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Difficulties and Challenges Facing National Integration



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Mina samir

Introduction

The story of humanity, socially and politically, is the story of the amalgamation of small groups into larger units. In political science, we are not concerned with the way in which kinship groups have assimilated into tribes nor with the way in which nations may be assimilated into international societies in the future. Rather, our concern is with the manner in which ethnic and cultural groups have been fully or partially integrated into national societies in order to support the political organization of the Nation-State.

With the development of human societies, a number of personal characteristics specific to humans began to develop, such as religion, race, family (tribe), and the geographical area, in addition to other determinants that contributed to the creation of a collective identity to which human groups belong and defend their own characteristics and values. In the context of humans' struggle over resources, the differences in those characteristics with other human groups were usually the cause of conflicts and wars, and history has many instances of conflicts and wars that took religious forms or a struggle for power between families.

In 1648, one of Europe's largest and longest-running conflicts, the Thirty Years' War, was ended. It is a war that began driven by a Catholic/Protestant sectarian conflict within the territory of the Holy Roman Empire for further expansion and in order for the warring parties to use that sectarian fanaticism as an acceptable reason to join the war. The war extended over the Holy Roman Empire, the German statelets, the Dutch provinces, Spain and France. The war itself is not the focus of our attention in this article insofar as it resulted in political variables, perhaps the most important of which is the establishment of the principle of sovereign rights, that is, the Nation-State.

In an attempt to avoid sectarian conflicts among the population, the treaty allowed those belonging to either the Catholic or the Protestant faiths to freely immigrate to areas where those belonging to their faiths constituted the majority. This means that the nation-states that emerged as a result of that treaty included sectarian diversity among their social components in their new forms. The priority in that model is belonging to nationalism and not to the faith, which was later reinforced by packages of covenants, charters and laws that established the principle of the rule of law and equality among citizens, and these are the most important realistic reasons that led to peaceful coexistence and national integration among the population of countries despite their individual differences.

Thereupon and as a result of several factors, including the European colonialism, whose influence extended over most regions of the world, the idea of the nation-state moved to those regions, and borders were drawn up between them, which included residents with ethnic, religious, sectarian and family differences. Thus, the model was transferred and the borders were drawn up without any consideration for the cultural and historical peculiarities of the inhabitants of those areas, and without taking into account the nature and history of the relations between these different groups, which subsequently inflamed the civil conflicts between the inhabitants of those countries, especially after independence, and perhaps countries such as India, Sudan, Uganda and other countries are such an example.

National integration is one of the political processes that attempt to control the conflicts within a single society that arise as a result of differences between the inhabitants. It is also one of the indicators of political development that reflects the effectiveness of political systems in relation to administration and governance, which shows how effective political systems are in administration and governance.

In this study, the most important difficulties and challenges facing national integration are tackled in specific points that can be used as guides, as well as positive international proposals and experiences in order to overcome these difficulties and challenges.

First: What is National Integration?

There is no country in the world that is free from any differences and variations between its residents and regions, from social class and regionalism, to language, religion and ethnicity. The state's ability to manage those differences between its components is an indicator of its political strength, since the absence of the state's political power and its positive influence and presence in light of these conflicts would enhance the intensity of rivalry between them, which may turn into civil strife.

The concept of national integration could be summarized as the realization of the common identity among the citizens of one state, that is, the individuals' awareness, through their individual and personal characteristics, of belonging to a variety of classes, cultures, societies, religions, regions and languages, in addition to their awareness that all these elements are the same within a broader and more comprehensive concept, which is home.

For instance, the United Kingdom is a somewhat disorganized state, which is neither fully federal nor united, has no formal constitution and can only be understood in historical terms. The United Kingdom was established in stages, through the expansion of England to include Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but then suffered a process of partial disintegration due to a rebellion in Ireland that led to its division country and the independence of the greater part of it, what provides an example of political integration and disintegration.



