

The Nexus Between Insurgency, Armed Banditry, and Secessionist Movements: Revisiting Nigeria's Indivisibility

Corresponding author: Ekeledirichukwu C. **Njoku**, PhD

Department of Political Science, Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato, Imo State, Nigeria

ekeledirichukwu.njoku@komu.edu.ng/ekelenjoku@yahoo.com (+2348061423238)

<https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0001-5739-5697>

Co-author – Christopher I. **Obiukwu**, PhD

Department of Political Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

chrisobiukwu@yahoo.com (+2348033506563)

Abstract

This paper revisits the ongoing debate on Nigeria's indivisibility in light of increasing armed banditry, insurgency and secessionist movements and critically analyses how these security challenges erode national cohesion and threaten Nigeria's unity. Driven by the Boko Haram/Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), insurgency, particularly in the Northeast, has taken monstrous proportions. Deriving support from a deeply impoverished population, these groups have devastated the Northeast, resulting in widespread displacement and humanitarian crises. Similarly, armed banditry in the Northwest regions disrupts socio-economic activities, heightens insecurity and instils pervasive fear in local communities. Again, a desire for greater political autonomy has resulted in the resurgence of secessionist movements such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast. These movements not only underscore structural inequalities and frustration with the Nigerian government but also deep-rooted ethnic and political grievances in these regions. These security threats and challenges call into question the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Nigerian state. Relying on qualitative analysis of secondary data, this paper explores the socio-political and economic underpinnings of these challenges and argues that the military-centric approach of the Nigerian government to these threats, rather than mitigating, has often exacerbated these threats. Thus, the paper argues that ensuring Nigeria's indivisibility requires a multifaceted and inclusive approach that respects ethnic diversity and promotes equitable governance.

Keywords: Armed banditry, Insurgency, Insecurity, Nigeria's indivisibility, Secessionist movements, Indigenous People of Biafra

Introduction

Nigeria is confronted by multiple security challenges, notably the resilient Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in the northeast, long-running discontent and militancy in the Niger Delta, increasing violence between herders and farming communities spreading from the central belt southward, and separatist Biafra agitation in the Igbo south-east (BBC, 2021; The International Crisis Group, 2024; Olufemi, 2021). The country has been unable to suppress these centrifugal forces and internal contradictions to achieve stability, peace and security. These challenges undermine national security, pose significant threats to Nigeria's territorial integrity and reignite debates about the indivisibility of the Nigerian state, a principle enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. Insurgency in Nigeria, exemplified by the activities of Boko Haram and Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), has led to significant loss of life, widespread displacement and socio-economic disruptions, particularly in the north-eastern region. According to the Institute for Economics & Peace (2016), Nigeria was in 2016 the third most terrorised country in the world after Iraq and Afghanistan. Nigeria has been battling various forms of violent conflicts such as terrorism, militancy, ethno-religious, violent communal clashes, assassination, herders-farmers' clashes, kidnapping, bombings, electoral violence, organised crimes (illegal oil bunkering, kidnapping, trafficking) and banditry. The scale, frequency and intensity of these diverse threats have called into question the ability of the Nigerian state and its institutions to effectively respond to these internal security threats to promote national security, enhance the stability of Nigeria, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of Nigerians. Regrettably, the desire and quest for a stable and secure country has remained elusive due to the emergence of these national security threats.

Similarly, an unprecedented wave of kidnappings, killings, displacements and cattle rustlings have become rampant due to the rise of armed bandits in the northwest region (Ojo, Oyewole & Aina, 2023). Meanwhile, secessionist agitations in the southeast and southwest, led by such groups as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Yoruba Nation agitators, reflect growing disillusionment with the central government and demands for self-determination. These movements not only underscore structural inequalities and frustration with the Nigerian government but also deep-rooted ethnic and political grievances in these regions. These recurrent violence, ethnic tensions and calls for self-determination from various quarters have constantly tested the resilience of this notion of indivisibility. In other words, these challenges have eroded national cohesion and fuelled debates about whether the Nigerian state, as currently structured, can address and accommodate Nigeria's vast diversity, aspirations and grievances of its diverse populace. At the heart of this discourse lies the contentious debate on Nigeria's indivisibility, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, which emphasises the sovereignty, unity, indivisibility and indissolubility of the Nigerian state.

