Under the Shadow of the Siamese Twins: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election

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OPEN ACCESS: REGULAR RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Abstract

Nigeria is considered a heterogeneous society per excellence. This is courtesy of its multi ethnic and multi religious character. While there is no agreement among scholars as to the exact number of its ethnic and religious diversities, its ethnic and religious composition closely follow same geographical boundary such that while the Eastern Ibo are mostly Christians, the Northern Hausa are predominantly Muslims while the Western Yoruba people are partly Christians and partly Muslims. Thus both often exercise joint influence on its politics. This is more profound at moments of decision making such as elections. This paper examines the 2023 Presidential elections in Nigeria viz a viz ethnic and religious influence in the election. Anchored on the rational choice theory, the paper relied on secondary source of materials such as text books, journals, electronic sources and official publications especially from the Independent National Electoral Commission. These were analysed using content analysis. It argued that both ethnic and religious influences are like Siamese twins as far as elections in Nigeria are concerned especially because of their geographical boundaries that roughly coincided. It concluded that Nigeria is yet to witness a significant departure in the pattern of ethno-religious influence on its elections. It, therefore, recommends the need for all stakeholders to be deliberate in stemming the tide of destructive ethnic and religious influence on politics in the country.

Key Words
Ethnicity, Religion, Politics, Election, Influence

1. Introduction

For Nigeria, ethnicity and religion are like Siamese twins and their influence becomes most noticeable at moments of competition for national resources especially elections. Indeed, out of the many fault lines in the country, ethnicity and religion predominates. Interestingly, both appear to have almost the same geographical boundary hence; it need not be surprising that each usually snowball into the other. For instance, several religious issues have resulted in ethnic outbursts and vice versa. This underscores the fact that both ethnic and religious considerations have become interwoven in both policy and politics to the extent that any genuine policy or programmes of the government are perceived through ethnic or religious lenses. While Christanity came through the South, populated mostly by the Ibo ethnic group, Islam came through the North dominated by Hausa ethnic group. Both registered their presence in the West inhabited mostly by the Yorubas almost at the same time thus, the country had an ethno-religious character. That is, ethnic and religious boundaries roughly coincide in the country. Given this character, it becomes almost impossible dissociating a particular ethnic group from the dominant religion in that particular region, especially in a region where one religious group is dominant

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such as the North and Southern (including East) parts of the country. This paper examines the extent to which ethnic and religious influence pervaded the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria and the implications which this state of affair has for the political process in the country.

2. Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the Rational Choice Theory also called economic theory of democracy (Dawn, 1957). The theory tries to link human's unlimited wants with the limited resources that is available. It assumes that man is rational in taking decisions that is of utmost benefit to him/her among competing alternatives. Thus, it can be used to explain voting decision by citizens. Downs who is the major proponent observed that citizen's vote for whatever party they believe will provide them with the highest utility from government action. This is because voting involves a cost/benefit analysis. A voter, therefore, will vote for a particular party where the benefits derivable from the action outweigh its cost.

Although a variety of other tools can be employed to explain voting behaviour, this work relies on the rational choice theory which holds that personal social identities such as ethnic affinities and religious shared religious faiths among others determine voting choices for an individual or social group. This is more relevant in Africa where these elements have long been regarded as playing a critical role in party politics and electoral democracies. Indeed, ethnic affinity has a strong direct impact on electoral behaviour in ethnically-segmented societies such as Nigeria because essentially, casting a vote becomes an expression of group identity. Similarly, religion by its nature, also confer on the individual a form of identity in the society. It is thus part of the complex pattern of other social identities that colour human relationships, struggles and competition. Consequently, because of its penchant for colouring relationships especially in multi-cultural societies such as Nigeria, it plays significant roles in societal politics including the process making vital decisions such as elections.

In the Nigerian context, what is often obtained during election is that voters are been influenced by the various identity factors such as religion of the candidate, ethnic affiliation or other basis of ascription. Although critics of this theory argue that voting is not all about rational choice but also involve some irrational choices that will bring destabilization to the opponent's options. However, this criticism notwithstanding, the utility of the theory in establishing a link between decisions and identity remains a strong point.

