Religion and ethnicity in Nigeria politics: An assessment of the Fourth Republic

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Abstract

One of the most fundamental issues affecting the process of Nigerian political terrain today is Religion and Ethnicity, in the sense that it articulates and control the politics of the country. This study aims to examines the role of these two issues and their impact on Nigeria fourth Republic (1999-2023). The study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of past research findings and highlighting the complexities of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics, drawing on past literature to analyze their implications for governance, social cohesion, and democratic development. Through an ex-post facto research design, the study synthesizes existing knowledge to explore the intricate dynamics of religion and ethnicity in shaping political behaviors, electoral outcomes, and governance dynamics. Findings reveal that religion and ethnicity significantly influence political mobilization, identity-based voting patterns, and ethno-religious conflicts, posing challenges to democratic consolidation and national unity. Policy implications include the importance of fostering inclusive governance structures, promoting interfaith dialogue, and addressing identity-based grievances to build a more inclusive and peaceful society. Ultimately, this study underscores the need for concerted efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote social cohesion, and address the underlying drivers of religious and ethnic tensions in Nigerian politics. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria can move towards a more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous future, where the diverse identities of its citizens are respected and celebrated within the framework of democratic governance.

Keyword: Democratic Governance, Fourth Republic, Politics, Religion, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Globally, Religion relates to politics in ways which are themselves linked to the particular historical and developmental trajectories of individual societies, whether traditional or modern. In traditional societies the relationship between religion and politics is always a close one. Political power is underpinned by religious beliefs and practices, while political concerns permeate to the heart of the religious sphere. Rulers are not only political heads: they are also religious leaders, whose well-being is closely linked to their people's health and welfare. (UNRISD Discussion 1995).

Today, Africa is laced with some of the most obstinate conflicts, most of them constructed from differences in religious and ethnic identities. Religious and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues, state collapse, economic decline and ethno-religious clashes. In December 1991 Algeria held a first round of legislative elections — which were won convincingly by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) — which most independent observers characterized as among the freest ever held in North Africa or the Arab Middle East. The following January, however, Algeria's armed forces seized power to prevent the second round of elections which would almost certainly have given the FIS a mandate to form the next government. The assumption was that if the FIS achieved power it would summarily close down

Algeria's newly refreshed democratic institutions and political system. Such an assumption was not necessarily warranted. Islamist groups, whether in Algeria or elsewhere, have multiple goals involving social, political, and economic change towards an Islamic society (Haynes, 1995). Among the most "radical" of Islamist groups is Egypt's al-Gama'a al-Islamiya, whose programme of action involves murdering foreign tourists, suppliers of a significant proportion of Egypt's foreign exchange, as well as state representatives, in order to stimulate both economic and political crisis which would facilitate the gaining of power by Islamists.

Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic (1999-2023) has been characterized by complex interplays of religion, ethnicity, and power dynamics, which have significantly influenced governance, stability, and national integration. Ethno-religious conflicts, often exacerbated by political actors for personal or partisan gains, have posed formidable challenges to political stability (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007; Adenuga et al., 2023). These conflicts, fueled by competition for resources and identity-based grievances, have resulted in violence and displacement, hindering efforts towards socio-political cohesion (Eze, 2021). Moreover, the politicization of ethnicity and religion has undermined national integration, perpetuating divisions among diverse ethnic groups and communities (Adegbami & Uche, 2015; Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). In the realm of democratic governance, identity politics often overshadows policy debates, leading to patronage-based politics and weak governance structures (Chris, 2009). The manipulation of religious identities during election campaigns further undermines the credibility and inclusivity of the electoral process (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies, including building state capacity to manage conflicts effectively, promoting interfaith dialogue, and enhancing economic opportunities for all segments of society (Emeaku, 2019; Utoro, 2023). By fostering inclusivity and addressing underlying grievances, Nigeria can harness its diversity as a source of strength and resilience in its political landscape.

