided access to the relevant online and offline diaries, speeches, and book accounts by Lt.-Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, former Head of State of the Republic of Biafra and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (Ojukwu, 1969) and Major-General Alexander A. Madiebo (Ret'd), the Biafran second in command (Madiebo, 1980). We also analysed the personal accounts of Obafemi Awolowo, Nigeria's then-minister of finance, and the brain behind the currency change (Awolowo, 1970). Examining the personal accounts of key military and political personnel is essential, as they played a crucial role in the war. We also provided evidence of what discourse they employed and who they were trying to influence, what evidence can be gleaned about the factors of interest (morale, capabilities and financial position), and themes identified. The article identifies relevant themes, including arms shortages, bankruptcy, loss of territory, foreign currency shortages, conflict zones, hunger and famine. The online sites that provided access to data include the Gazettes Africa, the Central Bank of Nigeria, and public libraries.

The content analysis includes qualitative content of policy documents, personal accounts and secondary data analysis. The research collected policy documents of the Federal Military Government. Gazettes (1967, No. 51; 1968, No. 51), which contain relevant Nigerian military government decrees and other federal government policies related to the currency change during the war.

Results and discussion

Part i—Currency warfare and duration of the Civil War period

The identified themes from the currency warfare theory for the duration of the conflict include bankruptcy, hard currency, arms shortages and loss of territory.

Bankruptcy

Biafrans had 30 million Nigerian pounds (£) in circulation at the time of their declaration of Independence and another £35 million, which they seized from Nigerian Central Bank branches

Table 2. Value of Biafra's currency.

PANEL A: Amount of money in US\$	++Amount N£'m	Conversion rate - USD	Total amount in US\$m
Amount of money in circulation in the Biafra territory	30	\$2.80	84
Amount taken converted from the Central Bank of Nigeria within the Biafra territory	35	\$2.80	98
Total amount held by the Biafra Government before the war.	65	\$2.80	182
LESS: Amount seized at Lome, Togolese border	7	\$2.80	19.60
Total Net amount held during the war	58	\$2.80	162.40
PANEL B: Possible currency conversions			
Highest possible ($\frac{1}{2} \times \$2.80 = \1.40)	58	\$1.40	81.2
Lowest possible ($\frac{1}{3} \times \$2.80 = \0.933)	58	\$0.93	54.11

++Nigeria pounds was the currency in use before the war. It is now called Naira (N).

in former Eastern Nigeria (Stremlau, 1977: 221). When this is multiplied by the official exchange rate of N£1 to US\$2.80 at the time, as Stremlau (1977) provides, we found that Biafra had a financial value of about US\$182 million. This monetary base gave the Biafrans some high hopes for the military capacity it could build against Nigeria. However, this money remained mainly in the Nigerian currency value until the Nigerian currency change was announced. Eventually, the Biafrans sold as much as they could at a ridiculously low rate of 'between one-half and one-third' of the Nigerian pound's (N£) official exchange rate' on the black market to beat the deadline of currency conversion from the Nigerian government (Stremlau, 1977: 221). Table 2 provides the value of Biafra's currency during the war.

The Scotsman (1968: 9) reports on how Biafra made a last-minute effort to change its currency in the Swiss market. 'More than \$20 million worth of currency was unloaded on the market. As a result, the free market value of the Nigerian pound dropped from seven Swiss francs to 60 centimes within a few days...'

Following Major-General Gowon's currency change decree (1967 (No 51(a)), the country's notification of the conversion by the Ministry of Finance (1967 (No 51(b))), the Central Bank of Nigeria's public notice on the new currency notes and the conversion period of only 19 days (1967 (No 51(c))), the population in the former Eastern region was not offered an opportunity for that conversion. This was an attempt to bankrupt the region by denying it access to money through the government's swift currency devaluation policy. All arrangements were solely for the government-controlled territories, even after the Central Bank, on January 3, 1968, extended the deadline for conversion to January 22, 1968 (1968 (No. 51(b))). The rebel territory was left with no conversion plans until September 3, 1968, when the federal government issued a conversion decree and regulation specifically for the region (1968 [No. 11]). Even with this, findings show no evidence that the policy was implemented until the war ended (Confidence, 2022). When the N £7 million the Biafrans lost in Lomé (Stremlau, 1977: 221) is subtracted from the entire N£65 million monetary value of Biafra, a total of N£58 million is left.

The Biafran exchange rate to the Nigerian pound was at one-half and one-third of Nigeria's official rate (\$2.80). Table 2 provides a calculation of the possible highest and lowest conversions the Biafrans could achieve, assuming they were able to convert all currencies in their possession (which they could not). According to the table, the highest possible conversion that Biafra could have achieved was \$81.2 million, and the lowest was \$54.11 million if they had converted all the money. Considering that the total amount of Nigerian pounds exchanged by the Biafrans is not

accounted for in available records, the total monetary value lost by Biafra is estimated to be over \$108 million. This amount of Biafra's financial power was lost by January 1968, resulting from Nigeria's currency weaponisation against the Biafrans. The \$108 million is a significant decrease compared to the total worth of their financial power at the start of the war, as calculated in Table 2. This aligns with Chartalism theory, which posits that money plays a significant role in controlling the activities of the state and its citizens (Rochon et al., 2003). Consequently, the Nigerian government was able to overpower the Biafran secessionist movement by employing a financial and monetary warfare policy that significantly influenced the war's outcome. Thus, it is necessary to observe whether money can ever be neutral in conflict situations (Davidson, 1999).

