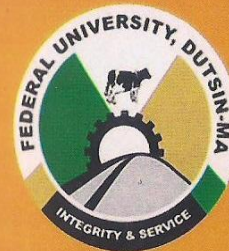


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**FUDMA JOURNAL OF ARTS
(FUDJARTS)**

VOLUME 2 SPECIAL EDITION 2018



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QUEST FOR DECOLONIALITY AND CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION IN THE KWARA PROJECT: THE IGBOMINA EPISODE

Aboyaji, Adeniyi Justus

Abstract

The unabated quest for decoloniality and integration, the major crux of this paper, appears a foremost challenge to the stakeholders of the Kwara Project. Fears that the Kwara Project, 'an experiment in political engineering', may someday fizzle out, going by the nostalgia, nepotism and discrimination in Kwara today, particularly by the Igbomina, compares with South Africa's apartheid. Given the option, the Igbomina-Ekiti and Ibolo would gladly align with Osun/Ekiti; Baruten and Kaiama with Sokoto/Kebbi, and Nupe with Nduduma/Edu State, if/when created. A substantial infraction of Asa and Moro LGAs would also gladly join their kith and kilns in Oyo. It therefore becomes clear that only the advantaged seems interested in the Project sustenance, while the disadvantaged, with a strong reminiscence for their homeland, are keen to opt out. The paper, however, concludes that although Ilorin Emirate was established by warfare, conscious efforts to foster a formidable inter-ethnic bond by the forbears in the multi-ethnic cauldron that emerged therefrom has sustained it hitherto. Meanwhile, the highly sought West Merger can hardly provide the desired panacea to the political quagmire, since the merging group(s) eventually become(s) later entrants and a minority group all over again. It recommends, thus, that while Ilorin cannot hold suzerainty over all others in the Kwara Project ad-infinitum, a symbiotic relationship stemming out of the concerted commitment of all towards promoting sustainable integration in the cultural cauldron becomes the only apparent alternative. The paper adopts the historical-cum-narrative and analytical approach, with a combination of primary and secondary sources.

Key words: Igbomina, Decoloniality, Integration, Kwara Project.

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Introduction

Ethno-political tensions have been identified as peculiar features of multi-ethnic societies. Undoubtedly, Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa¹ and the largest black country worldwide, is a complex ethno-political landscape.² A number of communities particularly exemplify the larger picture of Nigeria's multi-ethnic character. Ibadan, a Yoruba town and nineteenth-century imperial stalwart, is a typical example of a mixed population, where relations were believed to be cordial and where the early ruling elite came together to pursue the goal of imperial expansion with a clear vision of making Ibadan a home for all.³ Igbajo, another Yoruba community, is also remarkable for its plurality of cultural identities intermingling in an interestingly cohesive and peaceful manner. Meanwhile, as Aboyeji observed:

As the name 'Igbajo' itself suggests, it is a conglomeration of various units of people, not the Ijesa and Oyo alone – Ado, Ila-Orangun, Igbomina, Ekiti, etc. Igbajo is, indeed, a coming together; an agglomeration and synopsis of all Yoruba groups. Igbajo is a home of all Yoruba groups.⁴

However, in most multi-ethnic societies, ethno-political relations often breed unhealthy upheavals. As such, such ethno-political tensions are naturally capable of igniting the embers of anarchy and dissensions in the attempt of groups within the group to satisfy their cravings for parochial interest's satisfaction. Among other factors responsible for ethnic crises on varying scales which are commonplace in many Nigerian communities include the urge to preserve, protect and enhance the ethnic identity of the groups concerned and the desire to secure and enhance socio-political-cum-economic advantages.⁵ Some of such contemporary nasty occurrences which have degenerated into bad blood, bitter bloodletting and carnage include among others, the Share-Tsaragi, Ife-Modakeke, Offa-Erin-Ile and Fulani-Oro-Ago brouhahas.⁶

The multiplicity of ethnicity in Kwara as it is today, is obviously a brought-forward of the Ilorin proto-type which has a long standing antecedent traceable to the very foundation and era of consolidation of Ilorin. Holding to candour, the early Ilorin Emirate was acquired by war, however, what sustained it, from its outset, was the concerted efforts of the jihadist leaders and forbears to forge and foster a formidable inter-ethnic bond by integrating the immigrant Fulani and others with the aboriginal Yorubas in Ilorin.⁷ That the Ilorin Emirate was created by violence does not imply that it must be sustained by

same. Indeed, the need for ethno-political integration brought about the integration of apparently dissident groups such as the Yoruba, Fulani, Bariba, Nupe, Kemberi, Gambari/Gobirawa (Hausa), Malians and Arabs into the multi-ethnic cauldron that evolved therefrom. If today, by implication, the combination of Igbomina, Ekiti, Ibolo, plus the present Emirate which is believed to account for 75 per cent of the population of Kwara State is engrossed in mutual suspicion and distrust with one another,⁸ the hypothesis of a perennial crisis and perpetual state of disharmony in the *State of Harmony* cannot be null.