Religion holds significant importance in Nigerian society and politics, playing a central role in shaping identities, values, and political behaviors. With a diverse religious landscape encompassing Christianity, Islam, and indigenous beliefs, Nigeria's religious dynamics have often intersected with its political landscape, influencing governance, electoral outcomes, and national cohesion (Madami, 2023; Salahu, 2023). Both Christianity and Islam have sizable followings in Nigeria, and political elites frequently leverage religious identities to mobilize support and consolidate power (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Religious institutions wield considerable influence, serving as platforms for political messaging and activism, particularly during election campaigns (Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). However, the instrumentalization of religion in politics also exacerbates ethno-religious tensions and undermines democratic principles, as seen in the manipulation of religious sentiments for electoral gains (Aderayo & Olawunmi, 2023). Ethno-religious conflicts often arise from the competition for political power and resources, further complicating governance and impeding national integration (Ezeani & Chikeleze, 2017). Therefore, understanding the multifaceted relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by identity-based divisions and fostering inclusive governance structures that accommodate diverse religious communities (Egwu, 2011).

Ethnicity remains a salient feature of Nigerian society and politics, profoundly shaping identities, social relations, and

political allegiances. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria boasts a rich tapestry of cultures and traditions, but this diversity also presents challenges in governance and national unity (Chukwu & Udem, 2023). Ethnicity often serves as a primary basis for social organization and political mobilization, with political actors exploiting ethnic identities to garner support and consolidate power (Ohazurike, 2021). The politicization of ethnicity has contributed to identity-based grievances and tensions, fueling ethno-political conflicts and impeding efforts towards national integration (Adegbami & Uche, 2015). Moreover, the prevalence of identity politics has led to the marginalization of certain ethnic groups and regions, exacerbating inequalities and hindering inclusive development (Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). Ethnicity intersects with other factors such as religion and socio-economic status, further complicating Nigeria's political landscape and governance dynamics (Gbilekaa, 2012). Addressing the challenges posed by ethnicity in Nigerian politics requires fostering inclusive governance structures, promoting dialogue among diverse ethnic groups, and implementing equitable policies that address the needs and aspirations of all citizens (Nwankpa, 2022).

The relationship between religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic (1999-2023) has been intricate and fraught with challenges. Both religion and ethnicity have been exploited by political elites to mobilize support and consolidate power, leading to the polarization of society along sectarian lines (Madami, 2023). Ethno-religious conflicts, fueled by competition for political dominance and access to resources, have exacerbated divisions within communities and hindered efforts towards national cohesion (Adenuga et al., 2023). Furthermore, the politicization of religion and ethnicity has undermined democratic

principles, with identity-based grievances often overshadowing policy debates and electoral processes (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). These dynamics have posed significant challenges to governance, stability, and socio-political integration in Nigeria (Ezeani & Chikeleze, 2017). Despite these challenges, understanding the interplay between religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics is crucial for devising effective strategies to address identity-based conflicts, promote inclusive governance, and foster national unity (Utoro, 2023). The aim of this study is to Provide a comprehensive assessment of the role of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic and highlighting the challenges and opportunities for socio-political development in the country. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policymakers, scholars, and civil society actors about the complex dynamics of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics and contribute to the formulation of evidence-based interventions aimed at promoting peace, stability, and inclusive democracy in the Nigeria's fourth republic.

2. Literature Review
This chapter present a comprehensive review of existing literature on the relationship between religion and ethnicity in the Nigeria's fourth republic. The literature review serves as a foundation for understanding the key concepts, theories and empirical evidence related to this study. This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework and contextual backdrop for the subsequent analysis of Ethnicity and religion impactfulness on Nigeria's fourth republic (1999 - 2023).