The Biafran secessionists relied on any available sources to procure arms, including foreign interventions from charities and aid, to help sustain the war and achieve victory. The Biafran state continued to survive on international aid, especially from the International Committee of the Red Cross Societies (ICRCS) and West German Church organisations. As a condition for allowing the aid, Biafra traded its local currency for foreign currency. In addition, funds donated by the ICRCS for the purchase of food were converted by Biafra to purchase arms. The Times (1968a: 7) observes:

The money is made available to the International Committee of Red Cross Societies on the understanding that ICRCS will use the money to buy local foodstuffs for distribution in rebel-held areas ... Biafra had made available to the Red Cross £1,500,000 in its currency and will obtain the equivalent in hard currency.

In an interview with the BBC Timewatch, Echo (1995: 15) quotes Ojukwu as saying: 'If we could get some money from the relief organisations, we would substitute the money by producing Biafran currency, while we used the foreign hard currency for other military needs'. These measures taken by Biafra are evidence that the currency change crippled Biafran's ability to purchase arms and sustain the war.

Our findings suggest that the Nigerian government had depleted approximately 83 per cent of Biafra's financial wealth by January 1968. War is sustained by finance, and the chances of winning any war are limited when a participant's available money is worthless or depleted. The monetary defensive move by the Biafrans of producing their currency was of no financial consequence to the Nigerians (Owen, 2009) and had no impact on the duration of the war. Regardless of the Biafra currency policy, Nigeria was able to comfortably fund its war budget, which, as Awolowo (1970: 18) accounts, 'was £230.8 million in local currency and £70.8 million in foreign exchange.' Findings indicate that the introduction of the Biafran pound did not compromise Nigeria's financial stability.

Hard currency. The Biafran government grappled with access to foreign currency all through the war after Nigeria changed its currency. They struggled to convert the large amount of Nigerian currency in their possession to the new currency or hard currency before the deadline set by Nigeria, and they could not. After the introduction of their currency, they were met with global rejection of their new currency, the Biafran Pound (Cervenka, 1971: 64; Daly, 2020: 114). The negative impact on currency after a war is the cost of governance and the burden because of the devaluation of the currency (Berry, 2018). Currency warfare as a strategy goes beyond the preservation of national identity. It involves economic coercion through the manipulation of the monetary policy of a nation. Currency warfare executed through economic coercion has also been a source of economic war between the US and China (Gueorguiev et al., 2020). Such coercion has a consequential influence on monetary expenditure allocated to

military hardware (Eichenberg and Stoll, 2017). Liss (2008) reiterates that an attack on the currency of a state to render it worthless is a warfare strategy that can be applied to defeat an enemy.

When used strategically, an attack on the currency reduces the financial worth of an opponent and pushes a state in a destructive direction. For example, during the Iraqi war, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) considered reducing the financial worth of the dinar as a war strategy of destroying the Iraqi economy. Crespo (2020) adds that such use of monetary force aimed at reducing the financial worth of an enemy can be an effective military campaign strategy. Bordo et al. (2010) add that rendering an enemy currency worthless can be an effective strategy where there is an exposure to foreign currency, which can result in significant permanent output losses. In the case of the Nigerian Civil War, the objective of the sudden change of the currency was to render the Biafra economy financially worthless since they depended on the pre-war currency used by Nigeria.

Access to foreign currency is important in general international relations and more so in wartime transactions, either in the importation of arms or other needed supplies. It plays an important role in the sustenance of war. An actor's ability to sustain or stop a war can be limited when the actor's currency cannot afford its foreign exchange, therefore limiting it from accessing the necessary weapons needed to sustain the war. This was the case of Biafra, as its desperate search for hard currencies to buy arms only saw it raising an estimated maximum of £8.5 million; this was their only reliable and decisive source of financing the war (Krishner, 1995: 105) against Nigeria. Biafra's constant struggle for foreign currency due to Nigeria's currency change narrowed the chances of Biafrans sustaining the war. The economy of Biafra was hit by the withdrawal of foreign firms in the region (Times, 1968c).

Conversely, sources in this theme did not show any impact of Biafra's currency on Nigeria's financial power either in terms of currency competition as intended by the Biafrans or depletion of financial power as expected. If the counter-currency warfare by Biafra was effective against Nigeria, the Federal Military Government would have experienced a depleted currency value and a reduction in the financial power it needed to finance its efforts in the war. The Biafra counter currency change did not produce effective results as their currency was not recognised beyond the territory. Towards the end of the war, about £34 million of the Biafra currency was taken away from the Bank of Biafra by the Nigerian soldiers and rolled on the streets. There was £100 million of the Biafra currency in circulation after the worthless war (The Birmingham Post, 1970).

