



**A Comparative Study of the Interconnectedness of Religion,
Political Literacy, and Voter Choices for Females in Nigeria:
Evidence from Northern and Southern Regions**

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Abstract

Political outcomes refer to factors that determine or influence voting behaviour and political participation. Political outcomes are quite important as they dovetail from the political decisions made by political participants. Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are more often than not awash with nuances and not at par with realities at the regional level. There are more questions arising from dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level; how political outcomes get driven by interactions with religious groups and interests in Nigeria.

The perception of religion by the government in Nigeria is mostly a tool for political mobilization. This has been a recurring key indicator in Nigeria's successive elections. However, there appear to be fragments of disparities in the degrees of influence of religion on political activities at the regional levels. Most research conducted on this subject considers the general outlook of the influence of religion over political participation and political outcomes. Still, the outcomes of this research may not paint a true picture of the deeper contexts given that the dynamics of the regions differ and that there seems to be a variance between the North and the South on the role of religion. Similarly, there has not been any focus on how religion influences the political outcomes of female Nigerian voters or how political literacy can mediate the impact of religion on political outcomes.

Consequently, this project aims to examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and political literacy levels on voters' decisions and political outcomes at regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria. A mixed-method approach was adopted to alleviate any contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings, whilst also embedding the findings of this research in the experience of participants and stakeholders considered in the study. The research concludes that while the influence of religion on political outcomes is higher in the North than in the South, the role of political literacy in mediating this influence is marginal in both regions given the endemic damage caused by patriarchy. This research equally notes that the impact of patriarchy on the political participation of women is similar in both the North and the South.

Keywords: Religion, Political Literacy, Patriarchy, Political outcomes, Female Nigerian Voters, Southern Nigeria, Northern Nigeria

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The place of women in all human society cannot be over-emphasized as they have a role to play in every facet of human living. However, despite this glaring reality, the role of women in some societies has been reduced largely to the fringes. This has been due to the nature of human society where the woman is made a second-class citizen. The situation is not different in Africa where the patriarchal nature of African communities has reduced their role in politics and other facets of the decision-making process. The issue of the marginalization of women has been one that precedes the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. For instance, the Political Bureau established by Ibrahim Babangida's military government was tasked with conducting a review of Nigeria's political and socioeconomic systems before the Third Republic's establishment. In its report, the Department notably conceded that there is a gender gap in the country and recognised the need to safeguard the freedoms of women in the country (Abdullah, 1993). To this end, the Bureau suggested a concession of 5% of regulative seats by any means of nearby, state, and central legislatures to women (Abdullah, 1993). Although this proposal was dismissed by the junta, it is a pointer to how the issue of marginalization of women in political participation has garnered concern in the past. In the fourth republic as well, the issue of affirmative action has been passed into law. The Affirmative Action requires that a concession of 35% of elective seats be reserved for women. As interesting as this, women who get into elective seats are not up to 10%. They are limited by factors such as religion, culture, and economy, among others.

In Nigerian politics, religion is generally regarded as a Tour du Force (Ikem, Ogbonna & Nwoke, 2019). In this regard, Ayantayo (2009) observed that there are the justification, definition, and sustenance of religion in the Nigerian political space. As regards political outcomes, especially election outcomes, the appeal to religion and all that concerns it to win the election has become the order of the day, particularly with the transition to democracy in 1999 (Ikem, Ogbonna & Ogunnubi, 2020). Political outcomes are those factors that influence the voting behaviour and political participation of women. It can mean a lot of things chief of which are electoral choices and political participation among others. These outcomes are influenced by various state and

nonstate actors such as political parties, characters, media, political influencers, religion, ethnicity, and policies of political parties, among other things. To be candid, studies interrogating the nexus between religion and political outcomes (political outcomes) in Nigeria are theoretically scanty and empirically few. What is most available are newspaper commentaries that lack rigorous methodology and robust analysis (Nwankwo, 2019).

One of the existing studies was done by Nwankwo (2019) who used statistical data and focused on presidential elections between 1999 and 2015. He posited that there is weak evidence to support the relationship between religious values and political outcomes in Nigerian politics. Nwankwo (2019) categorically observed that religious values had no real impact on the outcomes of the 1999 and 2003 presidential elections respectively, but religious values had a mild impact on the outcomes of the 2011 presidential elections and had a significant impact on the political outcomes of the 2015 presidential elections. This finding reiterates Ishiyama (2012) and Bratton et al. (2012) arguments which noted that people who have a place in the political power will in general help the administering party, yet the converse is the situation for individuals who see that their social gathering is marginalized. Therefore, Nwankwo (2019) concluded that the relationship between religious affiliation and political outcomes in Nigeria is weak but not nil.

Furthermore, in a related study on the linkages between religion and political outcomes in Nigeria, Ojo (2019) focused on the role of religious values in shaping and determining the outcome of the 2019 presidential elections. He noted the absence of much intellectual attention on the interplay between religion and voters' behaviour in Nigeria. For him, religion has a strong influence on Nigerian politics Islam and Christianity are not the only religions in Nigeria, but they are in the majority and have dominated Nigerian political space. He further noted that competition and rivalry between the two religions have done a great disservice to the supposed secular status of the Nigerian state which is not good for the consolidation of democracy in the country. Focusing on the results of the 2019 presidential elections alone, Ojo (2019) noted that religion played a critical role in voters' choices across the country. The majority of the electorates in the Christian dominated regions such as South-South and South-East did not vote for Muhammadu Buhari, the Presidential candidate of the All-Progressive Congress, while the Muslim-dominated regions of Northern Nigeria voted massively for him.

Although, this study was largely descriptive and as well as historical because it highlighted and explained the reasons and possible evidence of the acrimony between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, however, the study had some fundamental shortcomings because it covered only one presidential election which is not enough to make plausible inferences on the nexus between religious values and political outcomes in Nigeria. The methodology used in the study was largely descriptive and based on secondary sources of data collection. Concerted efforts were not made to either interview or get the views of either stakeholder (Christians and Muslim voters) involved in the electoral process or even the electorates.

In another study conducted by Babalola (2020), religion, ethnicity and regional factors were considered as key factors influencing voters' behaviour in the 2019 general elections. The study employed historical analysis to trace the origin of the interplay between these factors and political outcomes in Nigeria. It noted that right from the 1959 general elections (apart from the 1993 presidential elections), religion, ethnicity and regional factors have featured prominently in Nigerian politics. Using the 2019 presidential elections as its unit of analysis, Babalola (2020) argues ethnicity and religion serve as instruments of mobilization by the elites in their desire to climb the political platform. He observed that apart from the 1993 presidential elections, the pattern of voting has always been motorized by ethnoreligious factors. He argued that rationally based voters in Nigeria who are not influenced by their ethnic or religious views are in the minority. His assumptions and conclusions are no different from other scholars who have focused on the nexus between religion and voters' behaviour in Nigeria. However, in his study, apart from tracing the historical development of the interplay between religious values and political outcomes, he added other factors such as ethnicity and regions in the shaping of voter behaviour. While these inclusions are commendable, they failed to properly capture the nuances or undercurrents of religion vis-à-vis politics in Nigeria. The inclusion of ethnicity in particular reduces the influence that religion could have in influencing politics in Nigeria.

The literature reviewed above on the influence of religious values in shaping political outcomes, especially political outcomes unravels an intellectual unanimity that religious bias and sentiment shape and condition voter behaviour in Nigeria. To be candid, these studies are not many and are largely descriptive and historical. They failed to employ primary data in testing the

hypothesis on the linkages between religious values and political outcomes in Nigeria, with their findings too limited to lead to a dependable and valid inference that can stand empirical scrutiny.

1.1.1 Religion and Advancing the Political Order in Nigeria

To be sure, some studies have delved into the place of religion making and unmaking the political order in Nigeria. In fact, since the return to democracy in 1999, a plethora of studies have focused on how the interplay between religion and politics does not augur well for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The role of religion in Nigerian politics has attracted and competed for the attention of scholars, think tanks and international organizations. A survey of the literature unearths three contending schools of thought on the importance or obstacle of religion in advancing political order in Nigeria.

The first set of analyses argued that religion has done more harm than good to the peace and stability of Nigeria. This set of scholars includes but is not restricted to Ludwig (2008), Obianyo (2010), Paden (2015), and Ojo (2018), among others. The core of their assumptions is that the dynamics and manifestations of religion in Nigerian politics have created and exacerbated tension and conflict in the country. In this context, Obianyo (2010, p.143) observed that: this is not to say that religious consideration does not play a significant role in the nation's power-play, at a particular point in the nation's history, politics became so 'religionised' that it divided the citizens into two worlds; the Muslims and the Christians. This divide between Muslims and Christians may not be the sole reason for conflicts in the country but it is certainly the major reason for conflicts in the country. According to Ojo (2019), thousands of Nigerians have died from ethnoreligious conflicts since their independence to date. This school of thought consider religion a centripetal force that cannot advance the peace and stability of the Nigerian state. They advocate for the isolation of religion from the public sphere for peace and order in the country (Tar & Shettima, 2010).

The second strand of analysis in the debate on religion and political order in Nigeria is of the view that Islamic fundamentalists in the country are doing everything within their power to conquer and appropriate the Nigerian state and its apparatus. Examples of scholars sharing this perspective include but are not restricted to Kukah (2003), Harnischfeger (2006), and Lenshie and Ayokhai (2012), among others. Generally, they argued that there is an agenda to create an Islamic

political order in Nigeria. There is a widespread belief that: the Boko Haram insurgency, for many Christians, is an Islamic agenda to reclaim Usman Danfodio's territorial area by whatever means. This relentlessness can be referred to as 'political jihad'. The political jihad is geared towards ensuring that Muslims control the top hierarchies of every sector in the country. This position might be true or false (Lenshie and Akpu, 2014, p.57), but it is nevertheless a widespread assumption from the views of many Christians in Nigeria because such an assertion might not be unfounded with the emergence and growth of Political Islam in Nigeria. The rationale or philosophy behind political Islam is that non-believers of Islam, known either as Kafir or Arne, cannot rule except if they convert to Islam. This overriding idea led to the adoption of Sharia law in any part of Northern Nigeria (Pérouse de Montclos, 2020).

The third strand of analysis focused on the rise and spread of Christianity especially its Pentecostal variants and its implication for political stability and order in Nigeria. This set of scholars includes but is not restricted to Obadare (2018), Onongha (2018), Adesoji (2018), Ikem, Ogbonna and Ogunnubi (2020); Ikem and Ogbonna (2020), among others. It was Ebenezer Obadare's magnum opus titled "Pentecostal Republic: Religion and the Struggle for State Power in Nigeria" published in 2018 that lays the foundational work on how Pentecostalism which a form of Christianity religion is, provides a means or vehicle for the competition of state powers. Three out of every ten Nigerians identify themselves as part of a Pentecostal organization making Nigeria one of the countries with the largest Pentecostal population and churches in the African continent (Burgess, 2015). Although not the only form of Christian religious practice in Nigeria, however, Pentecostalism given its population, reach and influence, is now a force to reckon with in all facets of society (Ikem, Ogbonna and Ogunnubi, 2020). The leaders of these Pentecostal churches are routinely consulted by many members of the political elites for either electoral support or regime legitimacy. They have even delved into making prophecies on political outcomes which have also increased their visibility and access to state power (Ikem and Ogbonna, 2020). While many of the leaders of the Pentecostal churches are bent on attracting members to their church or denomination, some of them are clamouring for access to corridors and apparatuses of state power. Also, Pentecostalism has been considered a site for belongingness and exclusionary politics in contemporary Nigerian society (Adesoji, 2018).

1.1.2 Political Literacy as a Moderating Factor on Religion Which Affects Political Outcomes

Literature on the role of education in shaping political outcomes, especially in developed and developing democracies abounds. Studies such as Larreguy and Marshall (2018;2014), Davies (2008), Finkel (2003), McMahon (2003), and Bratton (1999), among others, have argued that democracy can be taught. These scholars believe that an educated middle class can hold the government responsible and make rational choices without the interference of ethnoreligious sentiments and ideas. The intellectual consensus among these scholars is that a high level of political education encourages and inculcates the norms and tenets of democracy which include tolerance, and freedom of speech, among others that are very important in the process of democratization (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2004, 2007). In this context, Finkel (2003) argued that political literacy level has a moderate effect on the citizen's participation in politics, knowledge of politics, support for democratic institutions, and trust and tolerance in political institutions among others. Corroborating this fact, Larreguy and Marshall (2014) observed that when the majority of the citizens of a state are politically educated, there is an increase in civic participation in such a state. According to them, such political literacy level individuals become more attentive to issues bothering politics, stand higher chances of voting and being voted for, participate more in community activities, and may even promote collaboration with local politicians. They noted that the push for increasing political education through school enrolment in third-world democracies is crucial for the consolidation of such democracies.

Nevertheless, the above view has not gone unchallenged in the literature, studies such as Campante and Chor (2012a), Acemoglu et al., (2005), Glaeser et al., (2004), and Huntington (1968), among others, have argued that the relationship between education and consolidation of democracy is weak and, in some cases, negative. Huntington (1968) observed that there is a mismatch between education and labour market requirements in many democratic countries of the world and this leads to alienation and instability. When the graduates are not employed and their basic needs are unmet, the tendency for them to resort to armed violence is high. Campante and Chor (2012a) using examples from the Arab Spring argued that education alone cannot lead to democratic consolidation or rollback. For these scholars, other intervening variables account for the linkages between schooling and political participation, which is the economic factor.

Studies on the effect of political literacy as a moderating factor on religion in determining political outcomes in Nigeria are quite a few. Available studies such as Larreguy and Marshall (2018), (2014), Ameachi, Okechukwu and Ikechukwu (2018) among others focus on the nexus between education and democracy, political behaviour, voter apathy and electoral turnout in Nigeria. Larreguy and Marshall (2018), using Nigeria as their case study, noted that the provision of free education at the primary school level fosters pro-democratic civic and political engagement in a weak democracy like Nigeria. For them, primary schooling increases the tendency for fundamental forms of political participation such as voting, community participation and interest in politics. In the same vein, Ameachi, Okechukwu, and Ikechukwu (2018) observed that political education helps voters make the right choices and shun electoral fraud, malpractices, and violence. These studies are quite insightful and germane; however, their data sets are quite small, and their methodology is not robust.

Furthermore, some studies have focused on the nexus between voters' education and political behaviour in the country. These studies include but are not restricted to Bui (2006), Segay (2007), Jega (2008), and Ojo (2008), among others. An x-ray of the literature shows that the level of political illiteracy is still low among Nigerians. For instance, Segay (2007) noted that Nigerian electorates are still wallowing in stark ignorance and acute illiteracy about the entire electoral process. To this end, they are easily manipulated by dubious Nigerian politicians who prey on their ethno-religious sentiments. In a similar vein, Jega (2006) adduced that, for the battle against the incessant cases of violence in elections to succeed, voter education is not only paramount but also necessary. He argued that credible stakeholders such as the Electoral Management Body (EMB), government agencies and NGOs in the electoral process should enlighten the public on the consequences of electoral fraud and violence. This to him will help in building a political culture that will aid the sustainability of the electoral system.

Furthermore, according to Bui (2006), voter education involves the entire areas in which voters ought to be enlightened; these range from their roles in the entire electoral process to building their confidence in the electoral system. He emphasized workshops for segments of society such as Religious Leaders, Civil Society and Non-Government organizations, community-based organizations, traditional rulers, opinion leaders, academic communities, youths, students and women organizations, professional and labour organizations, opinion leaders etc.

Jingles, roadshows, and the use of media organizations will also help in this regard. He also identified areas such as secrecy of voters during elections, electoral codes of conduct during elections and so on.

The International Human Rights Law Group (2003), (IHRL) argued that voters must be educated to be involved in the entire electoral process and that staying aloof during elections because of electoral fraud and violence will not help the system. In this context, Sagay, (2007), in his views pointed out the relevance of voters as the engine wheel of any democratic society. That is why he pointed out their relevance as the only set of people that can change the system if welleducated and enlightened. He worried about how voters change the system if they were not informed. For him, the weapon of war in a bloodless revolution is the ‘voter’s card’. So, these voters must be enlightened against the dubious acts of some politicians who appeal to them using the instrumentality of ethnoreligious cleavages and blind allegiance to personalities.

In this regard, Ojo (2008) noted that the Nigerian government needs to invest in and strengthen political literacy. He observed that most of the electorates in Nigeria still have a low level of political culture. Sincerely, most of the voters still subject themselves to politics of money, favouritism, sectionalism, and abuse of voting powers (Ojo, 2008). This is more pronounced in Nigeria because money politics is the yardstick for gaining peoples’ mandate. He concluded that not until proper orientation and political literacy are given to the electorates, politicking in Nigeria would still be guided by parochial political behaviour.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the study

1.2.1 Research aim

The study aims to investigate how religion and political literacy level influence the political outcome with a comparison between the North and South in Nigeria. The research sets out to contribute to the literature on the determinants of political outcomes regarding Christianity and Islam and it seeks to achieve the following purpose:

“To investigate how political outcomes of women voters are influenced by religion in Nigeria and to ascertain whether the differences inherent within the South and the North are informed by a depth of religion and literacy levels”.

1.2.2 Research objectives

The research objectives are designed to achieve the overall aim of this study. The research objectives are subdivided into theoretical and analytical objectives.

1.2.2.1 Theoretical Objectives

To discuss relevant literature on political stakeholders and their unique characteristics, their perceptions of religion and political literacy level and the differences across regions including a discussion of the literature linking other variables unique to the North and South:

- To discuss relevant literature on religion and its significance as a mechanism for political outcomes.
- To highlight the policy implications of the research findings; and
- To make recommendations that boost the understanding of how religion and political literacy levels can lead to political outcomes that translate to sustainable development for developing countries.

1.2.2.2 Analytical objectives

- To investigate the general and disparate influences of religion on the electoral process at the regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria.

This will be done through available historical data, contextual analysis as well a mixed modelling approach, which is an analysis based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The population studied is female voters in Nigeria. The key areas to be interrogated are the regional divergence of voter decision-making and political participation as well as the role religion plays in the sociological aspects. This work will also examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on voters' decision and their roles in the current Nigerian political setup.

- To examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and political literacy levels on voters' decision and their roles in the current Nigerian political setup.
- To evaluate religious diversity and the advancement of political goals.

The necessity of this aspect of the research is rooted in the events surrounding the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria and the role of some religious leaders in the emergence of some political candidates. In this regard, a separatist study of the Southern and Northern regions, and the comparison of the religious differences in both regions will be the focus in a bid to understand the

secularism or otherwise of each region, the authority of their religious leaders and other key variables. This is because, while the Southern region is more liberal, with a more Christian population, and has high literacy rates, the Northern region is dominated by Islam and has low literacy levels.

1.3 Significance of the study

Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are often awash with nuances and not on par with realities at the regional level. More questions are arising from dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level; how political outcomes get driven by interactions with religious groups and interests; as well as the position of traditional religions in a developing country like Nigeria.

While much academic research on the subject recommends secular constitutional transformism, such recommendations are hardly achievable without a deeper understanding of the disparities to identify the meeting points. Secular constitutional transformationism recognises and lays the framework for the secularity of the Nigerian state as a way of dealing with the scourge of religions in Nigeria (See Ogoloma, 2012; Nnamani, 2014). Other studies argue for restructuring to prevent the malignant leverage of religion at the central level and inscribe more fairness in the electoral process. For example, Tochukwu and Nwafor-Orizu, (2018) opined that restructuring will halt the trend of ethno-religious crises in the country; Nwokolo (2020) holds that restructuring will not only solve ethno-religious crises but will be a launch pad for development for the country; among others. However, arguments around restructuring cannot be freely posed as the better alternative without a proper understanding of the variables at all levels of governance including the state and local governments.

These make it imperative to interrogate the level of social commitment to religious inclinations in politics across the regions and its potential influence on political outcomes. Furthermore, to contribute new knowledge in this field, the way literacy level moderates the impact of religion on political outcomes is examined. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study to assess this.

Whilst academic research may have drawn a nexus between these indicators and political outcomes, most of the works fail to offer empirical findings and deeper insights into the role of religion. A common opinion in this regard is that ethnoreligious violence discourages voter participation. Another commonly held opinion is that religion restricts public engagement in elections, voting or even making appearances in public because of a lack of sufficient education. In other words, religion plays a major role in influencing voter's behaviour, political choice or level of political participation in a clime like Nigeria (Ejikeme, 2019; Jatau and Maza, 2023). In the face of several contexts like these, mere numbers may not hold up to tell the true state of things and the weight of the influence of religion on these variables. This research aims to cover that research gap.

Broadly speaking, this study relates to the role of religion in voter choices and then asks further questions relating to the extent to which political literacy levels matter. This builds further to ask whether political literacy matters in the religion-voter choice nexus. Hence, this research contributes to knowledge in the following thematic areas:

1. The role of religion in the political outcomes of women.
2. Political Literacy level as a Moderating Factor on how religion affects Political Outcomes of Women.

Figure 1. Schematic Presentation of Research Themes

Source: (Author 2021)

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions covering these research themes to be explored are as follows:

- What are the factors that determine the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?
- Does political literacy level create a divergence in the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?
- How dominant are religious values concerning the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?

- Does patriarchy and gender sensitivity influence the political participation level and outcome of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?

1.5 Scope of the study

This study investigates the impact of religion and literacy levels on political outcomes in Nigeria. There are 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria which comprises 6 geopolitical zones with 6 states in each geopolitical zone. These include North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-East, South-South, and South-West. Political stakeholders are present in all geopolitical zones and are split between two major contemporary political parties in Nigeria i.e., the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All-Progressives Congress (APC). The South of the Niger - predominantly South-South and South-East as well as the North of the Niger – predominantly North-East and North-West are chosen as the main area of primary data collection in the study due to the presence of a sharp difference in religious views and literacy levels (see table 1). Due to considerations of time and financial resources, three states in the first cohort (Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna), and three states in the second group (Abia, Anambra and Edo) will be the main data collection groups. All respondents to the study are politically active.

Table 1. Scope of the study

Geopolitical zone	Location	Selected State	State Governors' Political Party
North-East	North of Nigeria	-	-
North-West		Kano	APC
		Kaduna	APC
North-Central		Kwara	APC
South-East	South of Nigeria	Abia	PDP
		Enugu	PDP
South-South		Edo	PDP
South-West		-	-

1.6 Conceptual Framework

1.6.1 Conceptualizing Politics

As usual, and as frequently associated with concepts in social science, we are yet to have a universal definition of the term politics. There are several conceptions of the term and as such, there is no generally accepted definition of politics, rather, a gamut of definitions. Put differently, the term could be said to have several acceptable meanings. That is, politics is loaded with definitions. It is different from concepts in the natural sciences which have uniformity and a wide range of acceptable meanings as well as definitions. For instance, when mathematicians talk about logarithms, the chemist of chain reaction, the physicist of the molecule, to an appreciable extent, their readers can understand precisely what those terms mean. On the contrary, when political scientists speak of concepts such as socialism, conservatism, liberalism, politics, and religion; there could be several associated interpretations of those concepts depending on the social background of their audience or readers. As such, there could be different opinions which makes politics nearly impossible to achieve agreement in terms of definition (Miller, 1962). Increasingly and with time, new definitions of politics emerge to render obsolete or further make less precise the concept of politics in general. The definitional variations of politics stem from place to place and from time to time. For example, in the nineteenth century, the domains of business and commercial activities were not considered as part of politics as it is today (Modebadze, 2010).

Cumulatively, politics is variously defined as the exercise of power, and authority, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of scarce resources, and the practice of diplomacy, among others (Heywood, 1997). Usually, political contestations arise out of disagreement. In principle then, disagreement provides the basis for politics. Disagreement occasionally stems from vital differences in interest, religion, status, power, opinion, and aim. People will always hold different opinions, and viewpoints and make different political as well as religious inclinations. For instance, people may disagree on how scarce resources of the society are to be shared or distributed among the various units that make up the society. Should political power be vested in the hands of a few leaders, or should it be decentralized among the members of society? Even in terms of an increase in the resources of the society, politics respond to the strategic question as to what strategy is to be employed as well as which mechanism is to best protect and guarantee the

distribution of resources that already exist. There is no single response to most of the questions highlighted not a single correct answer to such questions.

As it were, different scholars have different positions about what is the best action to take. Some political thinkers, in an attempt to describe what politics is, argued that conflict and its resolution are at the centre of politics especially conflict which emerged from the expression of different world views. To this group of scholars, politics is the resolution of conflict among people (Bentley, Dobson, Grant, Roberts, 1995). The need for social interaction among people attracts conflict of different dimensions. However, the inevitability of social interaction among people who seek to find meaning in their respective lives necessitated the need for cooperation with other members of society in an organized and well-ordered manner. The various forms this organization takes are suggestive of politics. The implication is that when people work together or have agreed to work together in an organized manner, there is a need to make decisions on the terms of the organization or about how problems that may stem from the organization as people interact will be resolved. Another sensitive aspect of social interaction is how collective resources available to a society are distributed. Politics provides an avenue through which these issues are contemplated and discussed in a manner that decisions are reached. Drawing from this, we can say politics is the study of how such decisions are made. There is a sense that politics can also be defined as the process by which scarce resources are distributed within units that make up society, city, state, nation, or an organization.

The concept of politics within the academic spectrum revolves around the following: politics as an art of governance that responds to public affairs, the resolution of conflict and the study of power or the exercise of power. Chancellor Bismarck of Germany is reputed for the conception of politics as an art and not a science. That is, to him, politics should be seen as an art of governance. Bismarck's interpretation of politics is associated with the classical conception of politics evolving from the original meaning of the term in Ancient Greece (Heywood, 1997). The etymology of the word politics is traceable to the Greek word polis, meaning everything that is associated with polis, or the city-state. Ironically, today the city-state no longer exists, the modern form of this definition is conceived within the parameter of the modern state. Thus, in its simplistic form, politics can be understood as a specialized field devoted to the study of the state and its institutions through which the aims and purposes of the state are realized. It is also concerned with

the various forms of relationships that exist between individual members of the society and the state as well as the relationship with other states. It also extends to the study of government and its officers who run the daily affairs of the state such as making laws and interpreting and enforcing rules for the entire society.

1.6.2 Political Outcomes

Political outcomes encompasses those factors that influence political participation and voting behaviour in a system. Every system comes to a point where decisions are made, and these decisions have consequences. In the same vein and in the realm of politics, political decisions become necessary in the process of governing the state. Political actions and decisions are essential in politics as they affect the state's allocation of resources (Romer, 2003). Political decisions determine who gets what, when, why, and how much in every political system. Political decisions are taken by both state and non-state actors and such actions produce results. The result or effect of these political decisions is what is referred to as political outcomes.

While there has not been any known clear-cut definition of the term, political outcome, the meaning of the term can be construed from the use of it by scholars. The reason for the nonconceptualization of the term may have stemmed from the assumption that the term is self-defining and so requires not much effort at conceptualizing. From the use of this term by scholars, political outcomes have been taken to cover the consequences or effects of decisions and actions taken by political actors in the state. They are the results of those actions taken within the political system and process. Political outcomes have been taken to cover a wide spectrum of issues within the political system. Abdul Hamid and Razali (2023) construe political outcomes as voters' choices influenced by non-state political actors. For Donati (2023), political outcomes include areas like political participation, electoral competition, voters' choice and protests. Hott and Sakurai (2021) see political outcomes from the angle of electoral outcomes and voter choice homogeneity from the angle of party switching. Singh (2020) sees political outcomes as voter turnout, election outcomes, and effects on corrupt officials, promotion of legitimacy of election, among others as ensured by polling booth safety. Motz (2015) views political outcomes as the actions of political parties and interest groups as it affects voters' perception, voters' choice, funding for such interest groups, and political literacy.

From the position of these scholars, one can conclude that political outcome covers the consequence or effect of the actions and decisions of political actors such as the state and its institutions as well as non-state actors such as politicians and political parties, the electorate, and interest groups among others. For the sake of this thesis, the idea of political outcome is taken to cover the areas of political participation and election outcomes.

1.6.3 Gender

Gender, in this study, is seen as the socio-cultural definition of men and women and one which also conveys the power relations between the sexes. Childs and Krook (2006) have argued that several reports have shown the interplay between gender and politics. In terms of the political system and matters of decision, society seems to focus on the male gender making women thus feel sidelined (Ekpenyong et al., 2015). The imbalance in male-to-female participation in politics affects both developed and developing countries (Alelaimat, 2019). This unfair gender-sensitive treatment resulted in women challenging the status quo. The reorientation of politics to fairly include women folk is the primary quest of gender mainstreaming in politics (Paxton et al., 2007). The Millennium Development Goals notes that women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of gender equality and women empowerment (Mlambo, 2019:2). The activism of Women in the past years has brought about an improvement in the number of women participating in politics globally (Celis et al., 2013). Nigeria, studies have also noted an incremental recognition of gender mainstreaming (Peter and Iteogu, 2021). However, the outcome of women's participation in politics seems not to be significant; when compared to the number of the male gender participating in politics (Igwe and Udefuna, 2019). This is corroborated in Table 2 as presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

1.6.4. Education

Education is generally believed to have a direct relationship with civic and political interest as well as political participation in developed societies (Putnam 2000). Education has been found to impart the skills to engage and understand politics, especially breeding greater tolerance and rationalism. Education has been a veritable tool for bringing individuals closer to decision-making processes and also serves as an incentive for political participation as well as political mobilization (Abrams, Iversen and Soskice, 2010). Several studies in advanced democracies have revealed the

positive linkage between education levels and political engagement outcomes. This is demonstrated specifically in electoral turnout and political information. For instance, in understanding political participation outcomes in the United States, studies have employed new research designs to avoid selection problems and identify great positive causal effects for high school and university (Berinsky and Lenz 2011; Dee 2004; Marshall 2013; Milligan, Moretti and Oreopoulos 2004; Sondheimer and Green 2010). While there is sufficient evidence from developed societies linking education with civic and political engagement, it is not clear or yet to be established that the same logic applies in developing countries where support for democracy is low.

