

**POLITICS OF FAITH: RELIGION/RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE
ON VOTER'S BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF EDO**

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
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JANUARY, 2023

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this project work was carried out by the undersigned, hereby certify that this work was carried out by **CHILAKA JUDAH CHILAKA** with Matriculation number: **SSC1708120** of the Department of Political Science, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in political Science (BSc.)

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work to God almighty for his inspiration and guidance throughout my stay in the University of Benin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to almighty God for his infinite mercy, grace and love towards me, for turning my dreams into reality. I am profoundly grateful to my project supervisor Prof. A.I Otohile who took time and pains to read through make necessary corrections and made it possible for me to complete this research. Also, to my lovely parents; Mr & Mrs Emmanuel and Mary Chilaka for their love, care, support, moral advice and encouragement which have made my academic pursuit at this level a success and also contributed to my great achievement in life. I will not fail to acknowledge my sisters; Priscilla Chilaka, Evangelista Chilaka, Christvine Chilaka; I love you all.

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ABSTRACT

Politicizing religion has been a topic of contention, with some arguing that doing so undermines the fundamental purpose of faith or God's creation. Religion has a significant impact on people's lives and choices all around the country. It has far-reaching consequences, influencing not only interpersonal interactions but also style, food, and political leanings. As a result of the intertwined nature of faith and civic engagement, every person has the opportunity to effect positive change in the world. Religion has an effect on many facets of modern society, including politics. The study's goals were to determine how religious values and beliefs shape the choices, indecisions, and interactions of individuals and faith-based organizations in a pluralized economic and political state like Nigeria; to analyze how religious movements and religion affect the relationships between states and societies; and determine how religious movements and religion shape voter behavior during and after periodic elections. Over the course of the research, 150 participants filled out questionnaires to provide quantitative data for the study. The study found that the interplay of religion and government in Nigeria is exceptionally complicated. This is because the majority of the population in Nigeria's two largest ethnic regions (the North and the West) adheres to Islam and the majority of the Igbo and the south-south population adheres to Christianity. That is to say, both of the country's main faiths are widely practiced everywhere. As a result of this quirk, Nigeria can feel secure in its secular identity. However, religious pluralism and the politicization of religious issues have always been a challenge to Nigeria's secularity. An effective electoral democracy and a powerful, united nation cannot be built without first addressing the danger posed by ethnicity and ethnic bloc voting, as suggested by the study. To achieve this goal, efforts should be made to formulate a set of constitutionally-enshrined principles for nation-building. The road forward also requires teaching the population about religion and elections, and there must be a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of economic and infrastructure growth are shared fairly. It is important to promote religious tolerance and mutual understanding, especially among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditionalists.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

It's impossible to ignore the close connection between faith and public life. Though the precise function of religion in politics has been a matter of controversy, there is no denying the long-standing relationship between the two concepts. No one's moral standing can be determined by their religious beliefs. As a matter of fact, it is being used as a means of tyranny and dishonesty in Nigeria. Nigerians appear resigned to their lot in life, which may be exacerbated by the widespread poverty, illiteracy, and lack of political knowledge that plagues the country. The popular view that politics is a nasty game in which only dishonest, manipulative, and greedy individuals belong only fuels this view. There are millions of devout Nigerians, but the country's horrific crime rate, widespread property destruction, and lack of safety should come as no surprise. We cannot stress enough how crucial it is that Nigeria maintains political stability. Some Nigerians hold the view that religion and politics must remain intertwined; others advocate for keeping the two distinct to prevent religious extremism from permeating the political system. It's commonly believed that religion and politics are unrelated facets of human life.

There have been discussions on how religion is being politicized, with some claiming this defeats the very point of religion or God's creation. Across the country, religion plays a major role in shaping people's daily lives and decisions. It affects everything from interpersonal relationships to wardrobe choices to diet preferences to political leanings. The capacity for an individual to make a difference in society through political participation is made possible by the close relationship between religion and politics. Nigeria is home to roughly 200 million people, nearly evenly split between Christians and Muslims. One indicator of the magnitude of this divide is the fact that most Nigerians prefer to identify themselves by their religion rather than their country of origin, though this is not always the case. So, there is a growing blurring of lines between secularism, religion, and politics.

The nature of sectarian politics is such that it inevitably causes problems. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and its population is about split between the Christian and Muslim faiths. 5% of the population identified as religiously unaffiliated, a number that is steadily rising in Nigeria. Although the South is home to a larger Christian population than the

North, the North is where you'll find the vast majority of Nigeria's Muslims, the vast majority of whom adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam. The Pew Forum evaluated data from multiple sources in a report issued in 2010. A total of 36% of Nigerians claimed Christian faith, 38% claimed Muslim faith, and 26% claimed no religion at all in the country's 1963 census. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data from 2008 shows that Islam accounts for 53% of the population, Christianity for 45%, and other religions for 2%. The Afro-barometer survey from 2008 revealed that Christianity made up 50%, Islam 49%, and other religions 1%. After demonstrating the existence of a diverse and complex religious makeup in Nigeria, the study will now briefly analyze the history, characteristics, and influences of the three primary religions in the country: Islam, Christianity, and Traditional Religion.

ISLAM

Nigeria is home to one of the most sizable communities of Muslims in all of West Africa. The religion of Islam was brought to Northern Nigeria as early as the 11th century, and by the 16th century, it had been firmly established in the region's major capitals before expanding out into the surrounding farmland and uplands of the middle belt. Shehu Uthman dan Fodio founded a government in northern Nigeria that was based on Islamic principles prior to the entrance of colonial forces. As a consequence of this, the British government established an indirect form of rule in Northern Nigeria by utilizing the framework of the existing government. During Mansa Musa's reign over the Mali Empire, Islam also made its way to portions of the south-western Yoruba-speaking world. The Yoruba people usually referred to Islam as "Esin-mali" or "Esin-mole," both of which mean "religion from Mali." This name for Islam originated in Mali. There is a sizeable minority of Muslims in Nigeria who adhere to the Shafi Madhab, despite the fact that the vast majority of Muslims in the country are Sunnis who follow the Maliki School of law.

There is often a sizeable number of Sunni Muslims in Sufi brotherhoods. The Qadriyya, Tijaniyyah, and IorMouride movements are the ones that the majority of Sufis adhere to. The proliferation of different Islamic sects in Nigeria has contributed to the country's Islam being a varied religion. Notable instances include the Quraniyoon group, the Ahmadiyya movement, the Shia movement, and various regional Islamic sects with restricted spread. Ousmane (1994) (1994)

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is one of the three primary religions practiced in Nigeria, and the country boasts the highest percentage of Christian inhabitants of any country in all of Africa. According to a recent poll that was carried out in 2011, more than half (51.6% to be exact) of Nigerians identify as Christians. (Religion and public life project 2019, conducted by the Pew Research Center) 24.8% of all Christians consider themselves to be Catholic, 74.1% to be Protestant, 0.9% to belong to other Christian denominations, and a very small percentage consider themselves to be Orthodox Christians. The highest concentrations of Christians are located in the south-eastern, southwestern, southern-southern, and middle-belt regions, respectively. The majority of missionaries did not come in the region until the 19th century, with the exception of Benin and Warri, both of which were converted to Christianity by the Portuguese as early as the 15th century. As was the case in other areas of the African continent, Roman Catholics and Anglicans had a tendency to establish regions of hegemony in Southern Nigeria. This was also the case in other parts of the continent.

TRADITIONAL RELIGION

In spite of the fact that it coexists with the dominant religious group, the traditional belief system is still able to exert a significant amount of effect on the morality and ethics of a significant portion of the community. In Yoruba land and the city-states that surround it, a more traditional way of life continues to be practiced. This way of life expresses a theology that links local beliefs to a central citadel government and its sovereignty over a hinterland of communities through the monarch: the seat of the king (the Oba) is responsible for the welfare of its jurisdiction in exchange for confirmation of the legitimacy of the Oba's rule over his subjects. Seasonal carnivals provide a spectacle for "tourist," which not only increases regional output but also guarantees access to fertile land and people and ensures that fertility will continue in perpetuity. In 1988, Adeleye presented a number of alternative religions, including atheism, Hinduism, the Grail movement, and the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity. Religion has a huge influence on the day-to-day lives of residents all across the country; it most strongly affects the ways in which we interact with one another, as well as the decisions we make about our dress, food, and political affiliations. To put it another way, religion and politics are inextricably linked, and this affords individuals the opportunity to influence public policy in accordance with their worldviews by seeking elective office. As a direct consequence of this, there is an increasing degree of mixing that occurs both openly and covertly in the realms of politics, secularism, and

religion. The phenomena of religion has evolved into an essential part of daily life in Nigeria. It had progressed to the point where it was essential to the political dialogue. The influence of religion is not limited to the realm of politics; rather, it permeates nearly every sphere of human existence. Political power has an effect not only on economic prosperity and social cohesion but also on educational advancement and the psychological makeup of a society. Because of this, politics and religion have been able to effectively complement one another ever since the birth of Nigeria's three primary religions. The Divine was cast in the role of religion, while humanity were the ones to play the political roles. In addition, the success of both politics and religion has historically rested not only on the sustaining of their respective principles and tenets, but also on the intervention of the Divine in the affairs of humankind. Many in the field of political science believe that humans are inherently political beings. This indicates that both politics and religion are necessary parts of our day-to-day existence. As a direct result of the fact that we make use of both politics and religion in our day-to-day lives, we have a propensity to view both of these realms through a political lens. As a consequence of this, the phrase "politicization of religion" is the most accurate way to define Nigerian politics. When you combine the two, you make politics more immoral, and you cause religion to lose some of its purity. This reality is reflected in the postcolonial state structure of Nigeria, specifically in the manner in which a self-centered, fractured political class was able to seize and maintain control of state authority while strategically dividing the populace and extending its hold on resources and authority in the country's developing capitalist system. This reality is reflected in the way in which a self-centered, fractured political class was able to seize and maintain control of state authority. For example, after Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the premier of Northern Nigeria, began a "official" campaign to "Islamize" the north and eventually spread Islam to other areas. This campaign's goal was to eventually spread Islam to other regions. This push has given many people, particularly Christians and adherents of African Traditional Religions, apprehension regarding the imminent annihilation of their own religious traditions (ATRs). It has been observed that politicians openly promote religious and sectarian sentiments while they are running for office.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

These days, religious beliefs are taken quite seriously in Nigerian politics. With the largest population in West Africa, this nation also has a wide range of faiths, from indigenous African practices to the Christian and Muslim faiths. These faiths also play a role in the nation's politics. In the Nigerian political system, the study of how religion influences people's decisions at the polls is an important area of inquiry. To a large extent, Nigeria's political behavior is influenced by the country's religious variety and divisiveness. It would be ideal if citizens voted for and selected their leaders not on the basis of their personal preferences but on the basis of their demonstrated leadership abilities and social acceptability. Prior to the 2015 election, Seyi John and a statistician colleague conducted a study that found that respondents' religious and ethnic identities accounted for 80% of their voting preferences. About 60% of Christians voted for Buhari, whereas 95% of Muslims did. Serious outbreaks of conflict between Christians and Muslims in the 1980s occurred in Kafanchan, Southern Kaduna State, a border area between the two religions. Extreme leaders were able to mobilize a young, educated group of people who feared the country would be unable to protect their religious group.