However, reflecting on the role of the financial budget during the war, Awolowo, who was the finance minister during the war, said 'The Civil War saw together three budgets. The first one was introduced on 19/10/67, and the other two were for 1968/69 and 1969/70' (Awolowo, 1970: 3). Awolowo accounts that the Federal Military Government of Nigeria spent £33.5 million to provide armaments, food, uniforms, transportation, and other war necessities at the end of 1967. Likewise, it spent a total of £98 million in the second year and £170 million in the third year, up to the end of January 1970 (Awolowo, 1970: 3–4). Accounts indicate that Russia and other Eastern European countries offered Nigeria a loan worth £33,000,000 to continue the war, particularly for weapons purchases (Ojukwu, 1969a: 237). In general, 'Nigeria was able to provide, on its own, £230.8 million in local currency, and £70.8 million in foreign exchange to finance the Civil War' (Awolowo, 1970: 18). Hard currency can be both a conflict-resolving and conflict-enhancing tool (Gallhofer and Haslam, 1991); however, in this case, it appears to have been applied to resolve the conflict and shorten the duration of the war. This would have been impossible if the monetary policies of Biafra had been effective against it.

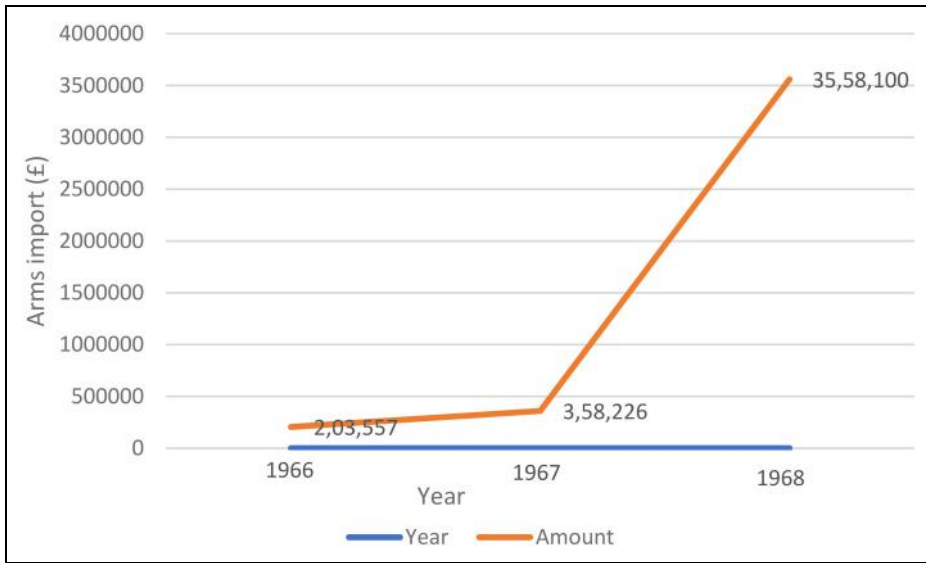


Figure 2 Annual imports of arms by Nigeria (1966-68).

Source: authors.

Arms shortage. The highest estimation for Biafra's exchange of the Biafran Pound for foreign currencies with individuals and organisations coming into Biafra was £8.5 million (Krishner, 1995: 105). This was their only reliable and decisive means of keeping the struggle alive. During the war, this was never enough for the purchase of arms, thereby leaving the Biafran troops to hold up the resistance with only 10 rounds of ammunition per man every day (Madiebo, 1980: 360). In other cases, multiple men shared limited equipment, and in the worst-case scenario, they were left to fight without any weapons against well-armed opponents (Cervenka, 1971: 148). Biafra found it challenging to pay the \$22,000 per flight transportation costs for arms from Lisbon to Biafra (Stremlau, 1977: 222). Even with the forced venture into indigenous weapons production by Biafra (Ojukwu, 1969a: 266–267), it could not afford the required materials to build standard military equipment. Biafra was forced to rely on available materials within its territory to produce the needed equipment, which was substandard compared to that of the Nigerians. With the Biafrans' lack of substantial equipment, they were met with a continuously increasing arms power of the Nigerian army, with a huge number of casualties.

Figure 2 provides evidence of the significant increase in weapons purchases by Nigeria during the Civil War. There was a 1648% increase in arms importation between 1966 and 1968, reflecting the growth of the country's military during the conflict.

These findings demonstrate that Nigeria's currency change enabled it to equip itself against Biafra, limit Biafra's access to weapons to wage war as long as it intended and eventually allowed Nigeria to end the war against the weaker Biafra by leveraging its superior weapons power. It also caused more Biafran casualties. The weaponisation of the currency caused the severity of the war and increased the casualties in the Biafran territory.

Losing territory. After the Nigerian change of currency, the findings show that Biafrans significantly and continuously lost territories, Biafra was unable to afford to equip itself for defence, which left it constantly losing strategic territories, from the oil-rich Port Harcourt to the eventual takedown of

