



THE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS AND VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the political exclusion and agitation for self-determination in Nigeria and Cameroon, which shared past colonial experiences. By character, the colonial state in Africa was inherently closed as it did not permit for the inclusion of indigenous groups in the process of making decision that affected them. It is this state that was inherited after the attainment of self-rule without any, if at all little, modification or moderation. This has conditioned the nature of political struggle to fill in the political vacuum left by the colonial masters after independent propelled largely by identity interest. Particularly in the context of shrinking scarce resources, those groups that were able to secure political power exclude others from participating in decision-making process and democratic institutions. The unfolding crisis had not only deepened the differences among groups but further created discontent and hatred among various ethnic nationalities. Poor governance and prolonged military rule, in some instances, has worsened the situation by furtherance the discrimination of one group by the others. This provokes discord and violent agitations for better inclusion, and heighten the vociferous demands for self-determination. The paper in its methodology used secondary source of data collection. The paper found that lack of inclusion of groups, denying people's participation and securing their access to political life, which pose threat to the development of democracy, promotion of national integration and peaceful co-existence among groups in both countries.

Keywords: *Agitation, Marginalisation, Political Exclusion, Self Determination*

I. INTRODUCTION

State in Africa even after decades of independence were not able to achieve peaceful coexistence and national integration, this can be attributed to the legacies of their colonial history and long years of dictatorship either military or one-party government. This inevitably hamper the process of democratic development in the continent but endanger the existence of most state as an entity. It is, indeed, important to note that the state in Africa was formed by colonial powers out of cultural, regional and religious diversities, which were arbitrarily brought together for the purpose of imperial interest. These entities, groups or nationalities up to today have remained perhaps if not largely antagonistic to each other in term of background and interest but also different. These historical differences with poor governance have become source for discords and feelings of discontentment among the various groups and ethnic nationalities.

Thus, the state in Africa, which was inherited by the indigenous political class, is inherently close in nature. It was largely established by the colonial authority for the purpose of reproduction of colonial power and for the formation of neo-colonial state, where colonial interests would continue to be protected even after independence (Kuna, 2001). Presumably, therefore, from the above statement, colonial authority even though had succeeded in bringing together different nations, but the interest was not to address the divergences that exist between the unified groups for the sake



of unity and building a strong as well as indivisible state. Rather, the aim of creation for the state is to serve the neo-colonial interests. Certainly, the unification of such diverse groups coupled with good governance will drive development, and this would serve as a threat to the colonial interests in Africa. Undoubtedly, the failure of state in Africa to unify the diverse ethnic groups for building a nation is for the purpose of serving the interest of the colonial masters.

With the tide of democratisation in the continent that transformed most of the states previously under military or one-party regime to a multi-party democratic form of governance in the 1990s, a new hope was raised that democratisation would build a political system that would encourage greater group's inclusion and participation, enhance economic and social opportunities believe will bring unity and peace among the diverse groups. However, despite this state in Africa has continued to experience the growing ethnic hatred, tension and violence due to intense competition over power and national resources. By so doing, it further endangers the cooperative existence among groups. This is largely because of poor governance, lack of accountability and excessive looting of public funds, all of which contributed towards deepening the crisis of legitimacy.

Thus, even though democratic space has been opened, there has been growing strident of perceived marginalisation of one group by the other and ceaseless agitations for self-determination of different ethnic nationalities. This worsens the rising limited economic opportunities and widened the gap between haves and have-nots. In Nigeria, for instance, the mismanagement of the national resources, which adversely impacted on people's livelihood and denied opportunities to majority of Nigerians, has deepened social fissures, spawned violence driven by identity such as communal, ethnic, regional or religious. This heightens not only the demand for the restructuring of the country but also threats of secession by various ethnic nationalities, particularly from the Southwest and Southeast parts of the country. Therefore, it can be rightly put that it is the multiplicity of demands and expectations by different groups coupled with lack of strong formal institution to address these issues that proliferate the formation of various secessionist groups agitating for self-determination in some states of Africa. In most recent time, the activities of some of these groups such as the Southern Cameroons People's Organisation for Self-determination (SCAPO) of Cameroon and the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) of the Southeast Nigeria have heightened political tension and violence, thereby endangering the process of national integration.

