

REFERENDUM IN NIGERIA AND SPAIN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Referendum is the act or principle of giving the people of a country the chance to state their opinion on some important matter by voting for or against such a matter in a universal franchise. It is also a demand by a group or section in a country or sovereign state to vote for or against an issue or issues for their benefit, growth and development especially when the group feels marginalized like the two jurisdiction under review- Catalans in Spain and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria. This work will therefore discuss the causes of demand for referendum in the two countries. It will also bring to the fore the differences and similarities between Catalans in Spain and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria. It is the finding of this work that there is no constitutional provision for the referendum on national disputes in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This omission does not represent the aggregate views of the generality of the citizens. Consequently, a number of conflicts have occurred and are still occurring which have claimed many lives. The research methods to be adopted will be amongst others analytical, comparative, doctrinal and historical.

Introduction

Referendum is referring of a political issue to a general vote by all the people of a country for a decision¹. It is the principle or practice of referring measures proposed or passed by a legislative body to the vote of the electorate for approval or rejection². It can also be referred to as the general vote by the electorate on a single political question which has been referred to them for their direct decision³. I am also of the view that a Referendum can be demanded by a group of people as a sovereign state for some reasons peculiar to them to enable them survive or thrive as a group. This is typical of the two groups under review in this work to wit, Catalans in Spain and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria. The need and importance of Referendum in a constitution cannot be overemphasized. It deals with flaws in the mandate theory as voters can voice an opinion on major issues. If a government listens to the people, it is likely to be gaining public approval and support⁴. Referendum legitimizes important constitutional issues. The insertion of a Referendum in a constitution goes a long way to show that the drafters are open to positive changes and corrections and accept that they are human beings with flaws. Drafting a constitution without room for amendment in the form of referendum shows that the draftsmen are not ready or open to changes to address and meet the need of the people in the

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¹ A.P. Cowie, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (4th Edition) Oxford University Press, Oxford (1994) P. 1056

² S.B. Flexner, The Random House College Dictionary (1st Edn.) New York (1956) P. 1108

³ Readers Digest Association Limited London (2001) P. 816

⁴ <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/britishpolitical> referendum/Accessed on Tuesday the 17th of July 2019 by 1.50pm

contemporary world. This is the case with the 1999 constitution⁵ of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended. I call it a “closed Constitution” because it is not dynamic and open to changes, though a constitution is not meant or supposed to be amended frequently but this may be necessary when the need arises. Referendum puts the onus of taking a decision on the voter in what is essentially a “Yes’ or “No” choice⁶

Advantages or Importance of Referendum are as follows:

- They are a very real form of direct democracy
- They increase political participation because voting does not take place just every five years
- Referenda can be a check on elective “dictatorship” during a government’s tenure
- Referenda provide a clear answer to a question that government might be asking
- Referenda deal with a flow in the mandate theory as voters can voice an opinion on a major issue and if the government listens to the people it is likely to be gaining public approval and support
- Referenda can unite a divided party
- Referenda can provide a mandate for controversial policies.
- Referenda legitimizes important constitutional issues.

However, referendum has the other side of it which includes the following:

- Referenda are inconsistent with the belief in parliamentary sovereignty
- Issues might be too complex for a mere yes/no vote or for the public to understand

Legal Framework for the Existence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria provides thus:

Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests provided:

That the provisions of this section shall not derogate from the powers conferred by this Constitution on the Independent National Electoral Commission with respect to political parties to which that Commission does not accord recognition.

In *National Union of Electricity Employee (N.U.E.E) v B.P.E*⁷ where the issue was whether National Union of Electricity Employee being a registered trade union can embark on strike action without first pursuing and ensuring strict compliance with mandatory procedures or condition precedent prescribed statutorily, it was held that the instant action has not impugned in any way on the defendants/appellants’ right as guaranteed by Section 40 of the Constitution.

Again in *R.T.N.A.C.H.P.N. v M and H.W.U.N.* It was held that Section 40 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 which guarantees the right to freedom of association is not absolute. This is because a political party is expected to be registered with INEC and where any political party fails to do that, it cannot enjoy the benefits of Section 40. Therefore the provisions of Sections 3 and 5 of the Trade Unions Act⁸ are not inconsistent with the provisions of the said Section of the 1999 Constitution of the Federation Republic of Nigeria (as amended). But be that as it may, IPOB is not a political party but a pressure group and therefore does not need

⁵ 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended

⁶ *Op. cit No. 4*

⁷ *National Union of Electricity Employee (N.U.E.E.) v B.P.E* (2010) AFWLR (Pt. 525) 201.