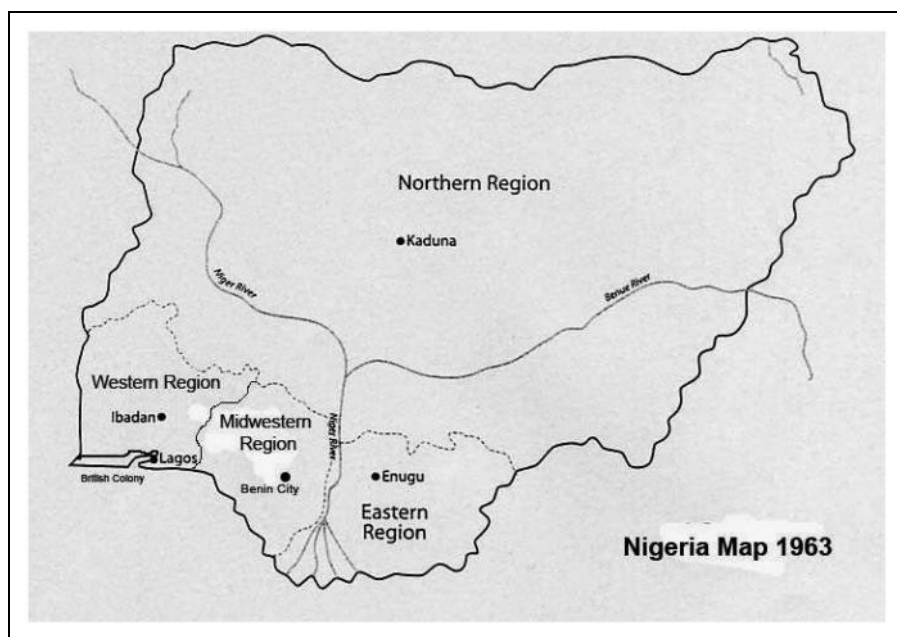


Figure 3. Map of Nigeria before the Biafran conflict.
Adapted from Achife (2016).

the Ibo heartland (Stremlau, 1977: 238). This demonstrates Nigeria's absolute military superiority guaranteed by its strategic currency change against the rebel government of Biafra. Biafra's constraints, stemming from the worthlessness of the currencies in their possession, including both the old Nigerian currency and the new Biafran currency, hindered the troops' ability to secure their homeland and push back against Nigeria's territorial takeover. Nigeria's monetary and resultant military advantage allowed it to continually reduce the Biafran state to a size that left it unable to sustain the resistance, resulting in a surrender to the Nigerian authorities. The currency change by Nigeria reduced the war effort despite the determination of the Biafrans to continue the war at all costs until the world became aware of their cause.

Figure 3 shows the map of Nigeria before the civil conflict, and Figure 4 is a map of the conflict zones. At the start of the conflict, the conflict zones (Eastern region) were entirely annexed by Biafran soldiers, and it became an independent country until taken back by Nigeria.

The creation of the Biafran currency had no impact on Nigeria's territorial loss, as it did not affect Nigeria's monetary power. Despite the fall of Nigeria's mid-western region to Biafra in the first months of the war (Madiebo, 1980), this was not linked to the Biafran counter-monetary policy.

The summary of our findings on currency change and the duration of the war discussed above has established that Nigeria's currency change left the Biafrans bankrupt, unable to access foreign currency, and ultimately led to an arms shortage and an inability to defend its territory. This eventually made it impracticable to sustain the war until international support was amassed. The currency warfare by Nigeria saw the Civil War end with the surrender of the rebels led by Philip Effiong after two years and seven months of resistance by the Biafrans (Daly, 2020). Table 3 provides a summary of the list of countries that supported each side in the war. The UK was a major arms supplier to the Nigerian government, while France and other allies supplied arms to the

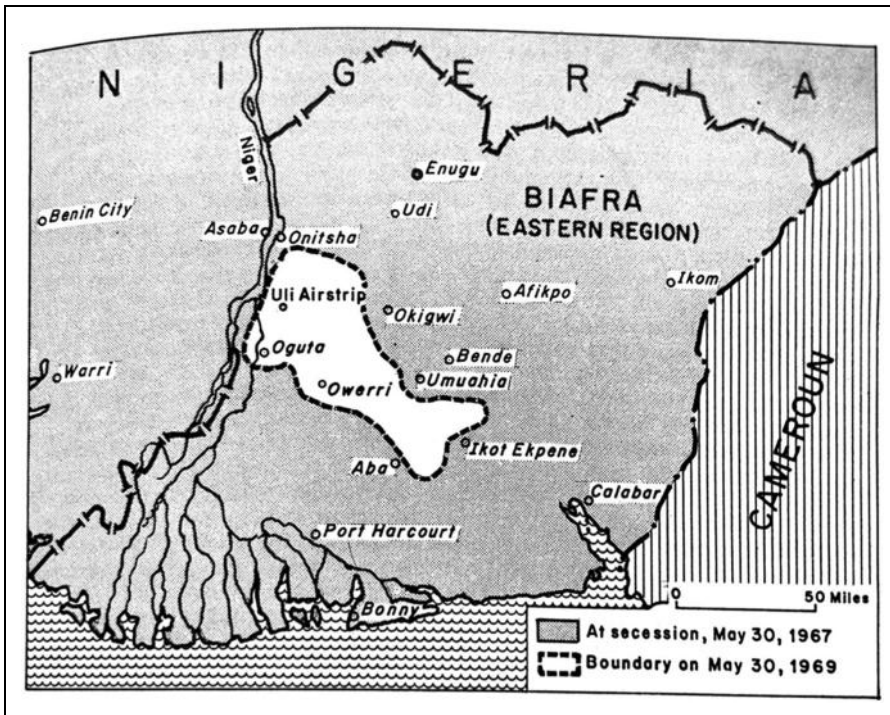


Figure 4. Map of the conflict zone.

Adapted from Cervenka (1971).

Biafran government. Other African countries provided support to Biafra, including the Ivory Coast, where the Biafra warlord secured asylum following the surrender of the Biafran army (Ojukwu, 1989).

Gallhofer and Haslam (1991) observe that financial instruments such as money notes are depicted as conflict-resolving tools during wartimes, using the example of the First World War. This underpins the use of currency as a tool (Chwastiak and Lehman, 2008) to shorten the duration of the Nigerian-Biafran war.