3. Character of the Nigerian State

The entity now known as Nigeria was a product of European ambition and rivalry in Africa. Located within latitude 40N and 140N and longitude 30E and 150E, and with a massive population currently estimated at over two hundred million according to the 1996 population census, it is the most populous country in Africa and among the five most populous in the tropics (Adalemo and Baba 1993). Equally, it has a land area of about 923, 768 square kilometer roughly equivalent to France, Italy, Belgium and Holland rolled together (Jovre quoted in Ojo 1998).

The evolution of the Nigeria State can be traced to the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 where territories of Africa were partitioned among the European powers. At the conference, British rights over the territory now known as Nigeria were recognised by other powers. Consequently, Britain chartered the Royal Niger Company to trade and administered the area. By 1900, the British formally took over administration of the territory after revoking the charter of the Royal Niger Company. Thus was established formal colonial rule.

Between 1900 and 1960 when the country formally attained independence, it went through series of administrative and constitutional reforms. This includes the 1914 amalgamation of the hitherto separately administered Northern and Southern parts for reasons bothering on the

economic complementarily of the two colonially delineated halves of the country (Oyovbaire 1985). The 1914 amalgamation which many have come to refer to as 'the mistake of 1914' (Williams 1999) marked a watershed in the evolution of modern Nigeria because before it, there was no Nigeria and the likelihood that a state like it would evolve was quite remote (Osaghae 1998). What had existed before the colonial era were different ethnic entities with diverse history and intermittent interactions but later conquered at different times by the British and loosely amalgamated into a single political union.

According to Akinola (1988), even the colonialists themselves cannot claim ignorance of the inherent danger in the amalgamation nor could Lugard who carried it out conceive of a single political system for the diverse ethnic groups. Hence, for pure administrative convenience, the indirect rule system was introduced, first in the North and later to other parts of the country but with varying degree of success. Though the colonialists may have advanced reasons bothering on attempt to truncate administrative expenses and lack of personnel, it is however generally believed that the introduction of the indirect rule was a means of fulfilling an earlier promise made to the Northern Chiefs and Emirs by the British not to interfere with the spread of Islam and their existing political system, except where it was absolutely necessary to ensure the continuance of order and good government (Osaghae, 1998). Secondly, it was informed by the desire to keep the North away from the corrupt and damaging influence of the Christian South (Osaghae 1998; Williams 1999).

Apart from the different administrative set up, there were also disparities in the social and educational development of the North and South largely informed by the protective measure of the British towards the North. This was essentially because, education then was spearheaded by the missionaries who has the utmost ambition of training the natives in the principles of Christian religion. For this reason, the missionaries were discouraged from entering the North lest they should offend Islamic susceptibilities (Akinola 1988). This practice according to Osaghae (1998) gave a head start to Southern groups not only in education but also in political development thereby resulting in grave consequences for political competition as well as competition for socio-economic goods both in the latter part of colonial rule and the post independence era. The above underscores the fact that the seed of ethno religious rivalry has been sown in Nigeria during colonial era but burgeon into a big tree after independence.

In terms of structural character, the existence of multiplicity of ethnic and religious groups is enough justification of the heterogeneous character of the polity. Though opinion is divided as to the exact number of ethnic groups, it is however believed that they are no less than 250 groups. For instance, Kurian (1979) estimated the number at 250, Barbour (1982) identified more than 350 while Otite (1990) estimated about 374 ethnic groups while Salawu (2010) recognized four Hundred ethnic groups. An important fact is that despite the variations, no group enjoys absolute numerical majority but the dominant ones are the Hausa-Fulani in the North, Ibo in the East and Yoruba in the South-West. All the three major groups according to Kurian (1979) constitute about 60% of the country's total population. It must, however, be pointed out that none of these three groups is monolithic. Each is a conglomeration of diver ethnic entities. For instance, what is refered to as Hausa-Fulani is a combination of two distinct ethnic groups. Apart from them, there is the Kanuri, Kemberi and Nupe etc. all inhabiting the Northern Nigeria. Equally among the Yorubas, there are Ijesha, Ijebu, Ife and Ekiti among others which are different groups but all are subsumed under Yoruba ethnic group. The existence of these groups is a reflection of the extent of ethnic diversities in the Nigerian state.