The leaders successfully alienated their following through speeches and public actions. Recent actions taken by some of these groups have led to the destruction of government buildings that are seen as vestiges of western culture or as having been modeled after them. This has resulted in the loss of life and property. Clashes between Christians and Muslims were infrequent, but tensions did grow as each religion became more radical. In October 1982, extremist Muslims in Kano used violence to stop the Anglican House Church from expanding because they perceived it as a threat to the nearby mosque, despite the fact that the church had existed in the area for forty years prior to the construction of the mosque. A rising reliance on the market and a lack of agreement on how to improve social injustice and poverty pushed moral ideals and hopes for mankind into the private arena of one's personal ethics or religious beliefs. Recently, religious conflicts have gotten more heated, reflecting or crossing with existing and – due to rising inequality — widening societal chasms.

This recent intensification has had important political and developmental ramifications, even though religion has frequently informed and affected politics throughout this age, both in mostly secular Europe and beyond. Without a doubt, Nigeria is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. At over 186 million people, Nigeria dominates the list of most populated Black countries and boasts the most ethnic groups (over 250) in Worldometers' 2015 data. Even

with these characteristics, the political scene in the country is dominated by the Yoruba, the Hausa, and the Igbo. The additional groups are marginalized, however. Major ethnic groups gaining dominance over minorities is a cause for concern, and this is exacerbated by the presence of smaller, less powerful groups within the larger, more powerful groups. Therefore, these ethnic groups and subgroups engage in political activity to either ensure that the majority continues to dominate or to prevent the minority from doing so. Thus, the political divide between Christian and Muslim communities has deepened due to the theological gulf between Islam and Christianity, as well as the (western) secularism that is essentially rooted from Christian traditions. Because of the high concentrations of Christians and Muslims in many African countries, the continent finds itself at the core of this political and theological clash. Religion has had a profound impact on Nigerian culture.

Whether overt or covert, religion has always played a role in Nigerian elections, therefore it is clear that it has always played a key role in all phases. It is a common misconception that religion's sole aim is to facilitate interaction with the supernatural, cosmic forces, and god expression. Marriage, families, schools, and businesses are just few of the many aspects of society that are influenced by religion.

The purpose of this research is to trace and discuss the history of Nigerian elections and to explore how religion has influenced the practice of elections in Nigeria.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study aims at interrogating the influence of religion in the voting behavior of the Nigerian electorates using Edo state as a case study representative of the larger population. The specific objectives of this study will include;

1. To ascertain ways in which religious values and beliefs drive the actions, inactions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organizations in a pluralized economic and political state such as Nigeria.
2. To examine how religious movements and religion influence the relationships between states and societies.
3. To ascertain ways in which religion and religious movements inform voter behavior during and after periodical elections.
4. To identify other factors apart from religion that influence people's decision during elections.

5. To identify the role of violence in Nigeria's religious scene.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research study seeks to address the following questions:

1. How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions, inactions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organizations in a pluralized economic and political state such as Nigeria?
2. Does religious movements and religion influence the relationships between states and societies?
3. How does religion and religious movements inform voter behavior during and after periodical elections?
4. Are there other factors apart from religion that influence people's decision during elections?
5. Are violence inherent in the Nigerian religious scene or is it a means to an end?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

This research study is based on the following hypothesis which will be tested in the course of this study

1. H_0 (Null hypothesis) - There is no significant relationship between religion or religious movement and voting behavior of citizens in Nigeria.
 H_R (Research hypothesis) – There is a significant relationship between religion or religious movement and voting behavior of citizens in Nigeria.
2. H_0 - There is no significant relationship between membership of religious groups and participation in voting activities.
 H_R - There is a significant relationship between membership of religious groups and participation in voting activities.
3. H_0 - There is no significant relationship between Religion/ religious sentiments and inter – ethnic and tribal crisis in Nigeria.
 H_R - There is a significant relationship between Religion/religious sentiments and inter-ethnic and tribal crisis in Nigeria.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following are the significance of this research study:

1. The outcome of this study will educate the general public on the impact of religious sentimentality on politics and choice of leaders.
2. This research will also serve as a bridge to the gaps which exist in knowledge base.
3. It will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study on the politics of faith will examine the amount of influence exerted by Religion on politics and governance in relation to voter's behavior during elections in Nigeria. The scope of the study however is limited to Edo state.

1.7.1 PROBABLE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Sensitivity: Due to the sensitivity of the nature of the study, respondents may not be able to respond freely and without bias to questions asked. This may in turn affect the credibility of the research itself.
- Time constraint: The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study alongside academic work. This subsequently would cut down on the time devoted for this research work.
- Financial constraint: Because the researcher is a student, insufficient funds will tend to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

1.8 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

ELECTION: An election is one of the cardinal features of democracy. It is the process through which "individuals are openly and methodically chosen to represent a body or community in a larger entity or government" (Nnadozie 2007, 45–73).

RELIGION: According to Cox (1996, 1-4), religion has been defined: Theologically: a belief in God and spiritual beings, as the life of God in the human soul and as an awesome and attractive mystery.

ETHNICITY: Ethnicity is a noun that refers to an affiliation resulting from racial or cultural ties. It is a socially defined category of people who relate to each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF WORK

This study is organized into five chapters.

- Chapter One introduces the study and gives a description of the background to the study. It highlights the research problem, the aims and objectives of the study, significant of the study, scope and operational definitions of terms.
- Chapter Two dwells on a review of the literature and the theoretical framework of the study. It centres essentially on previous and existing work on politics of faith, religion and religious movement and how it influences voter's behavior in elections. It identifies the inherent gap in the literatures and the likely contribution of the present study. Here emphasis will be made on the historical background; influence of religion in elections; will be examined in this chapter.
- Chapter Three entrenched on the Research Methodology that was adopted in this study; it also explained the Research Designed, Method of Data Collection and Research instrument was explained in this Chapter.
- Chapter four focuses on the presentation and analysis of research data. Basically, this chapter is divided into three sub-sections namely: data presentation, hypothesis testing, and data analysis cum research findings.
- Chapter 5 is the summary, recommendation and conclusion of the study. Area uncovered in this research was identified; suggestions, recommendations and bibliography will be given for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, home to over 150 million people, is one of the most populous and politically influential countries in Africa. The strong interaction between the government, religion, and religious groups lends credence to the widespread belief that Nigeria is not a secular state (FBOs). The connection between the Nigerian government and Muslim and Christian organizations (FBOs) is often murky, as demonstrated by case studies from the states of Anambra, Kano, and Oyo. Both of the world's largest faiths provide moral frameworks for voicing demands and criticisms of the state, but they also contest state-provided institutions of common interest. In response to Muslim concerns about secular law, for instance, Sharia criminal law has been implemented. It's also important to note that religious leaders, like any other kind of authority, can get involved in patronage politics. Sixth Annual African Economic and Social Survey

As a corollary, the patterns of inclusion and exclusion for religious organizations and FBOs are strongly related to patterns of inclusion and exclusion based on linguistic, ethnic, and regional identity, as well as intra-Nigerian conflicts to restrict the participation of particular groups through the requirement of "indigeneity" at the level of the Federation's states. As a result, the state's relationship with various FBOs and religious groups varies widely and is often unfair. For example, in some states, FBOs are prohibited from participating in local politics while in others, they are given preferential treatment. Religion-based disputes often involve struggles for power and control over other resources, such as land or the government's budget or a community's radio or television station. Given that religious diversity often reflects diversity in markers of group identity—including language, education, historical rivalry, ethnicity, and sometimes even age and gender—religious conflict is inextricably intertwined with the other sorts of antagonism that rule Nigerian local politics.

Unfair treatment by the state breeds mistrust among religious communities, and people's fears of discrimination based on their faith or other identities are likely to prompt retaliatory acts on a variety of fronts, further splintering society. Poverty and development, as well as the sway of patrimonial politics and "indemnity," must be addressed if religious conflict is to be mitigated.

All state governments work closely with some religious groups and FBOs, which opens the door for intimate interaction, negotiation, and imitation. This has allowed some religious groups and FBOs to conduct in-depth discussions with the government and with one another. When they interact, it's like a laboratory for how well religion and the state get along.

Although the specific function of religion in politics has been a matter of heated discussion, the two concepts have always been intertwined (Falana, 2010). People in Nigeria appear to be accepting with their current situation, which is likely exacerbated by the fact that the vast majority of them are either poor or uneducated and hence unable to effectively participate in politics. It doesn't help that many people view politics as a low-road activity, in which only dishonest, manipulative, and materialistic types have a place. There are millions of religious individuals in Nigeria, but the country's horrific crime rate, widespread property destruction, and general lack of safety should not be surprising.