Cross-national correlative evidence using Afrobarometer surveys provides tentative favourable evidence that suggests that there is a positive relationship between the interconnection of education and politics (MacLean, 2011). In addition, Mattes and Bratton (2007), showed that the demand for democracy across sub-Saharan Africa is strengthened by factors such as the flow of information, awareness, and education. Specifically, education increases the level of tolerance Mattes and Bratton (2007). On the other hand, voters expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of democracy in Africa but failed to indicate how governments can be held to account after elections by citizens and opposition parties (Bratton and Logan 2006).

Studies have also examined education-related interventions in developing democracies. Findings from these studies revealed an increase in political knowledge and local participation, but with mixed behavioural outcomes that included low voter turnout and weak democratic attitudes. Other examples such as Argentina, Dominican Republic, Poland, Zambia, and South Africa, showed that civic education programs have a positive relationship with local political participation, and increase citizen knowledge, political values, and voter registration (Finkel 2002).

Friedman et al. (2011) used an experimental variation method to show the relationship between school incentives and interest in democracy. The school performance incentives were initiated in Kenya. The incentive was tagged Kenya's Girls Scholarship Program. The programme was noted to have generated interest and knowledge of democracy. However, the initiative did not affect support for democracy, voter turn or participation among young, poor and rural women from minority ethnic groups and communities dominated by males. This could be the result of the disposition of these communities to gender differences. Similarly, a random community civil education program focused on decentralization and democracy in the Democratic Republic of

Congo revealed an increase in political awareness when responses were received, but there was no increase in political efficacy or change in attitudes toward democracy from respondents (Finkel and Rojo-Mendoza, 2012). Gottlieb (2012), in his study of some communities in Mali, systematically requested information about government performance capacity. The study revealed an increase in civic information and a prospect of voting according to government performance in hypothetical simulations. There is evidence that also suggests that informal education can increase political participation. Kuenzi (2006), discovered that information literacy education for Senegalese adults considerably increased their predisposition to vote and participate in local politics. In Nigeria, the primary school curriculum is designed to ingrain civil orientation that will enhance pupils' civic and democratic culture (Asagwara 1997).

1.6.5. Political Literacy

Political literacy is the capacity to critically engage the political institutions and processes in the polity. Political literacy is an important aspect of every democracy. Different scholars have conceptualized political literacy in different ways. It can be viewed as the state of possessing and acquiring political information (Davenport and Jones, 2005). This infers that political literacy is about the ability of the citizen to have basic information about the political system. Hence, having information about the political parties, their manifestoes, their activities, candidates for election, and the political structure of the state, among others constitutes political literacy. It is about knowing and understanding the political issues and processes such that they can effectively participate in the politics of the state (Syahputra, 2020). Syahputra, (2020) refers to this as political expertise.

Denver and Hands (1990) saw political literacy as an acquaintance with the basic information of the political happenings and processes in the system to help in the comprehension and fulfilment of the roles of citizens. Beyond seeing political literacy from the cognitive angle, Fyfe (2007) views political literacy as attitudinal and behavioural. Beyond knowing, a politically literate person understands that the actions within the polity affect them and so possesses the ability to critically subject the actions of all political actors to scrutiny. Such a person is an active participant in the socio-political events that affect them and the state. Political literacy, following these definitions, can be seen from three perspectives namely cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural. Cassel and Lo (1997) also identify three theories of political literacy cognitive

mobilization, structural role, and the traditional socialization agent theories. The authors argued that cognitive mobilization has the greatest effect on political literacy while socialization agents have the least effect.

Cassel and Lo (1997) noted that political literacy cannot be measured directly. However, a politically literate citizen is expected to know human rights; know the national constitution; know how the political system works; know the cultural and linguistic diversity of the society; have political efficacy; participate in public debates; participate in interest groups; participate in elections either as voter or candidate or in other ways; participate in community service; among others (See Staeheli, 2008 and Wood, 2010).

Political literacy must be seen as a community effort because it is an effort by the state to make every citizen get critically involved in politics and this is only achievable by equipping citizens with political capabilities (Staeheli, 2008). In every democracy, political literacy becomes the recipe for efficient citizen participation in demanding accountability and transparency. Political literacy helps in the development of a critical citizen who can sieve through whatever information is given by the media and the political class and engage such information to tell which is genuine and which is not. Political literacy has a connection to education level and literacy because citizens get exposed to the processes of government through citizenship education which is taught (or advocated to be taught) in schools (Wood, 2010).

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behavioural. He opines that political literacy requires attitude and behaviour. Beyond knowing, a politically literate person is an active participant in the socio-political events that affect them and the state. They understand that the actions within the polity affect them and so possess the ability to critically subject the actions of all political actors to scrutiny.

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1.6.6. Election results

An election is the process of selecting leaders during a democratic process where a legitimate change of leadership is constitutionally allowed (Johari, 2011). Frequent free and fair elections consist of one of the foremost important activities of liberal and modern democracy. Elections entail a democratic process where people are selected to administer a specific group,

society, or state. As an important feature of democracy, elections usually take diverse forms. This is largely depending on what the society in question deems suitable to be used (Robert and Obioha, 2005). However, Ujo (2008), differentiated between the concept of election and that of voting. He asserted that election is an all-inclusive word with good coverage that has other activities associated with it. These include all election-related activities that take place before, during and after voting. For instance, registration of voters, planning, delimitation of the constituency, polling stations' arrangement, polling guidelines, counting of votes and declaration of results are some of these activities. However, voting is the most important of all because it is the main process during which people make their choices and make endorsements from various alternatives. The contribution of election to the sustenance of democratization, and the extent to which it does, depends on factors that influence the people in making their choice during elections. Studies have shown clearly the interplay of electoral choice and ethnic structure as a major determinant of voters' choice (Norris and Mattes 2003; Glaeser 2005; Posner, 2006). These studies have demonstrated that African elites often use ethnic cleavages to win elections.

In Nigeria for instance, the first election was held in 1922 under a colonial regime. Colonial rule continued until 1960 when the country gained political independence from Britain. After independence, an election was held in 1964 but the democratic regime was short-lived due to a bloody military coup. In 1979, Nigeria dropped the parliamentary system and switched to a presidential system. In the fourth republic, the election has taken place at different times and levels. Beginning from 1999 to the general election held in 2023. One of the foremost interesting episodes in Nigerian politics is that of the Presidential Election. This is due to the voting pattern and political behaviour of the Nigerian voters towards electing their leaders. The conduct of election in Nigeria is carried out under two major legal documents which are the 1999 Constitution as Amended and the Electoral Act 2010. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the agency that is tasked with the responsibility of the conduct of elections and other related matters like registration and de-registration of political parties, checking the conduct of candidates, as well as drafting regulations to guide the conduct and behaviour of all actors involved in the election. Elections in Nigeria usually have ethnic, religious and regional colouration. This has constituted a major component of the problems that are bedevilling the successful choice of leaders within the country (Igbuzor, 2010; Osumah and Aghemelo, 2010).

Closely associated with the above is the politics of winner-take-all syndrome or winning at all costs. As a result, elections in Nigeria are marred with rigging, violence, manipulation of results intimidation of the opposition, and the use of hoodlums and security personnel to undermine the entire process (Auwal, 2015). According to Sule et al., (2018), elections in Nigeria are characterized by the illicit flow of cash, vote-buying, godfatherism, bribery, corruption, overspending, violation of electoral rules and other irregularities. All of these affect the method and the outcome of elections in Nigeria. The phenomenon of cash politics in Nigeria was at its zenith in the 2015 Presidential Election

The political elites found it expedient to use money and religion as the easiest means of acquiring power due to their failure to deliver responsible leadership or good governance. In Nigeria, politics has become a business enterprise used for self-services as well as private accumulation of wealth. Religious clerics are bought and influenced by politicians to influence voters' opinions into submission to spiritual sentiments in politics (Sule et al., 2018). The politics of violence, games, militarism and the utilisation of thugs by politicians are common in Nigeria. The use of desperate means to secure power at all costs including killings, political assassination, and intimidation of opposition and voters is gradually becoming part of the political system. All this is to have access to public office for private gain. Elections in Nigeria are best described as a do-or-die affair (Falola and Heaton, 2008). An election can thus, be held peacefully, safely and fairly when the principles and rules of the game are well spelt out and improved upon. Put differently, a fair election can only be conducted where the electoral body is seen and acts as an unbiased umpire and makes its terms open and fair to all standing for election. One of the approved ways is the adoption of modern technologies. E-voting tends to reduce election rigging. It also has a greater capacity for transparency and compliance by all actors. In addition, there could be an increase in public awareness creation about the negative consequences of involvement in election rigging, violence and other forms of electoral malpractice during elections. While there should be an emphasis on issue politics, the politics of ethnicity, religion and regionalism should be deemphasized and dealt with.

1.6.7. Political Representation

Political parties are very important to democracy as they link citizens to government. They also act as the bases or platforms through which citizens contribute their part to governance.

Political parties in democracy perform such functions as promoting members' interests, acquiring, and sustaining power in the government as well as proposing policy options. Political parties are good at aggregating like-minded citizens with common political inclinations and goals. For democracy to flourish, it is essential for political parties and their candidates to make available to citizens adequate information on political parties' policies. The policies will provide direction and a clearcut vision of what the political parties stand for. The proper articulation of these policies constitutes the party's agendas which enable the electorate to settle on candidates of their choice. Here, the mass media play an important role in making and highlighting the popularity of political parties. Ojekwe (2016) noted that political parties are noted for the use of the mass media during election campaigns to popularize their agenda. Beyond that, the mass media keeps citizens updated about recent happenings and creates awareness about things in society.

In addition, the mass media has a significant influence on public views and the way they regard political parties. The media is the principal avenue by which popular opinion is formed and sometimes manipulated (CIHRS 2011, Ojekwe (2016). Put differently, for the process of electioneering to be seen as free and fair, the people are expected to have sufficient knowledge about the candidates or contestants. The electorates are also to be given the privilege of knowing parties' manifestoes and stands on public issues as well as election policies. In the past, election campaigns and manifestoes were undertaken by personal contacts such as friends and family members, members of one's tribe or religious group as well as members of the public at the open rallies. Conversely, the experience of the Fourth Republic shows an increase in the utilization of political campaigns in the new media as a medium of aggregating support by the political class. This is perhaps because of the increase in modern communication technologies. Consequently, political parties and their candidates contribute large sums of monetary resources for political campaigns to publicize their candidates and parties.

Some of the issues dominating discussions around elections are related to voting behaviour. For instance, questions like why do voters vote for a particular candidate over another? And what are the implications of such choices? Feyipitan (2015), asserted that when a political party or candidate design his or her campaign messages toward improving voters' lives positively, there is a high tendency that such a candidate will be supported by the electorate. This is even more so when the message(s) contains some level of integrity. Put differently, voters are presumably to trust

candidates whose political agenda and campaigns offer to satisfy their basic needs, as against those who profess their achievements. However, personality traits, appearance and language use in the campaign do play crucial roles in political articulation and aggregation of supported Feyipitan (2015). The effectiveness of political campaigns in influencing the electorates to choose a particular candidate against another remains questionable in the literature. For instance, the governorship elections in Lagos state in 2015, saw political parties and their flag bearers resorting to aggressive media campaigns. Akinwunmi Ambode, the candidate of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) in 2015, emergence could be partly attributed to the media campaign. Before the elections, his campaign had filled the media airwaves. The new media, billboard ads, radio and TV jingles, print media messages and outdoor media were littered with compelling assurance to deliver on his electoral promises.

Sometimes, some of the promises are built around religious, geographic and ethnic interests instead. This is always done at the expense of issue-based politics or ideological lines. For instance, a poll by IRI's Center for Insights in Survey Research showed that 48 per cent of individuals questioned in Adamawa, Bauchi, Ebonyi and Sokoto States, declared their lack of understanding of the major political parties' platforms. About 43 per cent were not able to distinguish between the platforms of major political parties. This has further silenced the politically marginalized groups, such as women and youth. It has also stiffened the opposition and other political groups that would have offered alternative perspectives to the system.

The creation of multiple political parties in a democracy is to allow for a greater diversity of opinions and voices within the political arena. In Nigeria, and specifically, in the fourth republic, this was achieved in 2002 when the Supreme Court in a judgment liberalized the process of party formation and registration. However, the fallout of the judgment is that it has made party politics prone to abuse and fraud by unscrupulous elements.

Another weakness displayed by the parties is in the area of funding. Funding of political parties is carried out with little or no monitoring. Party members use and disburse funds at will and as it pleases them. The few elites who control the wealth of the nation known as "godfathers" usually use their wealth and privileged position to influence the structure and outcome of power. They sponsor their "godsons" and these godsons while in office use their vantage position to advance the interest of their godfathers. While a greater number of political parties in the system

may appear to offer citizens more choice at the poll, too many of them in a developing democracy such as Nigeria can overwhelm citizens and undermine effective voter participation. For example, drawing from the 2019 general elections, about 73 candidates contested the office of the president. Yet, the highest two contenders were from the two major parties – the APC and PDP. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has deregistered 74 out of the 91 registered parties within the country. The 74 deregistered parties were selected based on the reason that the parties did not win a minimum of 25 per cent of votes in any of the states either in the presidential or governorship elections. Eighteen political parties may be better managed by INEC as compared to 91.

On the other hand, citizens can better understand the differences between parties and feel at home casting their votes. To build a good national outlook in party activities and promote party membership across the country, the 1979 constitution brought in strict rules for party formation for the first time in the country. The Two-party system introduced in 1991 was financed by the government. The essence of this innovation was to limit the excessive influence of funders and political godfathers.

In the fourth republic, increasingly, the number of registered political parties has moved from 3 in 1999 to 91 in 2019. This has contributed to the challenges confronting bedevilling the electoral system in Nigeria. For instance, the ability to effectively regulate and manage the activities of all the parties. Today, the leading political parties are the PDP and the APC. The PDP controlled both the presidency and the National Assembly from when it was founded in 1998 until 2015. The APC, which was formed in 2013 has since the 2015 general elections replaced the PDP. The APC was an amalgamation of three opposition parties. The party captured the presidency in the 2015 general elections – two years after its formation. Ironically, the parties of the fourth republic, instead of acting as platforms for specific ideological issues, are employed by the Nigerian elite as a vehicle for the realization of political power and influence. For this reason, defection has become a common phenomenon. This is common during elections as politicians move in search of platforms that will guarantee them tickets and victory. This is common with the major political parties. For instance, in APC and PDP, presidential aspirants have attempted to exert control over the national leadership of these parties which in most cases led to leadership tussles within the parties. This is also common at the state level. For instance, towards the Edo State

governorship elections that were held in September 2020, the two major candidates in the election defected from the party under which they each contested the 2016 Governorship election in the state. Osagie Ize-Iyamu who was the standard bearer of the PDP in the 2016 Governorship election defected to the APC where he became the party's candidate for the 2020 election while Godwin Obaseki defected to the PDP from the APC under which he contested and won the Governorship election in 2016. Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are often awash with nuances and not on par with realities at the regional level

1.6.8. Basis and Determinants of Electoral Choice in Elections

For democracy to be consolidated, citizens should be allowed to participate in different ways. There is an association between democratic attitudes and democratic behaviours (Bratton, 2009). However, there is little or no information on which attitude leads to what behaviour. Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, (2012), have observed that both political interest and political efficiency facilitate political participation and political activities. On the other hand, political activity enhances interest and efficacy as well. The quality of democracy is indicated or measured by the level of citizen's participation in political activities including the formulation and determination of public policies, the willingness of the government to respond to the demands of the people and the level of government transparency in handling public concern (Mozambique: Democracy and Political Participation 2009). In addition to voting, which is the basic level of political participation, citizens should be given the space to participate in other political-related activities in society. Beyond the letters of the constitution, citizens should be able to enjoy the real organizational dividend of the civil/political society. This is so because there is a slight connection between civic participation and political participation. For instance, Robert Putnam (2000), in his study of the Americans, asserted that the reduction in social capital was responsible for some problems in American society. Putnam further observed that social networks and capital were essential to the performance of representative government. Social networks of civic engagement have proven to have a direct effect on voter turnout during the election in the United States. His conclusion linked a community of people, social capital, and a thriving democracy.

In Africa, these linkages are rather created by primordial social ties such as religion and ethnicity. For instance, in a study conducted by Babaola (2020), religion, ethnicity and regional

factors were considered key factors influencing voter behaviour in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The study employed historical analysis to trace the origin of the interplay between these factors and political outcomes in Nigeria. It noted that right from the 1959 general elections till date (apart from the 1993 presidential elections), religion, ethnicity and regional factors have featured prominently in Nigerian politics. Using the 2019 presidential elections as its unit of analysis, Babaola (2020) argued that ethnicity and religion serve as instruments of mobilization by the elites in their desire to climb the political platform. He observed that apart from the 1993 presidential elections, the pattern of voting has always been motorized by ethnoreligious factors. He opined that rational-based voters in Nigeria who are not influenced by their ethnic or religious views are in the minority.

Measuring attitude is always a complex exercise. Most times, social researchers use the public opinion technique. Public opinion can be conceptualized as the aggregation of private opinions on any public matter or issue (Clawson and Oxley 2008). Public opinion is entrenched in values. These values are acquired through processes by which citizens acquire societal values and culture. Through socialization processes, people are socialized into and acquire political culture. The political culture of Nigeria is such that sees politics as a domain for appropriation and exploitation. This has grossly affected democratic practice in Nigeria. The practice of democracy in Nigeria is at variance with the ideals of democracy in developed societies (Chukwuemeka and Egbo, 2012). Democratic ingredients such as equality, free and fair elections, consultations, and majoritarian rule which are consistent with democratic principles are absent in Nigeria's democracy. Notwithstanding, Lewis and Bratton (2000), have indicated that there is support for democratic principles in Nigeria. Lewis and Bratton drew their assertion from the premise that there is an enduring commitment to democratic ideals in Nigeria irrespective of the long spell of military rule.

In addition, they argued that Nigeria's democratic expectation has waned due to the government's poor performance and poor social and economic conditions. This has a direct effect on the interest of people in a democracy which is seen in their political participation. Participation in politics may take different forms, ranging from the casting of votes, and joining political associations and other civic organizations to involvement in lawful or unlawful activities such as protests. For instance, Ekanem and Ikpe (2001), agreed that when citizens show interest in politics

to contribute to government decisions whether covertly or overtly it should be considered a type of political participation. There is a sense in which political participation may be classified as conventional and unconventional. Conventional participation covers all activities widely approved by popular political culture like seeking to be elected, voting for aspirants and serving as party agents among others. Unconventional forms of political participation cover political protest among others (Ekanem and Ikpe, 2001). Ideally, confidence in the political system will lead increase in conventional participation and frustrations and a lack of trust in the system will lead to unconventional participation.

1.6.8.1. Religion

To give meaning to religion is somewhat of a troublesome task. However, we need one. Kenneth Burke, the prominent artistic scholar and rhetorician, conceived religion as “equipment for living”. Clifford Geertz, the renowned anthropologist, defines religion as a “system of the symbol” (Clifford, 1973:90). In any case, religion, in specific terms, can be defined here beyond its Western connotation. Theologically religion can be understood as faith in the presence and activities of spiritual creatures or heavenly powers, and the acknowledgement of an undetectable order or reality that influences people and their behaviour. This order consistently has a supernatural, suprasingular dimension and alludes to apparent ancestor spirits, makers, creatures, or power ‘beyond’ the physical. Religion in this sense is, on a fundamental level, seen as unbiased and perceived as a reality of being on the planet. Ananaba's definition cited by Bohannon labels religion as the “belief in Spiritual Beings”. For Emil Durkheim, religion is a “unified set of belief practices relative to sacred things”. That is, religion is a “set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community.... all those who adhere to them”. Attempting to define religion, Gordon W. Allport argues that “religion encompasses a value that every democrat must hold, the right of each individual to work out his philosophy of life, to find his creation niche as best as he can”. Again, according to Akin Ibidapo Obe, Religion connotes a belief in the Supreme Being and his worship through a specified ritual. Religion is based on a moralistic outlook or way of life. In its doctrinal perspective, it may be defined as a system of the general truth that has the effect of transforming characters when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.

A seemingly legalistic conception of religion portrays it as a relationship between man and divinity. This relationship includes reverence, adoration, worship, respect, and obedience to the dictates and laws of supernatural or superhuman beings. In its widest sense, it includes all kinds of beliefs in the existence of superhuman beings having controlling power over and above human beings. This control is usually by volition where rules of conduct are imposed, with the assurance of future rewards and punishment. That is a bond uniting man to God and virtue whose purpose is to render God worship, which is due to him, and as a source to all beings. A survey of several other definitions reveals the consensus about the presence of a super-human being and other associated values such as the unity of purpose, harmony or coherence, love for others, etc, which have formed the binding elements of societies across time.

1.6.8.2. Ethnicity

In contemporary heterogeneous societies such as Nigeria, ethnic attachment serves as a medium of identity for each member of the society. Ethnicity has been defined in several ways. According to Afkhami (2012), ethnicity is based on the idea of joint ancestry, inheritance, faith, values, nationhood, linguistic identity and territory. To Nnoli, (1978), ethnicity may be a social construction used as an instrument of exchange among members of other ethnic groups. The forgoing definitions suggest that ethnicity is characterized by socio-cultural identities including family ties, culture and tradition, and a sense of nationhood. This also means that ethnicity makes more meaning in a mixed society. Enloe (1978), thought of ethnicity as an artificial construct, man created the form of identity and as an instrument of collective organization. It is usually fabricated by people who are usually outsiders, who try to find an efficient instrument of political and economic access as well as control. To Azeez (2009:2) ethnicity may be seen as a premeditated strategy used by minority groups and other disadvantaged groups as an alternative platform for seeking political-related redress. It could also be exploited by a privileged group to protect its advantages. In a similar vein, Oladiran (2013:698) suggested that ethnicity is to be seen in any situation where a group of people with separate cultural and linguistic identities from other groups, use such identity in relating to others (Oladiran, 2013). Put neatly, ethnicity is the sense of oneness and cohesion shared or held by a group of people defined by some socio-cultural identities such as custom, history, tradition, and language as well as an ancestral foundation that differentiates this group from other groups. Ethnicity is a veritable instrument and determinant of identity politics in Nigeria.

1.6.8.3. Party Membership

On party membership in South Africa, the ANC's spokesperson, Keith Khoza, was cited by Merten and Mofokeng (2012), whom he described the importance of members to the ANC. He pointed to the crucial role of members in convincing the wider public to vote for the ANC. They also maintained that political party membership forms the core of party activism. The management and organization of party membership is always a concern to party institutionalization in Africa. For instance, political parties in South Africa are faced with the problem of managing membership records and data (Merten and Mofokeng, 2012). The poor culture of managing and keeping accurate membership records is further compounded by the growing interest shown by South Africans in joining the ANC. Political parties are always seeking for members to increase their chances of emerging victorious in elections. Thus, increasing membership is very important to the survival and electoral worth of political parties in a democratic system. The implication is that, in some cases, party membership expansion can result in administrative problems. This is particularly so in countries with a poor culture of record-keeping. A study of the South African political parties showed that most of them had issues with record keeping, except for the IFP which had an online membership applications platform where prospective members register to get their membership card (Merten and Mofokeng, 2012).

One of the positive effects of increased membership is that it has a direct influence on political party finance. The financial capacity of political parties is enhanced as more members pay their membership dues and contributions. However, the challenge that comes with the increase in party membership is the management of the membership database as the case of the ANC reveals. Merten and Mofokeng (2012) further observed that large party membership, irrespective of the financial capacity the party stands to have, has little to do with voting support and the chance of any political party having access to power and seat of government in South Africa. Instead, the factor that works in favour of political parties during elections in Africa is the spread of political parties' appeal all over the state which goes beyond the narrow reach of just having a large database of party membership. This argument can be faulted because party membership is a fundamental part of any party organized and it is an important tool in linking society to political parties. For instance, Hofmeister and Grabow (2011) observed that it is party members who join campaign rallies and engage in door-to-door campaigns to win new members.

Kainja (2012), in his study of party membership in Malawi, noted that members of political parties are rarely carried along, and therefore not considered partners in the political process. Party members have little or no say or any kind of influence in the parties' decision-making process. This is because political parties are not financed by membership dues but by other illicit sources that are not prescribed by law. However, he made the reservation about the opposition parties. He stated that opposition parties are relatively managed by party funds sourced from members of the party. This has contributed to and also created an environment where party members question party leaders and hold them to account. This is possible because party members have a stake in the parties. On the other hand, Kainja (2012) stated that the major political parties, in Malawi, are managed and controlled by the leaders who are the financiers of the parties' operations and not members. As a result, party members are alienated from the parties and do not share any sense of party ownership. This is why the Malawian political parties lack what is known as "royal support". Consequently, membership management by the Malawian political parties is best described as transactional. This is so because members' participation is paid for by the rich who control the political parties in order to accomplish their political interests and make a return on political investment. Chege (2007) studied party membership in five African countries. He argued that parties in the East African countries are institutionally weak, and this has affected their ability to mobilize for membership. This has also led to the inability to have a date membership register, the poor communication link with members, and the failure to involve members in issue-based discussions. This is because political parties draw members based on the primordial ground such as ethnicity.

In Nigeria, political party activity is more active during election periods, which is built around the "patrons and godfather" relationship or "godfather and godson" relationship. The godfathers are those who use their financial prowess as an advantage to buy members' support and loyalty to themselves rather than to the political parties. (Sivaraman, M. R. (2013). In addition, a study on the political parties' capacity in Nigeria by the UNDP under the watch of the Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) programme, reveals that some political parties do not have the capacity and the ability to organize members proficiently. They find it difficult to recruit and admit new party members (Sivaraman, M. R. (2013). The report further indicated that the most disturbing challenge confronting Nigerian political parties is the management and engagement of party members in the decision-making process. For instance, Salih (2006) reinforced this argument

by stating that internal party democracy during the selection of candidates, leadership contests, party conventions, and parties' internal disciplinary measures on party leadership is scarce in the dominant political parties investigated in Kenya, Ghana, and Malawi.

Maiyo (2008) on his part, observed that political parties in East Africa, are marked by a top-down organisational structure. That is, power and decision-making processes are centralized, and party members have left little or no space in the party decision-making process. Party decision making is non-exclusively reserved for the money bags and party financiers. However, Maliyamkono and Kanyongolo (2003), were of the view that the origin of this style of party organization could be traced to the colonial experience and its style of leadership structure. In the colonial administrative system, it was the educated political elites and the colonial masters that were dictating to the African natives without a space for local input or contribution. Specifically in Kenya, there was a study on party organisational management by the Audit Institute for Education in 1998. The study indicated that huge membership capability is advantageous and crucial to the continuity and longevity of political parties.

Maiyo (2008), in his study of internal party democracy in Africa, indicated that the conception of political parties as tools of cooperating action, articulation of social force and aggregation of various interests make lots of meaning within party organisational structure, activities and orientation. Maiyo contended that political parties in East Africa are the establishment of the political class. Parties are created for the elites and are used as instruments for the fulfilment of personal interests and as an avenue for controlling the populace. On party membership, Maiyo (2008: 53) and Ninsin (2006), submitted that parties in Sub-Sahara are characterized by mere supporters than card-carrying registered members. They, therefore, concluded that party attachment is fluid and characterized by multiple party members. That is, in Africa, it is common to see people belonging to more than one party with allegiance to all of them at the same time. This is the result of the poor political culture exhibited in Africa. Other factors such as illiteracy, monetized politics and poverty have also contributed to this kind of political outcome. In most cases, this kind of party practice leads to the production of a tyrannical one-party government where the mere bearing of the card becomes evidence of political membership without the commensurate commitment to party principles (Maiyo, 2008). Maiyo's study also revealed that East African political parties also lack satisfactory membership registers and accurate databases which are essential factors in party organizational management. He pointed out that, in Uganda

for instance, there were no figures to support their claim on the establishment of the national data centre (Maiyo, 2008). His report further revealed that except for the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and the National Resistance Movement (NRM), very other political parties in Uganda had no functional website or email address to communicate with their members.

