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## THE INCONGRUITY OF SAYYID QUTB'S POLITICAL ISLAM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

### Abstract

The refutation and disregard of the influence of religion in politics has implications for national integration. The last few decades have witnessed the emergence of contemporary Islamic movements and trends in the Muslim world. One of the most effective and influential political thinkers of Islamism is Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950's and 1960's and theorist of violent Jihad. As the father of modern Islamic fundamentalism, his ideas provide a framework and ideological foundation for many Islamic groups, like al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and the ISIS, around the world. While there are cases where political elites manipulate religion to mobilize support and further narrow political interests, it is erroneous and dangerous for policy to continue to perceive religion as incapable on its own to generate divisions in a society. This paper examines the features of Political Islam in three main areas: cultural-ideological, political and socio-economic, from the perspective of Sayyid Qutb political thought, and reflects on how these beliefs could impact on the dimensions of national integration in Nigeria. The paper argues that Political Islam is incompatible with national integration and as such the future of national integration is threatened in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Political Islam, national integration, religion, Nigeria, politics

### Introduction

Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion are the major religions in Nigeria operating amid groups with diverse social, cultural, economic and political interests.<sup>2</sup> Islam is considered as one of the most widespread religions in Nigeria. Nigeria houses one of the largest Muslim populations in the world and consequently, has the attention of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Egypt and a few others. In terms of geography, it accounts for about 70 percent of the old Northern region of the country and about 20 to 30 percent of the population of the

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2 Emmanuel Usue, Religion and National Integration in Nigeria: A Transcendental Religious Perspective, *Theologica Viatorum*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2011, p. 68.

southern regions. Culture, language, religion and ethnicity are among the factors that affect national integration.<sup>3</sup> The recent emphasis on ethnic militia as a means of providing security to local communities further makes the prospects of integration unlikely, not to talk of the calls for restructuring, for both genuine and mischievous reasons, among some political elites in the country. One of the most prominent reasons for the calls for restructuring is the fear of what has been tagged the agenda to Islamize Nigeria. Internally, the issues of Sharia law being adopted in several states in the Northern part of the country, the enduring threat of Boko Haram,<sup>4</sup> and the recent Fulani herdsmen/farmers conflicts that appear to go unchecked by the government<sup>5</sup> have made most Nigerians apprehensive. Externally, the global menace of ISIS, Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups help to increase the apprehension. Although less than one percent of the Muslim population are consciously Wahhabi in their worldview,<sup>6</sup> the destabilizing impact of these extremist movements has been felt around the world. Wahhabis, adherents of the Wahhabi ideology, call Muslims, who have strayed from 'true' Islam, to return to the pristine and original teachings of Islam.<sup>7</sup> All major and radical Islamic movements draw heavily from the Wahhabi thought that reflects puritanism, political expressions and extremism.<sup>8</sup>

Integration is a common concept in most discussions of Islam and Muslim Identity.<sup>9</sup> With over 400 ethnic cleavages and a handful of religious groupings, Nigeria is a plural society<sup>10</sup> that has survived several blows to its integration efforts. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria, peace and unity is crucial for stability, security and integration but this is currently being threatened by deep ethnic sentiments and religious fanaticism that is eating away at the fragile bond that has held the entity together since independence in 1960. While it is the priority of every country to promote unity by building institutions that de-emphasize diversity and reduce violent ethnic uprisings, the dynamics of disintegration are increasing daily in Nigeria and the feelings of continuous existence as a single sovereign state is perceived by some as no longer beneficial to

3 Jawad Shah and Waseem Ishaque, Challenges of National Integration in Pakistan and Strategic Response *ISSRA Papers*, 2017, p. 39.

4 Dodeye Williams, The Role of Conflict Resolution in Counterterrorism in Nigeria: A Case Analysis of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram (BH), *Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* Vol. 48, No. 1-2, 2016, p. 173.

5 Alhassan Bello, Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in North-Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions, *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* Vol. 2, No. 5, 2013, p. 129.

6 Vicenzo Olivetti, *Terror's Source: The Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and its Consequences* Birmingham, UK: Amadeus Books, 2002.  
7 Ibid.

8 Khaled El-Fadl, *The Great Theft – Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, USA: HarperCollins, 2005, p. 45.

9 Jonatan Bäckelie, *Religion and Politics – A Valid Divide? Confessionality in Politics and Higher Education*, Göteborgs Universitet: Literatur, Idéhistoria Och Religion, 2011, p. 39.

