

## Sense and Nonsense in Secessionist Agitations in Nigeria: Implication for National Integration

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### ABSTRACT

Over the years in Nigeria, agitations by some of the indigenous people for secession have continued to appear intractable. This paper which investigated the "Sense and Nonsense of such movements and its implications for National Integration" was aimed at the factors propelling secessionist agitations in Nigeria; determining the legality; among others rights under domestic and international laws and examining the extent to which administration of national integration could quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria. Content Analytical Design was adopted to analyze data from relevant literature. This paper is firmly rooted on the Relative Deprivation Theory propounded by American Sociologist, Robert K. Merton in 1956. Findings revealed that: the major factors propelling secessionist agitations in Nigeria include perceived sheer marginalization, intimidation, low representation in national administration, discriminatory access to justice, victimizations, discriminatory share of natural resources benefits, degradation of cultural and language rights, and regular assault on religious rights among others; secessionists do not have any legal rights under domestic and international laws as the right to self-determination is protected under international law but the desire to engage in activities leading to secession is not protected neither under domestic nor international law; and administration of national integration is an imperative pragmatic mechanism to quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria among others. The implication of the findings is that variegated fruitless secessionist agitations put the nation's unity, growth and development in omnibus jeopardy; hence the paper recommends that: Nigerian Government at all levels should channel efforts towards administration of national integration through inclusive administration to quell incessant secessionist agitations; secessionists on their own part should look deep into the potentials of having a strong, equitable, united and developed Nigeria; thus, concede their fruitless secessionist attempts; and there is need for national restructuring in Nigeria to allow regional autonomy among others.

**Keywords:** Secession, Self-determination, Administration, National Integration.

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### INTRODUCTION

Secession, conceptualized as a process by which a group seeks a separate status from the state to which it belongs, and to create a new state on part of the territory of that state has over the years threatened the existence, stability and administration of national integration in Nigeria. [1] posited that secession has often been necessitated by

perceived injustice on the one hand, and the zest for autonomy on the other hand.

Since her first republic in 1963 as a state, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge of separatist groups seeking self-determination and autonomous entity of their own. Of major concern is that these agitations are not limited to one or two sections as virtually every geopolitical unit in the country have witnessed

such agitation from one or more separatist groups. The South-East alone currently has at least three vibrant secessionist movements seeking for the actualization of the Biafra Republic. [2] in this regard, highlighted these groups to include the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) formed by Ralph Nwazuruike; Biafra Zionist Federation (BZF) led by Benjamin Igwe Onwuka; and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu. In the South-South, several militant groups, including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPFF), etc. had in the recent past agitated for the Niger Delta Republic, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People led by late Ken Saro Wiwa, which agitated for the Ogoni Republic. The resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta by the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) which also agitated for the Niger Delta Republic and also threatened to declare the Niger Delta State on 1st October, 2016 [3]. In the South-West, the Oodua People's Congress had equally, at one time or the other, agitated for the Oduduwa Republic. The Middle Belt is also not left out in their agitation for autonomy by the Middle Belt Federation (MBF). The North-east is notoriously known for the on-going insurgency perpetuated by the Boko Haram, a religious sect, seeking among other things, for a separate Islamic Caliphate in their territory [4]. Attempt at establishing the rights of secessionists has always been hinged on the idea of self determination. The idea found its way into Articles 1 and 55 of the United Nations Charter ("the Charter"). [5] unraveled that Article I of the Charter states that "the purpose of the United Nations includes the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples", while Article 55 highlighted conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. This statement of a legal right to self-determination appears to have been greatly disputed from logical, jurisprudential, political, administrative and practical perspectives. In this regard, [6] submitted that the drafters of the Charter did not define self-determination or identify who

the peoples were and from its constitutionalism therefore, the concept has been blood-drained by difficulties as to scope and application.

[7] maintained that virtually all the known instances of secessionist threats and actual attempts at secession such as the Isaac Boro's revolt, Ojukwu led Biafran war, Niger Delta insurgencies, Uwazuruike and Kanu's secessionist movements inter alia, seem to have been propelled by frustrations occasioned by prolonged cases of deprivation and denied expectations, aggravated by actions of successive governments which rather than addressing these grievances, choose to ignore them. Successive administrations in exacerbating the conundrum became neck-deep into corruption which further plunged the country into economic recession with its attendant consequences of increased level of poverty, unemployment and crime across the country. Government hence seems not to have taken national integration seriously as there have been incessant cases of religious and ethnic crises, class division, political exclusion or marginalization of certain groups, injustice, insecurity of lives and property of people across the entire country, etc. as witnessed overtime. Governance seems to have become much more irresponsible and greatly lacking in accountability and service delivery, less efficient in protecting lives and property with the spate of insurgency, kidnapping, cultism, communal conflicts culminating into protracted insecurity in the country. Successive administrations in Nigeria have either consciously or unconsciously treated with levity, most grievances associated with threats of secession and secessionist movements in historical past [8] The most serious attempts at addressing some of these grievances, he noted, were the national political conference organized under Presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan's administrations. Unfortunately, as Olu wrote, these conferences were politicized by the Nigerian elites while salient recommendations to some of these grievances were abandoned. For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari was alleged to have openly acclaimed that the priority of his administration was not to implement the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference, which many believe have the answer to the national question in Nigeria.

Other efforts of government in quelling the rising agitations took the form of establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission, the recent North East Development Commission, the Federal Character Principle, and the conduction of Operation Python Dance I and II in the South-East to quell IPOB agitations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has become increasingly worrisome that every nuke and cranny of Nigeria is neck deep in secession agitations which has continually plunged this nation into perpetual national insecurity and disintegration. At the least, huge amount of resources have been wasted in the courses of these incessant agitations while claiming many lives. These indigenous peoples have always claimed that they have legal rights to secession under the international law without critical recourse, interpretation and understanding of the position of the so called international law on the so alleged rights.

In spite of this omen, it has become more worrisome that successive governments appear not to have taken administration of national integration as a priority. In the light of this conundrum, one can borrow a leaf from [9] who lamented that virtually all the known instances of secessionist threats and actual attempts at secession such as the Isaac Boro's revolt, Ojukwu led Biafran war, Niger Delta insurgencies, Uwazuruike and Kanu's secessionist movements inter alia, seem to have been propelled by frustration occasioned by prolonged cases of deprivation and denied expectations, aggravated by actions of successive governments which rather than addressing these grievances, choose to ignore them. Successive administrations in exacerbating the conundrum became neck-deep into corruption which further plunged the country into economic recession with its attendant consequences of increased level of poverty, unemployment and crime across the country. Incessant cases of religious and ethnic crises, class division, political exclusion or marginalization of certain groups, injustice, insecurity of lives and property of people across the entire country, etc. as witnessed during the second, third and fourth republics. Governance seems to have become much more

irresponsible and greatly lacking in accountability and service delivery, less efficient in protecting lives and property with the spate of insurgency, kidnapping, cultism, communal conflicts culminating into protracted insecurity in the country. Hence, marginalization, dominance of others in their region; and resources and opportunities distribution appear to have been the epicenters of incessant secessionist movements in Nigeria [10].