Despite the constitutional emphasis on the indivisibility of Nigeria, the country is grappling with deep-seated governance failures, weak security architecture, endemic corruption, socio-economic inequalities and ethnic tensions that have intensified insecurity and alienation among various ethnic and religious groups (Nwokike, Chibuokem, & Udegbonam, 2023). The persistence of

insurgency, armed banditry, and secessionist movements suggests systemic weaknesses in addressing the root causes of these conflicts. These challenges not only threaten Nigeria's territorial integrity but also raise broader concerns about the sustainability of the Nigerian state. What structural and governance deficits enable the persistence of these crises and why have existing responses failed to quell them? How long can a country remain indivisible while fighting different non-state actors/threatening security issues? How can Nigeria reconcile its diverse identities and aspirations within a cohesive national framework? In an attempt to explore these questions, this paper intends to analyse the interconnectedness of these challenges in the Nigerian context to understand the underlying factors driving the insurgency, armed banditry and secessionist movements, as well as examine how governmental policies contributed to these security challenges. It also aims to provide insights into the resilience of Nigeria's statehood amidst these persistent threats, analyse the implications of these security threats for Nigeria's indivisibility and explore ways to address the root causes of these security threats to foster national unity and cohesion.

Conceptual review

Insurgency

According to Homeland Security (2012), insurgency is a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organisations. Most insurgent groups aim to gain control of a population or a particular territory as well as its resources (Homeland Security, 2012). For Ucko (2022), it is the graduate level of war while Ladan (2012) sees it as a crime against public order; a pattern of internal disturbances and tensions that pose serious problems to public safety, law and order. It is a violent political struggle for control of people and resources as insurgent groups often pursue some common objectives to undermine the legitimacy of the government and bolster their standing with the population (Homeland Security, 2012). Insurgent groups seek to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals.

Signs that insurgents may be on the verge of obtaining their goal include; withdrawal of support for the government by specific segments of the domestic population, evidence that the population increasingly views the government as illegitimate, insurgent co-optation, incorporation or elimination of other major groups opposed to the government, withdrawal of support for the government from critical foreign allies, rapid growth of insurgent forces or significant expansion of insurgent control of territory and population, severe weakening of the national economy as a result of the insurgency, reports of military plots, coup attempts, or massive desertion, defection, or surrender of security forces and evidence of a sudden government willingness to seek a negotiated settlement with the insurgents (Homeland Security, 2012). Longing for freedom and self-determination, injustice, illegitimate regime, poverty, ideological influences, and the militarisation of society are some of the causal factors of insurgency.

To drive home their demands, insurgent groups employ various tactics such as cell-networks, terrorism, attempts to foster local and international support, incessant attacks against the government and its institutions and many more. While some insurgent groups use arbitrary violence to deliberately cause fear or kill people, others exhibit restraint (Weinstein, 2006). Irrespective of their goals, insurgencies can be categorised into revolutionary insurgencies, reformist insurgencies, separatist insurgencies, resistance insurgencies and commercialist insurgencies (Homeland Security, 2012). Several groups such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Boko Haram, ISWAP and others have emerged at different stages in the political history of Nigeria. In pursuit of some socioeconomic or political objectives, the insurgent group employs unorthodox and standard forms of violence (Ucko, 2022; Weinstein, 2006).

Banditry

Banditry is a premeditated act of violence committed by individuals or groups to take another's property or take someone away by force (Sophoulis, 2020). Banditry is a rural phenomenon associated with other forms of criminality (Aina, Ojo & Oyewole, 2024). Historically, bandits are usually proscribed or outlawed brigands who engage in criminality on the fringes of society (Moveh & Isa, 2022). It is a form of crime that subverts the monopoly of the state over legitimate violence. And involves the attempt at resisting the power of the state through violence, brutality, extortion and theft. Banditry constitutes a significant hazard to local safety and order. In different parts of Nigeria, banditry is used to describe different variants of outlawry. According to Odinkalu (2018), banditry in Nigeria's northwest encapsulates ineffective law enforcement and the crisis of ungoverned spaces in Nigeria.

