



## The Implications of Religious Marketization on Nigeria's Democratic Politics: Katsina State *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-sunnah* in Perspective

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### Abstract

*This paper is an attempt to proffer a solution to the problems associated to the phenomenon of the marketization of religion in the Nigeria's democratic politics with special reference to Izala religious civic association Katsina State chapter. By way of a case study qualitative research inquiry, the study questioned eighteen key informants through a semi-structured interview approach which was analysed using NVivo 12. The paper is grounded on the religious market theory as a model of explanation of the phenomenon. It, however, revealed that religious marketization is disastrous to both the religious group and the effective workings of the democratization process of the country as well. The paper further adds that the prevailing material and existential conditions arising from the Nigerian political economy tend to promote the consciousness and practice of religious marketisation of the other Islamic religious civil society. The paper recommends that the activities of religious civil societies in Nigeria should be regulated by the government to allow the nascent democratic politics to thrive.*

**Key Words:** Democratic Politics, *Izala*, Religion, Religious Marketization, Religious Group

### 1. Introduction

Over the years, there has been an extraordinary rise and greater spread of religious organizations in the democratic politics of Nigeria (Al Chukwuma & Ahar Clement, 2014). Hence, democratic politics cannot be discussed without appreciating the influence of both secular and non-secular civil society organizations. They have been playing commendable roles in the advancement of democracy in so many perspectives. Both engage in civic advocacy ranging from voter education, elections monitoring and to some extent checking the excesses of governments (Diamond, 1994). Islamic religious associations have indeed become more active in the socio-economic, and political domain (Aviv, 2018). Of course, theorists have significantly refreshed academic minds on the religious marketization thesis but studying its implications on democratic politics with reference to a single religious organization remain a virgin academic terrain, particularly, in a nascent democratic state like Nigeria. These studies have

contributed little effort in investigating how religious groups turned out to become market-like enterprises, even though religious societies are now the largest non-profit beneficiaries of gifts of cash and other privileges from the political class particularly in democratic dispensations. Some of these scholars, such as Berger (1990), Roof (1999), Carrette, J. & King, R. (2004), Gauthier, Mertikainen and Woodhead (2011 & 2013), and Rinallo, Scott and Maclaren (2013) have been concerned with religious institutions and economy. Others, such as Al Chukwuma and Ahar Clement (2014) Usinier and Stolz (2014) Jafari and Sandicki, (2016), Moberg (2016 & 2017) Possamai (2018), Gauthier and Mertikainen (2018) have found spiritual materialism within religious institutions a rich ground for investigating their interests.

Indeed, religious marketization among religious civic associations has been persistently horrible phenomenon in the democratic politics of Nigeria for so many decades. It has been prevalent in the country's political scene since before independence with negative and devastating consequences on both the religious institutional morality and the effective working of democratic politics. Because of the important position Nigeria occupy, as a Muslim majority country in Africa, there is a need to provide a Nigerian perception of the academic discourse on political issues related to Islamic religion and the religious groups (Rufa'i, 2011). Religious groups have been very visible in the Nigerian democratic political space with varying interests which sometimes jeopardize democratization. A lot of clerics have found the political terrain as a window of achieving selfish economic advantages which made religious association to engage in a tumultuous competitive marketization of their groups to the political elites. Such a religio-politico-economic relation among religious groups fermented tensions, division hence dwindle democracy in so many perspectives. Many observers and analyst see to *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-sunnah* (JIBWIS) popularly known as *Izala* at the forefront among its peers in



the political domain of Nigeria (Kane, 2003a). The Islamic civic group was chosen because it is the most modern, most structured and the closest to Nigerian government and political environment among its Islamic peers (Kane, 2003a & b; Nolte, Danjibo & Oladeji, 2009; Thurston, 2015; Bashir, 2016).