Bryan and Baer (2005) worked on the relationship between money and politics as well as its effect on political parties' organizations. Their study relied on the Africa Political Party Finance Initiative (APFFI) survey that was conducted in 22 countries. Of the 22 countries studied, only 34% agreed that political parties source their finance through membership levies and dues from party faithful and leaders, raising of the funds and internal contributions from party loyalties, and incomes from parties' enterprises. That suggests that a chunk of 66% agreed that political parties finance their activities through illicit and unconventional sources. In this vein, Van den Berg (2013), in his study titled "Strategic Planning for Political Parties: A Practical Guide" noted that the ingredients for growing a political party must take into account the principle of strategic planning. This will include raising the internal management capabilities of political parties in the following areas: intra-party democracy, accountability in finance, ideological label, the inclusion of youth and women, campaign management and parties' capacity to govern and provide national leadership. This will demonstrate the relevance of party membership to the survival and growth of political parties. Thus, the management of party membership is crucial to the operation and political party organization. In addition, adequate financial management is crucial to party members and party management. This will compromise the principle of internal democracy when party funds are not made transparent and well-managed (Bryan and Baer, 2005).

1.6.8.4. Political Advertising

In Nigeria, there are several determinants of political outcome. One of the obvious ones is a political advertisement. Political advertisement has grown immensely in recent times. This may be attributed to the increasing awareness by parties and their respective candidates on the effectiveness of advertisement as an instrument of enlightening the voters about candidates as a 'better brand'. Olujide (2010) noted that advertising has become the foremost commonly used technique to make a favourable image for the candidate and a negative image for the opponent. Before now, political parties and candidates channelled most of their resources into political rallies, speeches and direct contact to attract the support of electorates (Opeibi, 2004). Between the 2007,

2011 and 2015 general elections, it was noticed that the use of political advertisements during campaigns has increased with specific reference to the style of delivery, the type of language used, and the type of media platform used in communicating messages. The 2007 governorship election in Lagos State, for example, witnessed an increase in the utilization of both traditional and mainstream media campaigns of the three major aspirants, who then were: Babatunde Fashola (AD), Musuliu Obanikoro (PDP) and Jimi Agbaje (DPA).

Owing to the reputation and support of these three leading candidates amongst the voters, the campaign and quest for support became extremely competitive. The mainstream media were kept busy as candidates tried to outshine their opponents. Several jingles were on air, for instance, like ‘everybody loves Jimi Agbaje’, and slogans like ‘Ekoonibaje o’ among several others. Nworah (2011), affirmed that the 2011 presidential election which was keenly contested by Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP and General Muhammadu Buhari of the CPC had its uniqueness. One of which is that Goodluck Jonathan was contesting for the position of president for the first time, he had a great responsibility of selling his candidacy to the people against the growing influence of his main rival. This he did by investing enormous funds into media campaigns, including traditional media. Although some scholars agree that political advertising is vital to each election campaign, certain political consultants remain divided on the extent to which political advertising influences voting behaviour. In the past, political campaign researchers like Iyengar agreed that political media campaigns had a significant effect on voting behaviour.

A study conducted by Duru (2019), in Nigeria, revealed that media help in exposing citizens to political matters. The study indicated that voting is the highest avenue where the majority of Nigerians participate in politics. They are less active in other civic associations as the result showed a minute number of respondents indicating interest in civic groups. 87% of respondents had never made any contact with public office holders, 74% had never participated in any public protest and 76% of respondents had never joined any political rally. Duru concluded that in Nigeria, civic and political participation is low since Nigerians are only interested in voting and interpersonal political discussion. Even though, Lewis and Bratton (2000), have declared Nigerians’ support for democracy, deliberative and participatory democratic values are still absent in the process. Conclusively, the lack of trust by Nigerians in the democratic process accounts for the low level of political participation. For instance, Clawson and Oxley (2008:5) have agreed that “the more trust

in government citizens have, the more likely they will participate in politics throughout life”. Some of the factors that affect the level of political participation in Nigeria are the form of political socialization, political culture, military legacies, money politics, and the unbalanced federal structure of the country among others.

However, recent studies have shown a far better understanding of the effectiveness of political advertising communication in elections. Holbrook (1996), concluded that ‘variations in candidate support during the campaign season are largely due to the occurrence of campaign events.’ Iyengar stated that political advertising is persuasive rather than manipulative, and its messages inform voters about the candidates’ positions and permit voters to develop differentiated images of the candidates. Interestingly, Nigerian voters are getting more exposed to political advertising. Increasingly, voters are becoming aware of political information that relates to candidates, party manifestos, election procedures and policies. This is assumed to have been attributed to the consistent use of advertisements in electioneering campaigns.

1.7 Structure of the study

The work is divided into Seven (7) chapters. The chapters are summarised below:

Chapter One: This chapter serves as the introduction to the thesis. It detailed the focus of the study alongside clear aims, objectives, and research questions, as well as a clarification of the meaning of key terms in the thesis.

Chapter Two: This chapter reviews extant literature in relation to this study and points out that extant literature on political outcomes in Nigeria has often focused on the electorate as a whole with the assumption that what applies to men equally applies to women. The chapter also reveals that extant literature has often failed to show a comparative study of political outcomes in both the North and South as well as how the level of political literacy (of women) in both regions has influenced their political outcomes. The chapter also conveys the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

Chapter Three: This chapter historicizes the intersection between religion and political outcomes in Nigeria from the First Republic to the current Fourth Republic. The chapter reviews this by looking at both National elections as well as the regional elections within this period. In doing this,

the chapter points out the dynamics of the religious distribution in each of the states in the federation.

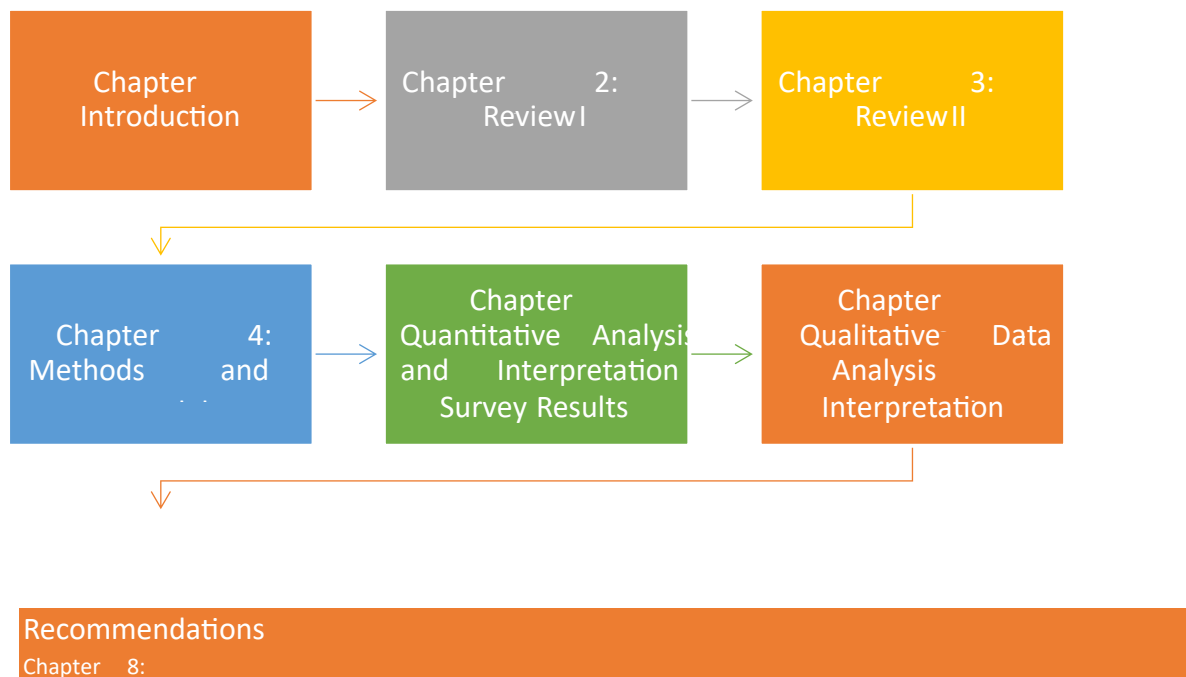
Chapter Four: The chapter outlines the research methods and models deployed in this study as well as the rationale behind the adoption of the method. It points out that this study is anchored on the use of the mix-method.

Chapter Five: This chapter analyzes the results from the survey that was conducted and discusses the results within the framework of extant literature and in line with the hypothesis generated in this study.

Chapter Six: This chapter examines the qualitative data gathered during this study. The interviews were extensively analyzed and discussed along four themes.

Chapter Seven: This chapter focuses on the theoretical, empirical, and policy implications, evaluation of the project outcomes, an agenda for future research, journal article publications and limitations of the project.

Figure 1: Schematic Overview of the Thesis Structure



Source: Author (2021)

1.8 Summary

Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, the findings of these studies are often awash with nuances and not in sync with realities at the state level. More questions are arising regarding the dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level; how political outcomes get influenced by interactions with religious groups and interests; as well as the position of traditional religions in a developing country like Nigeria.

The perception of religion by the government in Nigeria is mostly a tool for political mobilization. This has been a recurring key indicator in Nigeria's successive elections. However, there appear to be fragments of disparities in the degrees of influence of religion on political activities at the regional levels. Most research conducted on this subject considers the general outlook of the influence of religion over political participation and political outcomes, but the outcomes of this research may not paint a true picture of the deeper contexts.

Consequently, this project aims to examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on voters' decisions and political outcomes at regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria. A mixed-method approach will be adopted to ameliorate any contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings, whilst also embedding the findings of this research in the experience of participants and stakeholders considered in the research. The findings of this research will contribute to academic debate and help understand the political dimensions of Nigeria's democracy and policymaking.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Religion, Gender and Political Outcomes

The impacts of religion on gender especially women's participation in politics have attracted considerable intellectual and public policy attention (Forman-Rabinovici & Sommer, 2018). This attention has led to the creation of a special discipline known as Gender Studies and the establishment of myriad journals and other publishing outlets for knowledge production on gender (Lovenduski, 1992). No doubt, literature on how gender serves as a moderating factor in religion that affects political outcomes is quite scant. What is more available are studies that focus on how religion affects, shapes and influences gender and gendered roles in politics. Put differently, more intellectual attention has focused on how religion affects the politics of gender (Forman-Rabinovici & Sommer, 2018).

The historical trajectory between religion and gender shows a rocky and bumpy ride and tracing it is quite a herculean task (Leszczyńska & Zielińska, 2016; Lavanchy and Dahinden, 2012). However, there are two broad schools of thought on the relationship between religion and gender. The first argued that the emphasis and the appreciation of the role of the mother in the family by the different religions could be empowering for women (Woodhead, 2003). The second strand of analysis rejected the above view and posited that religion relegates women to the private sphere and that many religious texts are patriarchal (Forman-Rabinovici & Sommer, 2018).

Concerning Nigeria, studies such as Udoh et al., (2020), Christian Aid (2015) Sibani (2013), and Allanana (2013), have interrogated the linkages between religion and gender in Nigeria. Surprisingly, Udoh et al., (2020), argued that the problem is not a function of religion but can be traced to the African culture that places more value on men than on women. They noted that a male child is generally celebrated and accorded more respect than a female child which translates to the realm of politics. For these scholars, the discrimination against women in politics has no religious backing given that the different religions practised in Nigeria place importance on women.

The above view is quite unpopular in the literature and is not shared by many scholars. The received wisdom is that up until recently, women have been excluded from participating in politics in Nigeria due to socio-cultural and religious factors (Sibani, 2013). Corroborating this fact, Christian Aid (2015) noted that religion plays a strong role in defining the roles and responsibilities of the male and female sexes in Nigeria. For them, religion plays a major role in shaping the roles of men and women in the Nigerian political system.

In sum, female voters are the crux of the study, but gender will not be included as a variable. Hence, the gendered difference is not the focus. Instead, assessing electoral behavioural differences among female voters in the South and the North is the focus.

2.1.2 Gender and Political Participation in Nigeria

Nigeria Female participation in politics in Nigeria has been largely affected by patriarchy. Oftentimes, society puts all possible inhibition in the way of a woman such that rising above the ceiling set by society for her is almost difficult, if not impossible (Samkange, 2001). The typical woman is made to believe that she is inferior to the man, and this is a belief she must accept and live with (Mohammed and Zaid, 2014). Political participation in Nigeria is the lowest in Africa as Nigeria is ranked 184 out of 192 for women's representation in the national parliament (InterParliamentary Union Women in Politics Report, 2022). This is so when one compares the level of participation of women in Nigeria to that of other countries in Africa, like Rwanda (Mohammed and Zaid, 2014). Understanding political participation from women can be viewed from their participation as voters in elections, their involvement as politicians as well as female representation in power.

Although it has been quite a herculean task to keep track of data on female representation in Nigeria, the records of female representation in the Fourth Republic have been quite low and call for concern. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999, women have largely played the second fiddle. Female representation in Nigeria has been at an abysmally low level.

Table 2: Election Year in the Fourth Republic

	House of Assembly	House of Representatives	House of Senate	Deputy Governor
Seats available/No. of women				
1999	978/12	360/13	109/3	36/1*
2003	951/39	360/19	109/4	36/2
2007	990/54	360/28	109/9	36/6
2011	990/12	360/19	109/7	36/1
2015	990/60	360/19	109/8	36/5
2019	991/14	360/13	109/8	36/3
2023	991/48	360/16	109/4	36/7

*The only female Deputy Governor in 1999 was Chief Koforola Bucknor-Akerele but she was impeached in 2003 before the expiration of her term.

Source: INEC Database; Records of the National Assembly; Personal Computation of author

From the data above, female representation in the House of Assembly in the Fourth Republic stands at 3.4%; female representation in the House of Representatives in the Fourth Republic stands at 5.0%; there is a 5.6% female representation in the Senate in the Fourth Republic, while female representation for Deputy Governorship position stands at 9.5% in the Fourth Republic. Nigeria has never produced an elected female Governor, a female Vice President or a female President.

In the area of voting, the place of women in participation in voting Nigeria has also been quite difficult to track using data given the fact that the electoral umpire in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as well as its progenitors such as the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) in the First Republic, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) in the Second Republic, and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) in the Third Republic, has not been able to provide us with data on the number of women voters or female registered voters in Nigeria until recently. It was not until the 2015 general elections that INEC was able to provide us with a gendered breakdown of the total number of registered voters

in the election. While data on the gender composition of registered voters is not available, the INEC data on the gender composition of voters reveals that of the 23,643,479 million accredited voters, 10,332,456 million of them are female, accounting for 43.7% of the total accredited voters.

Table 3. 2015 voting gender distribution.

S/N	STATE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Abia	180,758	140,242	321,000
2	Adamawa	350,899	255,347	606,246
3	Akwa Ibom	292,013	230,903	522,916
4	Anambra	78,591	78,969	157,560
5	Bauchi	630,536	392,947	1,023,483
6	Bayelsa	98,922	87,188	186,110
7	Benue	424,045	292,255	716,300
8	Borno	291,616	164,946	456,562
9	Cross River	147,798	136,270	284,068
10	Delta	305,199	263,574	568,773
11	Ebonyi	156,007	203,521	359,528
12	Edo	293,943	250,562	544,505
13	Ekiti	151,657	174,213	325,870
14	Enugu	140,120	137,424	277,544
15	Fct	116,088	62,391	178,479
16	Gombe	333,496	171,252	504,748
17	Imo	118,710	117,304	236,014
18	Jigawa	601,718	525,639	1,127,357
19	Kaduna	812,434	669,426	1,481,860
20	Kano	980,179	667,002	1,647,181
21	Katsina	789,452	655,385	1,444,837
22	Kebbi	473,022	269,783	742,805
23	Kogi	206,895	179,057	385,952
24	Kwara	220,164	192,332	412,496

25	Lagos	845,547	542,942	1,388,489
26	Nasarawa	249,976	208,553	458,529
27	Niger	529,489	332,538	862,027
28	Ogun	286,355	251,833	538,188
29	Ondo	291,330	277,635	568,965
30	Osun	317,659	338,610	656,269
31	Oyo	497,687	434,636	932,323
32	Plateau	452,194	465,289	917,483
33	Rivers	180,694	131,125	311,819
34	Sokoto	462,530	301,517	764,047
35	Taraba	295,540	223,797	519,337
36	Yobe	280,088	161,569	441,657
37	Zamfara	427,672	344,480	772,152
	Total	13,311,023	10,332,456	23,643,479

Available data from the 2019 records reveal that of the 84,004,084 million registered voters in the country, 39,598,645 million were women, accounting for 47.14% of the total registered voters. The breakdown of females who collected their voter cards (PVC) was not provided by INEC. The INEC was, however, able to provide a state-by-state breakdown by sex of voters in the country as represented in Table 4.

Table 4. Gender composition of registered voters in 2019 election data

S/N	State	Male	%	Female	%	Total
1	Abia	971,205	50.25	961,687	49.75	1,932,892
2	Adamawa	1,075,265	54.50	897,818	45.50	1,973,083
3	Akwa Ibom	1,108,091	52.28	1,011,636	47.72	2,119,727
4	Anambra	1,215,828	49.67	1,232,168	50.33	2,447,996
5	Bauchi	1,412,898	57.37	1,049,945	42.63	2,462,843
6	Bayelsa	498,790	54.03	424,392	45.97	923,182
7	Benue	1,305,893	52.65	1,174,238	47.35	2,480,131

8	Borno	1,344,769	58.07	971,187	41.93	2,315,956
9	Cross River	772,395	50.57	754,894	49.43	1,527,289

10	Delta	1,462,558	51.40	1,382,716	48.60	2,845,274
11	Ebonyi	660,659	45.25	799,274	54.75	1,459,933
12	Edo	1,159,325	52.45	1,051,209	47.55	2,210,534
13	Ekiti	449,178	49.36	460,789	50.64	909,967
14	Enugu	896,317	46.11	1,047,699	53.89	1,944,016
15	FCT	743,238	55.27	601,618	44.73	1,344,856
16	Gombe	804,460	57.69	589,933	42.31	1,394,393
17	Imo	1,124,937	49.51	1,147,356	50.49	2,272,293
18	Jigawa	1,094,332	51.84	1,016,774	48.16	2,111,106
19	Kaduna	2,136,210	54.32	1,796,282	45.68	3,932,492
20	Kano	3,035,683	55.62	2,422,064	44.38	5,457,747
21	Katsina	1,649,766	51.07	1,580,464	48.93	3,230,230
22	Kebbi	985,834	54.58	820,397	45.42	1,806,231
23	Kogi	825,663	50.15	820,687	49.85	1,646,350
24	Kwara	734,061	52.19	672,396	47.81	1,406,457
25	Lagos	3,556,294	54.13	3,013,997	45.87	6,570,291
26	Nasarawa	845,931	52.29	771,855	47.71	1,617,786
27	Niger	1,390,483	58.18	999,552	41.82	2,390,035
28	Ogun	1,174,442	49.45	1,200,561	50.55	2,375,003
29	Ondo	925,892	50.81	896,454	49.19	1,822,346
30	Osun	797,953	47.48	882,545	52.52	1,680,498
31	Oyo	1,455,911	49.62	1,478,196	50.38	2,934,107
32	Plateau	1,257,251	50.69	1,223,204	49.31	2,480,455
33	Rivers	1,724,513	53.64	1,490,760	46.36	3,215,273

34	Sokoto	1,096,234	57.60	806,932	42.40	1,903,166
35	Taraba	970,266	54.60	806,839	45.40	1,777,105
36	Yobe	813,722	59.57	552,191	40.43	1,365,913
37	Zamfara	929,192	54.11	787,936	45.89	1,717,128
	Total	44,405,439	52.86	39,598,645	47.14	84,004,084

Source: INEC, 2019.

In the 2023 elections, of the 93,469,008 million registered voters, 44,414,846 million are women, accounting for 47.5 per cent of the total population of registered voters in Nigeria (INEC, 2023). These data are a pointer to the activeness of female voters in the voting demography in the country. However, it is difficult to tell if the choice of female voters is an expression of their will or if they were coerced or influenced by their male superiors or subordinates. Nonetheless, the percentage of female voters would make one think that women enjoy an almost equal representation level with their male counterparts, but this is not what we had indicated earlier. The reality is that women are only in the majority, but it counts for little or nothing in swinging political posts or preferences to them. They are best described either as a “*silent minority*” (Egwu, 2015; 399) or as a demography with “visibility without audibility” (Omotoso, 2020; 124).

While the Nigerian constitution guarantees the rights of all, regardless of gender, the reality on the ground has been that the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society has made it difficult for women to make much impact in the area of political participation (Umukoro, 2014). Similarly, the constitutions of the political parties have provisions that provide for women's participation and ensure inclusion but have little space for them in standing for elections. A review of the constitution of the two major political parties in the Fourth Republic, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the All-Progressive Congress (APC) encourage inclusivity, including gender inclusion.

The PDP’s constitution (2012, as amended) mentioned this. Chapter 1, sub-section 6(5) clearly states that “*The party shall support the emancipation and participation of women by encouraging their representation at all levels*”. Chapter 1, sub-section 6(7) further states that “*In the nomination for party offices at least 35% shall be allocated to women.*” Similarly, the pre-2022 constitution of the APC has it expressly mentioned in Article 7(vii) that the party has an objective to “*protect the interests ... of women in Nigeria ... and faithfully strive to obtain for them the greatest possible return for their labour and full participation in the Nigerian enterprise*’.

The APC Constitution (2022, as amended) provides for affirmative action in Articles 7(vii) and (viii) for women although the wording of the constitution was not specifically targeted at women alone but other disadvantaged groups in the country as it clearly states that the party has an objective to “*To observe Affirmative Action in all elective and appointive positions and ensure that youth, women Amended for clarity and provision for affirmative action for Women, Youth and Persons and Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs) are properly represented across all Party organs and government.*” and “*To promote and protect the interest of farmers, workers, women, youth and Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs) in Nigeria*”. While there is no exclusive preserve of affirmative action for women, Articles 12.1 – 12.15 mentioned the creation of the office of Woman Leader and Deputy Woman Leader at the National, Zonal, State, and Local government levels. Article 12.2 also included women in the National Advisory Council.

The Woman Leader and her Deputy are saddled with the responsibility of mobilizing fellow female members of the party as well as endearing the party to other women. In the case of the PDP, Sections 12.2, 12.12, 12.28, 12.50, and 12.62, mentioned the provision of the office of Women leaders at the Ward, Local Government, State, Zonal, and National Executive level respectively. Section 12.22 mentioned the concession of at least two slots in the ex-officio position at the Senatorial Executive level to women. The position of deputy women leader is however provided for at the National level. The concession of party executive position nonetheless, women hardly get such concessions or have a level-playing ground for all and sundry. Epelle and Oriakhi (2003) corroborated this when they noted the lopsidedness and the huge nomination fees for elective positions as these have made elective positions out of the reach of women. The situation of Nigerian women in this regard is reinforced by Castillejo (2009) who observed that political parties only use women as a means to an end. They only use them as women leaders so that they can mobilize fellow women for political activities as well as give them a false sense of belonging. Arowolo and Aluko (2010) even argued that women are never consulted at the party formation stage but rather at the membership drive stage.

The low level of political participation of women in Nigeria has been interrogated by different scholars. Samkange (2001) notes how women are prevented from contributing to all development in their locality as a result of some factors. Iloh and Ikenna (2009) alluded to how women in Northern Nigeria were disenfranchised up until 1979. According to Arowolo and Aluko

(2010), Pogoson (2012), and Okoosi-Simbine (2012), these factors inhibiting women's participation in politics can be divided into colonial, political, economic, socio-cultural, and religious. PLAC (2018), in its study, notes the low level of political participation of women is a result of the disadvantaged position of women in society as well as supposedly gendered issues like poverty, poor childcare, and poor healthcare. Izugbara and Chijioke, (2003) noted that women were serially marginalized under colonialism such that they were largely precluded from voting and even standing for elections, particularly in Northern Nigeria. This experience created a super status for men even in post-colonial Nigeria. The colonialists did not see women as capable of performing administrative roles of governance and so were not appointed into such roles by the representatives of the colonial powers (Gberevbie and Oviasogie, 2013). The place of culture in emboldening political marginalization of women is evidenced in the argument of Aboribo and Ogue (2007) when they stated that *"discrimination against women in politics is rooted in traditional beliefs and practices that regard the man as superior to his female counterpart"* (p. 93).

Some of the socio-political factors identified as inhibiting female political participation include thuggery and the challenge of indigeneship that women face (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010). Women do not have access to the thugs with which political power is grabbed. Also, a woman has to deal with the issue of indigeneship when she marries a tribal group other than her father's because their claim to the state of their spouse is often contested when politics come into play. Olufemi (2006) also echoed this challenge of indigeneship. Okoosi-Simbine (2012) identified the social factors inhibiting the political participation of women to include party elders' influence, political violence, party nomination method for candidates standing for elections, and political thuggery. Other social factors include reduced advocacy for female political participation (Abdullah, 1993); the role of the media in entrenching patriarchy (Omolola and Morah, 2014; Ette, 2017); low literacy level of women, more importantly in the North (Orisadare, 2019); and the role of gender-based violence (Agbalajobi, 2021).

Different scholars have also identified the economic and religious factors inhibiting the political participation of women in Nigeria. PLAC (2018) identified the role of the Nigerian economy which makes most women dependent on their spouses for financial support. Uhunmwangbo (2011) and Okoosi-Simbine (2012) mentioned the excessive monetization of

political office. In its study on how religion affects the political participation of women, Makama (2013) identified the role played by the Shari'ah system and noted that this explains the perceived difference in female political participation in the South and the North. Shariah is believed to proscribe women from showing their faces or having their voices heard in public.

2.1.3. Political Literacy and Electoral Choice

Political literacy may be a key determinant of political outcomes. According to Njoku (2009:40), about 70% of the electorate are not aware of the manifestoes of the major political parties in Nigeria. He linked his argument to the fact that most potential voters in the country are not properly schooled. In addition, Njoku opined that apart from ignorance due to lack of education, there were no enlightenment programmes designed to create political awareness about the political manifestoes of the main political parties in Nigeria. He further noted that lack of enlightenment has made many electorates unaware of the manifestoes provided by the main political parties that contested elections in Nigeria.

Understanding the manifestoes of the political parties by the electorate is needed as it will enable them to know how to vote and which party to vote for based on the best manifestoes of the political party (Unduru, 2008:35). In other developed countries, the electorate seems to have a proper political awareness of the political manifestoes of any party that contests elections, thereby enabling the people to make an appropriate decision on the best party to choose in the election. However, in Nigeria, most electorate hardly know the political parties; they vote without knowing what each party programme is all about and what the masses stand to benefit from the party or individual once elected (Janadu, 2011).

Available data has shown that the literacy levels of the North and the South differ greatly. According to the data on female literacy level in Nigeria, female literacy level, as of 2018 in the North Central is 49.6%; 31.8% in the North East; 29% in the North West; 79.3% in the South East; 79% in the South South; and 80.6% in the South West. What this therefore means is that the political literacy level of women in both Southern and Northern Nigeria differs. It has been argued that increased political participation is possible with increased literacy levels (Olomukore and Adelere, 2015). Olojede, Adekunle, and Samuel (2013) also argued that literacy has a way of increasing the consciousness of the people and spurring their sense of demanding accountability and good governance from the political class. Akanbi (2015) also argued that the way to promote

active political participation and good governance is by improving literacy levels. It is thus important to know, given the variance in literacy level in both Northern and Southern Nigeria, whether the impact of political literacy on the electoral choice of female voters in Northern Nigeria is the same as that of Southern Nigeria.

2.1.4 Religion and Electoral Choice

The interconnection between religion and political outcomes in Nigeria remains extremely complex. This could be understood in terms of the complexities that characterized the two main religions practised in Nigeria. The two main religions are simultaneously practised in two major ethnic regions (North and West). The Eastern Igbo-speaking people and the south-south people predominantly adhere to Christianity. That is, evidentially, the two dominant religions have adherence in all the states and zones of the country. This peculiarity has placed Nigeria as a secular state. However, Nigerian secularity has steadily been under threat. This stems from the fear of religious domination between the two major religions which occasionally leads to the quest for religious independence. Irrespective of its federal posture. There have been attempts to turn some sections of the country into Islamic states under a legal regime of sharia law. From all indications, this has contradicted the letter and spirit of the constitution, specifically, section 10 which states that “*The Government of the Federation or a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion*”. This has also negated the principle of federalism that the country is practising. This point has been emphasized by several scholars. For instance, Nwabueze cited in Eso (2003), has observed that the state support for sharia law in a multi-religious society such as Nigeria is antithetical to the principle of federalism. In a bid to address the question of religion and Nigerian politics, Garba (2002), has pointed out that the failure to maintain and follow judiciously the principles of secularism where the state is separated from religion has further complicated the existing national tension.