⁸ Trade Union Act, Cap 437 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990 (As Amended)

to be registered under Sections 3 and 5 of the Trade Union Act or with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Also in *Attorney General Federation v Abubakar*, it was held that by virtue of the provisions of Section 40 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, it will amount to illegality, injustice, and unconstitutionality to refuse or deny a citizen of this country from opting out, joining, or belonging to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interest, except where, in case of political parties, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) or as the name may suggest has not registered the party. This is also the position of the court in *Inspector General of Police v A.N.P.P*⁹ and *Independent National Electoral Commission v. Musa*¹⁰

Origin of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

The Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra (SCE) is constituted by the Elders of Biafra land who signed an Instrument dated 13th Sept 2012 filed in the Federal High Court Owerri Nigeria that authorized the Human Rights Initiative to take action against the Federal Republic of Nigeria on behalf of the remnants of the Biafra's who were not consumed in the war of 1967-1970¹¹. In order to ensure that the agitation by the youths for Biafra's independence was conducted lawfully, the elders of the land invoked their powers under Customary Law to organize, direct, manage and control their children so that the independence struggle would follow due process of law. These elders claims to govern the remnants of the Biafrans under customary law. The Head of the Customary Law Government of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is His Royal Majesty & His Lordship, The Honourable Justice Eze Ozobu, OFR, who is both a retired Judge and a serving Royal Father¹².

Territorial Jurisdiction

In Suit No FHC/OW/CS/92/2013, Indigenous People of Biafra who sued Nigeria in a representative capacity are defined as the people inhabiting three contiguous regions, namely: the South-East, parts of the South-South and parts of the Middle Belt regions of Nigeria. This definition covers the territorial jurisdiction where these Policy Statements and Orders shall apply under Customary Law¹³.

Understanding the Difference between Citizenship of a Sovereign State and the Indigenous Identity of a People

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹⁴ and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights¹⁵ makes it clear that there is a difference between the citizenship of a

⁹ *Inspector General of Police v A.N.P.P.* (2007) 18 NWLR (Pt. 1060) 457.

¹⁰ *INEC v Musa* (2003) FWLR (Pt. 145) 729.

¹¹ In the matter of Customary law, Government of Indigenous People of Biafra. Suit No.

F.H.C/OW/CS/92/2013: Federal High Court Owerri Imo State Nigeria by Billie Human Rights Intitative, P.I.

¹² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

¹⁵ Organization of African Unity (OAU) African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Bonjul charter) 27 June 1981.

sovereign country and the indigenous identities of the people that dwell in the country. A perfect example of this situation is the United Kingdom where the Scots, Welsh, Irish and the Anglo-Saxons maintain their indigenous identities as different peoples but of the same British citizenship. In the same way, the Indigenous People of Biafra claim to be Nigerians by citizenship but Biafrans by indigenous identity.

The Ancient Map of Africa in 1662 which have been filed in the Federal High Court Owerri showed the three kingdoms in West Africa from where the new country called “Nigeria” was created by the colonial masters. The three kingdoms were as follows: The Kingdom of Zamfara in the North; the Kingdom of Biafra in the East; and the Kingdom of Benin in the West. These three kingdoms existed on the Map of Africa for more than 400 years before Nigeria was created in 1914. The Kingdoms of Biafra and Benin shared common boundaries and had the Atlantic Ocean in the South with direct access to the Sea through their bays known as Bight of Biafra and Bight of Benin. The word “Bight” is an old English word for “Bay” just like the Bay Beach in Lagos. The fourth kingdom known as Oyo Empire was not contained in the ancient Map of Africa in 1662 but it was also a great kingdom in West Africa as described in Section 4.11-4.14 of these Policy Statements¹⁶.