The violent agitations for self-determination confronting some states in Africa today is largely due to injustice which revolves around economic, social and long-standing political exclusion of one ethnic group or region (Hedstrom & Smith, 2013). The desire for self-determination by politically and economically excluded groups has within the context of Nigeria and Cameroon experience continue to destroy the social fabrics of nationhood. It is pertinent to note that this entails the process of denying people the right to participate in political affairs of their country and securing access to political life. This imperils the democratic development and sustainability in both countries and worsen the relationship between groups. This has been the incident of Nigeria and Cameroon which, indeed, experienced colonial rule that still has negative impact on their political and governance experiences.

This paper seeks to examine the nature of political exclusion and agitation for self-determination in Nigeria and Cameroon with the view to make a comparative analysis. The paper is structured into seven segments: Section one is the Introduction and section two is the conceptual discussion. Section three reviewed literature on political agitation and self-determination. The fourth section contains theoretical context. Section five dealt with nature of political exclusion and self-determination in Nigeria and Cameroon. Section six is the comparative analysis and the last section is conclusion of the paper.

II. POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND SELF-DETERMINATION: CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

II.1 POLITICAL EXCLUSION:

Ross II and Smith (2009) defined political exclusion as the lack of consideration of any group whether minority or majority interests within the political process. Political exclusion hinders process of democratic development as it prevents people from participation. In the same vein, Young (cited in Allen, 2005) sees political exclusion as an institutional condition which inhibits or prevents individual or group from participation in determining their action or the condition of their actions in the political process. Political exclusion involves inability or lack of one's involvement in the process of making political decision. It is a process of excluding, ignoring and overlooking group's interest in



a political process. Political exclusion erects barriers to participation, limits or even deny political access and influence in democratic institutions (Dovi, 2009).

Within this context Doyi (2009) aptly notes that most of democratic theorists only limited the definition of exclusion to formal way, which emphasizes on prohibitions or bans citizens or group from participation fully in representative institution, with little or without given proper attention to informal way of excluding one from participation in a democratic setting. By informal way, Doyi (2009) argues that people can also deny the right to participate in a democratic setting by means of marginalisation. Indeed, the formal way of political exclusion of group may include the use of constitutional provision to deny group to participate in a decision-making process of their own country, which no doubt violates the essential democratic norms and principles. This is so common under non-democratic political systems such as colonial administration and dictatorship or perhaps in a country on transition to democracy. For instance, in Nigeria during General Ibrahim Babangida's transition programme, a group of politicians or the so-called old breed were denied right to participate by promulgating decree banning them from contesting for public offices.

Inferring from Doyi (2009) argument, it means political exclusion and marginalisation are synonymous. Marginalisation, therefore, is a mechanism through which some people are excluded or denied political influence and access to democratic institutions but through informal norms and practices. Thus, marginalisation, occurs when informal norms and practices constrain, mute, or render less effective to the representatives of certain interests, opinions and perspectives in formal democratic institutions. The cumulative effect of formal and informal ways of exclusion can restrict certain group or groups from having an effective political voice. Both are invidious to democratic practice and development. This is inevitable in representative democracy largely because it was designed to produce winners and losers. Therefore, political exclusion is a process that denies the participation of individuals or group of people, who differ politically in a decision-making process. Africa since independence has continued to suffer from the syndrome of narrowing political space even after embracement of democracy in the 1990s. This has proliferated violence, agitations for better inclusion in governance, struggle for self-determination, religious bigotry, regionalism and rising serious concern about national questions.

II.II SELF-DETERMINATION:

Providing a precise meaning of the concept self-determination is quite challenging as its meaning has been conceived by many scholars in the fields of Political Science and International Relations in different contexts and views. Palmer (1968) sees self-determination to mean, the right of the individuals in a state and the form of government under which the principle by which nationalities justify their efforts to acquire statehood within state exalted and strengthened by its sovereignty to poster security. Cobban (1969, cited in Alo, 2020: 1) see it as privilege of a nations or groups to select the kind of administration, government or political framework they wanted to live under or desired. It is all about fundamental right of individual in a state. Self-determination entails the political destiny of the people, that is, how they live and take decision on issues affecting them – politically, socially and economically.

III. POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND AGITATION FOR SELF DETERMINATION: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Despite Africa's return to multi-party system of governance in the 1990s, which opened up the political space by guaranteeing the right for inclusion of all groups in political process and in the process of taking decision that affect the society socially, politically and economically. The vociferous demand for inclusion has been the order of the day, which results to rising conflict and agitations for self-determination by marginalised groups. Douma (2006) explains that the combination of the political exclusion of specific communities and ethnic groups in relation to a shared group perception of deprivation that results from political decision making has become an explosive cocktail that underlies many violent conflicts in Africa. In the same vein, Nnoli (1978) argues that ethnic conflict and agitations for self-determination in Nigeria and Cameroun, is a product of political and administrative policy of divide and rule that manipulated ethnic consciousness among various groups. The manipulation of the ethnic consciousness has its root from the violence nature of the colonial state. During colonial rule, the policy of divide and rule was first used to



mobilise ethnic and regional sectionalism in order to curb African nationalism and maintain colonial interest in the colonies. The colonialists were the first to inject this syndrome of division among groups in Africa.

Choi and Piazza (2014) argue that there is a strong theoretical base to support the notion that countries with large ethnic populations excluded from political power would experience higher levels of agitations for self-determination by the groups, which may consequently produce domestic insecurity. Corroborating the above statement Ibrahim (1994), argued that political exclusion and marginalisation are common forms of injustices in a heterogeneous society, particularly in the post-colonial states which have been characterised by the authoritarian exclusion of large or minor segment of the society from participation in the political process.

Usuanlele and Ibhawoh (2017) point out that minority groups in Africa are frequently the victims of local and global power structures. The marginalisation and domination of minority ethnic, religious and cultural groups are often continuation of ethnic class and caste hierarchies established under the colonial rule. Colonial rule brought together diverse ethnic and sub-ethnic nationalities under a process that was often arbitrary and chaotic. The constituent African people had no say in determining the boundaries of African states when they were delineated at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 in Germany. Once colonial rule was established, they also had little or no control over how these states were structured or administered. Colonial politics and economic policies set to benefit elites of dominant groups at the expense of less influential ethnic minority groups. After political independence, African ruling elites inherited colonial structures, which are not politically inclusive, without reforming it purposely to adjust the injustice of the colonial rule by means of accommodating the diverse groups that made up of the state. The inevitable consequence of this dilemma is the tide of state plunder through corrupt practices and neo-patrimonial relationship. This leads to the institutionalisation of state leadership which is ethnically centred with separatist and particularistic outlook (Nnoli, 1978).

Alo et al (2020) traced the colonial history of Cameroon by arguing that before the World War I, Cameroon was a German protectorate after the partition of the African continent among the colonial super powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. With the defeat of Germany, Cameroon was divided into two protectorates as authorised by League of Nations controlled by British and French respectively. They noted that with the emergence of the United Nations after the World War II and the collapse of the League of Nations, British controlled Cameroon was never been managed as a distinct territory but attached to the Northern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria. This arrangement had brought neglect of the British Cameroon in the evolution of Nigeria's territory in the areas of politics, economic and social spheres. With the plan to unify the two divided Cameroons, the Anglophone Cameroons were asked to choose either to reunite with the Francophone Cameroons, which was then called République du Cameroun, or with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The decision of the Anglophone Cameroons to reunite with the République du Cameroun was based on the promise made to them that the unification is going to be based on an equality and fairness. After the reunification of the two Cameroons, the Anglophone Cameroons have continuously appealed for disparity, injustice and marginalisation. The political evolution and development of Cameroon during colonialism, therefore, was seen as the main contributing factor for the heterogeneous nature of the Cameroonian state and the present violence.

IV. THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

In order to put the framework for analysing political exclusion and how it has created agitation for self-determination in both Nigeria and Cameroon, the paper adopts a hybridisation of two theories. This is in order to have a clear understanding of subject of analysis scientifically. The theories are Group and Pluralist Theories: The Group Theory is associated with Arthur F. Bentley and Truman (cited in LaVaque-Manty, 2006) argued that groups are social forces that interact in the political process, seeking to project the interests of the members of each group within a given polity. In the course of interaction if not well managed, conflict is bound to happen and it normally comes with devastating impacts. Also, Johnson (2004) as one of the proponents of the Pluralist Theorists argued that power is relatively broad, distributed among many more or less organised interest groups in society that compete with one another to control public policy, with some groups tending to dominate one another. Government tends to be depicted as a mechanism



for mediating and compromising a constantly shifting balance between group interests rather than as an active innovator or imposer of policies upon society.