In this context, several questions came to the fore such as: why the religious organizations turned out to marketize religion in politics? How did the revered institutions of religion become a strong force to reckon with in democracy? What are the negative effects of religious marketization in Nigeria's democratic politics? These research questions constitute the focus of this article with special attention on *Izala*. In providing insight with respect to these fundamental questions the paper's aims and objectives revolve around achieving the effects of religious marketization on Nigeria's democracy by studying the activities of *Izala* between 1999 and 2017. This contribution offers a welcome academic discussion on the meaning of marketization through a scientific study of negative implications of religious marketization in democratization process. Thus, the paper is subdivided into seven independent parts. Following the introduction, the second part of the paper gave a historical review of religion and politics in Nigeria. The third section involved the conceptual and theoretical aspect of the paper; while the fourth dealt with the methodology of the study. The fifth discussed the findings of the study; while the sixth part summarised the implications of religious marketization in democratic politics and concluded with recommendation as the last portion.

## 2. Religion and politics in Nigeria: A Historical Review

Islam is the dominant religion in northern Nigeria and guaranteed the fusion of politics and religion (Sampson, 2014). Since before colonialism and the subsequent achievement of independence in 1960, religion has been deeply entrenched in the socio-economic and political life of the people particularly of northern Nigeria. And, politics and administration cannot be practiced effectively without encapsulating the culture of the society (Omolaja, 1999). This made the colonial masters to allow the Islamic caliphate system to continue under the 'indirect rule policy' with a symbolic Islamic political philosophy of the people of northern Nigeria (Sampson, 2014). Muslims in the north embraced Islamic religion since around the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Achunike and Kitause, 2013; Achunike & Ngbea, 2014; Sampson, 2014; Oloyede, 2014; Bala, 2015, Shittu, 2015). It later

become part of its political culture immediately after the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Jihad of Sheikh Uthman bn Fodio in 1804. From the end of the 1903, with the collapse of the Sokoto Caliphate established by Uthman the politics, economy and the social settings began to metamorphose into a modern British style of administration (Stokke, 1970).

In the case of the southern part of the country, Christianity was the dominant religion as it replaced the ancient inherited traditional religious belief system due to the advent of colonialism (Nwadiolor, 2013; Sampson, 2014). Thus, by 1922 the political trends started moving towards democratization when Sir Hugh Clifford introduced the first electoral process though strictly limited to Lagos and Calabar (Sampson, 2014). Religion and politics further intermeshed into the politics of modern Nigeria when Governor General Sir Arthur Richard opted for the division of the country into three distinct regions namely northern, western and Eastern regions respectively (Olawale, 2018). This development brought about the formation of political parties which, unfortunately for the country, were established on regional character. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) led by Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto dominated the north; the Action Group (AG) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo a Christian Yoruba captured the west; while the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) led by Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe controlled the Christian eastern Igbo extraction (Stokke, 1970).

Fierce competition began to erupt on controlling the central government between these regional political parties with religious colorations. Undoubtedly, the north was more attached to religious politics because of the historical antecedents of being ruled based on the Islamic jurisprudence under the defunct Sokoto Caliphate. Thus, the regional politics could not be detached from religion especially as the leader of the NPC, Ahmadu Bello, was a caliphatorial prince, thus a heir to the throne of the Uthman bn Fodio. Sampson (2014) clearly captured the scenario where he cited Mathew Hassan Kukah thus:

*"although the Sardauna had now come to preside over the political kingdom of dan Fodio, his biggest problem lay in the fact that the real basis of the power, that is, the spiritual authority, had now eluded him (Sampson, 2014:322)".*

Consequently, when the Sardauna could not get the throne of the caliphate after suffering a defeat from his brother Sir Abubakar III, as a Premier of the northern Region, he cleverly established the *Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI)* to have a firm control



of the entire northern Ulama who are supposedly answerable to the new Sultan (Kane, 2003). Additionally, by understanding the division between the religious and political authority the JNI made the Sardauna a sort of religious authority to further firmly consolidate his legitimacy (Sampson, 2014). The JNI brought together the two dominant religious groups [*Qadiriyya* and *Tijjaniyya*] of the time under one single umbrella. But because of the ensuing rivalry between the two Islamic group-the *Tijjaniyya* which was more dominant in Kano foresaw domineering forces of the Sokoto *Qadiriyya*, they therefore, tactically back-slides and aligned with Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), the major opposition political party in the north. It should be noted here that, the establishment of JNI precipitated the formation of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) as an umbrella body to counter the influence of the former politically in both the regional and central governments. So, this sectarian religious rivalry continued to cut across the veins of the political parties up till the collapse of the first Republic in January 1966.