At Pages 18 and 19 of the Book, “Biafra or Nigerian Presidency-What the Ibos Want”, published by the Legal Adviser of IPOB under the ISBN-978-0-9573250-0-5, the learned author advocating for the rights of Indigenous People of Biafra stated as follows: “*The Map of Africa produced by the Portuguese from 1492-1729* shows Biafra as a large territory spelt as “Biafra”, “Biafra” and “Biafra” having boundaries with such empires as Ethiopia, Sudan, Bini, Kamerun, Congo, Gabon, and others. It was in 1843 that the Map of Africa showed the country spelt as “Biafra” having some parts of the modern day Cameroon within its boundary including the disputed Bakassi Peninsula. The original territory of Biafra was not restricted to the present Eastern Nigeria alone. According to the maps, the Portuguese travelers used the word “Biafra” to describe the entire region of the Lower Niger River and eastwards up to the Cameroon Mountain and down to the eastern coastal tribes, thus including parts of Cameroon and Gabon. The British had diplomatic dealings with Biafrans before Nigeria was created. John Beecroft was the British Consul of the Bight of Biafra from 30th June 1849 to 10th June 1854 with his headquarters in Fernando Po in the Bight of Biafra. The city of Fernando Po is now called Bioko in Equatorial Guinea. It was from the Bight of Biafra that John Beecroft, eager to control the trade in the west and supported by Christian missionaries at Badagry, bombarded Lagos which became a British colony in 1851 and was formally ceded to Queen Victoria, the Queen of England in 1861, in whose honour Victoria Island Lagos was named. Therefore, the British had established their presence in Biafraland before they annexed Lagos in 1861. The left part of the Gulf of Guinea opposite the Bight of Biafra was designated on the Map of Africa as Bight of Benin. Therefore, Biafra was a sovereign entity with its own geographical territory clearly shown on the Map of Africa before the coming of the white man just like the ancient nations of Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan¹⁷, etc. The Biafra Nation practiced autonomous democracies among its clans as practiced among the Igbo today. Actually, the Republic of Biafra which was declared in 1967 by General Odumegwu Ojukwu was

¹⁶ In the matter of Customary law, Government of Indigenous People of Biafra. Suit No. F.H.C/OW/CS/92/2013: Federal High Court Owerri Imo State Nigeria by Billie Human Rights Initiative, P.I.

¹⁷ In the matter of Customary law, Government of Indigenous People of Biafra. Suit No. F.H.C/OW/CS/92/2013: Federal High Court Owerri Imo State Nigeria by Billie Human Rights Initiative, P.I..

not a new country but an attempt to restore the ancient Biafra Nation that existed before Nigeria was created by the British”.

In Africa and Asia, the merging of different peoples by the force of colonial masters to create new countries in the world such as Nigeria caused the intractable problems of instability of nations resulting in ethnic violence and incessant bloodshed as the peoples find themselves incompatible in their lifestyle, customs, traditions and philosophies of life. The peoples were conferred with the citizenships of the new countries created by the colonial masters whether they liked it or not. This is a fact of history causing religious and ethnic violence in Nigeria at the moment. The only way to solve this problem of national instability, bloodshed and ethnic violence is by the wisdom of the law. Thus, the law allows the indigenous peoples of the land to maintain their indigenous identities even though they have been conferred with the citizenship of their new countries. Most importantly, the law confers on the indigenous peoples of the land the right to self-determination. At the moment, the Scots are seeking to exercise their right to self-determination and establish Scotland as a sovereign nation independent from the Great Britain.

In the same way the Indigenous People of Biafra are seeking to exercise their right to self-determination and re-establish their ancient country of Biafra as a sovereign nation independent from Nigeria¹⁸

Freedom of Expression in other jurisdictions

In fact, there is a parallel with what is happening in America right now. President Donald Trump is up in arms against NFL players who in his opinion would not respect the US national anthem. He insults them and they insult him back, locking arms and defiantly kneeling during the anthem. In one symbolic day, hundreds of players, club owners and staff in every NFL ground defied him. Some NBA players have joined the fray, LeBron James called President Trump a “bum”, Stephen Curry has wondered how a leader would behave like Trump and so on. In fact, LeBron James and the athletes now go around in a black T-shirt saying “TRUMP U SON OF A B*TCH!” installed below the picture of a huge middle finger stiffly pointing up to complete the message.

But Trump is not sending in troops to close down NFL grounds or arrest players and staff, even when he calls on people to boycott them. He is not sending soldiers to pick up LeBron James, Stephen Curry and the other defiant athletes and he is not keeping quiet either. He is giving as well as he gets because, irrespective of the racial undercurrents in the whole thing, American democracy is alive and well. The right to free speech protects presidents and ordinary citizens alike³⁶.