Conceptual Clarification

Conceptually, *decoloniality*, as a liberatory option, differs from *decolonisation* just as *coloniality* is distinguishable from *colonialism*. Coloniality, a name for the 'darker side' of modernity exists as an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation camouflaged in the maxim of salvation, progress, modernisation, and being good for everyone. Coloniality survives colonialism and refers to the long-standing patterns of power emerging as an outcome of colonialism. It defines culture, labour, inter-subjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. It is upheld in the self-image of peoples, cultural patterns, common sense, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. As modern subjects, it is believed that we, in a way, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.⁹

Decoloniality arises from the perspective that the humanity of the black race is in doubt. It emerges as a way of recounting the story of the modern world from the standpoint of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and coloniality. Decoloniality therefore, studies Africa as a product of three-and-a-half centuries of struggles against slavery in the first instance and against coloniality today. The Igbominas, in particular and Africans in general, need to be sensitive and vigilant to the normalising and universalising tendencies of coloniality as a natural state of the world. It depicts the liquidation of colonialism celebrated by most African nations in the 1950s and 1960s as well as a complete extrication from the umbilical cord of developed nations and from all forms, trends and tendencies of colonialism.¹⁰ As there can be no meaningful political freedom without economic independence, it equally covers the unending struggle for a virile economy.¹¹ This aberration therefore needs to be unravelled, unveiled, resisted and obliterated since it produces a world order that can only be sustained through a recipe of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies.¹²

Hence, sequel to whatever contention over the appropriateness of the word 'decoloniality' on the title of this paper, given its implication for statehood, it is noteworthy that the Ilorin relations with other groups such as Igbomina, which later transmogrified into the Kwara project, a colonial-driven 'marriage of inconvenience', has been viewed by this writer in the light of the above. This is what provides the rationale for the adoption of decoloniality, which describes the on-going quest by the groups which were later politically aligned with Ilorin in the 'Kwara Project', to re-align with their kith and kilns in other states of the federation and remove the perceived normalising tendencies of the old order. The inclusion of Igbominaland in the Kwara Project, as it is today, could perhaps, at best, be described as a British 'artificial aberration'. Indeed, as an archival source pointed out, '...the fact is, Ilorin is not entitled to any Igbomina village except by virtue of old wars...it is our duty to sort the tribes out and keep them separate'.¹³

The Ethnic Composition of Ilorin and Kwara

Many non-Kwaras today, take Ilorin to be Kwara and Kwara to be Ilorin. But, who exactly are the Ilorin? In an attempt to answer his own rhetorical question: 'Are the pre-Jihad Ilorin then purely Oyo or just simply Ilorin?' published in 'The Daily Times' of 19 July, 1949, documented in the archive, J.O. Fakeye, Secretary Omo Ibile Esie, Lagos Branch, has noted:

Let me state straightaway that, 'Ilorin Descendants' Union' is a misnomer for that organisation. The correct name should have been 'Igbomina Descendants' Union'. It may be generally known that the Igbominas form at least, three-quarters of the inhabitants of Ilorin Province, occupying a large area extending as far as Ila-Orangun in Oyo Province. They are pure Yorubas!¹⁴

Mr V.F. Biscoe¹⁵ the Assistant District Officer, Omu-Isanlu District, provided an even greater corroboration for the above claim when he gave the population of the whole of Ilorin District in 1916 as follows:

Igbomina Natives	27, 503
Ilorin settlers	6,271
Fulani-Yoruba Cattle owners	984
Yoruba settlers from Oyo S.P.	736
Yoruba settlers from Offa District	357
Hausa natives	8
Total population	35, 859

But has Ilorin always been a distinct unit of the Yoruba? In their own observation, Hogben and Kirk-Greene noted that 'Up to recently, very little was known for certain of the pre-Fulani history of the Ilorin Yoruba'.¹⁶ The Ilorin-Yoruba claim descent from Oraniyan, the great grandson of Lamurudu. Hogben and Kirk-Greene however, claimed that only the Idi-Ape family of the Magaji Are quarters, those of the Baba Isale compound and Magaji Abdu came from Old Oyo. Others either came to hunt, trade or for asylum from the Yoruba wars. Hence, Ilorin began to expand.¹⁷ Afolayan emphatically argued that Ilorin was an Igbomina village under Oyo, which rose to prominence via the vicissitudes of that era. He provided further explanations in support of his argument:

...the independence of Ilorin under the Fulani Jihadists radically changed the socio-political character of the Igbomina region in and around Ilorin. The dialect, the political system and the socio-cultural organisation of this region which included Ilorin, Idofin, Afin and Iponrin changed in a way remarkably different from the other Igbomina and Yoruba people. Today, this region, besides being on Igbominaland and having a tradition of being part of Igbomina in the past, has become socially, economically and politically integrated into the Ilorin society. Thus, the 19th century crises transformed Ilorin from an insignificant Igbomina village to the most dominant centre of power in the region.¹⁸

Be that as it may, the Fulani in Ilorin, succeeded in detaching large Igbomina and other areas from the main sub-group by their counter-coup on Afonja and gave it a new character.¹⁹ Other Igbomina areas whose peoples today would not show that they are particularly keen in joining their Igbomina brethren, from archival documentation, included Ilofffa, Ekan, Odo-Owa, Osi, Osin and Obbo.²⁰ The Bayajjida legend, which refers to Ilorin among the seven Hausa Banza states, therefore, needs to be revisited and subjected to serious scrutiny. Following the Fulani wars of conquest which ousted Afonja and ceded Ilorin to the Fulani, the Fulani dynasty indigenised all comers and created a new Ilorin.²¹

The Fulani minority ruling caste evolved and adopted a power-sharing strategy to de-flex, calm and assuage the nerves of the Yoruba majority aborigines. This has been identified as a fundamentally unique element which nurtured enduring peace, stability and tranquillity in the early Ilorin community. This power-sharing formula, today however, is such that some groups feel disadvantaged with a sense of neglect and isolation. This, in turn, propels such groups into becoming

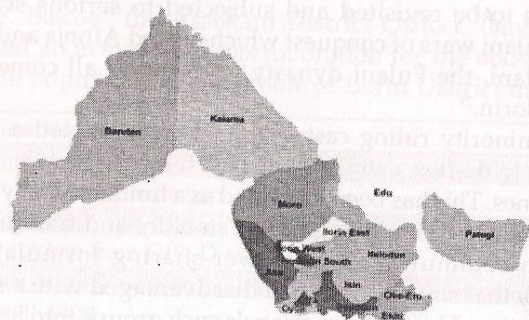
a dissident identity. Although Olumoh²² has tried to paint the picture of Ilorin differently from the commonly held opinion of many observers who see Ilorin as a potent theatre for ethnic violence, indeed, if the Ilorin community had a sense of belonging with appropriate mechanisms for dialogue and peaceful resolutions of matters, the same is obviously not true of the present Kwara arrangement. They apparently have not been able to transmit such mechanisms into bringing about meaningful integration within the Kwara agenda.

No attempt is made here to regurgitate already established theories regarding the origin of Ilorin. However, it suffices to note that Ilorin is Yoruba in origin and was part of the Old Oyo Empire. Ilorin consists of such Yoruba distinct sub-groups in Ilorin as the Oyo, Igbomina and Egba, supplemented by other ethnic groups such as the Fulani, Kanuri, Nupe and Hausa (called Gambari in Ilorin) from northern Nigeria.²³ Be that as it may, history favoured Ilorin, with the states creation exercise of 1967 as the military administration made the growing metropolis the administrative capital of the newly created Kwara State.²⁴

The Geographical Expression called 'Kwara'

The geographical space of about 34, 661²kms landmass located within the savannah grassland vegetation zone in the North-Central Senatorial District of Nigeria is christened Kwara. Kwara State is one of the very first twelve states created by the General Yakubu Gowon-led military administration on the brink of the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967 with the hope of forestalling the imminent disaster.²⁵ The 1996 LG creation by the Sanni Abacha regime, brought the number of LGAs to sixteen.

Map of Kwara State Showing Its LGAs



Source²⁶: Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006 Population and Housing Census Priority Table Volume III; Population Distribution by Sex, State, LGA & Senatorial District National Population Commission, Abuja, Nigeria April, 2010, p.38.

Kwara State may be referred to as a miniature Nigeria and a cultural melting pot *per excellence* because of the heterogeneous character of its population and their cultural diversity. Although Yoruba, Nupe and Baruten are the major languages spoken in the state,²⁷ there are several other ethnic groups that are assumed to be co-habiting in an atmosphere of total harmony. That perhaps suggests why it is often counted among the most peaceful states of the Federation. To buttress this again, it has adopted *the State of Harmony* as its slogan.

Kwara State, today, going by the 2006 population census, has a demographic composition of 2.3 million, as may be seen in the analysis below.