10 Okon John and Usoro, Usoro, Plural Society and the Challenge of Democratic Practice in Nigeria, *Developing Country Studies* Vol. 6, No.1, 2016, p. 141.

ordinary Nigerians<sup>11</sup> hence the calls for restructuring.

In pluralistic societies, civil religion is an expression of the basic cultural values that are respected and accepted by the entire population as well as a strategy for shaping common values into an inclusive national character.<sup>12</sup> National integration is central to unity, peaceful coexistence and harmony.<sup>13</sup> National integration does not imply similarity but a kind of unity in diversity but is the awareness of a common identity among the citizens of a country regardless of differences in ethnicity, religion, region and language. It is crucial to the development of any meaningful nation for it to flourish, grow and develop.<sup>14</sup>

National integration is a process as well as a goal by which people living in a particular territory, regardless of religious, ethnic or linguistic diversity, on the basis of shared traditions, experiences, common history and values strive to live together forever with honour and dignity.<sup>15</sup> It is a conscious process of creating an interlocking and vertical relationship between and among separate nations, after an understanding and reconciliation of the fundamental differences and an establishment of an acceptable consensus.<sup>16</sup> Integration is a series of multi-directional, inter-active processes in related but separate domains.<sup>17</sup> It implies the insertion of a group or individual into an existing entity.<sup>18</sup>

National integration is about coming to the knowledge, belief and acceptance that the citizens have a common nationality.<sup>19</sup> Discourse about national integration in Nigeria tends to reveal a lack of interest in the processes and goals of integration. This is not without reasons particularly among those groups who feel excluded from political, social and economic benefits. Integration, according to the Council of Europe, is a common framework of legal rights and active participation in society on the basis of a minimum standard of income, education and accommodation; freedom of choice of religious and political beliefs, cultural

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- 11 Ibrahim Baba and Chaminda Aeysighe, Re-Positioning Nigeria towards Sustainable National Unity, *Global Journal of Human Social Science* Vol. 17, No. 4, 2018, p. 41.
  - 12 Leon Miller and Gordon Anderson, Religions Role in Creating National Unity, *International Journal on World Peace* Vol. 26, No. 1, 2009, p. 91.
  - 13 Dawood Egbefo, Leadership and Ethno-Religious Crises: Implication for National Integration in Nigeria, *African Research Review* Vol. 9, No. 4, 2015, p. 92.
  - 14 Mercy Echem, Ebisemen Lulu-Pokubo and Eberechi Eberechi, The Role of Public Library in fostering National Integration for Development: A Case Study of Port Harcourt Library, Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal), 1713 <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1713> (Accessed May 29, 2018).
  - 15 I. Vyas, Mal-distribution and Poverty as factors in the Crisis of the Nigerian State, *The Constitution: A Journal of Constitutional Development* Vol. 1, No. 2, 1993, p. 1.
  - 16 Sherrif F. Folarin, Illemobola Olanrewaju, and Yartey Ajayi, 'Cultural Plurality, National Integration and the Security Dilemma in Nigeria', *Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 1, 2014, p. 81.
  - 17 Sarah Spencer and Katharine Charsely, Conceptualizing Integration: A Framework for Empirical Research, Taking Marriage Migration as a Case Study, *Comparative Migration Studies* Vol. 4, No. 18, 2016, p. 1.
  - 18 Adrian Favell, "Integration and Nations: The Nation-State and Research on Immigrants in Western Europe", in: *Selected Studies in International Migration and Immigrant Incorporation*, Marco Martiniello and Jan Rath eds. Vol 1, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010, p. 372.
  - 19 Echem, Lulu-Pokubo and Ejuh, The Role of Public Library.

and sexual affiliation, within the framework of basic democratic rights and liberties.<sup>20</sup> Integration involves bilateral communications, mutual contributions and participation of all groups in the society with a view to enhancing accommodation, respect and tolerance.<sup>21</sup>

Religion in Nigeria, permeates all aspects of human existence and is perceived both as a solution and problem to economic, moral and political challenges. Sharia, one of the sources of Islamic legislation, was seen by some Muslims as a solution to the moral decadence, economic decline, and failure of democracy in Nigeria, given the wanton corruption of public office holders. It has been observed that religious violence was kept in check during the military regimes until 1999 but with democracy which permits greater religious freedom, political and economic tensions along religious lines have been on the increase in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> Amidst the several reasons for the challenges of national integration in Nigeria, the inseparability of religion and politics is a recurrent decimal. This paper attempts to show how this incongruity contributes to making cultural, political, social and economic integration a herculean task in Nigeria in the light of political Islam. It argues that any integration policy or programme that does not recognize this incongruity is an inappropriate and inadequate approach to national integration in Nigeria.