Amidst this malady, administration of national integration in Nigeria which entails the processes of inclusiveness and bringing the various Nigerian ethnic groups to cohere, on an interdependent, interrelated and continuing basis through efficiency in providing what the peoples want and ought to have, appears not to have received deserved concern of successive administrations. It is against this backdrop that the researcher is poised into investigating the sense and nonsense in secessionist agitations for freedom and its imperative for administration of national integration in Nigeria. In view of the stated problem, the following research questions are raised:

1. What are the factors propelling secessionist agitations for freedom in Nigeria?
2. Do secessionists have any legal rights under domestic and international laws?
3. To what extent would administration of national integration quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study was to examine the sense and nonsense in secessionist agitations for freedom and its imperative for administration of national integration in Nigeria. Specifically, this study was aimed at:

1. Assessing the factors propelling secessionist agitations for freedom in Nigeria;
2. Determining whether secessionists have any legal rights under domestic and international laws;
3. Examining the extent to which national integration could quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted for the study is content analytical design. Relevant literature on secession and national integration in

Nigeria were reviewed from available sources, namely; journals, internet materials, newspapers and magazines.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is firmly rooted on the Relative Deprivation Theory propounded by American Sociologist, Robert K. Merton in 1956. Relative Deprivation Theory proposes that people who feel they are being deprived of almost everything considered essential in their society- whether money, rights, political voice or status, will organize or join social movements dedicated to obtaining the things of which they feel deprived [11].

Relative deprivation is the lack of resources to sustain the diet, lifestyle, activities and amenities that an individual or group are accustomed to or that are widely encouraged or approved in the society to which they belong.

The theory describes feelings or measures of economic, political, or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute and its attendant restiveness for inclusiveness. The theory of relative deprivation has been widely used by scholars as a potential cause of social movements and deviance, leading in extreme situations to political violence such as secession, rioting, terrorism, civil wars and other instances of social deviance such as crime [12].

The relevance of the theory to this study cannot be overemphasized. The theory underscores the fact that secessionist agitations in Nigeria over the years have been a consequence of economic, social, political, religious and ethnic deprivations and marginalization of the certain peoples by certain people. This is in tandem with the cries of [13] who lamented that virtually all the known instances of secessionist threats and actual attempts at secession such as the Isaac Boro's revolt, Ojukwu's led Biafran war, Niger Delta insurgencies, Uwazuruike and Kanu's secessionist movements inter alia have been propelled by frustrations occasioned by prolonged cases of deprivation and denied expectations, aggravated by actions of successive governments which rather than addressing these grievances, choose to ignore them. Hence, relative deprivation of certain peoples has engendered secessionist agitations at all quarters.

### **Conceptualizing Secession**

Plausible attempts have been made at underpinning the concept of secession to a consensual definition. For instance, the term

secession is many times used in the context of self-determination and dissolution [14]. Secession maybe defined as the process by which a group seeks to separate itself from the state to which it belongs, and to create a new state on part of the territory of that state. It is not a consensual process and thus needs to be distinguished from the process by which a state confers independence on a particular territory by legislative or other means, a process which may be referred to as devolution or grant of independence. Secession is essentially a unilateral process [15]. There is a need to emphasize four important points from the above definition. First, secession can only be carried out by a group of people and not individual. Since, there is no one man state, individual secession does not arise. Secondly, there must be territorial connectedness among the group trying to secede. Another feature from the above definition is the fact establishing the voice of exit of a particular group. Lastly, a forceful declaration of independence by a group of people without dialogue and consent or what [16] refers to as unilateral process. [17] in his contribution posited that secession entails a movement in which a group demands withdrawal from a larger political entity or a country with the aim of becoming independent state, separate from the former country they belong. From his perspective above, secession entails the action of withdrawing formally from membership of a federation, state or body with the purpose of acquiring independence and self rule. He observed further that the methods adopted by these groups vary from peaceful, non-violence approach to violent and armed struggle tactics. Secession has been correlated with the concept of self determination. In the submission of Alumona, [18], self-determination entails the right claimed by a 'people' to control their destiny despite having not yet achieved "statehood" under international law. Traditionally, only statehood could confer international legal personality, and its accompanying rights and duties, upon any group. In recognition of this, they noted that a group seeking self-determination is one which feels that it has been unjustifiably excluded from the community of states recognised by international law. As such, there is no doubt that secession is often necessitated by perceived injustice on the one

[www.idosr.org](http://www.idosr.org)

hand and the zest for autonomy on the other hand.

However, a borderline exists between self-determination and secession. Self-determination in the context of politics and law is the unchallenged fortitude and freedom of a group of persons to make decisions concerning their own statehood and their own government without coercion or interference by external powers. On the other hand, secession is an act by which a group of persons extract itself and its geographical territory from a larger political, legal and social entity. Secession can be achieved either by force of violence or by politically negotiated agreement. In some instances, the threat of secession can be strategically applied in order to gain some vital objectives by the agitating territory. Whilst both concepts, that is, self-determination and secession are very different, both are two sides of the same coin [19].

#### **Dynamics of Secessionist Movements in Nigeria**

The Nigerian state since her birth has been grappling with the conundrum of collating her divergent ethnic nationalities into a united nation. In her failure to achieve such goal, countless secessionist agitators have emerged overtime from all sections of the state.

Historically speaking, the first ever real attempt by any group to attempt secession from Nigeria was secessionist agitations in the Middle Belt Region principally by the Tiv ethnic group, spearheaded by Isaac Boro and his two other compatriots such that, Boro and his Niger Delta Volunteer Force declared the Niger Delta Republic as an independent state on February 23, 1966 and gallantly engaged the federal forces in a battle that lasted for only twelve days [20]. They were eventually arrested, tried and sentenced to death for treason. In 1967, however, the then Head of State, Yakubu Gowon, exercised in their favour the prerogative of mercy, after repeated calls for clemency by the public.

The main secessionist bid that rocked the boat of the entire federation came in 1967 when the

then Military Administrator of the Eastern Region, Lt. Col. Chukwuemaka Odumegwu Ojukwu declared the aborted Republic of Biafra. This according to [21], plunged the nation into a lamentable civil war. Though the war ended in a pitiable “no victor no vanquished” parlance, secessionist movements have continued to trail Nigeria most especially in the south-eastern Nigeria. [4] in this regard, highlighted these groups to include the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) formed by Ralph Nwazuruike; Biafra Zionist Federation (BZF) led by Benjamin Igwe Onwuka; and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Nnamdi Kanu.

In the South-South, several militant groups, including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPFF), etc. had in the recent past agitated for the Niger Delta Republic. In the same train, there is the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People led by late Ken Saro Wiwa, which agitated for the Ogoni Republic. There is also the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta by the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) which also agitated for the Niger Delta Republic and also threatened to declare the Niger Delta State on 1st October, 2016 [5].