The consequence of the introduction of Sharia law by some states in Nigeria has led to the widespread fear of the *Islamization* of the country. This is mostly nursed by the Southerners who are predominantly Christians. It is therefore obvious that religion accounts beyond the spiritual realm. It is also a deciding factor in the Nigerian political realm. For instance, President Jonathan alluded to this point when he stated that some religious tensions in the country were motivated by politicians for political reasons (Nnochia, 2012). Religion is politicized and most times used as an

instrument of destabilization and conflict generation. For instance, Ibrahim's (1989) study has elaborated on this assertion. Ibrahim argued that the crises in Kaduna state emanated from the politicization of religion for the sole end of politics and the quest for power.

Other cross-country comparative studies have also affirmed the association between politics and religion. In a study that measures religious perceptions of candidates' ideological base in the United States House elections, Jacobmeier's (2013), finding reveals that religion has a selfdetermining consequence on the assessment of candidates' ideologies. Findings from the study showed that candidates attached to the evangelical Christianity sect were seen to be more conservative than their ideological counterparts from mainline Protestants. Peralta (2012) studied the role of the Catholic Church in Mexico's political growth and showed that the Mexican Catholic Church was not an ideological national apparatus. The study discovered that the church was playing the role of the auditor in the public sector.

There is also a sense in which religion gives recognition to the power of political authorities to influence or support its operations. In this sense, electorates, especially those with fundamentalist rationality would vote for the candidate that would guarantee their religious autonomy and rights. The study by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), extensively dealt with cleavage-rial blocs of the societies in shaping the origin and development of political parties in some political systems.

In Nigeria, most of the parties in the First Republic emerged and were shaped by social group interests. For example, the NPC beyond its ethnic identity was also defined by religion and at the same time shielding religious interests. This was seen in its leadership structure. The party hierarchies were manned by known religious leaders. To counter the NPC, the United Middle Belt Congress was formed to address the interests of the alienated Christians in the old Northern Region. Ultimately, identity politics affected political attitudes and that was manifested in their voting behaviour (Egobueze and Ojirika, 2019). Political affiliation became an image of social divisions. The voting behaviour reflected religious affinity, socio-economic status, ethnic attachment, and gender differentiation, among other factors as major determinants that defined voting behaviour. Arguably, electoral choices were based on social group interests.

In the period following independence, Nigerian women played active roles in politics. In 1960, Mrs Wuraola Esan from the Western region became the first female member of the Federal Parliament. In 1961, Chief (Mrs) Margaret Ekpo became a member of the Eastern Nigeria House

of Assembly till 1966. Mrs Janet N. Mokelu and Miss Ekpo A. Young also became a member of the Eastern House of Assembly. however, in the North, women were still denied the franchise even after independence until 1979 when we had the Second Republic. As a result, noticeable female politicians like Hajia Gambo Sawaba could not vote and be voted for. In the Second Republic (1979-1983), women's engagement in politics was noticeable. A few Nigerian women won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level and also few women won elections into the State Houses of Assembly respectively. However, in the Second Republic, only two women were appointed Federal Ministers – Chief (Mrs) Janet Akinrinade and Mrs Adenike Ebun Oyagbola, serving as Minister for Internal Affairs and Minister for National Planning respectively. Mrs Francesca Yetunde Emmanuel served as the first female Permanent Secretary in the civil service. At the state level, few women were appointed Commissioners. It was in 1983, that Ms Franca Afegbua became the first woman to be elected to the Senate. At the local government level, few women were elected to Councils during this period.

It is however held that the place of religion as a determinant of politics and electoral choice differ between Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria. As earlier mentioned in this thesis, the religious composition of Southern Nigeria differs from that of Northern Nigeria. While Southern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim. The nature and practice of religion in the two parts also differ. For example, in the SouthWest where there is a mix of Christians and Muslims, cases of religious violence are nearly absent even though the contention between the two faiths exists. The case is however different in Northern Nigeria where there have been a series of religion-motivated violence leading to the destruction of lives and properties. Similarly, the two parts of the country have had a fair share of the mobilization of religion towards political and electoral purposes. It is to this end that it is important to test whether the impact of religion on the electoral choice of female voters in Northern Nigeria is the same as in Southern Nigeria.

2.1.5. Attitude To Gender Sensitivity in Politics

In Nigeria, following the end of the military government and subsequent transfer of power to civilian democratic administration in 1999, women's low participation in politics became an issue (Samuel and Segun, 2012). With the current trend, politics seems to be dominated by men (Idike et al., 2020). According to Oloyode, 2016, the participation of women or the number of

women occupying elected offices stood at about 6.7%. The statistics provided, however, are below the 22.5% global average. It appears that women's involvement in politics is becoming bleaker despite the demand for inclusion in politics (Idike et al., 2020). To tackle the low participation of females in politics, the Nigerian government adopted national and international instruments (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003; Ajayi, 2007). However, the issue remains a concern (Idike et al., 2020). African governments have been quick to commit themselves to including women in politics (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019). However, fulfilling their commitment becomes abortive.

In literature, the link between patriarchy and the present attitudinal issue towards the inclusion of women in politics abound. Patriarchy refers to the systemic societal structures, which institutionalize male physical, social, and economic power over women, a way of life in which men are believed to be superior to women (Okafor et al., 2007; Reeves & Baden, 2000). No wonder, Idike et al. (2020:8) asked, has patriarchy stunted the participation of women in national development in Nigeria? In Nigeria, the diversity in culture, language, religion, caste and class seems to be responsible for the link between patriarchy and women's participation in polity (Emordi et al.; 2021). Women make up about 49.5% of the population in Nigeria. However, in politics and government, they are not well represented. Working towards and ensuring the inclusion of women will help in national development, peace and democracy (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019).

Kelly (2019) also, attributes a corrupt and patronage-based political system to the low participation of women in politics. The political party system has made women marginalized when it comes as more nominees for political positions seem to be men (Kelly, 2019). For instance, A 2015 report shows that 760 candidates contested the position of governor and deputy, 87 were women (11.45%). Of the 747 candidates for senator, only 122 were women (16.33%). Of the 1,774 candidates for the House of Representatives, only 269 were women (15.16%) (NWTF (2015). In addition, the party system does not consider the domestic responsibilities of women (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019). Kelly (2019) highlights the rules of participation at the nomination stage of elections to revolve around the male folk, their norms and values.

Access to power emerges from familial, communal and economic linkages (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019:5). Women's participation in politics may also be limited by economic factors (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019). Some political positions will require the candidate to buy a form and to carry out campaigns. The cost for these is high (Mlambo and Kapingura, 2019). Mlambo

and Kapingura, 2019:5 suggest that independent funding and placing limits on campaign spending may support women in overcoming the barriers to political participation. The rate at which the female gender is often subject to hate speech, threats or violence constitutes another attitudinal problem for women's inclusion in politics (NCWD, 2016; NWTF, 2015). Creating a hostile-free environment may also proffer a solution to women's participation in politics.

Interestingly, there have been several studies on women's participation in politics in Nigeria and how religion and education level have been determinants of their participation, and these have been discussed earlier in Chapter Two of this thesis. This study will be adding to this corpus of knowledge as the qualitative objective of this study therefore is to discuss how Nigerian women engage in politics and to what extent is their engagement governed by religious influence and their levels of education.

2.1.6. Mediating and Moderating Role of Political Literacy

There is a volume of literature on the moderating role of political literacy in shaping political outcomes, especially in new democracies in Africa. Studies such as Larreguy and Marshall (2013; 2014), Davies (2008), Finkel (2003), McMahon (2003), and Bratton (1999), among others, popularized the opinion that democracy can be taught and learned. To this group of scholars, an educated middle class in any society can serve as a watchdog on government and hold it responsible for its actions. It is assumed that an educated middle class will make rational choices free of ethnoreligious and other primordial sentiments. The intellectual contribution among these groups of writers is that a high level of education / political literacy level encourages and inculcates the norms and tenets of democracy which include among other things tolerance and freedom of speech – considered necessary elements in the process of democratization (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer, 2004, 2007). In line with the above, Finkel (2003), argued that education has a modest effect on the citizen's participation in politics, an understanding of what politics means, support for democratic institutions, trust, and tolerance in political institutions among other things. In support of this view, Larreguy and Marshall (2013) have argued that when a critical mass of the people is educated, the consequence will increase civic participation in such a state. According to them, such educated citizens pay special attention to political matters, they stand better chances of voting and being voted for, they participate more effectively in community activities and may even serve better

as local politicians. They further observed that the campaign for an increase in school enrolment in new democracies is necessary for democratic consolidation.

It is important to note that the above view has received its share of criticism in the literature. Studies that emanated from the works of Campante and Chor (2012a), Acemoglu et al., (2005), Glaeser et al., (2004), and Huntington (1968), have argued variously that the nexus between education and consolidation of democracy is negligible and, in some instances, negative. Specifically, Huntington (1968) observed that there is a disparity between educational attainment and labour market requirements in many democratic nations of the world and this leads to alienation and instability in these societies. For instance, when young people especially graduates are not employed and their basic needs are not met, the other alternative will be armed violence and conflict. Campante and Chor (2012), drew examples from the Arab Spring. They argued that education alone cannot usher in democratic consolidation. For this group of scholars, there are other intervening variables, such as economic factor that accounts for the linkages between political literacy level and political participation.

Studies and evidence on the effect of political literacy level as a moderating element on religion in determining political outcomes in Nigeria are scanty. Few studies such as Larreguy and Marshall (2017), (2014), Ameachi, Okechukwu and Ikechukwu (2018), have focused on the connection between education and democracy, political behaviour, voter apathy, and voter turnout in Nigeria. In their study, Larreguy and Marshall (2017), used Nigeria as a case study. They observed that the availability of free education at the primary school level has favoured prodemocratic civic and political engagement in Nigeria. For them, education at the primary level increases the disposition for fundamental forms of political participation such as voting, community participation and interest in politics. Also, Ameachi, Okechukwu, and Ikechukwu (2018) have noted that political education helps electorates make the right choices and eschew electoral malpractice, electoral-related fraud, and violence. In any case, these studies are germane, however, their data sets are quite small, and their methodology is not robust.

Few studies have measured the relationship between voter political literacy level and political behaviour in Nigeria. These studies are not exclusive to Biu (2006), Segay (2007), Jega (2014), and Ojo (2008). The literature shows that the level of political literacy is still low among Nigerians. The work of Segay (2007) shows that a critical mass of Nigerian electorates is still in

the dark on matters relating to election and electoral processes in Nigeria. As a result, they are manipulated by some Nigerian politicians who exploit their ethnoreligious sentiments. On his part, Jega (2000) stated the prominence of voter education. He argued that, in order to have free and fair elections devoid of violence, political literacy has a central role to play and, thus a necessity. It is the role of credible actors such as EMB, public agencies and NGOs in the electoral process to educate the public on the untold consequences of electoral fraud and violence. To him, all of these put together will help in inculcating and raising a political culture that will aid the sustainability of the electoral system.

According to Biu (2006), political literacy covers a gamut of areas where voters must be educated; these include their roles in the electoral process chain to raise the level of their confidence in the electoral system. He went further to recommend workshops for some critical sections of society such as Civil Society groups, Religious Leaders, community-based organizations, traditional leaders, opinion-makers, the academic sector, youths, students and women groups, professional and labour organizations etc. other activities like Jingles, road display and the good use of the media will go far to help. In addition, he listed areas such as the secrecy of voters, and electoral codes of conduct during elections among others.

To be more specific, the International Human Rights Law Group (2003), has stated the need for voter education. From this, voters will understand the need to be involved in the election process rather than staying away for fear of electoral violence or fraud. In the same light, Sagay, (2007), stressed the importance of political education as being central to any democratic society. He observed that enlightened and well-educated voters have the capacity to bring about change in a democracy. His concern was, how can uninformed voters enforce the needed change in society. Therefore, for him, the instrument of war that will engineer a bloodless revolution is the 'voter's card' in a democracy. As a result, there is a need for voter education. This will prepare them against the suspicious acts of some politicians who seek support based on ethnoreligious cleavages and other primordial criteria.

For a way forward, Ojo (2008), has insisted that the Nigerian government must invest extensively and strengthen voter education. He has argued that the lack of it has been responsible for the low level of political culture expressed by an average Nigerian citizen. This is manifested in the ways an average Nigerian voter is inclined toward the politics of money, favouritism, sectarian politics and gross misuse of voting powers (Ojo, 2008). This is very worrisome in Nigeria

where money politics has a strong hold over the people and serves as the basis for gaining the people's mandate. In his conclusion, he posited that until proper reorientation and political education are carried out on the critical mass of the people, Nigerian politics will be moderated by parochial political culture.

2.1.7. Mediating and Moderating Role of Thematic Discussions of Religion

There are two major strands of argument on the intersection between religion and politics. The first consisted of a group of scholars who argued in favour of the relegation of religion in global politics. This school of thought was driven under the secularization thesis in the 1960s and 1970s, by scholars such as Max Weber, Peter Berger, and Bryan Wilson, among others (Turner, 2020). The foundation of their arguments rests on the competing request for modernization, expansion in knowledge acquisition and the increase in the idea of rationalism will in combination, relegate religion (Meulemann, 2017). Some of them went to the extreme or extent of declaring the obituary of religion. For instance, the British anthropologist Anthony F. Wallace cited by Gorski and Altinordu (2008:56) stated in 1966: The evolutionary future of religion is extinction ... Belief in supernatural powers is doomed to die out, all over the world, as the result of the increasing adequacy and diffusion of scientific knowledge. However, the extreme position of Gorski and Altinordu was not supported by many secularization writers. In any case, their point of convergence was that knowledge, modernization and liberalism would send religion into extinction in society.

Increasingly, current scholars such as Bruce (2002), (2013), Pickel (2009), (2013), and Pollack (2003), among others have variously pushed for the re-consideration of the secularization thesis. Their major concern is that even with the level of criticism on the secularization thesis, it still holds some level of explanation. According to Pickel (2017), the focus of these scholars is not just on the complete disappearance of religion but its relegation as a *Tour de Force* in society. It is important to note that some of their arguments are being challenged on the premise of Eurocentrism and non-empirical bias and, as such should not be taken seriously (Casanova, 2003; Stark, 1999). Yet, some of its present breeds of writers have recognized its obvious shortcomings and weaknesses, they have also insisted that the secularization thesis is theoretically useful in providing understanding for historical development (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008).

The revivalist who wrote extensively against the secularization theorists includes among others Fox (2001) (2019), Phillpott (2002), Kubáľková (2009), Kratochvíl (2009), and Kettel, (2012). This group of scholars claimed the resurgence in the study of the connection between religion and politics. They posited that there is an intellectual awakening on the global resurgence of religion driven by several schools of thought within the Social Sciences. This intellectual resurgence challenged the old narrative that claimed religion would die a natural death from the choke of modernity and/or globalization (Kubáľková, 2009).

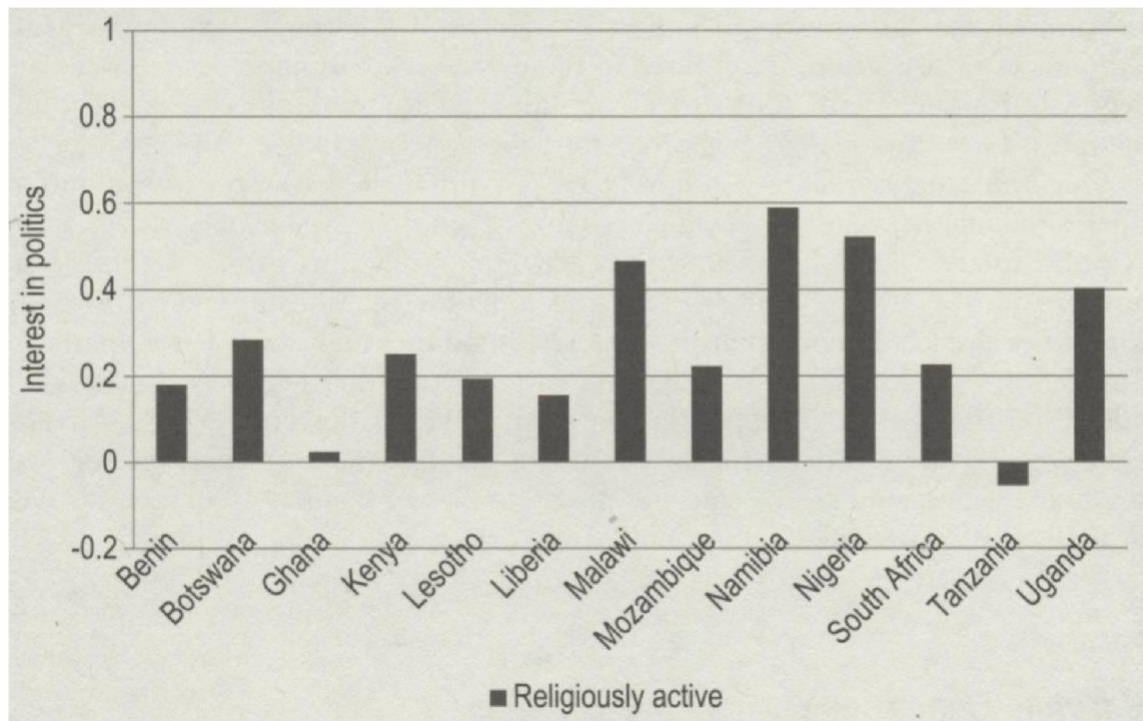
They claimed that since the incident of September 9/11, religion has returned prominently and has dominated discourse among journalists, politicians, think tanks, etc. (Phillpott, 2002). This is premised on the fact that religion is one of the historical forces that has shaped and will continue to shape the political narrative around the world (Kratochvíl, 2009). They stated that the influence of religion is constantly reflected in contemporary issues such as abortion, same-sex marriages, cloning, violence, terrorism, and diplomacy, among others. For these groups of scholars, there is a spirit after global politics known as religion, even though forces such as the State, science, rationalism, and modernism, among others, are confronting and trying to replace the invisible hand of religion. Rather, they argued, extensive investment should be channelled into the intellectual and systematic study of religion as seen in the volume of literature on the subject matter (Kettel, 2016). Hence, the study of religion will provide the basis for not just understanding the world but how it operates as well (Phillpott, 2009).

It is illustrative to also point out that Africa provides an excellent laboratory for the interrogation of the relationship between religion and politics (Jones and Lauterbach, 2005). The continent of Africa is replete with evidence that can serve as data for the study of the domain – of religion and politics. This is because Africa is noted as one of the regions of the world where religious groups are increasing exponentially (Mangolos and Weinreb, 2013). A Pew Research conducted on Religion and Public life (2017) in Africa placed Christians' population at about 517 million, and Muslims at about 248 million. The report noted that Africa is one of the places in modern times where religious leaders are accorded more respect than political leaders (Trinitapoli and Weinreb, 2012). Other writers such as Abbink (2014), and Ellis and Haar (2007), have also corroborated that religion is an important element in African societies and that it is intricately tied to politics.

In another Pew Research conducted in 2010, 69% to 98% of respondents in Africa believed in a metaphysical being known as God who goes to Mosques or Church often, and who do follow the injunctions of these religions. For instance, a study conducted by Manglos and Weinreb (2013), on sub-Saharan Africa, found that there is substantial variation across countries examined to determine their religious affiliation. The study covered thirteen countries. More countries were found to be Christians with a wide number of Christian adherences – Kenya, Ghana Malawi, Liberia, South Africa, and Benin are in this group. Other countries, like Namibia, Uganda, and Lesotho, have a more Christian population but with a preference for the Catholic denomination. The third group covers countries with a fair share of Christian and Muslim populations – Tanzania and Nigeria. The study showed that Botswana and Mozambique appear to be different because a larger number of citizens claim to have no religion. Their study further shows that in eleven of thirteen countries studied, there is a high, positive, and statistical relationship between religiously related activities and political interest. The exception has been Tanzania and Ghana.

Summarily, the model used in their study suggested that religion is indeed an instrument of integration as well as a mechanism of inclusivity. That is, religious activity does not in any way diminish political interest. On the contrary, the more active an individual is religious, the more politically interested they become. Some of the clergymen have become electoral prophets. Some of them categorically foretell which candidate and political party will win the election during the electoral contest. In some cases, the candidates contesting the election consult them for prediction. It is equally clear from the study that this generally positive result differs substantially between countries. Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of their argument.

Figure 2. The predicted net effect of being religiously active on political interest by country (filled black bar = increase in estimated political interest associated with being an active member of a religious group)



Source: Manglos & Weinreb (2013:206)

In Africa, there has been a growing attachment of importance to religion. This is more so due to religious linkages with politics, and this has constituted a subject of great intellectual discourse (Haynes, 2020; Ellis and Haar, 2004). Specifically, Nigeria is a religiously volatile country, and as such provides a social lab in Africa for the study and understanding of the interface between religion and politics, especially as regards the rising influence of religious leaders in Nigerian politics. Pew Research (2017), estimated that about 87 million Christians and 90 million Muslims are domiciled in Nigeria, making it the sixth-largest Christian population in the world and fifthlargest Muslim population in the world respectively. Few studies have attempted to measure the influence of religion on Nigerian politics, they include but are not restricted to Kukah (1993), Ilesanmi (1995), Obianyo (2010), Onapajo (2012), Lenshie and Akpu (2014), Maduagwu, (2016), Obadare (2018), Ikem, Ogbonna and Ogunnubi (2020), among others. Specifically, Lenshie and Akpu (2014:47) stated that: religion in Nigeria occupies the prime of the socio-economic and political life of the country, that is, the process of policymaking and implementation of the government in Nigeria is guided by religion among other factors.

2.1.8. Gap in Literature

A review of the literature examined so far shows that there are some lacunas that this thesis hopes to fill. First, the extant literature on the place of religion in influencing political outcomes in Nigeria has largely been premised on the assumption that the impact of religion is the same on both genders even though there is an acknowledgement that the impact of religion on electoral choice is stronger in Northern Nigeria than it is in Southern Nigeria. These assumptions have therefore made it difficult to measure how religion impacts the electoral choice of women in both Northern and Southern Nigeria. This study therefore fills the gap by examining the level of the impact of religion on political outcomes of women in both regions in the country.

Similarly, this study is novel as it also examines how political literacy has impacted the influence that religion has on the electoral choice of women in both regions in the country. While extant literature have examined the impact of political literacy on electoral choice, many of the works on the level of political literacy in both Northern and Southern Nigeria have argued that political literacy is higher in Southern Nigeria than in Northern. Their conclusion has been premised on the fact that education level is higher in the South than in the North and this should translate into a higher level of political literacy in the South than in the North. This thesis attempts to put a litmus test to this because education and literacy are not necessarily the same. This aside, the thesis equally examines how the level of political literacy in both regions have mediated in the influence of religion on political outcomes.

Interestingly, there have been several studies on women's Political participation in Nigeria and how religion and education level have been determinants of their participation, and these have been discussed earlier in Chapter Two of this thesis. This study will be adding to this corpus of knowledge as the qualitative objective of this study therefore is to discuss political participation of women in both regions with a view to making a comparative study of the level of political participation in both regions and how patriarchy has impacted this.

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Approaches to Religion and Political Involvement

The analysis and understanding of religion in the literature, especially the oral expression of what it represents in Africa, present challenges for conventional modes of analysis. This is even more complex when dealing with the blend between politics and religion. The academic discourse on the intersection of religion and politics is usually carried out under the academic auspices of

political science and economics (Bates, Mudimbe and O'Barr, 1993). However, neither of them has the sophistication to explain the common belief in Africa – that “there exists a continuum between visible and invisible worlds, or that mankind shares its environment with spirits of various types which have a determining influence on the outcome of mundane transactions and with which direct communication is possible” (Ellis and Ter Haar, 1998: 179). Western literature which attempts to offer explanations on the role and impact of religion in African politics mostly concentrates on the institutional approach which rarely captures how religious ideologies find their way into the way and manner political power is appreciated and exercised in Africa (Haynes, 1994; Villalon, 1995; Ranger, 1986). Other historical works that tried to make an impression on the relationship between religion and politics have had little or no success in impacting contemporary politics and public affairs (Ranger, and Kimambo, 1972).

However, there are exceptions, especially from the Francophone School of political science, which was influenced by philosophy, history, and anthropology in incorporating religion in its frame of analysis (Bayart, Mbembe and Toulabor, 1993; Constantin and Coulon, 1997). Temporarily, the World Bank in its economic analysis of Africa has integrated and borrowed some insights from a political science into its analysis, maintaining that the root cause of Africa's economic problems could be traceable to the nature of Africa's political institutions and its political culture peculiar to the African people. This is also referred to by the World Bank as “a crisis of governance” in Africa (Brunger, 1990). This idea has dominated, in recent times the discussion around governance in Africa. However, anthropologists of African descent were more concerned about systematising indigenous practices and beliefs which thrived in rural regions of Africa, where tradition existed in its natural form. Several other classical anthropological writers based their study on local institutions and cultures that are considered closed systems which with time will be eroded and refashioned by the forces of modernization. This approach held sway for many decades in explaining the anthropological views of African religion (Peel, 1968). It also follows that anthropologists have studied the religious beliefs of Africans from a wider perspective where they incorporate, for example, new Christian settlements and extend their studies to other ways in which religion and politics meet in contemporary Africa (Comaroff, 1985; Lan, 1985).

Sub-Saharan Africa is regarded as the world's most religious region (Manglos and Weinreb, 2013). In the region, religious organizations are the most extensive non-state actors, with churches

and mosques always crowded and well-attended by people (Isichei 2004; Norris and Inglehart, 2004). These religious groups always make significant demands on adherents both material and immaterial demands which are used in running the religious groups (Trinitapoli and Regnerus, 2006; Manglos, 2010). In addition, adherents and followers are engaged in various religious-related activities and networks. These religious organizations and networks also provide some level of services, and most times serve as links for foreign aid (Manglos, 2011; Englund, 2003; Hearn, 2002). They are a formidable mechanism for the provision of both the spiritual and welfare needs of the people, especially in the absence of public-funded welfare systems and state failure (Adogame, 2007; Manglos, 2011; Trinitapoli and Weinreb, 2012).

The basic assumption underlying religious attachment is built on the fact that in several societies, religious affinity does shape and moderate the civic identity of the people (Lichterman, 2008). This is so when religious affiliation serves as the basis for differences in access to politics and political recognition. Most times, this could result in different levels of political disenchantment and disconnection (Tilly, 2005). This is where the tradition of divisions inherent in religious affiliation stems from. This is contrary to the underlying argument advanced by some civil society scholars that religious affiliation and identity have the potential for holding societies together as well as inclusionary potentialities (Billing, 1990; Smith, 1996; Young, 2002). From this dimension, religion can elevate a person's civic consciousness and in a broader perspective serves as a mobilization platform for political engagement. Focusing on Africa and more specifically Nigeria, there are few approaches in the literature connecting religion and the political sphere. To examine these approaches in perspective, the first two to be discussed here illustrate the central role and influence of elite/leadership, while the last two focus on grassroots/popular influence. All four approaches examine religious affiliation and the process of being an ardent follower of a religious group.

The first approach sees religious leaders as political actors who play extensive roles such as mobilization, negotiation, resistance to political authorities, and protesting government regimes. This was obvious and common in the 1980s and 1990s in Africa (Boyle, 1995; Fields, 1982; Gifford, 2009; Huntington, 1993). For instance, notably, the Catholic denomination has been formidable and reputable for resistance and protest. Others such as the African-Independent Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, Mission Protestant churches have all

trailed behind the Catholic Church (Gifford, 1998; Meyer, 2004; van Dijk, 1992). The variation in the level of activism is hinged largely on the size and capacity of the church, its linkages with other transnational bureaucratic institutions, financial prowess, and the level of independence the church enjoys from state authorities. Due to the level of attention, this first approach has received in the literature, there are the general assumptions that there are universal variations in the level of political penetration or involvement of religious groups. This assumption holds that the Catholic Church and other older denominations, like Mission Protestants, will be more inclined to politics given their weight and size, their connection to influential global organizations, and their historical antecedence. This also suggests that the closer members are to the leadership of these churches, the more politically inclined they become. However, it is not clear if ardent religious membership and political participation would hold or have the same explanation for other groups is yet to be ascertained.

The second approach sees religion as a ritual, broadly defined as a political activity that illustrates and represents the vestiges of colonial experience prevalent in postcolonial societies (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997; Mbembe, 1992). Here, religion is seen as a set of politically created symbols that helps people to reinterpret, undermine and suppress emerging global forces on local communities (ter Haar, 1998, 2004, Marshall, 2009). Under this approach, emerging Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations are seen to have more potential for political engagement as well as participation. This is achieved by persuading political elites to comply with the rules using public media platforms (Hackett, 1998; Marshall 2009). From this perspective, it is a politically motivated discourse that matters. It negates the argument that the Catholic and Mission Protestants are more inclined politically. It also challenges the argument on intensive religious engagement. Stating that it can have a reversed relationship to political interest as members' religious obligations already function to serve the intention of the political engagement. Put differently, since there is a growing disenchantment in the political system, the religious spectrum has become an option and a preferred space for public protest.