Part II—Currency warfare and the severity of the Civil War. The identified themes from the currency warfare theory for the conflict severity include conflict zones, hunger and famine. These themes are used to investigate the severity of the war.

Conflict zones. This article finds that the currency changes by Nigeria left the Biafran troops short of arms to control the conflict zones and consequently defend both their borders and the Biafran civilians. Evidence shows that this contributed to the severity of the conflict among the Biafrans (Akresh et al., 2012; Luepke, 2018). When a war is entirely fought in a particular territory, the majority of casualties are likely to be among the population of that territory, and this was the case with Biafra. As an impact of the currency change, Biafra was unable to influence the conflict zones (Krishner, 1995; Stremlau, 1977).

The only shift in the conflict zones in August 1967 occurred when the Biafrans' financial wealth had not been compromised, as they utilised their access to the foreign exchange market to equip themselves for the invasion. The sudden worthlessness of Biafra's wealth and resultant weapons

Table 3. List of countries that supported each side in the Nigeria-Biafra War and the nature of their support.

Name of country: Nigeria	Nature of support	Name of country: Biafra	Nature of support
1. United Kingdom	85 per cent of small arms, light and heavy Weapons, military intelligence, mercenaries, 2 bombers and 60 vessels	1. France	War weapons (two B26 s, Allouette helicopters) and pilots. Also provided captured German and Italian WW2 weapons
2. Soviet Union	War weapons (20 MiG-15 fighters, trainers, 6 Czech L-29 Delfin jet fighters and 200 Soviet technicians	2. Portugal	Allowed the black market sale of weapons to Biafra
3. Egypt	Provided pilots to fly Nigeria's Soviet – made aircraft	3. South Africa	Allowed the black market sale of weapons to Biafra
4. Chad	Provided mercenaries	4. Israel	Sent twelve tons of food aid and a few consignments of small arms
5. United States	Provided sundry military assistance and intelligence, mostly through the UK	5. Tanzania	Recognised Biafra as a sovereign state, sent relief, helped in purchasing fighter planes, sundry diplomatic assistance
6. Canada	Military intelligence and support	6. Gabon	Provided an inlet for French arms to get into Biafra, resold some French transferred arms and provided relief
7. Syria	Provided mercenaries	7. Ivory Coast	Provided an inlet for French arms to get into Biafra, resold some French transferred arms and provided relief
8. Saudi Arabia	Diplomatic support	8. Zambia (Rhodesia)	Recognised Biafra's sovereignty, diplomatic support, supplied a few consignments of small arms and light weapons, 2 B.20 bombers and DC3 transport aircraft
9. Algeria	Diplomatic support	9. Spain	Sympathetic
10. Bulgaria	Diplomatic support	10. Haiti	Sympathetic

Source: Ugwuja, A. A. (2018)

incapacitation established static conflict zones and helped compound Biafran war deaths. The Biafran troops were unable to shift the conflict zones nor defend their borders and, in the worst cases, were unable to protect their civilians during the invasion. This is evidenced in the Nigerian army's unchallenged access to target unarmed Biafran civilians as they advanced into the Biafran territory (Ojukwu, 1969b). In a war where the conflict zones were established, defensive battles were fought despite the determination to sustain the war, as the Biafrans sought (Ojukwu, 1969a: 228, 354). Such situations provide the enemy with an opportunity to cause more local casualties. Our findings confirm that this was the case for the Biafrans. Figure 3 depicts the conflict zones.

Furthermore, our findings also show that Biafra's introduction of a new currency did not challenge Nigeria's ability to determine where the war was fought. The Nigerian pound was unaffected, and Nigeria remained in constant supply of the required weapons from supporting countries, as indicated in Table 3, and the apparent increase in the purchase of arms as shown in Figure 2 above.

Hunger and famine. The findings indicate that Biafra, a former region of Eastern Nigeria, was primarily an importer of food to supplement its local production (Stremlau, 1977: 205). The lack of

Table 4. Price of essential food commodities.

Product	Quantity	1967 price	Feb. 1969 price
Yam	One (large)	5s.	£3
Garri	Three cups*	3d.	5s.
Salt	Two cups	3d.	£6
Chicken	One (small)	6 s.	£5
Goat	One (medium)	£2 10s.	£40 to £50
Cigarettes	Packet of 20	3 s. 6d.	£4 10 s.

*A cup is a measure of the size of a tin containing 50 cigarettes, which used at one time to be readily available in Nigeria. Source: Times (1969) An eye-witness reports on starvation in Biafra. 3 March, p. 8.

Biafran monetary wealth, in the form of both the old Nigerian currency and the new Biafran currency, imposed a significant constraint on Biafrans' financial capacity to feed themselves, as well as limitations on defending themselves due to a shortage of weapons. This meant less food for the Biafrans, which became worse when the Nigerians captured their food-producing areas due to arms superiority (McNeil, 2014). Following this, the only sure option for the Biafrans (including the military) was to become dependent on donations to survive (Stremlau, 1977: 243). If the Biafrans had not become victims of worthless currencies, they would have had more money to facilitate food importation.

