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# Suggestible Consequences of Militarizing Self-Determination Movements in Nigeria: A Case Study of Yoruba Separatist Movement

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| **ABSTRACT**

Nigeria, as one of the ethnically heterogeneous African states, has been historically confronted with ethnic conflicts and movements for self-determination, which are often followed by the state's deployment of military armed forces to suppress them. This article uses a deductive thematic analysis of qualitative data obtained from a created Google form, a free online survey link with self-constructed questions to find out the prospect of the Nigerian government deploying military armed forces to suppress the ongoing Yoruba separatist movements as well as suggestible consequences of such militarization. The result unveils a higher prospect of the government militarizing the movement with the outbreak of mass violence as a suggestible outcome. With the theoretical review of the Remedial Theory of self-determination and the exploration of cases of self-determination in post-colonial African states, the article concludes that the possible eruption of mass violence leading to human rights violations and international interventions might result in the dissolution of Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

The legality to maintain the sacrosanctity of the state's territorial integrity that has compelled the containment of aggrieved groups within internationally recognized borders propitious for the preponderance of ethnic conflicts and self-determination movements in Africa has raised questions demanding answers within the academia. Should aggrieved groups be allowed to establish their statehood? Is it possible to allow all ethnic groups to seek self-determination and secession? Can self-determination produce peace and security in multi-ethnic societies? It is pragmatically impossible to allow all ethnic groups to seek both external and internal self-determination, which could facilitate a state of chaos and turmoil in ethnically heterogeneous societies. On the other hand, keeping aggrieved groups forcefully within colonially inherited borders in Africa has not equally spawned stability and security within the continent, thereby necessitating the need to examine certain conditions justifiable and considerable for external and internal self-determination as an alternative solution to the lingering challenge of ethnic conflicts and separatist movements in Africa. It is cumbersome to ascertain the chances of secession spawning stability and security considering the fact that there has been limited success regarding separatist movements in Africa and few secessionist post-colonial states such as South Sudan and Eritrea have not been promising enough to signalize such positive outcomes though this conclusion could be described premature and impotent to become a notable precedent for the future. The final point of consideration is the regional and global implications of successful secession, whereby it could become a motivation behind the eruption of many aggrieved ethnic groups violently demanding secession in multi-ethnic societies, thereby raises concern on the need to prioritize other settlement options short of secession as alternatives to address secessionist movements demanding a change to established colonial boundaries in Africa (Rodt & Wolff, 2015).

The broad principle of self-determination can be categorized into two, which are internal and external. Internal self-determination has to do with the agitation of an aggrieved group within an existing state demanding to be granted autonomy and self-governance (Igwe, Bereprebofa& Anthony, 2020). This entails the continuation of dissatisfied constituents to exist within the boundaries of nation-states based on agreements to freely make political choices and pursue economic, social and cultural development within their territories; therefore, it does not affect the existing territorial integrity of the state (Gudeleviciute, 2005). External self-determination, on the other hand, is directly associated with secession or separatist movement whereby aggrieved constituents deliberately seek to separate themselves from the existing state and set up a new independent state (Bereketeab, 2015). The historical struggles for self-determination in Nigeria have demonstrated both categories whereby the agitation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is mainly associated with external self-determination that started with the declaration of the Republic of Biafra on the 26th May 1967 by the then Governor of the Eastern Region, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, which resulted to the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970. Secondly, the agitation for autonomy and resource control by the Niger Delta militants in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria has closely followed the line of internal self-determination. The commonality between both historical struggles for self-determination is militarized and suppressive responses of the Nigerian state to quell the movements (Igwe, Bereprebofa & Anthony, 2020).

The colonial construct of Nigeria in 1914 has been historically characterized by ethno-religious conflicts whereby political and economic issues are uncontrollably contested along ethnic, religious and regional lines. Consequently, political mobilization is inevitably drawn along ethnic and religious lines, which has put the kibosh on the spirit of national unity in the country (Agbiboa & Okem, 2011). Internal conflicts have pervaded the history of Nigeria, starting from the Aba women's riot of 1929 to the Jos riot of 1945, which led to the death of 200 Igbos living in Jos by northern politicians (Plotnicov, 1971). The Kano riot of 1953 resulted in the death of many people in the Sabongari area of Kano; the Tiv Riots of 1960 to 1964 was an ethno-religious conflict that broke out as a result of the resilience of the Tiv ethnic group (Christians) against the repressive rule of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), dominated by the Hausa-Fulani (Muslims) under the leadership of Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the 1962/63 Census Crisis, Nigeria's first military coup of 1966, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970 followed by many military coups, attempted coups and counter-coups. Internal conflicts continued in the aftermath of the Cold War, such as the proceeding conflicts at different parts of the country after the annulment of the June 12th, 1993 presidential election, oil-related violence from Niger Delta militants, political violence by Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, the Egbesu boys of Ijaw extraction in the Niger Delta and the emergence of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a more radical separatist group in 2012  and the rise of Hausa/Fulani headmen/banditry (Igwe & Amadi, 2021).

Considering the Nigerian ethnicized political structure that has been sourcing the preponderance of ethno-religious conflicts in the history of the country, the need to delve into the possibility of self-determination becoming an alternative solution towards stability in the country is alarming, and it requires the exploration of certain significant factors; firstly, at the Cairo summit in 1964, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) officially declared the sacrosanctity and inviolability of colonially inherited borders whereby colonial boundaries were transformed into international borders (nation-states) at which the UN, other international bodies and conventions immediately acknowledged their legalities thereby concomitant states gained international recognition as legal entities and members of the international system (Farley, 2010). This officially criminalized secessionist movement in Africa leads to the second question of whether the sanctity afforded to colonial-recognized African states has prevented the emergence of ethnic conflicts in the continent. The colonial construct of African boundaries failed to prioritize differences in culture, language, ethnicity, topography and religion among the people, which has been blamed for the outbreak of ethnic conflicts, self-determination and secessionist movements in the post-colonial African states (Mkandawire, 2002). Secondly, the 1999 constitution of Nigeria (CFRN) proscribed any movement towards the political partition of the country by describing the country as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. This constitutionally legitimized the use of military armed forces to suppress all forms of self-determination movements in the country (Igwe, Bereprebofa & Anthony, 2020).