The third school of thought perceives religion as a major factor in the advancement of civic awareness. Specifically, this approach takes into consideration socialization processes, patterns of reorganization, and the exchange of ideas amidst a critical mass of citizens as essential to the interconnection between religion and politics. Other studies from this school of thought consider

as important the role of modern education, which invariably promotes civic obligation as an important influence and responsibility of religious groups (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Becker and Woessman, 2009; Brown, 2000; Woodberry, 2012). Other studies see local religious congregations as social institutions that organize members into social networks for managing individual risk as well as the regulation of behaviour (Manglos, 2011; Englund, 2007; Garner, 2000). Again, there are a group of scholars that see religion as an instrument for the acquisition of civic development, institutional values and democratic processes of decisionmaking (Campbell, 2004; Sabar-Friedman, 1997).

In any case, we can see that religion is understood as a veritable instrument in enriching the public realm, especially, in motivating citizens to act in manners that go beyond clannish and ethnic sentiment. This further explains the inclusionary dimension of religion in terms of its ability to link individuals to another public sphere by expanding their knowledge on public matters as well as their network. This perspective highlights the nexus between civic opinion and religion at the local level. There are discrete variables associated with this perspective. The first emphasizes education. It holds the view that denominational variations in education have a direct relationship with denominational control over educational systems which could lead to denominational variances in politicization. The second variable works on the assumption of the voluntary group within religions. The argument is that the activities of these groups either directly or indirectly enhanced the civic consciousness of the people. At large, it also suggests a positive general linkage between active religious memberships with political engagement.

The fourth approach sees religion as providing dual purposes – one, religion providing the bases for political mobilization and second, as an element that provides political boundaries – thereby disenfranchising some religious groups from active political participation. This approach brings to the fore the divisive realm of religion or better still, the tendency for the region to breed and deepen inequality along the lines of religious differences (Tilly, 2005). This assumption, however, is a common theme in global surveys of religion, but very little attention has been given to it in African religious studies. David Laitin (1986), pondered why in Nigeria the debate over Shari'a law between the Christians and the Muslims became less politically charged. Another example can be found in the assessment of some of Africa's democracies where the advent of ethnic and regional political parties – some with a separate religious character are organized along

with pre-existing religious variances (Clapham, 1993). Broadly, though, several studies in Africa deal with subnational fractionalization (Bates, 2008; Clapham, 1993; Fukuyama, 2004; Herbst, 2000; Posner 2005). These studies captured the nexus between ethnicity, region, and religion based on different historical missions. Thus, this approach suggests differences in the level of politicization among groups, however, there will be variation based on context and not religious tradition. Context-based on differences in the level of education, political involvement, and the size as well as the capacity of a group in a country. From observation, this approach does not support or suggest the premise of active membership in a religious sect and political involvement. To summarize, we have agreed that religious leaders and approaches 1 and 2 have contributed to and defined to some extent African politics.

For this study, the cognitive mobilization theory of political literacy is quite fundamental. Cognitive mobilization borders on the process through which the populace acquires the cognitive abilities they employ in the making of political decisions such as voting as well as participation in other political activities (Dalton, 1984). It holds that political literacy promotes citizen's involvement in politics through the development of their political cognitive skills and knowledge which in turn helps them to comprehend and analyze the issues and happenings within the political system (Denny and Doyle, 2008). The theory links the process that creates a cause-effect between political literacy and political participation to certain inherent psychological forces. Popson and Dimock (1999) maintain that political literacy is the defining element in political participation. They argued that citizens with less political literacy level have little political knowledge and information and as such are less keen on political involvement while citizens with higher political literacy have more political information and this with higher political involvement level. Campbell (1960) further holds that the ideological consciousness of the citizenry is affected by political literacy. A politically literate person has a higher ideological consciousness than one with little or less political literacy level. According to Tam Cho (1999), what determines the people's level of involvement and decision-making in politics is their level of political literacy. It births an increase in the level of cognitive skills necessary for acquiring political knowledge and brings the populace to understand that the more politically literate you are, the more gratification you are bound to receive from participating in politics. Tam Cho (1999) however cautioned that political participation is not increased by political education or literacy per se but it is the socialization

process which political literacy brings about. In other words, political literacy causes the individual to increase the level of political socialization which in turn leads to higher political participation.

It is important to note that the cognitive mobilisation theory of political literacy level is that it impacts the mental proficiency of individuals to comprehend the intricacies of politics, and this will, in effect, affect political participation (Adamson, 2006). In other words, the more politically literate a person is, the more the propensity for the person to show interest in politics and make better-informed political decisions (Popson and Dimock, 1999). A politically literate person stands a better chance to be quite independent in their choice of candidate or in making other politically inclined positions than one who has little political literacy. Such a person is hardly swayed or influenced by the elite as they have the cognitive skills to critically engage political issues beyond how they appear on the surface level. Such persons can distil the manifestoes and programmes of candidates in an election and as such guide their choice of candidate. They are less swayed by primordial sentiments such as religion and ethnicity. Hence, a politically literate person can engage in a cost-benefit analysis of their political decisions and choices. By extension, politically literate persons can synchronize their interests with political issues (Delli-Capini and Keeter, 1996). They can identify which candidate's policy will best be suited to attend to the personal interests of all candidates standing for an election.

The role of the media and other external forces has to be mentioned in the development of political literacy and the honing of the cognitive skills necessary for comprehending political issues. Dalton (2002) argued that the media and technological advancement have increased the political knowledge of citizens. With improved technology, information is now available at each person's doorstep. Thus, the citizens are predisposed to more information. It can therefore be argued that the media itself influences citizens' level of political participation. This position is contended by Denny and Doyle (2008) who maintained that people with a high level of cognitive mobilization possess the motivation as well as the skill to interrogate the intricacies of politics without the influence of the media.

Besides improving the level of political participation, this theory argues that political literacy has the potential to increase the verbal cognitive ability and intellectual skills of a person (Cited in Amechi, Innocent, and Ikechukwu, 2018). In other words, a politically literate person tends to act more rationally and dissect political issues and events better. Political literacy does not

just promote political participation but it “*also dramatically lower the cost of gaining, pursuing and integrating political knowledge for active political involvement*” (cited in Amechi, Innocent, and Ikechukwu, 2018).

This theory applies to this study as it helps us understand the primacy of political literacy in interrogating female voters’ choices in elections. From our understanding of this theory so far, the theory suggests that women politically literate women tend to be more politically involved through participation in partisan politics, political advocacy, or exercising the civic duty of casting one’s vote. Such women are rarely swayed by primordial sentiments such as religious affiliation or even ethnicity. They make their choices based on the merit of the programmes and manifestoes of candidates and their political parties. Such women are also not easily by their spouse should they be married or other male figures in their lives, should they be single or widowed. It also emphasizes how a politically literate woman will not rely totally on the news from the media but will interrogate all ideas put forward during the electioneering campaign.

2.3 Biologism and Gender Roles

The conception of the woman has been one that has been greeted with the assigning of roles and identification of her as being the other. This implies the creation of a binary world with the woman being the “Other”. Many philosophers like Aristotle and others had claimed that the world, and indeed reproduction, can only be viewed from a binary viewpoint of male and female and thus bifurcation also means there are only active and passive attributes that map onto the categorization of humanity into male and female. Hence, the male is categorized as active while the female is categorized as passive. Although this has been criticized as superimposing the qualities of one or a few to be a general rule, this assumption has defined the categorization of male and female. What therefore defines a man, or a woman is the biology and the social roles that are assigned to them. Humans are defined by their sexes into male and female. The “natural” sexual organ that a person has defines his sex and the implication of this is that no room is made for other sexual orientations such as bisexual, queer, and even trans-sexual. The social roles assigned to the female makes her a woman while the social roles assigned to the male make him a man. Nobelius (2004) draws up an equation to capture the synthesis of biology and role designation as definers of male and female humans.

The equation goes thus:

'man' = male sex+ masculine social role (a 'real man', 'masculine' or 'manly')

'woman' = female sex + feminine social role (a 'real woman', 'feminine' or 'womanly')

Udry (1994) has already noted that the most common use of gender in social science today is as a synonym for biological sex. He noted that this is evident in the academics as a comprehensive bibliography of 12,000 titles for marriage and family literature from 1900 – 1964 showed that the term “gender” does not appear once. This error may not be unconnected with an assumption the simplest definition amounts to the most correct, a position that Money (1955) condemns. Money (1955) was the first try to bifurcate between biological sex and gender as a role.

In this ascribing of roles, the male is ascribed independent, primary, and superior while the woman is the dependent, secondary, or subservient. The woman therefore owes her survival to the man and must conform to the whims of the male. The male is regarded as the strong while the female is the weaker version and as such regarded as the inferior version to the man. She is subjected to social, economic, and political oppression – oppression by the man. Truth (1851) encapsulates this in her speech titled “*Ain’t I a Woman*,”

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and have gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with a mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman? (Truth, 1851).

Truth's speech draws attention to the socio-economic and political oppression the woman is subjected to. If one is to therefore kill the oppression that the woman is subjected to, it is important to deal with the conception which tends to birth this oppression in the first place. Weil (2004) draws up an analysis of oppression of the women from the works of Engels and Marx when she argues that “...Marx finally came to understand that you cannot abolish oppression so long as the causes which make it inevitable remain, and that these causes reside in the objective—that is to say material—conditions of the social system.” This is where Beauvoir’s criticism of the idea of

biologism comes in. In her 1949 work titled *The Second Sex* Beauvoir advances the struggle of women in Existential Philosophical thought by expressing a feminist interpretation of injustice hence Beauvoir's famous line, “*One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.*” (Beauvoir, 1953) The import of this is to say that biologically one is born male, female or intersex. Becoming a woman therefore becomes a construct, culturally, religiously, and politically. This in turn informs the conception of gender as a social construct. The realisation that a 'woman's' life is constructed deprives her of living an authentic life. In “The Givens of Biology”, De Beauvoir sketches a wide variety of reproductive processes and behaviour in animals. De Beauvoir discusses the smallest insects through to fishes, birds, mammals and ultimately human beings. She also argued that we must begin with biology because biological facts have been used to justify the oppression of women. Specifically, she argues against encapsulating women as the necessary Other by emphasizing women’s animality with an appeal to “facts” of biology.

Another fundamental question that can be posed is the question about who it was that defined and assigned these social roles. Who is it that determines what roles are to be performed by females and what roles are to be performed by males? A possible answer to this will be that the roles are defined by male humans, thereby indicating the place of female oppression. It resonates with the idea of patriarchy and its over-reaching impact on female authenticity. The notion of biologism and social roles therefore means that a woman is expected to stick to the social roles assigned to her and governance of politics is not one of them because it would mean that the woman gets a superior position to the man. She is expected to be seen but not heard. Hence, while she can participate in politics as a mobilize, she is not meant to be involved in any position that puts her out to contest against a man as this will be a contention with the assigned social roles. Politics should not be within the purview of the gender roles for females.

This also explains the strongman posture that politics is given such that a woman will be seen as putting herself in harm’s way if she wants to contest with a man. From what has been ingrained into her consciousness and a whole lot of other factors, she is framed to accept it as a norm that she is not meant to challenge the norm – male domination in politics. Wollstonecraft (1796) asserts that:

...women in particular are made weak and wretched by several cooperating causes, originating from one hasty conclusion [MW’s phrase]. The conduct and manners of women show clearly that their minds are not in a healthy state; as with flowers planted in soil that is

too rich, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flamboyant leaves, after giving pleasure to viewers, fade on the stalk, disregarded, long before it was the time for them to reach maturity. This barren blooming is caused partly by a false system of education, gathered from the books on the subject by men. These writers, regarding females as women rather than as human creatures, have been more concerned with making them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and this homage to women's attractions has distorted their understanding to such an extent that almost all the civilized women of the present century are anxious only to inspire love, when they ought to have the nobler aim of getting respect for their abilities and virtues (Wollstonecraft, 1796).

Within the Nigerian political space, and given the encumbrances of religion and culture, women are found to have been able to make up their minds to contest and slug it out with men are seen in a derogatory way as wayward, promiscuous, among other things. Her gender role is meant to be in the kitchen or at the home front tending to the kids and such affront as wanting to take a political position is derided by men and even women alike.

2.4 Social Identity Theory

As of late, *“the subject of identity has gained prominence...as dominant theoretical frameworks prove inadequate in explaining the crisis of development and the complexities of present-day conflicts”* (Bangura, 1994). As Erickson (1962) stated, it is *“an individual's feeling of having a place with a gathering if (it) impacts his political way of behaving”*. Erickson (1968) defines social identity as *“a person's sense of belonging to a group if (it) influences his political behaviour”*. Social identity is defined by markers such as *“obligation to a reason”*, *“love and trust for a gathering”*, *“close to home bind to a gathering”*, and *“commitments and obligations”* that connect the individual and the group he identifies with.

Most broad investigations of identity stress that identity suggests equivalence and contrast simultaneously (Jenkins, 1996). Identity alludes to the advancement of development of importance based on a social property, or a connected arrangement of social credits, which is given need over different wellsprings of significance. For an individual or a gathering, there might be a majority of identities. However, in both self-representation and social action, such diversity is a source of tension and contradiction. This is because identity should be recognized from job sets. Jobs are characterized by standards organized by the establishments and associations of society. Their overall load in impacting individuals' way of behaving relies on exchanges and plans among people

and these foundations and associations. Identities are wellsprings of importance for themselves, and without help from anyone else, developed through a course of individuation (Giddens, 1991).

Identity is neither uniform nor stable among communities or persons. The significance and strength of identity differ among communities and may vary extensively over the long run. As such, while personalities are pretty much fixed, identity awareness is unique and dynamic, mirroring the changing identities and the effect or consequences of governmental policies or politics as regards who gets what, when and how. Thus, political and social mobilization, conflict and agitations are key to the development of an essential identity cognizance which, thus, is basic to identity-based politicking. Likewise, across the life cycle, an individual might have various identities, every one of which may continuously influence their interpretation and execution of social and political roles in society as well as their political conduct. According to Larsh and Friedman (1992), the dynamic operator linking economic and cultural processes in contemporary societies is the formation or construction of identity space. In rivalry or battles over the resources of the society which are largely scarce, collective demands will generally be predicated and coordinated on shared interests, which thus will often rely on either physiological 'givens' or, as is all the more frequently the case, on shared sociocultural identities. Subsequently, what can be named as identity politics is just, to use Joseph's (1987) words, “*the mutually reinforcing interplay between identities and the pursuit of material benefits within the arena of competitive politics*”

Since the social development of identity generally happens in a setting set apart by power connections, Castells proposes a differentiation between three structures and starting points of identity building (Castells, 2004):

- *Legitimizing identity* that is introduced by the dominant societal institution to extend and rationalize their domination over social actors (Sennett, 1980; Anderson, 1983).
- *Resistance identity* which is generated by those actors who are in a position to extend devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and surgical based on principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society (Calhoun, 1994).

- *Project identity* comes into existence when social actor, based on whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of the overall social structure.

Social identity creates a sense of sameness among people regardless of possible markers that ought to divide them. For example, people who identify with Christianity or Islam will see each other as brothers or sisters if and when their ethnic identity is subsumed by their religious identity. The point being made here is that an individual is defined by several identities, and it becomes a function which of these identities is dominant and which is residual. Where a woman's identity as a woman is dominant over her other identities like religion and ethnicity, her sentiments toward her gender will reign supreme.

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGION, ETHNICITY AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA

3.1 Introduction

There is an established link between religion and politics. However, there is contestation on the role that religion plays in shaping political outcomes (Falana, 2010). The nexus between the two concepts – religion and politics – has a very long history; this is so because religion right time has constituted the daily life of the people. Religion influences other aspects of people's lives, be they cultural, economic, or social spheres. In a specific context, religion has a different way it influencing and impacting the politics and system of governance of states. For instance, in the United States, where large numbers of people subscribe to one religious sect or another, the impact of religion on democratic progress and development is negligible. Ironically, in Nigeria, the same cannot be said. The case in Nigeria has shown religious factors to remain a key determinant factor in the country's political evolution (Falana, 2010).

In Nigeria, religion is perceived to have contributed in some ways to the idea of nation building. Overall, the constructive influence of religion on Nigeria's politics has remained negligible. What is obtainable, at most, is the manipulation of religion by the elites, or at best, the political gladiators who use religion as a smokescreen to pursue their selfish and narrow interests at the expense of national interest (Kukah, 1993; Obianyo, 2010; Onapajo, 2012; Obadare, 2018). These have constituted one of the adverse properties of religion in the Nigerian polity. Another dimension under the religious properties is greed. According to Kukah (1993), Religious practitioners have allowed greed to creep into the domain of religion to the extent that clergymen synergies with corrupt political leaders for material gain. There has been a massive call for reforms that will also include the religious space in politics, considering the crucial place of religion in Nigerian politics. Harnessing the beneficial properties of religion through positive reforms is essential to avoid the use of religion as a manipulative instrument in the hands of the political elites.

There is another conception of what religion does. It is perceived, as a collective instrument of community formation, consequently and frequently culminating in various forms of political identity. Religion is not really about morality as always assumed (Stark 2004: 470:71). But as Ellis and Ter Haar (1998) have suggested, an instrument in the hands of the political class. In Africa, the

use of religion for political ends by public leaders is unquestionable. It is used as an approach to keep power and influence together.

3.2 The Religion and Politics Nexus

One of the defining characteristics of Nigerian politics is how the political class take advantage of any form of identity to find access to public office or state power. At a point, ethnicity is deployed. And where ethnicity seems to have failed, religious sentiments become the next option. As an instrument of mobilization, religion has variously been deployed by the ruling class for self ends (Nnoli, 1989). That is, Nigerian political history has been tainted with one form of identity or the other. For instance, ethnic consideration in Nigerian politics is given a premium over other considerations. The second is religious consideration, always trailing behind ethnicity. Ironically, these various forms of identity relating to Nigerian politics have not been given the required level of attention in the realms of intellectual discourse and analysis. Mustapha as quoted (Jega, 2000), asserted that this could be a result of the phobia among some African scholars who deliberately chose not to undertake research works that can compromise national cohesion, and or take the radical view of class determinism as an explanation to African politics.

However, Bangura in Jega (2000), has observed that the identity thesis is gaining popularity as a framework for the understanding of African politics, yet it has been tainted with politics by the elites. Identity politics strives because of its psychological and social roles. Such roles as emotional linkage to a group as well as duties and responsibilities of members to the group they belong to (Jega, 2000). The emotional attachment that underscores identity relations is usually an instrument of manipulation by political leaders to aggregate support during campaigns and elections for public office. In addition, the fluidity, and the way these identities are used during electoral contests speak volumes. The casual ways these identities are picked and used by politicians when necessary and dropped when their interest is achieved underscore the fact that social identities are not the basis of political action. In this instance, religion serves as an example of one of these identities. Specifically in Nigeria, religion serves as an instrument for manipulation by the ruling class. It is deployed by identity groups in the quest for political power. As noted by various scholars, manipulation has thrived in the country because of the indifference and posture of the state to the social plight of the people (Nnoli, 1989; Jega, 2000).

On the other hand, religion has continued to serve as a social buffer or a medium of social support for many people, especially those at the bottom of the social cadre in society. Related to this, social demands are also predicated and organised most times along the lines of social identities such as religion and ethnicity. Thus, in Nigeria, religious identity has been structured into a mutually reinforcing identity for the pursuit of material resources within the realm of competitive politics (Joseph 1987). It, therefore, suggests that religion tends to provide a ready political base for politicians to access the public office of their dreams. On the part of the people, religion creates easy access to state power and state resources when a member of the in-group is in charge (Nnoli 1978; Ake 1996; Obianyo 2001; Jega 2000). This explains why members of these religious groups sometimes organise some form of a social event like a “welcome reception” for a member who won the election or has been given a political appointment within the public space. These religious groups will in turn place demands on the public office holder or their expectations for him or her.

Specifically, several studies have interrogated the subject matter of religion and politics in Nigeria. This includes but is not restricted to Kukah (1993), Ilesanmi (1995), Obianyo (2010), Onapajo (2012), Lenshie and Akpu (2014), Maduagwu, (2016), Obadare (2018), Ikem, Ogbonna and Ogunnubi (2020), among others. The position of these studies on the role of religion in Nigerian politics shows mosaics of divergent assumptions, postulations and conclusions. They have advanced the views that religion is just a tool of manipulation in the hands of the elite, an expression of hegemonic tendencies, a vehicle to climb the political rostrum, a means for political support and legitimacy, an instrument of national unity, etc. Put differently, the current state of the art in the literature on the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria oscillates between those who see religion as an ill wind that blows the democratic consolidation process no good and others who consider it a strong instrument of socio-cultural and political integration (Ikem & Ogbonna, 2020).

Furthermore, the debates on the nexus between religion and politics in Nigeria have also dwelt on whether Nigeria is a secular state or a religious state. Studies such as Samuel and Anedi (2021), Svoboda (2020) Ekpo and Offiong (2020), Adelakan (2020), Ojo (2019), Ogbu (2014), Lenshie and Akipu (2014), Tar and Shettima (2010), among others have interrogated the thorny issue concerning the secular status of the Nigerian state. A survey of the literature shows that two broad contrasting strands of analysis exist on the secular nature of the Nigerian state.

For the pro-secularists, Nigeria is a secular state even though the 1999 constitution does not expressly state so but Section 10 of the 1999 constitution as amended forbids the state or federal government from categorically adopting any form of state religion (Ogbu, 2014). Advocates of this position believe that religious conflicts will reduce or even vanish in Nigeria if and when the state and its apparatus completely avoid any form of religious issues. They called for a secular space in Nigeria which is common and harmonious to everyone beyond and above any theocratic entity (Tar & Shettima, 2010). The position of this strand of analysis is that, given the constitutional provision, religion should be removed from the public sphere and/or the public sphere should be secularized. The core of their argument is that the acquisition, demonstration and consolidation of state power should be religiously neutral in Nigeria.

On the other hand, Ojo (2019), Svoboda (2020), Lenshie and Akipu (2014), among others argued that despite the claims that Nigerian is a secular state, the political rivalry and economic competition between and among Christians and Muslims in the country have made every claim of secularism in Nigeria figments of imagination that is not rooted on empirical pieces of evidence. For instance, Ojo (2019) noted that political offices are shared according to religious affiliations in the country. It is more or less quite difficult to win elections in Nigeria without any form of religious affiliation and no wonder that the ruling class in Nigeria is deeply motivated by religious interest and force (Tar & Shettima, 2010).

Kukah (1983; 103) noted that the politicization of religion is a result of the efforts of the political elites. He pointed out that *“The ground was therefore well laid and rather than the politicians seeing themselves being divided only by the contending ideological presentations of their party manifestoes, a lot of useful energy was diverted to building religious lagers. Rather than mobilize Nigeria to their cause as politicians, the new political elite were busy mobilizing religious constituencies for a war against one another”*. Danjuma (1979), in a speech, highlighted the dangers that religion poses to the polity while also noting that tribalism itself has its inherent dangers. He noted that.

...I must confess that I share the fears of the possibilities of religious and sectarian strife in this country. I believe that tribalism as a fallback position was destroyed by the Nigerian civil war. But I regret to say that religious and sectarian chauvinism is fast replacing tribalism as a vehicle of political cohesion. The use of ethnic and or religious differences as a means of achieving political solidarity is fraudulent

enough but it becomes more disturbing when it is used to polarize the people and thereby disturb the peace and stability of the country. I am not aware of any country that has survived two civil wars. I am afraid that our country Nigeria may presently be living between wars. I hope I am wrong but all the ingredients and the signs to the contrary are there for any perceptive analyst to see...my greatest fear is that there may be no Nigeria after our Nigeria after our next strive (Danjuma, 1979).

3.3 Ethnicity, Culture and Religion in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-cultural country with 371 ethnic groups and over 500 languages (Otitte 1990). Of all these ethnic groups, Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa are considered the three major ethnic groups. Before the amalgamation of the Northern Protectorate and the Southern Protectorate by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914, the various ethnic groups had thrived on their own while maintaining interaction with one another (1999). These relations among the various ethnic groups happened through migration and myths, conquest, linguistic connection, trade, and marriage (Ajayi and Espie, 1981).

The history of ethnic groups has been one of migration and with this, they have interacted with other ethnic groups. For example, the Igbo have records of their internal migration from the Igbo heartland of Nri-Awka-Orlu from where they were said to have migrated to other parts of Igboland (Afigbo, 2008). Other records have pointed to the Igbo migration from the Biblical Israel (Alaezi, 2002; and Ilona, 2004). The ancient Kanem-Bornu empire and its Seifawa dynasty which lasted over a thousand years were said to have migrated to where the first Kanem-Bornu empire was and now to where the second Kanem-Bornu Empire was located (Khalidi, 2004). The Zaghawa people (Who formed the empire) met the Sao civilization, the Tuareg, and the Bulala people in their location. Similarly, some ethnic groups from the Niger-Delta axis and the Yoruba in Southwest Nigeria have had their origin traced to Benin and so share some similitude with Benin culture and tradition (Ifemesia, 1981; Bondareko and Roese, 1999). Although this claim has been controverted by the Yoruba, it is incontrovertible that the Yoruba and Bini share some connection as seen in their political system and arts. The Benin was said to have migrated from both Sudan through Nupeland and Egypt. Egharevba (1960), in his chronicles of the Bini, noted that “*Many, many years ago, the Binis came from Egypt to find a more secure shelter in this part of the world after a short stay in the Sudan and at Ile-Ife, which the Benin people call Uhe. Before coming here, a band of hunters was sent from Ife to inspect this land and the report furnished was very favourable. ... they met some people who were in the land before their arrival. These people are*

said to have come originally from Nupe and the Sudan in waves.” (p. 1). The myth of creation showed that the Yoruba trace their origin to an Oduduwa (Law, 1973) while the Hausa trace their origin to a Bayyajida (Shokpeka, 2005).

The place of conquest in establishing inter-group relations in the pre-colonial period is settled in historical records. Kanem-Bornu’s expansionist drive made the empire make contact with neighbours. The empire expanded into the heart of Hausaland such as Daura, Kano, Katsina, and Zaria as well as Jukun and even as far north as Fezzan (Okeke, 1992). The Benin Kingdom also expanded and exercised authority in parts of the Niger-Delta, Igboland, Akure, and Ikere (Egharevba, 1960) while also trying to incorporate Owo in Yorubaland (Ifemesia, 1981). This is evidenced in the claims of many groups in the Niger-Delta whose tradition of origin is traced to Benin and in the case of arts of the Owo kingdom and the traditional head of the Kingdom, the Olowo of Owo, dresses like the Oba of Benin regalia and the arts of Owo Kingdom (Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1999). Oyo Empire also incorporated other tribal groups in Yorubaland such as Owu, Egba, Dahomey, and Ilorin, among others as well as non-Yoruba groups like the Ibariba, Borgu and Tapa (Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1999). By the early 19th century, the Empire had “...*controlled a sea coast from about Whydah to just east of Badagry, and the territory extended for perhaps more than two hundred miles inland*” (Akinjogbin and Ayandele, 1999; 135). The Igala Kingdom expanded to its neighbours and posed a considerable threat to the existence of the Benin Empire in the 15th and 16th centuries (Obayemi, 1999: 153).

The linguistic connection among groups is also evidence of established inter-group relations in Nigeria. Greenberg (1963) classifies African languages into four families out of which only three are found in Nigeria. These three included the Niger-Kordofanian phylum, the AfroAsiatian phylum, and the Nilo-Saharan phylum. The fact that there is a spread of ethnic groups across Southern and Northern Nigeria suggests the intergroup relations among them before colonialism. These tribal groups included Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Nupe, Igala, Idoma, Itsekiri, Chamba, Tiv, Efik, Ibibio, Ejagham, and other Jukunoid languages (Arema, 2009; Ballard, 1971). Hence, while all the Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan are located in Northern Nigeria, the majority of the Niger-Kordofanian languages are in Southern Nigeria. Thus, Adeyanju (2022) argued that the “...*vast multifarious cognate reflexes are evidence of not only genetic relatedness but also of culture-historical and somewhat of a common political homogeneity dating back to a far distant period.*”

Trade was also a means of facilitating inter-group relations in pre-colonial times. Trade brought a lot of ethnic groups in contact with one another. The Tiv had relations with their Jukun, Idoma, and Yala neighbours as well as other ethnic groups through trade in salt, dried fish, cattle, and clothes, among others. Oyo's contact with the North was either on the grounds of religion or trade. Due to the nature of the region, Oyo depended on the supply of horses from the North for its cavalry. Benin also had trade relations with neighbours and those distant away. This helped in bolstering the relations among different groups.

The establishment of inter-group relations among the various tribal groups in Nigeria is a pointer to the fact that the current dichotomy that is created by ethnicity and tribalism is a misplaced one. One is forced to agree with Ekeh (1982) that ethnicity is an emergent structure that popped up as a result of the workings and dynamics of colonialism. The wave of ethnic conflict in post-colonial Nigeria is worth studying, particularly as it affects politics in the respective states. To this end, it is important to highlight the tribal groups in each state of the federation to appreciate and comprehend the dynamics and politics of each state.

Religion has also been a strong factor in Nigeria, from the pre-colonial period to the postcolonial period. It has been able to determine the turn of political events in Nigeria. Needless to mention, the two dominant religions in Nigeria were not indigenous to different ethnic groups in the country. The indigenous African religions were multifarious in form and practices. Mbiti (1969) captures this thus, "*Africa is not a land of one religion but of many religions. African traditional religions are many*". However, African traditional religion has been eroded into the backseat with the introduction of Islam and Christianity.