Political exclusion denies marginalised groups to have sense of belonging, of which the result lead to violent struggles for greater inclusion in political process and institutions, as well as, agitations for self-determination. This in turn creates various issues and questions that challenge the sovereignty of state which are poorly managed. In the case of Nigeria and Cameroon, the challenge has led to proliferation of various agitation groups such as IPOB in Nigeria and SCAPO in Cameroon, which took up arms against the state to agitate for self-determination of the people of Southeast and Southern regions of the two countries. This shows that tackling the challenges of injustice, equality and marginalisation in Africa required seriousness and commitment of the political leadership and the failure of which may likely plunge state into a senseless civil war, thereby retarding political and economic development.

V. POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND AGITATING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION IN NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

V.I NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and accounts for over half of West Africa's population. Nigeria presently has over 200 million people and with more than 250 ethnic groups. Hausa and Fulani, which accounts for two-third of the country's population most of whom are Muslims who dominate the Northern parts of the country. The Yoruba people are predominant in the South-west region while the Igbo extraction are predominant in the Southeast (Salawu, 2010). Indeed, besides these three dominant ethnic groups, there exist numerous other minority groups such as Tiv, Igala, Idoma, Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw. Some of these minority groups had no historical relationship with the dominant ethnic groups in their respective regions. English is the official language of Nigeria and the widely spoken languages across the country are: Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani and other smaller indigenous languages are spoken by the few in the country.

The history of Nigerian political development has been ravaged with the struggle for political inclusion and vociferous calls for self-determination. This cannot be disconnected from the nature of the state and clash of interests of the political elites of the different ethnic nationalities over political power and control of resources than issues bothering the nation (Tamuno, 1991, cited in Ibrahim, 2003: 49). The struggle for better political inclusion and self-determination only throb whenever such interest has been threatened. Thus, because of the post-colonial Nigerian state is ethnically heterogeneous in nature, there is high potentiality for lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear among elites of the different ethnic nationalities. For instance, there was rising fear among political elites of the northern extraction that they will be excluded or marginalised as soon as Southern political elites assume dominance over the country political affairs with the departure of the British. This had been among the possible reasons for their unwillingness to support the motion for self-government, which was tabled by Mr Anthony Enahoro in the Federal House of Representatives, from British in 1956. The eight points agenda presented by elites of the Northern Region after its representatives were booed by Lagos Crown Colony over their refusal to support the motion was meant to secede from the federation and stand as an independent entity justify the claim for mutual suspicion among the different ethnic nationalities that made up of Nigeria.

Nigeria gained her independence from British in 1960 with the handing over the affairs of the country to the indigenous political class. The inability to replace the inherited colonial state structures that was politically close with the one that is more inclusive after the political independence so as to accommodate the diverse interests had laid the foundation of ethnic crisis in Nigeria. The struggle for power and control of state resources were within the context of identity. Indeed, even census was politicised because it was used in determining the number of representatives from each of the regions in the Federal House of Representatives. The unfolding situation had exacerbated the condition for mutual suspicion and the demand for secession. In 1964, for instance, "...following the census and election crises, Southern politicians were getting disenchanted with their future in Nigeria. Michael Okpara, Premier of the then Eastern Region had threatened in December 1964 that the East would secede..." (Tamunno, cited in Ibrahim, 1991: 50).



It was in line to protect ethnic interests within the Nigerian federal state that the political parties were also formed on the basis of ethnic divides. For instance, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed as the political party of the people of the Northern Nigeria with a motto: "One North, One People and One Destiny" irrespective of religion and ethnic background (Paden, 1986). The Action Group (AG) was formed to fight for the common course of the Yoruba ethnic groups in the Nigeria's socio-economic and political milieu. While, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was more for the Igbo people of the Eastern region. The ethnic minorities because they were weak in the unfolding ethnic politics had to form political parties and associations or at least went into alliance with other political parties dominated by the majority ethnic groups to safeguard their political interests. Some of these political parties and associations included: the Borno Youth Movement (BYM), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the Niger-Delta Congress (NDC). The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), for instance, was formed to safeguard the interest of the ethnic minorities of the Middle Belt of the Northern region (Abdullahi, 2019; Abdullahi, 2021).

