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POLITICS OF RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN THE 2023 NIGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This work examine politics of religion and ethnicity in the 2023 Nigeria Presidential election and the challenges of National Development. This study provide a logical answer and empirical evidences whether religion and ethnicity has played a significant role in the Nigeria 2023 Presidential election. To achieve this survey research method was adopted which include face to face interview. And the sampling techniques adopted for this study is the convenience available sampling. Through this research it has been discovered that most people in Gombe State agreed that religion and ethnicity has played a vital role in the 2023 Nigeria Presidential election it is also discovered that politics of religion and ethnicity has a negative effect on National Development. The researcher therefore recommend that despite the fact that ethnicity and religion has long ago dominated the Nigerian politics. Nigerians should learn how to put the interest of the country first before their parochial, tribal, ethnic or religious interest because the country is for all of us. The leadership of Nigeria headed by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu should as a matter of fairness keep to his electoral promise by putting in place electoral reforms that would enable Nigerians have free and fair election that had eluded the country for decades

KEYWORDS: National Development, Election, Politics of Religion, Ethnicity, Challenges, Presidential Election

Introduction

The 62 years old Nigeria is still searching for a new political path because of the domination of ethnicism, religious and political groups, these factors have hampered the survival of democratic rule and national development in Nigeria.

In a complex society like Nigeria federalism is arguably the right model for addressing ethnic cultural and religious pluralism. Each region or state allowed to control its resources and develop at its own space under such arrangements. Nigeria on the other hand is a nation that claims to have a federal system of government operate the opposite way and ignores the identities, interests and needs of the people particularly those of minorities. The Nigerian constitution does not reflect the needs of the people and the majority of the government plans are anti-people and do not promote national integration and cohesion (Ilesanmi 2014). The Nigerian government is stubbornly stubborn in it's pursuit of the interest of it's citizens, politics at the federal, states and local levels in Nigeria Nigerian federation are dominated by the powerful mandarin who built vast patronage

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networks during the military days and who now use political office to expand these networks and their personal fortunes. Moreover, many of these so called 'godfathers' have been cultivating, prompting a local arm race in some regions even though several governors are under indictment for money laundering abroad and others are being investigated at home, the bonanza continues at public coffers for these power holders, while basic infrastructure in many parts of the country remains as dilapidated as it was under military rule (Kew, 2006 cited in Fagbadebo, 2007). Politics today in Nigeria is a 'do or die' affair. The struggle For political power and control at the centre the nation polity has over- heated and exacerbated unnecessary tension which has resulted in bigotry between and among regions. These same politicians who loosen their grip on this criminals at the end of the day used this weapons on defenseless citizens who are recruited and armed s(Ilesanmi, 2014). Since its inception the current democratic system has been besiege by unprecedented vice violence and social instability, resulting in extensive destruction of asset and the loss of lives. The religious and ethnic dimension to these upheavals makes them a serious threat to national security. The tension and uncertainties in the country today is not conducive for democratic process and national development. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed a lot of violence eruption and general insecurity in nearly all the states of the federation. Prominent among such is the Boko Haram which has been attributed to the political rivalry between the north and the south towards controlling the political power in the country. It must be realized that, the sudden and apparent emergence of the Boko Haram sect at this period in the history of the country is meant to destabilize the Jonathan's Administration as well as the equilibrium the country has been brought to by the government (Ogoloma, 2012). In addition, kidnapping and all forms of maladies, militia groups exist in all geopolitical zones. This has resulted in a lot of bloodsheds, senseless killings, destruction of property, social and economic dislocation and its attendant poverty, insecurity and unemployment (Ilesanmi, 2014). This is why Ogbulafor (2000) argued that the number of people in Nigeria bitten by poverty is over 70%. It is only in Nigeria you find political leaders, military chiefs who are clueless, visionless and lack the necessary ingredients to stirring a good socio-economic and political environment, some of them and their cohorts have become sponsors to most crises and conflicts rather than seeing themselves as apostles of peace and national development. Worse still, in all political activities in Nigeria, the factor of ethnicity is reflected. It is particularly obvious in area like voting, distribution of political offices, employment and government general patronage of the citizens (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Also, when national development is mentioned, it is suicidal to ignore the contributions of religious adherents such as Christians, Muslims, African Traditional adherents and other secular ideologists (Awoniyi, 2015). Today, religion has been used, abused, abused and misused by political elites, and unfortunately the so-called clerics of Christianity and Islam, so much that it has continued to cause conflagrations all over the world. Nigerian experience is one among many of the countries witnessing Islamic extremists' senseless killings and maiming of innocent lives (Gbadegesin & Adeyemi-Adejolu, 2016). Therefore, a discussion of the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development in Nigeria is or seems to be highly desirable. It even becomes necessary given