For Okoli & Ngom (2023), banditry in northern Nigeria is fuelled by the existence of vast un(der)governed hinterland and trans-border spaces where various non-state armed groups operate unhindered and outside of the law, engaging in various forms of transnational crime. Challengers of legitimate power, competing feudal lords and clansmen and unruly mercenaries are all branded bandits by different authors who use this term interchangeably according to the direction of their narratives (Sophoulis, 2020). According to Osasona (2023), bandits are a loose collection of various criminal groups involved in kidnap-for-ransom, armed robbery, cattle rustling, rape and other sexual violence, pillage and attacks on traders, farmers and travellers – particularly in Nigeria's North-West region.

These events have created a climate of uncertainty that has become a cause for concern for the government and the citizenry. In terms of its disruptive impact and intensity of violence, banditry is the gravest security threat that Nigeria currently faces, and it is driving her worst national humanitarian crisis in decades (Osasona, 2022). Over 10,000 cattle were lost, while 2,688 hectares of farmlands and 10,000 houses were destroyed between 2011 and mid-2018 in Zamfara State (WANEP, 2019). In November 2019, an estimated 4,000 people were also internally displaced in Shiroro LGA of Niger State alone (WANEP, 2019). Banditry has paralleled the Boko Haram insurgency as the albatross of national security (Okoli & Ngom, 2023). Banditry constitutes one of the most serious threats to the peace, security and corporate existence of the Nigerian state (Utibe & Ogundiya, 2024).

Secession

Secession is a Latin word that means ‘withdrawal’ (Khan, 2024). Thus, secession is the carving out (or an attempt to) a new sovereign territory from an existing sovereign state so that each continues thereafter as a separate political entity (Bartkus, 1999; López-Basaguren & San-Epifanio, 2019; Radan, 2016). It is the creation of a state by the use or threat of force without the consent of the former sovereign or the creation of a new state upon territory previously forming part of, or being a colonial entity of an existing state (Ninet, 2023). Secessionist movements have proliferated since the end of the Second World War (Siroky & Abbasov, 2021). Secession attempts can be peaceful or violent (Goertz, Diehl & Balas (2016). Secession usually elicits divided and vehement opinions concerning their justification and the methods used in attempting or suppressing them (Pavkovic & Radan, 2016). It is the attempted creation of a state by the use or threat of force without the consent of the former sovereign (Ninet, 2023). Secessionist movements are types of social movements with a specific political goal: independence/self-determination. If government does not protect the rights of individuals, they may end their allegiance to it. And this renunciation may take the form of secession whereby a group may renounce its allegiance to its government and form a new government (Gordon, 1998). In recent times, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Yoruba Nation agitators (YNA) from South-west have emerged to challenge the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria (Ojo, 2023; Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Relative Deprivation Theory

For more than five decades, there has been extensive usage of the Relative Deprivation construct in sociology, psychology and other social sciences in the explanation of many paradoxes. This was later expounded by Gurr (2015) in *Why Men Rebel*. While RD might not be a new theory to the study of violence, drawing from it to analyse reasons for a series of threats to Nigeria’s security threats is new. Gurr provides a valuable explanation and insight into the radicalisation and threats of groups such as BH, IPOB and bandits. For Gurr, structural poverty, inequality and other social vices of bad governance within a country act as breeding grounds for violent or radical movements. Gurr argues that relative deprivation leads to aggression and rebellion.

Gurr (2015) defined Relative deprivation as a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities. Deprivation is an attitude, a feeling of discontent or perceived injustice. Gurr (2015) explained that while value expectations are those conditions of life or socio-economic amenities to which the masses believe they are legitimately and justifiably

entitled, the latter – value capabilities, are those socio-economic conditions they think that they can attain or maintain, considering the environment or the availability of the means to achieve those goals. In Runcman's (1966) formulation, an actor or individual is relatively deprived of **B** because he does not have **B** but knows and sees other actors who have **B**. Looking at others having **B**, the actor wants to get **B** and believes that having **B** is feasible. Since the actor believes that having **B** is feasible, it helps him differentiate between unrealistic and realistic values and hope. If the actor realises that his desire is unrealistic, there will be no deprivation. Likewise, he will feel deprived if he knows that his desire is realistic.