2.1 THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION AND POLITICS IN COLONIAL NIGERIA

Nigeria's religious landscape is complicated by the country's historical exposure to Islam via trans-Saharan trade and the success of Christian missionary business in many southern sections of the country. The acceptance of these two world religions is intimately tied to historical links and common ethnicity, despite the fact that religious and ethno-regional identity are intertwined and often support each other. Even though Islam had been practiced in pre-colonial Hausa cities for centuries, many other Northern groups converted to Islam in the wake of the Islamic Jihad under Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817), which incorporated most of northern and central Nigeria into a new Caliphate with the exception of the preexisting, and much older, Islamic Kingdom of Borno. There are two major groups of Nigerians who have converted to Islam: the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria, who converted because of their ties to Malian commercial communities, and the people of Nigeria's central belt (cf. peel,1996, p.610), who converted en masse during the colonial era and have continued to do so since independence.

Educated African elite, made up of freed and returned slaves as well as indigenous converts, emerged in nineteenth-century port cities like Lagos when the trans-Atlantic slave trade was abolished. Being a far more recent immigrant to the region than Islam, Christianity has established a different set of power relations. For a long time, Christians made up the majority of

Nigeria's upper-class because of the church's rapid expansion and the widespread availability of missionary training. There is as much variety in Nigeria's Christian population as there is in Islam's. In spite of the fact that Nigerian Pentecostal groups have made impressive inroads into the Igbo-speaking South-East in the twenty years prior to this study, Roman Catholicism continues to be the dominant religion in this area. The Yoruba-speaking South-West has almost as much religious diversity as the rest of the country, although the rest of the South is dominated by protestant faiths, especially Pentecostal ones. It's important to note that the Hausa converts, along with other sizable Christian communities in the North, are keen on setting themselves apart from the majority Hausa people and the power dynamics associated with the Caliphate (cfkasfelt, 2003). Practically every city in northern Nigeria has a Christian community made up of migrants or descendants of migrants from the South, just as many southern Nigerian cities have Muslim groups.

Nigeria's Muslim and Christian populations have historically been at odds, and both colonial and postcolonial governments have attempted to heal the rifts in a variety of methods. Northern Nigeria was ruled during much of the colonial era by the Uthmanian Caliphate and the kingdom of Borno, albeit indirectly and through the Caliphate's structures and with British oversight. Consequently, traditional officials presided over local administration, which was officially sanctioned by both tradition and Islam. Islam also formed the basis for local government, even though secular considerations directed many aspects of it. People typically turned to Sharia courts, which had existed previous to colonial control, for the mediation and resolution of personal disputes. Before the year of independence in 1960, there was no codified, secular criminal law.

The colonial state's devotion to the Caliphate's institutional structure had an impact on the religious and educational politics of Northern Nigeria. Because missionary work was illegal in many Northern areas, it was difficult for educated elite to emerge to question the Emirs or local Muslim traditions. Since the end of colonial control, northern Nigerian politics have been dominated by the region's preexisting urban (trade) elites and local nobles. While Islam was profoundly anchored in the traditional sector of the Nigerian state, Christianity was often linked with modernisation, especially in the south. Christianity had a significant impact on the expansion of education because most missions provided schools and, later, university education.

The rapid growth of literacy paved the way for the emergence of a professional class in urban areas, with educated men and women working in fields like catechizing, clerking, and teaching. Rapidly absorbing and reshaping the local elite's attempts toward self-determination, this movement gained momentum swiftly. Educated southerners, who had firsthand experience with racial discrimination in colonial administration, banking practices, and even mission churches, would go on to lead Nigeria's anti-colonial struggle (Nigerian Institute for social and Economic Research 2009)

2.2 THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND POLITICS IN POSTCOLONIAL NIGERIA

In 1960, after the country's independence was finally achieved, Nigeria declared itself a secular republic. Despite the fact that the independence movement was divided along ethnic lines, southern Nigerians, who are overwhelmingly Christians with the exception of the south-west, hoped for national cohesion and growth in keeping with Western concepts of modernization, democratization, and meritocracy. But many Muslim northern Nigerian leaders were leery about complete political independence. One theory is that the northerners were afraid of being overthrown by the south when Nigeria gained its independence because of the south's greater literacy rate.

That's why Islamic schools became a hot topic among America's Muslim population. Religion's impact on Nigerian politics was generally seen as less problematic than that of ethnicity and regionalism, despite playing a significant role in shaping political competition in the early post-colonial years and in the conflicts that triggered the first military coup in 1966 and the civil war in the years 1967-1970. One area where post-war reforms attempted to rebuild the nation was in the realm of education, with the goal of bringing together the country's Christian and Muslim communities. The military government led by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo began reforms after the South-east civil war and completed them in 1976, encouraging the Nigerian state governments to take over schools and hospitals owned by religious organizations in an effort to reduce inequality, particularly the educational gap between Muslims and Christians (Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu, 2001). Since 1960, a Sharia court of appeal has presided over civil disputes involving Muslims in the country's Northern region. Although various northern States established their own courts of Appeal once the region was partitioned into states, the legal landscape of northern Nigeria remained divided due to the closure of this Court of Appeal. There were cries for the establishment of a Federal Sharia court of Appeal during the period of

constitutional revisions that preceded the return to civilian governance (1979–1983). (second republic). Although it would ensure the unity of the Muslim majority, Christians in Nigeria were afraid that the establishment of a federal institution focused with Sharia law would significantly expand Muslim legal power over the state. A resolution was reached at the time, but the issue has been brought up for discussion again and again. In the mid-1980s, when the military retook control of Nigeria, the country's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) became widely known, further dividing Christians and Muslims. The subsequent military governments did little to end the religious conflict.

It's true that Nigerians have a lot of experience writing constitutions (the country has had nine constitutions since the first [Clifford] constitution in 1922), but the one presided over by the Obasanjo administration is somewhat ambiguous on the question of religion's place in government. According to Article 10 of Nigeria's constitution from 1999, the government of the Federation of the State shall not establish any religion as the State religion (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

However, Section 38(1) stipulates that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, opinion, and religion, including the freedom to worship God and teach and practice one's faith in any setting (publicly or privately) and the freedom to alter one's religious or believe affiliation.

Conflicts between different communities and religions have resulted in the deaths of almost 10,000 people since May 1992. Most of the fatalities occurred in the states of Plateau, Benue, Taraba, and Borno. Since 2001, both the frequency and severity of acts of violence between Christians and Muslims have increased. Religion influences politics to the extent that people choose leaders who share their values even if they aren't the best choice for the job. This pattern was especially evident in the South and East. The Catholic clergy in the state of Anambra, for instance, openly urged its parishioners to vote for Peter Obi (the former Governor) because of his religious beliefs. As he puts it, "he always gripped his chaplet tightly in his hands to demonstrate to them that he was surely one of them," thus the Catholic devout naturally took to him (Okafor, 2011).

Similarly, Dr. Danladi Sankara, a former senator for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) from the Jigawa Northwest Senatorial constituency, has spoken out against what he deems a "religious undertone" in the 2011 presidential elections. Sankara acted as the returning agent for

Jonathan and Sambo in Jigawa state during the election. According to him, the Jigawa opposition parties are colluding to brainwash the locals into voting for the Muslim candidate. Former CPC candidate and current President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) received 665,994 votes in Jigawa state in the 2011 presidential election, easily defeating People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate and former President of Nigeria Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (fmr), who received 419,252 votes. At the INEC headquarters in Dutse, Professor Jibrilla D. Amin, Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Dutse, declared that 1,214,774 votes had been cast, with 1,140,776 of those votes being legitimate in the state's presidential election. He contends that religious and ethnic identities are irrelevant in Nigerian party politics, making the constitution, and not the Bible or any other Holy Book, the country's highest law (Furtune News, 2011).

Though Islam and Christianity have emerged as major political forces in Nigeria, African Traditional Religion has not been pushed to the sidelines. It is common practice for Christian and Muslim politicians to meet with ATR priests behind closed doors in order to make secret political and business agreements. However, ATR is not heavily involved in the formulation of official policies and programs (Afolabi: 2015)

2.2.1 CONCEPT OF RELIGION

Religion is one of humanity's most misrepresented aspects. Thus, religion must be defined. Nearly everyone believes they understand religion. It's difficult, if not impossible, to define religion. Scholars have developed five broad definitions of phenomenology. Religion is defined by Cox (1996): From a sociological standpoint, belief in God and other spiritual entities as the divine spark within each person and the source of wonder and enticement is "the opiate of the people" and "values preservation" (Cox 1996).

These explanations are inadequate. The underpinning for determining each was people's lived experiences and religious perspectives. The sociological term, which calls religion "the opiate of the masses," is closest to Nigerian politicians' use of religion as a political tool. Except for "religion as the people's opium," my definition includes everything above. According to this study, religion is the belief in a transcendent and immanent being or Force that gives us power and compels us to live in harmony with the Creator and the Created. Using this notion, we can examine whether religion has a position in electoral politics. This question has been answered poorly by many. Since two prominent academics have long advocated for religion's withdrawal from public life, this is neither surprising nor novel. Sigmund Freud dubbed it "infant neurosis,"

while Karl Marx called religion "opium of the people." Politics and religion should not mix, according to Wole Soyinka (Nigerian Guardian, March 3, 2009). He claims that religious fanaticism threatens emerging nations and requires more than a post office box. Since organized religion entered national politics, people have become more savage, bigoted, and unthinking. The destruction defies description. (The Nigerian Guardian, 2009) The way Nigerians (particularly politicians) have described religion in their practice of religion during politics/elections with violence, thuggery, death, devastation, and more makes it impossible to blame any Nigerian who answers negatively.