After the military rule and at the eve of the return of democratic politics of the Second Republic in 1979, a new modern religious organization (*Izala*) came into the fore and lodged into the political terrain. This further brought the religious groups closer to the state hence manipulate their ways into becoming a necessary instrument which cannot be abandoned by any politician or political party in both the states or the Federal Government. Indeed, they play an outstanding role in promoting democratic politics whilst acting within the purview of civil society (Hasu, 2013). As Islam become more pronounced in Africa and Nigeria during the wave of democratization of the 1990s, Islamic civil societies thus became actively involved in politics. But, unfortunately their involvement made some of the groups' members to commoditize the religions with a devastating consequence on both the religion and the nascent democratic politics of the country. Consequently, the implications of marketization of religious groups in the democratic politics remains an area which requires focus by scholars as it proved to be understudied. Thus, this paper deemed it necessary to contribute towards that end with special reference to *Izala* in Nigeria.

### 3. Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

For easier common comprehension and conceptual operationalization, it is useful to reflect the basic concepts that comprise the main thrust of the subject matter in this academic discourse. The

concepts are religious marketization; democratic politics; *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-sunnah* [*Izala*]. The operational meanings given to these concepts are what they are regarded in the context of the paper.

#### Religious Marketization

The religious Marketization refers to the commoditization of religion by the religious associations in behaviour like a competitive market situation (Rodney, 2007). In this context, religious organizations are the commodity sellers who use religious capital for political gains.

#### Democratic Politics

Democratic politics refers to a system of governance based on the rule of the majority with absolute protection of minority rights. It is a system advocating for equality before the eyes of laws and enjoyment of some certain inalienable rights known as fundamental human rights i.e. the right to life, human dignity, movement, peaceful assembly, religion and ultimately the right to vote and be voted for in a free and fair periodic election.

#### *Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-sunnah*

*Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'a Wa'iqamatis-sunnah* is translated to mean 'The Society for the Removal of Innovation and the Reinstatement of Tradition'. In popular parlance, it is called *Izala* (Lomeier, 1997; Kane, 2003; Amara, 2011; Salem, 2012; Thurston, 2015), while its followers are referred to as *Yan-Izala* [The *Izala* followers]. It is a registered Islamic organization established around 1978 in Nigeria to challenge the Sufi orders who are considered by the *Izala* adherents as the promoters of heretics and innovations in Islamic religion which is against the true teachings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The group had accepted competitive electoral democracy in politics.

#### Religious Marketization Theory

The religious Market Theory (RMT) is a framework which explains religious groups behaviour analogous to what obtained within a competitive market environmental (Rodney, 2007). The theory sees religious groups and their products, a competitive religious economy stimulates activities like a market type setting. It posits that the economy makes it possible for religious groups to meet the demands of various religious consumers. Currently, economic and sociological theorists engage in employing the theory to explain religious phenomena and its behaviours from an economic perspective. By using economic lenses in studying religion, these scholars made it possible for the study of activities of religious organizations



in the democratization process in modern secular societies. However, this approach has been criticized because of its reductionist methodology and major arguments. It has been belittled based on its modelling the theory on market-like assumptions. Thus, it is argued that the model can only be appropriate in a free market social order and secularized societies like the USA or the UK.