Furthermore, the militarized or repressive response of states against secessionist movements cannot be attributed to the Nigerian state only as many states with the historical experience of the separatist dilemma have customarily responded with the use of the militarized approach. Katanga secessionist movements in Congo, Casamance of Senegal, Cabinda of Angola, Zanzibar of Tanzania and Ogaden secession against the Ethiopian government are examples of African secessions that were suppressed militarily and not as a result of continental conventions (Bereketeab, 2015). Retrospectively, the excessiveness of using military and para-military forces to curtail insecurities in Nigeria is sizeable for scrutiny. The Nigerian state has been characterized by the usual trait of deploying military armed forces to complement the duties of police forces to ensure internal stability in the country, which has mainly resulted in human rights violations and countless civilian casualties (Oluyemi, 2020; Afeno, 2014; Amnesty International, 2002 & 2018). The recent cases of military operations in the country are military killings to quell the "EndSARS" peaceful protests as well as the police militarized approach of using unwarranted force and brutality towards the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown measures in the country. In October 2020, thousands of Nigerians thronged many cities to peacefully protest for the end of police brutality and demanded justice for victims of police violence and extrajudicial killings. The peaceful protest that was tagged

*"EndSARS"* gained global sympathy and support whereby world leaders such as United Nations Secretary-General AntónioGuterres, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, U.S. President Joe Biden, boxing heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua, Arsenal footballer Mesut Ozil and popular American rapper Kanye West all showed support through their social media handles. On the 20th of October 2020, the Nigerian government cracked down on protesters through the declaration of curfews in nine states. At nightfall, the Nigerian armed forces were deployed to open gun-fire at peaceful protesters inLekki Toll Gate, Lagos, the symbolic center of the protest, which resulted in the death of forty-nine (49) civilians and many injured individuals (Uwazuruike, 2020). Secondly, the outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020, which was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), has demanded countries engage in necessary measures to control the spread of the disease (WHO, 2020). Nigeria also took measures such as the closure of airports, schools, religious and social gatherings, restaurants, hotels, public spaces, seaports and land borders, isolation and quarantining of people, as well as banning of sports. Findings have unfolded many complaints of human rights violations, killing of civilians as well as police aggression and extortion against frontline health workers across the country that were exempted from the 'stay-at-home' order of the government (Aborisade & Gbahabo, 2021).

The perpetual deployment of military and para-military forces by the Nigerian government is not only the state's aggressive reactions against separatist movements, but the military armed forces have also been instrumental in removing opposition to the government, addressing internal conflicts and enforcing unacceptable consequences of political corruption over the people (Oluyemi, 2020). The historical records of self-determination movements in Nigeria ranging from the unilateral declaration of the Republic of Biafra in 1967 that led to the eruption of the Nigerian Civil War to the ongoing complimentary efforts of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in addition with the Niger Delta struggle for internal self-determination through the  Kaiama Declaration, the Ogoni Bill of Rights and militant activities from groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Niger Delta Avengers have all been aggressively confronted with the deployment of military armed forces by the government followed bymany military operations in different regions such as the military invasion of Eastern Nigeria during Operation Python Dance (Igwe, Bereprebofa& Anthony, 2020) as well as the formation of a Joint Task Force (JTF) composed of Nigerian armed forces to carry out many military operations in the Niger Delta region under "Operation Salvage", "Operation Hakuri I, II and III" Operation Andoni and Operation Restore Hope (Oluyemi, 2020). The historical record of the Nigerian militarized approach is attestable to the fact that the ongoing secessionist struggle for statehood by the Yoruba tribe in the southwest region is indirectly looking for physical confrontations with the Nigerian armed forces, and this article finds it worthwhile to examine the possibility of this militarization and its suggestible consequences.

Article 1 of the UN Charter empowered anti-colonial nationalist movements and created opportunities for the emergence of independent states, mainly known as decolonization, but it has simultaneously served as a powerful tool for preventing the recreation of new states outside the context of decolonization. The limited successes from struggles for external self-determination outside the context of decolonization have remained to be exceptions rather than the rule, such as the independence and recognition of Kosovo, which has illustratively remained a notable exemplification of remedial secession theory (Rodt & Wolff, 2015). Roseberry (2013) analyzed the eligibility of mass violence as a contentious act affording a certain status to the victimized group citing the international recognition of Kosovo's independence in 2008 as an example to instantiate the potency of normative theories of remedial secession and the theory of suffering. However, both remedial theory and the notion of supervised independence have been unable to establish a universally applicable rule under international law, but they have been able to broaden options for self-determination movements and the international community's recognition (Rodt & Wolff, 2015). The historical hallmark of deploying military armed forces to perpetually quell internal issues or uprisings in Nigeria has gained international attention, and this article argues that militarizing the separatist movements of the Yoruba tribe could result in mass violence and human rights violations, which could, in turn, produce a different result from the usual suppressive outcomes enjoyable by the federal government. Considering the link between mass violence, human rights violations, humanitarian interventions and secession established during the cases of Kosovo, Eritrea and South Sudan, this article argues that the possible eruption of a large scale of mass violence, which is consequential to the militarization of the ongoing Yoruba separatist movements, could be propitious for the dissolution of Nigeria.

## 2. Theoretical Framework
Remedial Rights Only Theory and Primary Rights Theories have been conventionally cited as the main theories of secession (Buchanan, 1997); therefore, an attempt will be made to explain both theories, but Remedial Rights Only Theory will be suitably considered for the scope of this article. Remedial Rights Only Theory is defined as a general right of a group to secede under the condition of suffering a level of injustice to the extent that secession becomes the appropriate remedy of last resort. These injustices could reflect in different forms, such as economic marginalization, ethnic cleansing, exploitation, the threat of extermination, unjust conquest and under-representation in political power or government threshold (Buchanan, 1997). This theory has also been associated with the theory of suffering, which argues that if aggrieved people within an independent state keep up guerrilla warfare for a long time, they are entitled to obtain statehood (White, 1981). This means that the severity of violence and suffering a minority group within a state faces becomes a matter of international concern regarding cases of remedial secession (Anaya, 1996; Lehning,

1998). Remedial Rights Only Theory is also associated with the theory of cultural distance, which argues that if there is an existing cultural gap between the subordinate and superordinate sections of the population and this gap is coupled with the theory of suffering and remedy, it can compel moral and political imperative for the movements of secession. The independence and international recognition of South Sudan in 2011 and Kosovo in 2008 have been considered exemplified cases of remedial secession theory (Rodt & Wolff, 2015; Bereketeab, 2015).