The introduction of Islam into Nigeria was driven by trade. It was driven by the trade interactions and exchanges that took place along the trans-Saharan trade routes (Anoba, 2017). Arabic sources claim that Islam came to modern Nigeria through the Arab traders and that Umme Jilmi, who became the Mai of the Kanem Bornu Empire in 1086 was the first Muslim monarch in West Africa when he converted to Islam and got some of his subjects to convert to Islam as well (Balogun, 1969). Islam spread to Hausaland from Bornu around the 12th or 13th century but did not gain ground until the 14th century when more Islamic scholars started trooping into Hausaland and got some Hausa kings to convert to Islam as well (Balogun, 1969; Kenny, 1996). By the 15th century and the 16th century, Islam had penetrated the North as many monarchs like Mai Idris

Alooma made Islam a state religion (Balogun, 1969). Before this period, Islam was essentially a religion of the elites as only court officials and the rich practised it most (Balogun, 1969; Ladipus, 2002). By the 15th century, a city like Kano had become the hub of Islam proselytizing with the presence of many Islamic scholars who spread to other parts of Hausaland from there (Smith, 1960). The foundation of Islam in Northern Nigeria was sealed with Uthman Dan Fodio's Jihad which saw to the Islamization of Hausaland and even attempts to spread to other non-Hausa communities (Ibrahim, 1976). It is also instructive to mention the effort of Ahmadu Bello (the great-grandchild of Dan Fodio and Premier of Northern Region). He was said to have embarked on the extensive spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria during the colonial period and got funding from King Faisal and Sheikh Sabbah of Kuwait towards this proselytizing effort between 1962 and 1966 (Bala, 2005). As the Vice President of the World Muslim League, he was quoted to have declared in an address to the Muslim Conference that "... *I have by the grace of Allah been able to convert some 60,000 non-Muslims in my region to Islam within five months...I would like to say this is only the beginning as there are other areas we have not yet tapped*" (Cited in Bala, 2005; 232).

Similarly, Christianity spread to modern Nigeria through trade. It came through Portuguese traders who had come into Benin and the Delta region as traders and had come with Christian missionaries in 1472 and this relationship subsisted till the 18th century, although without it being able to create a foothold in any of Benin, Warri, Bonny, and Calabar (Adamolekun, 1999). This was a result of the non-committal nature of the traders who were more concerned with their trade in gold and slaves than they were about converting the people. The essence of conversion was largely to create political ties rather than to introduce Christianity to the people (Egharevba, 1960; Adamolekun, 1999). With the abolition of the slave trade came a stimulation of fresh missionary activities by other Europeans and Americans as missionaries were sent to Nigeria (Ade-Ajayi, 1965). Although the Anglicans under the Church Missionary Society (CMS) undertook the first mission, the expedition they came in 1841 failed. The Wesleyan Methodists were successful in their bid when they, in 1842 sent Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, William de craft and his wife to Badagry while Henry Townsend was sent to Abeokuta (Ade-Ajayi, 1965). Rolland Bingham, Walter Gowans, and Thomas Kent began mission work in Northern Nigeria while the Sudan United Mission (SUM) joined the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) in proselytizing in the regions of

Adamawa, Benue and Bornu. The growth of Christianity in Nigeria gained traction with the growth of indigenous churches and Pentecostalism (Ojo, 1984).

Islam and Christianity have grown since independence, thereby making it difficult to determine which of the two religions has domination in Nigeria. It becomes more contentious as tracking the religious demography of Nigeria has been left as a matter of mere conjectures. The last verified enumeration exercise that factored in figures on the religious demography of Nigeria was the 1963 census. The data from the Census shows that about 47.2% of the population was Muslim, 34.3% Christian, and 18.5% other (Ostien, 2012). After this census, other figures in subsequent years on religious demography in Nigeria have been largely anecdotal and anchored on assumptions as Nigeria's National Population Commission no longer factors in religion data in its enumeration exercise., nonetheless, we often rely on the data from West-inclined population resource services such CIA World Fact Sheet and Population Resource Centre among others to get our data on Nigeria's religion demography. For instance, the CIA World Factbook data of 2011 pegs Nigeria's religious demography at 50% Muslims, 40%, and 10% indigenous believers (CIA World Factbook, 2011). By 2018 estimate, CIA World Factbook pegs the religion demography at 53.5% Muslim, 45.9% Christian (10.6% Roman Catholic and 35.3% protestant and other Christian), and 0.6% for indigenous believers (CIA World Factbook, 2018). In its estimate of 2015, the Pew Research Center estimated the Muslim population at 50%, the Christian population was estimated at 48.1%, and others at 1.9% (Pew Research Center, 2015). In its 2020 estimate, the Pew Research Centre pegged the estimate of the Muslim population at 51.1%, the Christian population was estimated at 46.9%, and others were estimated at 2% (Pew Research Center, 2020). These approximations lack statistical integrity because they are premised on Nigeria's official estimates.

3.3.1 The People of Southern Nigeria

What is now referred to as Southern Nigeria is divided into three parts namely, the Southwest, Southsouth, and the Southeast. The Southwest is the home of the Yoruba, and the region has six states – Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun. There are also non-Yoruba groups in the region like the Egun people in Lagos as well as the Ijaws in Ondo State. It is difficult to tell which religion is most dominant in this region, but there is no doubt that the region enjoys a religion mix. While

states like Ekiti and Ondo have a Christian predomination, Oyo State has a clear Muslim predomination.

The South-South region is a mix of various ethnic groups. The region comprises Edo, Delta, Rivers, Cross River, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom States. While the Ijaw populate states like Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta, they share Rivers and Delta with other ethnic groups such as the Ikwerre, Igbo, Urhobo, Isoko, and Itsekiri, among others. Edo State is home to the Esan, Afemmai, and Bini among others. Cross River is home to the Efik, Yakurr, Ejagham, and Bekwarra while Akwa Ibom hosts the Ibibio, and Anaang, among others. Aside from Edo State which has a fair balance of Christian and Muslim population, the other five states in the Southsouth are predominantly Christians.

The third zone in the zone is the Southeast. The region consists of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states and it is home to the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria, the Igbo. Christianity is the predominant religion in the zone but the contention in the zone is among the various denominations in Christianity.

Table 5. States, Ethnicity and Faith - South

State	Ethnic groups	Predominant faith
South-West		
Lagos	Awori, Ijebu, Egun, Creoles	Undecided
Ogun	Egba, Ijebu, Yewa, Awori	Undecided
Oyo	Ibadan, Oyo, Ogbomosho, Oke-Ohun, Ibarapa	Undecided
Osun	Ife, Ijesha, Ibolo, Oyo, Igbomina, Oyo	Undecided
Ondo	Idanre, Akoko, Akure, Ikale, Ilaje, Ondo, Owo, Ijaw, Oke Igbo	Christianity
Ekiti	Ekiti	Christianity
South-South		
Edo	Bini, Esan, Afemmai, Etsako, Owan	Undecided

Delta	Urhobo, Itsekiri, Isoko, Ijaw, Igbo (Asaba, Ukwuani, and Ika)	Christianity
Rivers	Ijaw (Ogoni), Ikwerre, and Igbo	Christianity
Bayelsa	Ijaw	Christianity
Cross Rivers	Efik, Ejagham, Bekwarra, Yakurr	Christianity
Akwa Ibom	Ibibio, Anaang, Oro and Obolo	Christianity
South-East		
Abia	Igbo	Christianity
Anambra	Igbo, Igala	Christianity
Ebonyi	Igbo, Orri	Christianity
Enugu	Igbo, Idoma, Igala	Christianity
Imo	Igbo	Christianity

3.3.2 The People of Northern Nigeria

Northern Nigeria is the largest of the two parts of the country, covering an estimated 281,872 square miles (Perkins and Stenbridge, 1975). Northern Nigeria is divided into three geopolitical zones namely, North Central, North East, and North West respectively. The North Central zone is also referred to as the Middle Belt and its status as being part of what is referred to as the core North has always remained in contention as a result of its geographical proximity to the core North but seeming religious tolerance similitude with the South (Best, 2004). Shut (2007: 91) states that *“The middle Belt comprises people that existed in Nigeria with a consciousness, identity and culture that is difficult from the Hausa/Fulani and the Kanuri of the far North. There is no consensus among scholars on what constitutes the Middle Belt region, while some scholars perceive the Middle Belt in the context of religion i.e northern Christians as against their Muslim counterparts, others perceive it to include all non-Hausa/Fulani-speaking -people of the north.”* Jonah and Vahyala (2015) also maintained that the Middle Belt *“is the geographical belt of the South of Northern Nigeria and the North of Southern Nigeria.”*

A political chieftain from the zone, Solomon Lar however differentiates between the political and geographic Middle Belt. He argued that *“By way of clarification, the geographic Middle Belt is distinct from, and smaller than the political Middle Belt. The political Middle Belt*

encompasses all the marginalized minority groups in Northern Nigeria. These are the nationalities that have historically resisted feudalism, political oppression, injustice, religious discrimination and economic emasculation of the unfavoured masses. It (Middle Belt) extends from Ilorin to Kabba, to Adamawa, Taraba, Southern Bornu, Gombe, Tafawa Balewa, to Zuru, the Federal Capital Territory and every part of Northern Nigeria where the tyranny of a predatory oligarchy has frustrated the legitimate aspirations of many people. (The Guardian (Lagos), October 29, 2003)”. The contention about the status of the Middle Belt nonetheless, the North-Central zone consists of the largest concentration of ethnic minorities in the country and one where Christianity, Islam, and Traditional religion hold sway. For example, best (2004) argued that Adamawa has about 80 ethnic minorities while Best (2007) holds that Plateau State has over 58 ethnic minorities. The zone is also a mix-match of religions although states like Plateau and Benue have a Christian predomination while Niger, Kwara, Nassarawa, and FCT are Muslim-predominated (Afrobarometer Survey, 2012).

The North-East comprises six states namely, Adamawa, Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. Adamawa state has more than 50 indigenous tribal groups and was once part of the Sokoto Caliphate (Adamawa State n.d.) The state has a Muslim majority although it has a sizeable Christian population. The population of the state is such that there are areas that are Muslim dominated while there are some that are Christian-dominated. Bauchi state was also part of the old Sokoto Caliphate and has 55 ethnic groups (Bauchi State n.d.). Bauchi has a predominantly Muslim population but has a sizeable Christian population who are in the majority in some local governments in the state. Bornu State used to be the seat of the defunct Kanem-Bornu empire and was predominated by Kanuris. Other tribal groups in the state include Shuwa Arabs, Fulani, Jere, Chibok, Higi, Hausa, Babur, and Kanakuru. While Islam is the predominant faith in the state, the Chibok and Kanakuru are predominantly Christians. Gombe State has a Fulani predomination. The religious demography of the state shows that Muslims are in the majority although Christians form more than 30% of the state’s population. Gombe South is predominantly a Christian zone. Taraba State has over 80 ethnic groups each with its distinct and unique cultural heritage (ZODML n.d.) Although the question of which faith has a majority population is in contention, the fact that the state has only produced Christian Governors suggests that Christians are in the majority in the state. Yobe state is another state with an array of ethnic groups majority of which are Fulani, Kanuri, and Karai-Karai. The state is predominantly Muslim.

The North-West is a predominantly Muslim zone and it comprises seven states namely, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto, and Zamfara state. Kaduna State has over 50 and a Muslim dominated population (Hayab, 2014). It is important to note that there is a Christian predomination in Kaduna South as well as a handful of persons who practice traditional worship. The Muslim population in Kaduna South are Hausa-Fulani. Kano State is a metropolitan state with a predominantly Muslim population. The Christian population in the state are migrants and non-indigenes. Katsina State is a predominantly Muslim state and predominantly Hausa and Fulani (Nwankwo 2019). Kebbi State is also a predominantly Muslim state (Kebbi State n.d.). Jigawa State is a Muslim-dominated state and is dominated by Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri (Jigawa State n.d.). Sokoto State used to be the home of the Caliphate and is predominantly a Muslim state (Sokoto State n.d.). Zamfara State is also a predominantly Muslim state (Zamfara State n.d.).

Table 6. States, Ethnicity and Faith - North

State	Ethnic groups	Predominant faith
North-Central		
Benue	Tiv, Idoma, Igala, Igede, Etulo, Ufia Orring, Abakpa, Jukun, Igbo, Akweya, Nyifon	Christianity
Kogi	Egbira, Okun, Igala, Magongo, Nupe, Oworo	Undecided
Kwara	Yoruba, Nupe, Busa, Fulani, Baruba	Islam
Nassarawa	Miligi (Koro), Alago, Mada, Gwandara, Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Gbagyi, Rindre, Afo, Eggon, Egbira, Bassa, Yeskwa	Undecided
Niger	Nupes, Hausa, Gbagyi, Kadara, Koro, Bassa, Kamuku, Ingwai, Fangu, Kambari, Dukkawa, Fulani, Abewa, Bisan, Gungawa, Bauchi, Bariba, Urah, Boko, Bokobaro, Bauchnu, Achifawa, Dakarkari, Kakanda, Ganagana, and Dibo	Islam
Plateau	Berom, Afizere, Amo, Anaguta, Aten, Bogghom, Buji, Challa, Chip, Fier, Gashish, Goemai, Irigwe, Jarawa, Jukun, Kofyar (comprising Doemak, Kwalla, and Mernyang), Montol, Mushere, Mupun, Mwaghavul, Ngas, Piapung, Pyem, Ron-Kulere, Bache, Talet, Taroh (Tarok), Youm and Fulani/Kanuri	Christianity
FCT	Gbagyi, Gwandara, Egbira	Undecided

North-East		
Adamawa	Kanuri, Babur, Mbula, Bwatiye (Bachama, Bata), Chamba, Mbula, Ga'anda, Longuda, Kanakuru, Higgi, Kilba, Marghi, Bansa, Gombi, Koma, Gude, Gudu, Bata, Baya, Biye, Bille, Botlere, Bura, Daka, Daba, Fyer, Gwa, Gira, Gizigz, Hausa, Bali, Yandang, Yungur, Fali, Verre, Libo	Islam
Bauchi	Hausa, Fulani, Gerawa, Sayawa, Jarawa, Bolewa, Karekare, Kanuri, Fa'awa, Butawa, Warjawa, Zulawa, Badawa, etc.	Islam
Bornu	Kanuri, Shuwa Arabs, Fulani, Jere, Chibok, Higi, Hausa, Babur, and Kanakuru	Islam
Gombe	Waja, Tangale, Tera, Fulani, Bolewa, Kanuri, Jukun, Cham, Tula, Hausa Pero/Shonge and Kamo/Awak	Islam
Taraba	Mumuye, Ichen, Wurkum, Mambilla, Kuteb, Chamba, Jukun, Yandang, Fulani, Jenjo, Kunini, Lo, Ndoro, Kambu, Kaka, Bandawa, Mung, Tiv, Zo, Bambuka, Jibu and Jole.	Undecided
Yobe	Fulani, Karai-Karai and Kanuri, Bolewa, Ngizim, Bade, Hausa, Ngamo, Shuwa, Bura, Bura, Marghi, Manga	Islam
North-West		
Kaduna	Hausa, Gbagyi, Adara, Ham, Atyap, Bajjuu, Agworok, Kanuri, Nandu, etc.	Islam
Kano	Huasa, Kanuri, Fulani, Shira, Teshena, Nupe, Tuareg	Islam
Katsina	Hausa, Fulani	Islam
Kebbi	Hausa, Zarma, Fulani, Lelna (Dakarkari), Bussawa (generally speakers of Busa), Dukawa, Kambari, Gungawa and Kamuku	Islam
Jigawa	Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri	Islam
Sokoto	Hausa, Fulani, Zaberma, Tuareg	Islam
Zamfara	Hausa, Fulani, Gwari, Kamuku, Kambari, Dukawa, Bussawa, Zabarma	Islam

3.4 Religion and Political Outcome in Nigeria at the State Level

3.4.1 Intersection of Religion and Election Outcomes in Southern Nigeria

The interplay of religion, ethnicity, and politics in Southern Nigeria has been largely on a silent note given the peculiarity of the zone as mentioned earlier in this study. This is because

religion did not play a significant role in the politics of the region until the Fourth Republic. Needless to say, what is now referred to as Southern Nigeria used to be divided into the Eastern Region and the Western Region until the Mid-Western Region was carved out of the Western Region in the First Republic. As mentioned earlier, there was some level of homogeneity in Southern Nigeria. The level of religious tolerance in Southern Nigeria was also appreciable given that the heated religious tension that defines the North is absent in the South. Thus, religion was not a paramount factor in the politics of Southern Nigeria. For example, the Western Region (and by extension, the Mid-Western Region) was defined by religious diversity and the leader of the Action Group (which was the dominant party in the region), Obafemi Awolowo, as well as his Deputy, Samuel Ladoke Akintola, were both Christians. Even when a fracas broke out between Awolowo and Akintola, Awolowo's choice to replace Akintola was a Muslim, Dauda Adegbenro. There was no religious consideration in determining this. The same also applied to the Eastern Region where Nnamdi Azikiwe and Michael Okpara – both Christians – called the shots. The religious consideration did not matter to the electorate.

The situation was not different in the Second Republic in Southern Nigeria where the zone had been divided into different states. Religion was not a factor to be considered in the elections, particularly in areas where there was almost an equal distribution of both Christians and Muslims. For example, religious consideration was absent in the choice of Governor and Deputy Governor in the religiously diverse Western Nigerian states such as Lagos, Ogun, Bendel, and Oyo, who were elected under the platform of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) between 1979 and 1983. The Governor of Lagos State and the Deputy Governor, Lateef Jakande and Rafiu Jafujo, were both Muslims. Also, the Governor of Ogun State, Olabisi Onabanjo, and his deputy, Samuel Soluade, were both Christians. The tale was not different in the case of Oyo State which has an (almost) equal distribution of both Christians and Muslims. The Governor was Bola Ige while his deputy was Sunday Afolabi and both were Christians although Bisi Akande, a Muslim, took over as Deputy Governor in 1982 when Afolabi resigned his position as Deputy Governor. In Bendel State, the Governor was Ambrose Alli, a Christian, while his deputy was Demas Akpore, another Christian, who was later replaced by another Christian, Patrick Odiete, towards the end of the tenure. and both were Christians. In the case of other Southern Nigeria states like Anambra, Imo, Rivers, and Cross Rivers, religion was also not a factor as there is Christian predomination in these states. By the 1983 elections, Bola Ige lost the election to the National Party of Nigeria's (NPN)

Omololu Olunloyo, a Christian, whose deputy was a Muslim, Olatunji Mohammed. Similarly, Ambrose Alli lost his seat to Samuel Ogbemudia, a Christian, of the NPN whose deputy, Ray Inije, was also a Christian.

In the Third Republic, there was a religious balance in the religion of the Governor and Deputy Governor in states where there was an almost even distribution of both Christianity and Islam although religion was not an issue in the election at the sub-national level. Hence, in Oyo State for example, the Governor of the state was Kolapo Ishola, a Christian, while the deputy was Ahmed Gbadamosi, a Muslim. This was replicated in other states where both Christians and Muslims have an even or near-even distribution. Thus, states in Southern Nigeria like Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, and Edo had the Governorship and Deputy Governorship slots shared between both faiths. That aside, and largely owing to the short-lived nature of this period (The Governors were only in office for a year), agitations over marginalization on the grounds of religion were almost non-existent.

In the Fourth Republic, the unwritten code as regards a fair balance in sharing positions between Christians and Muslims also continued. The dimensions have however been different depending on the peculiarity of the respective states. While having same-faith tickets in states with even distribution of both faiths has been absent, there have been agitations by either faith on their marginalization. In some other instances, it has been an intra-faith contention bordering on which denomination of the faith has been in power, particularly in the South East. In the South West, the contention between Christianity and Islam for dominance in politics has been rife. In instances where there have been successive Governors of a particular faith, it is not unusual to see cries of marginalization by the other faith. In Lagos, the Governors of the state since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999 up till 2015 had been Muslims, thereby raising calls by Christian leaders for a Christian Governor in the state. In 2013, Christian leaders called for a Christian successor to the incumbent Babatunde Fashola (a Muslim). In his call, the Chairman of the Lagos branch of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (a Christian group), Apostle Alex Bamgbala, noted that it was fair for Christians to be given a fair shot as Governor of the state and urged “*Christians, Muslims and all others of different faiths, as stakeholders, to elect a bona fide Christian of integrity, who will take over the mantle of leadership from Gov. Fashola in 2015*” (Vanguard, 2013). Although the Christian Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode failed to get his party ticket in 2019, he was replaced

by another Christian. In Oyo State, the agitation between the two faiths has been pushed by different religious interest groups such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) since 2019. In the build-up to the 2019 elections, the Governorship candidate of the All Progressive Congress, Adebayo Adelabu, was accused of playing religious sentiments by including his Muslim name in his campaign posters, banners, and billboards whereas the name was conspicuously not in the records submitted to INEC to curry Muslim votes. Both CAN and MURIC have been at loggerheads with each other since 2019 over questions of religious marginalization.

While MURIC has been unequivocal in their claims that the Seyi Makinde-led administration has consistently marginalized Muslims in the state, CAN has constantly defended the Governor and argued that there was no marginalization. In Osun State, although both MURIC and CAN have had to exchange tirades over issues in the state particularly over the HIJAB crisis that took place in the state in 2016, it has not translated into religion playing a major role in influencing electoral decisions in the state. For Instance, Ademola Adeleke, a Christian born to a Muslim father, picked a Christian Deputy and still won the election against the incumbent. In the predominantly Christian states in the Southwest like Ondo and Ekiti States, there have been agitations from the Muslim Community asking that a Muslim be supported for the Governorship positions in both states. While both states have produced Muslim Deputy Governors in the past, the agitation for a Muslim Governor has been top demand of Muslim groups in the states (Osewezina, 2016; Punch, 2017).

Politics reared its ugly head in influencing politics in the Fourth Republic in the Southeast. As a result of the overwhelmingly Christian population in each of the five Southeast states, the issue has not been a contention between Christians and Muslims but among Christians. Ebonyi State, particularly, the Afikpo bloc is largely Presbyterian while the Abakaliki bloc is largely Catholic. However, denomination is rarely an issue in the politics of the state. The first civilian governor of the state, Sam Egwu, is Pentecostal -Assemblies of God-, while his successor, Martin Elechi, is Catholic. Abia State politics has also been relatively free from religious influence, and this may not be unconnected to the fact that no denomination can claim outright predominance in the state (Meribe, 2019). Each denomination such as Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Pentecostal has a fair spread across the states and can only boast of strongholds in specific axis of

the state (Meribe, 2019). This does not however mean there has never been an attempt to bring religious sentiments into politics in the state. There were claims that in 1999, there were moves to swing Catholic votes to Vincent Ogbulafor of the All-Peoples Party (APP) against Orji Uzor Kalu of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) but it fell flat (Meribe, 2019). The same cannot however be said of the other three Igbo states of Imo, Enugu, and Anambra.

The influence of religion on politics is very much evidenced in Imo State. Religious denominations started playing out in politics in the state in the build-up to the 2011 Governorship election. The then Governor, Ikedi Ohakim, an Anglican, lost his re-election due to poor governance and denominational politics. A rumour became trending in August 2010 that the Governor ordered the stripping and whipping of a Catholic Priest, Eustace Okorie, who allegedly blocked the Governor's convoy. The Catholic church, particularly championed by Fr Mbaka and the Catholic Archbishop of Owerri Archdiocese, Anthony Obinna rose in unison against Ohakim and his re-election to the extent of composing songs that urged Catholics not to vote for Ohakim (Chima, 2014). The election was so keen that the anti-Ohakim jingles were so prominent in the state, including on state-owned media stations like *Orient 94.4 FM* and *Imo Broadcasting Corporation*. A most prominent jingle was:

Onye ahu piara father ihe, O gaghi achi anyi ozo (The person that spoke to our father rudely, he won't rule us again)
Onye ah gbara father t, gagh ach anyi z! (The person that shot at our Father, he won't rule us again) Onye ah piara father ihe, gagh ach anyi z! (The person that spoke to our father rudely, he won't rule us again)
Ikiri piara father ihe, gagh ach anyi z! (He spoke to our Father anyhow; he won't rule us again) Ikiri gbara father t, gagh ach anyi z! (He shot at our Father; he won't rule us again)

The result was that Ohakim lost his re-election to Rochas Okorocha, a Catholic. In 2019, Catholic priests such as Mbaka and Anthony Obinna were also rumoured to have supported Hope Uzodinma against Emeka Ihedioha, an Anglican, even while the result of the election was still a matter of litigation in the courts (Meribe, 2019).

Until 2007, the offices of the Governor and Deputy Governor in Enugu State have always been shared between Catholics and Anglicans. However, in 2007, the two offices were occupied by Catholics. Of importance here is the role played by Fr Ejike Mbaka whose church is domiciled in the state. He was alleged to have worked against the reelection, in 2003, of the then Governor

Chimaroke Nnamani on the ground that he (The Governor) was not Catholic (Meribe, 2019). The election of 2015 drew the attention of the Anglican denomination as they kicked against any attempt by the major political parties to pick another Catholic as Deputy Governor. In an address to journalists on December 18, 2015, Emmanuel Chukwuma, the Anglican Archbishop of the Enugu Ecclesiastical Province, warned that: *“Former Governor of the State, Chimaroke Nnamani who served from 1999 to 2007 is a Methodist. He picked Okechukwu Itanyi, a Catholic as his Deputy. Nnamani handed over to Sullivan Chime who is Roman Catholic. Sullivan chose Sunday Onyebuchi, a Methodist or so, not an Anglican as Deputy. As they are going out, all those who want to become governor are Catholics and, in the PDP, they are plotting to make their running mate a Catholic. We are saying give us an Anglican Deputy, otherwise you are looking for our trouble.”* (Chukwuma, 2015). This threat did not stop the emergence of another Catholic-Catholic ticket in the state. In 2023, the Enugu Catholic Archdiocese openly declared support for and adopted Peter Mbah as its candidate in the 2023 Governorship elections. Catholic priests were reported to be openly campaigning for him during church service on account of his being Catholic.

Anambra is no doubt a *locus classicus* of the influence of religion on politics in the Fourth Republic. The politics of the state is among Catholics, Anglicans, and Pentecostals, with the Catholics being in the outright majority. The politics of religion played out in the ousting of the first Governor of the state in the fourth Republic, Chinwoke Mbadinju – a Pentecostal. Mbadinju alluded to this in an interview he granted in 2011 where he stated, among other things, that *“Yes, there are plenty of religious sentiments in Anambra politics, In the whole of Nigeria, it is ethnic sentiments and religious too, but in Anambra State, it is between Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostals. It was much of that reason I was not allowed to contest the second term. The Catholics believed it was their time and Peter Obi was chosen...”* (Mbadinju, 2011). All other subsequent Governors of the state have been from the Catholic stock except for Andy Uba and Virgil Etiaba whose tenure were short-lived. In the build-up to the Anambra Governorship election in 2022, the candidate of the All-Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Charles Soludo, appealed to religious sentiments by picking the brother of the Anglican Archbishop as his running mate. This helped him in coasting to victory at the polls. Political patronage of the church was a consistent practice by officeholders and politicians in a bid to curry the favours of the different denominations, particularly the Catholic church. Aside from inter-denomination squabbles, there was also the role played by the Okija shrine in the politics of Anambra State. In 2003, Chris Ngige

was said to have been taken to Okija Shrine to swear to an oath of contract with his political godfather, Chris Uba ((Elis 2008, 445–466). There was also the case of Andy Uba as well as Theodore Orji of Abia State being visitors to the shrine. The belief is that the visitation of these persons influenced the political outcomes. It must be noted that each of these persons won their election although the victories of both Chris Ngige and Andy Uba were overturned by the courts.

3.4.2 Intersection of Religion and Election Outcome in Northern Nigeria

Religion was a very major issue in mobilizing votes in Northern Nigeria in the First Republic. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) led by Ahmad Bello held majority seats in the region and appealed more to Muslim voters in the North. Given the proselytizing activities of Ahmadu Bello and the fact that he was the great-grandchild of the Sokoto Jihadist, Uthman Dan Fodio, those of other faiths felt threatened by his activities and thus avoided supporting his political party. The situation was put thus “... *the Sardauna of Sokoto, who was the premier of the northern region, went about trying to Islamize people, especially in the northern region. So, he became both a political as well as a religious leader. His effort at that particular time up to the time he was killed was geared towards converting people — be they Christian or pagan — to Islam.*” (Jatau, 1990). It was made worse by the fact that upward mobility and appointment in the civil service of the Northern region was tied to accepting Islam or being a Muslim, thereby leaving many nonMuslims with no choice but to accept Islam (Crampton, 1979). An attempt was made by Ahmadu Bello to allay the fear of existential threat felt by the Christians.