Also in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurds have organized a referendum for independence opposed by the Iraqi state. Most world powers had appealed to them not to go ahead with it, the Iraqi Supreme Court ruled against it, but they have gone ahead defiantly. The Iraqi government is not sending in soldiers to Kurdistan and no one is running around accusing the other of not being patriots. In a democracy, dissidents too are patriots. Of course, there would always be real and pseudo-patriots calling for a strong-arm response to calls for secession, but the test of a true democracy is the ability of its elected and appointed officials to resist the temptation of replacing the law with their personal whims and prejudices because once we go down that road, we would actually be killing democracy and our nation¹⁹

In reality, there is nothing abnormal with the IPOB campaign for secession. As far as we all have the public space to debate our respective positions, we don’t need the army to intervene. IPOB and

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Nnamdi Kanu were meeting freely with Governors, Igbo community leaders and members of the states' leadership in the South-East, issuing joint statements and assuring citizens they were all working towards a common purpose. The Governors and IPOB had scheduled a meeting for mid-September before the military deployment scamped the whole thing. In fact, if indeed there was an insurrection in the South-East, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would not have declared the South-East as the safest place to live in Nigeria in its last year report on the country. IPOB is not a secret society and their rallies are open to the public. There is nothing in the contemplation of the law or by the ordinary meaning of the word that would consider whatever was happening in the South-East before the military deployment as an insurrection.

History of Catalonia

Catalonia, a nationality²⁰ and currently a Spanish autonomous community, was first settled during the Middle Palaeolithic era. Like the rest of the Mediterranean side of the Iberian Peninsula, the area was occupied by the Iberians and several Greek colonies were established on the coast before the Roman conquest. It was the first area of Hispania conquered by the Romans. It then came under Visigothic rule after the collapse of the western part of the Roman Empire. In 718, the area was occupied by the Umayyad Caliphate and became a part of Muslim ruled al-Andalus. The Frankish Empire conquered the area from the Muslims, ending with the conquest of Barcelona in 801, as part of the creation of a larger buffer zone of Christian counties against Islamic rule known as the Marca Hispanica. In the 10th century the County of Barcelona became independent de facto.

In 1137, Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona accepted King Ramiro II of Aragon's proposal to marry Queen Petronila, establishing the dynastic union of the County of Barcelona with the Kingdom of Aragon, creating the Crown of Aragon, while the County of Barcelona and the other Catalan counties adopted a common political entity known as Principality of Catalonia²¹ which developed an institutional system (Courts, constitutions, Generalitat) that limited the power of the kings. Catalonia contributed to the expansion of the Crown's trade and military, most significantly their navy. The Catalan language flourished and expanded as more territories were added to the Crown of Aragon, including Valencia, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Sicily, Naples, and Athens. The crisis of the 14th century, the end of the reign of House of Barcelona and a civil war (1462–1472) weakened the role of the Principality in Crown and international affairs.

The marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1469 created a dynastic union between the Crowns of Aragon and Castile, and both realms kept their own laws, institutions, borders and currency. In 1492 the Spanish colonization of the Americas began, political power began to shift away towards Castile. Tensions between Catalan institutions and the Monarchy, alongside the economic crisis and the peasants' revolts, caused the Reapers' War (1640–1652), being briefly proclaimed a Catalan Republic. The Principality of Catalonia retained its political status, but this came to an end after the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714), in which the Crown of Aragon supported the claim of the Archduke Charles of Habsburg.

Following Catalan surrender on 11 September 1714, the king Philip V of Bourbon, inspired by the model of France imposed a unifying administration across Spain,

²⁰ First article of the statute of Autonomy of Catalonia: Catalonia as an autonomous community. General Retrieved 30th June 2018 in https://on.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Catalan. Accessed on the 7th of October 2019 by 2.45pm.

²¹ Sesma Munoz, Jose Angel. *La Corona de Arogen Una introduccion critica Zaragoza*. Cajo de la immacolata 2000 (Coleccion Mariano de Paroy Ruata-Dir Crusllemo fatas Cabeza) ISBN 84-95306-80-8 in <https://on.wikipedia>

suppressing the Crown of Aragon and enacted the Nueva Planta decrees, banning the main Catalan political institutions and rights and merged into Castile as a province. These led to the eclipse of Catalan as a language of government and literature. Catalonia experienced economic growth, reinforced in the late 18th century when Cádiz's trade monopoly with American colonies ended.

