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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Editorial Board**

**Submission Guidelines**

**Table of Contents**

**Women, Development and Inequality in Edo State, Nigeria: A Sociological Perspective**

*Cinderella Temitope Ochu, Tolulope Ilesanmi* and *Dafetta Odiri*  

1

**Onion Production and Rural Livelihoods in Central Gombe Since 1960**

*Anloho, Teryima Albert*  

15

**Modern Diplomatic Practice: Some Historical and Theoretical Insights**

*Chris S. Onugu*  

29

**The Place of Theatre Workshop in the Curriculum of Theatre Arts in Nigerian Colleges of Education**

*Marcellinus Aondohehmba Ason*  

41

**Broadband in Nigeria: Pathway to Economic Development**

*Peter F. Adebayo, Owoade Adewale A.*  

57

**The Role of Pentecostal Churches in Peace and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria**

*Franca Shiminenge Jando*  

75

**Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and the Internationalisation of Tin Mining on the Jos Plateau, 1902-1960**

*Daniel Datok Dalyop*  

88

**Basic Sociolinguistics Concepts and Their Manifestation in Nigeria: Accent, Argot, Taboo, Slang and Jargon**

*Ozioma J. Okey-Kalu*  

100

**The Elite and the Mismanagement of Religious Pluralism in the Nigerian Society: The Way Forward**

*Solomon O. Oduma-Abol, Nicholas N. Adumbu*  

114

**Modelling a Culture of Academic Integrity in Nigeria: The Role of Lecturers**

*Kenneth T. Azaigha and Elizabeth I. Yecho*  

129

**Restructuring the Nigerian Federalism: Lessons from History**

*Benjamin W. Yio*  

138

**Corruption in the Book of Amos: Lessons for the Nigerian State**

*David H. Kajom and John Ishaku*  

155

**Legacies of the Government Marine Department (GMD) in Nigeria 1901-1997**

*Anthony Danladi Ali*  

167

**The Paradoxes of Being and Time: An Existential-Tragic Approach to Dramatic Literature**

*Issa Omotosho Garuba*  

179

**Masculinity in the Urhobo Folklore of Nigeria**

*Joy Arnoture Omorom* and *Felicia Omoowori*  

195

**Oral Tradition in Adebowale’s The Virgin and Ngugi’s The River Between**

*Ojedoja Sanjo*  

213
The 1959 Federal Elections and Its Aftermath on Tiv of Benue Valley Region
David D. Yonga 226

International Terrorism and Its Effects on Global Peace
Uchenna Samuel Nzeako and Peter Vandi Tumba 242

Small Arms Proliferation: A Threat to Religious and National Unity in Nigeria
David H. Kajom 255

Agricultural Policy Measures and Self-Sufficiency in Food Production in Nigeria, 1970-1990
Henry Terna Ahom 267

Western Liberal Values: The Limits of Relevance
Ebere R. Adigbuo 282

The Impact of Export Crops Production on Colonial Northern Nigeria
Dahiru Rabe 297

A History of Lagos Island Up To 2017
Habeeb A. Sanni and Bashir O. Animashaun 309

Yoruba Influences on the Development of Printing Industry in Zaria 1960-2011
Ennise S.A. Jeje 321

The Relevance of Dependency and Under-Development Theory in Contemporary Third World
Audu Yusuf and Isaac Iorhen Akwa 333

The Role of Entrepreneurial Skills in the Performance of Small Scale Business: A Study of Mr Bigg's Kaduna
Lumu Musa Yaro 343

Religious Moral Values: A Panacea for Free, Fair and Credible General Elections in Nigeria
Simon Jeji Majimre 356

The Relevance of Traditional Institutions in the Containment of Security Challenges in Northern Nigeria
Jamilu Shehu 371

Ethnic Politics in Nigeria: A Call for Power Shift in Kogi State
Uchenna Samuel Nzeako, Yusufu Ahmed Adu and Ileobare Igheoise Trust 380

Odeigah, Theresa Nfam 392

Africanisation of Numeral Concept in Christian Religious Worship among the Igbomina in Eastern Yorubaland
Aboyi, Oyeniyi Solomon 401

The Nigerian Military and Internal Security Interventions since 1999: Assessing the Challenges to Nation-Building in Nigeria
Aondowase Hembe and J.A. Hembe 417

The Introduction and Spread of Islam among the Fakkawa of Zuru Emirate, 1910-2015
Yusuf Abdullahi 437

Quest for Decoloniality and Challenges of Integration in the Kwara Project: The Igbomina Episode
Aboyi, Adeniyi Justus 447

Historical Exploration of the Phenomenal of Hate Speeches and the Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria
Tuofiki Aminu and Rebecca Ezra Dikki 467
QUEST FOR DECOLONIALITY AND CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION IN THE KWARA PROJECT: THE IGBOMINA EPISODE

Aboyeji, 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 Ilbolo would gladly align with Osun/Ekiti; Baruten and Kaiama with Sokoto/Kebbi, and Nape with Nduwuma/Edu State, if/when created. A substantial infraction of Asa and Moro LGAs would also gladly join their kith and kin 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-infinitem, 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.