Kwara State 2006 Census Population Distribution by LGA

S/N	LGA	Senatorial District	Land Size' Klm2	Male	Female	Both Sexes
1	Asa	B	1308.316	62751	61917	124668
2	Baruten	A	9935.467	104727	101952	206679
3	Edu	A	2596.408	104040	97602	201642
4	Ekiti	C	488.192	27611	26788	54399
5	Ifelodun	C	3501.718	103650	101325	204975
6	Ilorin east	B	495.076	104801	102661	207462
7	Ilorin south	B	177.607	103606	105645	209251
8	Ilorin west	B	106.455	180387	184834	365221
9	Irepodun	C	749.338	73554	74040	147594
10	Isin	C	644.433	30088	29393	59481
11	Kaiama	A	7125.225	64901	59114	124015
12	Moro	A	3337.397	54860	53855	108715
13	Offa	C	96.971	44813	44162	88975
14	Oke-ero	C	445.617	28358	28612	56970
15	Oyun	C	484.19	47890	46564	94454
16	Pategi	A	2975.126	57746	53106	110852
Kwara State			34,467.536	1,193,783	1,171,570	2,365,353

A = Kwara North. B = Kwara Central. C = Kwara South.

A = Kwara North. B = Kwara Central. C = Kwara South.

Source:²⁸ Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006 Population and Housing Census Priority Table Volume III; Population Distribution by Sex, State, LGA & Senatorial DISTRICT National Population Commission, Abuja, Nigeria April, 2010, p.38.

Ilorin, its administrative headquarters, lies on Latitude 8° 30 North and Longitude 4° 35 East, and is some 300 kilometres north of Lagos,²⁹ former Nigerian FCT and about 500 kilometres to Abuja, Nigeria's current FCT. Ilorin, the gateway between the north and south of modern Nigeria, is no doubt, a multi-ethnic composition. It is no gainsay that Kwara State, one of the oldest states created in 1967, by extension, is a melting point of cultures and the product of a political imperial-midwifing and an experiment in political engineering.

It should be recalled that the military junta of January 1966 was occasioned particularly by the politics of bitterness, tension and ethno-political mistrust of the era. The indications were clear that the nascent nation-state was heading speedily towards disintegration. As part of the measures to bring the tumultuous political upheaval of the nascent Nigerian nation-state under check, following the collapse of the First Republic, Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon, Head of the Federal Military Government therefore restructured the hitherto four Regions in the country into twelve states through the promulgation of Decree No. 14, on 27 May, 1967. But rather than ameliorate the political crinkle crackle within the nascent Nigerian state, the strategy of states creation only succeeded in exacerbating the already estranged blood and seared relationship among the dissident Nigerian groups. One immediate reaction to this was that only three days after the declaration of states creation by the Yakubu Gowon-led-Federal Military Government, Lt-Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu's Eastern Regional Government announced secession—the birth of the new Republic of Biafra.³⁰

One of the earliest issues of contention for the new (Kwara) state was what name to bear. Before the name 'Kwara' first appear in the political vocabulary of Nigeria, the state, which was carved out of the former Ilorin and Kabba Provinces of the Old Northern Region of Nigeria was initially called the *Central-West State*. From inception, the Kwara Project incorporated diverse peoples of diverse cultures: the whole of the Borgu L.G.A. of the present Niger State, Ankpa, Dekina, Kabba, Lokoja and Okene, which are now in the present-day Kogi State. The 1976 state creation under the Murtala-Obasanjo regime excised the Igala people of the present Kogi State from Kwara. In 1991,

the Abacha military regime occasioned the further excision of Lokoja, Okene and Kabba in a merger with the Igalas and others to form the present cultural make-up called Kogi State, to weaken the perceived political strength of the Yorubas. Hence, while the Okun Yorubas were ceded to Kogi State, at same period the Borgu Division was also excised from Kwara State and merged with Niger State, thereby reducing it to its present size. The Igbominas, Ibolos and Ekitis were thus reduced to a minority in Kwara; ditto for the Okun Yorubas also in Kogi.³¹

The earlier move to name it Central-West State was rejected prestissimo by the Ilorin people and the pro-NPC elements throughout Northern Nigeria as the term was reminiscent of the agitation by the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) in the former Ilorin Province in their quest for a West Merger under the NPC-led Northern regional administration. Meanwhile, Kwara was the name of the Native Authority that had its headquarters in Lokoja prior to the collapse of the colonial regime.³² The name, 'Kwara' which came from *Quorra*, the native name of the people of New Bussa in the Kingdom of *Yaour* for River Niger upon which Mungo Park, the young Scottish surgeon-turned-explorer was believed to have navigated during his second exploration after departing from Sansanding around November 1806, was eventually agreed upon. The Central-West State thus became re-christened Kwara State with Ilorin retained as its administrative headquarters.

