

Title of Article: Two Nigerian Ethno-nationalism :A Comparative Study of OPC and MASSOB

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Abstract: The proliferation of ethnic militia organizations in Nigeria raises questions as to the factors responsible for the development. Though reasons adduced from the rhetoric of these organizations points to politics of exclusion and marginalization in Nigeria, this form of ethnicity is a new phenomenon. The growth of these militant formations pervading the length and breath of the country is attributed to the nature and character of the Nigerian state. Since its creation by British colonialists in the 19th century, the Nigerian state has sought to maintain control and hegemony in the society via the use of violence. This tendency has beclouded attempts at addressing the Nigerian national question which is the core of the festering divisive ethnicity besetting the country (Asia 2001). It became more profound during military rule when violence was unleashed on civil society groups, thus closing channels of peaceful expression of dissent in the country. The result was the transformation of civil society groups into ethnic organizations that employed the use violence not only to counteract state but advance their objectives (Adekson 2004). The most prominent of these militia organizations include Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) both of which draws their recruits from the two major ethnic groups in the southern part of the country. What are the socio-political conditions responsible for this development? This paper examines this question by comparing MASSOB and OPC.