Many a time, it is not only that acceptable means to economic success are unrewarding or impeded, but also that the unrewarding means are “accompanied by feelings of injustice and resentment.” As the actor becomes aware of the limitations in accessing economic resources, his resentment grows, increasing the potential for crime. Crime rates are affected by the relative nature of deprivation.

In RD, there is an awareness or understanding of social, political and economic disparity, comparison with other actors and evaluation of the condition to change. The inability to obtain the desired values leads to anger and frustration, a precursor to violence (Njoku, 2021). Against this background, Hoselitz and Willner (2015) posited that:

unrealized aspirations produce feelings of disappointment but unrealized expectations result in feelings of deprivation. Disappointment is generally tolerable; deprivation is often intolerable. The deprived individual feels impelled to remedy, by whatever means are available, the material and psychic frustrations produced in him. Whereas disappointment may breed the seeds of incipient revolution, deprivation serves as a catalyst for revolution.

For researchers and scholars of relative deprivation, four principal explanations for collective violence are rising expectation; an explosion or outbreak of long-festering frustration usually triggered by the brutality of the police and security forces, economic inequality between the disadvantaged and the advantaged, and competition among deprived for scarce resources (Folger, 2012). When an individual feels that he is generally less fortunate than the people he compares himself to, he feels relatively deprived. In Nigeria, ethnic and regional disparities in resource distribution and political power have fostered feelings of deprivation among various groups. The Niger Delta militants, Boko Haram insurgents, and secessionist agitators like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) often cite economic and political marginalisation as justifications for their actions.

This theory helps explain why grievances over unequal access to resources and opportunities escalate into organised violence and secessionist demands. While arguing that severe economic deprivation may not be directly linked to violent conflict or mass atrocities, Evans (2009) acknowledges that factors such as high rate of unemployment, low income, and economic decline directly or indirectly contribute to violence by fuelling anger and resentment among a particular excluded and disadvantaged group, reducing opportunity costs relevant to joining a violent group or probably both. Extremist movements are driven by perceived ethnic marginalisation, political exclusion and economic neglect.

Implication of these security threats to the Nigerian state

Insurgency, banditry and secessionist movements in Nigeria pose significant challenges to national security and stability (Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024; BBC, 2021; Odalonu & Egbogu, 2023). Groups such as the Boko Haram and ISWAP have long established territorial control over certain areas in the Northeast (ICG, 2024), and continue to challenge the authority of the Nigerian government. The inability of the government to fully combat these groups raises the question of the legitimacy and capacity of the government. These groups have caused widespread destruction, resulting in thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions of people (Okoeguale & Aigbovia, 2023). Their frequent attacks on military and police installations also undermine the morale and efficiency of security personnel (Njoku, 2024). Kidnapping, arms trafficking as well as human smuggling associated with insurgency often spills over into neighbouring countries such as Niger and Chad to increase regional insecurity.

The implications of armed banditry for Nigeria's unity are significant. Like insurgency, the frequent and violent nature of bandit attacks has created a climate of uncertainty, eroding public trust in the government's ability to protect the lives and properties of local communities (Ojo, Oyewole & Aina, 2023; Musa, 2022). This has led to increased calls for self-defence mechanisms as some communities feel abandoned while others allege complicity by the Nigerian armed forces (Ogundipe, 2018). Armed banditry disrupts local governance and weakens state authority as well as creates power vacuums exploited by insurgents to threaten Nigeria's control over its territory. As seen in the northwest and north central, bandits form alliances with terrorist groups like ISWAP to compound security challenges in these regions and drive youths toward extremism (Njoku, 2024).

Similarly, secessionist movements such as IPOB and Yoruba nation agitators strongly challenge the notion of Nigeria as an indivisible state (Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024). These agitations undermine the ability of the Nigerian state to manage its internal security, especially in the Southeast zone (Abiodun, & Oladele, 2024). In the same vein, secessionist rhetoric in Nigeria deepens ethnic and religious divisions that undermine efforts to foster national unity and integration (Njoku, 2025). The repressive responses of security personnel against these movements often lead to the militarisation of these zones resulting in loss of civilian lives, armed conflicts and displacement of local communities (Njoku & Sidhu, 2017).