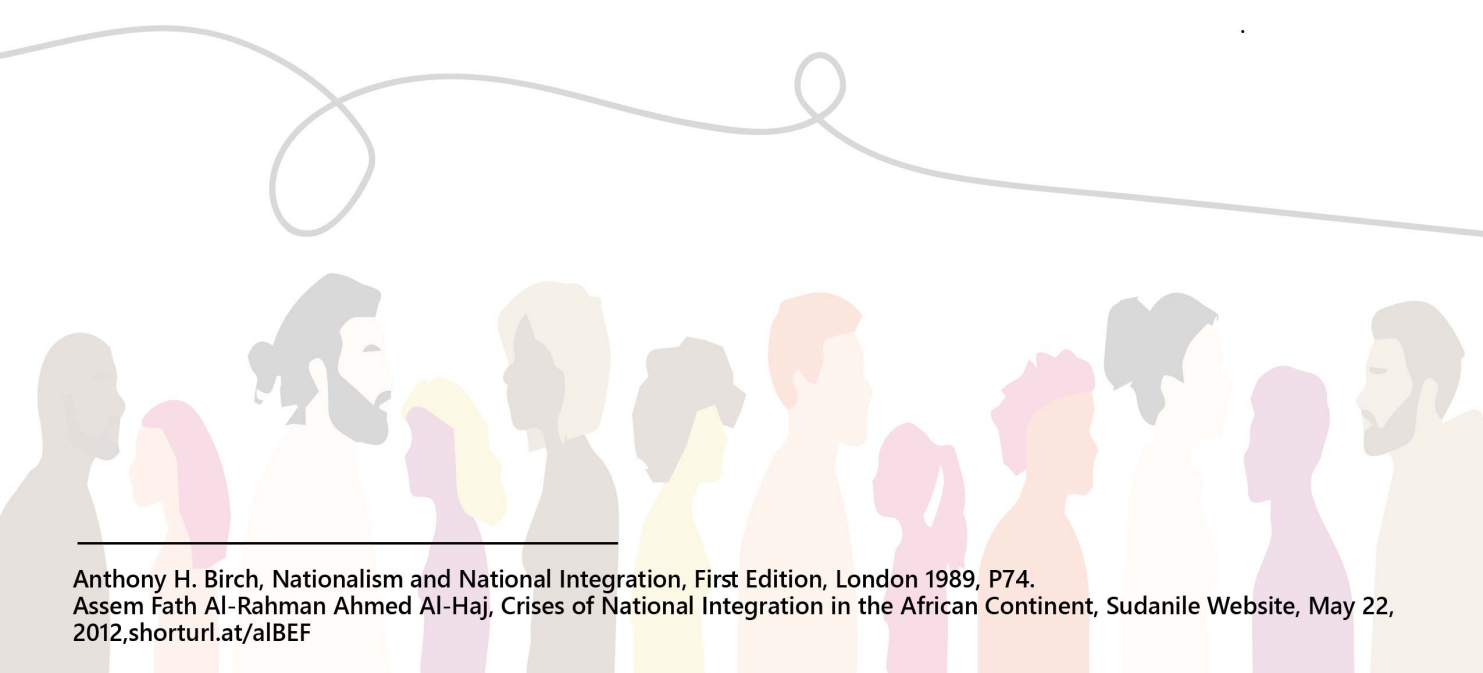
The state was made up of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, yet despite the ethnic, cultural, sectarian and other differences, all the inhabitants of those regions realize that they belong to a political entity called the United Kingdom. In return, they all get a great deal of equality in political, economic, social and cultural rights.

In this sense, national integration cannot be considered an automatic process that occurs just because of one's birth in a specific geographic area, belonging to a class or ethnic group, or holding a nationality. These simply are natural gains that are not enough to foster a sense of belonging, a feeling that needs a parallel move from the other direction, which is the State.

Second: The State's Role in Promoting National Integration

The role of the state in supporting national integration can be defined as creating equal opportunities and rights for all the social components within the same state, so that such social components can be more integrated with each other, and thus, national loyalty rises above ethnic and tribal loyalties. The term "integration" means voluntary integration between the various social components within the same state. National integration is a concept that seeks to manage diversity and cultural pluralism, and to direct the ethnic, religious and linguistic differences that exist in society in order to contribute to building a national unity based on diversity.

National integration aims to achieve equality between the components of society within a single state by fulfilling their immediate and future needs and aspirations. As a consequence, the concept of national integration involves intellectual trends that attempt to find a solution for many complex social problems, such as ethnic disputes and conflicts, which threaten the unity of states, and disrupt the abilities of national governments to meet the requirements of their peoples.



Third: The Most Important Difficulties and Challenges Impeding National Integration



- **Absence of Diversity Management**

Almost, there is no country in the world whose population consists of one component. Societies consist of groups different from each other in one element at least, such as religion, language and others. Countries vary in the amount of diversity among their components, and there are countries whose social groups consist of at least two factions. While there are societies that include among their components dozens of different groups, such as the USA. Researchers always ask the question of how much diversity a country can absorb before it disintegrates under the pressure of intergroup conflict and centrifugal forces. The answer should be found in the comparative analysis of the historical experience of countries with diverse population structures such as the USA, India, the UK, Switzerland, Belgium, Iraq, Lebanon, South Africa and others. The process of nation-building in the modern era has involved integrating subnational groups of citizens into some form of a common nation with the overarching national identity pattern.