In the South-West, the Oodua People’s Congress had equally, at one time or the other, agitated for the Oduduwa Republic. The Middle Belt is also not left out in their agitation for autonomy by the Middle Belt Federation (MBF). The North-east has also perpetrated the Arewa People’s Congress (APC), the Middle Belt Federation and currently, is notoriously known for the on-going insurgency perpetuated by the Boko Haram, a religious sect, seeking among other things, for a separate Islamic Caliphate in their territory [7].

A highlight of the divergent secessionist movements in Nigeria, the perpetrating region, the proposed state, modus operandi and agitation is presented in the table below:



**Table 1: Glossary of Secessionist Agitation Groups in Nigeria**

Secessionist Group	Region	Proposed State	Modus Operandi	Agitation
<b>Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)</b>	South-East	Biafra Republic	Mainly dialogue and peaceful civil disobedience	Ethnic separation from the Nigerian State
<b>Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)</b>	South-East	Biafra Republic	Mainly dialogue and peaceful civil disobedience	Self-Determination and ethnic separation from the Nigerian State
<b>Biafran Zionist Federation (BZF)</b>	South-East	Biafra Republic	Mainly dialogue and peaceful civil disobedience	Self-Determination and ethnic separation from the Nigerian State
<b>(Boko Haram Islamic State Movement (BHISM))</b>	North-East	An Islamic Caliphate	Believe in the use of violence to human person and properties	Pressing for Self-Determination and separate existence based on the Islamic religion of Sharia
<b>Oodua People’s Congress (OPC)</b>	South-West	Oduduwa Republic	Mainly dialogue/threat of violence	Self-Determination and ethnic separation from the Nigerian State
<b>Arewa People’s Congress (APC)</b>	North	Arewa Republic	Mainly dialogue, reactionary utterances and threat of violence	Self-Determination / Not clear
<b>Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)</b>	South-South	Niger Delta Republic	Application of violence to property and business installation and direct confrontation with government forces	Justice, Self-Determination and Resource Control
<b>Niger Delta People’s Volunteer (NDV)</b>	South-South	Niger Delta Republic	Application of violence to property and business installation and direct confrontation with government forces	Justice, Self-Determination and Resource Control
<b>Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)</b>	South-South	Ogoni Republic	Mainly dialogue/threat of violence	Justice, Self-Determination and Resource Control
<b>Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)</b>	South-South	Niger Delta Republic	Application of violence to property and business installation and direct confrontation with government forces	Justice, Self-Determination and Resource Control
<b>Middle Belt Federation</b>	North-Central	Not clear	Mainly Dialogue	Emphasizes the illegality of Nigerian 1999 constitution and the solid structure/ethnic constitution of the Nigerian State

**Source: Compiled by the Researcher**

The table above clearly unravels that virtually all the ethnic groups in Nigeria had or are perpetrating one or more secessionist group(s)

or the other. Such a scenario is a pointer to the level of national disintegration in Nigeria.

**Factors Propelling Secessionist Agitations for Freedom in Nigeria; the Sense**

Secessionist agitations by some of the indigenous peoples for freedom and self-rule have been traced to numerous factors. Most notable among the propelling factors is the perceived inequitable injustices in the administrative, political, social and economic configurations in the existing federal structure in Nigeria. Secessionist movements in pursuing their course, have articulated sheer intimidations with consequential perception of low representation in national administration; discriminatory access to justice; victimisations; discriminatory share of natural resources benefits; degradation of cultural and language rights; and regular assault on religious rights among others. They consequently hold tenaciously to the belief that, they have the rights to safeguard their collective dignity through secession by which their sovereignty can be sustained.

In the light of the above, [3] lamented that virtually all the known instances of secessionist threats and actual attempts at secession such as the Isaac Boro’s revolt, Ojukwu led Biafran war, Niger Delta insurgencies, Uwazuruike and Kanu’s secessionist movements inter alia, have been propelled by frustration occasioned by prolonged cases of deprivation and denied expectations, aggravated by actions of successive governments which rather than addressing these grievances, choose to ignore them. Successive administrations in exacerbating the conundrum became neck-deep into corruption which further plunged

the country into economic recession with its attendant consequences of increased level of poverty, unemployment and crime across the country.

Incessant cases of religious and ethnic crises, class division, political exclusion or marginalization of certain groups, injustice, insecurity of lives and property of people across the entire country, etc. as witnessed during the second, third and fourth republics have also been adduced. Hence, it has been maintained marginalization, dominance of others in their region; and resources and opportunities distribution have been at the epicenter of incessant secessionist movements in Nigeria [8].

Aside, states and local government are basic units for sharing federal largesse and revenue in Nigeria. [9] however alleged that the creation of the 12-state structure in 1967 was a civil war strategy used by the Federal Government to isolate, dismember and land-lock the Igbos for instance and to incite them against their neighbours with a view to frustrating their struggle for self-determination. No wonder secessionists in the south-eastern region have articulated sheer marginalization of the group in structural allocation of the federation. This is apparently understandable from table 2, which shows the distribution of states and local governments among the six geo-political zones, which clearly demonstrates that subsequent exercises in state and local government creations in Nigeria till date have continued to follow the same pattern.

**Table 2: Distribution of States and Local Government Areas in Nigeria**

S/No	Zone	No. of States	No. of Local Governments
1	North -Central	6 (16.67%)	116 (15.19%)
2	North - East	6 (16.67%)	110 (14.36%)
3	North -West	7(1.44%)	181 (23.69%)
4	South -West	6 (16.67%)	138 (18.01%)
5	South - South	6 (16.67%)	127 (16.58%)
6	South - East	5 (13.89%)	94 (12.27%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>774</b>

**Source:** Ohaneze Ndigbo (2002) cited in Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2019)

From the data above, of the six geo-political zones, South-East has the lowest number of states and local government areas. There is no gainsaying the fact that states and local governments are used as bases for sharing

federal resources, the rising Biafra separatism is, to a large extent, driven by a sense of victimization and gross injustice perpetrated through state and local government creations.

[12] wrote that the process of political cremation of certain groups especially the Igbos, the Middle Belt among others also manifests glaringly in the deliberate state policy to exclude them from political apex. Unlike other geopolitical zones, no Igbo man, except Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, has occupied the political apex of Nigeria. In their words, Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba groups have

occupied the political apex have occupied it from independence, while the Igbos have occupied it for just 6 months and 13 days. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was merely a ceremonial President. Evidence to the above claims is contained in Table 3 below which clearly shows the regional character of the foregoing exclusion.