In his Christmas message to Christians in the North in 1959, he stated thus: “*We are people of many different races, tribes and religions, who are knit together by common history, common interests and common ideals. Our diversity may be great but the things that unite us are stronger than the things that divide us. On an occasion like this, I always remind people about our firmly rooted policy on religious tolerance. Families of all creeds and colours can rely on these assurances. We have no intention of favouring one religion at the expense of another.*” (Bello, 1959). The persuasion, nonetheless, the perceived threat gave birth to the Northern Christian Association (NCA) as well as the loss of total control of the seats in the region to parties such as the Action Group (AG), the coalition of National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Hence, in the 1959 general elections, while the NPC won 134 seats in the Northern region, the AG won 25 seats, the coalition of NCNC/NEPU

won 8 seats, while others won 7 seats (Kurfi, 1983: 177; Osaghae, 1998: 33). In fact, the AG led Awolowo as well as some Northern Christians like Dr Patrick Dokotri, Mr David Lot, and Dr Fom Bot, among others expressed their fears at the floor of the Northern House of Assembly about the overt persecution of Christians in the north (Crampton, 1979).

In the Second Republic, the elections were won and lost on the strength of political personalities rather than because of religion. For instance, the victory of GNPP in Gongola and Bornu states on the strength of the political strength of Ibrahim Waziri. In a similar vein, the victory of the PRP in both Kano and Kaduna States was a result of the political personality of Aminu Kano. The contributions of religion to political outcomes during this period were quite marginal a good example is how Cornelius Adebayo of the UPN was able to defeat the incumbent Adamu Attah of the NPN in Kwara in the 1983 Governorship elections largely as a result of the political scheming of Olubukola Saraki. This does not however mean religious minorities were taken into consideration in many of the Northern states. For instance, in Gongola, Niger, Kaduna, and Plateau states, religious minorities were ignored in the sharing of the top two positions in the state.

The Third Republic was not different in the interplay of religion and political outcomes in states in Northern Nigeria. With the number of states rising to thirty, some old states of the Third Republic like Gongola State, which were unbundled into Adamawa and Taraba states, witnessed a higher presence of Christian population in Taraba State while a sizeable Christian population was also in Adamawa State. The effect of this was that a Christian emerged as Governor of Taraba state. This however should not be taken to mean that religion played a role in the emergence of the Governor. There is no evidence of the fact that religion played any role in the determination of political outcomes in the Third Republic. This is unconnected with the fact that while religion was a vital issue even at this time, the question of marginalization of a religious group was not prominent in public discussion. Rather, the focus was primarily on ethnic marginalization and not religion.

By the Fourth Republic which began in 1999, the gulf between the two major religions in the North had widened as a result of growing tensions that built up between Christians and Muslims in the North. The issue keeps deteriorating as each election cycle within the Fourth Republic passes on. It is often the case that in states where there is a significant number of either faith, the complaints of marginalization and domination have never ceased from either party. Religion has

become a major identity marker in determining political outcomes for each cycle of elections. States with huge predominance of Muslims such as Zamfara, Sokoto, Bauchi, Bornu, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Yobe, and Jigawa have held on to their Muslim-Muslim ticket without consequence while states with huge Christian predominance like Benue and Plateau have also held on to their Christian-Christian ticket without consequence. In other states, there has often been a Christian-Muslim or Muslim-Christian ticket. Such states include Gombe, Kwara, Kogi, Kaduna, Taraba, Nassarawa, and Adamawa. While the fate of religious minorities in either predominantly Christian or Muslim states hangs on the goodwill of the dominant faith, these religious minorities have been a major force and the political outcomes in their areas have been largely influenced by how well they are persuaded to vote the candidate of each party.

A case in point in the influence of religion on political outcomes in the Fourth Republic is the Sharia debacle. Zamfara, Ahmed Sani Yerima, was the first to introduce Sharia in 1999 and this seems to be premised on the understanding that religion can influence political outcome. Yerima was said to have started the sowing of the seed for Sharia in his days as a Permanent Secretary in the state's Ministry of Lands and Housing where he oversaw the construction and renovation of a good number of Quranic schools as well as mosques. This made him come across to the electorate as a pious and devout Muslim. When the campaign process for election, Yerima was up against bigwigs in politics who were in the PDP, and it seemed like an uphill task to defeat these well-established politicians. The situation is summarized thus: *"In the 1999 elections, the Zamfara governor didn't look likely to win. His campaign team were trying to think of what they could do to win. Someone suggested campaigning on Shari'a. They said that's it and went out and campaigned on Shari'a. People latched onto it."* (Human Rights Watch interview, 2003).

The result was that he was able to defeat well-established politicians in the 1998 elections and became the first Governor of the state in the Fourth Republic (Suleman, 1999). With the introduction of Sharia in October 1999 and it came into force in January 2000, Ahmed Sani Yerima became the poster boy of Islam and the darling of the Muslim masses who saw him as the poster boy of Islam. Malomo (2022; 209) explained that Yerima, as a result of the action, *"earned widespread support and acceptance from the people of Zamfara and Muslims all over the Nation for his promise to implement Sharia as a major strategy to address widespread societal decadence in Zamfara State"*. The outcome of this public acceptance was that it landed Yerima re-election in

2003 on a platter of gold at a time when the PDP was sweeping states in the North. In the election, Yerima, out of a total valid vote of 1,047,734 votes, polled 829,954 votes (79.2% of the total valid votes) while his closes rival, the candidate of the ruling PDP, polled 210,143 votes (African Election Database, 2003). Yerima was also able to secure victory for his protégé, Mahmud Shinkafi, in 2007 to become the winner of the Governorship election. When Shinkafi had issues with Yerima and defected to the PDP, the former lost the election even as an incumbent Governor to the candidate of the All-Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) who polled 514,962 votes against Shinkafi's 460,656 votes (See PM News, 2011). Without a doubt, the Sharia move turned Yerima into the beloved of the people and was a rallying point for him in elections as seen in how it translated into electoral victories for him and his protégés.

A similar individual who had also deployed the Sharia card as an instrument of electoral victory was Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano State. The view of many was that Rabi'u Kwankwaso was not enthusiastic about the implementation of Sharia and his disposition towards the harsh punishment meted out by Sharia was not favourable (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The general belief was that Kwankwaso only bowed to the introduction of Sharia due to massive public pressure and not because he was willing to see to its implementation (Human Rights Watch, 2004). As a result of his position as an Islamic cleric and his campaign to deploy Sharia to its full length should he be elected, Shekarau was able to defeat the incumbent, Rabi'u Kwankwaso, in 2003 (Malomo, 2022). Not only did the Muslim clerics campaign for him but they ensured his victory at the polls throughout his tenure as Governor in the state. Shekarau garnered 1,082,457 votes while Rabi'u Kwankwaso garnered 888,494 votes. Needless to say, the 2003 elections across the twelve core Northern states resonated with the anthem of Sharia. Every politician who campaigned for the Governorship seat in the states of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Yobe, Bornu, Sokoto, Bauchi, Jigawa, Gombe, and Zamfara mentioned Sharia implementation as part of their manifestoes (Human Rights Watch, July 2003). It was considered politically suicidal for one to side-step the issue of Jihad in the campaign during the period as that would mean such politicians would get no vote from the Muslim bloc.

There have also been instances where a bloc from faith has vowed to or promised their vote to a particular candidate or party on account of the belief of marginalization in the North-Central state. In Niger State for instance, the Christian bloc in the state vowed not to vote for any political

party that fielded a Muslim-Muslim ticket and canvass for any Christian vying for any office and they made true their promise (Yohanna, 2023). In Plateau state, the rejection of the idea of a Muslim-Muslim ticket at the federal level affected the chances of the APC at the state elections (Akinwale, 2023). In Kwara State, political patronage with Islamic scholars determines the quantum of votes a candidate will get. While the different faith ticket is the norm in the state, politicians seek to brighten their chances by patronizing Islamic scholars such as Alfa Sanu Shehu, Alfa Adugba, Alfa Bukhari Musa, Abubakar Imam Aliagan, Aminullahi Olohunoyin,

Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullah, Alhaji Olayiwola, Alfa Lukman Isale Koto, Alfa Olaoti and his group, Husein Arikewusola, Alfa Imam Mahmud Adewole, and several imams of Juma'ah mosques among others (Jawondo, 2019). These Islamic scholars are renowned for their political commentaries on various media and their ability to sway their followers. Christian voters in Kwara State have not had a reason to pull their bloc effect as the norm in the state has been a different faith ticket and what parties do is to look for a running mate that can help mobilize the bloc to their advantage. In Plateau and Benue states, religion has not been a determinant of political outcome given that the two states have a predomination of Christians and there was never a time the candidates of the major parties were not a Christian nor was there a known time issues of denomination propped up. The same can also be said of Kogi where both Christianity and Islam have an even distribution, although the Christians have never produced a Governor in the state, voting in the state has not been influenced by religion but by ethnic identity (Bello-Williams, 2019). In the case of Nassarawa state, there is no available record to point out that religion plays a role in the determination of political outcomes in the state elections. Although the state also has an even distribution of both faiths, the state has not produced a Christian governor before. While politicians attempt to whip up religious sentiments, such sentiments are not evidence-backed.

In the Northeastern states, the dynamics of religion playing a role in political outcomes is evidenced in some states. In Bauchi, Bornu, and Yobe states, the Christian population in these states are small and the election has not largely been based on religious sentiments. While Christian-dominated areas like Chibok in Bornu State, Postiskum in Yobe State, and the Bogoro, Dass and Tafawa Balewa Federal Constituencies in Bauchi State have often elected Christian representatives, nothing shows that such election is a function of the religious identity of the representatives. In the case of Gombe state, although the state's Southern local governments of Balanga, Billiri, Kaltungo, and Shongom have a Christian predominance and the deputy

Governorship slot has always been zoned to the zone, there is no evidence to point that state political outcome in the state have been influenced by religion until 2023.

A comparative analysis of the results of the Governorship elections in 2019 and 2023 will explain this. After his victory in 2019, the Governor of the state, Inuwa Yahaya, engaged in actions that were considered a slight on the Christian population in the state. First, the governor refused to appoint a Christian and female, Justice Beatrice L. Iliya, as the state Chief Judge despite she is the most senior jurist on the bench in the state. Also, in 2021, the Governor refused to announce a Christian, Musa Maiyamba, who had been picked by the kingmakers, as the new Mai (king) of the Tangale kingdom. These actions stirred reactions from Christian quarters. It was in acknowledgement of this malfeasance that Inuwa Yahaya had to offer apologies to the Christian community in the build-up to the elections (Azubuike, 2023). The action of the Governor and the reaction of the Christian community can best be understood if we juxtapose the results of the Governorship election of 2019 that brought Yahaya into Christian-dominated local governments and that of 2023. In 2019 in Balanga, Yahaya polled 30,926 votes while his opponent polled 18,192 votes compared to 2023 when he polled 25,341 votes to his opponent's 20,085 votes.

In Billiri, Yahaya polled 18,612 votes against his opponent who polled 18,063 votes in 2019 compared to in 2023 when he lost the local government as he polled 14,752 votes as against his opponent who polled 23,066 votes. In Kaltungo, Yahaya polled 26,744 votes against the PDP's 22,259 votes in 2019 compared to the 2023 elections when he lost the local government polling 21,015 votes as against the 21,321 votes polled by his opponent. Similarly, in Shongom local government in 2019, Yahaya won by polling 13,463 votes against his opponent's 12,993 votes while in 2023, he polled 13,609 votes against his opponent's 13,412 votes. One can notice that while Yahaya won in all four local governments in Gombe South in 2019, he lost in two of them in 2023 and on a cumulative lost the election by over 5000 votes. This shows the impact of religion on political outcomes in Gombe State. In the duo of Taraba and Adamawa states, the question of religion determining political outcome is difficult to track. This is because while only the Christian candidates are fielded as Governorship candidates in Taraba State, it is the reverse in Adamawa State. A review of State House of Assembly elections has also shown that voting patterns have not been consistent enough to determine the influence of religion on it.

In the North-West states, the issue of the influence of religion on political outcomes has been mentioned earlier, particularly for Zamfara and Kano states. Aside from Kaduna State, the place of religion as a tool for vote mobilization was the same in other states like Kebbi, Jigawa, Katsina, and Sokoto. Sharia was a trump card used by politicians in these states to galvanize Muslim votes. The use of Muslim clerics called Ulama was a common phenomenon as they became tools of campaign for politicians who are considered to be pious and ready to fight the cause of Islam. The case of Kaduna was slightly different because there was a pushback against this by the Christian population who predominate Southern Kaduna. The unwritten rule before 2019 in the state is to run a different faith ticket with Christians enjoying the ticket allotted to Southern Kaduna. Southern Kaduna is made up of twelve local governments of the twenty-three in the state and they include Chikun, Jaba, Jema'a, Kachia, Kaduna South, Kagarko, Kajuru, Kaura, Kauru, Lere, Sanga, and Zangon Kataf. Southern Kaduna must be differentiated from the Kaduna South Senatorial district which excludes four of the local government namely, Chikun, Kajuru, Kaduna South, and Lere local governments.

In 2019, the Governor of the state, Nasir El-Rufai decided that he would not pick a Christian Deputy and opted for a Muslim from the zone (Folorunsho-Francis, 2022). This was warmly welcomed by the Muslim community but sparked an outcry from Christians who are the dominant faith in the zone who had, before then, labelled the Governor of nursing an agenda against Christians in the state and Southern Kaduna (Olafusi, 2018). In 2023, the candidate of the APC in the Governorship election, Uba Sani, also reciprocated this act of running on a Muslim-Muslim ticket (Bangura, 2022). The effect of this was that religion became a major marker in determining political outcomes in the state in the 2019 and 2023 Governorship elections (Premium Times n.d.).

The effect of this was that Christians in the Southern Kaduna voted against the APC in the Governorship election. A juxtaposition of the votes polled by the APC from Southern Kaduna in 2015 when El-Rufai first contested as against what the party polled in 2019 during his re-election bid as well as in 2023 when he was no longer on the ballot, but the party retained a Muslim-Muslim ticket shows how religion became a major tool in determining political outcome in the state. The Christian population essentially voted against the party in a larger part of Southern Kaduna in 2019 and 2023 as against the number of votes they got in 2015. The APC went from winning local governments like Chikum, Kaduna South, Kagarko, and Kaura to losing all but Kaduna South. In Kaduna South, the APC went from winning about 90% of the votes to only winning barely above

60% of votes in the zone. The APC lost the election in the zone and overall while it maintained its lead in the Kaduna North and Kaduna Central which are predominantly Muslim communities.

Table 7: Election Results in some selected Local Governments Area in Kaduna State, 2015-2023

LGs	APC (2015)	PDP (2015)	APC (2019)	PDP (2019)	APC (2023)	PDP (2023)
Chikun	36,920 (57.5%)	27,248 (42.5%)	24,262 (21.9%)	86,261 (78.1%)	19,979 (18.2%)	89,946 (81.8%)
Jaba			6,298 (21.5%)	22,976 (78.5%)	7,564 (34.1%)	14,616 (63.9%)
Jema'a	39,760 (46.8%)	45,272 (53.2%)	21,265 (25.2%)	63,129 (74.8%)	19,920 (40.8%)	28,963 (59.2%)
Kachia			30,812 (37.3%)	51,780 (62.7%)	23,849 (46.5%)	27,491 (53.5%)
Kaduna South	120,535 (88.5%)	15,665 (11.5%)	102,035 (72.9%)	37,948 (27.1%)	69,170 (61.9%)	42,604 (38.1%)
Kagarko	24,846 (61.7%)	15,413 (38.3%)	21,982 (45.2%)	26,643 (54.8%)	18,830 (48.5%)	19,991 (51.5%)
Kajuru	18,522 (46.5%)	21,296 (53.5%)	10,229 (22.7%)	34,658 (77.3%)	8,271 (26.4%)	23,115 (72.6%)
Kaura	37,521 (69%)	16,836 (31%)	8,342 (17.7%)	38,764 (82.3%)	12,950 (46.2%)	15,108 (53.8%)
Kauru			34,844 (52.2%)	31,928 (47.8%)	26,915 (50.5%)	26,342 (49.5%)
Lere			71,056 (61.1%)	45,215 (38.9%)	45,823 (49.7%)	46,365 (50.3%)
Sanga			20, 806 (49.5%)	21, 226 (50.5%)	12,338 (48.5%)	13,119 (51.5%)

Zangon			13,448	87,546	11,448	33,185
Kataf			(13.3%)	(86.7%)	(25.6%)	(74.4%)

3.5 Religion and Election Outcomes at the Federal Level

3.5.1 Religion and Election Outcomes in Nigeria's First Republic

Religion has been at the forefront of determining electoral outcomes in federal elections in Nigeria. In the First Republic, elections were anchored on religion, particularly in the Northern region. While Southern parties like the Action Group (AG) and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) did not anchor their campaigns on religion, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) played up religion in its campaign. In the build-up to the parliamentary elections in 1959, the NPC postured itself as a Muslim party to warm itself to the hearts of people in the core North. This was further emphasized by the proselytizing efforts of the leader of the party, Ahmadu Bello, who went about trying to convert non-Muslims in the North to Muslims. The NPC used the formation of the Jaa'matu Nasrilu Islam (JNI) - the Society for the Victory of Islam - a religious organization that was used as a tool for political mobilization in the North to the Islamic sect of the Sardauna (Paden, 1986; 548-66). Paden (1986: 563-4) captures the situation thus: "*The Sardauna was very sincere and determined ... to use this method and mould the North together. Within the JNI forum, the Sardauna hoped to bring together traditional rulers, ulama, modern civil servants, businessmen, politicians, and the masses. Most ministers were interested in this forum; all recognized the key role of the mallams.*" By the 1964 federal elections, the JNI was used to mobilize Muslims in the region and the religious sentiments of the NPC and its leaders were brought to the fore. The message given in the North to ask for the election of NPC representatives was that "*The Prime Minister and the Sardauna need to go back to Lagos to deal with Zik and Awo. The Sardauna and Prime Minister are our people. The Sardauna is a very good Muslim, the descendant of the Shehu. We want your support. ... If you don't give it, there will be trouble*" (Paden, 1986: 431). This action had ripple effects.

On the one hand, the action made many in the North see the party as the vanguard of Islam and thus influenced their acceptance of the party by a large number of Muslim folks in the region. However, there were those in the region who were not comfortable with the proselytizing drive of Ahmadu Bello or the values of the NPC as a party. On one hand, there were those in the Yoruba districts of Ilorin and Kabba who felt it was a misnomer to be regarded as part of the region (Stokke,

1970). On another hand, there were also those referred to as Middle Belt. The coalition of opposition to the interest of the NPC in this regard came from the leaders in the Tiv and Birom areas of the region as well as Christians who were not comfortable with the activities of the Sardauna (Stokke, 1970). Needless to mention there were also Muslims who did not support the NPC on account of the Sardauna and the sect he belongs to -Quadriyyah. The Tijanniyah group was based in Kano and remained a major opposition to the Sardauna and his political interests. The group also formed a major support hub for the NEPU. The hatred is so endemic that they had a prayer chant expressing this:

O Lord, O Lord, O Lord Almighty,
O God, O God, O God the Subduer,
O Lord, destroy the Amir of Hausa, Interdict the Sultan of Sokoto.
Shake his affairs and frustrate his views,
Destroy his house and hasten the one who will announce his death.
O Lord, O Lord, O Lord the powerful,
[Destroy] him, O Lord who [destroys] the powerful.
By the power of Surat Al-Rad (Sura 13), send thunder.
To his house so that he will not live forever. (Kukah, 1989: 58)

The implication of all these was that the NPC lost some of the seats in the region to other parties. It lost 25 seats to the coalition of the AG and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC); 8 seats to the coalition of the NCNC and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU); and 7 seats to independents. Religion played a vital role in this, particularly in determining the choice of those in the Middle Belt as well as some Christians who are in the heart of the region (Dudley, 1982; Iwara, 2004; Onapajo 2016).

In the South, the demonization of the NPC in religious garb made it difficult for it to make a presence in other regions. It is instructive to mention that while the two other major parties won seats in other regions, the NPC could only win seats in the North. Hence, the AG controlled 25 seats in the Northern region and 14 in the Eastern region; the NCNC controlled 8 seats in the Northern region and 21 seats in the Western region; but the North had no seat outside of the Northern region (Gberevbie and Oni, 2021). There were also attempts to lure Muslim voters and sway their voting allegiance on account of religion with the formation of the National Muslim Party in 1953 and the formation of the National Muslim League in 1957. Unfortunately, these

parties recorded no electoral fortune as they could not win a seat in the 1953, 1956, and/or 1959 Federal elections.

3.5.2 Religion and Election Outcome in Nigeria's Second Republic

The First Republic ended with a military coup that led to the death of some key players in politics. After the military coup of January 1966 which ended the civilian administration, the military was in power for 13 years before an election was conducted in 1979 to usher in the Second Republic. Five political parties were formed in the 1979 Federal elections. These parties include the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), Greater Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), and People's Redemption Party (PRP).

The place of religion as a tool for influencing political outcomes in the Second Republic is better understood from the angle of interrogating the introduction of Sharia into the constitution drafting during this period. With the constitution of the Constituent Assembly and the Constitutional Drafting Committee towards the 1979 Constitution, the issue of Sharia became a very topical and contentious issue. Muslim representatives from the Northern States in the Constituent Assembly pushed for the inclusion of Sharia and the Federal Sharia Court of Appeal into the proposed constitution. The Constitution Drafting Committee had made a provision for this in Section 180 (i) (e) of the draft constitution, but this was rejected by Christian representatives in the Constituent Assembly. When this move did not sail through, a sub-committee of the Constituent Assembly was set up and it came with a compromise position which stated that whenever a Sharia case of appeal came up, three judges in the Federal Court of Appeal who are learned in Islamic law are to sit on such appeal. This position was not acceptable to the Muslim delegates from both the North and the South so they staged a walkout. The then Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo, had to intervene by warning the members to avoid what could split the country (Kukah, 1994). The defeat of the proposition of Sharia did not sit well with Muslims, particularly in the North and a series of protests were organized by the Muslim Students Society (MSS) under the leadership of its Deputy National Chairman, Ibrahim Elzakzaky with banners denouncing the recognition of the Nigerian constitution and bearing inscriptions such as *No Sharia, No peace. No Sharia, No constitution. No Sharia, No Muslims, No Nigeria* (Bala, 2005: 239). The implication of this was that Southern Christians were considered antagonistic to the interest of Islam and so should not be voted for.

The effect of religion on political outcomes was evidenced in the states where each party got their votes. The candidate of the NPN in the election, Shehu Shagari, was a Muslim and picked a Christian running mate, Alex Ekwueme while the candidate of the UPN, Obafemi Awolowo, was a Christian and picked a Christian running mate as well. In a similar vein, the candidate of the NPP, Nnamdi Azikiwe, was a Christian and picked a Muslim running mate; the candidate of the PRP, Aminu Kano, was a Muslim and picked a Christian running mate; while the candidate of the GNPP, Ibrahim Waziri, was a Muslim and picked Christian running mate.

Out of a total number of 47,433,757 registered voters, the candidates of the NPN, and the PRP were from Sokoto and Kano states in the North West while the candidate of the GNPP came from Bornu state in the North East and these trio received most of his votes from the North West, North East, and North Central geo-political zones which are largely Muslim-dominated. The presidential candidates of the UPN and NPP came from Ogun state in the South West and Anambra in the Southeast. As we had mentioned earlier, the level of religious tolerance in the North-East and North-West is low given the predominance of Islam. In the states of Bauchi, Borno, Gongola, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Niger, and Sokoto, the Muslim candidates, Shehu Shagari, Ibrahim Waziri, and Aminu Kano cumulatively enjoyed more than 80% of the votes cast and each came first, second, and third in these states except Kwara and Gongola states (Nigerian Muse, 2006). In Kwara state, the Muslim candidates had over 60% of the votes cast while the Christian candidates had a cumulative of 40% of the total votes cast (reflecting the religious diversity of voters in the state) while the trio had about 74% of votes cast in Gongola state while the Christian candidates had 24% of the total votes cast (Reflecting the religious diversity of the state) (Nigerian Muse, 2006). In other words, the religion of the candidate influenced the votes cast for these candidates in these areas but what is more evident is that ethnicity played a stronger role in influencing political outcomes than religion in the 1979 elections. In the Christian-dominated Northern states of Benue and Plateau, the Christian Presidential candidates had 59.4% of the total votes while the Muslim candidates had 40.6% of the total votes cast (Nigerian Muse, 2006). The case of Benue was quite different as the NPN candidate as well as other Muslim candidates had 85.7% of the total votes cast while the Christian candidates had only 14.3% of the total votes cast (Nigerian Muse, 2006). In the 1983 elections, the place of religion became quite obvious as the candidate of the UPN had to pick a Muslim running mate to balance the ticket from a Christian-Christian ticket to a Christian-Muslim ticket. Although the election was marred with irregularities, the place of religion could not

be underplayed in the political outcome. For example, a song was composed by Alhaji Dankwo in 1983 in the buildup to the elections where he admonished Muslims to vote for Shagari and the NPN:

Since the time of Amadu Bello, there has never been another leader with power, except Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the trusted one. He is the grandson of the servant of God, Bawan-Allah. My happiness is that our flag, which has been lying down in Mecca, during the reign of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, has raised it. In the face of Islam today in the world, Nigeria is first. (Kukah 1994, 153).

The administration was truncated by a coup on December 31, 1983.

3.5.3 Religion and Election Outcome in Nigeria's Third Republic

The claim that religion influenced the political outcome of the Presidential election of the Third Republic is quite relevant within the framework of the Presidential election in the Third Republic. Some scholars have argued that the election was a contest between Islam and Christianity (See Clarke, 1999 and Familusi, 2012). Clarke emphatically stated that “*the annulled 1993 election was a political contest between Islam and Christianity, ending possibly in the breakup of the federation*” (Clarke 1991, 229). The election was a two-horse race between two Muslims - one a Southern Muslim and the other a Northern Muslim.

In the build-up to the election, the Military Government had created only two political parties - the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The NRC had picked Bashir Tofa as its presidential candidate while Sylvester Ugo, a Christian from the South-East, was picked as his running mate, while the SDP picked MKO Abiola as its presidential candidate while Baba Gana Kingibe, a Muslim from the North-East, was picked as his running mate. The choice of a Muslim-Muslim ticket had raised some dust as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) threatened to boycott the election on account of this (Osaghae 1998). The SDP had argued that the choice of a Muslim-Muslim ticket was a child of necessity. The party had zoned the party chairmanship to the South-South, the Senate President to the North-Central, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives to the South-East and it was clear that the Vice-Presidential slot was going to the North based on the sharing formula.

The party had set up a three-man Strategy Committee made up of Abubakar Rimi, Balarabe Musa, and Bala Usman to come up with a strategy for the selection of a running mate. In its report

titled “*An Analysis of the Major Ethnic and Religious Considerations in the Selection of Chief MKO Abiola’s Running Mate*”, the committee noted that it is trite for positions to be shared in Nigeria and by political parties along the established ethnic and religious lines in Nigeria to give all a sense of belonging in the party (Yandaki, 2023). It equally noted that the South-South, South-East, South-West, and North-Central geo-political zones have gotten four of the five top positions the party can give namely the party chairmanship, the Speaker of the House, the President slot, and the Senate Presidency. Of these four, only one is a Muslim and that is the Presidential candidate. In light of this, the committee argued that it would inflame Muslim voters and affect the party’s chances at the polls should the party pick a Christian running mate given the current religious imbalance even if such a candidate is from the North. They argued that a Christian running mate would affect the chances of the party in ten Northern states namely Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Niger, Kebbi, Sokoto and Katsina such that “*adversely affect the party and reduce its chances of victory, to the extent that it may not get 25% of the votes in the States*” (cited in Yandaki, 2023). Suffice it that the NRC had won the Governorship election in Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, and Sokoto earlier in the Governorship election of 1991.

The choice of a Muslim-Muslim did the magic in a way for the SDP, thereby corroborating the claim that religion influenced the political outcome of the Presidential election in the Third Republic. In Bauchi, the SDP got 39.3% of votes cast; 38.7% of votes cast in Katsina; 32.7% of the votes cast in Kebbi; 38.1% of votes cast in Niger; and 20.7% of votes cast in Sokoto state (African election database, 2023). The party, on account of the Muslim-Muslim ticket, was also able to retain victory in states where it had won the Governorship elections in the North such that it had 54.5% of the total votes cast in Borno; 60.7% of the total votes cast in Jigawa; and 63.6% of the total votes cast in Yobe state (African election database, 2023). The SDP was able to secure a flip in Kano and Kaduna states. In Kano state which was the home state of the candidate of the NRC, SDP was able to garner 52.3% of the total votes cast while it got 52.2% of the total votes cast in Kaduna state (African election database, 2023). The choice of the Muslim-Muslim ticket helped in selling the candidacy of the SDP candidate to the electorate despite the rife belief that a Northern Muslim considers a Southern Muslim as not being a thoroughbred Muslim.

