

A REVIEW OF CHARLES NWEKE'S "BOKO HARAM TERRORISM AND NIGERIA NATIONAL INTEGRATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS"

Onyeka Emmanuel Uzowulu

Nigeria became a single entity after the 1914 amalgamation. The colonial masters merged all the ethnic groups into two protectorate; Northern and Southern protectorate. This act has been argued by some many if it was done with cognizance of consent or it was subjected to force. However, the deed has been done and the goal aims towards promoting national integration amongst different ethnic groups.

It interests me so much to have gone through this article by C. C. Nweke. It exposes that Nigeria is not only struggling in her pursuit for national integration but battling external factors which poses a threat against its unity. National integration can be summarized as unity; a united whole. The author in carrying out a philosophical analysis on how boko haram poses a threat to Nigeria's national integration began from a metaphysical point of view.

According to BBC News, Boko haram has as its official name as; "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awti wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching.'" The sect was established by Mallam Lawal in 1995 with its objectives, a revolt against Western traditions. Dr. Charles identifies that after the death of Lawal, the sect adopted a new leader in person of Abubakar Shekau. Under the reign of Shekau, Boko Haram became very notorious for its use of extreme violence.

The author was quick to point out that Boko Haram was not the first ethnic sect to seek a break away from the entity Nigeria. Various ethnic groups at different periods have risen to advocate for their personal-collective desires. In the early days of Nigeria's independence, Biafra fought for secession. Another was witnessed from the Militant group of the Niger Delta. They agitated against the exploitative ambitions by the Federal government against their region. Amnesty was granted to the militant fighters and once again, peace was restored. Many groups with both ethnic and religious background have at one point sought freedom or a break away from Nigeria.

In the article, the author tried to narrow boko haram and its activities as an ethnic sec; the idea that Nigeria is mainly structured under two major religious group; Islam and Christianity. The group was notorious for its attack on other religions especially Christianity. The Nigerian security lacked precision and thus, turned a blind eye to the activities of Boko Haram. The sect employed young and naïve youths both from Nigeria and neighboring countries like Chad and Niger. At this point, it was an ethnic group attacking other ethnic groups with different religion and culture; churches, schools, homes and business were destroyed as the attacks increased.

The failure of the Nigerian government to act swiftly provided Boko Haram the opportunity to grow. Another angle the author views boko haram as an ethnic group is evident that the group became violent during the reign of a non-Muslim and a Southern President. The belief that a particular tribe is born to rule resulted to threats from Northerner leaders who promised to frustrate the new government. Due to the fact that only one particular ethnic group was affected at the early stages of the insurgency, the northern leaders failed to condemn the activities of Boko Haram. Not until the kidnap of 270 Chibok school girls, the ambush and kidnap of Imams, northern travellers, raiding of northern villages, killings of both Muslims and non-Muslims that the sect was no longer treated as insurgency. It was later regarded as a terrorist group and also gained international recognition. Nweke writes;

Over time, *Boko Haram* has developed into a terror giant segmented into splinter groups, one of which is known as Ansaru. Their monstrous activities centre around the North East states of Borno, Yobe Adamawa, Kaduna, Kano and Bauchi compelling the Nigerian government to declare partial state of emergency in three states (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe). The extension of their gruesome acts to other states including Plateau and the FCT relays the inability of Nigerian security forces to contend them. The sect's viral spread beyond the shores of Nigeria represents its graduation to an international terrorist group. (Nweke, 2020)

Nigeria is at war again. Many lives and properties have been lost. A lot of individuals have been rendered homeless and the IDP camps are working on an overload and lack of insufficient resources despite receiving aids from international communities around the globe. The unity that binds Nigeria is under threat as other tribes as angry and filled with revenge. How can one remain faithful to a nation that abandoned them because they do not belong to a religious ethnic group? How can national integration be feasible with people losing faith daily as boko haram continues to spread its killings?

To pinpoint the central theme embedded in national integration, the author questions if it is natural for man to live together in unity despite their differences? Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation made up of different ethnic groups with difference in religion and cultures. The author recognizes that 'unity' and 'differences' both have cosmological as well as ontological foundations. The universe is made up of different elements comprising of billions of different life existence. We have man, animals, plants, micro-organisms, etc. yet, in all these difference, there is evident the presence of harmony. Nature, according to the article possesses its own culture. The culture of nature includes its ability to ensure harmony between all form existences.

Integration in the article was identified as unity in both conflicts and harmony. Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation. The human society by nature includes differences ranging from gender, sex, tribe, races. There are nations that are homogeneous naturally. Nations like China and Japan are good examples of homogeneous society. Despite their differences in gender, tribes, kits and kins, they share a common cultural value. Countries like Nigeria and USA are perfect examples of heterogeneous nations. Unlike USA which has a mastery of belongingness of its citizens despite their ethnic differences, Nigeria continues to experience intra and inter-ethnic conflicts. The social contract evidently binds and guides conflicts towards togetherness. The amalgamation in 1914 joined the conflict of North and the South protectorate into a united entity.

Nweke recognizes that the first conflict after the amalgamation was the Nigerian/Biafra war of 1966-1970. He exposes that this was the beginning of the conflict experienced in Nigeria. He states:

After that war, the country continues to exist in the cold war of ethnic conflict, social mistrust, religious bigotry, the major problem hinging on

the majority/minority divide part of which throws up a born to rule mindset as a political creed of a particular ethnic group.(Nweke, 2020)

Aside this, he also identifies how the mentality of 'born to rule' has crippled the unity of Nigeria. Development and national integration has remained hindered due to the ethnic sentimentality, nepotism and corruption.

Boko haram is a threat to national integration. Yes, it has been regarded as a terrorist group, it still possess some element of ethnic grievance especially with Christianity as its first enemy. Nweke concludes that:

If American intelligence predicted the break-up of Nigeria by 2015, the terrorist activities of Boko Haram stand the possibility of bringing it to fruition especially if those activities extend to the South. The show of solidarity by all segments of Nigeria in bring back our girls campaign could be a basis for argument for/evidence of integration, but the truth remains that *Boko Haram* is already dealing a fatal blow on the Nigeria wall of unity. It is simply submitted that their activities, if not adequately checked and contained, retains the potentiality of drifting Nigeria to total disintegration. (Nweke, 2020)

In conclusion, the article relates a philosophical analysis which indirectly couldled to a future prediction. The future predicted here, implies Nigeria's dis-integration as a result of the terrorist activities of Boko haram. The evidence that citizens still believe in a one Nigeria is very much not questionable and also, we cannot deny the fact that ethnic conflicts still exist. However, it is in the goodness of nature that we have differences and also, it is the beauty of nature that we see a harmonious unity between them. Lastly, the terrorist activities of Boko Haram calls for a more united front through national integration or we allow boko haram win and lose our national integration.

Onyeka Emmanuel Uzowulu

Department of Philosophy

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

oe.uzowulu@unizik.edu.ng

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