The debate

Proponents of the 'indivisibility' of Nigeria support their argument with the preamble of Nigeria's 1999 constitution (as amended) that affirms thus: "We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria having firmly and solemnly resolved, to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God." They believe that Nigeria is better and stronger together. On the other hand, those who argue that Nigeria is divisible draw support from relevant international charters such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights that proclaims that: "All peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely

determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen.” The question is; should Nigeria continue to force national unity by fiat based on constitutional finality or should the country look at the realities and consider its fragile existence? And how sustainable is this indivisibility? If Nigeria must remain indivisible, is the military might the most plausible approach to address such issues as agitation for secession, armed banditry and commercialist insurgency?

Regardless of one’s side of the divide, one must not lose sight of the fact that Nigeria is facing the most difficult time in its history as a result of the increasing rate of insurgency, banditry and agitations. These national security threats and violent non-state actors are simply a sign that there is a deep crack in the Nigerian polity. And we cannot continue to pretend. Nigeria is at a crossroads today with the very essence of its existence under serious threat. Successive Nigerian leaders have failed in all indices of governance. And in terms of the core function of a state – protection of life and property of citizens, Nigeria is worse off today under the All Progressives Congress (APC) than it was in 2015.

Proponents of secession believe that Nigeria is undergoing the strains of a forced union, arguing that the security architecture has been politicised and irretrievably damaged. They believe that since it looks like the Nigerian state has no solution to the killings and kidnappings in Borno, Southern Kaduna, Katsina, Benue and Enugu by non-state actors, it has become imperative to let people go their separate ways. They vehemently abhor and reject the domination of their ethnic group by another, coldblooded political and economic marginalisation and violent clashes that lead to loss of lives arising from irreconcilable differences. These agitations and security threats are products of long-standing political and economic grievances. And they are expected to linger considering the widespread support it has garnered from disenchanted and frustrated youths. The Nigerian state is structurally flawed, crisis-prone and oppressive. And for most Nigerians, the country is on its last legs. Injustice, politics of exclusion, deliberate decision to disobey/ignore the rule of law, nepotism and religious bigotry are pervasive. The question is: what is the way forward? There is a need to lay a new foundation for the country because the current structure is at variance with the equitable distribution of power and resources in a heterogeneous state.

The basis for Nigeria’s indivisibility

Promotion of national unity

In the medium term, there is a need for the promotion of national unity through an inclusive federal government. Here, the sensibilities of all Nigerians must be respected and reflected in federal appointments, regardless of one’s ethnic origin (Njoku, 2024; Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024). This will foster a sense of belonging and reduce the tension in the Southeastern part of the country. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state like Nigeria, lopsided appointments to federal agencies and parastatals only create room for unending calls for self-determination/secession and violent conflicts. The predominance of persons from a particular ethnic group in a government is constitutionally unjustifiable. Sidelining any ethnic group or federating unit in federal appointments is at odds with national integration.

Nigerian Constitution

The current Nigerian Constitution should be jettisoned to allow unabridged federalism. Because only a federal constitution can address the calls for the balkanisation of the country. A federal constitution will ensure a balance of power where the government at the centre will not become so powerful to bully the federating units or states. According to Anyaoku, as long as we have the 1999 constitution as our grundnorm, not even Angel Gabriel or Malaikah Jibrin as leaders can successfully tackle the divisiveness, the underperforming economy with the resultant poverty, insecurity, humongous corruption and the other major challenges currently facing Nigeria (Oloniniran, 2024). A ‘true’ federal constitution will address the yearnings and aspirations of the people and not the whims and caprices of the minority political class. It is unacceptable for the government at the centre to arrogate to itself the dominant position in all respects with the federating units being subservient to it.

Restructuring

Political uncertainty and economic stress, multiple localised violent conflicts, as well as the rise of divisive rhetoric in Nigeria, have reignited debate on how resources and power should be managed across the country (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2017). Regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status or religion, some Nigerians have harped on the need for a comprehensive rethink of Nigeria’s governance architecture. From the creation or merger of states to the derivation principle and devolution of powers to fiscal federalism and resource control, form of government to local government autonomy, from power sharing and rotation of political offices to land tenure reforms, restructuring can address grievances, bring about reduction in power contestation, extravagancy of public office holders and massive national development in Nigeria (Harry, 2020). A restructured Nigeria where the federating units exercise more power than the government at the centre will surely mitigate most of the challenges facing Nigeria as a country.