As a result of the currency change, Biafra continued to struggle to raise the needed funds to purchase food and arms but sought to do so through any means. This included converting humanitarian funds donated for the feeding of the populace and using coins that were not changed by the Nigerian government in Lagos. As reported by the Times (1969: 8) newspaper:

... although Nigeria changed per paper currency to make any Nigeria money that may have been held in Biafra valueless, she did not change her coinage ... there was a considerable amount of smuggling ... with the Nigerian coins that were still in circulation in Biafra....

If the new currency had had the financial capacity to be an acceptable means of exchange, it would have facilitated the importation of food to combat starvation. This was not the case, and the currency move by the Nigerians crumbled the Biafrans' capacity to import food items as they usually would. The government was more concerned about garnering the limited foreign exchange generated from humanitarian organisations and people coming into Biafra to purchase military equipment. Even the military, as we found, was dependent on humanitarian organisations for food. This shows the extent of the starvation the Nigerian monetary policy caused the Biafrans (Heerten and Moses, 2018). Table 4 shows the cost of essential food commodities, which was beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. Note that £1 sterling is equal to 17 s of Biafran currency. To understand the impact on the cost of living, the price of a loaf of bread was the equivalent of £7 (sterling), and a labourer's wages were the equivalent of £1 sterling per week (Times, 1969). Households struggled to survive.

The counter-currency strategy of the Biafrans was ineffective against the Nigerians. Even with the importation restrictions instituted by the Federal Military Government for the sake of balance of payments (Nafziger, 1972: 232), Nigerians continued to rely on their local production as before.

Following the war, the Biafran state insisted on collecting oil royalties of one million pounds from the Anglo-Dutch-Shell-BP company and Satrap, a French oil exploration firm operating in the Biafran region (Garrison, 1967). However, to mitigate the risk of losing the royalties to the Nigerian government, the Biafran state insisted that the funds be delivered in Swiss francs.

Table 5. Summary of the effects of the currency change on the Nigeria-Biafra War.

	Before the currency change by Nigeria	After the currency change
Arms available	<p>The hard currency available to finance the war for the Biafrans was never much or substantial enough to match the Nigerians (Ojukwu, 1969b: 44–45). Because of this lack of foreign exchange needed to purchase required weapons, the Biafran troops relied on ‘an average of 10 rounds of ammunition to one man every day with hopes of halting or at least delaying the Nigerian troops from advancing’ (Madiebo, 1980: 360). Findings show that the Biafran troops continued to run out and/or remain in short supply of ammunition because of the overwhelming shortage of Nigerian currency (Ojukwu, 1969a: 343). Also, findings show that even ‘the money the humanitarians provided through landing fees and food purchase only enabled the Biafran authorities to procure the minimal arms that only supported them to maintain some level of defense’ (Stremlau, 1977: 223–224).</p>	<p>The lack of money limited the Biafrans’ military equipment supply and eventually forced them to manufacture their own war equipment from materials they could find within their territory. Ojukwu’s call on Biafran ‘scientists and technological inventors’ (Ojukwu, 1969a: 243) eventually saw them ‘operating a crude armament industry, manufacturing a variety of gunboats, land mines, rockets, grenades, and even crude aerial bombs’ (Cervenka, 1971: 315). ‘They also manufactured a few armoured cars by building soft-steel plate into a wide variety of commercial vehicles including bulldozers’ (Cervenka, 1971: 148). Ojukwu applauded them for using Biafran ‘local materials’ to ameliorate the effect of the economic warfare of Nigeria’s currency withdrawal (Ojukwu, 1969a: 266–267). Notwithstanding, this indigenous weapons production did not improve the arms supply in Biafra.</p>
Bankruptcy	<p>Stremlau (1977) also showed that ‘when secession was declared, the Eastern Region had more than thirty million Nigerian pounds in circulation, with the Nigerian pounds standing at an official exchange rate of \$2.80’ with the American dollar. Stremlau estimated that the amount of money in circulation was about eighty-five million dollars. Aside from this, Awolowo, the brain behind Nigeria’s currency change, claimed that Ojukwu’s soldiers looted all the Central Bank of Nigeria’s branches in the former Eastern region (Premium Times, 2012). In corroboration, records showed that the secessionists seized a total of thirty-five million Nigerian pounds from the Nigerian Central Bank branches in Port Harcourt, Benin and Enugu, having taken control of the former Eastern region where these branches were located. Eventually, they sold as much as they could at a</p>	<p>The Central Bank of Nigeria issued a public notice on the new currency notes and gave a conversion period of only 19 days. The population in the former Eastern region was not offered an opportunity for that conversion. All arrangements were solely for the government-controlled territories, even after the Central Bank, on January 3, 1968, extended the deadline for conversion to January 22, 1968 (The Federal Military Government, 1968a). The result of this was that the Nigerian currency became useless in Biafra. Businesses that imported goods could not rely on it, and there was general apprehension among the Biafrans on commercial activities before the launch of the Biafra currency. Records suggest that the monetary policy of Nigeria resulted in financial difficulties for Biafra, thereby causing terrible experiences for Biafrans as it disposed them of their wealth (Ojukwu, 1969a: 375). The currency change ‘cost the people of Biafra at the minimum over 50 million pounds’ (Madiebo, 1980: 237). In line with this, Krishner (1996:</p>

(Continued)

Table 5. (Continued)