The struggle for power among the different ethnic groups was within ethnic identity and the tendency to eliminate competition from other ethnic groups. The dominant group tend to excluded the other groups by dominating relevant political positions. This cause hatred among the ethnic nationalities and groups which further deepens identity such as "north and south", "west and east" as well as "north and middle-belt" or "Hausa and Yoruba", "Igbo and Hausa", "Yoruba and Igbo" accordingly. The inevitable of this dilemma is in the context of state in Nigeriaremains the tendency towards violent confrontations and rising agitation for better inclusion of the marginalised groups in the affairs of the state. It was this ethnic confrontation resulted from the agitation for better political inclusion in the formal political process. More so, in February 1964, Isaac Shu'aibu of the UMBC declared the sovereign state of Tiv in the floor of the Northern House of Assembly.

The first military coup in Nigeria was staged on 15th January, 1966 by group of young military officers from the Igbo ethnic extraction against the federal government control by the Hausa-Fulani dominated political party – the NPC was another agitation against political exclusion and marginalisation in the country. After the coup, the country saw the emergence of political leadership under an Igbo man in person General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi. The emergence of Igbo as a political head of the country in 1966 had disturbed other ethnic nationalities. Particularly the minority ethnic nationalities in the Niger-Delta area about perceived domination of Igbo ethnic group over other minorities in the Southeast. It was this fear that led to declaration of Independent of the Niger-Delta People's Republic by Isaac Boro (Ibrahim, 2003). Worst still, the crisis resulted from the coup had subsequently in 1967 exploded into full-blown civil war between the Igbo ethnic nationality and the rest of the country, which claimed thousands of civilians lives mainly from Igbo of the Southeast part of the country (Salawu, 2010).

Since 1967, the ethnic mistrust among the various ethnic groups and dialectically different people in Nigeria has not seized. The April 1990 coup attempt by Major Gideon Orkar, for example, was not only regarded as an attempt to bring change in the political leadership of the country but was an attempt to excise the five most northerly states from the country in order to liberate the marginalised groups of the Middle Belt and Southern part of the country. The crisis regarded ethnic hatred and lack of trust has more often than not culminated into ethno-religious and communal violence such as ethno-religious violence in Kano in May 1995; violent clash between the Yoruba and the Hausa residents in Sagamu in 1999.

The continuously excluded groups from the decision cycle right from the onset, which subsequently gave rise to separatist agitations among minority ethnic groups even before the departure of the colonial government in 1960. The situation became more worse as the country moved into military rule (Tarka, 2013). In addition to the above, the representative democracy is a game of numbers coupled with the fact that people in Nigeria still votes along ethnic lines, it is highly unlikely that the Hausa who constitute the majority in Nigeria and the Yoruba, the second majority, will vote for an Igbo presidential candidate. This makes the Igbos feel frustrated and excluded, added to this issues that the federal government of Nigeria has failed to address issues of development in the Southeast. These created waves of agitations and a renewed call for Biafran Independence in the Southeast (Udorji, 2017).



The agitation for self-determination has not been too rampant as under the present political dispensation, especially under the reign of President Muhammadu Buhari. Most of the demands for better inclusion and agitation for self-determination are from the Southwest and Southeast. A number of secessionist groups emerged to achieve this, which include: the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) and the Nigerian Indigenous Nationalities Alliance for Self-Determination (NINAS). Even though the activities of these groups vary but they constitute eminent danger to the cooperate existence of the country.

V.II CAMEROON EXPERIENCE

Like most modern African societies, Cameroon has a long history of conquest and subjugation. When the colonial scramble for Africa began, Germany acquired what it named the territory of Kamerun, but at the end of the First World War, the territory was confiscated by the French and British who curved up with the French taking the larger portion. In 1961, a year after independence, the United Nations held a referendum giving English speaking people in Southern Cameroon region the choice of either joining Nigeria or the new Republic of Cameroon. With no option to become an independent state, those in the Northern provinces chose to join Nigeria, while their Southern counterparts chose to unite with their French-speaking neighbours and together became a united federal republic.