One of the earliest acid tests for the nascent inter-ethnic state came when state administration became operational and Col. D.L. Bamigboye,³³ an Igbomina man from Omu-Aran, one of the districts of the old Ilorin Province, was appointed and deployed in August 1967 as military administrator. The Bamigboye military government, in line with the ideals of the new military government embarked upon reforms abolishing the Native Authority System and putting in its place the new local government structure, called Divisions, in April 1968. Beside other Divisions of the State such as Borgu, Lafiagi/Patigi, Kabba, Ankpa and Kogi, the jurisdiction of the old Ilorin Native Authority was split into three autonomous Divisions, viz: Ilorin, Igbomina/Ekiti and Oyun Divisions with their headquarters in Ilorin, Omu-Aran and Offa respectively.

Meanwhile, as observed by Olumoh,³⁴ Ilorin-Igbomina relation has not always been cordial. The master-slave relation carried over into the Kwara Project is reminiscent of and depicted in the pre-colonial 'Ara-Oko/Ara-Ile' (Home/Bush people) Ilorin-Igbomina relations that

labelled people from Offa, Omu-Aran or Obbo-Aiyegunle as 'ero' strangers. Indeed, the popular aphorism among the Ilorins, according to Oyedepo, when describing their town as '*ilu ti o loko, ti o lodo tin si n je nkan to wu won*' (meaning a community that does not work yet feeds fat on rich dainties) speaks volumes.³⁵ To the Igbomina, Ibolo and Ekiti peoples of Kwara South, Ilorins are '*Metsu Jamba*' (treacherous and crafty folks) while the Ilorins in turn refer to them as '*nkan obe*' – slaves, although Jawondo had argued that the *Metsu Jamba* coinage actually evolved from the wizardry of Ilorin's dangerous military tactics.³⁶ Such was the unhealthy imperial lord-vassal relationship at the wake of states creation.

Bamigboye was therefore perceived as having come to power to launch a pay-back against the Ilorins. Hence, while this reform was warmly embraced outside Ilorin, it was construed to have been particularly intended by Bamigboye to diminish the status of Ilorin and its emir. Part of the measures perceived to have been designed to further deplete the Emir of Ilorin of his influence was the supposed deliberate restructuring and upgrading of some traditional rulers. It was observed that the Emir of Ilorin had since 1900 enjoyed the exclusive position as most senior traditional chief on first grade in the Province. Bamigboye's administrative reform in 1969 via a series of edicts, restructured the Traditional Council by placing the Attah of Igala, Olupo of Ajase-po and Emir of Lafiagi on First Grade status, thus putting them almost at par with the Emir of Ilorin. The status of an emir who had hitherto enjoyed such an almost deified status was thus perceived to have been reduced to that of a mere *Primus Inter Pares*. As if that was not enough, in furtherance, the state government adopted the recommendations of the Soladoye Panel and upgraded the Ohinoyi of Igbiraland, the Oloffo of Offa and the Etsu of Patigi to the First Class status in 1972.³⁷ All of these were interpreted as direct concerted efforts towards the quest of the former vassals (colonies) of Ilorin towards decoloniality.

The period between 1967 and 1999, if regarded as an aberration in the political development of Kwara State, since it fell within the era of military despondency, the period from then to now is not best suited to ascribe Kwara State as a goldmine of development. Paradoxically, the period could comparatively be labelled as the golden age for the development of Kwara when pioneer civil servants and political leaders truly served the people of the state.³⁸ This era ushered in political scavengers who polluted the political atmosphere pretending

to be politicians just in a bid to siphon the easy money coming monthly from a statutory account to the coffers of the state. This easy and unearned money had produced a gluttonous leadership that squanders state's fund on wanton frivolities. Such leaders must have drawn inspiration from the 11th of the 48 Laws of Power by Robert Greene and Joost Elffers with the counsel: 'Learn to keep people dependent on you'.³⁹

Kwara has since gradually reclined into stagnancy and decay, with the inauguration of what Oyedapo dubbed as the era of 'patriotic sentiment'.⁴⁰ Today, given the option, the Igbomina, Ibolo and Ekiti would gladly align with Osun or Ekiti States, the Baruten and Kaiama with Sokoto or Kebbi States and the Nupe with Nduduma or Edu State, if/when created. Even a substantial infraction of Moro LGA would gladly join their kith and kilns in Oyo State; ditto for Asa LGA.⁴¹ Given this circumstance, only the advantaged seems interested in the sustenance of the Project, while the disadvantaged, with a very strong nostalgia for their ancestral origins, only wish to opt out of the parasitic and lopsided political brinksmanship. Palpable fears have been exercised that going by the nostalgia, nepotism and discrimination in Kwara today, which may, perhaps at best, be comparable with the apartheid of South Africa, the Kwara Project, an experiment in political engineering, may someday fizzle out.⁴²

Lopsidedness

By 27 May 2017, Kwara State will be celebrating her Golden Jubilee. From its inception till date, Kwara State has had 19 administrative heads, be they military or civilian. Thirteen of them were military while the rest six were civilians. Whereas the military cumulatively ruled for some 26 years, the elected Governors have ruled for about 25 years as at 2018. There is no arguing it that Kwara State or any other state in Nigeria for that matter had no democratic foundation as they were not created through a democratic process. The jackboots, of course, were made Governors and posted by military fiats and were strictly speaking not answerable to the people they governed. As such, it will be hard, if not unheard for democratic policies to flow from undemocratic practices.⁴³ And where possible, the result is what is evident in Kwara today.