### **The Pluralist Model of Integration**

Theoretically, several national integration models exist. The assimilation model is founded on social integration and can be achieved through socialization and abandoning of socio-political, cultural loyalties of various small ethnic groups with their willing absorption into the major/dominant group.<sup>23</sup> The differentialist model is based on the perception to curtail the acquaintances with ethnic minorities, and conflicts are dealt with through the eradication of the ethnic minorities.<sup>24</sup> The federalism model appreciates diversity within the federal structure of the state and the federating units. The government of the federating units and the central government are acknowledged as legitimate and supreme establishments within respective jurisdictions. This model emphasizes unity in diversity.<sup>25</sup> The pluralist model involves having segregated cultural groups living together without blending into one single political unit where one segment dominates the power and controls state institutions and the state tries to accom-

20 Rainer Bauböck, *The Integration of Immigrants*, *Institut für Höhere Studien*, Vol. 94, No. 25, 1995.

21 Geleti H. Daba, *The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and Integration of Immigrants in the Western Post Secularism: A Comparative Study of Immigrants living in Oslo and Minnesota*, Thesis submitted to the Norwegian School of Theology, (2017), iv.

22 Ihedrika, 2011.

23 Shah and Ishaque, *Challenges of National Integration*, p. 38.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

moderate the interests of the main ethnic group.<sup>26</sup> Competition for power in Nigeria takes place largely within the framework of ethnic and religious divisions. Religion in Nigeria is strongly linked with ethnic communities, serves as a viable tool of social mobilization for political support and is a strong basis for individual and collective identity. Although Nigeria is said to operate a Federal model of integration, in practice it is the pluralist model of integration that tends to be a more prominent feature. Pluralism is not the opposite of integration<sup>27</sup> but the unaddressed issues of plurality continue to fuel a growing political consciousness and ethno-religious identity that always results in communal and societal conflicts.<sup>28</sup> Daba<sup>29</sup> argues that religious institutions can offer spiritual, psychological, physical and emotional refuge in providing a safe place for them to feel comfortable amid a chaotic environment. Connor<sup>30</sup> opines that religious organizations provide opportunities for social interaction, learning new languages, understanding new cultures, obtaining job referrals, finding jobs and learning how to survive in a different environment. Integration is the possibility of becoming a citizen of a country and being able to choose in what ways to adapt, in what ways to remain the same, how much you want to interact and how much you want to withdraw.<sup>31</sup> However, while religion can help integration in some contexts, it can also hinder the process of integration in others.<sup>32</sup> Religion has both positive and negative impartations in the process of integration.<sup>33</sup> Where the diverse groups in a society cannot blend into one single political unit, and where one group constantly dominates the other, national integration will remain a farce. For this reason religious pluralism continues to make integration difficult more so in the context of extremism. Political Islam represents an attempt to dominate other religious and ethnic groups in a plural society, as a result it is incompatible with national integration. When certain groups in a society are suppressed and dominated it erodes their national integration consciousness which is vital in the process of national integration. Mutual respect, religious freedom, religious harmony with interfaith dialogue, and accommodation are essential requirements for furthering national integration.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, where these are absent the process and goal of integration tend to suffer huge setbacks.

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26 Erik Lundberg, *A Pluralist State? Civil Society Organizations Access to the Swedish Policy Process 1964-2009*, Orebro University, Sweden, 2014, pp. 23-24.

27 Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Integration and Pluralism", in: *Eliminating Racism: Perspectives in Social Psychology*, P. Katz and D. Taylor, eds, Springer, 1988.

28 Folarin, Olanrewaju, and Ajayi, *Cultural Plurality*, p. 81.

29 Daba, *The Challenge of Religious Pluralism*, p. 27.

30 Phillip Connor, *Immigrant Faith: Patterns of Immigrant Religion in the United States, Canada, Australia and Western Europe*, New York University Press, 2014, p. 71.

31 Göran Larsson and Sanders Åke, *Islam and Muslims in Sweden: Integration or Fragmentation? A Contextual Study*, Berlin, LIT, 2007, p. 95.