In other words, the ethnic multiplicity of the country engenders a highly diversified cultural setting in such manner that even the dominant groups are each a conglomeration of many sub-cultures or tribal groups. The import of the above is that the entity now known as Nigeria was

composed of groups of sovereign principalities with different ethnic and cultural background and each having its own traditional belief system before they were wedged together by colonialism. Otite (1990) was thus right to assert that modern day Nigeria is a sociological aggregate consisting of distinct cultural groups and institutions, interacting and making claims on the resources of the wider encapsulating society.

Like the ethnic factor, the religious multiplicity of the Nigeria state also derives from its colonial experience. With colonialism, not only was Christianity introduced, the different ethnic groups some of which had already acquired another religion (Islam) via contact with Arab traders and Islamic Jihadists were forced together under one political authority. The resulting consequences of this are two folds. First is that, the existing African Traditional Religion (ATR) became completely relegated and over-shadowed by the now dominant Islam and Christianity and Secondly is that, the resulting religious composition of the population closely follows geographic and ethnic lines. Thus, the Southern Ibo are predominantly Christians; the Northern Hausa-Fulani are predominantly Muslims while the western Yoruba are partly Christians and partly Muslims (Kurian 1979). This was essentially so because while Christianity came through the South, having firm root in the East and spreading towards the west, Islam penetrated through the north, became established there and was spreading Southwards only to meet with Christianity in the West. Suffice to say that the religious distribution of the population along ethnic and geographic line is a major factor responsible for the inter-wining of ethnic and religious crises in the Nigerian State. What is to be noted is that multiplicity of ethnic and religious groups has now become institutionalized diversities within the Nigerian State courtesy of her colonial experience. It is within these historical facts therefore that we can locate the reasons or rational behind the country's adoption of the federal system and essentially, the influence which ethnic and religious considerations play in elections.

4. Overview of Ethno-Religious Influence on Politics in Nigeria

The influence of ethnic and religious sentiments on politics in Nigeria dates back to the period before independence. This however became exacerbated in the post independent period due to inability of the state to manage the trend and the nature of political elites who usually manipulate the fault lines for personal advantage. The first dose of religious sentiments in politics was before the 1959 elections when a Pentecostal pastor urged his followers to vote Zik (a Christian from Eastern region) because he was the messier sent to save Nigeria. He equally demonised candidates of other parties. This action, though not pronounced, was condemned by the colonial government and many Nigerians. It, however, brought about ethno-religious consciousness in the country. Ethno-religious antagonism remained latent in the country until the 1977/78 Shariah controversies in the Constituent Assembly. This was, however, put paid to by the military government that constituted the assembly. However, ever since then, ethno-religious sentiments have been a continuous influence on Nigerian Government and Politics covering governance, party formation and elections among others.

Thus, ethno-religious issues have not only become a potent political force in the country, there is also an unnecessary veneration of ethnic and religious considerations to the extent that candidate for an office and his/her running mate must come from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Even military regimes (except few) tend to respect this trend. The table below captured ethnic and religious affiliation of some of Nigeria's leader since independence.

Table 1. Ethnic and religious affiliation of Nigeria's leader since independence

President / Head of State	Ethnic / Religious Affiliation	Deputy President / Head of State	Ethnic / Religious Affiliation
Tafawa Balewa	Northerner and Muslim	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	Ibo and Christian
Gen Aguyi Ironsi	Easterner and Christian	Major General Babafemi Olatunde Ogundipe	Westerner and Christian
Gen. Yakubu Gowon	Northerner and Christian	Vice Admiral Joseph Edet Akinwale Wey	Westerner and Christian
Gen. Murtala Muhammed	Northerner and Christian	Gen Olusegun Obasanjo	Westerner and Christian
Alh. Sheu Shagari	Northerner and Christian	Dr. Alex Ekweme	Easterner and Christian
Gen. Muhammadu Buhari	Northerner and Christian	Gen. Tunde Idiagbon	Northerner and Christian
Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	Northerner and Christian	Rear Adm.Augustus Aikhomu and Ebitu Ukiwe	Easterners and Christian
Ge. Sani Abacha	Northerner and Christian	Ge. Oladipo Diya and Vice Admiral Mike Aikhigbe	Westerner and Christian; Southerner and Christian
Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar	Northerner and Christian		
President Olusegun Obasanjo	Westerner and Christian	Alh. Atiku Abubakar	Northerner and Christian
President Umar Musa Yar;adua	Northerner and Christian	Goodluck Jonathan	Southerner and Christian
President Goodluck Jonathan	Southerner and Christian	Arc. Namadi Sambo	Northerner and Christian
President Muhammadu Buhari	Northerner and Christian	Yemi Osinbajo	Westerner and Christian
President Bola Ahmed Tinubu	Westerner and Muslim	Shettima Kashim	Northerner and Christian