**Table 3: Nigeria's Head of State/Government, Ethnic Group, Tenure from (Oct. 1st 1960 till date)**

S/N	Name	Title	State	Ethnicity	Zone	Period	Ethnic Tenure
1	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	President (Ceremonial)	Anambra	Igbo	South East	1/10/1960-15/1/1966	5 Years, 5 months and 8 Days
2	Alh. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	Prime Minister	Bauchi	Jarawa	North East	1/10/1960-15/1/1966	5 Years, 5 months and 8 Days
3	Maj.Gen, J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi	Head of State	Abia	Igbo	South East	16/1/1966-29/7/1966	6 months and 13 days
4	General Yakubu Gowon	Head of State	Plateau	Angas/Beron	North-central	29/7/1966-29/7/1975	9 Years
5	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	Head of State	Kano	Hausa	North West	29/7/1975-13/2/1976	6 months and 15 Days
6	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Head of State	Ogun	Yoruba	South West	13/2/1976-30/9/1979	3 Years, 7 Months and 17 days
7	Alh. Shehu Shagari	President	Sokoto	Fulani	North - west	1/10/1979-31/12/1983	4 years, 2 Months and 30 days
8	Maj. General Muhammadu Buhari	Head of State	Kastina	Fulani	North West	31/12/1983-27/8/1985	1 Year, 7 Months and 26 Days
9	General Ibrahim Babangida	Head of State	Niger	Gwari	North-central	27/8/1985-26/8/1993	8 Years
10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Head of State	Ogun	Yoruba	South West	26/8/1993-17/11/1993	2 Months and 23 Days
11	General Sani Abacha	Head of State	Kano	Kanuri	North - west	17/11/1993-8/6/1998	4 Years, 6 Months and 22 Days



12	Gen, Abdusalami Abubakar	Head of State	Niger	Nupe	North-central	8/6/1998-29/05/1999	11 Months and 21 Days
13	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Executive President	Ogun	Yoruba	South-west	29/05/1999-29/05/2007	8 Years
14	Musa Yaradua		Kastina	Fulani	North-west	29/05/2007-05/05/2010	2 Years, 11 Months and 6 Days
15	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	Acting Executive President	Bayelsa	Ijaw	South-south	6/05/2010 - 29/05/2011	1 Year 23 Days
16	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	Executive President	Bayelsa	Ijaw	South-south	29/05/2011-29/05/2015	4 Years
17	Muhammadu Buhari	Executive President	Kastina	Fulani	North-west	29/05/2015-Date	2015 till date

**Source:** Adapted with modifications from Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2019) citing Ohaneze (2002).

A cursory glance at the table there above unravels that the South-Eastern region of Nigeria has not produced Nigeria’s president since her creation and it does not seem likely that they will achieve that anytime soon. In Nigeria, state power has been captured and used to further the interests of an ethnic group or a combination of ethnic groups that dominate the corridors of power [16]. Therefore, the struggle and contestations for acquisition and use of state power in Nigeria have been patterned largely along ethnic lines. Given that the political apex of Nigeria has eluded the Igbos of South-east, it would appear

that the policies and programmes of the Nigerian government are deliberately designed to exclude them.

The cut-off marks for entrance to Federal Unity Schools for the 36 states of the federation is another case in point. Table 4 clearly shows that the South-eastern States of Anambra, Imo and Enugu have the highest cut-off marks in Nigeria. The implication is that a primary school boy in Anambra, Imo and Enugu must score ten times above his counterpart in Kebbi, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara to gain entrance into Federal Unity Schools in Nigeria.

**Table 4: Cut-off Marks for Entrance into Federal Unity Schools for all 36 States and FCT**

S/N	State	Male	Female
<b>North</b>			
1	Adamawa	62	62
2	Bauchi	35	35
3	Benue	111	111
4	Borno	45	45
5	Gombe	58	58
6	Jigawa	44	44
7	Kaduna	91	91
8	Kano	67	67
9	Kastina	60	60
10	Kebbi	9	20
11	Kogi	119	119
12	Nasarawa	58	58
13	Niger	93	93
14	Plateau	97	97
15	Sokoto	9	13
16	Taraba	3	11
17	Yobe	2	27
18	Zamfara	4	2
19	FCT Abuja	90	90
<b>South East</b>			
20	Abia	130	130
21	Anambra	139	139
22	Ebonyi	112	112
23	Enugu	134	134
24	Imo	138	138
<b>South-South</b>			
25	Akwa-Ibom	123	123
26	Bayelsa	72	72
27	Cross Rivers	97	97
28	Delta	131	131
29	Edo	127	127
30	Rivers	118	118
<b>South West</b>			
31	Ekiti	119	110
32	Kwara	123	123
33	Lagos	133	133
34	Ogun	131	131
35	Ondo	126	126
36	Osun	127	127
37	Oyo	127	127

**Source:** <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/23/unity-schools-education-ministry-releases-20172018-admission-list>.

Again, the present structure of the Nigeria Police Force is an eloquent testimony of

deliberate state policy of excluding the South-East Region. Unlike other geo-political zones,

Police Commands in the South-east report to AIGs outside the region because there is no AIG based in the region to which the five South-eastern States will report. Anambra State Command reports to the AIG based in Benin (South-South Zone), Enugu State Command reports to the AIG based in Makurdi (North-Central Zone), Abia, Ebonyi and Imo States Commands report to the AIG in Calabar (South-South Zone) [18], [19].

Besides, there appears to have been social disempowerment of the Igbo through denial of employment in the federal sector, discrimination and attacks in various parts of the country at every slightest provocation, and neglect of minerals discovered in Igbo land, even when their exploration and exploitation would benefit the entire country. It is on record that oil has been discovered in Nsukka area by a Federal Oil Company SAFRAP [16]. They revealed further that the area was sealed up with the expulsion of the company during the war, and to date the federal Government has not ordered resumption of activities. In their words, Natural Gas found in Ugwuoba, the largest deposit in Nigeria has been sealed

up as strategic reserve [14] while embarking on a wild goose chase for oil in the North, what a pity.

Moreso, the dredging of River Niger, construction of an inland port, and construction of the long proposed second bridge across River Niger to unleash the industrial potentials of the Onitsha-Nnewi-Aba axis appears to have been losing air as it has remained indefinitely on the drawing board. The same thing is applicable to the opening, expansion and modernization of Bonny Opobo, and Port Harcourt ports to prosper Ikwere, Obigbo, Ahoada, Bonny, down to Aba, Onitsha and Nnewi. Igbo businessmen are rather compelled to go to Lagos, with all the inconveniences, to clear their goods, when it can be done easily at home [12].

The politics of exclusion evident in the initial appointments by President Buhari in which the Igbos were completely excluded, has remained the most appalling. Beginning with the appointment of service chiefs, Tables 5 below shows clearly, the regional character of President Buhari's initial appointments.

**Table 5: Service Chiefs Appointed by President Buhari and their States of Origin**

S/N	Name	Position	State
1	Major-General Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin	Chief of Defence Staff	Ekiti
2	Major-General T.Y. Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	Borno
3	Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas	Chief of Naval Staff	Cross River
4	Air Vice Marshal Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	Bauchi
5	Air Vice Marshal Monday Riku Morgan	Chief of Defence Intelligence	Benue
6	Major-General Babagana Monguno (Rtd.)	National Security Adviser	Borno

**Source:** *Premium Times*, Tuesday, January 13, 2015.

From table 5 above, it can be observed that among the appointed service chiefs, none is from the South-eastern region. Such scenario presents an ugly picture of an administration targeted at national integration and inclusiveness.

A cursory glance at table 6 presented below would shed more lights into the nature of major appointments made by the Presidents Muhammadu Buhari's led administration.