32 Daba, *The Challenge of Religious Pluralism*, p. 28.

33 Connor, *Immigrant Faith*, p. 74.

34 Shah and Ishaque, *Challenges of National Integration*, p. 39.

## Methodology

The paper adopts a descriptive analysis and a qualitative method of data collection. Data was collected largely from secondary sources like journal articles, government reports, newspapers, books and relevant research reports. Data collected is organized and discussed under concrete themes. We examine the features of Islamism in three main areas: cultural-ideological, political and socio-economic, from the perspective of Sayyid Qutb's political thought, and show how these beliefs impact on the various dimensions of national integration in Nigeria. The ideas of Qutb are singled out for this study primarily because of Boko Haram's affiliation with his brand of Islamism.<sup>35</sup>

## Features of Sayyid Qutb's Political Islam

Political Islam is an ideology based on Islam but different from Islam despite their claims of being similar.<sup>36</sup> The origin of Political Islam can be traced to the reformist and radical ideas of Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab who, according to Nassir,<sup>37</sup> adhered to a very strict and literal understanding of Islam based on a puritanical and unqualified reading of the sources of Islamic jurisprudence, called 'Wahhabism'.

Islamism uses a certain version of Muslim doctrines, beliefs and values as the foundation of the political structure that supporters of the ideology have called the Islamic State (al-dawla al-islamiyya).<sup>38</sup> Sayyid Qutb was a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950's and 1960's and a theorist of violent Jihad. As the father of modern Islamic fundamentalism the ideas of this contemporary Islamist have greatly influenced fundamentalists like Osama Bin Ladin.<sup>39</sup> Qutb's contribution to Political Islam is the concept of Jahiliyya which refers to the idea of taking violent Jihad to any society that fails to submit to God's rule as revealed in the Koran, specifically those Muslim societies that adhere to the capitalist and communist systems which are considered materialistic and decadent.<sup>40</sup>

The founder of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 has stated that "all Islamic scholars who undermine Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Hassan al-Banna and Osama Bin Laden are not authentic Islamic scholars".<sup>41</sup> The features and characteristics of Qutb's Political Islam can be understood from three (3) macro areas,

35 Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group in Nigeria that is seeking to establish an Islamic government.

36 Ana B. Soage, Introduction to Political Islam, *Religion Compass*, Vol. 3, No. 5, 2009, p. 887.

37 Mohammed Nassir, Concept and Emergence of Political Islam <http://www.worde.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/mohamed-nassir-article-Concept-and-Emergence-of-Political-Islam.pdf>, 2011 (Accessed May 29, 2018)

38 Soage, Introduction to Political Islam, p. 887.

39 Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah*, Routledge, 2006.

40 Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi'l-tariq*, Damascus, Dar Dimashq, 1964, p. 201.

41 Jacob Zenn, Nigerian al-Qaedaism, *Current Trends in Islamic Ideology*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2014, p. 105.

namely, the cultural-ideological, political and socio-economic areas.<sup>42</sup> This section considers their main features.

### *Cultural-Ideological*

Sayyid Qutb's Political Islam holds that ideology and worldview are sources of all change and transformation. Islamic religious belief therefore, is the only absolute religion that can prevent human beings from anxiety, distortions, abuses and degeneration and also lead humanity to truth.<sup>43</sup> The Islamic monotheism is considered the theoretical background of the Islamic government which must be implemented in society through the Sharia law. As a reaction to modernity's destabilizing forces and its overpowering social and moral insecurities, political Islam displays hostility towards all forms of intellectualism, mysticism and sectarianism within Islam and considers them heretic movements from un-Islamic influences.<sup>44</sup> In order to lead humanity to the path of God, there is a need for an Islamic Government as no other type of government can provide this leadership for change.<sup>45</sup> Political Islam believes that an Islamic government is the only type of government that can produce and guarantee societal harmony. For him, a true Muslim is not supposed to adopt the customs of non-Muslims, nor be a friend to non-Muslims and as such, any Muslim who makes himself an ally of non-Muslims or heretical Muslims is to be considered an apostate.<sup>46</sup>

### *Political*

Political Islam believes that religious and political laws of Islam are not separate from each other because Islam is an indivisible whole.<sup>47</sup> Islamic government therefore cuts across political, social and cultural affairs. Political and philosophical secularism have no place in the ideas of Qutb who disagrees strongly with the separation of state and religion. Qutb argues that Islam "has not come to crawl in the hearts and temples and be confined to preaching alone, but because it must manifest in the social contexts, its main aim is to dominate legislation and the establishment of socio-political structures and institutions"<sup>48</sup> made possible only through an Islamic government. For him, the interaction of political power and

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42 Yahya Z. Bouzarinejad and Elahe Marandi, Sayyid Qutb and Political Islam: Islamic Government from the Perspective of Sayyid Qutb *Journal of History Culture and Arts Research*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2016, p. 92.