2.1 Concept of Religion and Ethnicity
The concept of religion encompasses diverse beliefs, practices, and institutions that center around the worship of a higher power or spiritual entity. Scholars have approached the definition of religion from

various perspectives, emphasizing its multifaceted nature. Emeaku (2019) views religion as a system of beliefs and rituals that provide individuals with a sense of meaning, purpose, and moral guidance. Similarly, Abdullahi & Saka (2007) define religion as a social institution that regulates human behavior and fosters a sense of community among believers. These definitions highlight religion's role in shaping individuals' worldview, morality, and social interactions. Moreover, religion often intersects with culture, politics, and identity, influencing various aspects of society (Madami, 2023). Conversely, ethnicity refers to the shared cultural, linguistic, and historical traits that define a particular group of people. Adegbami & Uche (2015) conceptualize ethnicity as a form of social identity characterized by common ancestry, language, and customs. Ethnic groups often exhibit solidarity and cohesion based on these shared characteristics, which may include kinship ties, territorial boundaries, and cultural practices (Chukwu & Udem, 2023). However, ethnicity is not static and can be fluid, evolving over time through interactions with other groups and changes in social, economic, and political contexts (Ohazurike, 2021). Additionally, ethnicity intersects with other forms of identity, such as religion and nationality, leading to complex patterns of belonging and allegiance (Gbilekaa, 2012). Despite their distinctiveness, religion and ethnicity often overlap conceptually, as religious beliefs and practices may be closely intertwined with ethnic identity, influencing individuals' sense of belonging and group solidarity (Egwu, 2011). Thus, while religion and ethnicity represent distinct dimensions of social life, their interplay contributes to the complexity of identity formation and social dynamics in diverse societies such as Islam, Christianity, traditional belief are the religion practicing in the country. Nigeria is a very ethnically diverse country with 371 ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Hausa, Yoruba and the Igbo. others notable ethnic in the country are TIV, Ijaw, Urhobos, Edo, Fulfulde, Ibibio, Siyawa and others.

2.2 Overview of Nigerian Politics in the Fourth Republic

The Fourth Republic of Nigeria, spanning from 1999 to 2023, marked a significant period of transition from military rule to democratic governance. This era was characterized by a complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors that shaped the country's political landscape. Following years of military dictatorship, Nigeria embarked on a path towards democratization, marked by the adoption of a new constitution and the organization of multi-party elections (Utoro, 2023). However, Nigerian politics during this period was marred by persistent challenges, including corruption, ethno-religious conflicts, and governance deficits (Nwankpa, 2022). The political arena was dominated by a few powerful parties and elites, with a tendency towards patronage politics and electoral manipulation (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Despite efforts to promote democratic governance and institutional reforms, the Fourth Republic witnessed recurrent episodes of violence, particularly in the form of ethno-religious clashes and electoral violence (Adenuga et al., 2023). Moreover, issues of resource allocation, federalism, and ethnic representation remained contentious, reflecting deep-seated grievances and inequalities within Nigerian society (Ohazurike, 2021). Nevertheless, the Fourth Republic also saw moments of progress and resilience, with civil society activism, media freedom, and citizen engagement playing crucial roles in advancing democratic norms and accountability (Eze, 2021).

2.3 Intersectionality of Religion and Ethnicity in Nigerian Politics

The intersectionality of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic (1999-2023) underscores the complex dynamics that shape the

country's socio-political landscape. Religion and ethnicity often intertwine, influencing individuals' identities, allegiances, and political behaviors. In Nigeria, where ethno-religious diversity is pronounced, these intersecting identities play a significant role in shaping political mobilization, electoral outcomes, and governance dynamics (Madami, 2023). Politicians frequently exploit religious and ethnic sentiments to garner support and consolidate power, leading to the polarization of society along sectarian lines (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Ethno-religious conflicts, exacerbated by political manipulation and competition for resources, further deepen divisions within communities and impede efforts towards national cohesion (Adenuga et al., 2023). Moreover, the politicization of religion and ethnicity often leads to the marginalization of certain groups, exacerbating inequalities and fostering grievances (Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). However, religion and ethnicity also serve as sources of resilience and solidarity, with religious and ethnic communities mobilizing for social justice, peacebuilding, and democratic reform (Eze, 2021). Understanding the intersectionality of religion and ethnicity is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by identity-based conflicts and promoting inclusive governance structures that accommodate diverse religious and ethnic identities (Utoro, 2023). By fostering dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect among different religious and ethnic groups, Nigeria can harness its diversity as a source of strength and unity in its political landscape.