Justice

Irrespective of the fact that they lost more than three million people during the civil war the Igbos continue to agitate and clamour for justice and equality (Bawa et al., 2020). This shows that their grievances are deep-rooted and should be addressed. According to Mefor (2024), no volume of extrajudicial killings, arrests, propaganda or deceit by the Nigerian state can extinguish the enduring spirit of Biafra because it is an idea that is deeply rooted in the principles of justice, equity, fairness, equality and resonates not only within the South-East zone but also with all those who cherish the values of human rights and self-determination globally. For Nigeria to remain indivisible and indissoluble, there is a need for political and social justice to address age-long feelings of marginalisation, neglect and alienation by southeasterners. No ethnic group should be greater than the other and no individual should be seen as a first class or second class citizen in Nigeria.

Safety of lives and properties

Nigerian security agencies have become human rights abusers and protectors of the ruling class and their interests rather than entire citizens and their welfare (Amnesty International, 2002). The consequence of these is that the ordinary man has no confidence in state institutions and, rather,

prefers to address challenges through self-help. The practicality of security structures in Nigeria is gradated to one's social position where the poor are worse off in security of lives and property, health security, education security, road security and human rights security among others (Tade, 2018). The safety of lives and properties of Nigerians should be guaranteed irrespective of their place of origin or residence.

Inclusive governance

The principles of inclusive governance call for equal opportunities, accountability, meaningful participation and transparency in governance. Inclusive governance is not just a concept; it is a fundamental approach that recognises the importance of inclusivity in shaping policies and initiatives (OECD, 2020; GGI, 2024). There should be equal opportunity for every Nigerian citizen irrespective of his ethnic or religious leaning. In jobs and political appointments, Nigerians must enjoy all the rights and privileges as citizens of one united country. A country managed in such a way that all the instruments of coercion are in the hands of one ethnic group is only paying lip service to Nigeria's indivisibility (Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024; Njoku, 2025).

End gratifying/pacifying bandits and criminal elements

In 2021, former governors, some traditional rulers and top personalities in Zamfara State were indicted for their relationship with bandits and other criminals in the state (Bilesanmi, 2021). The Nigerian government always show sympathy towards the terrorists/insurgents/bandits rather than their victims. Since crime thrives where there's little deterrence, there should be a better way to deter the marauding bandits and terrorists from their violent activities. Pacifying bandits indirectly strengthens their notoriety. When bandits capture Nigerian civilians, they either murder them or release them only after they have received a ransom from the families or government. However, Nigerian soldiers have been accused of capturing and releasing bandits back into the society (Sahara Reporters, 2024). Since these bandits are steeped in criminal recidivism, they should be contained with relevant laws of the land, not gratification.

Conclusion

Can constitutional finality ameliorate the agitations of secession or a sense of marginalisation and injustice? On the other hand, is secession the panacea to issues of endemic corruption, marginalisation, poverty, insecurity and ethno-religious conflicts? Rather than focusing on an indivisible Nigeria, there is a need to harp on the importance of a country where there is justice and equity. Practical steps that would show the aggrieved individuals that the government is addressing the issues that threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria should be taken. To simply argue that national unity is not negotiable is an intellectual fallacy and an expression of the poverty of ideas. Deepening discord and disunity while holding firm to the myth of Nigeria's indivisibility is not sustainable.

The government has significantly relied on a military-centric approach against secessionist movements, bandits and insurgents but it has failed to produce lasting solutions to these challenges. In other words, such a quick-fix solution will not arrest these centrifugal forces because the government has failed to identify that these threats are driven by deep-seated economic problems, deprivation, socio-economic grievances, multidimensional poverty and all-time neglect

by successive Nigerian governments (Njoku & Sidhu, 2021). Whether or not the unity of Nigeria is negotiable, the fact is that Nigeria is currently confronted with the challenge of national cohesion, national unity and national survival. Thus, a multifaceted approach that includes the development of grassroots policing and addressing the socio-economic and political root causes of these threats are necessary to mitigate these security challenges and ensure Nigeria's indivisibility.

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