Roseberry (2013) has done notable work in providing insights into the categorization of instances of mass political violence and its implications on the ethics of secession using the independence and international recognition of Kosovo as a case study. Roseberry argues that the use of the remedial theory of secession to justify the international community'spartial recognition of Kosovo's independence based on the Kosovo Albanians' collective status as victims of ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Serb forces has enabled the international community to minimize the risk of further unilateral declarations of independence by aggrieved groups or minorities in vulnerable multi-ethnic states. This also has established a theoretical framework bed-rocking a comparative analysis linking mass violence, humanitarian interventions, human rights violations, and responsibility to protect secession and independence together. In addition, the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia and its recognition by the OAU has been justified within the scope of this theory, whereby Eritrea's historical ruinous federal experience with Ethiopia that led to the eruption of Eritrea's armed struggles for self-determination in 1961 coupled with a repressive and violent response from Ethiopia are considerable factors demonstrating the influence of remedial right theory and theory of suffering over the afforded sanctity of African territoriality. The independence of South Sudan in 2011 and its international recognition have also been described as consequences of historical social, economic, and cultural marginalization and discrimination experienced by the people of South Sudan within Sudan, coupled with the eruption of the first and second civil wars in 1955-1972 and 1983-2005 reinforcing the primacy of remedial right theory and theory of suffering within the OAU's declaration of colonial borders as sacrosanct (Bereketeab, 2015).

The use of injustices as legal conditions to justify secession under the Remedial Right Theory and Theory of Suffering has been questioned by Buchanan (1997), arguing that an act of injustice cannot be the only legal condition for self-determination, thereby proposing conditions that can legitimize secessionist movements. These include "*if the state grants the right to secede, (2) if the constitution of the state includes the right to secede, or perhaps (3) if the agreement by which the state was initially created out of previously independent political unit included the implicit and explicit assumption that secession at a later point was permissible*" (Buchanan 1997, p.36). In 1905, the granting of self-determination to Norway by Sweden illustrated the possibility of self-determination through 'special right' contrary to the remedial right theory. Primary Right Only Theory, on the other hand, has been described as antithetical to Remedial Rights, arguing that injustices are not a prerequisite condition for secession and the right to secession is a natural right thereby, groups within any state have the right to come together and demand a divorce from a sovereign state. Primary right theory can be categorized into two, which are Ascriptive and Associative Theory. Ascriptive theory justifies the right of a group to secede provided it is characterized by a common culture, history, language and a sense of its own distinctiveness, while Associative theory justifies the right of political association as eligible enough to secede (Buchanan, 1997). The impracticability of Primary Rights Theory within African states and most in particular in Nigeria, as well as its inapplicability to various regional and international conventions on the sacrosanctity and inviolability of territoriality of nation-states, has made it short of adequate consideration in this article.

## 3. Rights and Cases of Self Determination

Self-determination as a term was first used by the 28th President of the United States of America after the First World War, Woodrow Wilson, in his famous document known as *Fourteen Points,* where he addressed nations in the category of superpowers such as France, Great Britain, Italians, Germans, Belgians, Spaniards and Portuguese managing colonies all around the world on the need to grant their colonies inalienable rights to self-determination and freedom (Taiwo, 2017). The principle of self-determination entails that nations have the right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status without external force. Article 1(2) of the United Nations (UN) Charter explains that one of the main purposes of the UN is to *"develop friendly relations among nation-states based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of the people as well as taking necessary measures to strengthen universal peace"* (Dersso, 2012, p.8). Self-determination principle transformed into a legal right under Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) stated that the *"rights of everyone to have a nationality that cannot be arbitrarily violated."* The common Article 1 in both International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) explained that "*All peoples have the right of self-determination whereby they have can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic social and cultural development"* (Gudeleciute, 2005, p.49). Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul) also stated that "*all peoples have the right to existence and that they have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination, to determine their political status freely and pursue their economic and social development*" The African Charter explains further that colonized and oppressed people have the right to free themselves from alien domination using any means recognized by the international community (Bereketeab, 2015).

The comprehensive understanding of rights to self-determination stated within international conventions is mainly related to decolonization, whereby nation-states were granted the legal right to pursue freedom from alien domination, the right to liberate people under foreign military occupation through self-determination to become separate independent states as well as the right granted to the oppressed or unrepresented people to have meaningful government, political, economic, social and cultural development thereby self-determination has not been envisioned to take place within the existing defined international recognized territories (Bereketeab, 2015). In this respect, the sustainability of the territorial integrity of states and its inviolability has been placed above the principle of external self-determination in post-colonial states, which can also be found in African states' commitment to the principle of *'Uti Possidetis.'* The Organization of African Unity (OAU) passed a resolution in 1964 stating *that "all Member States pledgedto themselves to respect the existing borders on their achievement of national independence"*(Temin, 2010). This could be consequential to various issues that confronted African states during the period of OAU's establishment, such as conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia, Kenya's claim over Somali-inhabited Ogaden of Ethiopia and the North Eastern Province of Kenya necessitated the need to contain and reduce wars of secession and border disputes by the OAU thereby facilitated the declaration of the sacrosanctity of internationally recognized borders in Africa. The independence and recognition of Eritrea and South Sudan by the OAU have raised considerable questions on moral conditions broadening the sacrosanctity afforded to colonially inherited borders of African states (Bereketeab, 2015).

The various international conventions reinforcing the inviolability of existing colonially created borders, coupled with states' suppressive responses against separatist movements that have been mainly defined as threatening the survival of states' territorial integrity and their national unity, have consequently limited the pervasion of secessionist conflicts in ethnically heterogeneous states. The case of Kosovo's independence stands among many cases of contested movements for external self-determination and remains to be among the few that seceded successfully. Outside the context of decolonization before 2008, the creation of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1971 out of a secessionist movement was the only notable case. The emergence of new states, such as those in Central and Eastern Europe, out of the collapse of communism has not been defined as cases of successful secession. The independence of Baltic republics in 1991 from the former Soviet Union has been described as the restoration of pre-existing statehood, which led to the creation of additional twelve successor states. In addition, the Czechoslovakia case has been similarly described, while Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1993 out of the UN-supervised referendum has been described as somehow short of contested secession. The independence of East Timor from Indonesia in 2002, representing the first such incident in the twenty-first century, has also been classified within the context of decolonization, which has left the independence of Kosovo becoming a watershed in the longstanding debate regarding the chances of aggrieved people within colonially created borders to seek external self-determination (Rodt & Wolff, 2015).