2.4 Historical Context of Religious and Ethnic Dynamics in Nigeria

The historical context of religious and ethnic dynamics in Nigeria provides crucial insights into the complexities of the country's socio-political landscape. Nigeria's colonial history, marked by British colonial rule and the subsequent amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups, laid the foundation for the ethnic and religious diversity observed today (Ohazurike, 2021). The imposition of colonial boundaries and administrative structures disregarded pre-existing ethnic and religious affiliations, leading to the coexistence of numerous ethnic groups and religious communities within the same geopolitical entity (Nwankpa, 2022). This legacy of colonialism contributed to tensions and competition for resources among ethnic groups, as well as the emergence of religious divides, particularly between Christian and Muslim communities (Ezeani & Chikeleze, 2017). Additionally, the post-independence period was marked by political instability, military coups, and ethnic tensions. Over time, Gowon's attempt to strengthen the federal system by dividing Nigeria's four regions into 12 states, coupled with similar moves establishing 19 states in 1976, helped only to accentuate ethnic differences (Bach 1989, 19). Not only did these attempts at reorganization weaken national unity, but they opened the door for the use of religion as a tool to form a political constituency transcending both ethnic and state boundaries (Hunwick Nov. 1992, 148). The oil boom of the 1970s intensified competition for control over resources, leading to ethno-religious conflicts and communal violence (Chris, 2009). Moreover, the politicization of ethnicity and religion by successive governments and political elites exacerbated identity-based grievances and perpetuated cycles of violence (Salahu, 2023). Despite efforts to promote national unity and integration, Nigeria continues to grapple with the legacies of its colonial past and the challenges posed by ethnic and religious diversity (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007). Understanding the historical roots of religious and ethnic dynamics is essential for devising effective strategies to address identity-based conflicts, promote social cohesion, and foster inclusive

governance structures in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and beyond.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This section aims to identify the theories to be review to explain the relationship between religion and ethnicity in the Nigeria's fourth republic (1999 - 2023). Three theories were used they include; Ethnoreligious conflict theory, identity politics theory, and resource mobilization theory.

2.5.1 Ethnoreligious Conflict Theory

The Ethnoreligious Conflict Theory, proposed by scholars such as Emeaku (2019), posits that political conflict often arises from the intersection of ethnic and religious identities, leading to heightened tensions and violence. The theory assumes that ethnic and religious groups compete for power, resources, and recognition within the political sphere, resulting in identity-based grievances and conflicts (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007). Significantly, this theory highlights the role of political elites in manipulating ethnic and religious identities for their own interests, exacerbating divisions and fostering animosity among different communities (Adenuga et al., 2023). Critics argue that the Ethnoreligious Conflict Theory oversimplifies complex social dynamics and overlooks other factors contributing to political conflict, such as economic inequality and governance failures (Chris, 2009). However, the theory remains significant for understanding the drivers of ethno-religious conflicts and guiding interventions aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation. Applying the Ethnoreligious Conflict Theory to the study of Nigerian politics reveals historical examples of ethno-religious conflicts, such as the Jos crisis and the Boko Haram insurgency, which have been fueled by competition for political power and religious extremism (Ezeani & Chikeleze, 2017). Moreover, analyzing power dynamics and resource allocation in ethno-religious conflicts sheds light on how

political elites exploit ethnic and religious divisions to maintain their grip on power and access to resources, further exacerbating tensions and perpetuating cycles of violence (Madami, 2023).