Religion appears to be inextricably linked to politics and elections. The author claims that individuals who say religion and politics are incompatible are hypocritical and possibly uneducated. Our political representatives and many Nigerians have misrepresented religious beliefs and practices. Violence, intimidation, harassment, stuffing voting boxes, stealing and purchasing votes, interrupting polls, the absence of electoral officers, and harassing election monitors are not religious.

Religion is real, long-lasting, and crucial to human harmony (Isiramen 2010). It's rare to find a territory untainted by religion. Religion has dominated human discussion and activity since the beginning. Religion has dominated public life in Nigeria for centuries. This is reflected in our Constitution and political and electoral traditions. On occasion, Nigeria's government has asked religious leaders to guide the nation. Government and country will contradict themselves if they try to ban religion from public life.

2.3 RELIGION AND POLITICS

In recent decades, religion's significance in public discourse and political mobilization has expanded. Religion's emergence has coincided with several material and intellectual changes that have affected world politics. One such tendency is the decline of state socialism, which presented a viable ideological and political alternative to the socialist world and had significant practical implications beyond its borders. A new moral and political perspective was presented, and power brokers agreed that inequality should be eliminated. Since the 1980s, international and domestic politics have been dominated by ideological and practical responses to liberal capitalism's supposed success. Utopian philosophy is generally dismissed as irrelevant, and hopeful expectations for humankind's future are limited to market efficiency and institutions.

Global inequality, notably between North and South, has grown since the 1980s (Cornia and Court, 2001).

Market dependence and the lack of consensus on reducing social inequality and poverty have pushed moral concepts and hopes for mankind into the private arena of personal ethics or faith in many cases. Recent intensification of religious debates have had significant political and developmental consequences because they reflect or intersect with existing and – due to increasing inequality – growing social divisions, even though religion has often informed and influenced politics even during this era, both in predominantly secular Europe and beyond. Theological differences between Islam and Christianity and Western secularism, primarily inherited from Christianity, have intensified political differences between Muslim and Christian societies.

Due to its large Christian and Muslim populations, often in the same country, Africa is at the center of the political and theological conflict between Christians and Muslims. Muslim and Christian communities and organizations in many African countries are increasingly openly contesting the secular postcolonial state and expanding their activities into sectors of social provision intimately linked with the state but no longer guaranteed, such as education and health care (Soares and Otayek, 2007). Religion's effects on government structures are complex and often contradicting. Religious groups' political participation and service supply in locations where the state has failed threaten the state's ideology and practicality (Love, 2006). However, these efforts support essential government activities and help the state. Formal cooperation between state and religious bodies can be perceived as undemocratic and frightening by excluded groups, leading to further political and religious conflict (Philpott, 2007). Even the most qualified leaders are vulnerable to challenge due to most religious groups' idealistic ideas. Men in this position are qualified for the job, but they don't want it because they think politicians have great spiritual and sorcery capabilities that aren't worth the risk. This stance necessitates the hiring of unqualified candidates. Thankfully, most of these well-meaning folks only vote and don't run for office.

Due to the stigma, several religious groups are reluctant to get involved in politics. Voter registration, voting on Election Day, and electoral official participation are not their concerns because they have more essential things to do, including running for office. Since man is too small to understand another man's ideas, they wonder why mankind should take on God's

responsibilities. This faction believes that God, as the final arbitrator, should choose a leader, but they fail to recognize that in biblical times, the masses still turned out and lots were thrown, with God serving as the Independent National Electoral Commission. This causes political apathy, where people cease caring about politics and don't vote. In the most recent election, voter turnout was unusually low in the South, even though religion had nothing to do with it.

We see examples of local governments with 500,000 people, but only 250,000 votes were counted overall as was shared among the parties; if a party wins by getting a larger count of this number, would it be right to say the election was free and fair; if the remaining half had voted, would the winner still have been the majority's choice; political apathy, whether religiously based or not, creates a lot of problems, especially as the winner ends up being the Most Christians did not support the present president because they were from other faiths and felt that this would limit Christianity's progress.

Based on lineage or culture, ethnicity defines a person's group membership. It also refers to groups of individuals who share a history, culture, or country and have strong social ties. For decades, race definition and division have been debated. Religion, mythology, ritual, food, clothing style, ancestry, history, homeland, language, and dialect are all elements of culture, which is intimately linked to ethnicity. Ethnic groups usually split into smaller ethnic subgroups, which may or may not be recognized as independent ethnic groups depending on the authority. Language, religion, and culture are often shared among ethnic groups.

A common factor is faith in a higher power. In many multi-religious cultures, religion and political activity are inextricably linked. The amount to which a civilization is exploited varies drastically from culture to culture. According to Oguntola (2008), Nigerian religious and political institutions work well together. Religious beliefs were used to oppress the poor, according to the study. Despite their negative effects, religion and politics can benefit the state and its citizens. These benefits are unclear for a pluralistic community with multiple religions. Politics and religion can coexist in a religiously monolithic community. In a multiethnic, multi-religious nation, politicians favor unfavorable religious interactions. Politics and religion in Nigeria are valuable, according to Davidson (2011) for the open mind foundation.

The merging of politics and religion has not improved economic growth, standard of living, unemployment, consumption, infrastructure, or life and property security, according to him. Religion has become a political liability rather than a tool to moralize government. The

author cites Eso's work to warn against mixing religion and politics in Nigeria (2003). Religious fundamentalism in Nigeria is responsible for this voting attitude. Fundamentalism "longs for a tribal group rather than a brotherhood of man" (Okonkwo, 2018). It's dangerous to vote religiously. It indicates mindless voting that elects inept officials. Conservative religious voters tolerate politicians who don't meet their needs. Using one's voting power to promote one's religious beliefs creates political discord and unnecessary animosity between people of different faiths. African society is built on religion and ethnicity. It shapes its followers' minds, gives them purpose, and helps them understand the physical and ethereal worlds. It shields its members from physical and spiritual harm and instills in them a strong desire to defend the group.

The Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)

In an effort to ensure the unity of the Nigeria Muslims and to close all existing gap between differing Muslims in the North and South, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs was established. The council was founded in 1977 with Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, the sultan of Sokoto as the President and the Shehu of Borno as the deputy president. Its head quarter is located in Kaduna. The governing body of the council is made up of representatives from each state of the federation. This council is the only Muslim organization usually recognized to liaise with the Federal Government on Muslim affairs.

Aims and Objectives

1. To act as a forum for debate for all Nigerian Muslims.
2. To unify Muslim opinion on issues relating to legal and educational developments in the country.
3. To help promote Muslim consciousness and improve communication.
4. To provide a firm base for the future development of Islam (179, 1992, Farzan)
5. To determine the date of Muslims festivals and organize pilgrims for Hajj.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

The move towards ecumenism among Christians originally led to the formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria. The association was founded in 1976 with Cardinal Dominic Ekanem as the president and C.O. Williams, the Secretary (421, 2005, Nwanaju) [14]. Prior to

the formation of CAN, the Northern Christian Association (NCA) was the Christian organization existing in the North. It was formed in 1964 in response to the threat of Islamic expansionism and its political domination. Therefore, to have a unified body representing the Christian faith in Nigeria, NCA was changed to CAN in 1976 (Kukah, 1993).

Aims and Objectives

The Christian Association of Nigeria is a fellowship of Churches, working together to promote the glory of God by encouraging the growth and unity of the churches, and by helping them to salvation. Below are some of its objectives.

1. To serve as a basis of response to the unity of the Churches, especially as contained in Jesus' pastoral prayer: 'that they all may be one'.
2. To act as a liaison committee, by means of which its member church can consult together and when necessary, make common statements and take common action.
3. To be watch-dog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.
4. To propagate the Gospel.
5. To promote understanding among the various people and strata of society in Nigeria (Nwanaju, 2005).

2.3.1 THE CAN AND NSCIA IN NIGERIA POLITICS

It is clear from reading the mission statements that the CAN and the NSCIA serve the same function for Christians and Muslims respectively. However, the formation of these organizations significantly impacted the growth of Nigerian politics. A group of Muslim intellectuals sought a new identity for Islam in the 1970s and 1980s to boost Islam's reputation in the Muslim world. They started working to get Islamic law (Shariah) incorporated into the constitution. The Shariah is one of three legal systems in Nigeria, and its proponents say the constitution gives it too little weight (Islamic law, English law, and native law). In 1978, the Constituent Assembly voted to make the transition. During the hearing, the Shariah issue sparked heated debate. During debate, 93 Muslim parliamentarians walked out after failing to reach a consensus with Christian representatives over the provision of Shar'iah in the draft constitution (116, 1993, Kukah). However, due to the Military Government's intervention, a compromise

clause was formed, allowing for a Shar'iah court of appeal for states that desired it, though only in the narrow jurisdiction of personal status as outlined in subsection 1 of section 240. A new constitution was being drafted in 1988, and anti-Shariah sentiment was once again on the rise. At the convention, Christian delegates argued that Shariah clauses should be removed from the Nigerian constitution. As a result, hostilities escalated between proponents and detractors of Shariah law.

In 1999, Ahmed Yerima, governor of Zamfara state and member of the All-Nigerian People's Party, implemented Shar'iah law shortly after Nigeria's transition to democratic rule, citing the constitution's provision that "the house of assembly of a state shall have the power to make laws for peace, order, and good government of the state" (section 4, subsection 7). The thinking behind this move was that the ANPP would gain the image of the conservative Islamic doctrine-associated NPC and NPN, the two former ruling political parties of the North (51, 2012, Onapajo). As a result, the ANPP rose to prominence as the northern region's preferred alternative to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the country's current government (PDP).