The success of Kosovo's external self-determination and its partial international recognition has been mainly attributed to the consequences of protracted violent conflicts and human rights situation against Albanian Kosovo by Serb Forces. The conflict that witnessed the failure of many international conflict management strategies started from 1990 onwards (Rodt& Wolff, 2015). In summary, Kosovar Albanians sought independence throughout the 1990s and in 1998 Serb government initiated police and military actions against the separatist movements, which resulted in human rights violations. Many initiatives and political negotiations to resolve the status of Kosovo failed, leading to the air strike campaign of NATO against Serb forces in 1999 in order to force the withdrawal of Serb military operations in Kosovo. After NATO military intervention, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1244 (1999) authorizing the UN's administration of Kosovo with the task of coming up with a general framework to resolve the final political and legal status of Kosovo, which resulted in the UN nine years' administration of Kosovo followed by many political negotiations that consequently came up with inconclusive decisions. The European Union, Russia, and the United States (Troika), in an attempt to carry out a mediation process, engaged in negotiations between the government of Serbia and Kosovar Albanians from August to December 2007, and the outcome of Troika report stated the dissatisfaction of both parties to the conflict to reach a collective agreement, which in turn led to the statement issued by the Parliament of Kosovo declaring *"Kosovo to be an independent and sovereign state in 2008"* (Borgen, 2008).

The wide-ranging implications of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and its partial international recognition prompted the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution in 2008 that requested an advisory opinion on whether the independence of Kosovo was in alignment with the international law from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Court delivered its Advisory Opinion in 2010 stated that the declaration of independence of Kosovo has not violated international law. Additionally, some conditions defining the success of Kosovo independence are stated as follows; (1) the prolonged mass violence leading to human rights violations against Albanian Kosovo by the Serb government, (2) the inability of international responses to address the intransigence of both parties to reach an agreement whereby for Kosovo, anything other than independence was inconceivable, and for Serbs, anything but independence was possible and (3) lack of coherent interest among international actors involved in the conflict management whereby there was internal EU divisions, United States supportive actions toward the independence of Kosovo and the resistance of Russia towards the UN Security Council resolution without an agreement from Belgrade (Rodt & Wolf, 2015). The Kosovo case has been used to reinforce the linkage between prolonged mass violence, human rights violations, humanitarian intervention and secession coupled with postulations of remedial right only theory. Roseberry (2013)

argues that mass violence against independence-seeking groups has profound impacts not only on the group status of victims and their prospects of gaining independence and recognition but also on powerful international actors' decisions on the ground on which such secessionist groups would be recognized. The use of remedial secession based on mass violence against Albanian Kosovo as a justification for the international recognition afforded to Kosovo, as well as its rightfulness of independence, instantiated the efficacy of mass violence towards the success of secessionist movements.

The independence of Eritrea was born out of the 30-year war, and its recognition has also been described as a breach of the sacrosanctity of territorial borders that was officiated by the OAU in 1964. The historical claim of Ethiopia was the classification of Eritrea to be an integral part of the Abyssinian Empire before its colonization, while Eritrea's argument for decolonization and independence was grounded on the fact that its political identity was a creation of colonialism. Historically, Eritrea did not exist as a unified political entity until Italy created it as a colony in the 1890s and after the defeat of Italy in 1941 during World War II, the British forces administered Eritrea as a UN trustee, which lasted for ten years (Bereketeab, 2015). The disposal of Eritrea was brought to the UN General Assembly leading to different conflicting positions among members, and the United States disagreed with the independence of Eritrea on the suspicion that it is a Muslim-majority state liable to form an alliance with the Arab world, which could turn the Red Sea into an Arab Lake (Yohannes, 1991). On the other hand, Ethiopia is described as a Christian majority state and a staunch enemy of communism, thereby adjoining Eritrea and Ethiopia seemed to profit from the United States and Israeli interests over the Red Sea (Schraeder, 1992). This led to the proposal of a federal arrangement between Ethiopia and Eritrea by the United States in order to compromise the interest of Eritrea's self-determination and Ethiopia's claim over Eritrea. The proposal that later obtained the approval of the UN led to the creation of the Ethio-Eritrean federation in 1952, which lasted for only ten years as Ethiopia unilaterally annexed Eritrea in 1962 (Bereketeab, 2015).

Eritrea experienced ruinous federal administration from Ethiopia, whereby there were restrictions on political rights, including the press and political organizations against Eritrea. The economy was incapacitated through the closure and relocation of many factories to Addis Ababa. The education system was attempted to be reformed with the aim of incorporating the official language of Ethiopia, Amharic, and in 1957, many educational texts written in Tigrigna and Arabic were burnt. The Ethiopian government also lowered the Eritrean flag in 1958, which was the symbol of Eritrean nationalism (Bereketeab, 2015). In 1961, Eritrea started armed struggles for independence by Hamid Idris Awate; by 1971, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) began to wage war against Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, and by 1975, the EPLF joined forces with the rising nationalist movement in the neighboring province of Ethiopia, Tigray; the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The combined forces fought decades-long of armed struggles against the Mengistu government. Meles Zenawi, the leader of TPLF, gained an interim position as Prime Minister of Ethiopia and subsequent elections made it a permanent position in 1991. This success led to the establishment of a cemented agreement between EPLF and TPLF that eventually led to the organized referendum in Eritrea under the supervision of the United Nations (UN Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea), which gave birth to the United Nations formal recognition of Eritrea to its membership on May 28, 1993 (Hamilton, 2000). The independence and recognition of Eritrea have been described as a consequence of protractive mass violence (a 30-year war) between Eritrea and Ethiopia as well as failed efforts of international conflict resolution, which has also been cited in reinforcing the primacy of remedial right only theory and theory of suffering towards secessionist movements.

The independence of South Sudan outside the context of decolonization was another contravention of the OAU's sacrosanctity of African territoriality (Bereketeab, 2015). The area known as South Sudan today was a marginalized region in the Republic of Sudan under the administration of tribal chiefs during the British colonial period (1899-1955). The marginalization resulted in the first Sudanese civil war (1955-1972) from the emergence of the Anyanya rebellion headed by southern Sudanese separatists. It was described as the longest bloody conflict that erupted at the end of the British colonial era between the people of South Sudan and the government of Sudan, which was a year before the independence of the country. The 1972 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement marked the end of the first civil war only to welcome the outbreak of another civil war in 1983 instigated by the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), and it was also described as one of the longest civil wars that ended in 2005 through the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between SPLM/A and the government of Sudan, which allowed the autonomous right of self-rule to the people of South Sudan for five years as well as a chance for self-determination. This led to the organized referendum under the supervision of the UN, EU and many intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations in January 2011 with an outcome of 98.8% voted for the independent state of South Sudan, and on July 9, 2011, the new state of South Sudan was officially announced with its admission into the membership of the United Nations General Assembly on July 14, 2011 (Kumsa, 2017). The protracted nature of mass violence leading to long years of human rights violations and the failure of many peace agreements afforded the privilege of successful secession to South Sudan, which also falls within the scope of remedial secession and the theory of human suffering. Roseberry (2013) argues that the possibility of secession outside the context of decolonization has been increasingly re-oriented towards highly restrictive conditions intimately linked with the type and extent of mass violence suffered by the population seeking secession.