#### 4. Methodology

The paper is premised on interpretive qualitative philosophy because it rests on the understandings and experiences of individuals who are knowledgeable on the phenomenon in question (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014; Roulston, 2014). Thus, it used interview as a qualitative method of data collection to explore and analysed the various experiences and understandings of stakeholders on the implications of religious marketization with reference to the *Izala* religious organization in the democratic politics of Katsina State-Nigeria between 1999 and 2017. The period was chosen by because, it is the period when the democratic politics return to Nigeria after a prolonged military rule. And it has coincided with the period when the *Izala* group deeply mired in the political theatre of Katsina State and the country in general. The research was conducted as a case study. Case study

suits this paper because, it is use by qualitative investigators for an in-depth investigation of a bounded system like an event, program, or action regarding single individual or a group. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013; Yin, 2014; Creswell & Plano, 2015). So, the data collection was conducted in Katsina State-Nigeria from April to July 2018. An in-depth face to face semi-structured interview was carried out. It is argued that an interview is the most useful for exploring the understandings, experiences, and perceptions of individuals on any phenomenon (Yusuf, Kamarul Zaman & Knocks, 2018; Braun and Clarke 2013). In fact, it is the best way of exploring and understanding human perceptions. Hence, a purposive sampling approach was employed for the fact that the informants were more able to offer rich and relevant data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2012). Therefore, using the maximum variation sample from the purposive sampling technique, 18 key informants were recruited for the interview. To this effect, suitable informants were engaged which includes religious leaders, politicians, Civil Society Organizations and academics. They comprised eight religious group leaders (Informants A1-A8), politicians (Informants B9-B13), Civil Society leaders (C14-C15) and academics (D16-D18) as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: *The Code and the category of Informants*

Code	Interpretation	Frequency
Informants, A1 to A8	Religious Leaders	8
Informants, B9 to B13	Politicians	5
Informants, C14 to C15	Civil Society Leaders	2
Informants, D16 to D18	Academics	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>

Source: Field Work, 2018

The purpose of choosing these informers was on the grounds of possessing broad ideas and experiences on the religious group's political activities in the democratic politics of the country. They were questioned to get the most dependable and first-hand data on the effects of religious marketization on the democracy in Nigeria. All the data were collected by the researcher through interviews. Those interviewed [informers] all gave their permission to be quoted in anonymity. The data was analysed after transcription, coding, thematic organization and representation.

#### 5 Discussion of Findings

Religion offers various ways of organizing society and politics (Yagboyaju, 2017), but one major obstacle confronting religious civic institutions in democratic politics of Nigeria is its

commodification and marketization for personal aggrandizement (Informants B9, A8 & C14 personal interview). This usually happens through the activities of religious groups platforms where the group leaders corruptly exploit religion to gain various incentives from the state (Ngaski, 2018). A large chunk of these groups is alleged to be formed for personal gains because of the strong competition for relevance around the corridors of power and the privileges in the congested religious market scene of Nigeria (Obadare 2007; Thurston, 2015). This phenomenon made Meesua and Edet (n.d) to advocated for the separation of politics and religion despite their strong attachments. In Nigeria, it has been observed that the *Izala* civic religious group is at the forefront among its peers when it comes to issues of commoditizing religion



in the current democratic regime. Informant D16 has observed and responded that said:

*"It is of great dismay to have observed how some of the Izala group's ulama involve in the commoditization of religion in Nigeria. Of course, there are some of them that do not marketize religion but most of the leaders that you see very close to politicians are feeding out of selling 'God' to mobilize supporters for most of the politicians. They used to seek for appointments, contracts and other privileges which mostly made them join the bandwagon of corruption. (Personal Interview with Informant D16, conducted on 16<sup>th</sup>-05-2018)".*

This is in tandem with the explanation of a religious market theory which equates religious groups to private enterprises in a market economic setting that continuously seek to profit from their investments (Rodney, 2007). Many informers expressed disdain on how the *Izala* religious group leaders engage in a vehement contest to sell their social capital to the politicians and people in government for personal aggrandizement. Informant B10 has attributed the scenario to colonial historical precedence when the colonizers started encapsulating religious scholars very close to them for colonial convenience. This is how he lamented about it:

*"The elements which breed religious commodification by the religious leaders was originally sown and bequeathed by the colonial masters. Because of the respect, the African people have on particularly Islamic religion; the white men found it necessary to align with the then Ulamas to consolidate their colonial machinations (Personal interview with informant B10, conducted on 06<sup>th</sup>-05-2018).*

Indeed, British colonial government was the initial perpetrators of some element of commoditizing the religious leaders through luring the then religious leaders by sponsoring some of them to pilgrimage to consolidate colonial rule especially in northern Nigeria (Emmanuel, 2016). Thus, the politicians manipulate the avenue to buy the loyalty of the leadership of the group, who command large followership, to achieve their political goals. They paid the politicians to campaign for them knowing that they have a lot of respect in the eyes of their adherents. This is a great problem to the democratic politics of Nigeria for the phenomenon creates competition for relevance in government and the politicians as well among the other religious groups who would also want to market themselves as explained by the RMT. This tendency leads to the polarization of the people hazardously as Nigeria is a hotbed of religio-sectarian crises (Idike &

Innocent, 2015; Owoyemi, 2016). Both Christian and Muslim religious leaders have been involved in commodification and marketization of religion through their various association particularly by trading God with politicians (Obadare, 2007). This has also been rightly observed in the response of informant A1 where they lamented that:

*"They usually join the band-wagon of politicians to sell their religious commodities or capital in exchange of their various demands ranging from appointments and contracts. To, this is also one of the problems of the Izala religious group which is seriously affecting the group and the democratic politics of the country. That is why most of them very close to politicians are extremely rich. They don't even need to work as their organization is already a business venture which attracts stupendously buoyant customers. In such a situation do you think the politicians will live to expectation? Virtually, the answer is no, so this is how they use the religious group to bastardize democratic politics of the country (Personal Interview with Informant A1, conducted on 12<sup>th</sup>-06-2018)".*

It is therefore accurately observed that religion and politics are tightly linked, and the connection is demonstrating itself through the numerous religious organizations who participate in the democratic politics of Nigeria. Thus, organizations represented by their leaders cannot do away with politics. For instance, Islam as a complete way of life controls Muslims from the beginning of his life until the end. But, the challenging issue is the marketization of religion for personal selfish gain. Informants A3 and A5 have clearly expressed their resentment on how some leading figures of *Izala* commoditized the group to Nigerian political brokers. They further retorted that this has demeaned the moral posture of the group and in the long run will create the problem of identity politics. And identity politics negates the ideals of democratic politics in that it runs toward changing the public mindset to only support or vote for not only a candidate of their religious extraction but also the sticking on those that have similar sectarian belief. Indeed, it is cancerous to the development of democratic politics in Nigeria as competent and capable hands most often lose elections for commoditization and marketization factor. The theory of religious marketization had further reflected its explanation on this argument; as the informants indicated the nature of commoditization of religious group for profitable benefits. According to Olomjobi (2015) maintained that:



"...the manipulation of Islam for political gains is due to the fact that the consumption patterns of the elite were subsidized through 'inflated state contracts, low-interest loans, government jobs and corrupt accumulation (Olomjobi, 2015:11)".

Once more, informants A4, B11, D17, D18, and A3 were also critical on the nature of *Izala's* participation in the democratic politics of the country strategically turned into a seller-customer reciprocal relationship as indicated by the informants especially in terms of gaining juicy appointments and privileges in government. Undoubtedly, this has manifested itself in almost all the northern states and the Federal Government respectively. This is a serious problem to the group because many of their members lobby and accepted the political appointments and contracts which are poorly executed as they themselves have turned out to be corrupt which also demean the image of the *ulamas* as well as the integrity of the association. A lot of observers are looking at the *Izala* group as people who want to be close to power for their personal gains not for the development of the society. Irrefutably, in the name of Islam, economic objectives are being achieved by so many Islamic associations and their leaders through marketization of religion in the political environment (Shah, 2017). Thus, it is condemned as antithetical to Islamic doctrine and the vision of democratic politics as well.