With this shift in power, eleven states in the north have made Sharia law their principal legal code. Many Christians in the North interpreted this as the Muslim majority's latest attempt to limit their involvement in government. Thus, when the Kaduna state government, under the leadership of Ahmad Makarfi, approved the Shar'iah in 2000, the CAN warned all churches in the city to get ready for a massive demonstration. It was the belief of CAN that the campaign for Sharia in the northern states was part of a coordinated plot by Hausa Muslims to topple the government of Christian President Olusegun Obasanjo. Archbishop Ola Makinde, the Abuja CAN chapter's chairman, has stated that political Sharia's main objectives in Nigeria are to halt the expansion of Christianity in the North and to depose Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's government, whom the political Shar'iah apostles consider to be an infidel (52, 2012, Onapajo).

A theological crisis erupted after the CAN's protest, killing hundreds of people and causing millions of dollars' worth of damage. Another event that propelled the CAN and NSCIA into the limelight of Nigerian politics was the OIC saga. The "OIC" here refers to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Christian leaders in Nigeria, who were represented at the time by CAN, reacted angrily in 1985 when the Babangida administration formally registered Nigeria as a member. With its vocal opposition to Nigeria's membership in the OIC, CAN

exacerbated tensions in the political system, which it saw as an effort to Islamize the country and dilute the role of Christians in government and society. Statistics about the distribution of ministers, governors, parastatal CEOs, and directors in the Federal Ministry of Finance, among other institutions, are sometimes cited as proof of Muslim "domination" in Nigeria. The Muslim elites who consider themselves the rightful rulers of the country have been exposed as corrupt, disingenuous, egotistical, and inept, and they are hence to blame for the country's problems.

2.3.2 THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN LONG-TERM POLITICAL PROGRESS

The ability of religion to instil high morals, sense of duty, selfless service, public accountability, respect for human life, love of neighbour, sense of humanity, abhorrence of violence, love for peace, contentment with what one can legitimately have, corruption, justice, etc. in citizens and leaders is a key reason why religion can contribute to long-term political development (Omoregbe, 2003). If a religion can't raise people's moral standards, it's failing at its core mission and has no business being involved in politics or helping a country prosper. Leaders and followers who are religiously committed are very helpful to the political process. Regardless of one's religious affiliation, one can look to the defining ideals and practices of that faith's teachings to discover a natural equilibrium for human conduct.

Here we see how religious teachings can form the bedrock of a society free from violence and full of opportunity. Religion may also be a uniting factor in political development because it influences every part of human existence and serves as the basis for humanity. More interfaith dialogue can lead to more public acceptance of other faiths. Interfaith dialogue serves as a platform for religious leaders to share their beliefs with the general population. Religious leaders must protect their followers from the kind of hypocritical teaching that undermines political stability and social peace. For this reason, open dialogue is crucial to resolving religious conflicts and eliminating ignorance. Politicians should always be guided by their faith and keep the promise they made when they ran for office. That's great because, as we've shown, religion is value-driven, and when its adherents get involved in politics, the state benefits inexorably. Because religious fanatics will use whatever methods, legitimate or not, to ensure that their adherents are elected or appointed to positions of power in the name of their faith, sectarian tendencies give a helpful lens through which to view the harmful consequences. A person

holding this opinion places a higher priority on their own personal views and values than on any other aspect of life (New York Times, 2005).

2.4 THE IDEA OF ETHNICITY

When it comes to Africa's many different peoples, Okwudiba Nnoli is the man in the know. According to him, ethnicity is a social phenomenon that arises through the interactions of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Communities serve as useful dividing borders for most ethnic groups. It's likely that shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds help bring people together (Nnoli, 1980). In his article "Ethnicity is the Foundation of African Society," Mudasiru (2015) argues that people's ethnicity determines their socialization and the way they arrange their economic, cultural, and political life. African culture is important because it gives the African a sense of purpose, insight, and agency by defining his universe and shaping his worldview. In spite of the fact that westernization and cultural adulteration have only intensified since colonial times, being African remains important to every African's sense of self.

Mudasiru emphasizes African origin in a few key ways. One major advantage is that everybody in the group, even the leader, is safe. As a people, an ethnic group's members feel more secure and are more ready to take a stand for their freedom and existence when they are united. Confidence like this gives societies a feeling of purpose and stability. Second, Africans place a premium on preserving their unique cultural identities because of the shared history and ancestry they share with other Africans. Finally, a shared language is another another means by which a people's ethnicity serves to set them apart from others. Lastly, people's shared ethnic histories can bring them together in times of conflict or when they're searching for a feeling of family, community, and belonging (Mudasiru, 2015). It's important to note that a group's ethnicity may influence how they vote. The rate of voter turnout is significantly affected by racial background. One step in this way is emphasizing the importance of group loyalty. So, it's important to learn about how ethnicity may affect voters' choices.

It is more important in today's multicultural culture to have a common past with one's ethnic group. The term "ethnicity," like many others in the social sciences, has multiple meanings. It is "based on the idea that a collective group of people have its roots in shared genealogy, tradition, religion, culture, nationality, language, and a place," writes Afkhami (2012, p. 6), and this is what "ethnicity displays as a collective identity." "Ethnicity," as defined by

Nnoli (1978, p. 5), is a social phenomena that arises through the interaction of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. These criteria lead us to conclude that social-cultural factors such as lineal ancestry, cultural traditions, and a feeling of national identity are crucial in determining what constitutes an ethnic group.

Therefore, it follows that there must be a great deal of racial diversity in order for there to be ethnic groups. An extreme viewpoint is held by those like Enloe (1978, p. 33), who see ethnicity as "an as unreal, an artificial basis of identification and collective organization, conjured up by outsiders looking for an effective weapon of political and economic supremacy." According to Azeez (2009, p. 2), affluent groups will use ethnicity to maintain their status quo, while marginalized groups would use it to push for political change. Ethnicity, according to Oladiran (2013, p. 698), is also inevitable whenever a group of people, of any size and with any number of distinguishing cultural and linguistic traits, employs a sense of oneness as a medium through which to communicate with other groups (Edlyne 2000 cited in Oladiran, 2013 p. 698). Ethnicity, in a nutshell, can be defined as the feeling of unity that comes from sharing a common history, culture, language, and customs with a certain group of people.

2.4.1 VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Voting is a powerful tool for citizens to exercise their democratic rights and influence the political process in a representative democracy. It's the most unique political weapon people have to demand that their government fulfil their wants. To participate in politics, voting is the primary method, and Gordon (1998) noted that the study of voting behaviour is one of the most advanced sub-fields of political science. Thus, the phrase "voting behaviour" is used to describe the influences that lead individuals or groups to support particular political parties or candidates (UK Essays 2013). It can also be used to define the type of voting behaviour that sheds light on the thought processes of public policymakers or individual voters.

2.4.2 CHRONOLOGY OF ETHNIC POLITICS AND ELECTION OUTCOMES IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, ethnic politics may be traced back to the founding of political parties and party politics under the Clifford Constitution of 1922. The Nigerian National Democratic Party was thus the pioneering political organization in Nigeria (NNDP). Following this, the newly created political parties based much of their ideology on racial and cultural differences. This is

when ethnic politics took hold and spread across the country, says Oladiran (2013, p. 699). In the years leading up to Nigeria's independence, ethnic identities were crucial to the formation of political parties. The most powerful political parties in the years running up to independence and the early years of the First Republic had their origins in a variety of different ethnic and cultural communities. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) under Sir Ahmadu Bello grew out of the Hausa socio-cultural group Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe helmed the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC), afterwards renamed the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (association of the people of the north).

Further, Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group sprang from the Yoruba social and cultural organization Egbe Omo Oduduwa (the association of the descendants of Oduduwa, the mythical ancestors of the Yoruba). It was found that the majority of Nigeria's National Party supporters lived in the country's northern areas. The western United States also hosted the majority of Action Group members. The Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) of Aminu Kano was one of many political parties in Nigeria at the time, along with Joseph Tarka's United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), the Bornu Youth Movement (BYM), and the Dynamic Party (DP). Each of these parties has pushed policies that are particular to a certain ethnic community and sought out new members from within that group. Ethnic politics leading up to independence were aggravated by regionalism, which was incorporated in the Richards Constitution of 1946. (Oladiran 2013)

Thus, the three areas (Western, Eastern, and Northern) became identified with the major ethnic groups and political parties. The first attempt at democracy in the country failed due to a lack of stability brought on by ethnic politics and the resulting antagonism between political groups. The military government of the time attempted to prevent a replay of the corrupt political party system of the First Republic in the Second Republic by including a provision for the registration of political parties in the Constitution of 1979. To qualify for registration under this section, political parties must have a nationwide emphasis and membership base. The goal was to prevent ethnic quotas from being used by political parties in the Second Republic. For the general elections of the Second Republic, five political parties filed to participate. These included the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), and the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) (PRP).

All these groups were exact replicas of their First Republic counterparts. From the ashes of the Northern People's Congress in the First Republic rose the National Party of Nigeria, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria originated from the Action Group. The Nigerian People's Party, led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, and the Great Nigerian People's Party, led by Ibrahim Waziri, both emerged as major political parties in the country (GNPP). The People's Redemption Party adopted the style and character of political organizations popular under the First Republic. They were called "old wines in new bottles" because their policies and platforms echoed those of the First Republic (Adamolekun 1983). That's why racial tensions and bitter political bickering were also prominent features of election campaigns under the Second Republic.

2.4.3 VOTING IN ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BLOCKS: THE IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY IN A HETEROGENEOUS STATE

Ethnic bloc voting can have devastating effects on the development of democracy in societies with substantial ethnic divisions, such as Nigeria. Many experts have warned for years that voting in deeply divided nations may only lead to ethnic consensus. Ishiyama (2012) argues that elections with such a high degree of partisanship act as a barrier to racial harmony. It's been shown that voting in ethnic blocs can incite widespread ethnic strife rather than fostering peaceful cohabitation and political stability in societies with a wide range of ethnic groups. It's easy for voting to devolve into a platform for displaying racial bigotry in such an atmosphere. According to this theory, people vote in order to publicly declare their allegiance to a specific cultural group.