**Table 6: List of Buhari's Major Appointments Since 2015**

S/N	Name	Position	State/Geo-political Zone
1	Lt. Col Abubakar Lawal	Aide de Camp to President	Kano State, North-West
2	Femi Adesina	Special Adviser, Media and Publicity to the president	Osun State, South-West
3	Garba Shehu	Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	Kano State, North-West
4	Lawal Abdullahi Kazaure	State Chief of Protocol/Special Assistant (Presidential Matters)	Jigawa State, North- West
5	Ahmed Idris	Accountant General of the Federation	Kano State, North-West
6	Lawal Daura	Director General, State Security Services, SSS	Katsina State, North- West
7	Amina Zakari	Acting Chairperson, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC	Jigawa State, North- West
8	Habibu Abdulahi	Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority, NPA	Kano State, North-West
9	Paul Boroh	Special Adviser, Niger Delta Amnesty Office	Bayelsa State, South- South
10	Baba Haruna Jauro	Acting Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration, Safety and Security Agency, NIMASA	Yobe State, North-East
11	Umaru Dambatta	Executive Vice Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Communications Commission	Kano State, North-West
12	Babatunde Fowler	Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS	Lagos State, South-West
13	Aliyu Gusau	Director General, Budget Office of the Federation	Zamfara State, North- West
14	Emmanuel Kachikwu	Group Managing Director, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC	Delta State, South-South
15	Babachir David Lawal	Secretary to Government of the Federation	Adamawa, North-East
16	Abba Kyari	Chief of Staff to the President	Borno, North-East
17	Hameed Ibrahim Ali	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Customs Service	Kaduna State, North- Central
18	Kure Martin Abeshi	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Immigration Service:	Nasarawa State, North- Central
19	Ita Enang	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (Senate)	Akwa Ibom State, South-South
20	Suleiman Kawu	Senior Special Assistant on National Assembly Matters (House of Representatives)	Kano State, North-West
21	Modesai Baba Ladan	Director, Department Of Petroleum Resources, DPR	Kano, North-West

22	Mohammed Kari	Commissioner for Insurance and Chief Executive of the National Insurance Commission	North-West
23	Prof. Yakubu Mahmood	Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	Bauchi State-North-East
24	Ibrahim Magu	Ag. Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)	Bornu-North East
25	Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali (Rtd)	The Comptroller-General of Customs	Kadun-North Central

**Source:** Adapted with updates from Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2019)

The point being made is that systematic reduction of the Igbo of South-east to a minority group by the Federal Government and coordinated attempts to exclude them from active involvement in governance at the federal level have given fillip to persistent separatist agitations in the region.

All of these have resulted in infrastructural decay; in addition, bad governance at different levels of governance and the instability of the Nigerian federal system have heightened separatist agitations in Nigeria. This has led to the emergence of various groups and organizations with different histories and goals. Their objectives range from drawing attention to the perceived marginalization of their respective ethnic group, pressure groups with a view to influencing the structure of power and to redress perceptions of marginalization of their group [10].

#### **The Position of Domestic and International Laws with Regards to Secession: The Nonsense**

Within the ambit of domestic law (The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria As Amended, 2011), there is no “breathing air” for secessionists in Nigeria as the constitution explicitly stated in section 2(1) that “Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria”. The implication of the above position of the law nullifies and voids any secessionist attempt, desire or demand by any group or peoples of the state irrespective of the approach (civic or violent) adopted. As such, secessionists lack the locus standi to legally lay claims to any rights with regards to secession.

From the available evidence herein discussed, it seems likely that, any group’s quest for a

separate nation-state and sovereignty is unlikely to succeed. For example, [16] revealed that in Secession of Quebec, three issues were raised for determination as follows:

- (a) Whether under the Constitution of Canada, can the National Assembly, legislature or government of Quebec affect the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally?
- (b) Whether international law gives the National Assembly, legislature or government of Quebec the right to affect the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally? In this regard, is there a right to self-determination under international law that would give the National Assembly, legislature, or government of Quebec the right to effect the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally?
- (c) Whether in the event of a conflict between domestic and international law on the right of the National Assembly, legislature or government of Quebec to effect the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally, which would take precedence in Canada?

The Supreme Court of Canada held inter alia that the Canadian Constitution does not give Quebec the right to secede and become an autonomous nation-state. It went further to emphasised that the principles of self-determination under international law has not made provisions for secession as a right. The court thus, held inter alia that there were no conflicts between the Canadian Constitution and international law. The court also failed to provide for the third question in the sense that, there was no evidence to support the claims that Quebec as unique peoples were victimised and oppressed by the government



of Canada. In specific terms, the court held that the peoples of Quebec are not authorised to unilateral secession.

It is likely that, secessionist agitators in Nigeria may likely face the same outcome as that of Quebec in the event that they litigate on the basis of exercising their rights to secede from Nigeria. The core-Igbo states for instance are currently represented in all corridors of the federal government, for example, Imo State alone as at 2015 had 5,825 personnel in the federal civil service which is the state with the highest number of persons in the federal civil service [4]. Igbos is also represented in the Judicial Service and legislature of the federal government and in all other relevant agencies. It is therefore, unlikely for the IPOB or any other group to substantiate the allegation of oppression which is a key variable for secession to gain international backings. Moreover, states housing all the agitating groups receive annual remittance and project allocations from the federation account in proportion to the principles of need and, the principle of equality of states. Also, there is no restriction on any citizen of any region from contesting any of the elective offices in the federal setup. Within the ambits of International Law, there have been controversies as regarding the position of the law with regards to secession. Secessionists in their agitation for freedom have always claimed they have right to self determination provided under international law. [13] articulated that the Charter of the United Nations expressly establishes the right to self-determination in Article 1, paragraph 2 (Chapter I: "Purposes and Principles") and in Article 55 (Chapter IX: "International Economic and Social Co-operation"). According to him, Article 1, paragraph 2, states that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. At this juncture, self-determination entails "the right claimed by a 'people' to control their destiny" despite that such a people have not yet achieved "statehood" under international law. Traditionally, only statehood could confer international legal personality, and its accompanying rights and duties, upon any group. A group seeking self-determination

is one which feels that it has been unjustifiably excluded from the community of states recognised by international law [1].

It is shocking to unravel that both domestic and international laws do not provide rights to secession. In corroborating the assertion above, [3] posited that International law is mostly neutral on the issue of secession. While international law embraces the right to self-determination for all people, and while this right can effectively translate into remedial secession, international law positively allows for this outcome only in the case of decolonization and, perhaps, territorial occupation. Other than these two relatively rare instances, international law does not affirmatively authorize groups to seek secession.

Raison d'être being that secession inherently undermines the territorial integrity of the mother state, and international law has for centuries espoused the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Embracing the right of secession would jeopardize the above-mentioned principles and could lead to global chaos caused by an incessant redrawing of boundaries. [6] affirmed that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has on occasions discussed the issue of secession but however, has failed to develop a normative framework on secession.