**4. Self Determination Movements in Nigeria and the State' Response**

The colonial construct of Nigeria mirrored its administrative interest at the detriment of differences among ethnically composed groups situated in different regions, and this has consequently become a historical source of ethnic conflicts or separatist movements in the country. The independence of 1960 was immediately followed by a staged coup in the Nigerian Military Force in 1966 by the Ibo people of Biafra targeted against prominent northern leaders, resulting in the death of Ahmadu Bello (Sadauna of Sokoto) and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (the then Premier of Nigeria). Vengefully, northerners launched retaliatory attacks against the Ibo people, who were not only in the military but also civilians inhabiting the northern part of the country, which resulted in the death of thousands of Biafra people (Uzoigwe, 2016). Nigeria was under the military government of General Yakubu Gowon during this period who was a northerner and the then governor of the East, Odumegwu Ojukwu, accused him of intransigence and negligence toward taking necessary measures to protect the people of Biafra, which led Ojukwu to declare the Republic of Biafra in 1967 (Taiwo, 2017; Ojukwu& Oni, 2017). This declaration resulted in the bloodiest first civil war in Sub-Saharan Africa as the Nigerian government responded with heavy military armed forces against the secessionist region of Biafra between July 6, 1967, to January 15, 1970, with records of mass violence, with the death of around three million people, wide spread of malnutrition and devastation (Akreshetal., 2012).

People of Biafra might have been militarily compelled to surrender, leading to the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970, but the history and ideology of Biafra have remained unchanged in the minds of Biafrans. Ojukwu (1989) stated that Biafra as a concept was a line drawn on the side of discriminated and persecuted people for having hope; it was a line drawn for the hope of displaced people, a line drawn for the hope of hated and marginalized people and this line was not drawn until there were certain acts of war, violence, discrimination and marginalization against Biafrans. Biafra has become an ideology ensuring hope and vision of a future good society to the young Ibo generation allowing them to be proactive, progressive and industrious (Otuonye, 2019). This project has resurfaced again through the various separatist strategies of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), established in 1999 and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) formed in 2012, including their allies (Otuonye 2019). Amnesty International (2016) explained ways in which IPOB has been using its London-based Radio Biafra Station to reach out to many aggrieved Biafrans and gather many supporters both inside and outside Nigeria. Biafra is considered a threat to Nigeria's national unity, and the Nigerian government continued with a militarized approach to suppress the movement, whereby many members of the group have been ceaselessly intimidated, killed and incarcerated by law enforcement agencies (Adonu, 2018). The leader of MASSOB, Ralph Uwazuruike, together with his followers, have been arrested unlawfully countless times, while the leader of IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu, was apprehended and incarcerated by the Department of State Security (DSS) in 2015 (Akreshetal., 2012). Nnamdi Kanu's house was invaded by the Nigerian armed forces in 2017, whereby Adonu (2018) argued that many Biafrans were apprehended during this invasion and killed in cold blood. The federal government of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, has also proscribed IPOB and officially tagged it as a terrorist group through a court judgment (Chukwudietal., 2019). The various military measures adopted by the federal government to suppress separatist agitations of the people of Biafra are still ongoing in Nigeria, illustrating the preponderance of mass violence and human rights violations in the country.

Another historical movement for self-determination in Nigeria emerged from struggles over ownership and control of oil resources and revenues by the people of the Niger Delta (Ako & Omiunu 2013). This region is composed of six states in the south-south geopolitical zone occupying minority groups in the country. The 1956 discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri town, located in the Niger Delta region that subsequently became the mainstay of the Nigerian national economy in the 1970s, had devastative effects on the environment and agricultural works of inhabitants through the various oil activities by oil companies in the region working in collaboration with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (Bagaji A.Y et al., 2011). UNDP (2006) stated that emanating oil spills from the exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the Niger Delta region have deteriorated the environment, resulting in the destruction of farmland, contamination of water resources and the disposition of toxic materials. The consequential disasters from oil activities in this region prompted the people to peacefully demand a governmental policy aimed at addressing various environmental challenges and socio-economic underdevelopment of the region. Military armed forces have been historically deployed to suppress both peaceful and violent movements of the people. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), headed by a social activist, Ken SaroWiwa, started with peaceful movements in the 1990s whereby the military operation carried out in the region resulted in the death of the leader and eight other members of the group. Militarization of the region has resulted in the rise of militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Avengers and the Niger Delta Creek Warriors (NDCW) violently demanding self-determination; the right to have control over oil resources, autonomous and self-government (Bereprebofa & Anthony, 2020). Additionally, the Niger Delta region has accommodated many military operations such as "Operation Salvage" and "Operation Hakuri I, II and III" in 1997, "Operation Pulo Shield" and "Operation Flush Out" as violent responses from the government to suppress the rise of militant groups in the region without any substantial positive outcomes (Oluyemi, 2020). This region is still battling various security challenges from militant groups and Nigerian armed forces with an ongoing large scale of violence and instabilities, abject poverty, a high rate of unemployment, environmental degradation, and socio-economic underdevelopment, as well as the demand for self-determination.

The third ongoing separatist movement in Nigeria has to do with the demand for statehood by the Yoruba tribe, which has basically gained the attention of this article. Yoruba tribe is one of the three major tribes in Nigeria, with around 30 million people in the south-western region. As early as the 1900s, there have been historical records of ethnic-based nationalist movements by Yoruba people. This started as a cultural project and later gravitated to a political dimension reflecting civic nationalism in the 1940s, and the involvement of violence came along from the 1960s upwards. Yoruba nationalist movements have had considerable influence on the formation of the Nigerian state both during colonial and post-colonial eras. The movement has been described as violent since 1964 and is often associated with the ethnic-based political relationship among many ethnic groups characterizing Nigerian politics. Many exemplifying cases of Yoruba crisis include; *'operation weti e'* (1964-1966), Àgbékòyà crisis (1968), political violence as a result of a rigged election in the old Oyo and Ondo states in 1983 and the proceeding violence after the annulment of June 12, 1993, general elections. In addition, other cases relating to Yoruba's perceived marginalization in Nigeria involve the political violence initiated by the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in many Yoruba-dominated states and cities such as Ibadan, Ilorin, Lagos, Sagamu, Osogbo (Ajala, 2009).