Politicians compete for the backing of voters, who look to their leaders for guidance, throughout election seasons. When people of diverse backgrounds become involved in politics, they often find themselves at odds with one another since their respective leaders are working toward the same goals (Okonta 2012, p. 13). Nonetheless, the connection between ethnicity and democratization has been the subject of controversy among political scientists. The literature has "focused substantially on the reciprocal impact of ethnicity and multi-party democracy," as Ibeanu (2000, p. 55) puts it. Parenti (1967) argues that a multi-party democratic system has a negative link with ethnicity since such systems promote ethnicity. Others, however, argue that there is a connection between the two, and that racial inequities can be better addressed in a

democratic society because of the diversity of viewpoints it encourages (Osaghae 2008). Ethnic voting blocs hamper nation-building in existing polarized countries. Voting for a candidate of the same race or ethnicity as oneself might be interpreted as a "psychological affirmation of group identification" (Horowitz 1985).

Due to the high levels of ethnic pride, it is challenging to bring together the various peoples who make up the country and who speak different languages and follow diverse cultures. A dictatorship that is elected on the basis of ethnic identification is less legitimate, but a candidate who wins with support from all parts of a diverse country usually has the backing of the people regardless of their ethnic or regional background. Members of other groups who voted for candidates of the same ethnicity out of solidarity may feel alienated if the winning candidate received a disproportionate number of votes from his own ethnic group. Consider President Muhammadu Buhari's recent statement to the international media that he does not intend to treat people who gave him 97% of the vote the same as those who gave him 5%, as an illustration of this argument. The majority of a population may be won over by the government only if it treats its citizens fairly (Gjefsen 2012).

2.4 VOTING PATTERN IN NIGERIA

Noting that materialistic interests today impact the patterns of selecting political actors in Nigeria's political system, including recruitment practices, the dynamics of political socialization, and the ease with which political office holders can communicate with others. Politics, which is usually believed to be service oriented, is determined by the economic interests that eventually drive voter behavior.

Nigeria is a cultural and racial melting pot, with people from all over the world living there. There are many various regions, cultures, and peoples in this country, therefore it's important to remember that. The region is home to an estimated 450 unique cultural traditions. According to a 2006 census sanctioned by the National Population Commission (NPC), Nigeria's population is 140 million, with an annual growth rate of 6.3%. According to a study by Mudasiru,(2015), It is estimated that there are over 450 different ethnic groups in Nigeria, but the country is broadly divided along geographical lines, with the Hausa/Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the east, and the Yoruba in the west. Due to the state's creation and reorganization in 1996, Nigeria is now divided into six geo-political zones, with the Hausa-Fulani occupying the

majority of the North-East, North-West, and North-Central regions, the Ibo occupying the majority of the South-East region, the Yoruba occupying the majority of the South-West region, and the Niger Delta people forming the South-South region (Musasiru, 2015). People of various cultural backgrounds have been seeking elective office to advance their own interests and those of their communities. This ethnic chauvinism and configuration is also reflected in the formation of political parties, and party platforms often reflect the values of the larger community. Throughout the early republic, this trend first appeared, and it has continued unabated till the present day. From the First Republic through the Fourth, Nigerian voting habits were profoundly impacted by factors like ethnicity, religion, and the popularity of different political parties.

Ability and reputation are two more criteria that can have an indirect impact on voters' decisions. Three major political parties in Nigeria and Cameroon emerged under the First Republic: the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), the Northern People's Congress (NPC), and the Action Group (AG). These political organizations reflected the country's three largest ethnic groups: the Ibo, the Hausa/Fulani, and the Yoruba. The 1959 and 1964 federal elections both displayed very similar patterns of voting along ethnic lines. The Hausa/Fulani people voted overwhelmingly for the NPC, while those in the East chose the NCNC and those in the West favored the AG. Voting along ethnic lines openly undermined national integration and ultimately brought the first republic to its knees (Ikelegbe, 1995)

Voter participation in the Second Republic (1979–1983) was nearly identical to that in the First Republic. The Hausa and Fulani ethnic group voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Northern-based National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in the 1979 general election, while the Ibo voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Eastern-based Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Yoruba voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Southern-based Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Since 1999, when the fourth republic began, there have been four other presidential elections, making the one scheduled for 2015 the fifth. Even though a system was put in place that theoretically allows for other political parties to run candidates, only the three major parties actually done so. Alliance for Democracy, People's Democratic Party, and All Nigerian Peoples Party (AD). The PDP and APP were nationwide parties, whereas the AD was based in the South-West. Although PDP nominee Chief Olusegun Obasanjo finally won the presidency in 1999, the APP and the AD formed an alliance for that election.

It's a curious coincidence that all of the presidential candidates from the various parties who participated in the election hailed from the South West. The People's Democratic Party was represented by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, while the All Progressives Congress and Action Democratic Party (APP/AD) was led by Chief OluFalae. The election results showed that people of all different ages and walks of life voted in accordance with the values held by their respective communities. The vote patterns in the South and West were the clearest indication of regional racial differences. Reason being, they collectively supported the AD and therefore brought this about. Their voting behavior was heavily influenced by the fact that their famous son, the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola, was widely believed to have won the election on June 12.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Rational Choice Theory (RCT), also known as Choice Theory or Rational Action Theory, will serve as the theoretical basis for this investigation. You can't build a better foundation for your research than this hypothesis.

Rationality is defined in a way that is distinct from both everyday and philosophical usages in Rational Choice theory. Those who are logical are those who act in a sensible, predictable, and intelligent manner. A narrower definition of rationality underpins the Rational Choice framework. Foundational to reason are actions that are purposeful, reflective (evaluative), and consistent (across time and different choice situations). One may easily see the advantages of this over random, impulsive, conditioned, or (non-evaluative) imitation-based behaviors (Wikipedia, accessed 28 February 2020).

Sociologist George Homas, drawing primarily on assumptions from behavioral psychology, laid the groundwork for exchange theory in 1961. It's possible that this is due to the spread of the randomized controlled experiment. It wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that theorists like Blau, Coleman, and Cook formally outlined the concepts behind Rational Choice. Supporters of the randomized controlled trial (RCT) argue that people's actions can be explained by their ability to pick the option that best fits their preferences from a menu of available choices. Therefore, people act in accordance with the intentions they have consciously chosen to pursue. People are assumed to always do what's best for themselves based on their own assessments of information, likelihood of outcomes, expenses, and potential benefits. The economy plays a significant role in shaping people's actions. This discusses the reasons why people consider the prospective costs and benefits of an action before committing to it, and underlines the reasons

why people are often driven by materialism, as indicated by an unfettered demand for money and profit making. This line of thought is formally known as Rational Choice Theory.

A judicious voter is one who casts a ballot based on issues other than party affiliation, such as the candidates' religion or ethnicity. People are born without any preconceived conceptions of good or wrong, and it is up to them to establish those notions for themselves. A Predestined actor is someone who gives in to their emotions and may be swayed in their voting choices because of their religious or ethnic backgrounds. Some people may be captivated by both internal and external forces that lead them to act in ways at odds with their original values (or both). Research on Nigerian voters' choices goes back decades, and the greatest answer can be found in Rational Choice theory. Most Nigerian voters, similar to those throughout the independence era, see gaining political power as an aim in itself. For the sake of progress through the religious cycle, one person or group must rise to power.

The results of the 2015 presidential election serve as an excellent example of this trend. President Buhari, a Muslim from the North, won the majority of the vote in the states located in the North, but his closest competitor, also a Christian and from the South and Southeast, won the South and Southeast by large margins. Voters in the South West and North Central regions of the United States were swayed by divisive religious rhetoric. The patterns of selecting political actors in the Nigerian political system, including political recruitment, the nature of political socialization, and the free flow of communication between political office holders and other actors in the system at the state level, are all currently determined by interest, motivated by materialism. Rational Choice theory posits that comprehending voter behavior entails learning why people cast ballots based on factors like ethnic sentimentality and religious biases. The RTC asserts that individuals' actions can be explained by the fact that they are free to select the alternative that best meets their needs. In other words, individuals direct their actions toward achieving the ends they have deliberately set for themselves.

Rational actors are assumed to act in accordance with their own preferences in light of available information, the likelihood of events, and the potential costs and benefits of alternative courses of action. People's actions are heavily influenced by the economy's current state. This discusses the reasons why people consider the prospective costs and benefits of an action before committing to it, and underlines the reasons why people are often driven by materialism, as

indicated by an unfettered demand for money and profit making. This way of thinking is formally known as "rational choice theory."

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

For reasonable and good research to be effectively carried out there is need for orderliness, precision and accuracy. In political science, which is a branch of the Social science discipline, research is conducted in compliance with the scientific method.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research employed the survey research method. Since this research is a social survey, responses were generated based on a questionnaire frame, which enabled the researcher to collate data. Consequently, collected data was quantitatively analyzed

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study of this research was made up of residents in Edo State. Edo state has a population of 3,233,366 (National Population Commission, 2006) from which the sample population was drawn.

	L.G.A	SENATORIAL DISTRICT	POPULATION
1	Oredo	Edo South	374,515
2	Orhionmwon	Edo South	183,994
3	Ovia North East	Edo South	155,344
4	Ovia South West	Edo South	138,072
5	Owan East	Edo North	154,630
6	Owan West	Edo North	99,056
7	Uhunmwode	Edo South	121,749
8	IkpobaOkha	Edo South	372,080
9	Akoko-Edo	Edo North	261,567
10	Egor	Edo South	340,287
11	Esan Central	Edo Central	105,242
12	Esan South East	Edo Central	166,309
13	Esan North East	Edo Central	121,989
14	Esan West	Edo Central	127,718
15	Etsako Central	Edo North	94,228

16	Etsako East	Edo North	147,335
17	Etsako West	Edo North	198,975
18	Igueben	Edo Central	70,276
	TOTAL		3,233,366

Source: National Population Commission, (2006)

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size of this study was 150 respondents drawn from the three senatorial districts in Edo state.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The cluster sampling technique was employed in this research so as to ensure adequate representation of the study population. Edo state was divided into clusters using the senatorial districts. Edo state comprises of a sum of local governments within three senatorial districts- Edo North, Edo South and Edo Central. Going further, the simple random sampling was used to randomly pick one of the local governments in each senatorial district.