While Governor Adamu Attah of the excised Kogi-Kwara ruled for four years, cumulatively and comparatively, Kwara North, Central and South would have ruled the state for 22 months, twelve years, and six years, three months respectively, by 2017. It is not in the best

interest of proper integration in a heterogeneous Kwara to reduce the office of a Governor to the exclusive property of a community or cultural sect. Power shift or national principle cements relationships rather than just creating access of the component units of the state to power holding not strictly for promotion of nepotism. Power should be exercised to sustain relationship in the heterogeneous Kwara so as to obliterate the suspicions which are palpable among the citizens of the state.

The lopsidedness and breach of the avowed principle of fairness in a heterogeneous Kwara State is seen as a time bomb capable of exacerbating the evident distrust, hatred, acrimony, tension and imminent revolution in a pluralistic cultural Kwara setting which has brought people of different histories, ethnic origins and social backgrounds together. Kwara State is divided into three Senatorial Districts, viz: Kwara North which is home to the Nupe and Bariba, Kwara Central which houses the Ilorin Yoruba and Fulani and Kwara South which is the habitat of the Igbomina, Ekiti and Ibolu. However, the lopsidedness evident in the Works and Transportation Sector which plausibly replicates the situation of other sectors, is an errant demonstration of gross unfairness.

Oyedepo revealed that of Governor Mohammed Lawal's 34 Road projects between 1999-2003, twenty-three were cited in Kwara Central, eight in Kwara South and three in Kwara North. Between 2003-2011, of Governor Bukola Saraki's 183 Road projects, 132 were cited in Kwara Central worth | 27, 801, 933, 099.32k translating to 67.67 per cent of the total value; Kwara South - 36 projects worth | 5, 716, 775, 203.22k translating to 13.92 per cent and Kwara North had 15 projects worth | 7, 565, 755, 392.08k, translating to 18.42 per cent.⁴⁴ This exemplifies government's scanty attention and a palpable neglect of the rural Kwara in preference for the urban development, thus creating an aura of inequality among the ethnic compositions of the state.

Kwara is a largely agrarian and civil service state. Hence, a mega-city development approach around the state capital is only capable of alienating the people from the real source of economic development with a craze and mad-rush for the urban. Today, virtually all federal institutions, state tertiary institution, companies and other projects are purely urban based, sited in Ilorin, the state capital. This is an invitation to a crisis of development. The end result is that, of the thirty-six states of the Nigerian federation, Kwara is reputed as the thirty-third poorest.⁴⁵

Oyedepo, in a rhetorical framework, comparing the manifestation of nepotism in Kwara to the liquidated apartheid in South Africa, asked

'...how is the policy better than the dismantled apartheid of South Africa? Are both not policies of discriminations?'⁴⁶ Unfortunately, when this persists for so long without reaction, we live in the fool's paradise that others are either fools or comfortable with oppression. This quiet forbearance is often being mistaken for peace and harmony in the State of Harmony.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the ace nationalist, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe once remarked that 'only a fool loves his chains even if made of gold.'⁴⁸

Which Way Forward?

For about 200 years now, fate or perhaps accident of history has apparently brought dissident groups together to cohabit and integrate within the same geographical space dubbed as Kwara. The Herculean task is how to work out an effective formula for peaceful co-existence.⁴⁹ But how were the early people able to foster enduring integration?

The political peculiarity and ethnic multiplicity of Ilorin greatly influenced the constitutional experimentation and administrative structure evolved in 1828 by Sheik Abdulsalam, son of Alimi, the first emir, who had to face the task of re-defining Ilorin to suit the prevailing realities of the era. Ilorin was initially divided into three main administrative wards - Fulani, Gambari (Hausawa) and Ajikobi (Yoruba) wards, each headed by a Balogun - Yoruba Viceroy or military chieftaincy title. It was in 1842 that Emir Shitta created the position of Balogun Alanamu for a second ward for the Yoruba, thus bringing the number of wards in Ilorin to four.⁵⁰ The attainment and sustenance of this rare feat of an integrated administrative structure during the pre-colonial era and afterwards gave Ilorin the picture of a peaceful and harmonious settlement where groups with distinct and at times conflicting backgrounds cohabit peacefully⁵¹ as a model of unity in diversity for multi-ethnic communities in contemporary societies.