The main drivers of division in societies are ethnicity, language, religion, or region or a combination of these factors. Each country has its own unique set of divisions that can sometimes translate into fierce animosity between groups. In many cases, these divisions undermine the cohesion and stability that society needs to advance to higher levels of inclusive social and economic development.

Impact of Race, Religion, and Language on Diversity Management

Today's perceptions of race play a significant role in producing a strong sense of differentiation between people; immediate recognition of a different skin color or facial characteristics is one of the basic elements used as the basis for social differentiation, although today the term "race" is largely understood as a scientific concept regarding the social differentiation between humans. In general, despite the outcries and the enactment of legislation and laws against racial discrimination, it is at the same time an indication of what we can describe as a tendency to appear to appear to realize the clear ethnic identity. This is particularly true in multi-ethnic environments, a feeling that, if not controlled and managed, may create an ethnic-based conflict, which means that diversity could not to be managed, and therefore national integration would fail, posing a threat to the stability of the state. Religion is the most threatening element to national integration in the event that states do not manage their religious diversity, since religious groups usually gain a sense of uniqueness and superiority over the rest of people by virtue of divine commands. It is a formula that constitutes a collective identity characterized by a sense of distinction from the rest of the components, therefore creating negative perceptions and stereotypes against other religious components, which are usually disturbing, resulting in an opposite reaction in the same direction.

³ W B VOSLOO, *Diversity and national integration*, University of Wollongong, September 2016, p1.

⁴ CW Anderson, F.R. von der Mehden, C. Young. *Issues of Political Development*. Prentice-Hall. NJ. 1967. pp20-27.

With regard to language, which is the first and most important means of communication between all human beings, lack of awareness of the right communication would create barriers between the groups that make up societies, and each group would enter a state of isolation from other groups. This enhances the mutual negative stereotyping between each group against the other groups, which is a prelude to the clash that breaks out due to the simplest causes.

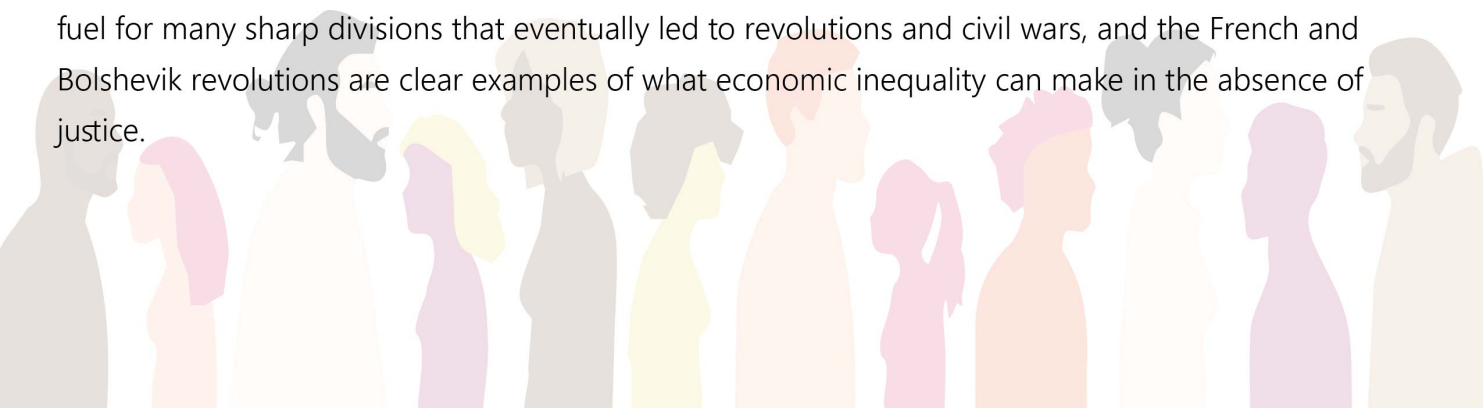
On the other hand, the political experiences of a number of countries indicate that the official disregard by the states for language as one of its societal components is a major motive for the feeling of alienation by that component towards society and the state. It is also regarded as an act of support by the state for one of its cultures to dominate other cultures. The language may be the language of the majority of the population, but this is not a legal or moral justification for marginalizing the languages or cultures of other minorities in society in order for the state to avoid the sense of marginalization by one of its components, which constitutes a great indicator of a potential conflict.