Conceptual Clarification

Politics

Politics is derived from the Greek word ''polis'' which means city or state of governance in the world ''polis'' has been used interchangeably by different writers and the definitions reflect the authors philosophical, social and political back ground it has been impossible to have a universally accepted defination of politics due to this. Ejizu (1988) defined politics as a dynamic process whereby human and other human resources are managed, directed after due mobilization to ensure the enforcement of public policy and decision in the bid to regulate social order. Hornby (2000) sees politics as the science and art of government. It is the science dealing with terms,

organization and administration of state or part of one and with the regulation of its relation with other state. For Onyekpe (2003) cited in Ogugua and Ogugua (2015) politics is about the control and exercise of power. Politics can also be view as the process of deciding who gets what, when and how. Dyke (1960) views politics as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. In the Marxian sense, politics is a class struggle, that is, the struggle between antagonistic classes in the society for the control of the state- the state being an 'organ of class rule' (Oluwatusin & Daisi, 2018). In the words of Leshe (1970) cited in Ngele (2008), politics is a sphere of purposeful behaviour through which we seek to live better than we do now. Ake (1995) sees politics as mainly about the control of power; this is well known. What is not so well know is the extent to which the nature of the state, including its power, determines politics. Politics according to Ikelegbe (2005) is a persistent pattern of human relationships that involves to a significant extent control, influence or authority. Despite the divergent conceptions of politics, there is a common ground in the centrality of the state and power to the political process. Thus, politics is concentrated as revolving round the state, its agencies, activities and overall impact on the society; and also an analysis of government and its responsibilities (Appadorai, 2003). It is instructive to note that the leadership problem in the Nigerian polity was a manifestation of the dysfunctional pattern of the years of military interregnum (Omo-Bare, 1996; Omodia, 2009; Ighodalo, 2012; Ijere, 2015). The leadership pattern in Nigeria lacks the necessary focus capable of instilling national development and promotes political stability. Rather, Nigerian leaders are preoccupied with their desires for the appropriation and privatization of the Nigeria state (Ake, 1995); Sklar, Onwudiwe & Kew, 2006). The fall of the First and Second Republic, for instance, was precipitated by the pervasive corruption and the attendant political violence that greeted electoral manipulations, in a bid to stick to power (Ayeni, 1988). Consequently, development performance was slowed down, and political instability continued to pervade the polity, as focus was shifted to combat the looming forces of insecurity and internal regime instability. In the Nigerian state today, the democratic process no doubt has been bedeviled with poor party politics as a result of lack of internal democracy, party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept 'democracy,' the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession among others (Ntalaja, 2000). These factors, no doubt snowballed in the abortion of democratic
republic in Nigeria and have persistently threatened the survival of the Nigeria Fourth Republic.
National Development Development means different things to different people. Development could be seen as a process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental interactions (Ajaebu, 2012). Development is also equated with progress and modernity (Willis, 2005). According to Walter Rodney as cited in Ajaegbu (2012) development is the process that includes: physical development