43 Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and World Peace*, Translated by Zine El Abidin Qorbani and Seyyed Hadi Khosrowshahi, Tehran, Islamic Culture Publication Office, 2012, p. 36.

44 El-Fadl, Khaled Abou, *The Great Theft – Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, HarperCollins, 2005.

45 Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, Translated by Mohammed Ali Gerami and Seyyed Hadi Khosrowshahi, Qom Institute of Boostane-e-Ketab Center for Islamic Propagation Office of Qom Seminary, 2013, p. 382.

46 El-Fadl, Khaled Abou, *The Great Theft – Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, 2005.

47 Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 31.

48 Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and Others*, Translated by Mohammed Shirazi, Tehran, Abedi Press Association, 1971, pp. 82-89.

civil power is based on three core principles: justice of the ruler, obedience of the people and consultation between the rulers and the people.<sup>49</sup> In terms of foreign relations and policy, the Islamic world should remain united, as Muslim nations will never be able to remain separate and dispersed nor will they join the East or West to fight Islam.<sup>50</sup> Qutb<sup>51</sup> posits that Muslim nations have only one way which is to form a bloc that is not affiliated with, but is independent of the East or West, both of which trying to annihilate Islam through conspiracy and cooperation. Preaching alone for Political Islam would not be enough to establish an Islamic order, and so Jihad would be necessary to get this done.<sup>52</sup>

### *Socio-economic*

Qutb believes that the lack of commitment to dealing with poverty and deprivation, as well as the lack of realization of basic needs of living is what has led to the failure of inner spiritual desires and faith in the hearts of Muslims.<sup>53</sup> So for Political Islam, the fundamental pillar of an Islamic government is a social justice that is comprehensive and inclusive, that seeks to encompass all facets of societal life and that is based on human equality. It puts a strong emphasis on the formation of an Islamic government and its close relationship with social justice.<sup>54</sup> This social justice is not limited to economic dimensions alone; and legal and structural regulations are not merely guarantees of its implementation. Qutb<sup>55</sup> believes that the Islamic economic system in the Islamic government, while recognizing the benefits of personal property in capitalism, destroys the corruptions that is imposed on individual property by communism and finds a middle line, away from the extremes of both, that is based on accurate and common human nature. Although Islamic law provides for the equality of men and women under the Islamic government, women must be dressed a certain way for honour and dignity.<sup>56</sup> For Qutb' women have a right to work only within the home to bring up children and care for the home, except when the men cannot handle the financial burdens alone.<sup>57</sup> Qutb's Political Islam holds that Islam is not opposed to science but Islam must be the framework in which the science and human

49 Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 151.

50 Bouzarinejad and Marandi, Sayyid Qutb and Political Islam, p. 101.

51 Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and World Peace*, Translated by Zine El Abidin Qorbani and Seyyed Hadi Khosrowshahi, Tehran, Islamic Culture Publication Office, 2012, p. 91.

52 Sayyid Qutb, *Fi zilal al-Qur'an*, Beirut, Cairo, Dar al-shuruq, 1982, pp. 1091-1434; Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi'l-tariq*, Damascus, Dar Dimashq, 1964, p. 83.

53 Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, pp. 124-136.

54 Bouzarinejad and Marandi, Sayyid Qutb and Political Islam, p. 103.

55 Qutb, *Islam and World Peace*, p. 229.

56 Qutb, *Islam and Others*, pp. 116-118.

57 Qutb, *Islam and World Peace*, pp. 118-123.



civilizations must be located.<sup>58</sup> Therefore the value of creativity, innovation and education in Islam must be only to the extent that they do not contradict the laws of God.<sup>59</sup> It is for this reason that they reject all forms of western humanities, philosophies and infrastructure.<sup>60</sup>

### **Implications of Sayyid Qutb's Political Islam for National Integration in Nigeria**

However, the ideas of Qutb are presented in absolute terms with little or no room for compromise or accommodation of diversity. Integration is multidimensional as it involves a complex weaving together of two or more dimensions at any given time.<sup>61</sup> This section discusses the implication of political Islam on the various dimensions of national integration in Nigeria.