Against this backdrop, the very first Emir, Sheik Abdulsalam, the son of Alimi, was said to have ascended the throne with his Yoruba wife.⁵² The mother of Momoloshu and fifth Emir, the eldest son of the late Emir Zubayr, who ascended the throne in 1891, was a Yoruba woman, Abake, from Ipapo, a village near Iseyin. Momoloshu himself was called *Amori Arojojoye*. Indeed, being a product of two different ethno-cultural backgrounds, Momoloshu had a particularly peaceful disposition with the Yoruba territories. For instance, while he sent richly caparisoned beautiful horses to the Bale of Ipapo, his mother's town, he also exchanged good relations with the Alaafin of Oyo. This brought him at variance with his Baloguns, especially Balogun Alanamu

Inakoju Ali and Balogun Gambari, Adamu who succeeded Abubakar Karara.⁵³

The ninth Emir, Alhaji Sulukanaini Gambari, who was remarked to have depicted Ilorin as a difficult place to rule,⁵⁴ perhaps for the acceptability of a Fulani-minority Emir in a Yoruba-majority community, was addressed by the Yoruba panegyric: 'Alabi Opo, Aiyelabowo IV'. Records have also revealed that while his mother was an Igbomina from Agbeyangi in Iponrin District of Ilorin East LGA, he also reportedly betrothed one of his own daughters to the then reigning Baba Isale of Ilorin, a Yoruba man.⁵⁵ Hence, these cognisant efforts, among others, were made by the early and subsequent Emirs to try and integrate the Fulanis with the Yoruba and others in the emirate.

It is, indeed, absurd to think that a society can thrive at the expense of one part of a whole. It is perverse when some groups think that by wielding political power and authority, and by capturing all vacancies in the Civil Service of State, Federal Ministries and parastatals, for their kith and kin, they are creating a lasting political edge for their section of the heterogeneous state. Oyedepo vociferously condemned the perceived superiority of Ilorin over the rest of the people of Kwara State as well as the political domination of the power brokers in Kwara in the areas of admission into higher institutions and employment where out of every ten, eight of their own are taken.⁵⁶ Today, primordial interests are more paramount to the different ethnic compositions of the Kwara Project (the Ilorins, Ekitis, Barubas, Nupes, Igbominas, Ibolos) than the overall interests of Kwara as a corporate entity.⁵⁷

What then is the way out of this debacle? How do we possibly achieve a Kwara that will be a true state of harmony and not the present state where harmony among the divergent stakeholders of the Kwara Project is, perhaps at best, a mirage? When do we expect to see that Dream-Kwara where the Igbomina and Ibolos will forget their quest for merger with Osun State, Ekiti Kwara for merger with Ekiti State, the Nupes for the long-sought Nduduma or Edu State⁵⁸ and where ultimately complete decoloniality is attained for the good of all?

There is an urgent need to pursue *relational re-orientation*. Relationship among the different ethnic groups must be clearly re-defined; one that believes in the common humanity of man and in the dignity of humanity, as against the institutionalisation of the present inhumanity to man; one that seeks to make Kwara a place of refuge for all and not a platform of discrimination on whatever ground; a relationship that will distinguish between the facts of historical facts

from the objective reality of the present. There is indeed, the need for a total re-orientation of the psyche of those who still live in the reality of the eighteenth century while oblivious of the twenty-first century. This is because, to continue to behave as if the war is not yet over, is injurious to genuine integration.⁵⁹ Since there are no more wars to fight, there is the need to establish a true relationship of genuine love, harmonious co-existence and genuine integration in the interest of all. There is the need to note that modern government had only knitted together disparate groups that had always been at war with one another and ethnic nationalities that were subdued though not permanently defeated.⁶⁰

Socialising our young ones to the culture of discrimination, bitterness and hatred is not only dangerous but prepares the ground for violent outburst and revolution, which could escalate into the kind of brutal genocide experienced between the Kutes and Chamba/Jukun in Takun town of Taraba State, stemming obviously out of protracted oppression and discrimination.⁶¹

Merit System should be exalted above nepotism or sectional divides. Lines of divide should be erased. We need to build bridges, not walls since bridges connect but walls divide. This is because as Aboyeji put it:

For as long as certain men share certain things in common than other men, which consequently bring them closer together in social relation, either in terms of ethnic, religious, historical or geographical affiliations, whether for peace or for war, lines of divide are already delineated.⁶²

As Ilorin cannot hold suzerainty over all others in the Kwara Project *ad infinitum* going by the philosophy of power shift, a symbiotic relationship stemming out of the concerted commitment of all towards promoting sustainable integration of the cultural cauldron becomes the only tenable alternative. There is the need for greater accommodation.