- **Economic Inequality**

In its abstract sense, economic inequality is natural in light of the scarcity of resources. Not all human beings can be at the same well-being or economic levels. Human nature and personal traits in light of competition for resources and opportunities play a pivotal role in creating that inequality. One of the main roles of the state is to work to reduce the severity of that inequality, not to end it. States have many tools for this, such as imposing a progressive taxation system, social welfare policies, or support programs for the most vulnerable classes, and so on.

The problem lies in whether such inequality results from the absence of justice, and the bias of states towards the richer classes without taking into account the reality and needs of the poorer classes. The presence of the largest percentage of the country's wealth in the hands of a small percentage of their population, with a large percentage of the population below the poverty threshold, is one of the signs of economic inequality that may be supported by an absence of justice.

Such situations necessarily create a state of polarization within society, so that it is divided into two camps, each of which is intensely agitated against the other. History tells us that this situation was the fuel for many sharp divisions that eventually led to revolutions and civil wars, and the French and Bolshevik revolutions are clear examples of what economic inequality can make in the absence of justice.

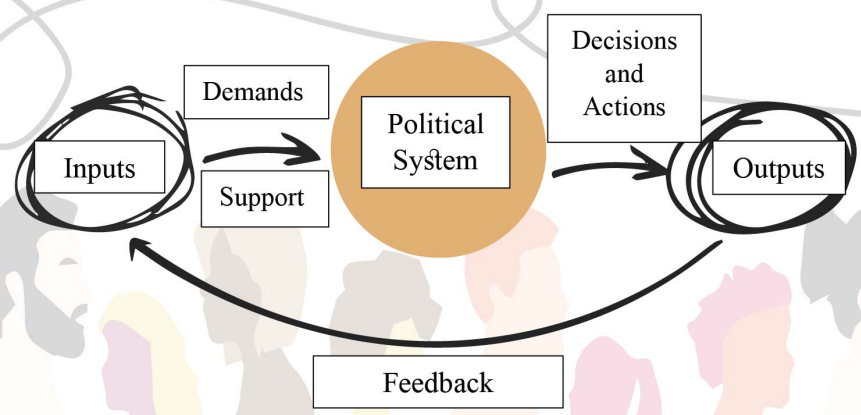


In many cases, economic inequality in the absence of justice is an ulterior motive for unrest, especially if that economic inequality is also accompanied by ethnic, religious, regional or other differentiation. Then, that economic inequality becomes one of the real, but ulterior motives for ethnic conflicts. No one will engage in sectarian conflict, for example, and declares that he is motivated by the wealth of those belonging to that religion while he is poor; alternatively, he would provide dozens of justifications that may not rise to any logic to justify his action.

• **Weakness of Political Systems**

According to David Easton, in the simplified model of the political system, a system is the main unit of analysis in the approach of system analysis. A system is defined in general as a group of interacting elements that are functionally interrelated with each other on a regular basis. It means that the change in one of the components of the system affects the rest of the elements. The system has a kind of interdependence between its components, and it has boundaries that separate it from other systems, and it has a surrounding or environment in which it moves. The analysis process that takes place within the system is a process of defining and evaluating the parts that make up the whole with the aim of realizing these parts as components of each compound with an attempt to know the controls that link their relationships to each other on the one hand, and the laws that govern the movement and development of the whole compound, on the other hand. Consequently, the political system is defined as a set of political interactions that occur within any society and according to which public policies are made. The political system consists of four basic elements: inputs, transfer, outputs, and feedback.

According to this approach, the political system is linked to elements in its surroundings or environment that interact with it and that affect and are affected by it. The political system manifest itself in a set of decisions and actions, which are reflected in its surroundings and affect it, and are reflected again on the political system in the form of support, re-election, as well as stability.



⁵ Systems Analysis Approach, Systematic Approach, Political Encyclopedia, shorturl.at/oz456

In the past and until the sixties of the last century, the indicators used by political systems to measure political influence were limited to social and economic development. These are the indicators that later developed in liberal political studies to include crises of political development of political systems, as well as what these crises reveal about the system weakness. The political development crises include six crises, namely, those of identity, legitimacy, political participation, penetration, distribution, and integration.