Aboyeji, Adeniyi Justus, PhD, Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
Introduction
Ethno-political tensions have been identified as peculiar features of multi-ethnic societies. Undoubtedly, Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and the largest black country worldwide, is a complex ethno-political landscape. 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. Igbajo, another Yoruba community, is also remarkable for its plurality of cultural identities intermingling in an interestingly cohesive and peaceful manner. Meanwhile, as Aboyi 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, Igbominia, Ekiti, etc. Igbajo is, indeed, a coming together; an agglomeration and synthesis of all Yoruba groups. Igbajo is a home of all Yoruba groups.

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. Some of such contemporary nasty occurrences which have degenerated into bad blood, bitter bloodletting and carnage include among others, the Share-Tsaragi, Ile-Madakeke, Offa-Erin-Ile and Fulani-Oro-Ago brouhahas.

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. That the Ilorin Emirate was created by violence does not imply that it must be sustained by the same. Indeed, the need for ethno-political integration brought about the integration of apparently dissident groups such as the Yoruba, Fulani, Bariba, Nupe, Kembri, Gambari/Gobirawa (Hausa), Malians and Arabs into the multi-ethnic cauldron that evolved therefrom. If today, by implication, the combination of Igbominia, Ekiti, Ibolu, 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, 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 maxims 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, breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

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 Igbominia, 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. As there can be no meaningful political freedom without economic independence, it equally covers the unending struggle for a virile economy.

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.
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 Igbonina, which later transmogrified into the Kwara project, a colonial-driven ‘marriage of convenience’, 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 kin in other states of the federation and remove the perceived normalising tendencies of the old order. The inclusion of Igboninaland 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 Igbonina village except by virtue of old wars...it is our duty to sort the tribes out and keep them separate’.

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-fifties 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 Ibiile Esie, Lagos Branch, has noted:

Let me state straightforward that, ‘Ilorin Descendants’ Union’ is a misnomer for that organisation. The correct name should have been ‘Igbonina Descendants’ Union’. It may be generally known that the Igboninas 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!

Mr V.F. Biscoe, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Igbonina Natives</th>
<th>27,503</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ilorin settlers</td>
<td>6,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulani-Yoruba Cattle owners</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba settlers from Oyo S.P.</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba settlers from Offa District</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa natives</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>35,899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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’.

The Ilorin-Yoruba claim descent from Oraniyan, the great grandson of Lamurudu. Hogben and Kirk-Greene however, claimed that only the Ibi-Afe family of the Magaji Are quarters, those of the Baba Isale compound and Magaji Abdul came from Old Oyo. Others either came to hunt, trade or for asylum from the Yoruba wars. Hence, Ilorin began to expand. Afolayan emphatically argued that Ilorin was an Igbonina 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 Igbonina region in and around Ilorin. The dialect, the political system and the socio-cultural organisation of this region which included Ilorin, Ido, Afin and Ilorin changed in a way remarkably different from the other Igbonina and Yoruba people. Today, this region, besides being on Igboninaland and having a tradition of being part of Igbonina in the past, has become socially, economically and politically integrated into the Ilorin society. Thus, the 19th century crises transformed Ilorin from an insignificant Igbonina village to the most dominant centre of power in the region.

Be that as it may, the Fulani in Ilorin, succeeded in detaching large Igbonina and other areas from the main sub-group by their counter-coup on Afonja and gave it a new character. Other Igbonina areas whose peoples today would not show that they are particularly keen in joining their Igbonina brethren, from archival documentation, included Ilopo, Ekin, Odo-Owa, Osu, Osin and Obo. The Bayajidja 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.

The Fulani minority ruling caste evolved and adopted a power-sharing strategy to deflex, 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 Olumoh\textsuperscript{22} 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, Igbominna and Egba, supplemented by other ethnic groups such as the Fulani, Kanuri, Nupe and Hausa (called Gambari in Ilorin) from northern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{24}

The Geographical Expression called ‘Kwara’

The geographical space of about 34,661\textsuperscript{2} kms 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.\textsuperscript{25} The 1996 LG creation by the Sanni Abacha regime, brought the number of LGAs to sixteen.