Nigeria is inherent with ethno-religious division leading to countless ethnic conflicts, such as the issuing of a three-month ultimatum to the Ibos of southeast living in the northern part of the country to leave the region by some northern groups in 2017, which has also placed demand on the need for territorial and political division of the country. Historically, Yoruba farmers and Fulani (Northerners) pastoralists have co-existed together in the southwest (Yoruba region) for many centuries and recently, the prevalence of aggravated atrocities of Fulani herdsmen's killing, raping, and kidnapping of many Yoruba people in the southwest (Yoruba region) has erupted the violence calling for the separation of Yoruba tribe from Nigeria. The populist leader Sunday Adeyemo commonly known as Sunday Igboho, and Yoruba historian, Professor Banji Akintoye have accused the negligence and intransigence of the federal government of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari (northerner), who belongs to the Fulani tribe to have deliberately allowed the excessiveness of various atrocities committed by the Fulani headsmen in the Yoruba region, which has been the argument behind the need for Yoruba people to divorce the territorial boundary of Nigeria and be recognized as a separate independent state (Mpi, 2021). The argument legitimizing this claim is found similar to that of OdumegwuOjukwu's reason behind the declaration of the Republic of Biafra in 1967 against the government of General Yakubu Gowon (northerner) as already explained. Considering the historical record of the Nigerian government deploying the military and para-military forces to suppress all forms of opposition and uprisings in the country, this article finds it requisite to examine the chances of approaching the Yoruba separatist movements with the same security approach and the possible outcomes of such militarization.

## 5. Methodology
Due to the compounded, sensitive and unexplored nature of the research topic, the article uses a deductive thematic text analysis of qualitative data obtained from a created Google form, a free online survey link with self-constructed questions inspired by Braun and Clark (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2012; Clarke and Braun, 2017). The survey aims to capture the opinion of participants concerning the recent separatist movement of the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, if the government will deploy military armed forces to suppress the movement and suggestible outcomes of militarizing the movement. The survey was conducted for a period of three weeks and publicized on different social media sites through the help of OlayomiKoiki Media, and participants were only allowed from southwest states (Yoruba states) in Nigeria, which consists of Oyo, Ogun, Kwara, Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Kogi States. The survey was hybrid structured with multiple choice and open-ended questions, which allowed participants to share their opinion in answering research questions. The survey was adequately structured to address research questions and allowed flexibility in other to obtain a vast amount of qualitative content-rich comments, and as a result, the survey received 660 participants with one or more comments. Deductive thematic text analysis was adopted, which involves the use of pre-existing theory, framework, or other researcher driven focus in identifying appropriate themes of interest contrary to the inductive thematic text where themes are derived from the researcher's data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The fact that the inductive approach is dependent on data obtained from the survey to generate themes makes it short of consideration in this study, considering the fact that participants' responses might not mirror the exact questions asked, whereby data obtained may not address the research interest or scope of the study. This study generates themes from exploring the remedial right theory of self-determination and existing cases of self-determination in establishing a relationship between mass violence, human rights violations, the need for humanitarian intervention and secession. The rich-content qualitative comments obtained from participants were repeatedly read for adequate understand and carefully analyzed by the researcher in order to classify suitable comments toward the explanation of themes generated from the theoretical framework of the study and research questions.

### 5.1 Participants and Ethical Consideration
The survey targeted participants only from southwest states in Nigeria, and it received 660 participants composed of 573 (86.8%) male, and 87 (13.2%) female, illustrating that male participants are higher than female participants. 57 (8.6%) participants from Lagos state, 130 (19.7%) participants from Oyo state, 150 (22.7%) participants from Ogun state, 142 (21.5%) participants from Osun state, 34 (5.2%) participants from Kwara state, 67(10.2%) participants from Ekiti state, 48 (7.3%) participants from Ondo state, 32 (4.8%) participants from Kogi state illustrating the fact that participants cover all southwest states (Yoruba land) in Nigeria. 52

(7.9%) participants fall between the ages 18-25, 353 (53.5%) participants fall between the ages 26-39, and 255 (38.6%) participants fall between the ages 40 and above, illustrating the fact that youth between the age of 26-39 are highest participants.

The survey also adhered to ethical principles by putting an anonymous option in the questionnaire whereby comments were carefully cited according to the anonymous decision of participants. Data was also collected anonymously through the use of a web-based public survey link whereby participation was solely dependent on the voluntary decision of participants.

**Table1 shows the descriptive result of the survey**

|  | Responses | n= 660 | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 573 | 86.8% |
|  | Female | 87 | 13.2% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Age | 18-25 | 52 | 7.9% |
|  | 26-39 | 353 | 53.5% |
|  | 40+ | 255 | 38.6% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Anonymous option | I don't care | 445 | 67.4% |
|  | Anonymous | 215 | 32.6% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Educational level | ≤10 years of schooling | 23 | 3.5% |
|  | High school or equivalent | 142 | 21.5% |
|  | NCE/OND | 129 | 19.6% |
|  | Bachelor's or equivalent | 290 | 43.9% |
|  | Master's degree | 55 | 8.3% |
|  | Doctoral degree | 21 | 3.2% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| State of Origin | Lagos | 57 | 8.6% |
|  | Oyo | 130 | 19.7% |
|  | Ogun | 150 | 22.7% |
|  | Osun | 142 | 21.5% |
|  | Kwara | 34 | 5.2% |
|  | Ekiti | 67 | 10.2% |
|  | Ondo | 48 | 7.3% |
|  | Kogi | 32 | 4.8% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Opinion on divided or one Nigeria? | Divided | 620 | 93.9% |
|  | One Nigeria | 34 | 5.2% |
|  | Not sure | 6 | 0.9% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Opinion on the deployment of military armed forces to suppress Yoruba separatist movements? | Yes Related | 525 | 79.6% |
|  | No Related | 55 | 8.3% |
|  | Not Sure | 80 | 12.1% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |
| Opinion on outcomes of militarization | Mass Violence Related | 575 | 87.1% |
|  | Non Violence Related | 55 | 8.3% |
|  | Not Sure | 30 | 4.6% |
|  | Total | 660 | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**6. Results**
*6.1Opinion on Yoruba Separatist Movements*
The survey received 620 (93.9%) participants who supported the division of Nigeria, while only 34 (5.2%) supported Nigeria to existence as a unified country. Many participants opinionated their motives behind supporting the separatist movement of the Yoruba tribe as a consequence of the failure of Nigeria as a unified country whereby there is ethnicization of political offices and significant governmental parastatals leading to high rate of marginalization, exploitation, corruption, insecurities and underdevelopment rampant in the country. The majority of participants have lost hope in the ability of a unified Nigeria to become promising due to the ethnic composition of the country. Differences among various ethnic groups in the country, the security challenge is emanating from Boko Haram terrorist groups from the north as well as various atrocities of Fulani headmen and banditry, well as the negligence and dispassionate attitudes of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to address security threats posed by northerners with the accusation that his nonchalant attitude is as a result of the fact that he is a northerner by the tribe. The few participants that supported Nigeria to remain as one still commented on the need for adequate restructuring to address various challenges rampant in the country. Some of the comments obtained from participants concerning their opinion on the Yoruba tribe separating from Nigeria to become an independent state are as follows:

Tomiwa, a master's degree holder from Oyo state, Ibadan, commented that the Yoruba tribe separating from Nigeria has both good and bad sides whereby Yoruba tribe would be able to survive alone considering the major economics they control, but it may not come easily and lives might be lost during the process.