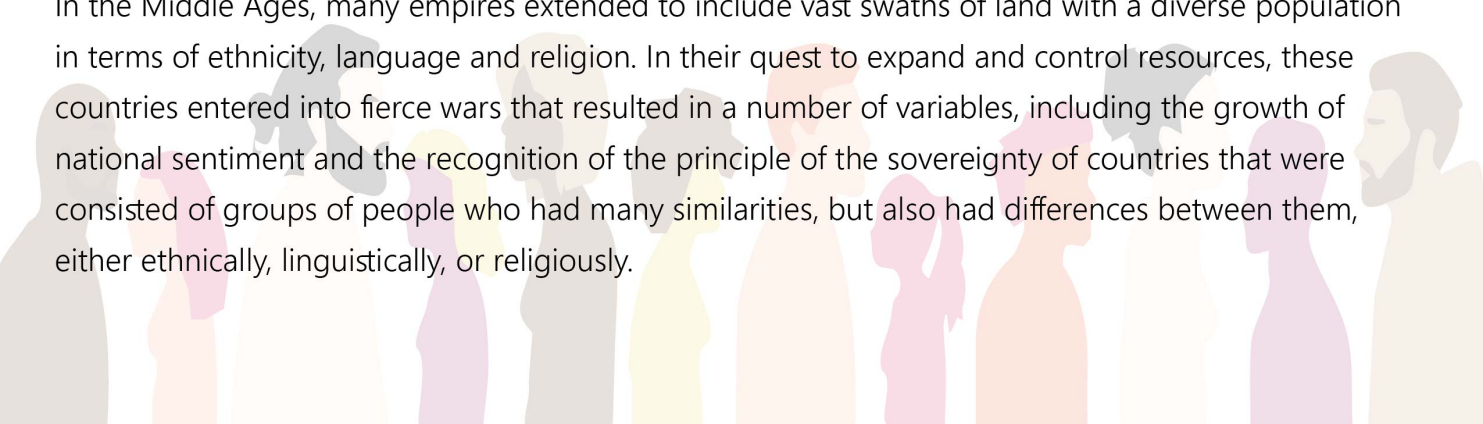
National integration is one of the crises of political development, which usually results from the weakness of the system and in turn weakens the system. There are many reasons that contribute to the pervasiveness of the crisis of national integration, perhaps the most obvious and influential is the strengthening of the hegemony of one culture and the marginalization of other cultures. This culture is usually the culture of the majority of the population and is reinforced by political systems to gain the support of its followers. That culture might also be the culture of one of the minority population groups, but one of the main components of the political system is that minority, which develops a hostile feeling among the majority, and in all cases these policies are a major cause of the crisis of national integration.

In addition to strengthening the dominance of a culture, any defect in the justice system would enhance the crisis of national integration, especially that there are some countries that enhance their constitutional and legislative systems through giving rights and privileges to one of their societal components or detracting from the rights of another component. The apartheid regime in South Africa is a case in point, as it put the South African society in a state of constant readiness for civil war before it was abolished in 1991.

The crisis of national integration is a political crisis in the first place, and to put an end to it in preparation for its treatment, it needs a complex political process. There is no single model or experience in which repressive practices or security solutions were solutions to overcoming the crisis, but often lead to further complication of matters.

Conclusion

In the Middle Ages, many empires extended to include vast swaths of land with a diverse population in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. In their quest to expand and control resources, these countries entered into fierce wars that resulted in a number of variables, including the growth of national sentiment and the recognition of the principle of the sovereignty of countries that were consisted of groups of people who had many similarities, but also had differences between them, either ethnically, linguistically, or religiously.



Those population differences would be an enriching element for society. Diversity in itself is one of the causes of creativity in all areas of life. However, if diversity is not successfully and effectively controlled, it may cause a state of failure for the state and society, and matters may reach a civil strife.

There are many reasons for the failure of the national integration process, including the population's own perception of the superiority of their race, religion or language. In the presence of these elements in a group of people, they create a kind of collective perceptions that give a feeling of sovereignty and undervalue other societal components, which leads to a conflict between the societal components.

The other reason is economic inequality, and the great economic inequality between the classes of society would create a state of social tension that may turn into forms of armed opposition or revolution, and the revolutions of France and the Bolsheviks are such an example. On the other hand, economic inequality between clearly distinct groups may lead produce sectarian alertness. Thus, inequality is the motive for any sectarian actions in society.

Finally, the weakness of the political system is the cause and effect of the national integration crisis. It is one of the political development crises that result from a failure in the interaction between the political system and its surroundings or environment. This requires the system to support equality policies, reinforce the justice system, and neutralize security politically in order to achieve national integration.