Conclusion

The quest and clamour of the Igbomina people for a disconnect with the Fulani caste of Northern Nigeria (which was the whole essence of Adeyemi's discourse),⁶³ and merger with the Yorubas of Western Nigeria which had started since the colonial era has not yet receded. Recalling reminiscences of that era, Carter, the British Colonial Governor in Lagos who had been denied access to Ilorin in the mid-1890s and

having been earlier harassed by Sarumi, the Emir's aide, had indicated his resolve to re-integrate the people of Ilorin with the Yoruba mainly from Ibadan in his bid to 'drive the unruly foreign elements back to their country'.⁶⁴ Thereafter, following the invasion and conquest of Ilorin by the forces of the Royal Niger Company on 16 February 1897, George Taubman Goldie equally nursed the ambition of restoring a Yoruba dynasty in Ilorin. He dropped the idea only when he realised that a large garrison would be needed to dismantle the 'Ancien Regime'.⁶⁵ If the referendum following the Henry Wilkins' report on the minority interests in Nigeria around 1954 was not aborted by vested counter interests, the Yoruba territory that is still part of the Kwara Project and absurdly geographically addressed as north would have since been ceded to the Yorubas of Western Nigeria.⁶⁶ Two recent memoranda⁶⁷ requesting for the creation of Igbomina State is an affirmation that the people have not rested on the oars in their bid for decoloniality from what is considered an aberration.

Indeed, when people are oppressed and power is abused, the natural tendency stemming out of the natural instinct of man is rejection and resentment. The success of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP), with the heroic bravery of such legendary stalwarts as Sule Maito, Hammed Ayo, Ayifun Baya of Oja Gbooro, Adebimpe Oniyeye, Yakubu Olowo, Aremu Alayaba, Tantanmo ita Elefun and a host of others who stood as vanguards of the struggle for emancipation in the mid-1950s should be a good reminder that when the oppressed unite, political quit-notice is bound to be served on the oppressors.⁶⁸ This is because, considering the living expression of Dele Giwa, the assassinated Nigerian journalist, 'Evil done by man to man will definitely be redressed; if not by man, then by God and if not now, then definitely later.'⁶⁹

The long siege on the political will of the marginalised minority peoples, particularly Igbomina, should therefore not be misconstrued as a resort to fate; but only a 'muted brouhaha' or at best, a bottled explosive.⁷⁰ However, there are fears that the highly sought West Merger can hardly provide the desired solution to the political quagmire, since wherever the merging group (s) eventually falls, unless if an entirely new creation, they become later entrants and therefore, a minority group all over again.

There is no arguing it that Ilorin was founded by a Yoruba man. But the grand remaking of history by the Fulani forces in 1817 which brought about the mutiny, conquest and defeat of the forces of Afonja is an equally undeniable fact of history. However, this did not result in the obliteration of the Yoruba in Ilorin. Although the early Ilorin

Emirate was acquired by war, what sustained it, from its outset, was the conscious efforts of the jihadist leaders and forbears to forge and foster a formidable inter-ethnic bond by integrating the immigrant Fulani and others with the aboriginal Yorubas in the multi-ethnic cauldron that emerged therefrom. This is the rationale for the quest for decoloniality from the old Ilorin-Igbomina lord-vassal imperialist relations, and genuine integration within the Kwara political landscape, for the overall good of all. It is not until we attain the great lofty heights of genuine love for one another, truth, faith, honesty and decoloniality in the multi-ethnic State of Harmony, and Nigeria by extension, can we expect the manifestation of the dream of building a virile nation where the desired 'peace and justice shall reign'.

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HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE PHENOMENAL OF HATE SPEECHES AND THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Taofiki Aminu and Rebecca Ezra Dikki

Abstract

A key threat to contemporary Nigeria development is the phenomenon of hate speech which has continued to escalate across Nigeria. The increasing propensity and echoes of hate speeches in the contemporary period has continued to engender myriads of controversies, squabbles and violence conflicts. This paper examines the implications of hate speeches on national cohesion and indeed development. It employs historical techniques of data collection to underscore how hate speeches have haunted national integration in the country. It argues that hate speeches are escalating insecurities and polarising the country along ethnic and religious divides. The paper concludes that the challenge of hate speeches has deep historical roots traceable to the colonial era. It therefore stresses the dire need for government to take steps towards de-emphasising divisive tendencies in the country particularly those that are fuelled by hate speeches.

Keywords: Hate Speech, Challenges, Insecurity.

Introduction

In amplifying the trend of hate speeches in Nigeria, Decker contends that "Nigeria has followed the same course of "good and bad" trajectories since independence and has particularly attracted, in part, and on different occasions, some admirations, neglect, suspension, disdain or even hatred."¹ Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, Nigerians have been faced with a lot of problems emanating from disorderliness, confusion and the latest insecurity development. The

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