Tunde, a PhD holder from Ogun state, commented that actualizing a Yoruba nation (Yoruba independent state from Nigeria) will be a dream comes true, but at least there is a need to start with restructuring first.

Charles, a bachelor's degree holder from Ekiti State, commented that we need our own Yoruba Nation because Nigeria is for jihadist Northern Fulani. We are civil and educated people; we need a Yoruba independent state as it existed before 1914 forceful amalgamation of Yoruba with terrorist north jihadist, Boko Haram people.

A master's degree holder participant from Oyo state explained; I generally feel not just as a Yoruba tribe, there is a need for a proper restructuring in Nigeria. Each state should have their autonomy in order to build itself because even the division of the country along ethnic lines would likely still lead to the same issues we have been facing in the country. Nigeria should continue to exist as a unified state, but there is a need for proper restructuring.

Bamidele is HND holder from Osun State, commented that my opinion is supportive of Yoruba separating from Nigeria based on certain reasons; nepotism is one, and resources control by northerners is another. Most Yoruba indigenous people are being deprived of their rights in their states whereby educated Yoruba people are subjected below illiterate northerners, and concerning employment at government offices, northerners have been given priority above the Yoruba people, then to make the situation worse, Fulani headmen are killing our farmers on our farmlands, raping and kidnapping our people in our states and Mr. President is silent about it because they are people from his tribe.

Olawale, a bachelor's degree holder from Ogun state, explained that the Yoruba nation (Yoruba as an independent state from Nigeria) is the only answer to the horrifying situation of Nigeria. We are living as slaves in Nigeria; insecurity is rampant everywhere, along with an unfavorable and biased constitution, nepotism etc.

Otebolakuis, a bachelor's degree holder from Osun state, commented that this is the best option to save Yoruba people from extermination, ethnic cleansing and slavery of Fulani hegemony. We, Yorubas had our own nation before the British, out of greed and selfishness, fraudulently amalgamated us together; we are horrible together and different people by look, orientation, beliefs, culture, mindset, language, religion and geographical location. Therefore, we seek to exit this void and fraudulent union to gain our sovereignty and independence as a nation.

Jide, a Ph.D holder from Kogi State, explains that the separation of the Yoruba tribe from Nigeria will create unity and better understanding among Yorubas. It will also assist our economy by engaging productive and versatile youths in order to increase the viability of every sector.

A bachelor's degree holder from Ogun state explained that I feel indifferent about it. I am afraid because if the Yoruba tribe should separate from Nigeria, Yoruba leaders might still lead the newly established Yoruba nation into corruption and the like.

A bachelor's degree holder participant from Ondo State explained that achieving this independence would not be an easy task. It will be difficult for the Yoruba tribe to wake up one day and decides to separate from Nigeria; this will lead to war because the Nigerian government will do everything possible to suppress it, lives will be lost, and other countries can use the opportunity to invade our country and enslave our people again. I'm not in support of it at all.

***6.2 Deployment of Military Armed Forces to Suppress Yoruba Separatist Movements***

There are 525 (79.6%) participants who strongly believe that the Nigerian government would deploy military armed forces to suppress the Yoruba separatist movement, while 100 (15.2%) participants disagreed, and 35 (5.3%) participants are not sure. Many participants supported the prospect of the government militarizing the movement with comments buttressing how the government has been active in using armed forces to suppress all forms of opposition and uprisings in the country. Many people mentioned the case of military attacks against ENDSARS peaceful protests as the least expected militarized response from a democratic government and considering how Nigerian citizens demonstrated their rights peacefully during protests as well as the international attention gained by the protest. The historical records of perpetual deployment of military armed forces in the country, such as military attacks against Biafrans and the people of Niger Delta, were cited by the people who claimed to be expectant of government militarizing the Yoruba separatist movement. Some of the comments obtained from participants concerning their opinion on the prospects of the Nigerian government deploying military armed forces to suppress the Yoruba separatist movement are as follows:

A participant of 40 years and above from Ogun state commented that the Nigerian government would surely make a move to deploy armed forces against protesters because the oppressor will not give freedom to the oppressed freely except the oppressed people take what belongs to them by force; therefore we are ready to defend and take back our nation within our capacity for our upcoming generation to live a better life.

Olájùwón, an NCE degree holder from Ogun state, commented that Yes, the Nigerian government would deploy armed forces to attack protesters because they have been doing it already. The killing of Innocent citizens is a daily routine for the government. They pamper terrorism, banditry and Boko Haram, but they kill unarmed Nigerian citizens.

A participant from Osun state also commented that, yes, the Nigerian government would use soldiers and police to suppress the protest because they are used to doing it. They did it against Biafrans in 1967; they are presently doing it against IPOB and against Niger Delta people, and also against peaceful protesters of ENDSARS.

A bachelor's degree holder from Ekiti state commented that Yes. I totally believe Nigeria would deploy the military to suppress the protest. This is because they have already been doing that with the Igbos (Biafra) on a groundless basis. The Nigerian government has always been dominated by northerners and depended on revenues from the south, but they have not done much in developing their human capital for self-sustainability over decades. Hence they will want to kill the will of others through the use of military force.

Oluade, a bachelor's degree holder at the age of 40years and above from Ondo state, commented that If the Nigerian government can use military armed forces to attack peaceful protesters during ENDSARS protests, then they are capable of repeating the same approach or they may likely use some proxy like insurgents or perhaps they will use Yoruba polithievescians.

Muritala from Oyo state commented that I don't think so because the southeast is not safe anymore due to militarization, they only have the southwest, and if they repeat such a mistake, they may lose the whole country.

Timileyin from Ondo State, a bachelor's degree student, commented that Yes, the Nigerian government would do that, but we are not scared of them, though a lot of people will die during this process, let's face the fact, 80% of us are living as dead beings in Nigeria already, so let's fight this once and for all. I stand with my father's land, Oduduwa (Yoruba) nation. I am a religious man, but I will do anything to save my people from injustice.