Source: Compiled by author

The above mentioned trend which has been occurring since independence in 1960 has continued till date. Even formation of political parties in the country has not been free from ethno-religious sentiments. For example, apart from the NNDP which was formed in 1923 due to granting of elective principle by the Clifford constitution, other parties thereafter have emerged from socio cultural organisations. These included the Action Group (AG) which was formed in 1951 from Egbe Omo Oduduwa; Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) which emerged from Jammah Mutenen Arewa and the National Council of Nigerian and Northern Cameroon (NCNC) which was deeply rooted in the Eastern region. Following the collapse of NNDP in the late 1940s, the AG, NCNC and NPC remained the three dominant parties in the country. Although there were other parties in existence such as, the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the Northern Elements Progress Union (NEPU), they were not as strong in electoral support as the earlier three mentioned (Muhammad, 2007). However, they also have ethno cultural antecedent. But all remained principal actors in the political process up to the time of termination of the First Republic. Extensive works on previous republics in Nigeria have been done by Joseph 1991; Diamond et al 1997; Ujo 2000 and Yaqub 2002 among others.

Even the NCNC which started somewhat as a national party later receded to become an eastern region party probably due to the ethnic affiliation of its leader, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. The socio- cultural influence and sentiments within which the parties emerged continued to have profound influence on their operations and activities even when they reincarnated under

different banners during Nigeria's Second Republic. With regards to the nature of contestation, the understanding here is that since the Nigerian elite is fractionalized along regional, ethnic or religious lines, support base is usually drawn from this sentimental bases of fractionalization. The result is the intensification of party rivalry and, indeed, party politics along the lines of conflict, especially as they struggle for which party is to gain control of political power after independence.

Another area where ethno-cultural and religious sentiments have come to play on Nigerian government and politics is in the attempt to review the 1999 constitution in 2006 although actors hid under the sentiment of advancing democracy. Indeed, a careful observer of Nigerian politics would easily recall that struggle for ascendancy between the north and the south which predate Nigeria's independence in 1960 have always been informed by self interest of the two regions making mutual suspicion and the desire of one group to dominate the other to be the hallmarks of inter group relations (Muhammad, 2013a). In the attempt to mobilize mass support, ethnic and religious champions usually co- opt the traditional rulers who were closest to the grass roots in furthering their interests thus, making the traditional rulers to become key instruments in the mobilization of primordial sentiments thereby fanning identity politics (Muhammad, 2013a). Indications of this influencing behaviours on the constitution amendment could be seen in the reactions of participants at the fourth northern senator's forum in Kaduna 2006 where placard-carrying demonstrators taunted then deputy Senate president, Alhaji Ibrahim Nasiru Mantu, who was also Chairman of the National Assembly Joint Committee on the Review of the Constitution (JCRC); Senate leader, Dr. Sarki Dalhatu Tafida and Senator Umar Hambagba accusing them of working against the interest of the North to produce the president in 2007. It became apparent that while most of the protagonists of Constitution review were from the southern region, most antagonists were from the northern region. This was attested to by Afro barometer survey on the issue (cited in Olaniyan, 2006).

In other words, the high rate of opposition from the north, for instance, may not be unconnected with the clamour for power to return to the region come 2007. This position was equally underscored by former Governor Sani Yerima of Zamfara State while responding to a question in an interview. According to him, power 'is automatically supposed to go to north… south had taken eight years, and the north should have eight years' (Yerima 2006). To a large extent, these evidences suggest that ethnic and religious considerations played a major role in determining the pattern of reaction to issues in the constitution amendment proposal. Related to this is that policies and programmes are seen through either the lens of religion or ethnicity thus forcing the state to embark on ethnic and religious balancing to mitigate the effect of ethno-religious rivalry. That is, putting constitutional and extra constitutional mechanisms in place to ensure that relations between ethnic and religious groups within the state occur in an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence and that positive potentials of religious groups impact positively on the entire societal process. Perhaps this realisation has informed the establishment of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) scheme, Federal Character and, state involvement in religious matters such as establishment of Christian and Muslim pilgrims welfare boards, declaration of equal number of days to celebrate Christian and Muslim festivals etc. However, these efforts have remained sterile. It has even suffered criticism from scholars (Mustapha, 2009; Muhammad, 2013b) who argued that it is the state's involvement that is promoting the ethnic and religious rivalry.