#### **Socio-economic Integration**

National integration refers to a process of building just social units which confer on every inhabitant a sense of belonging, a satisfactory level of participation in decision making and development and a chance to share from the resources of the society commensurate with decent and acceptable living.<sup>62</sup> On a theoretical level, social integration indicates principles by which individuals are bound to each other in the social space and it refers to relations among actors and how they accept social rules.<sup>63</sup> It is about making societies more equitable and is the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights and opportunity, equity and dignity.<sup>64</sup> It has to do with building institutions that promote a society for all on the basis of social justice.<sup>65</sup> In Nigeria, social interactions, relationships, marriages abound amidst its diverse heterogeneous nature. As a result of this heterogeneity, there is mosaic of culture, food habits,

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58 Sayyid Qutb, *The Future in the Lands of Islam*, Translated by Seyed Ali Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Culture Publications Office Publishing, 1994, pp. 122-124.

59 Qutb, Sayyid, *Fi Zalat al-Quran (In the Shade of the Quran)*, Vol. 1, Translated by Mustafa Khoramdel, Tehran, Ehsan Publication, 2014, pp. 25-27.

60 Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 346.

61 Erik Snel, Godfried Engbersen and Arjen Leerkes, Transnational Involvement and Integration, *Global Networks*, Vol. 6 No. 3, 2006.

62 Muhammad N. Adeoye, Religion and National Integration in Nigeria A Paper Presented at the 2017 Conference on Islam in Nigeria (COIN) Organized by the Islamic Welfare Foundation in Collaboration with the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan held at the University of Ibadan 20-23 November, 2017, pp. 3-4.

63 Vida Beresneviiute, Dimensions of Social Integration: Appraisal of Theoretical Approaches, *Ethnicity Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2003, p. 97.

64 Clare Ferguson, Promoting Social Integration Report Commissioned by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) for the Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, Finland, 8-10 July, 2008, [www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/se6.pdf](http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/se6.pdf) (Accessed May 29, 2018), p. 3.

65 Ibid.

dress, religion, social customs and traditions. However, religious intolerance is the greatest manifestation of a lack of social integration in Nigeria. As Usue<sup>66</sup> observes, marginalization, pervasive individualistic and ethnic interests manifesting through conflicts over resource control, propagation of exclusive religious ideologies and the practice of sectional and tribal politics have characterized the Nigerian polity for several decades. Political Islam forbids close friendships or relationships between Muslims and adherents of other religions. It considers any practice or traditions outside of itself as not being compatible with Islam. As a result, there is a violent attempt to rid its societies of diversity and produce a society strictly based on Islamic beliefs and practices. In a country like Nigeria with a complex mix of people from over 400 ethnic groups, classes, age, and religion, the prospects of social integration are unlikely particularly considering the domination by one religion. The lack of tolerance manifests in communal tensions and conflicts, violent displacements of people from their homes.

### Cultural Integration

Multiculturalism holds that when people and societies are confident in and feel secure about their own cultural identities, and their place in larger society, more positive mutual attitudes will evolve but when these identities are threatened, mutual hostility is inevitable.<sup>67</sup> Where groups are able to maintain their heritage and culture, while at the same time having contact with and participating in the larger society along with other ethnocultural groups, there is a better chance of achieving national integration.<sup>68</sup> Although Islam itself is not homogenous,<sup>69</sup> political Islam is not inclusive in nature and not accommodating of cultural diversity. The hostility that Political Islam displays towards other cultures and all forms of intellectualism, mysticism and sectarianism, as Fadl<sup>70</sup> observes, works against any attempt at national integration. Even within Islam, those whose practices appear to accommodate western views, like mode of dress, are considered abominable. This lack of appreciation of different cultures and intolerance fuels degeneration in the appreciation of issues of religious diversity in Nigeria.<sup>71</sup> The concept of identity is closely linked to the idea of culture given that identity is influenced greatly by culture.<sup>72</sup> Cultural identity is influenced by factors such as reli-

66 Usue, Religion and National Integration in Nigeria, p. 61.

67 John W. Berry, Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies: Research Derived from Multiculturalism Policy, *Acta de Investigación Psicológica*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2013, p. 1122.