2.5.2 Identity Politics Theory

The Identity Politics Theory, advocated by scholars like Adegbami & Uche (2015), explores how ethnic and religious identities influence political behavior, including voting patterns and party politics. This theory, developed in the late 20th century, assumes that individuals' political preferences and actions are shaped by their sense of ethnic or religious belonging and the perceived interests of their respective identity groups. It posits that politicians and parties often mobilize ethnic and religious groups for political purposes by appealing to their identity-based grievances and aspirations (Ohazurike, 2021). Critics argue that the Identity Politics Theory essentializes and reinforces divisions among different identity groups, potentially undermining national cohesion and democratic principles (Ezeani & Chikeleze, 2017). However, the theory remains significant for understanding the complexities of political mobilization in ethnically and religiously diverse societies like Nigeria. Applying the Identity Politics Theory to the study of Nigerian politics explains how political parties strategically target specific ethnic and religious constituencies, often through the provision of patronage and symbolic gestures (Odogwu, 2023). Moreover, analyzing identity-based voting patterns reveals how individuals' ethnic or religious affiliations influence their electoral choices and party loyalties, shaping the dynamics of competitive politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (Onyinye & Chris, 2019). By examining the mobilization of ethnic and religious groups for political purposes and the impact of identity-based voting on party politics, the Identity Politics Theory offers valuable insights into the complexities of Nigerian political behavior

and the challenges of building inclusive and representative democratic institutions.

2.5.3 Resource Mobilization Theory

The Resource Mobilization Theory, pioneered by scholars like Chris (2009), examines how resources, both material and symbolic, are utilized in political movements to achieve specific goals. Developed in the 20th century, this theory challenges earlier notions that social movements are solely driven by grievances or ideology, instead emphasizing the importance of organizational structure, leadership, and access to resources in mobilizing collective action. The theory assumes that political movements require resources such as funding, manpower, and media support to effectively challenge existing power structures and advance their objectives (Adegbami & Uche, 2015). Significantly, the Resource Mobilization Theory highlights the role of elites and grassroots organizations in mobilizing resources and coordinating collective action, thereby shaping the dynamics of political participation (Eze, 2021). Critics argue that the theory overlooks the role of ideology and social identity in motivating political activism, potentially downplaying the significance of grassroots mobilization and spontaneous protests (Gbilekaa, 2012). However, the Resource Mobilization Theory remains influential for understanding the strategic calculations and organizational dynamics of political movements. Applying the theory to the study of Nigerian politics reveals how religious and ethnic groups mobilize resources, both material and symbolic, to assert their interests and influence political outcomes (Salahu, 2023). Moreover, analyzing the role of elites and grassroots organizations in resource mobilization efforts sheds light on the power dynamics within Nigerian society and the mechanisms through which political influence is exerted (Odogwu, 2023). By examining how resources are mobilized and deployed in political movements, the Resource Mobilization Theory offers valuable insights into the complexities of political participation and the strategies employed by different actors to achieve their objectives in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

3. Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of the research question and the need to delve into historical and contemporary contexts, a qualitative research design would be most suitable for this study. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena and the generation of rich, contextualized data. Data Collection Methods includes document Analysis of Primary Sources which includes, government documents (e.g., constitutions, electoral laws, policy documents, newspaper articles, editorials, and opinion pieces, court cases and legal documents, secondary sources include academic books, journal articles, and research papers, reports and publications by think tanks, NGOs, and international organizations. This approach is justified by the vast body of existing literature on the subject, which offers valuable insights and analyses of historical events, political processes, and social dynamics within Nigeria (Webster & Watson, 2002). By synthesizing and analyzing existing data, this study can build upon and contribute to the existing knowledge base on the intersection of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics. Finally, the data analysis techniques utilized in this study involve Thematic analysis approach to extract the meaningful patterns, themes ans insights from the selected secondary sources. Thematic analysis is well-suited to uncovering underlying concepts, relationships and variations in the qualitative data, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of religion and ethnicity in the Nigeria's fourth republic.