Religion

Religion as the oldest discipline in human society is the most difficult term or word to define. There is no clear consensus on the conception of religion by theologians and social scientists. This is not merely because scholars grapple with the element of subjectivity, but largely because of the inherent difficulty in understanding the 'inner essences' of religion (Egwu, 2001). Different people understand religion differently or have different perspectives according to their disciplines. For example, sociologists regard religion as being of social rather than political significance while

anthropologists view religion as a component of the cultural aspect of life (Barrett, 2003). To the Theologians, religion is the essence and centre of civilization and the sublime aesthetic expression and root of all decision, actions and ultimate explanation of civilization with its invention and artifacts; its social, political and economic system, its past and future, promises and history (Muazam, 2006 cited in Cinjel & Chujor, 2017). Durkheim (1965) defined religion as a collective representation that made things sacred. Religion can be termed by reference to what is known as extent of purity and impurity (Shabi & Awe, 2001). Yesufu (2016) sees religion as the service and worship of God or gods. Mbati (1999) cited in Ilesanmi (2014) emphasized that religion is a strong element in the traditional backgrounds and exerts the greatest influence upon the thinking and feelings of the people concerned. Obilor (1998) avers that religion is a capacity or a power which enable man to observe the laws of his nature, the natural law and/or of the divine law. Durrant (1920) interprets religion as a barrier to human self-actualization. There is no doubt that religion can be seen in this light when it has been turned into an ideological tool or else, why did Karl Marx see it as the opium of the people. A palliative used by the leaders to hold the masses in check. In the hand of a villain, religion can be a cog in the wheel of progress and massaging of the ego and dehumanization of the people while in the hand of a saint it becomes an instrument for humanization (Ogugua & Ogugua, 2015). It has been argued that one's religion is what makes one a complete whole, this assertion may not be correct because not all people practicing a religion would agreed that they depend on their religion to complete them as a whole. Basically, the two major religious practices in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. While the Muslims believe in Allah, the Christians believe in one God, yet we have African Traditional religion. These differences in beliefs have given rise to the religious conflict we are experiencing worldwide (Ilesanmi, 2014). Today, based on the increasing rise of religious bigots and extremists, one may be tempted to suggest that religion is not relevant to societal development and hence should be extricated from human social life (Gbadegesin & Adeyemi- Adejolu, 2016). Religious extremism is commonly known in Nigeria as religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. Hornby (2000) Defined fanaticism as extreme beliefs or behaviour, especially in connection with religion or politics. Balogun (1988) defined religious fanaticism as violent and unreasoning religious enthusiasm as well as the inability of religious adherents to harmonize between those theories and the practical aspects of religion.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a universal phenomenon that is not limited to the developing world but also to the developed countries this was because many villages bands and isolated groups came together to form a nation and then continued their cultural traditions within the newly formed groups for one reason or another (Cohen 1974) These entities later metamorphosed into ethnic grouping within a state with different degrees of cultural uniqueness and distinctiveness.

The concept of ethnicity has been variously defined by scholars Cohen (1974) for instance avers that an ethnic group is a collection of people who share some patterns of normative behaviour and for apart of a larger population, interacting with people from other ethnic groups within the frame work of a social system. For Cohen one of the characteristics of a people so addressed as an ethnic group is the sharing of normative behaviour. This normative behaviour is a distinct behaviour which which distinguished one group of people from others and it include kingship, marriage, friendship, festival, rituals and other ceremonial activities. Normative behaviour can also be coupled to the continuous interactions with other distinguished group especially within the same Nation-state.

Therefore ethnicity can be seen as interaction between culturally distinct groups operating within a common social context.

For Mc Lean (1991) ethnic group is the strongest sense of group feeling. From this simple definition, it can be deduced that there are many groups to which men could belong. These groups include social, political, religious and professional group of which the ethnic group stimulates the greatest feelings especially among those who are biologically related. To this extend primordialists have argued that ethnic groups are the outcome of biological processes (Fearon and Litin, 2000). Thus blood is a unifying factor in cementing the relationship among the ethnic groups as membership is not by choice but rather by descent. Lending credence to the unifying power of blood relationship Udo (1980) highlight the power of blood in cementing relations among ethnic groups even after the political partitioning and demarcation of nations. It is evident that, the political demarcation which follow the eventual partitioning of African territories by the colonial powers is not a barrier to ethnic ties and relation. According to Udo (1980:10) cited in Salami,2004, the cultural tie between the Hausa of Nigeria Niger may be greater than contacts between Hausa of Nigeria and Jukun of Nigeria.