	Before the currency change by Nigeria	After the currency change
	ridiculously low rate of 'between one-half and one-third of the Nigerian pound's (N£) official exchange rate' at the black market in order to beat the deadline of the currency conversion by the Nigerian government (Stremlau, 1977: 221).	104) expressed that the currency change left a 'staggering blow on the Biafrans and therefore, because of that financial loss, Biafra found it difficult to support her army at war.' He further showed that the currency changes 'undermined Biafra's ability to sustain their war effort' (Krishner, 1996: 104), resulting in Biafra having 'no special budget for warfare, and became highly dependent on donations and in most cases did not pay the army'. This situation resultantly saw Biafra issuing three bonds worth £25,000,000 to pay for the war (Ojukwu, 1969a: 251). As a result of this, the financial monetary currency warfare policy of Nigeria, the secessionist state of Biafra failed to sustain the campaign. As demonstrated in this table, there were also factors that significantly contributed to the failed secession.
Territory	Ojukwu (1969b: 44–45) acknowledged that 'if one looks at the movement of troops, one might be inclined to say that Nigeria is winning, and indeed they have made some significant advances into our territory. The territory has somewhat shrunk from what it was originally, but this is only one facet of the war... we have not been able to match the enemy (Nigeria) man for man or weapon for weapon.' The loss of territory by the Biafran government was due to their financial incapability to purchase arms due to the currency change.	Stremlau (1977: 238) records that during the summer of 1968, the 'Nigerians had already occupied the oil-rich Port Harcourt, Biafra's most strategic area and almost all the square miles of 20,000 to 25,000 that surrounded the Igbo heartland which was only 5000 in square miles.' Even worse, 'by the end of 1968, Biafra had lost all of its food producing areas and found itself totally dependent on airlift for food and arms' (Cervenka, 1971: 164). Madiebo (1980: 382), the Biafran army commander, also acknowledged that 'despite their gallant efforts, they were forced into fighting defensive battles throughout the war.' Biafra continued to lose more and more territory in the war. Evidence links the loss of territories to shortages in military equipment that matched that of the Nigerians, as their currency provided access to purchase foreign arms.
Access to foreign currency	Regardless of the Biafra monetary policy, Nigeria was able to comfortably fund its war budget, which, as Awolowo (1970: 18) accounts, 'was £230.8 million in local currency, and £70.8 million in foreign exchange.' Findings show that Nigeria did not have its financial power threatened by the	Furthermore, the monetary policy by Biafra was merely a weak defence that yielded no output, as the Nigerians were continually able to exchange their currency for hard currencies (Awolowo, 1970: 18) for the purchase of needed military equipment and were not constrained to limited sources to financing the war. In this, the Nigerians were

(Continued)

Table 5. (Continued)

	Before the currency change by Nigeria	After the currency change
Hunger	<p>launch of the Biafran pound. Biafra, on the other hand, had stashed money in foreign banks of about £40 million (De St Jorre, 1972)</p> <p>Prior to the currency change, there was no concern on the value and worthiness of the currency as the citizens could carry out trades without concerns. Most people in the eastern (Biafra region) are traders who import goods for sale. Thus, the reassurance of the stability and value of the currency was important.</p> <p>Nigeria's change of currency not only affected arms purchases but also affected the Biafrans' access to basic supplies, particularly food. The lack of foreign exchange worsened food scarcity, particularly protein like stockfish; nutrition; and welfare of Biafrans, particularly for those in Onitsha, Owerri and Umuahia provinces (Stremlau, 1977: 205).</p>	<p>at an advantage in shortening the length of the war through their hard currency access, which their new currency offered them against the Biafrans.</p> <p>The worthlessness of the Biafran monetary wealth in the form of the old Nigerian currency and the new Biafran currency put a huge constraint on Biafrans' financial capacity to feed themselves, just like the limitation on defending themselves due to the weapons shortage. This meant less food for the Biafrans and even worse when the Nigerians captured their food-producing areas due to arms superiority. Following this, the only sure option for the Biafrans (including the military) was to become dependent on donations to survive (Stremlau, 1977: 243). Worst of all, when the Biafran army could not provide enough food for its soldiers, especially from imports to continue the struggle, the army resorted to setting up roadblocks and forcefully collecting food items from the civilian public to survive (Madiebo, 1980: 364).</p>
Conflict zones	<p>The Biafran war was entirely fought in the former Eastern region (Madiebo, 1980). Findings show that these static conflict zones resulted from the monetary hindrances the Biafran military faced in securing necessary military equipment. While Ojukwu claimed that Biafra intended to hold up the war until international support for the Biafran secessionist agenda was amassed (Ojukwu, 1969a: 228 and 354), the Biafra invasion of the mid-western region of Nigeria on 8th August 1967 gives a different picture. While the Nigerians instituted a counterattack and retook the region, the Biafran troops' invasion of the region showed the willingness of the Biafrans to shift the conflict zones and control the casualty sites.</p>	<p>However, the currency change, which depleted their financial wealth and weapons strength (Ojukwu, 1969a: 343), removed their opportunity to influence the war zones which remained in the former eastern Nigeria, even when Biafra began indigenous weapons production (Uche, 2002). The counter introduction of the Biafran pound did not inhibit Nigeria's ability to determine the conflict zones, as the Nigerian troops remained in constant supply of military equipment from across the world, facing no hindrance to that (Heerten and Moses, 2014: 174). As a result, evidence showed that it continued to draw from its monetary access to equip its troops, ensuring the conflict zones (former eastern region) remained unchanged.</p> <p>There are several instances where the Nigerian troops overpowered the Biafrans and unleashed targeted massacres on the civilian population. Ojukwu (1969a) highlights instances, including the 10,000 non-combatants killed at the start of 1968, the Asaba massacre, where women and</p>

(Continued)

Table 5. (Continued)

Before the currency change by Nigeria	After the currency change
	children were targeted and killed on February 10 and 22, 1968. Some 2000 civilians were killed at Owazu, 300 were killed at Ozuaku on August 17, 1968, and 300, mostly women and children, were killed on February 10, 1969. Findings reveal that Nigeria’s ability to determine the conflict zones and unleash terror on the Biafran civilians without any substantial defence from the Biafran troops was a function of Nigeria’s ability to cut off Biafra’s financing source through the currency change.