In a similar vein, informant A1 had expressed that the *Izala's* involvement in the democratic politics of Nigeria is not for any meaningful societal development since they are struggling to profit from their religious social capital investments. Unlike the Shi'ites, the *Izala* Muslim organization in Nigeria engages in the constant quest for material benefits in politics (Yahya, 2016). The informant bemoaned that:

*"But their agenda is not that for the development of society. Because any good scholar will not be seen around the corridors of power. These are people that are struggling for contract and worldly things. And how can you tell me these people are developing our society whereas they marketized religion to government officials to cheat people. And anywhere the government is distributing anything they are at the forefront e.g. land allocations, issue of Hajj operations where they go and duped people and nobody can question it because Izala organization is involved. They are just involving in politics to get some certain advantages (Personal Interview with Informant A1, conducted on 12<sup>th</sup>-06-2018)".*

Informant B12 has also echoed that, there were some serious discussions among some *Izala* leaders that shunning away from participation in government and their privileges of any kind is the only pill to the problem of marketization of religion by some of the leaders. His words read:

*"We have tried to stop Izala from involving deeply in the democratic politics and stop allowing these corrupt politicians into the organization's affairs. Even though Mallam [Late Sheikh Abubakar Gummi] has shown us that Islamic religion cannot prosper without politics but deep involvement into it is a curse to such a reputable organization like Izala. The Izala ulamas shouldn't participate in government because the politicians will spoil them (Personal interview with informant B12, conducted on 19<sup>th</sup>-04-2018)".*

Informants A2, A6, and B11 have reinforced the claim by saying that the public respect of the group had already been ruined hence unredeemable. Once God is sold out for a private advantage there is nothing an individual can do to bring back the already gone integrity. Informant A5 advanced the argument by restating that:

*"You see Izala has been trying to be in government for so long. You see, these sects are basically 3, the Izala, the Dariqa and the Shi'ite (who distanced themselves from governance). Dariqa particularly is built on obedience, they are built in such a way that one person will tell, you to do and you do it. Izala is indeed worldlier! Their desire for worldly things made them lose their public integrity and respect. I don't think with this attitude they can make an impact in the forthcoming elections. No, no, no [shaking his head, and squeezing his face], they have lost their integrity in politics! (Personal interview with informant A5, conducted on 1<sup>st</sup>-06-2018)".*

He further continued by saying that:

*"Izala is one of the greatest participators in the democratization process in Nigeria in general. The other one is the Munazzamatil Fityanul Islam an offshoot of the youth of Tariqa sect. The third group is Shi'ites who are not participating in politics at all. So, in my own opinion, Izala is just deeply involving in the democratization process of the state to serve their personal interest. A lot of people are accusing them of enriching themselves especially if they are given positions in the government. In fact, they are materialistic groups who eat from the sales of religious commodities which are the bunch of followers they influence to support a candidate or a political party. They used to organize fundraising activities which if they are*



not very close to the government they would not gain anything”.

Their problematic issues are seeking worldly things, which made them to always try to seek advantages selling religious products. They knitted to every regime which is slightly different from their previous leadership of the early 80s through mid-90s as opined by informant A8 below:

*"They are not in any way there for any development. Let them stay on the creeds of Malam Abubakar Mahmoud Gummi who was the father of Izala. Let them copy his life; he lived without any fashionable things like luxury cars, houses or any personal belongings (Personal interview with informant A8, conducted on 07<sup>th</sup>-07-2018)".*

Similarly, A7 emphasized that:

*"The bottom line is that they are a group who always wanted to be close to the government. They indeed want to associate with each government of the day at local, state and the federal level. Today, they have completely changed from the teachings of Gummi. Anyone of them that is opportune to be appointed in government you will see wonders; because many of them engage in a competition to acquire wealth through the religious pulpits. The major interest is nothing but materialistic. Remember Gummi died without amassing wealth even though he has been a Grand khadi of the Northern regional government under the late Sardauna (Personal interview with informant A7, conducted on 25<sup>th</sup>-04-2018)".*