In the 19th century Catalonia was severely affected by the Napoleonic and Carlist Wars. The Napoleonic occupation and subsequent war in Spain began a period of political and economic turmoil. In the second third of the century, Catalonia became a center of industrialization. As wealth from the industrial expansion grew, Catalonia saw a cultural renaissance coupled with incipient nationalism while several workers movements (particularly anarchism) appeared.

In the 20th century, Catalonia enjoyed and lost varying degrees of autonomy. The Second Spanish Republic established Catalan self-governance and the official use of the Catalan language. Like much of Spain, Catalonia fought to defend the Republic in the Civil War of 1936–1939. The Republican defeat established the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, which unleashed a harsh repression and suppressed the autonomy. With Spain devastated and cut off from international trade and the autarkic politics of the regime, Catalonia, as an industrial center, suffered severely; the economic recovery was slow. Between 1959 and 1974 Spain experienced the second fastest economic expansion in the world known as the Spanish Miracle, and Catalonia prospered as Spain's most important industrial and tourist destination. In 1975 Franco died, bringing his regime to an end, and the new democratic Spanish constitution of 1978 recognized Catalonia's autonomy and language. It regained considerable self-government in internal affairs and is now one of the most economically dynamic communities of Spain. In the 2010s there have been growing calls for Catalan independence.

Causes of Agitation by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria

Politics of imbalance and to very a large extent poor leadership in Nigeria at various levels of governance and administration has failed to address nagging socio-political, and economic inequality in the nation's polity. The politics of imbalance in the nation's political, social, economic, and corporate governance in the management, sharing, and allocation of the nation's common wealth, constitute to a very large rampant state of insecurity, rancor, fear, suspicion and feelings of agitation, exclusion and isolation within and among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigerian state²².

Hence, primarily the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, social and political imbalance further fuel the desire for agitation and division within the Nigerian federation. Again, the politics of uneven wealth sharing formula further stimulates feelings of secession from the Nigerian state, via agitation for Biafra from the South Eastern Nigeria, calls for re-structuring also from the South Western Nigeria stemmed from the marginalization and exploitation of the resources from the South-South area of Nigeria. Hence, feelings of marginalization and deprivation nursed by people of the South East region occasioned by the high spate of poverty in the region has fueled the call for secession into another country, other than Nigeria.

Biafra agitation stemmed from leadership failure on the part of government, amounting to years of social neglect, economic and political isolation of the people in Nigeria and particularly people from the South East of the Nation in general. Again, the monumental underdevelopment, lingering unemployment for the youth skewed political structure and composition and snail speed

²² journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cujpia/article/viewFile/1008/667

economic growth of the Nigerian state resulting to increased poverty, hunger, insecurity and instability via Boko Haram²³ are also increasing the agitation for separate nation states among the Nigerian federating units.. The problem is further compounded with the failure of successive government over the years to address the high rate of unemployment, corruption, mismanagement of public funds at the expense of the national interest.

This has led to brain drain, money laundering by government officials, immigration to Europe in search of greener pastures and terrorism and very recently violent clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the North Central part of the Nation. A Nation is an abstraction in itself without any form or status; it is the people, their customs, culture, language and political difference/affiliation, personality and their idiosyncrasies that gives forms and meaning to what constitute a Nation. Again, a Nation's characteristic is noted in its geographical location, topography, population, natural resources, climatic conditions, social, political, economic, cultural beliefs and ideology. Nigeria is described and regarded as a nation because of these characteristics highlighted above. Fundamentally, a Nation exists because of its people, values, cultures, and socio-political and economic structure.

While, it is true that Nigeria as a nation fits into these descriptions as well as other nation in the world, its socio-political composition has created tension, insecurity and a feeling and consciousness of social, economic and political exclusion and isolation of some of its constituent part in the minds and hearts of peoples in these areas. Many scholars have contended that the skewed composition of Nigerian political structure constitutes avenues of conflict, political instability and unending agitations for balance, fairness, sense of belonging and social inclusion, and most recently restructuring in the polity. The Nigerian state historically, was the conception and the design of the British colonial masters in 1914, when the Northern and the Southern protectorate were brought together as one political unit by Lord Lugard, its primary objective and purpose was to service the British commercial and economic interest and for the ease of administration of colonial Nigeria in 1914.