Ethnicity according to Osaghae (1994), is a social formation predicated on culturally specific practices and unique symbols. What this means is that ethnicity is a situation in which individuals in a particular ethnic group consider themselves or are considered by others to have common affinity which distinct them from other groups in the society. Also, distinct cultural behaviours are usually developed; all groups can be identifiable through religion, politics, occupation or language (Ilesanmi, 2014). In political terms, ethnicity refers to the ethnic-identity based behaviour which seeks, in a competitive setting, to capture political power at the micro level and state, power at the macro level (Osimen, Balogun & Adenegan, 2013). Achebe (1981) sees ethnicity as discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth. Today, ethnicity has become a population subject of intellectual exploration to scholars in different fields both in developed and developing countries particularly of Africa, as it is often considered a prominent factor in the governance and development processes of many countries. Ajayi and Owumi (2013) affirm that it would not be easy to identify a country that is not affected by issues triggered by ethnicity but some countries' situations are particularly striking because of the lessons they provide regarding the impact of ethnicity on national development. Jiboku and Jiboku (2018) also observe that the-inter- ethnic relations in Nigeria has been one of conflict largely caused by ethnic chauvinism, which manifested in the form of ethnic nationalism. There is no doubt that this has implications for the survival of democracy and national development in Nigeria.

National Development

To develop means to grow, become advanced, to become elaborate, stronger and to be complete. Something that develops makes progress, it changes; it could become bigger and more successful. Development involves gradual advancement and a series of changes that lead to progress (Webster Dictionary) in the society. The process of development involves degrees in maturation. Even though development may take place, it might not be noticeable immediately. We notice that children grow and mature but we do not stand by them and see the various parts of their bodies grow. We simply notice the growth. Development involves the application of new ideas to practical problems to produce positive change in the society.

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Development has been a matter of concern. At the beginning of the second half of the 20th Century, international agenda began to focus on development and there came up the nation that growth in the economy did not automatically lead to better quality of life for members of the society, that it was important to determine and emphasize specific policies that would direct resources and enable the various strata of the society to develop socially and economically (Israel, 2018). Governments and nongovernmental organizations then began to direct efforts towards societal change. Development indicates the need and the means through which poor countries are helped to attain better living standards. It includes, but is not limited to, economic growth, human development, better health, better nutrition, education and a clean environment. According to Akinfeleye, (2008) national development refers to the process of social change within a society or nation. It involves national integration, elite – mass integration, territorial integration and value integration. We have already indicated that development may not necessarily be immediate; however, it is visible and useful. It involves a change in quality and also creates conditions for that change.

Full list of Presidential Candidates and their parties 2023

The 2023 Nigerian Presidential election featured eighteen registered political parties and their candidates which were approved by INEC following a flurry of drama in the parties primary election as shown in the table below.

S/N	Party Name	Party Acronym	Presidential Candidates
1.	Accord	A	Professor Christopher Imumulen
2.	Action Allience	AA	Almustapha Hamza
3.	Action Democratic Party	ADP	Sani Yabagi Yusuf
4.	Action Peoples Party	APP	**Nnadi Charles Osita**
5.	African Action Congress	AAC	Omoyole Sowore
6.	African Democratic Congress	ADC	Dumebi Kachikwu
7.	All Progressive Congress	APC	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu
8.	All Progressive Grand Alliance	APGA	Professor Peter Umeadi
9	Allied Peoples Movement	APM	Yusuf Mamman Dan Talle
10.	Boot Party	BP	Adenuga Sunday Oluwafemi
11.	Labour Party	LP	Mr Peter Obi
12.	National Rescue Movement	NRM	Osakwe Felix Johnson
13.	New Nigerian Peoples Party	NNPP	Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso
14.	People Democratic Party	PDP	Atiku Abubakar
15.	Peoples Redemption Party	PRP	Kola abiola
16.	Social Democratic Party	SDP	Prince Adewole Adebayo
17.	Young Progressive Party	YPP	Prince Malik Ado Ibrahim
18.	Zenith Labour Party	ZLP	Nwanyawu Daniel Dabere Chukwu

2023 Nigeria Presidential Election result

Despite the fact that 18 candidates from different political parties contested for the 2023 presidential election but only four candidates results will be presented and discuss, this is because they are the only candidates that won at least one states.