[5] justifies the above position using the East Timor case, in which Portugal, East Timor's last colonizer, sued Australia, claiming that the latter did not have a legal right to enter into a treaty with Indonesia over East Timorese natural resources, because Portugal was the true sovereign of East Timor, whereas Indonesia had illegally occupied East Timor. The International Court of Justice refused to resolve the dispute, because this would have involved announcing a legal proclamation on the status of East Timor (whether the people of East Timor had the right to self determination, and which state was its legitimate "owner"), which at the time was controlled by Indonesia. The World Court dismissed the case, by invoking the so-called indispensable third party doctrine, thereby missing an opportunity to develop normative law on self-determination and possibly secession.

In the now infamous Kosovo case, the ICJ was asked for an advisory opinion on the issue of

whether the Kosovar unilateral declaration of independence was in accordance with international law. The World Court answered in the affirmative, but somewhat curiously or opportunistically decided not to devote any significant space to the issue of self-determination and secession (it devoted only two paragraphs to these issues) [18]. Sterio furthered that in its holding, the World Court stated:

*“The Court is not required by the question it has been asked to take a position on whether international law conferred a positive entitlement on Kosovo unilaterally to declare its independence or, afortiori, on whether international law generally confers an entitlement on entities situated within a State unilaterally to break away from it. Instead, the ICJ concluded that: it follows that the task which the Court is called upon to perform is to determine whether or not the declaration of independence was adopted in violation of international law, the ICJ concluded that it was not, because international law does not prohibits declarations of independence” [20].*

Additionally, the ICJ addressed self-determination in the decolonization paradigm in the Western Sahara Advisory Opinion, by determining whether the people of Western Sahara, colonized by Spain and territorially claimed by both Morocco and Mauritania had a right to self-determination [12]. In his assertion, Kingston revealed that the World Court determined that the people of Western Sahara had a right to self-determination, while refusing to rule on the legality of the Moroccan and Mauritanian territorial claims to this region. This advisory opinion is significant because in it, the World Court

held: That the principle of territorial integrity could prevail over self-determination, in instances where there is solid evidence of the existence of a territorial claim over a particular region, despite the fact that the people of that region do not want to be governed by the entity asserting such a territorial claim.

This type of ambiguous attitude by international law vis-a-vis the right of secession is delicate at best, and perhaps dangerous. It is unhelpful because like this paper posits, it is a fact that international law does not contain an affirmative right of secession, while secessionists themselves can claim that international law does not explicitly prohibit secession. Victory here may be in the eye of the beholder. It is dangerous because it leads to inconsistent results, entirely dominated by politics. Almost all secessionist entities which have been successful in their separatist quests have been supported by at least one world super-power, typically the United States or the Soviet Union/Russia Statehood. In most instances, attempted secession truly depends on whether the majority of world countries, including the super-powers, are willing to recognize the seceding entity as a new sovereign state. Almost all unsuccessful secessionist entities have been unable to garner such recognition. Recognition is a purely political act which arguably has little to do with international law. In view of the position of domestic and international laws as juxtaposed above, every secessionist agitations in Nigeria especially the one of Indigenous People of Biafra which daydreams on international law and community to actualize her “fantasy” (independence), makes no sense. It is the position of this paper that such fantasy would hardly ever materialize. Notwithstanding, marginalization of the group among other minorities in the state, political illiteracy of leaders in the South-East as a focal point, also contributes immensely in the rising level of infrastructural deficit, disempowerment and social decay in the region. [20] corroborated the above position when they lamented that for sixteen years of PDP rule, particularly the six years of Goodluck Jonathan's administration, Igbos occupied the office of Deputy Senate President, Deputy Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Secretary to the Government of the Federation

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(SGF); Minister of Finance/Coordinating Minister of the Nigerian Economy, Ministers of Health, Aviation, Labor, Chief of Army Staff, among others. In spite of these high positions, no meaningful improvement in infrastructure or federal institutions was recorded in the Southeast. Those who had access to Aso Rock, and who got fat contracts took advantage of marginalization allegation to hoodwink both the Aso Rock godfathers and the Igbos. The trend in social decay and disempowerment in the South-east appears not to have abated, despite the "change" slogan of the ruling party; three of the South-Eastern states: Abia, Ebonyi and Imo are among the ten states that owe their workers despite the Paris Club loan refund [5]. All the testimonies above are pointers to the nonsense in the agitations for secession in Nigeria by any group.

It is doubtful that, the IPOB or any other secessionist group grounding their struggle on the provision of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, will ever yield any success because, the UN instrument require voluntary compliance and not legally binding. The UN Declaration does not provide the mechanism for its enforcement.

#### **National Integration: Towards Conceptualization**

National integration has been variously conceptualized. For instance [2] submitted that national integration is a relationship of community among people within the same political entity; a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programmes. It thus referring to a society of oneness whose members are willing to live and work together harmoniously and share the same destiny. The definition above did not take cognizance of the process involved in national integration as such, [5] offered a better view when she argued that National integration is the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogeneous political community. In other words, this is the increasing promotion or emergence of peace through the breaking down of cultural and regional divides in the process of evolving a united state. It relates to the building of nation-states out of disparate socio-economic, religious, ethnic and geographical elements.

National Integration entails the processes of inclusiveness and bringing the various

Nigerian ethnic groups to cohere, on an interdependent, interrelated and continuing basis through efficiency in providing what the peoples want and ought to have [16]. National Integration takes to heart equitable allocation of resources, inclusion of all segments of the nation in all sectors of national affairs and promotion of feelings of oneness and belongingness among the entire citizenry.

The challenge of germinating national consciousness and unity among the different ethnic nationalities has always been compounded by the inability of the successive governments to frontally address the problems associated with citizenship, religion, ethnicity, inequality, resource distribution, native-settler dichotomy and development [20]. The negative fallout from the situation has not only promoted disunity and mistrust among Nigerians, but has also manifested in the resentful disposition towards the Nigerian State which is exhibited by the nationalities that feel disadvantaged and aggrieved in Nigeria. To this end, separatist agitations, which have been a regular feature of Nigerian politics, remain a veritable tool for the expression of discontent with the Nigerian State, and a platform for demanding adequate political accommodation. With the aid of hindsight, these separatist agitations that date back to the era of British colonial administration cannot be adequately explained outside the context of poor leadership and the absence of an ideology with mass appeal. The interplay of power and force between different ethnic nationalities that resort to separatist agitations has constantly threatened the continued existence of the Nigerian State. Unfortunately, the dominant political elite have not found any practical solution to this challenge [12].

Various integrative administrative mechanisms have been adopted in Nigeria since 1914, and they include:

- (i) The Amalgamation
- (ii) Nigerianization Policy
- (iii) National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme
- (iv) Unity Schools
- (v) National Language Policy
- (vi) Federalism, Party Politics
- (vii) New Federal Capital Territory
- (viii) States and Local Governments Creation [10].

There are also other integrative mechanisms that have been adopted such as National Festivals of Arts and Culture, National Sports Festival, National Football League, as well as other sports competitions, policy of Federal Character [16], which was to ensure that public appointments and positions are spread across members of all the geo-political zones, states, local governments, wards and communities such that all ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups are represented in government institutions and agencies as much as possible. However, the current efforts have not yielded the desired results.