Map of Kwara State Showing Its LGAs

\textbf{Kwara State 2006 Census Population Distribution by LGA}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Senatorial District</th>
<th>Land Size (Km(^2))</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Both Sexes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1308.316</td>
<td>62751</td>
<td>61917</td>
<td>124668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Baruten</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>9935.467</td>
<td>104727</td>
<td>101952</td>
<td>206679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Edu</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2596.408</td>
<td>104040</td>
<td>97602</td>
<td>201642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Egbe</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>488.192</td>
<td>27611</td>
<td>26788</td>
<td>54599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ifelodun</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3501.718</td>
<td>103650</td>
<td>101325</td>
<td>204975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ilorin east</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>495.076</td>
<td>104801</td>
<td>102661</td>
<td>207462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ilorin south</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>177.607</td>
<td>103606</td>
<td>105645</td>
<td>209251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ilorin west</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>106.455</td>
<td>180387</td>
<td>184834</td>
<td>365221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Irepodun</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>749.338</td>
<td>73554</td>
<td>74040</td>
<td>147594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Isin</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>644.333</td>
<td>30088</td>
<td>29393</td>
<td>59481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kaisama</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>712.225</td>
<td>64901</td>
<td>59114</td>
<td>124015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Moro</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3337.397</td>
<td>54860</td>
<td>53855</td>
<td>108715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Offa</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>96.971</td>
<td>44813</td>
<td>44162</td>
<td>89035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Oke-ero</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>445.617</td>
<td>28358</td>
<td>28862</td>
<td>56270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Oyun</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>484.19</td>
<td>47980</td>
<td>46564</td>
<td>95454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Pategi</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2975.126</td>
<td>57746</td>
<td>53106</td>
<td>110852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Kwara State}


the Abacha military regime occasioned the further excision of Lokoja, Okene and Kamba in a merger with the Igala 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 some period the Borgu Division was also excised from Kwara State and merged with Niger State, thereby reducing it to its present size. The Igboomas, Ilorin 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 with the utmost by the Ilorin people and the pro-NPC elements throughout Northern Nigeria as the word seemed 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 Qorra, the native name of the people of New Bussa in the Kingdom of Yaur 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 rechristened 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, an Igbooma 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/Fatigi, Kabba, Ankpa and Kogi, the jurisdiction of the old Ilorin Native Authority was split into three autonomous Divisions, viz: Ilorin, Igbooma/Ekiti and Oyun Divisions with their headquarters in Ilorin, Omu-Aran and Offa respectively.

Meanwhile, as observed by Olumoh,33 Ilorin-Igbooma relations have 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-Igbooma relations that
labelled people from Offa, Omu-Aran or Obbo-Aiyegunle as ‘era’s
strangers. Indeed, the popular aphorism among the Ilorins, according to
Oyedepo, when describing their town as ‘liu ti o loko, ti o lodo tin si jẹ
mi kan to yu wo’ (meaning a community that does not work yet feeds fat
on rich dainties) speaks volumes. To the Igboominia, Ibo and Ekiti
peoples of Kwara South, Ilorins are ‘Metsa Jamba’ (treacherous and crafty
folks) while the Ilorins in turn refer to them as ‘mi kan o be’—slaves.
although Jawondul had argued that the Mets Jamba coigne actually
evolved from the wizardry of Ilorin’s dangerous military tactics. 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 pal 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 Olollo of Ojoo and the Etsu of Patigi to
the First Class status in 1972. 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. 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.’

Kwara has since gradually reeled into stagnancy and decay, with
the inauguration of what Oyedepo dubbed as the era of ‘patriotic
sentiment’. Today, given the option, the Igboominia, Ibo and Ekiti
would gladly align with Osun or Ekiti States, the Baruten and Kaima
with Sokoto or Kebbi States and the Nupe with Nduku or Edu
State, if/when created. Even a substantial infraction of Moro LGA
would gladly join their kith and kin in Oyo State; ditto for Asa LGA.
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.

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 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 fiat 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. 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 breech 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 Igbonima, Ekiti and Ilolo. 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, Oyedepo revealed that of Governor Bukola Saraki’s 183 Road projects, 132 were cited in Kwara Central worth $27,801, 930, 99.32k 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. 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 megacity 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.

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?" 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. Meanwhile, the ace nationalist, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe once remarked that "only a fool loves his chains even if made of gold."