Informants B13 thus recommended that:

*"They are supposed to stand on their own; let me use a chemistry term "catalyst". Let the Izala clerics become the catalyst. Quick reaction to the victory of the politicians they believed in; they can help the process; can achieve the purpose but without necessarily being affected themselves; they should not join the government or seek any favour in kind or cash. But, unfortunately, one of the problems of Izala in the democratic politics of Nigeria is that they join the politicians after forming the government; and they have become part of everything that is happening in the government including corrupt practices to enrich themselves (Personal interview with informant B13, conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup>-06-2018)".*

Likewise, informant C15 lamented that:

*"They eat whatever they are eating there together with the politicians. Both the good and the bad they are all involved. How can they check the excesses of the state in this situation? Again, how can they come back and tell people to come and vote for*

*somebody? This is the problem! That was what I was telling you about the nature of man. It is nothing but the heart which if it became corrupted the whole body will be affected as the saying of the prophet which says "Fa'in salahat faqad salahat kulluh". You see, I told you how the politicians came in and how the ulama joined in and become corrupted. That is the gold that I was telling you if it stains the iron rotten is now what we are seeing happening (Personal interview with informant C15, conducted on 28<sup>th</sup>-05-2018)".*

## 6. Summary of the Implications

Izala religious group have been engaging in the democratic politics in Nigeria with both positive and negative consequences. Their involvement has really brought increasing civic awareness to the populace in terms of voter education and to some extent serving as a check to the state activities. But, marketization of religion has been cancerously damaging effects to the public integrity of the group and the probable perilous negative implications to the development of democratic politics in Nigeria.

The serious implication of religious marketization by the Izala is the trading of God with politicians. The politicians paid some of the groups *ulamas* to campaign for them because of the great influence they garnered on the Muslim populace of the entire northern states of Nigeria, Katsina State inclusive. This is a phenomenon that can create serious competition among the other religious groups which breeds communal divisiveness in the nascent democratic environment. Indeed, polarization of these religious groups along political lines is extremely hazardous to democracy and the nation which is already a hotbed of religio-sectarian crises (Okpanachi, 2012; Cox, Orsborn, & Sisk, 2014; Idike & Innocent, 2015; Owoyemi, 2016). Moreover, marketization of religion for personal selfish gain did not usually favour the most competent and capable hands who cannot buy their way in the competitive religious economic environment (Udo, 2012; Al Chukwuma & Ahar Clement, 2014). Thus, commoditization and marketization of religion is condemned as antithetical to Islamic doctrine and the vision of democratic politics as well. This is because it demeaned the religious moral position of Islamic civic groups and in the long run creates the problem of identity politics. And, identity politics mildly wanes the ideals of democratic politics. It usually runs towards changing the public mindset to only support or vote for candidates of their own religious extraction in extension those with a similar sectarian belief even in the same faith.



## 7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper provides an explanation on how the new generation of Muslims civic group (*Izala*) Katsina State-Nigeria chapter have engaged in marketization of religion in the democratic politics of the state. Despite the democratic cum religious competitive environment, some of the *Izala* group members are still non-accommodative with the way and manner the religious group engages into the religious marketization debacles. This is especially because of the public criticisms against the group which made some of the members to eschewed being political. Avoiding religious marketization

would certainly retrace the public image of the revered *Izala* religious civic group despite its involvement in democratic politics as civil society group. And, consequently the question of communal and sectarian polarization which create tensions particularly during the electioneering campaigns would be addressed. Not only this, regulatory measures should be put in place to have a firm control of both the politicians and the religious civic groups on their political activities. A comparative study on *Izala* and two or more Islamic religious groups in democratic politics would provide a highly and stronger academic understanding on religious marketization.

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