**Extent to which National Integration could Quell Secessionist Agitations in Nigeria**

National Integration has become imperative as pragmatic mechanism to quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria. The inability of the national government to meet the basic needs of the individual causes the decline of confidence in the country. Among these basic needs, the economic ones are the primary. [17] adduced that the effective and democratic administration of ethnic groups is strongly clamored in Nigeria in terms of respect, justice and fairness, equal benefits of "the valued things of society", even development, state actors and state policies being purged of all forms of ethnic group bias, and encouraging or developing cross- cutting cleavages instead of "cumulative cleavages with exclusive

orientations. Such measure will to a large extent would promote unity and sense of belonging among the peoples of Nigeria. [7] in [8] stressed that for a federal system to be acceptable it must guarantee the minimum conditions of self-determination or ethno-regional autonomy, resource ownership or fiscal federalism as well as equitable access to resources and opportunities for growth, development and actualization. In this manner, the spirit of inclusiveness, oneness and patriotism would be engendered amongst the divergent nationalities.

Moreover, National Integration in Nigeria would as well focus on developing and exploring other mineral resources domiciled in all the states of the federation thereby shifting interest for the oil deposits in the Niger Delta region [9]. The overdependence of the state on the oil in one region to finance the administration of the entire nation has to a lamentable extent caused perceived injustice, marginalization and ethnic domination; thus, fuelling the increased agitations and militancy in the region. It is astonishing to reveal that all the 36 states of the federation have unquantifiable mineral deposits which when explored can launch each state into self reliance. Table 7 below presents a state by state assessment of mineral deposits across the states of the federation.

**Table 7: State by State Assessment of Natural Resources in Nigeria**

State	Solid Minerals	Agric./Agro Allied	Oil & Gas	Industrial Potentials
Abia	Brine, Iron ore, Lignite Kaolin, Clay	Cowpeas, Soyabeans, Rice, Maize, Cassava, Oil Palm Cocoa, Rubber, Fruits	Petroleum & Gas	Ceramic, Cosmetic Plastic, Petroleum & Gas Industries
Abuja	Marble, Kaolin, Clay, tin, Lead, Zinc	Yam, Cassava, Maize	-	Food Processing and
Adamawa	Barytes, Salt, Calciumlaterites, Marble, Gypsum, Clay	Beans and Fruits Guinea-Corn, Sugarcane, Yam, Cassava, Maize, Millet, rice, Milk, Cheese, Cotton, Groundnuts	-	manufact. Industries Agricultural processing industries
Akwa Ibom	Clay, Glass, Sand	Coconut, Cocoa,	Crude oil and	Agricultural processing,

	Beutonite	Rubber, Raffia palm,	Natural gas	Oil & Gas
Anambra		Coffee, Oil Palm		industries
	Kaolin, Limestone, Marble	Rice, Yam, Cassava	Crude oil reserve	Oil & Gas industries
Bauchi	Limestone,	Sugarcane, Maize,	Crude oil	Limestone, Ceramic
	Columbite, Iron ore, Tin, Kaolin	Groundnuts, Millet, Guinea corn, Cotton, Rice	(under survey)	industry
Bayelsa	-	Plantain, Banana, Cassava, Yam, Cocoyam	Crude oil and gas	Oil & Petrochemical
Benue	Tin, Columbite, Kaolin, Gypsum	Yam, Rice, Maize, Sorghum, Millet and Fruits	-	Food canning/cement
Borno	Gypsum, Iron ore, Feldspar, Limestone, Clay	Millet, Wheat, Arabic gum, Hides & Skins	-	Soda ash, leather industries
Cross river	Limestone, Baryte, Uranium, Bentonite	Rubber, Cocoa,	-	Agric & Fishing
Delta	Lignite, Gypsum, Tar Sand, Silica	Oil Palm, Cassava, rice, fruits Palm oil, Kernel,	Crude Oil and Gas	Petrochemical, Oil & Wood processing.
Ebonyi	Salt, Limestone, Lead, Zinc, Gypsum	Cassava, Rubber and Timber Yam, Rice, Cassava, Maize, Soyabeans	-	Mining, food processing
Edo	Gypsum, Tar sand, Lignite, Marble	Cassava, Yam, Gari, Plantain, Rubber	Oil & Gas reserve	Oil & Gas Industries, Cement, Food & Rubber processing
Ekiti	Tantalite, Quarta, Kaolin, Sand, Clay, Gold, Feldspar	Cocoa, Timber, Palm produce	-	Food & canning, wood processing
Enugu	Coal, Clay, Limestone, Silica, Iron ore, Lead	Oil Palm, Cassava, Rice, Maize, Yam	-	Ceramic, Pottery, Mining
Gombe	Gypsum, Columbite, Lead, Zinc, tin, Iron ore, Clay	Maize, Beans, Groundnuts, Millet, Cotton, Rice, Sugarcane	-	Cotton, cement work
Imo	Limestone, Lead, Zinc,	Oil palm, Cassava,	Crude oil	Food processing, oil &



Jigawa	Ore, Kaolin, Clay Kaolin, Tourmaline,	Cashew Groundnut, Cassava, Wheat, Millet	-	gas Industry. Agro & Food based,
Kaduna	Copper, Iron ore, clay Gold, Gemstone, Talc,	Wheat, Millet, Rice,	-	Mining, Limestone work Food processing,
Kano	Zinc, Clay, Iron ore Tin, Zinc, Lead, Clay, Copper, Kaolin	Beans, Potatoes Onions, Groundnut, Rice, Maize, Wheat	-	Fertilizer industries. Food processing work
Katsina	Marble, Kaolin, Feldspar, Iron ore	Guinea Corn, Groundnut, Millet, Wheat, Maize, rice, Cotton	-	Flourmill, meat processing
Kebbi	Kaolin, Salt, Clay, Limestone, Iron ore	Millet, Guinea corn, Maize, Ginger, Bears fruits	-	Groundnut mills, leather industries.
Kogi	Limestone, Clay, Gold, Iron ore, Coal Marble	Yam, Cassava, Rice, Maize, Coffee, Cashew	-	Ore mining, Cement industries.
Kwara	Iron ore, Marble, limestone, Clay, Feldspar	Yam, Cassava, maize	-	Mining, Food processing
Lagos	Iron ore, Marble, Limestone, Clay, Feldspar	Fish, Coconut	Crude oil	Food processing, oil & gas, paper mill
Nasarawa	Iron ore, Marble, Coal, Lead, Zinc Tin Glass, Gold, Iron ore Limestone, Chalk,	Rice, Yam, Maize, Cotton Corn, Rice, Yam Rice, Maize, Beans, palm produce,	-	Agro Allied industries
Niger Ogun	Clay, Kaolin, Phosphate, Tar Sand	Cocoa, Rubber Timber, Palm , produce Cocoa, Kolanut	Crude oil	Oil & Gas, Wood, Food processing
Osun	Bitumen, Limestone, Kaolin, Iron ore	Cocoa, Kolanut,	-	Food processing
Oyo	Gold, Clay, Limestone, Kaolin, Granite Dolomite, Kaolin,	Rice, Maize Cocoa, Palm produce, Kolanut, Cashew,	-	Mining, Food processing
Rivers	Marble, Iron ore, Clay, Gemstone Silica, Sand, Clay	Maize, Cassava Palm oil, Fish, Cassava, Fruits	Crude oil & Natural gas	Oil industries, petrochemicals,