Unfortunately, the British Government did not concede to such a channel of funds transfer (Wagner, 1967). This exaggerated the level of starvation as Biafra struggled to provide the introductory provisions for its citizens. The Biafran state managed to obtain an equivalent of £252,000 worth of the currency, which was unfortunately confiscated at the London Airport on January 22, 1968 by the British authorities. Even so, the amount was in old currency notes, which the Nigerian government changed as a strategy to frustrate the Biafran capacity to fund the war (Times, 1968b). In addition, the bureaucratic accounting system in the Nigerian government made it difficult for relief materials and funds approved by the Nigerian state to reach the frontline for Biafran victims. Some of them died before the relief could get to them due to a hierarchical approval system (Omolehinwa, 2012).

A summary of the findings on currency change and the severity of the war reveals that the Nigerian currency change left the Biafran troops unable to equip themselves with the necessary military equipment to withstand the Nigerian forces, protect their civilians, and shift the geography of the war to include Nigerian territories. As a result, it left the Biafrans incapable of defending themselves against the Nigerians, thereby causing more deaths, both military and civilian, by the Nigerians. The limitation the currency change put on the food importation capacity of the Biafrans was overwhelming for an area known to be very dependent on imported foods. This contributed to the overwhelming number of Biafrans, especially children, who starved to death. Had the war been prolonged, the casualties would have increased. Table 5 summarises the effects of the currency change on the Nigeria-Biafra War on the major themes of the study.

Conclusion and implications of findings

The investigation of the monetary policies during the Biafran War highlights the impact of currency weaponisation during the civil conflict. This study provides a review of currency warfare, war duration and severity, as well as the role of accounting as a strategic tool in resolving conflicts, promoting peace or destabilising the economy (Chwastiak and Lehman, 2008; McBride et al., 2016). This was done to provide a robust contextualisation of the questions of interest through a qualitative content analysis of archival and library sources. Our article finds that the duration and severity of the Biafran War were influenced by the currency change that occurred during the war. Further findings show that the duration and severity were only affected by the Nigerian

government's currency change. At the same time, the Biafran rebels' actions had no impact on either the duration or severity.

In the absence of a relevant theory, our article developed a currency warfare theory to guide the investigation. We applied Chartalism theory to understand Nigeria's choice of currency change policy and its impact on the war's outcome. The study identified bankruptcy, arms shortage, territorial loss and limited access to foreign currency as the means through which the currency attack or weaponisation helped to impact the duration of the war. It also identified hunger and famine, as well as the location of the conflict, as other means through which the currency attack or weaponisation helped impact the severity of the war. These factors are controlled by the power of monetary policy, which underscores the Chartalism theory (Rochon et al., 2003).

The current study extends the concepts of Crespo (2019), which focused on how and why a state weaponises currency in formulating a theory of currency warfare implementation and showing preconditions for this policy choice. However, Crespo (2019) was concerned with international conflicts. Our article focuses on national disputes where the state can influence monetary policy. Helleiner (1998) also identifies national identity theory as relevant in theorising rebels' weaponisation of currencies in certain instances. However, this research extends beyond both studies by considering a state's currency warfare decision in the context of an internal conflict. In combining both state and rebel involvement, this article focused on the dimension of duration and severity, as against Helleiner's focus on national identity and Crespo's focus on the rationale.

Our study takes a step further by analysing how currency change can be used as a war strategy in influencing the duration of a civil war. In the case of the Nigerian government, the swift currency change helped ensure that the funds held by the Biafran secessionist government were rendered economically impotent, preventing them from importing arms. Biafra was left with little option but to rely on international support and locally-made arms. Their estimation of the war was grossly fatal; such underestimation is common in warfare (Miley and Read, 2021). The accounting system increased the severity of the war as money approved for relief took too long before being released, causing a high number of casualties from starvation and combat deaths. The Peat (1970) Report highlights the efficiency in budgeting and management of donated funds during the War, which inadvertently contributed to the severity of the conflict.

The Biafran Civil War remains relevant in conversations and academic debates, even though it has been over fifty years since the war. With continued conversation around the war, deaths and debates on the resilience of the Biafran forces and the Nigerian troops, a study such as this into the key war policies contributes significantly to the discussion and in managing future conflicts. This study has significance for understanding, analysing and anticipating the outcomes of disputes. Currency and monetary policies are accounting tools that can resolve or enhance conflict durations, particularly in the procurement of arms and destabilising enemies' economic base (Gallhofer and Haslam, 1991; Heier, 2010). The case of the Nigerian Civil War highlights the double-edged role of currency change as a financial and monetary warfare policy strategy in controlling the duration of a conflict and maintaining the economic stability of the state.

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