4. Results and Discussion

This study has made it known that among other things that the religion and ethnicity in the Nigeria's fourth republic has brought more harm than good and it end up with the following findings:

4.1 Religion and Ethnicity in Nigerian Politics during the Fourth Republic

Religion and ethnicity have profoundly influenced Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic, as evidenced by past studies examining the intersection of these identities with political processes and outcomes. Scholars have documented how religious and ethnic identities shape political mobilization, electoral behavior, and governance dynamics in Nigeria (Madami, 2023). For instance, research has highlighted the role of identity-based voting patterns and the mobilization of ethnic and religious groups by political elites for electoral gains (Onyinye & Chris, 2019). Moreover, studies have underscored the significance of ethno-religious conflicts in destabilizing governance structures and impeding efforts towards national integration (Eze, 2021). These findings resonate with the complexities observed in Nigerian politics, where the manipulation of religious and ethnic identities by political actors often leads to polarization, violence, and governance challenges (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Additionally, past research has explored the impact of resource mobilization efforts by ethnic and religious groups on political participation and power dynamics (Odogwu, 2023). By synthesizing and building upon past studies, this discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics, emphasizing their implications for democratic governance, social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

4.2 The Role of Religion and Ethnicity in Nigerian Politics

Religion and ethnicity play significant roles in shaping Nigerian politics, with past studies shedding light on their intricate dynamics and implications. Religion serves as a mobilizing force, with religious identities often influencing political behaviors and electoral outcomes (Odii & Anigbo, 2023). Similarly, ethnicity serves as a basis for social organization and political mobilization, with ethnic groups competing for power and resources within the political sphere (Adegbami & Uche, 2015). Research has shown that political elites frequently exploit these identities for their own interests, leading to the polarization of society along religious and ethnic lines (Adenuga et al., 2023). Moreover, ethno-religious conflicts, fueled by political manipulation and competition, have posed significant challenges to governance and stability (Eze, 2021). However, religion and ethnicity also serve as sources of resilience and solidarity, with religious and ethnic communities mobilizing for social justice and democratic reform (Egwu, 2011). By synthesizing past studies, this discussion underscores the complex interplay of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics, highlighting their implications for democratic governance, social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

4.3 Implications for Nigeria's Political Landscape

The implications of religion and ethnicity for Nigeria's political landscape are profound, as evidenced by past studies that have highlighted their complex interplay and ramifications. Ethno-religious tensions have often led to violence, instability, and governance challenges, posing significant obstacles to democratic consolidation and national unity (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007). Moreover, the manipulation of religious and ethnic identities by political elites has perpetuated divisions and hindered efforts towards inclusive governance and social cohesion (Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). These dynamics have profound implications for Nigeria's political stability, economic development, and social progress (Ohazurike, 2021).

However, religion and ethnicity also serve as sources of resilience and solidarity, with religious and ethnic communities mobilizing for social justice and democratic reform (Eze, 2021). By recognizing the complexities and challenges posed by religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards fostering inclusive governance structures, promoting interfaith dialogue, and addressing identity-based grievances (Utoro, 2023). Ultimately, the implications of religion and ethnicity for Nigeria's political landscape underscore the need for concerted efforts to build a more inclusive, equitable, and peaceful society.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the intricate dynamics of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics during the Fourth Republic (1999-2023). Key findings reveal that religion and ethnicity significantly influence political behaviors, electoral outcomes, and governance dynamics, often leading to polarization, violence, and governance challenges. The contributions of this study to the existing literature lie in its comprehensive analysis of past research findings, providing insights into the complex interplay of religion and ethnicity in Nigerian politics. By synthesizing existing knowledge, this study enhances our understanding of the implications of religion and ethnicity for Nigeria's political landscape, emphasizing the need for inclusive governance structures, interfaith dialogue, and strategies to address identity-based grievances. Policy implications and recommendations arising from this study include the importance of promoting social cohesion, strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering dialogue among diverse religious and ethnic communities. Policy implications and recommendations arising from this study include the importance of promoting social cohesion,

strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering dialogue among diverse religious and ethnic communities. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria can move towards a more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous future, where the diverse identities of its citizens are respected and celebrated within the framework of democratic governance.

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