Which Way Forward?

For about 200 years now, fate or perhaps accident of history has apparently brought dissenting 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. 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 Sheikh Abdulsalame, 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 (Hausa) 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. 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 peacefully as a model of unity in diversity for multi-ethnic communities in contemporary societies.

Against this backdrop, the very first Emir, Sheik Abdulsalame, the son of Alimi, was said to have ascended the throne with his Yoruba wife. The mother of Momolosho and fifth Emir, the eldest son of the late Emir Zubayr, who ascended the throne in 1891, was a Yoruba woman, Abake, from Ipepo, a village near Iseyin. Momolosho himself was called Amor Ojojojo. Indeed, being a product of two different ethno-cultural backgrounds, Momolosho had a particularly peaceful disposition with the Yoruba territories. For instance, while he sent-richly caparisoned beautiful horses to the Bale of Ipepo, 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.\textsuperscript{38}

The ninth Emir, Alhaji Sulukainaini Gambari, who was remarked to have depicted Ilorin as a difficult place to rule,\textsuperscript{44} 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 Igbonina 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.\textsuperscript{38} 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 pervasive 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 Kwaran State as well as the political domination of the power brokers in Kwaran in the areas of admission into higher institutions and employment where out of every ten, eight of their own are taken.\textsuperscript{39} Today, primordial interests are more paramount to the different ethnic compositions of the Kwara Project (the Ilorins, Ekitis, Barubas, Nupes, Igboninas, Ibolos) than the overall interests of Kwaran as a corporate entity.

What then is the way out of this debacle? How do we possibly achieve a Kwaran that will be a true state of harmony and not the present state where harmony among the divergent stakeholders of the Kwaran Project is, perhaps at best, a mirage? When do we expect to see that Dream-Kwaran where the Igbonina and Ibolos will forget their quest for merger with Osun State, Ekiti Kwaran for merger with Ekiti State, the Nupes for the long-sought Nduduma or Edu State\textsuperscript{38} 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 Kwaran 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 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.\textsuperscript{35} 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 knit together disparate groups that had always been at war with one another and ethnic nationalities that were subdued though not permanently defeated.\textsuperscript{40}

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.\textsuperscript{41}

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 Aboyeye\textsuperscript{2} 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.\textsuperscript{42}

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 Igbonina people for a disconnect with the Fulani caste of Northern Nigeria (which was the whole essence of Adeyemi’s discourse),\textsuperscript{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 mainland from Ibadan in his bid to ‘drive the unruly foreign elements back to their country’. 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’. 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 geopolitically addressed as north would have since been ceded to the Yorubas of Western Nigeria. Two recent memoranda 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, Tantamolo et al 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. 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.’

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. 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 forbearers 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-vasal 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’.

Notes and References
1 The African society was full of inter-ethnic rivalries which resulted into strikes and wars which destroyed empires and dethroned thrones.
5 Olumoh, Managing Ethno-Political Relations, 12.
6 Justus A. Aboyej, “Issues of Promoting Good Neighbourliness in Igbomina: A Historical Analysis” presented at the 60th Annual
Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) hosted by the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Abuja, between 11-14th October, 2015.


Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political relations, 9, 117.


FMI, The March to Democracy, 30th Anniversary, (Published by the Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1990), 7.


NAK Ilor Prof 5083.

NAK Ilor Prof 2700 vol. II, ‘Ilorin or Igbonoma...Which?’, 133. See also Aboyi, ‘Foreign Influence on Igbonoma’, 142-143.


Ibid.

NAK, Ilor Prof 5083. Meanwhile, the River Osun, which runs from Ila-Orangun right into the River Niger is said to have practically encircled all the Igbonoma peoples with the exception of only two or three.

Oyedepo, Letters to the Emir, 10.

Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political Relations, 2.

Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political relations, 8.

Oyedepo, Letters to the Emir, 267.


The apparent obliteraton of Fulfulde, the Fulani language in Ilorin today begs for attention by interested scholars.


Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political relations, 8.


Oyedepo, Letters to the Emir, 35, 117.

Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political relations, 275.

David Lasisi Bamigboye (Rtd.) died on Thursday night at about 10 pm of 20th September, 2018 in a private hospital in Lagos after a brief illness.

Ibid, 277.

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Oyedepo, Letters to the Emir, 124-125.

Ibid. 32-33.

Ibid.

Ibid. 225, 238.

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Oyedepo, Letters to the Emir, 62, 166-170.

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Ibid. 159.

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Olomoh, Managing Ethno-Political Relations, 166-167.
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.” 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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