Jimoh, a bachelor's degree holder from Kogi state, commented that definitely yes, the Nigerian government would do that, and besides, there is no revolution that has not come with bloodshed; for every revolution, there must be a war such as Russian Revolutions, Napoleon War, France, Scotland and England etc. We are ready for war.

Akins, a bachelor's degree holder from Osun state, commented that definitely, the Nigerian government, over the years, had shown massive disregard to the fundamental and core values of democracy by using military forces in most related cases, and I don't think that would change now.

Femi, a master's degree holder from Ogun state at the age of 40 years and above, commented that I strongly believe the Nigerian government would do so, but if death is the answer, we are ready to die for the next generation to be liberated.

A PhD holder participant from Ondo state commented that the Nigerian government would attempt negotiation first; it might finally lead to a national referendum. The use of force will be the last resort because if that happens, Nigeria will be fighting on two fronts, the Biafra and Oduduwa.

Adeyemi, a bachelor's degree holder from Ekiti state, commented that the Nigerian government would try to do so, but we will resist; it will become an international issue that will eventually lead to Yoruba Independence. We need self-determination.

### 6.3 Suggestible Outcomes of Militarizing the Yoruba Separatist Movement: Mass Violence

Related comments to mass violence such as killings, the full scale of war, large scale of violence, disastrous and genocidal outcomes, death, fatalities, ethnic cleansing, international intervention, human rights violations, attacks and counter attacks, revolutions, rebellion, bloody, brutal, chaos, total anarchy, failed state and human suffering are mentioned by 575 (87.1%) participants as suggestible outcomes of a military attack against protesters of Yoruba separatist movement whereby many participants claimed to be ready for war and death in fighting for what they claimed to be the only solution to the long-time challenges confronting the country. Some of the comments obtained from participants concerning their opinion on the outcomes of the Nigerian government deploying military armed forces to suppress the movement are as follows:

Tunde, a PhD holder from Ogun state, commented that, as we all know, the military is not supposed to be involved in internal conflicts, but Nigeria as a nation has degraded the armed forces to the extent that military forces intervene in civil matters. The military approach will lead to more havoc, and this might lead to unexpected civil war in the country.

Johnson, a master's degree holder from Ekiti state, commented that possibilities are there. Freedom is not cheap. Fulani people won't spare their guns. They see Nigeria as their private property, and they will do everything possible to keep it. We, Yorubas, should keep getting ready for that confrontation. We need to build alliances. We need to work with Yoruba people in the diaspora who are members of a foreign army and other military forces. We need to be ready for war.

Bamidele, an HND holder from Osun state, commented that the outcome would be bloody because we are tired of a unified Nigeria, Yoruba nation is what we want, and if they attack our peaceful protest, it will lead to massive crisis.

Anjorin, a bachelor's degree holder from Ekiti state, commented that the Nigerian government would regret the decision to deploy armed forces because we are fully prepared and ready for them. This will eventually be to our advantage because after the mass violence for freedom, we will be totally free.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

The pervasiveness of the Nigerian militarized security approach connotes the perpetual deployment of military and para-military armed forces to address internal insecurities and all forms of opposition or uprisings, as well as movements for self-determination in the country. The survey result of this article shows 620 (93.9%) participants supported the dissolution and disintegration of Nigeria, illustrating how unbearable and ungovernable Nigeria as a country has become to its citizens. Cultural distance prevailed in the comments of many participants with complaints of how divided ethnically Nigeria has become as a consequence of the 1914 amalgamation and how ethnic divisions and the existing cultural gap had deteriorated the political and economic structures of the country. Many Yoruba people blame northerners as a result of insecurities posed by Boko Haram and Fulani headmen/banditry, including the northernization of Nigerian political structure, thereby opting for Yoruba land to become an independent state becomes the only alternative solution. This article argues that the division of Nigeria in spite of the wave of self-determination might be impregnable only if the Nigerian government could adopt a different security strategy (Non-military approach) outside the use of military armed forces. The wide-ranging implications of secession in regional and global environments could hinder the support of powerful states and continental and international organizations to aid separatist movements in Nigeria and any other African states.

Furthermore, the success of the Yoruba separatist movement (southwest) would legitimize the furtherance of the same right by the people of Biafra (eastern region) as well as the Niger Delta region (south-south), leaving Nigeria to northerners, which could result in the division of the country into four different independent states. Considering the position of Nigeria in Africa and the significance of Nigerians in diasporas, this self-determination can lead to the eruption of separatist movements in many ethnically heterogeneous African states whereby many of which have historically been confronted with separatist movements. The division of the country might also contradict the national interest of many powerful states in Nigeria, taking cognizance of how international assistance from powerful states had played a deciding role in the self-determination of Kosovo, Eritrea and South Sudan. The unilateral declaration of independence of Yoruba land could result in a lack of international recognition and membership of regional and global organizations, such as the situation of Somaliland and North Cyprus (recognized only by Turkey). In this respect, the outbreak of mass violence leading to human rights violations remains the express way of international intervention whereby the failure of international conflict resolution strategies could facilitate the same outcomes eventuated in Kosovo, Eritrea and South Sudan as exemplified within the remedial right theory of self-determination. The survey result shows 525 (79.5%) of participants strongly believe that the government would deploy military armed forces to attack the Yoruba separatist movement, and 575 (87.1%) participants claimed to be ready for mass violence as the outcome of such militarization. The high rate of insecurities and rampant militarization in Nigeria has made it vulnerable, whereby the outbreak of mass violence might become uncontrollable, leading to the need for humanitarian and international intervention, which could lead to the dissolution of Nigeria as a unified, independent state. The established relationship between mass violence, human rights violations, humanitarian and international interventions and secession has been empirically examined in this article in order to admonish the Nigerian government to abstain

from militarizing the ongoing Yoruba separatist movements and eschew the outbreak of mass violence in its all possibilities in the country.

The participants obtained for this research are limited compared to the population of people inhabiting each Yoruba state in the country, which means the created online survey link might be unable to reach out to many people. Additionally, this research provides illuminating predictions and suggestions on the possible outcome of the Nigerian government employing military tactics to suppress the secessionist movements of the Yoruba tribe by exploring different cases of self-determinations and theoretical perspectives; however, the suggested outcomes might not eventuate the future reality. This research also recognizes the pressing need for future research to focus on necessary conditions that could be conventionally applicable and justifiable for aggrieved, deprived and discriminated groups of people to seek self-determinations within colonially created and recognized boundaries considering the fact that the recreation of these colonially created borders might be the only considerable solution to many protracted ethnic conflicts in ethnically heterogeneous states.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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