S/N	STATE	APC	PDP	LP	NNPP
1.	Adamawa	182,881	417,611	105,648	8,006
2.	Abia	8,914	22,676	327,095	1,239
3.	Akwa Ibom	160,620	214,012	132,683	7,796
4.	Anambra	5,111	9,036	584,621	1,967
5.	Bauchi	316,694	426,607	27,373	72,103
6.	Bayelsa	42,572	68,818	49,975	540
7.	Borno	252,285	190,921	7,205	4,626
8.	Cross River	130.520	95.425	179,911	1,644
9.	Delta	90,183	161,600	341,866	3,122
10.	Ebonyi	42,402	13,503	259,738	2,661
11.	Edo	144,471	89,585	331,163	2,743
12.	Gombe	146,977	319,123	26,160	10,520
13.	Imo	66,406	30,234	360,495	1,552
14.	Jigawa	421,390	386,587	1,889	98,234
15.	Kano	517,341	131,716	28,518	997,279
16.	Katsina	482,283	489,045	6,376	69,386
17.	Kwara	263,572	136,909	31,166	3,142
18.	Lagos	572,	75,750	582,454	8,448
19.	Nasarawa	172,922	147,093	191,361	12,715
20.	Plateau	307,195	243,808	466,272	8,869
21.	Sokoto	285,444	288,679	6,568	1,300
22.	Ondo	369,924	115,463	44,405	930
23.	Osun	343,945	354,366	23,283	713
24.	Ogun	341,554	123,831	85,829	2,200
25.	Niger	375,183	284,898	80,452	21,836
26.	Kebbi	248,088	285,175	10,682	5,038
27.	Taraba	135,165	189,017	146,315	12,818
28.	Kaduna	399,293	554,360	294,494	92,969
29	FCT	90,902	74,194	281,717	4,517
30.	Kogi	240,751	145,104	56,217	4,238
31.	Benue	310,468	130,081	308,372	4,740
32.	Rivers	231,591	88,468	175,071	1,322
33.	Oyo	449,884	182,977	99,110	4,095
34.	Yobe	151,459	198,567	2,406	18,270
35.	Enugu	4,772	15,749	428,640	1,808
36.	Zamfara	298,396	193,978	1,660	4,044
Aggregate		8,794,726	6,984,520	6,101,533	1,496,671

From the above table you may find out that all the candidates won election in at lease their states of origin except the APC Candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Labour Party (LP) Presidential candidate Mr Peter Obi defeated All Peoples Congress (APC) candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Lagos. Mr Obi received a massive support from the electorate especially in the areas densely populated by non-Yoruba speaking residents.

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Also the campaign against APC'S Muslim-Muslim ticket for the presidency was seen by many as evil inconsiderate and insensitive and led to what some members of the ruling party described as protest vote against the ticket.

Mr Peter Obi, won the following Local Governments: Kosofe, Eti-Osa, Ojo, Amuwo-Odofin, Somolu, Ikeja, Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Alimosho and Oshodi-Isola

Bola Ahmed Tinubu won in 11 Local Governments Areas of Lagos state but his total number of votes was less than Mr Obi's tally by less than 10,000 . The Local Government areas won by Tinubu were Lagoa Island, Ibeju-Lekki, Apapa, Lagos Mainland, Ifako-Ijaiye Ikorodu, Epe, Badagry, Agege, Mushin and Surulere.

Tinubu, also lost his local government Ikeja to Mr Peter Obi who polled 30,004 votes as against Tinubu's 21,276 votes.