5. Ethno-Religious Issues and the 2023 Presidential Elections in Nigeria
As stated earlier, ethnic and religious issues have continued to influence government and politics in Nigeria and the 2023 Presidential election is not an exception. Prelude to the election, there were insinuations and public debates on the Presidential and vice Presidential candidates of the

major parties. While the issue of ethnic affiliation of candidates and their deputies appeared settled, the religious affiliation constituted a volatile issue especially for the ruling party, APC. In other words, the NNPP, LP and PDP that were the major parties were able to balance their choice of Presidential candidate and running mate between ethnic and religious groups, the APC was not able to do so.

Table 2. Ethic and religious affiliation of Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates of the 4 Frontline Parties in the 2023 Election

S/N	Political Party	Presidential Candidate	Ethnic and Religious Affiliation	Vice Presidential Candidate	Ethnic And Religious Affiliation
1	APC	Bola Ahmed Tinubu	South West / Muslim	Kashim Shetima	North East / Muslim
2	LP	Peter Obi	South East / Christian	Datti Ahmed	North West / Muslim
3	NNPP	Kwakwanso	North West / Muslim		
4	PDP	Atiku Abubakar	North east / Muslim	Ifeanyi Okowa	South South / Christian

Source: Compiled by Author

For myriad of political considerations, the APC ended up with a Muslim-Muslim ticket. That is, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a Yoruba from the West had as his running mate, Kashim Shettima, a Muslim from the North. This generated uproar from Nigerians with some calling on the National Assembly to make a law compelling ethnic and religious balancing in the choice of candidates. Even the muslim-muslim ticket was vehemently opposed by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) but with a caveat that the right of political parties to make political decisions in line with 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended) must be respected (Punch online, September 5, 2022; This Day online, September 6, 2022; The Cable, September 6, 2022). It also led to a situation where pastors and heads of churches became vociferous antagonists of a Muslim-Muslim ticket while their counterparts in the Muslim faith became serious protagonists. In order words, Nigerians became polarised along Religious lines prelude to the 2023 Presidential election. Although the APC tried to defend this that it was based on political calculations and competency, and, the fact that the spouse of the APC candidate was a Christian, the antagonists of the joint Muslim-Muslim ticket vehemently opposed it(). They argued that Nigeria is a complex state in terms of religious affiliation and this should be respected. It was in this state of affairs that the Presidential election took place and the outcome of the election reflected ethno religious support for candidates.

Table 3. Spread of the 2023 Presidential Election Results and Winner by Geopolitical Zones

Geopolitical zone	Winner in each geo political zone
North-Central	APC
North-East	PDP
North-West	APC
South-East	LP
South-south	LP
South West	APC

Source: Compiled by the Author from Cable News and Premium times

The table above showed clearly that only three of the parties that contested the 2023 Presidential election won at least a region in the country. However, distribution of the region based on their ethno religious affiliation shows the influence of ethnic and religious sentiments. For example, the victory of the APC in three of the six regions can be attributed to ethnic and political support. While APC's win in the South-West can be attributed to the ethnic affiliation of the Presidential aspirant, its victory in the North-central and North-West can be attributed to religious affiliation of the Presidential aspirant and his running mate. This is more so given the fact that these regions were mostly populated by people of the same religious affiliation with the duo. Conversely, the loss of the party in the South-south and South-east (which were won candidate of the LP) can be attributed to aversion of the regions to a Muslim-Muslim ticket of the APC and acceptance of the LP candidate especially considering the fact that the areas are populated mostly by people of the Christian religious group and who belong to a different ethnic group from that of the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates of the APC. Perhaps, the APC could not win in the North-east due to strong influence of the PDP Presidential candidate in the region. It, however, took a second place. This may also be taken to mean a reflection of ethnic and religious affiliation of the Vice Presidential candidate of the APC who is also from the region.