EDO CENTRAL - ESAN CENTRAL

EDO NORTH - ETSAKO EAST

EDO SOUTH - OVIA NORTH EAST

3.5 SOURCES OF DATA

The study made use of two primary source of data collection; the secondary data and primary data sources.

The secondary data are information reported by scholars and previous research that has been conducted in the study areas. They include books, magazines, journals and conference report among others. Similarly, previous project thesis and dissertations was also reviewed to support the argument of the research. Further information was accessed from the libraries, book stores and the internet to support the research project.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

For effective data collection, the study employed the questionnaire to effectively collate respondents' objective opinion, feeling and perception.

Questionnaire is a set of carefully structured question that is administered to respondents to elicit information from respondents. The study utilized the closed ended questionnaire, comprising questions on the perception, reservation and participation in the electoral process. The questionnaire was administered to respondents after which they were allowed time to fill them and return.

The study made use of primary source of data. Concerning the primary source, questionnaire was used to gather the data. The questionnaire was a five-point rating scale (Likert scale), starting from strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), undecided (U), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was designed in such a way that every question in the questionnaire was related to the research questions of the study. Also, the result was used to answer the research questions.

3.8 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The technique used in the research for purpose of data analysis was the simple percentage. The data collected from the respondents was presented and analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentage. The formula for the computation of the simple percentage is

$$\% = \frac{P}{N} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the field work with respect to Politics of Faith, Religion/Religious Movement and Its Influence on Voter's Behavior in Nigeria: A Case Study of Edo State

Section A: Personal data of Respondents

Table 4:1:1: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	65	43
Female	85	57
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above, 65 respondents representing 43% were Males and 85 respondents representing 57% were Females

Table 4:1:2: Age of Respondents

Age	Responses	Percentage (%)
18-28 years	115	76
29-39 years	30	20
40-50 years	5	4
50 years and above	-	-
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above, 76% were of 18-28 years, 20% were of 29-39 years, 4% were 40-50 years.

Table 4:1:3: Marital Status

Marital Status	Responses	Percentage (%)
Single	132	88
Married	18	12
Divorced	-	-
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 88% were Single, 12% were Married, no responses were gotten for divorced.

Table 4:1:4: Religion

Religion	Responses	Percentage (%)
Christianity	117	78
Islam	33	22
ATR	-	-
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above, 78% of respondents were Christians, 22% were of the Islamic religion, no response was gotten for ATR.

Table 4.1.5: Educational Qualification

Qualification	Responses	Percentage (%)
Primary	-	-
Secondary	15	10
Tertiary	135	90
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above, 10% of the respondents had secondary education, while 90% of respondents had tertiary education. No response was gotten for primary education.

SECTION B: POLITICS OF FAITH, RELIGION/RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOTER'S BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF EDO STATE

Table 4.1.1: Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state (does not have a particular religion specific to it).

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	45	30
Agree	55	37
Undecided	20	13
Strongly Disagree	10	7
Disagree	20	13
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 30% strongly agreed, 37% Agreed, 13% were undecided, 7% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed. This shows that Nigeria is indeed a secular state. Nigeria's population of over 190 million is divided nearly equally between Christians and Muslims.

Table 4.1.2: Is there a link between politics and religion in Edo state

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	61	41
Agree	36	24
Undecided	10	7
Strongly Disagree	23	15
Disagree	20	13
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 41% strongly agreed, 24% Agreed, 7% were undecided, 15% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed. This shows that there is a link between religion and politics in Edo state. Both religion and politics have one common goal: that is to acquire political power and use it to fulfill their aims. However, their methods are different. Religion mobilizes religious sensibilities of people in order to get their support to capture power; while politics uses intrigue, diplomacy, and makes attempt to win public opinion either democratically or otherwise.

Table 4.1.3: Do all religions in Nigeria interact and share values and beliefs

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	47	31
Agree	33	22
Undecided	10	7
Strongly Disagree	38	25

Disagree	22	15
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 3% strongly agreed, 22% Agreed, 7% were undecided, 25% strongly disagreed, and 15% disagreed. This shows that religious in Nigeria interact and shares values although religious polarization is becoming a real issue in Nigeria as every issue in Nigeria is often viewed from the lens of religion.

Table 4.1.4: Does the Nigerian political and economic system accommodates and sustains all religions in it.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	31	21
Agree	43	29
Undecided	10	7
Strongly Disagree	27	18
Disagree	39	26
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 21% strongly agreed, 29% Agreed, 7% were undecided, 18% strongly disagreed, and 26% disagreed. It is evident that Nigeria's political space accommodates and sustains all religions.

Table 4.1.5: Are there less laws regulating the activities of religious organizations in Edo state

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	33

Agree	33	22
Undecided	14	9
Strongly Disagree	15	10
Disagree	38	25
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 33% strongly agreed, 22% Agreed, 9% were undecided, 10% strongly disagreed, and 25% disagreed. It is evident that there are not enough laws that guide religious affairs in the country.

Table 4.1.6: Is there freedom to practice whatever religion a person is interested in

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	80	55
Agree	31	20
Undecided	5	3
Strongly Disagree	18	12
Disagree	16	10
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 55% strongly agreed, 20% Agreed, 3% were undecided, 12% strongly disagreed, and 10% disagreed. This shows that there is freedom to practice any religion any one is interested in.

Table 4.1.7: Does religion plays a very important role in the voting pattern of individuals

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	72	48
Agree	40	27
Undecided	5	3
Strongly Disagree	14	9
Disagree	19	13
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 48% strongly agreed, 27% Agreed,3% were undecided, 9% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed. This shows that religion plays a very important role in Nigerian politics. Religion is crucial in Nigerian politics, the structure and substance of politics in the country revolves around it. Since independence, the voting behavior of Nigerians has reflected religious instinct such that in virtually all the elections conducted in the country, the voting pattern has often towed along religious lines.

Table 4.1.8: Do religious leaders seek to influence state policies and laws

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	33
Agree	33	22
Undecided	14	9
Strongly Disagree	15	10
Disagree	38	25
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 33% strongly agreed, 22% Agreed, 9% were undecided, 10% strongly disagreed, and 25% disagreed. This shows that religious leaders often try to influence state policies as whatever they say or do often influences their members who consequently acts the same.

Table 4.1.9: Do candidates voted in as a result of religious sentiments live up to the expectations of religious groups

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	52	35
Agree	32	21
Undecided	18	1
Strongly Disagree	26	17
Disagree	22	15
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 35% strongly agreed, 21% Agreed, 12% were undecided, 17% strongly disagreed, and 15% disagreed. It is evident from the table that candidates who are voted for based on religious inclinations often time live up to expectation and often deliver the dividends of being voted for.

Table 4.1.10: Is religion a major source of conflict in Nigeria

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	73	49
Agree	25	17
Undecided	9	6
Strongly Disagree	17	11

Disagree	26	17
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 49% strongly agreed, 17% Agreed, 6% were undecided, 11% strongly disagreed, and 17% disagreed. It can be implied that religion is a major source of conflict in Nigeria. Although the general presumption is that ethnic identity is a more prominent and stable source of identity in Nigeria, some researchers have demonstrated that religion was more significant than ethnicity as a source of identity and conflict in Nigeria.

Table 4.1.11: Does religious violence affect the outcome of elections

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	62	41
Agree	41	2
Undecided	7	5
Strongly Disagree	36	24
Disagree	4	3
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2021

From the table above 41% strongly agreed, 27% Agreed, 5% were undecided, 24% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. It can be implied from the table that religious violence affects the outcome of elections in Nigeria as majority of the respondents agreed to this claim.

Table 4.1.12: Do politicians canvass for votes based on religious inclinations

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	47	3

Agree	41	27
Undecided	7	5
Strongly Disagree	36	24
Disagree	19	13
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 31% strongly agreed, 27% Agreed, 5% were undecided, 24% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed. It can be implied from the table that politicians often times canvass for votes based on religious inclination.

Table 4.1.13: In Edo state elections, does religion/religious inclinations determine voter's choice

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	31	21
Agree	18	12
Undecided	10	7
Strongly Disagree	48	3
Disagree	43	29
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 21% strongly agreed, 12% Agreed, 10% were undecided, 32% strongly disagreed, and 29% disagreed. It can be implied from the table that religion/religious inclination does not determine voter's choice as people often times vote based on the personal disposition of candidates as opposed to religious inclinations.

Table 4.1.14: Do Nigerian politicians make policies based on their religious beliefs

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	44	29
Agree	53	35
Undecided	6	4
Strongly Disagree	18	12
Disagree	29	19
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 29% strongly agreed, 35% Agreed, 4% were undecided, 1% strongly disagreed, and 19% disagreed. It can be implied from the table that Nigerian politicians often time make policies that are often tied to religious beliefs.

Table 4.1.15: Do these policies have negative impacts on Nigerians

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	85	56
Agree	23	15
Undecided	-	-
Strongly Disagree	26	18
Disagree	16	11
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 56% strongly agreed, 5% Agreed, no response was gotten for undecided, 18% strongly disagreed, and 11% disagreed. It can be implied from the table that policies taken based on religious sentiments hinders citizens negatively.

Table 4.1.16: Do Policies taken based on religious inclinations have negative impacts on the citizenry

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	61	41
Agree	34	23
Undecided	8	5
Strongly Disagree	14	9
Disagree	33	22
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 41% strongly agreed, 23% Agreed, 5% were undecided, 9% strongly disagreed, and 22% disagreed. It is evident from the table above those policies adopted based on religious inclinations can often be detrimental to the well-being of the citizens.