Also, the states local government with the highest voter turnout Alimosho, was won by Mr Obi. The local government area had always provided a major buffer for the ruling party but the outcome of 2023 election has shocked many

Politics and National Development

Governments are unable to develop and implement policies that they believe are essential to sustained economic growth all too often even when leaders have the best intention in making politics work for growth, political barriers can discourage them from following solid scientific advice: Harnessing Transparency and Citizen Engagement focuses on two forces-citizens engagement and transparency that hold the key to solving government failures by shaping how political markets function.

In today's participatory world, people are not only queuing at voting booths but they are also taking to the street and using modern communication technology to select, sanction and pressure the leaders who wield power within government. This political engagement can function in highly nuanced ways even within the same formal institutional context and across the political spectrum, from autocracies to democracies. Political engagement becomes unhealthy when leaders are selected and sanctioned on the basis of their provision of private benefits rather than public goods, giving rise to a range of government failures.

The solution to these failure lies in fostering healthy political engagement within any institutional context, and not in circumventing or suppressing it. Transparency-citizens access to publicly available information about the actions of those in government and the consequences of these action can play a crucial role by nourishing political engagement. The report distills policy lessons for governments, international development partners, and civil society on how best to target transparency initiative so that the provision of public goods become the focus of political contestation.

This path breaking report places politics at the heart of the development dialogue-exactly where it belongs. It provides constructive ideas for harnessing the forces of transparency and citizen engagement in ways that are suited to diverse institutional contexts so that reform leaders can overcome political constraints to their countries development goals. Even so, unhealthy political engagement may persist. But to build institutions that are capable of tackling public goods problems, politics needs to be addressed and cannot be side-stepped. Targeted transparency is one way to move in the right direction: It complements everything else policy makers do and holds the potential to make politics work for development rather than against it. World Bank

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Ethnicity and National Development

According to Frank Ojeme (2021) Since Nigeria attained independence, ethnic diversity has been a major obstacle to her attainment of nationhood. Nigeria's postcolonial politics cannot be understood without stressing the significance of ethnicity in the process of power configuration at every level of government. The complex ethnic-regional negotiation that that dominated the decolonization process foretold the role ethnicity would have to play in the postcolonial period. The persistent manipulation of ethnic regional identities contributed significantly to many postcolonial political crises. Failure to forge progressive coalitions among political elites entrenched the tendencies of ethnicity, thus consolidating the power base of political elite as ethnic-regional power brokers. Ethnic politics is most likely to be most pronounced in situation of marked un even development and inequitable allocation of resources, all of which reduced the validity and legitimacy of the government in the eyes of ethnic contestants.i

Ethnicity provides the critical platform through which sociopolitical variables like class, religion, gender etc are expressed. Yet while ethnicity remains the critical medium for the manipulation of power by the dominant ethnic groups ethnic structures have also emerged as the critical rallying point of resistance to oppressive and corrupt regimes

Religion and National Development

Religion is a system of social coherence commonly understood as a group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen or imaginary being, or system of though considered to be super natural, sacred, divine or highest truth and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions and rituals associated with such beliefs or system of thought. It is frame work within which specific theological doctrine and practices are advocated and pursued usually among a community of like-minded believers. Religion has two distinctive etymological roots. Firstly, the Latin word relIgere, from legere means to bring together, to harvest or to gather. Secondly, religare, from ligare means to tie or bind together. The first meaning recognizes the religious foundations of any social group that is gathered together. The second indicates the discipline or morality that is necessary for controlling and regulating human being. Kirkpatrick (2005) sees religion as psychological attachment, a powerful emotional relationship to things. Tylor (1958-1871). Defined religion as a belief in spirits. Spirit were gods, animating power, animal-spirit companions, etc all of which seemed to have a religious cast. Durkheim (1963-1912) defined religion as a collective representation that made things sacred. Religion was a world view that created the sacred. The power to do this resided with the society. According to him society created religion. Durkheim felt that religion was the foundation of society

Development, could be defined as a process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental interactions. According to Walter Rodney, development is the process that includes: Physical development which includes man-made goods produced by the use of technology, cultural development which comprises of the values, norms and traditions of a society and personal development, is the process that includes the psychological directions of individuals. According to Seer (1979) the purpose of development in the society is to reduce poverty, inequality, and un employment. For Sen (1999), development involves reducing deprivation or broadening choice. Deprivation represent a multi-dimensional view of poverty that includes hunger, illiteracy, illness and poor health, powerlessness, voicelessness, insecurity, humiliation, and a lack of access to basic infrastructures.