This exercise did not consider the overall interest, customs, cultures, language, and religion of the different ethnic nationalities in the polity. The Hausa/Fulani in the North having heavy impact of Islamic culture and education for over six centuries had no common ties and relationship with the Yoruba and Igbo in the South with the influence of Christianity and European culture and values. Again, the skewed administrative, socio-economic and political arrangement of the Nigerian state, occasioned by the merging of different ethnic nationalities in 1914 by the British colonial master gave undue advantage to particular ethnic nationalities in the polity in terms of size, population, land mass and geographical spread, and revenue sharing at the expense of other ethnic nationalities, particularly the minorities. This has further generated insecurity, suspicion, and fear.

Again, this is further articulated by James Ojiako in his book titled: *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today*, “*that the British colonial master upon conquering the different ethnic nationalities and its peoples created the problem of how to merge, manage, and administer discordant elements and vast land mass into a coherent political unit*”.

These gave rise for tension and agitation right from colonial period, whereby minorities in the polity demanded for increased revenue and political inclusion and participation in the scheme of things in Nigeria, through a credible, transparent and sustainable review of the revenue sharing formula and increased political expression and identity in the Nigerian polity. This has provoked

²³ Elliot J.H (John (2002) *Imperial Spain* 1469 (716 London: Pengium. ISBN 0441007036 CLC 49691947, Accessed.

bitter controversy and resentment till now, and has culminated or translated to what is known as the “National Question” in Nigeria today.

Causes of agitation in Catalonia, Spain

The autonomous community of Catalonia is the richest and most highly industrialized part of Spain. The Catalan textile industry first achieved prominence between 1283 and 1313 and long remained the region’s premier industry. The manufacturing sector underwent rapid expansion and diversification since the 1950’s. However, metal working, food processing, pharmaceutical, and chemical industries have over taken textiles in importance by the 21st century. Textile, paper making and graphic arts, chemicals, and networking industries are concentrated in Barcelona, Sabadell and Terrassa are also textile centres.

One of Barcelona’s plant produces electric automobiles for Nissan. Catalonia’s growing demand for petroleum product led to the expansion of Tarragonas petroleum refineries. Services, particularly those of tourism and transportation, are highly developed.

Similarities and Differences in Catalonia and Nigeria

In Catalonia the national police were sent in to disrupt the unofficial independence referendum the regional Catalonia government had organized. In Nigeria, the military viewed IPOB as a terrorist group and the authorities got it proscribed. Under the new law it is now an offence bordering on terrorism to be a member of IPOB, or be found with posters, flyers, or even clothing with IPOB logo or inscription anywhere in Nigeria

Catalan separatist was elected to run a regional government. But Nigerian has a federal system, designed to ward off demands for independence but secessionists have not been elected to any of the Igbo majority states namely; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These may be as a result of lack of public support or heavy-handed action by the authorities.

With IPOB banned, the group is obviously unable to contest elections. But both pro and ante- Catalan independence protests have been held in Spain without major clashes with security forces. However, in Nigeria, any public protest is immediately quashed, leading to arrest, and in some cases deaths.

Another area of difference is the level of media coverage. The separatist movements are getting the merits of a proposed Catalan State and challenges it would face have been part of the mainstream debate in Spain. This is in contrast to Nigeria where the activities of the separationist groups have been criminalized banned from local media coverage while Nigerian authorities appear averse to negotiation with advocates of session movement. Paul Buja, Cameroon president of 35 years and counting, has called for dialogue.

Conclusion

In this work, we have discussed amongst other things, the causes of agitation in both Nigeria and Spain. We have looked at the history and or origin of the two countries under review. We also looked at the similarities and differences in the two countries with regard to their demands for independence from Spain by Catalonians and Nigeria by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) . We discovered that the two countries have rich resources which the countries were enjoying while marginalizing the Catalonians and Biafrans. Consequently, Spain made room for dialogue but not so with Nigeria. In the case of Nigeria, IPOB’s protests were suppressed by “Operation Python Dance” during which many people were killed.

It was also discovered that Spain has a provision for referendum in their constitution which is not the case with Nigeria. By making such provision, it can be inferred that the draftsmen recognized that they were humans and left room for development and progress of the people. But in Nigeria there is no such arrangement which goes to show that we assume that we are perfect human beings who cannot mistakes and as such no room for development and progress.

It is equally recognized in this work that there was freedom of expression in the constitution of other jurisdictions without any threat or intimidation as in Nigeria. This is a sign that there is no spirit of sportsmanship which is of vital importance to democracy. It is therefore recommended that the 1999 Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria be reviewed to include a provision referendum on issues such as the national question.