In addition to the above, the territory had already been administered as one by Germany before 1914, so they had a lot of similarities in terms of a shared colonial experience and territorial management. Most of the ethnic groups were found in both British and French Cameroon. So, Southern Cameroonians wanted to reunite with their brothers who had been separated from them by arbitrary colonial borders. During the referendum campaigns, the bad experiences that some Southern Cameroonians who had lived in Nigeria had with Nigerian Igbo traders were used to whip up anti-Nigerian sentiment. In addition, there were some reports of Igbotraders based in Southern Cameroon who had abused their Southern Cameroonian counterparts. A union with French Cameroon was seen as a way of avoiding those experiences amid fears of Igbo political domination (Mintel Reports, 2018).

The French Cameroon, led by its first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo who was supported by France, succeeded in getting some Southern Cameroon leaders such as John Ngu Foncha, whose ancestry were traced back to Dschang in French Cameroon on their side. With this support, those campaigning for Southern Cameroon to join Nigeria had very little chance of succeeding. To make the deal sweeter, the Southern Cameroon was promised a federal form of government that would secure greater autonomy for English speakers in running their own affairs. The English speakers found it was not a union of equals. Mumbings of an independent Ambazonia have been around since the 1980s but only gained real traction with the current political crisis. English speaking Cameroon is a strategic and diverse geopolitical region, encompassing two administrative regions and more than thirty ethnic groups, including the Bansa, Wimbun, BamaliBafut, Balis, Baba, Babungo, Bambalang, Awing, Pinyin, Akum, Mankon, Bamendankwe, NkwenBambili, Bambui, Meta, Ngie, Batibo, Widikum, Kom and in Northwest and Bakweri, Bomboko, Balong, Bafaw, Balondo, Bakundu, Banyangi, Bangwa, Mundani, Bakossi, Ejagham, Bassosi, Mbo and Mbonge in the Southwest (Mintel Reports, 2018).

While Cameroon government since 1980s has continued to experienced pressure from the Southern Cameroun People's Organisation for Self-determination (SCAPO), which led the Cameroun government to deploy armed soldiers and gendarmes to quell the protests and attempts to hoist the Ambazonia flag. Following this action, the situation erupted into an open revolt by the agitators and the government responded with disproportionate force leading to at least 40 deaths and over 100 injuries among protesters in 2017 (Mintel Reports, 2018). Since then, the agitations continue to hamper the process of national integration in both countries.

VI. AGITATION FOR POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND SELF-DETERMINATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

The agitation for political exclusion and self-determination in Nigeria and Cameroon are quite distinct but both have some similarities based on historical and circumstances that contributed towards rising violence in the two African countries. As in the case of Nigeria, the Southern protectorate which including the Eastern and the Western regions together with the Northern protectorate were all colonised by Britain and only amalgamated in 1914 before the



independence in 1960. In the case of Southern Cameroon, it was colonised by Britain, while the Northern Cameroon was colonised by French. It was an ultimate decision of the Southern Cameroonians to join French Cameroon after independence in 1961.

Even though the agitation for self-determination in Cameroon and Nigeria has been provoked over grievances or what can be described as perceived political, socio-economic and cultural marginalisation. This includes the state failure to address some of the fundamental issues of development in the Southeast Nigeria and Southern Cameroon, which brought about developmental gap between the regions and the rest parts of the country. There is also perceived exclusion of the groups in the state politics and appointment of public officers. Though the politics of Nigeria takes place within the framework of federal presidential republic, while the politics of Cameroon takes place within the framework of unitary presidential republic. Thus, all within the context of multipartyism politics, which was expectation that it will encourage inclusive government and politics of accommodation, where the diverse opinions of the people would be considered while taking decisions that affect the entire countries. Despite this there is still cries for perceived marginalisation among groups in both countries.

In furtherance of the above discussion, the people of Southeast region of Nigeria claim that since the end of civil war, there has not been an Igbo president. The country has been ruled for over sixty years by the people of the Northern and the Southwest extractions. Their perception is that Igbos are being punished because of the last aborted secession of Biafra and the Nigerian state fails to ensure post-war transitional justice, which had been coined under triple R, that is, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. To them this has not been implemented to the fullest as the people of the Southeast region are still afflicted by poverty. There is also limited infrastructural facilities such good road networks and health centres. Despite that some of the claims underlined by the Igbos ethnic nationality are true. However, they have misconceived the reality of the situation. There is no doubt about it that the Northern political class have been in control of power for years but the people of the Northern extraction are also affected negatively by the nature and style of their governance. Their lives have not been significantly transformed due to misery, lack of opportunity, poor socio-economic services and infrastructure, and there is evidence of out of school children.