Table 4.1.17: Does religious beliefs of some certain groups hinder them from engaging in politics

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	49	33
Agree	43	29
Undecided	13	9
Strongly Disagree	27	18

Disagree	18	12
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 33% strongly agreed, 29% Agreed, 9% were undecided, 18% strongly disagreed, and 12% disagreed. It is evident from the table above that religious belief of some certain groups can hinder them from participating in politics as majority of respondents were in support of this claim.

Table 4.1.18: In Edo state, does government policies affect/influence religious groups positively

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	35	23
Agree	42	28
Undecided	23	15
Strongly Disagree	22	15
Disagree	28	19
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 23% strongly agreed, 28% Agreed, 15% were undecided, 15% strongly disagreed, and 19% disagreed. It is evident from the table above that government policies often influence the activities of religious groups.

Table 4.1.19: Will you would vote based on religious perceptions during upcoming elections

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	43	28
Agree	36	24

Undecided	18	12
Strongly Disagree	21	15
Disagree	32	21
TOTAL	150	100

Source: Field work 2022

From the table above 28% strongly agreed, 2% Agreed, 12% were undecided, 15% strongly disagreed, and 21% disagreed. It is evident from the table above that majority of citizens will vote based on religious inclinations in upcoming elections.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from the study have shown clearly that the relationship between politics and religion in Nigeria remains extraordinarily complex. This is so because the two dominant religions are practiced in two major ethnic localities (North & West) while the Igbo and the south-south minorities practice Christianity. In other words, the two major religions are practiced in all parts of the country. This peculiarity places Nigeria in a safe secular status. The secularity of Nigeria, however, has consistently been threatened by the desire of religious independence and over politicization of matters that pertains to religion.

It is also obvious from the analysis that religion is a strong factor not only in the spiritual practice of citizen but a determining factor in the Nigeria political sphere. Religion and politics are two very important aspects of human society anywhere in the world. While religion addresses and conditions man's spiritual balance, politics shapes the practice of religion and determine who gets what, when, and how in any given political setting. The belief in the supernatural can make people resist any perceived attempt to distort one's religious belief. An attempt to sustain one's religion, on the other hand, can determine the way one acts in the electoral process.

In other words, the notion that a favorable polity guarantees the liberty to exercise freely one's religious rituals can influence the attitude and the way people act in deciding who should govern them. Christianity and Islam have been very recurrent in Nigeria's political sphere. Many public office seekers have largely exploited religious fanaticism to realize their political ambition.

Politicians make use of the power entrenched in religion, not only to achieve their political aims but also to legitimize their religion. There is an element of power in religion and politics. Nevertheless, there are three ways in which religion can influence politics, namely: by the direct involvement of religious men in politics, by fusing the two (religion and politics) as one, and by subjecting politics or governance along the line of religious doctrines, ideals or laws. All these are obvious in Nigerian politics and they have made religion and politics to seem inseparable despite the view that religion should be separated from the state. Religion must thus be separated from politics, so that the future of Nigeria would not be threatened.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As mentioned in the opening chapter, the Nigerian state is home to a wide variety of religious communities, with a sizable proportion of adherents belonging to Christianity and Islam. It follows that Religion will inevitably play a significant role in the daily lives of her residents and as a result, will have a trickle-down influence on politics. Given the polarization and diversity of religious beliefs in Nigerian culture, it follows that these factors will have a considerable impact on the country's political conduct and decisions. This is a key motivation for the study, which also aims to test the presumption that people choose their leaders based on their religious convictions by determining the degree of (or absence of) religious impact on politics. The numerous religious disputes that have infiltrated Nigerian society are also considered as a crucial concern.

Violence between Christians and Muslims has increased in frequency and severity throughout time. The non-participation of various religious groups' members in political activities like voting and election participation was also covered in this study. Because it is the most effective paradigm for the research's direction, the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) was adopted as a theoretical framework in assessing and comprehending the research activity. The voting patterns that have persisted throughout time in Nigeria, where ethnic and religious affiliations continue to influence voting, are best explained by the rational choice theory.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Given that Nigeria is one of the most religious nations in the world, the relationship between its religion and politics is pertinent to the literature cited in this research study. The use of religion as a tool for voter turnout during elections is related to its role in Nigerian politics. As this study has demonstrated, religious sentiments have frequently been invoked in Nigerian history in order to obtain political advantage. Undoubtedly, the recent elections show yet another noteworthy instance of how the political class tries to use religion to influence the faithful and

garner votes in order to win elections. Therefore, the goal of this study was to investigate how candidates organized the faithful at their houses of worship to win the election. The major candidates for the Edo state governorship election and the presidential office clearly demonstrated this in their campaign techniques. This research also discovered that religious sentiments frequently have a significant impact on the electorate's choice of vote through analysis of voting trends. As opposed to basing their decision on the track records of the candidates, voters are influenced by religion. In a pluralistic economic and political state like Nigeria, religious values and beliefs shape people's behavior, including their decisions and interactions. Similar to this, it was found that one of the main factors contributing to political and economic unrest in Nigeria is religion.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions were made as a result of the research:

The fear of marginalization felt by many religious organizations and concerns about equality must be addressed in efforts to lessen religious disputes, which frequently result from favorable treatment for indigenous people.

Religion does not appeal to reason as much by its very character and content. Huge emotions are involved because it is a heart problem. In order to stop further violence, the government must exercise caution while handling religious issues. The social stability, togetherness, and integration that are prerequisites for national growth cannot exist in any society or country that is entangled in the web of religious conflict. More importantly, everyone involved should adhere to the Constitution as written and refrain from using religion as a political tool.

Additionally, individuals who are found guilty of exploiting religion to undermine society must be subjected to the full force of the law in accordance with the gravity of their offenses. The non-application of any form of rules is a serious issue in Nigeria. Due of the lack of consequences, many people commit crimes against religion. The judiciary should be provided every inducement necessary to do its duties bravely, it is proposed at this point. Since equality is guaranteed by the rule of law, the subject of exemption clauses or sacred cows shouldn't come up.

The practice of religious diversity in Nigeria ought to be directed toward achieving long-term growth and political stability. This is crucial for a developed nation. Additionally, having

high moral standards must be the foundation for achieving political power. It must not be based on one's religious affiliation. Instead of interfering in politics, religious leaders should serve as watchdogs for those who hold political office by counseling them about unacceptable behaviors that could endanger political progress.

Since political office holders are also members of their congregation, religious leaders can serve as watchdogs for those in political office by abstaining from politics and acting as moral compass by warning them away from unethical behavior that could jeopardize political development.

By hosting seminars and workshops for religious adherents that support long-term political development, the National Religious Advisory Board and the Nigeria Inter-religious Council should encourage interreligious dialogue and religious tolerance. This is so that those who have been personally involved in conflict can be inspired to cooperate and find common ground, as Haynes (2009) contends, when interreligious dialogue is skillfully organized and pursued.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and religious institutions and organizations should collaborate to educate and sensitize the electorate, along with other NGOs. Voting decisions should be discussed in terms of party ideology, a candidate's qualifications, and their reputation rather than their religious beliefs or perceived religiousness.

The threat of ethnicity and ethnic bloc voting needs to be addressed in order to establish a sound electoral democracy and a strong united nation. In order to do this, efforts should be made to develop a set of guiding principles for nation-building that should be written into the constitution. A commitment to distributing socioeconomic and infrastructure development equally is also necessary.

Uneven socioeconomic and infrastructure development in a nation breeds exclusion, fear of dominance and marginalization by the underdeveloped portion of the nation, and feelings of marginalization. In order to foster positive relations between the various ethnic groups, it is also important to formulate policies and programs to reorient those who are divided along ethnic lines.

To prevent the inappropriate use of religion in all spheres of life, particularly in politics, the way forward also entails educating the populace about religion and elections. Interreligious

dialogue, especially between Christians, Muslims, and African Traditionalists, should be encouraged. Christians, Muslims, and African Traditionalists need to undergo extensive reorientation in order to truly change their hearts and to have the fear of God.

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APPENDIX
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the above department. I am writing a research work on the topic “**POLITICS OF FAITH: RELIGION/RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOTER’S BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF EDO STATE**”. Kindly provide relevant information that will assist me in getting the desired results. Be rest assured that your information would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Chilaka Judah
RESEARCHER

SECTION A: (PERSONAL DATA)

Instruction: tick (√) where appropriate

1. **Sex:** Male () Female ()
2. **Age:** 18 – 28 () 29 – 39 () 40 – 50 () 51 and above ()
3. **Marital Status:** Single () Married () Divorced ()
4. **Religion:** Christianity () Islam () ATR () Others ()
5. **Educational Qualification:** Primary () Secondary () Tertiary ()

SECTION B: POLITICS OF FAITH: RELIGION/RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOTER’S BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF EDO STATE

Instruction: For statement below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of them by ticking the answer that is most appropriate. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D)

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state (does not have a particular religion specific to it)					
2	Is there a link between politics and religion in Edo state?					
3	Do all religion in Nigeria interact and share same values and beliefs?					
4	Does the Nigerian political and economic system					

	accommodate and sustains all religion in it?					
5	Are there less laws regulating the activities of religious organizations in Edo state?					
6	Is there freedom to practice whatever religion a person is interested?					
7	Does religion play a vital role in the voting pattern of individuals?					
8	Do religious Leaders seek to influence state policies and laws?					
9	Do candidates elected as a result of religious sentiments live up to the expectations of religious groups?					
10	Is religion a major source of conflict in Nigeria?					
11	Does religious violence affect the outcome of elections?					
12	Do politicians canvass for votes based on religious inclinations?					
13	In Edo state elections, does religion/religious inclinations determine voter's choice					
14	Do Nigerian politicians make policies based on their religious beliefs?					
15	Do these policies have negative impacts on Nigerians?					
16	Do policies taken based on religious inclinations have negative impacts on the citizenry?					
17	Does religious belief of some certain groups hinder them from engaging in politics?					
18	In Edo state, government policies affect/influences religious groups positively?					
19	Will you vote based on religious perceptions during upcoming elections?					