68 Ibid, p. 1127.

69 Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, "The Steady Integration of France's Most Recent and Largest Minority", in: *Integrating Islam Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*, Brookings Institution Press, 2006, p. 15.

70 El-Fadl, *The Great Theft*.

71 Umaru A. Pate, et al, Religious Diversity and National Integration in Nigeria, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 25, 2014, p. 113.

72 Marcel I. Onyibor, National Identity and Crisis of Integration in Multi-Ethnic Nigeria: An Existentialist Perspective, *Open Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2016, p. 2.

gion, ancestry, skin colour, language, class, education, profession, skill, family and politics.<sup>73</sup> The Arabic language as a universal means of communication is an indication of this non-inclusiveness. Integration is a dynamic, long-term and continuous two way process of mutual accommodation.<sup>74</sup> Language is very important in community relations and so where people are forced to relate via particular languages it affects the degree of integration that can be achieved on a cultural level. While culture cannot be extrapolated from broader socio-economic and structural forces at play,<sup>75</sup> shared identity and a sense of belonging are crucial for unity in diversity. Most Nigerians define themselves first based on their religion and ethnic group before identifying with the entity called Nigeria.<sup>76</sup> These strong feelings have been criticized for being a result of prejudices, narrow-mindedness, lack of knowledge of other cultures and religion. Integration is defined as a condition identified with a set of vague symbols or variables, or as process identified with an over-increasing degree of structural linkages between two or more parts of a system or systems.<sup>77</sup>

### Political Integration

National integration is the building of a nation-state, out of disparate socio-economic religious, ethnic and geographical elements that translate the diffuse and unorganized sentiments of nationalism, into the spirit of citizenship through the creation of policy and programmes, that are in line with the citizenry.<sup>78</sup> Political Islam is to create or set up an Islamic government regardless of whether the constituting units of that country or society share the same sentiments. Political Islam encompasses all aspects of life and as such rejects secularism in clear terms.<sup>79</sup> Political integration within a nation implies the establishment of a unified legal framework, creating common institutions, developing a decision-making centre and projecting a national identity.<sup>80</sup> It has to do with building a political community. While this term is often used to refer to a process where states delegate

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73 Ibid.

74 Berry, *Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies*, p. 1125.

75 Marco Martiniello, *Comparisons in Migration Studies Comparative Migration Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2013, p. 11.

76 Dodeye U. Williams, *Dimensions in the Construction of National Identity in Nigeria*, *Studies in World Christianity*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2010.

77 Etim O. Frank and Wilfred I. Ukpere, *Administration of National Integration in Nigeria: The Challenges and Prospects*, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 14, 2013, p. 482.

78 Ikyase J. Tersoo, and Egberi A. Ejue, *Democracy and National Integration: Appraising the Challenges of Nigeria from 2003 to 2011*, *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 19, No. 11, 2014, p. 32.

79 Lateef Adegbite, *The Sharia in Nigeria: Challenge to Christians*, *The Sharia Issue: Working Papers for Dialogue*. (A Working Paper at a meeting of 32 Eminent Nigerians on how to douse the tension generated by the introduction of Sharia in some parts of Northern States in August, 2000), p. 73.

80 Nikola Ilievski, *The Concept of Political Integration: The Perspectives of a Neofunctionalist Theory*, *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015, p. 2.

their sovereignty to a supranational entity<sup>81</sup> we use it here to mean the forging of a political community. Political Islam is cast in absolutes and is not compatible with democracy in Nigeria. In a multi-religious country like Nigeria, the rule of law, inclusion and equality are central to the survival of democracy.<sup>82</sup> The rule of law upholds individual rights such as freedom of association, religious freedom, freedom of thought and expression, and where such rights are suppressed, as will be the case within an Islamic state, security and stability cannot be guaranteed particularly in a plural society like Nigeria. While Political Islam points to the failure of fiscal federalism, leadership, democratic process and civil society participation in delivering a just society, what the alternative presents is not sustainable within the context of a multicultural and plural society like Nigeria. Several states in Northern Nigeria have adopted Sharia law as the state law. This action from inception has been controversial and problematic for national integration, particularly, as Awofeso<sup>83</sup> observes, in the light of the current security trajectories of religious terrorism and insurgency as well as the Fulani herdsmen/farmers crisis all supporting the conspiracy theories of a systematic attempt to Islamize Nigeria. These societies are the same ones that are continually ridden with strife, injustice and conflict. These events have created suspicion and tensions in several states of the federation leaving many crying out for restructuring which to them implies a separation of the North from the South. The controversies generated by the adoption of the Sharia Law have not resulted in its demise in Nigeria rather more states have adopted the Islamic Law. While the Sharia system has served to integrate Muslims in the Northern part of the country it has not had an integrating role for Nigeria as a whole but has generated discontent, suspicion and discrimination among non-Muslims.<sup>84</sup> The adoption of Sharia thus has worked against the national integration of Nigeria. As Gilbert<sup>85</sup> rightly opines, the enforcement of Sharia Law on non-Muslims violates their human rights. Political Islam manifesting in the establishment of an Islamic government could lead to the disintegration of the Nigerian State.<sup>86</sup>