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The emergence of terrorist religious groups like book haram has created a serious setback to Nigerian national development. Chinweudo et'al Terrorism (Boko Haram insurgency) has introduced a dangerous dimension into the crime space of Nigeria. The trademarks of the Boko haram are wanton destruction of life and properties with reckless abandon, through bombings, abduction and slaughtering of human beings like rams especially in northern Nigeria. This has created palpable fear and sense of insecurity in the polity it is a fact that the development of every country in the world is dependent on many factors which may fast-track or retard its growth, among which security is central, security of lives and properties plays major role in the development od any nation as investors in any economy want to be assured of the safety of their investment. Since the risk of doing business increase when there is insecurity in the polity investors who are to facilitate industrial growth and employment generation, try as much as possible to avoid such an un favorable business environment.

THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

There are quite a number of theories that might prove appropriate for the purpose of this paper, political theory is adopted.

Political theory is the philosophical study of government, addressing questions about the nature, scope and legitimacy of public agents and institutions and the relationship between them its topics include politics, liberty, justice property rights, law and the enforcement of law by authorities, what they are, if they are needed, what makes a government legitimate, what rights and freedoms it should protect, what form should it take, what the law is and what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any and when it may be legitimately over thrown if ever. Political theory also engages questions of a broader scope, tackling the political nature of phenomena and categories such as identity, culture, sexuality, race, wealth, human-nonhuman relations, ethnic, religion and more.

Methodology

This study titled politics of religion, ethnicity in the 2023 Nigeria Presidential election and the challenges of national development, the methodology adopted for this study is survey research method. This involves face to face interview. The purpose behind the selection of this method is because of its relevance to the study as majority of my respondents may neither read nor write.

According to Severin and Tankard (2001)
Survey research is a study of portion or
Sample of specific population e.g news
Paper subscribers, magazine readers
Television viewers people of community
Or state e.t.c
According to Berger (2000)
Survey is a research method that the researcher
Uses to get information about certain group
Of people of interest to them

Study Population

The study population are the people of Gombe State

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Sampling Techniques and Size

The sampling techniques adopted for this study is convenience/available sampling, this is because convenience sampling is non probability sampling according to Raj (1972) issues of external validity is baseless because of a phenomenon characteristics of trait does not exist it should be exist in any sample. Also Sobowale (1983) posit that the researcher simply uses a collection of reality accessible subject that is one simply takes the sample that are landy and continuous until the sample riches a designated size. 300 was selected

Data Presentation and Analysis

This work Politics of religion and ethnicity in the 2023 Nigeria presidential election and the challenges of national Development, convenience available sampling was used in the selecting respondents for this study (300) respondents were selected and interviewed.

The responses generated from the respondents in answering the questions will be presented and analyzed

Table 1.1 Election vs Religion

Yes	**204**	**68%**
No	96	32%
Total	**300**	**100%**

Table 1.1 above reveals that out of the general respondents of (300) two hundred and four (204) respondents agreed that religion has influenced the 2023 Presidential election

Table 1.2 Age vs Election and Ethnicity

Age	**Yes**	**No**	**Percentage**
18-25	42 (14%)	16 (5%)	19%
26-39	58 (19%)	32 (11%)	30%
40-above	104 (35%)	48 (16)	51%
TOTAL	**204**	**96**	**100%**

According to the information provided in the above table 42 respondents ages between 18-25 agreed that ethnicity has influenced the 2023 presidential election while 16 respondent does not believe that ethnicity has influenced the 2023 presidential election which represent 19%

Respondents with ages between 26-39 Fifty eight respondents agreed that ethnicity influenced the 2023 presidential election which represent 19% while thirty two respondents (32) which represent thirty percent (30%) does not believe that ethnicity has influenced the 2023 presidential election.