Historically, both Cameroon and Nigeria have inherited colonial structures that are not politically inclusive without much reformation after independence and the inevitable consequence of this dilemma is the state incapacity to accommodate the interests of different ethnic nationalities. But, Nigerian people of Biafra were not formally excluded from the political process. This is because Southeast have been given an equal share of seat in the National Assembly depending on the number of populations of the state that constitute the six geographical zones of Nigeria. Also, the judicial system is the same all over the country. While in the case of Ambazonia region of Cameroon, has different judicial system with the Francophone region by using common law of Britain. It was only forced to adopt Napoleonic code of judicial system which shows gross violation of their rights and formal exclusion from the political process.

In their agitation for greater political inclusion and self-determination, the people of Southeast Nigeria and Southern Cameroon have established agitation groups to fight for their common goal and perceived marginalisation. For instance, number of agitation groups for self-determination for Igbo ethnic group of the Southeast part of Nigeria were formed notable among them are the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) and the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). However, IPOB is the most violent group in recent time and it was formed in 2014 to actualise the Biafran Republic with Nnamdi Kanu as its leader and the commander in chief of the Biafran Army. IPOB is an offshoot of the first Biafran secessionist movement that led Nigerian state to fight almost three years civil war 1967 to 1970 where more than one million people lost their lives (Refworld, 2016). The agitation for self-determination of the people of the Southern Cameroon who are the popularly agitation group known as Southern Cameroon Peoples' Organisation (SCAPO). It has Augustine Feh Ndagam as its leader. It was founded in 1994 with the claims that there is gross violation of the rights of citizens of the Southern Cameroonians and violation of the collective rights of people of the Southern Cameroons by French Cameroonian Government.

The activities of IPOB and SCAPO are mostly violent and have their own military formation that meted violence on government offices, institutions and generally on the members of public. Indeed, in their struggle for self-determination, the Southeast and Southern regions of Nigeria and Cameroon raised the flags of their movement over



government buildings, composed a national anthem, launched an official website, radio stations propagating their agenda and activities. However, recently Nigerian state has clashes with the IPOB protesters, who destroyed many government institutions, killing many security officers and brought about stand still in the socio-economic activities in the Southeast. On the other hand, SCAPO equally on 1st October, 2017 took to the streets to ask for the Independent Republic of Ambazonia from French speaking Cameroon.

Comparatively, in Cameroon and Nigeria, the separatist raised their flag of their movement over public structures with their official website and radio stations thereby broadcasting their movements. Notwithstanding, the Cameroonian government, for instance, on its part responded by deploying armed soldiers and gendarmes to quell all protests and attempts to hoist the Ambazonia flag. Following this action, the regional crisis, which had been brewing for years, erupted into open revolt. Defence and security forces responded with disproportionate force, leading to at least 40 deaths and over 100 injuries among protesters between 28th September and 2nd October 2017. Live ammunition and tear gas were used on the protesters, including in homes, and against worshippers as they left church. Gendarmes also arrested hundreds of people without warrants. Many of them were picked up from their homes (Mintel Reports, 2018).

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the comparative assessment conducted on political exclusion and agitations for self-determination in both Nigeria and Cameroon, it is discovered that, both countries had colonial legacy or inherited colonial structure coupled with neo-patrimonial relationship and identity politics which play significant role in the emergence of separatist groups. While in the case of Biafrans agitations, they were not formally ignored in the political process, rather informally excluded. Meanwhile, in the case of Amazonians agitation, they have been excluded formally from the political process.

There is the need for the government of the two countries to exercise cautious measure in applying military force to limit the activities of separatist groups. Dialogue and negotiation should be employed to address the grievances as non-violence will by far bring more meaningful settlement than the use of force. This is because violence appears to do good, the good is only temporary, the evil it does remains permanent. Governments of the two countries should identify a constitutional solution to the agitating regions for peaceful coexistence and democratic development, because peace cannot be built on exclusivism, absolutism and intolerance. Neither can it be built on vague liberal slogans and pious programs gestated in the smoke of confabulation. There can be no peace in the two countries without the kind of inner change. It is important to note that post-colonial states of Africa continue to grapple with issues of exclusion, separatist movements and insurgencies but the obvious solution to the problem is non-violence and opening of the democratic space for every citizen to participate in the political process. More so accountability should be the bedrock of governance.

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