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81 Ibid, p. 1.

82 Olu Awofeso, Political Islam and Democracy in Nigeria: Compatibility or Incompatibility?, *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2016, p. 2.

83 Ibid, p. 4.

84 Ikenga K. Oraegbunam, Sharia Criminal Law, Islam and Democracy in Nigeria Today, *A New Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2011, p. 193.

85 Enyidah-Okey O. Gilbert, Sharia Law in Nigeria: Can a Selective Imposition of Islamic Law work in the Nation?, *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2015, p. 75.

86 Ibid, p. 78.

## Conclusion

Religion plays a critical role in integration in multicultural and plural societies. Religion and politics are inseparable in Nigeria. Political Islam will polarize Nigeria more than promoting integration. The core features of Political Islam are in conflict with the dimensions of national integration. National integration is the process of bringing diverse cultural and social groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national unity.<sup>87</sup> Political Islam is not accommodating and where one religion dominates the political, socio-economic and cultural life of people in a multicultural and plural society, the process and goals of national integration will be hindered. National unity is a prerequisite for success in every nation, it guarantees a sense of national belonging regardless of political, ethnic and religious inclinations. However, where diversity is sacrificed on the altar of religion, people tend to lose their national consciousness and this is a vital ingredient of national integration. The religious values embraced by citizens of a country are central to the life of a society given that religion provides answers to fundamental issues of life, death, human value and the meaning of co-existence. However religion can be destructive as well. Where religious freedom is impeded in any way it can create tensions and destabilize any nation. Building shared values is always a challenge for pluralistic societies like Nigeria and any society without shared values has a minimal chance at national integration as shared values can contribute to shaping national identity rather than having national identity shaped by ethnicity, religion or nationality.<sup>88</sup>

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87 Pius E. Adejoh, "Ethnicity, Marginalisation, Integration and Development", in: *Development Crisis and Social Change*, F. A. Oyekanmi, ed, Lagos, University of Lagos, 2005.

88 Leon Miller and Gordon Anderson, Religions Role in Creating National Unity, *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2009, p. 91.

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## **НЕУСКЛАЂЕНОСТ ПОЛИТИЧКОГ ИСЛАМА СЕИДА КУТБА И НАЦИОНАЛНЕ ИНТЕГРАЦИЈЕ У НИГЕРИЈИ: ДЕСКРИПТИВНА АНАЛИЗА**

### **Сажетак**

Одбијање и занемаривање утицаја религије на политику има своје импликације за националну интеграцију. Последњих неколико декада су показале јачање савремених исламских покрета и трендова у муслиманском свету. Један од најутицајнијих исламских политичких мислилаца је Сејид Кутб, истакнути члан Муслиманске браће средином прошлог века и аутор који је поставио теоријске основе насилног џихада. Као отац модерног муслиманског фундаментализма, његове идеје представљају оквир и идеолошке основе многих исламских група, као што су Ал Каида, Боко Харам и Исламска држава. Иако има случајева у којима политичке елите користе религију у циљу задобијања подршке за своје интересе, погрешно је и опасно посматрати религију као неспособну да утиче на поделе у друштву. Овај чланак анализира карактеристике политичког ислама у три области: културно-идеолошкој, политичкој и друштвено-економској, из перспективе политичке мисли Сејида Кутба и указује како ова веровања могу да утичу на процес националне интеграције у Нигерији. Аргумент аутора јесте тај да је политички ислам некомпатибилан са националном интеграцијом и да је у том смислу овај процес у Нигерији угрожен од стране политичког ислама.

**Кључне речи:** политички ислам, национална интеграција, религија, Нигерија, политика

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