Those respondents with ages between forty and above, one hundred and four respondents (104) which represent agreed that ethnicity has influenced the 2023 presidential election which represent (35%)

Table 2.1 Politics, religion, ethnicity vs National Development

Age	**Yes**	**No**	**Percentage**
18-25	40 (13%)	18 (6%)	19%
26-29	74 (25%)	16 (5%)	30%

40-above	122 (41%)	30 (10%)	51%
Total	**236**	**64**	**100%**

Table 2.1 above reveals that 40 respondents representing 13% with ages between 18-25 says politics of religion and ethnicity have negative impact on national development while eighteen (18) respondents representing 6% says politics of religion ethnicity and has no negative effect on national development.

Respondents with ages between 26-29 seventy four representing 25% agreed that politics of religion ethnicity have negative effect on national development while sixteen respondents representing 5% did not agree that politics of religion and ethnicity have negative effect on national development

Data Interpretation

According to the information provided in table 1.1 it is a clear fact that majority of the respondents agreed that religion has played a significant role in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Findings on Table 1.2 indicates that elderly respondents ages between 40-and above have the highest percentage of those who believed that ethnicity has played a significant role in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election

My findings on in table 2.1 shows that majority of the respondents especially those between the ages of 26-29 and 40- above agreed that politics of religion ethnicity have negative effect on Nigeria National development.

Discussion

According to the first aim of this study, ethnicity has a significant and detrimental effect on Nigeria's national development. Ethnicity has a significant negative effect on Nigeria national development multi-ethnic states are often prone to conflictual and competitive relationships as different groups struggle to control political power and other economic resources of the state.

Secondly the results showed that religion does have a significant and detrimental effects on Nigeria's national development. Religion in Nigeria act as a weapon for the commission of violence, according to Ngale (2008) and Ajaegbu (2012) which fuels ethnic awareness and solidarity, political power and socio-economic benefits, massive killings and the systematic destruction of lives and property of those who are considered to be infidels or who commit allegiance to another religion. Religion terrorism in Nigeria poses a significant threat to national growth, as shown by northern Nigeria, where economic and social activities in some of the country's most volatile states, Yobe and Borno, have almost been halted by the flow of killings , destruction of basic means of livelihood for the people and the truncation of foreign and local investment.

Lastly the study showed that politics does have a significant and detrimental effect on national growth in Nigeria

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to this report ethnicity faith and politics as practice in in Nigeria have stifled the country's integration and development, as centrifugal tensions, resource management and self-determination, ethnicity base politics and religious cleavages have enveloped national growth.

The Nigerian national development process has faced challenges from ethnicity faith and politics. These political dynamics have weakened and hampered the establishment of the national structures that are essential to success. The study has shown that ethnicity faith and politics have a negative effect on Nigerian economic growth as a whole. This is sequel to the rise of ethnic chauvinism, ethnic politics political disorientation, ethnic awareness, ethnic sentiment, religious bigotry and religious fanaticism in Nigeria if Nigeria is to see the greatest growth it must have a supra-national consciousness and it must shift their national value away from their ethnic and regional cum religious groups to a new Nigerian nation.

This does not in any way imply a policy that denies Nigeria's socio-cultural or ethnic roots, but all Nigerians must contribute to the development of a single nation that include all ethnicities (majorities, minorities and sub-minorities alike), taking advantage of our multi-culturalism, multi-religiosity and multiple identities

If we are to exist as nation due consideration must be given to the plurality of our ethnic identities in which case, the values of federalism must be respected, political power must be distributed equitably among the constituent ethno cultural groups and resources for growth. The nation needs a zealous leadership that places the people at the centre of a political project without resorting to ethnic chauvinism and sees the acquisition of political power as not a goal it self but a means to ensure the people collective well-being regardless of their ethnic origin.

Leaders of different religious organization and their followers are encourage to embrace dialogue tolerance and admiration for one another as well as the tents of their faith which promote peaceful co-existence love and brotherhood of all man kings. The content and structure of the Nigerian constitution should be strictly applied practiced and utilized as provide. This will go along way to strengthen and empower the potency of government in the act of governance in Nigeria.

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