Sokoto	Kaolin, Gypsum,	Rice, Wheat,	-	glass works Food processing, Cement industry
	Salt, Marble, Limestone, Gold	Millet, Groundnut		
Taraba	Baryte, Bauxite,	Rice, Guinea Corn,	-	Food processing, canning
	Iron ore	Yam, Cassava, Fruits		
Yobe	Arabic Gum, Gypsum, Limestone, Clay, Kaolin	Cotton, Groundnut, Millet, Maize	-	Food processing
Zamfara	Gold, Mica	Rice Maize, Guinea Corn	-	Food processing.

**Source:** Adapted with modifications from Adesopo and Asaju (2004)

A state-by-state assessment of mineral wealth of Nigeria as contained in Table 7 above bears eloquent testimony to the fact that in terms of mineral resources potential, Nigeria is one of the richest countries in Africa with known deposits of tin, columbite, tantalite, wolfram, gold, lead-zinc, limestone, kaolin, clay, shale, marble, radio-active minerals, barytes, cassiterite, coal, lignite, petroleum, natural gas and hydro-electric power just to mention but a few. These resources when developed and explored would largely quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria.

At the individual level, it is the position of this paper that secessionists on their own part should look deep into the potentials of having a strong, equitable, united and developed Nigeria; thus, concede their fruitless secessionist attempts. The strength in Nigeria's diversity hinges on the fact that interdependence and interrelationship among the various nationalities in economic, political, social and human capital dimensions would give birth to a formidable nation that could compete with other world powers around the globe.

[10] in [14] contended that until there is in practice one Nigerian citizenship for all Nigerians, and until the individual Nigerian feels this citizenship relatively equally with other Nigerians from other states, through for example, the enjoyment of standardized civil liberties and equal opportunities in any part of Nigeria irrespective of state of origin, prospects for a united Nigerian state will remain hollow and a fantasy.

[16] had earlier observed that states and local governments still discriminate against

Nigerians who do not hail from within their boundaries. This government sponsored discrimination is a clear statement against national unity even as it represents an official case of government sanctioned human rights abuse. In the North of Nigeria, Southerners are only employed in the civil service only on non-pensionable basis. This is clear discrimination on citizenship criteria. Also, no southerner can become Principal or Headmaster in any state government secondary or primary school. Such scenario leaves a puzzle in the heart of every patriotic Nigerian as to where administration of national integration has been buried in Nigeria.

In 2014, it was alleged that Abia State, in South-East of Nigeria, sacked non-Abia citizens (including co-Igbos from Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States) and people from other states of the federation such as Edo State allegedly because of financial constraints [21]. Discriminatory school fees are also charged in many states of the federation. This unending problem of discrimination is no doubt fallout of the equally lingering fear of ethnic domination and scarcity of resources as well as poor governance. There is no doubt that the problem of ethnic suspicion still exists in Nigeria which behooves an enormous task on administrators at all levels of government to urgently turn to administration of national integration.

Administration of national integration as a veritable instrument encompasses democracy, devolution, and power sharing for accommodation and management of segmented societies in Nigeria. Within this

spectrum are the instrumentalities of human rights, including minority and groups' rights, local political autonomy, affirmative action or quota system and other elements of consociationalism, secularism, and so on. They also include the five types of

devolutionary arrangements identified as confederalism, federalism, regional autonomy, regional administrative decentralization and community autonomy [19].

### CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing analysis, this paper revealed that secessionist agitations by some of the indigenous peoples for freedom and self-rule have been traced to numerous factors. Most notable among the propelling factors is the perceived inequity and injustices in the administrative, political, social and economic configurations in the existing federal structure in Nigeria. Secessionist movements in pursuing their course, have articulated sheer intimidations with consequential perception of low representation in national administration; discriminatory access to justice; victimisations; discriminatory share of natural resources benefits; degradation of cultural and language rights; and regular assault on religious rights among others. For instance, the dredging of River Niger, construction of an inland port, and construction of the long proposed second bridge across River Niger to unleash the industrial potentials of the Onitsha-Nnewi-Aba axis have been "losing air" as it has remained indefinitely on the drawing board. The same thing is applicable to the opening, expansion and modernization of Bonny Opobo, and Port Harcourt ports to prosper Ikwere, Obigbo, Ahoada, and Bonny, down to Aba, Onitsha and Nnewi. Igbo businessmen are rather compelled to go to Lagos, with all the inconveniences, to clear their goods, when it can be done easily at home [22].

Both domestic and international laws do not provide rights to secession. International law

is mostly neutral on the issue of secession. While international law embraces the right to self-determination for all people, and while this right can effectively translate into remedial secession, international law positively allows for this outcome only in the case of decolonization and, perhaps, territorial occupation. Other than these two relatively rare instances, international law does not affirmatively authorize groups to seek secession. Within the ambit of domestic law (The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria As Amended, 2011), there is no "breathing air" for secessionists in Nigeria as the constitution explicitly stated in section 2(1) that "Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria". The implication of the above position of the law nullifies and voids any secessionist attempt, desire or demand by any group or peoples of the state irrespective of the approach (civic or violent) adopted. As such, secessionists lack the *locus standi* to legally lay claims to any rights with regards to secession.

National Integration is an imperative and pragmatic mechanism to quell secessionist agitations in Nigeria. National Integration in Nigeria would as well focus on developing and exploring other mineral resources domiciled in all the states of the federation thereby shifting interest for the oil deposits in the Niger Delta region.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are therefore put forward:

1. Federal Government should channel efforts towards administration of national integration in Nigeria through inclusiveness administration. As a veritable instrument, it would promote democracy, devolution, and power sharing for accommodation and

management of segmented societies in Nigeria.

2. The national government should intensify efforts towards promoting inter ethnic/tribal cohesion by sponsoring transnational goal-oriented programmes. For instance, inter tribal/ethnic marriages should be sponsored.
3. Secessionists on their own part should look deep into the potentials of having a strong, equitable, united and

developed Nigeria; thus, concede their fruitless secessionist attempts. The strength in Nigeria's diversity hinges on the fact that interdependence and interrelationship among the various nationalities in economic, political, social and human capital dimensions would give birth to a formidable nation that could compete with other world powers around the globe. This is because continued agitations for secession further promote distrust and disunity in the nation.

4. States and local governments should cease to discriminate against Nigerians who do not hail from within their boundaries. This government sponsored discrimination is a clear administration of national disintegration as such, against national unity.
5. There is need for national restructuring in Nigeria to allow regional autonomy. All the 36 states of the federation have abundant mineral deposits which when explored can launch this nation into boom.

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