Similarly, the Labour Party (LP) candidate won in two of the regions. That is, South-east and South-south and the victory may be taken to mean a reflection of the prevailing ethnic and religious sentiments in the regions especially considering the fact that Nigeria's geopolitical make up indicates that people of the regions are predominantly Christians. The PDP won in only one region (North-east) and as earlier said, this victory could be attributed to the political influence of the PDP flag bearer in the region.

6. Implications for Politics / Governance

There is no gain saying the fact that the result of ethno-religious politics in Nigeria is negative. First is that, a government that emerged from such sentimental base is likely to suffer legitimacy crisis. This is because, it implies that there is no overwhelming support for the government as policies and programmes will be perceived through the lens of religion or ethnicity. It is on record that policies and programmes of government in the past have often been perceived through such lenses. Profound influence of ethnic and religious sentiment in the voting pattern of Nigerians during the 2023 Presidential election is likely to heightened consciousness of many in this regard. For instance, the victory of LP in Lagos state during the 2023 Presidential election may be attributed to religious influence. This is because the geographical make up of Nigeria made the Ibos to be predominantly Christians. The large presence of Ibos in Lagos coupled with the consciousness among Lagosians who are Christians, therefore, may have swing the trend of votes in the state towards a Christian candidate thus, given LP a sweeping victory in the state.

Second, the heightening of ethno-religious sentiment in the country politics has the potential to aggravate conflicts. Conflicts in the view of scholars result from disaggregate interests (Dunmoye, 2003; Salawu, 2010). Such interests stem from different perception of situations as either for or against one. While the country may have succeeded in curtailing such conflicts in the past, it is difficult to predict that the state will always have the capacity to curtail such destructive conflicts. Related to this is that, conflicts when they occur leaves in its wake destructions of great magnitude in human and material resources. Equally, while it may be difficult to know the exact number of Ethno-religious conflicts due to lack of adequate statistical data on the phenomenon, it is believed that about fourty percent (40%) of ethno-religion based conflicts are credited to the fourth Republic of Nigeria (Salawu, 2010)

Third and related to the above is that ethno-religious considerations in elections have implications for national security. For instance in the contemporary world, religion has become 'a political force that is pushing in different directions (Thomas and Richard, 1995). This implies that nations and indeed Nigeria must wake up to this realization and be more concerned with harnessing the peace-making components and values of its various religious groups. This is against the background that prevalence of religious sentiments may spark an ideological war which may be difficult for the state to control. in this context, national security becomes threatened.

Another implication is that the votes gained from each region determined the extent of political patronage enjoyed by the region. This can be seen in the number of ministerial nominees from each region. For example, the north-west where the APC got over 30 percent of the votes had 10 ministerial nominees. South west where it got 25.9 percent of votes had 9 nominees while North central where it polled 20.0 percent of votes had 8 nominees. Similarly, the lowest percentage of votes got by the APC came from the Christian dominated areas of north East (13.5%), South-South (9.1%) and South-East (1.5%). This trend also affected in the ministerial nominees with North East having 8, South-South 7 and South East 5 respectively.

The episode also increased political consciousness on the part of religious leaders. Religious leaders are now interested in politics and governance. As leaders with followers, therefore, they can become a tool for galvanising the citizens towards playing a positive role in the political process. Such mobilisation can be an important positive towards resolving the critical issues of nation building, good governance, and development and other plethora of challenges confronting the country.

7. Conclusion

The article examined the influence of ethnic and religious diversities on Nigeria's 2023 election as well as the implications which the scenario has on the electoral process. In doing this, data was sourced from documents relating to the issue under study. Equally, origin of Nigeria's plural character was traced. The article concluded that because the country's ethnic and religious boundaries roughly coincides, it becomes difficult to experience the influence of one without the other. In other words, ethnic and religious sentiments in Nigeria are more of Siamese twins. Second, it is concluded that both elements have continued to influence the electoral process in Nigeria. While this is not new as it dates back to the period before independence, this study has, however, revealed that contrary to expectation many years after independence, the trend has continued and has serious deleterious implications for political process in the country. Part pf the implications include tendency to aggravate conflicts and negative impact on national security. The article recommends improved measures beyond what is currently done to mitigate the worst effect of these elements.

Author Contributions

This work is sole authored and is an original research of the author.

Muhammad (2023)

Conflicts of Interest (Optional)
There is no conflict of interest associated to this publication

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