One may, however, contest the influence of religion on political outcome in the election given that despite the Muslim-Muslim ticket, the SDP won in Christian-predominated states in the

North like Benue, Plateau, and Taraba states where it garnered 56.9%, 61.7%, and 61.4% of the total votes cast respectively (African election database, 2023). Similarly in Christian-predominated Southern but non-Yoruba states like Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, and Delta, the SDP got 51.9%, 57.1%, 55.2%, and 69.3% of the votes cast (African election database, 2023). In the other Christian-predominated Southern but non-Yoruba states like Abia, Enugu, Imo, and Rivers states, the SDP garnered 41%, 48.1%, 44.9%, and 36.6% respectively (African election database, 2023). The party also won with over 80% of the total votes cast in the Yoruba states including the Christian-predominated state of Ondo (African election database, 2023).

This is a pointer to the fact that religion was not the only causal factor on political outcome in the election as other factors such as ethnicity and charisma of the candidate came into play in the election.

3.5.4 Religion and Election Outcome in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

1999 Presidential Elections

The Fourth Republic started with the elections that brought in a civilian administration in 1999 and has been in place since then till the current moment of this thesis. In this Fourth Republic, there have been seven elections namely in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023. In the 1999 election, the election was between two Southern Christians –Olu Falae of the coalition of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All-People's Party (APP) and Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The results of the election do not point to the influence of religion on the political outcome. In an analysis, Nwankwo (2020) undertook a regression analysis to understudy the effect of religion on the results of the 1999 presidential elections and concluded that as religious homogeneity increases, there is a decrease in Voters Choice Homogeneity (VCH). In other words, for every unit increase in religious uniformity, there is a 0.126 decrease in VCH.

2003 Elections

In the case of the 2003 Presidential election, the place of religion in the determination of political outcome became evident. The election witnessed the multiplicity of political parties in Nigeria, and it witnessed the emergence of many presidential candidates for the election. Aside from the incumbent, Olusegun Obasanjo, other candidates included Muhammadu Buhari of the

All-Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Chukwuemeka Ojukwu of the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and seventeen (17) other candidates. Obasanjo and Ojukwu were Christians from the SouthWest and SouthEast respectively while Buhari was a Muslim from the NorthWest region of the country. Although religion was not a dominant factor in determining political outcomes in the election across the country, it was a major factor in the North West and North East.

Before the election and in the wave of the adoption of Sharia by some states in the North, Buhari was at the forefront of the adoption of Sharia. He advocated the adoption of total Sharia across the North and even called on Muslims to vote only for those who would defend their faith. He had openly declared that *"I will continue to show openly and inside me the total commitment to the Sharia movement that is sweeping all over Nigeria"* (Point Blank n.d.). This endeared him to most Muslims in the North, particularly given the wave of Sharia fantasy that had enveloped the North at the time as earlier discussed. The implication however was that a lot of voters in Southern Nigeria held such call suspect. One cannot however declare that this position had an enormous impact on the political outcome of the election cycle.

The result is evidenced in the number of votes polled by Buhari against the incumbent Obasanjo. Buhari polled higher votes in all the North-West states except Kaduna where he polled 45.4% of the total votes cast. In other states in the North-West, he garnered 80.4% of the votes cast in Jigawa, 74.9% of the votes cast in Kano, 76.2% of the votes cast in Katsina, 65% of the votes cast in Kebbi, 80% of votes cast in Zamfara, and 73.3% of votes cast in Sokoto. In the North-East, he was able to garner as much as 62.1% of votes in Bauchi, 65% of votes cast in Bornu, 52.9% of votes cast in Gombe, and 64% of votes cast in Yobe while he polled 29.8% votes cast in Adamawa. In the Christian predominated North-East state of Taraba, he polled 21.9% of votes cast. In the North Central states of Benue and Plateau Christian predominated, he polled 40.8% and 30.9% of the votes cast respectively while he polled 39.7% in Muslim predominated Niger state.

The votes polled by Buhari, who appealed to religious sentiments, in Christian-predominated states in the North-East and North Central showed that religion had little significance on political outcome in 2003. This is corroborated by Nwankwo (2020) who argued that a regression analysis of the impact of religion on 2003 elections showed that for every unit increase in religious uniformity, there is a 0.036 decrease in VCH. This points to the fact that factors such

as ethnicity and political presence played a stronger role as the determinant of political outcome in the election.

2007 Elections

It is quite difficult to analyze the results of the 2007 Presidential elections due to the paucity of data on the election at the state level. In a similar vein, the 2007 election was said to have been widely affected by electoral irregularities such that the winner of the election, Umaru Musa Yar'adua and his running mate, Goodluck Jonathan, as well as the incumbent President, Olusegun Obasanjo, admitted that the election was flawed. The election umpire never produced the state-by-state breakdown of the results gotten by each candidate and the official results announced and later published on the INEC website showed a 28,000 votes disparity. INEC also refused to release detailed voter turnout data for the election. These factors mostly justify why the election is often omitted in analysis (Adebayo and Omotola 2007). In this study, the election year is omitted as it is difficult to analyse the voter's choice homogeneity in the election which would have helped in telling whether or not religion played any role in the outcome of the election.

2011 Elections

The 2011 election was significant on many grounds. First, it was an avenue to right the ills that the flawed 2007 elections created. Similarly, it was the second election in the Fourth Republic where the two major candidates in the election were of different faiths. More importantly, it was an election that had someone of the ethnic minority contest against another of a major ethnic stock. The two major candidates in the election were the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP who assumed power on account of the demise of his principal who passed on in 2010 while his major contender Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC).

The influence of religion on the election as well as the political outcome can be gleaned from the pre-election events, the results of the election, as well as the post-election violence that followed. In the build-up to the elections, Goodluck Jonathan regularly made visits to churches and Christian leaders in the country, canvassing and mobilizing Christian votes. There were reports that many influential Christian leaders and Christian groups like CAN and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), campaigned and mobilized for him towards the election (Onapajo, 2016). In one such visit to one of the influential pastors in Lagos, Pastor Paul Adefarasin, the Pastor

urged his congregation to vote for a Christian President (Onapajo, 2016). Of great significance was his visit to the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) – a Pentecostal church deemed to have the highest number of branches and members across the country –, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, to solicit his support and seek prayers towards his victory. While there is no evidence that Buhari whipped up religious sentiments towards the election, it is incontrovertible that his pre-2011 speeches where he urged Muslims to vote only for those who will defend the cause of Sharia continually puts him up as a defender of Sharia.

The post-election events also confirmed the influence of religion on political outcomes in the election. On account of the defeat of Buhari in the election, violence broke out in major states in the North like Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, and Yobe (Reliefweb, 2011). Aside from the attacks on members of the PDP, most of the non-politician victims were Christians and churches. Several churches were razed down. There were claims that some persons were burnt alive in a church. The fact that the protests started after Muslim prayers when a certain Islamic cleric told congregants at the 7 pm prayers that Buhari was being rigged out by the PDP is a pointer to the influence of religion. Several churches were burnt at different locations in Borno, Kaduna, and Yobe states by the protesters. The attack on churches suggests that the protesters assume that those who did not vote for their preferred candidate were Christians.

The results of the election show that there is a positive relationship between religion and political outcomes in the 2011 elections. In the Christian-predominated South-South which doubles as the home of the PDP candidate, Jonathan polled 94.58% in Akwa Ibom; 99.63% in Bayelsa; 97.67% in Cross River; 98.59% in Delta; 87.28% in Edo; and 98.04% in Rivers. Also, in the Christian predominated South-East, Goodluck Jonathan had 98.96% in Anambra; 98.96% in Abia; 95.97% in Ebonyi; 98.54% in Enugu state; and 97.98% in Imo Sate. In the Christian-predominated North Central states of Benue and Plateau, Goodluck Jonathan secured 66.31% of the votes as against Buhari's 10.47% votes and Ribadu's 21.29% while he was able to secure 72.98% votes in Plateau state as against Buhari's 25.27% of the total votes cast. It is even more interesting to note that Jonathan got 61.0% of the total votes cast in Northeast Taraba state. In the case of Buhari, the resounding victory he recorded in the Muslim-predominated Northeast and Northwest states is a pointer to how religion influenced political outcomes in the state. Buhari was able to secure 56% of the votes cast in Adamawa; 81.69% of the votes cast in Bauchi; 59.73% of the votes cast in

Gombe; 58.21% of the votes in Jigawa; 51.92% of the votes cast in Kaduna; 60.77% of the votes cast in Kano; 70.99% of the votes cast in Katsina; 64.03% in Niger; 59.44% of the total votes cast in Sokoto state; 54.26% of the votes cast in Yobe state; and 66.25% of the votes cast in Zamfara. The defeat of Buhari in Muslim-predominated states like Bornu, Kebbi, and Nassarawa can be attributed to the presence of many PDP bigwigs in the said state. In the case of Kaduna state which has an almost even distribution of Christians and Muslims, Goodluck Jonathan garnered 46.31% of the votes and these votes were believed to have come from Kaduna South (A Christian-dominated zone in the state). This is corroborated by the claim of some of the protesters in Kaduna that “...the ruling *People's Democratic Party, PDP, recorded 100 per cent of all registered voters in the Christian-dominated southern parts of the state without allowing the Muslim areas to rig election in the zone*”.

The regression analysis undertaken by Nwankwo (2020) corroborated the connection between religion and political outcome in the 2011 elections by showing that there is a positive but weak relationship between religion and political outcome in the 2011 election. The author noted that for every unit increase in religious identity leads to a 0.300 increase in VCH but is not significant at a 95% confidence level.

2015 Election

The 2015 Presidential election was also a two-horse race between the incumbent Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari. In the build-up to the election, Buhari's CPC had formed an alliance with other parties such as the Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN), APGA, among others to form a mega party, the All-Progressives Congress (APC), which aims to wrestle power at the centre from the PDP. Each of the major parties conducted their primaries and Goodluck Jonathan emerged as the standard bearer of the PDP while Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the standard bearer of the APC. The campaign was quite intensive with the two political parties trying to whip up religious sentiments in its favour. The PDP and its candidate hobnobbed with the CAN and PFN in the build-up to the elections to the extent that the government and army were accused of using Christian organizations. One of the highlights of the events was the relationship of the President with the President of CAN, Ayo Oritsejafor. There was a claim by the then Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi, that Jonathan gave a sum of #6bn to CAN with the sole aim of influencing Christian voters in the country. This claim was corroborated by Kallamu Musa Ali Dikwa, the Director of

the Voice of Northern Christian Movement, that the money was #7bn and not #6bn, #3bn of which was shared to CAN executive members in each state as well as some influential Pentecostal pastors (Joseph and Benjamin 2015, 15). The actions of the President, alongside the allegations that his cabinet was skewed in favour of Christians, led Muslim leaders to pay the President a protest visit to register their grouse (Adamo, 2018).

The election witnessed a tour of major Christian gatherings by the President between October 2014 and February 2015. Within this period, the President visited the Winners' Chapel, Redemption Camp, as well as The Lord's Chosen. Jonathan was said to have been endorsed by the joint body of CAN and the PFN. In this light, when a certain Whatsapp message was sent around Whatsapp platforms in which Christians were canvassed to vote for Jonathan who was referred to as being religiously liberal against Buhari who was painted as a religious bigot, the message was allegedly linked to CAN whose President was working closely with the Goodluck Jonathan administration. It is interesting to note that although Jonathan is a Christian, the running mate of Buhari in the election was equally a Christian and a pastor at RCCG – the denomination with the highest number of branches and members in the country. Osinbajo, Buhari's running mate, was also noted to be a close ally of the General Overseer of the RCCG and well-respected Christian leader in the country, Enoch Adeboye. The choice of Osinbajo as Vice to Buhari was a deal at breaking the Christian votes, particularly in the South given that Buhari was painted as a man who intended to Islamize the country. With Osinbajo, the narrative about Buhari and Islamization became dead on fours. On the other hand, the campaign in the North was presenting Buhari as a thorough Muslim and anyone against his interest as anti-Islam. Both parties accused each other. The APC accused the PDP of whipping Christian sentiments while the PDP equally accused the APC of being a Muslim party. A former Governor of Jigawa State, Sule Lamido, who is equally a PDP stalwart, corroborated this when he stated in an interview that all who supported Jonathan in the 2015 election were labelled "Pastor", "Christian", or "infidel" (TheCable, 2016). The political outcome reflected the influence of religion in the election. Jonathan won in all the Christian-predominated states in the North, except Benue, although by a slim margin. For example, while Jonathan won in both Plateau and Taraba states, he won with 55.95% and 53.62% of the total votes cast in the two states respectively as against 43.68% and 45.08% polled by Buhari in the two states respectively. In Benue, which is another Christian-predominated state in the North, the APC won with 54.73% of the total votes cast as against the PDP's 44.45% of the total votes. Buhari won in

all Muslim predominated states in the North except Nassarawa where he lost with 46.30% of the total votes cast as against the PDP's 53.46% of the total votes cast. In the other predominantly Muslim states, Buhari won the election with not less than 60% of the total votes cast except in Adamawa state which is the home state of the running mate to Jonathan where Buhari secured 58.91% of the total votes cast. He garnered 91.3% of the votes in Bauchi; 94.35% in Bornu; 78.43% in Gombe; 85.39% in Jigawa; 69.72% in Kaduna; 89.44% in Kano; 92.83% in Katsina; 83.88% in Kebbi; 68.66% in Kwara; 80.83% in Niger; 80.54% in Sokoto; 94.19% in Yobe; and 80.44% in Zamfara.

In the South, religious sentiments played out in the South-South and the South East. He recorded a landslide victory in all the states in these zones except for Edo state. In Abia, he secured 94.18% of the total votes cast; 93.73% in Akwa Ibom; 98.52% in Anambra; 98.40% in Bayelsa; 92.09% in Cross River; 95.55 from Delta; 88.94% in Ebonyi; 57.32% in Edo; 96.48% in Enugu; 79.55% in Imo; and 94.99% in Rivers.

From the analysis above, it is incontrovertible that while other factors such as personality, and ethnicity, among others, are important, religion played a more significant impact on political outcome. As Nwakwo (2020) argued following his regression analysis of the impact of religion on VCH, religion had a significant and positive relationship with VCH in the 2015 elections. He noted that a unit increase in religious identity is associated with a 0.675 increase in VCH at a 95% confidence level.

2019 Election

The residue of the events of the 2015 elections was still very much hovering over the 2019 elections. while the 2015 election saw the APC make a sweep of votes in the North, the four years of being in power earned the APC and the Buhari administration much hatred, particularly among the Christian folks. The APC administration drew the ire of people based on the lacklustre way with which it handled the Farmers-Herders crisis which snowballed into kidnapping, maiming, and razing down of towns, particularly Christian communities. Equally, there was an increased attack on Southern Kaduna which thereby raised the suspicion of Christians that the Buhari administration was all out to annihilate Christians and Islamize Nigeria. His Deputy, Yemi Osinbajo, was also accused of being a betrayal who kept quiet in the face of the severe attacks on Christians under the administration. Unlike the 2015 election where and when the CAN and PFN openly supported a candidate, the PFN was quite covert in its opposition to Buhari. They

condemned Buhari and urged Christians only to vote for a candidate who can eliminate the killings and one who will not abuse institutions such as INEC, EFCC, and police, among others (*The Punch*, February 16, 2019, p. 7). This was seen as a subtle campaign against the APC, as the religious body was simply warning her members against voting for Buhari's re-election. On an individual note, some Christian leaders were very loud in their criticism of the APC administration and their campaign against the APC. It did not matter that the main contender against Buhari was Atiku Abubakar, who was also a Fulani Muslim.

The perception of Buhari as a protector of Islam remained in most parts of the North where he had developed a cult-like following. This will be better understood when one juxtaposes the results that the APC secured in the 2015 and 2019 elections, particularly in areas in the North and the South West where it had an excellent outcome in 2015. In the 2019 results and in line with religious influence, Buhari lost in all the states in the South-East based on the perception of him as a Jihadist and ethical bigot. Thus, even though some political bigwigs had joined the party. It is clear that while the Buhari administration had to deal with the burden of being labelled a Jihadist, the fact that his major opponent was also a Muslim makes it difficult to whip up many religious sentiments. Thus, while the PDP recorded more than 80% votes in each of the states in the Southeast and the South-South, the percentile plummeted in 2019 compared to 2015. In Abia, the PDP got 67.96% of the total votes against APC's 26.31%; the PDP got 86.63% of the total votes cast in Anambra as against APC's 5.5%; the PDP got 72% to 25.26% gotten by the APC in Ebonyi; the PDP got 84.45% in Enugu while the APC got 12.93% of the votes; while in Imo, the PDP got 65.47% to APC's 27.46%. In the South-South, the PDP cleared the votes convincingly.

In Akwa Ibom, the PDP got 68.39% of the total votes while APC got 30.31%; in Bayelsa, the PDP polled 61.51% as against APC's 36.93%; in Cross River, PDP got 70.1% while APC got 27.8%; Delta State, PDP got 71.59% of the total votes cast while APC got 26.67% of the votes cast; in Edo, PDP got 49.17% as against APC's 47.17%; while in Rivers, PDP polled 73.81% of the total votes cast as against the APC's 23.47%. In the Southwest, the PDP won in both Oyo and Ondo where it polled 43.83% and 49.62% respectively as against APC's 43.66% and 43.48%. The APC however recorded in Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti, and Osun where it polled 53.31%, 49.94%, 57.52%, and 48.64% respectively while the PDP secured 41.12%, 34.5%, 40.41%, 47.21% respectively.

In the North-Central which was the hub of the Farmers-Herders crisis, the APC lost so much ground. The PDP won in Christian-predominated areas. Hence, the PDP won in Benue, FCT,

and Plateau with 48.95%, 61.33%, and 53.02% respectively while the APC secured 47.7%, 35.91%, and 45.28% of the total votes. The APC equally secured victory in Kwara, Kogi, Nassarawa, and Niger with 67.22%, 54.87%, 49.92%, and 71.88%, respectively as against the PDP's 30.06%, 41.88%, 48.87%, and 25.59%. The fact that the two major candidates in this election were Muslims explained why the victory was largely slim. Other than religion, some other factors came into play in these states. For instance, the poor performance of the sitting Governor contributed to APC's poor performance in Kogi while the "o to ge" social revolution made the election in Kwara one not premised on religious consideration.

In the Northwest and the North-East which have often turned out huge votes for Buhari, there was a difference in the dynamics in 2019. The fact that both contenders are Fulani Muslims affected this base of Buhari and prevented the endemic use of religion to influence political outcomes as was the case in 2015. Hence, in the North-West states of Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto and Zamfara, the APC secured 59.2%, 77.45%, 79.21%, 76.86%, 71.84%, 56.24%, and 75.84% respectively while the PDP secured 39.05%, 20.71%, 19.8%, 20.39%, 26.21%, 41.47%, and 21.68% respectively. The result from Kaduna is instructive as it was a result of the endemic division that had been created between Christians and Muslims in the state based on the action of the Governor, Nasir El-Rufai. He had made some remarks that aided the perception that the APC is a Muslim party. As against the age-long tradition in the state, El-Rufai decided to choose a Muslim Deputy to run with him in the 2019 Governorship elections because the people from the zone would not have voted for him even if he picked a Pope as his running mate. This action sealed the fate of the APC in Southern Kaduna and explained why the party lost much ground in the election. In the North-East, the PDP won in both Adamawa and Taraba with 50.55% and 52.57% votes respectively while the APC secured 46.59% and 45.58%. While the victory of the PDP in Adamawa can be explained given that it is the home state of the PDP candidate, the case of Taraba reflects the impact of religion. Taraba, as earlier mentioned, is a Christian predominated state and the claims of Islamization and Fulanization fuelled in some circles and echoed by the like of Theophilus Danjuma in the state, contributed to the defeat of the APC in the state. On the other hand, the APC won in Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, and Yobe by securing 77.95%, 90.94%, 72.71%, and 89.01% respectively while the PDP secured 20.43%, 7.8%, 24.99%, and 9.08% respectively.

The 2019 election, it must be stated, did not rely on religious sentiments alone as other factors played out in the political outcome. In this segment, we have noted the place of ethnicity

and government performance in the determination of political outcomes. While religion had a significant relation with political outcome, it was not the sole factor in most of the states in the Federation.

2023 Election

The 2023 Presidential election was significant in the Fourth Republic for several reasons. First, the election was the second time the Muslim-Muslim ticket was adopted by a political party and this time around it generated much more outcry than the 1993 case and came with consequences. In the case of the 1993 situation, the only alternative that Christian organizations and voters had was another Muslim candidate since the Third Republic was a two-party system. The situation in 2023 was quite different given that there was a Christian candidate among the frontline candidates. Secondly, the election witnessed a Southern Christian and a Southern Muslim going head-to-head in the elections against a Northern Muslim. Thirdly, Buhari who had a cult-like following was no longer on the ballot and none of the Northern candidates could be deemed an Islamic fundamentalist. One major reason why the candidate of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP), Rabiul Kwakwanso, lost his governorship reelection bid in 2003 was that he was not fully committed to the implementation of Sharia (Malomo, 2022) while the candidate of the PDP, Atiku Abubakar, was deemed as being too liberal. Lastly, the election witnessed the frontline candidates from different geo-political zones in the country. The candidate of the APC, Bola Tinubu, is from the Southwest; the candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, is from the South-East; the candidate of the PDP, Atiku Abubakar, is from the North-East; while the candidate of the NNPP, Rabiul Kwankwaso, is from the North-West. This creates a fertile ground for the deployment of ethnicity in the election.

The place of religion in the election and in influencing political outcomes was very evident in the 2023 elections. The choice of a Muslim-Muslim ticket has been premised on the need to appeal to Muslim voters who are in the majority in the core North. Jibrin (2022) notes that the choice of a Christian deputy from the North for the candidate of the APC may not have been able to help curry the votes of Muslim voters in the North. It is believed that picking a Christian deputy from the North will make a candidate lose the votes from core Northern states like Bauchi, Bornu, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Kebbi, among others. These states are renowned for pulling great numbers in terms of votes during elections and it will be suicidal for any candidate to overlook them. This is also foregrounded by the belief that the Southern Muslim does not represent

the Northern Muslim from a religious perspective (Mefor, 2022). In other words, the core Northern Muslim does not see a Southern Muslim as being Muslim enough to represent his/her religious interest. This is explained by arguments that a Southern Muslim is hardly allowed to lead prayers in a mosque where Northerners are. Hence, a Southern Muslim is expected to pick a Northern Muslim as deputy if s/he will get votes from the North. This is coupled with the fact that picking a Northern Christian as deputy will amount to taking the Northern Muslim out of the equation in the administration. More importantly, it is believed that only a Muslim-Muslim ticket can serve as a counterforce to the Muslim votes that Northern Muslim candidates like Atiku and Kwankwaso can pull from the core North. These arguments, nonetheless, the choice of a Muslim-Muslim ticket drew the opprobrium of the CAN and the PFN as well as some Christian leaders within the APC. A change in the leadership of CAN did not change the position of CAN on it. The position of CAN was also reechoed by Catholic Bishops who maintained that “*When you decide that only one religion will produce the major actors, excluding others who will become like strangers, it would not be fair and just*” (Kaigama, 2022).

It was believed that both Atiku and Kwankwaso did not have much hurdle before them since they were Northern Muslims and could easily appeal to the Northern Muslim votes. The hurdle for them was the choice of a deputy. Atiku chose Okowa, a former Governor of Delta State and a Christian from the South-South while Kwankwaso picked Bishop Isaac Idahosa, a pastor of a Pentecostal church and from the South-South, as his deputy. It was widely believed that the choice of a pastor as running mate to Kwankwaso was to appeal to the Christian community which many believed would tilt towards the candidate of the LP, Peter Obi, on the strength that he is a Southern Christian and it appeals to the reason of fairness and equitability if a Christian succeeds a Muslim as it has been the case since the beginning of the Fourth Republic.

Peter Obi, in the face of the religion of other frontline candidates, became the darling of many Christian leaders. While there is no concrete evidence to support that he was overtly supported by CAN or PFN, he was the only candidate who made the most visits to the convention of churches during the campaign. Between July and December 2022, Obi attended the Campground of the Lord’s Chosen Charismatic Renewal, the Convention of RCCG, the convention of Living Faith Church (Winner’s Chapel), the Dunamis, as well as The Experience

(The largest Christian musical concert in Nigeria). There were also cases where some pastors across the country were seen to be openly canvassing and campaigning for him during their church service. For example, Christian leaders such as David Ibiyeomie, Odumeje, and Sarah Omakwu, among others openly campaigned for Obi and urged their members to vote massively for him (Odili, 2023). There were also claims that CAN urged its members to mobilize for Obi although this claim was denied by the body. A reinforcement of the role of pastors and church leaders in supporting Obi was evidenced in certain leaked audio in which Obi was said to have told Oyedepo that the election was a “religious war” a claim which Obi did not deny nor affirm (Adeyemi, 2023). One thing was clear from the foregoing and it is the belief that Obi was largely seen as the adopted candidate of Christian voters, particularly in the North.

The implications of the religious game played by the candidate were obvious in the results of the election. In the South-West which was the political base of the APC candidate, the APC lost in both Lagos and Osun states. The APC lost in Lagos to the LP which had 45.81% of the votes cast as against the APC’s 45.04% of total votes cast. The reason adduced for this has been the bloc votes of people from the South-East region, the presence of youths, as well as the influence of the church as a lot of the megachurches that declared support for Obi had their members in Lagos. In the case of Osun APC lost to the PDP which polled 48.85% of the votes cast as against APC’s 47.34% of the votes cast. The loss in Osun is largely attributed to the division within the APC in the state as well as the charisma of the Governor who belonged to the PDP. The APC however polled higher votes in other states of the Southwest. In Ogun, APC polled 61.21% of the votes against PDP’s 17.98% and LP’s 15.59%. In Ondo state, APC polled 68.03% as against the PDP’s 18.98% and LP’s 9.75%. in Oyo, the APC polled 56.5% while the PDP and LP polled 22.6% and 11.93% respectively. In Ekiti, the APC polled 65.39% of the votes cast while the PDP and LP polled 29.08% and 3.69% respectively.

The results of the South East and the South-South are also worth considering in this analysis. In the South-East, which is the home of the LP Candidate, the LP won other parties' hands down. In Anambra, the home state of Obi, he polled 95.3% of the votes cast. the LP also polled 91.55% in Abia; 76.98% in Ebonyi; 93.81% in Enugu; and 85.32% in Imo. The results from the South-East are attributed to the fact that the zone is a predominantly Christian zone with a

significantly few Muslim population and because the LP candidate is from this zone as well. In the South-South which is also a predominantly Christian zone, the votes polled by the LP were also quite instructive. In Akwa Ibom, the PDP won the state with 44.49% as against 27.61% polled by the APC and 21.98% polled by the LP. In Bayelsa state, the PDP won by polling 42.44% of the total votes as against 26.25% polled by the APC and 30.28% polled by the LP. The LP won in Cross River with 48.68% of the total votes cast as against 17.91% polled by the PDP and 30.6% polled by the APC. The LP also won in Delta where it polled 57.11% of the votes as against 24.35% polled by the PDP and 16.25% polled by the APC. Similarly, in Edo, the LP won with 71.35% of the votes cast as against 11.44% of the PDP and 13.84% of the APC. In Rivers, the LP also won with 42.06% of the votes cast as against 19.08% of the PDP and 35.2% of the APC. The results from the South-South which is the zone of the Vice-Presidential Candidate of the PDP as well as support for the party witnessed an upset for the party. This is also despite the presence of some APC bigwigs in the region. Religion played a major role in the result from the zone as the choice of voting for a Muslim candidate, regardless of whether his running mate was from the zone, was considered as one of less importance compared to voting for a Christian candidate. Religion played a major role in influencing the political outcome as the LP polled 1,210,775 votes in the zone as against 799,960 votes and 717,908 votes polled by the APC and the PDP respectively.

In the North Central states, the role of religion in the determination of political outcomes was evidenced. APC won in four states while LP won in two states. In Benue, which is a predominantly Christian state, the APC secured 48.7% as against the PDP's 48.4% and the LP secured 20.4% of the votes cast. An argument that could suffice for this result is that the APC had fielded a Catholic Priest as its candidate, and this atoned for any damage that the Muslim-Muslim ticket could stir as well as curry the sympathy of the people for the party. Thus, nonetheless, the LP was still able to make an impression in the state. In Niger, which is a predominantly Muslim state, the LP could only poll 10.86% of the votes against the APC and PDP candidates who are Muslims and polled 50.66% and 38.47% respectively. In both Kogi and Kwara states – two states where it is difficult to state which religion predominates, the APC won. The APC polled 54.91% in Kwara and 53.94% in Kogi. The LP however won in both Nassarawa and Plateau – two states that have a significantly high Christian population. In Nassarawa, the LP won with 37.42% of the votes as against APC's 33.82% and PDP's 28.76%. In Plateau, the LP won with 45.84% of the

votes as against APC's 30.19% and PDP's 23.97%. The competitive results pulled by the LP in this zone showed how much the Christian voters in the zone voted for Peter Obi. The place of religion influencing political outcomes becomes more revealing when one considers the total number of votes that Peter Obi and the LP could pull in this zone against established parties like the APC and the PDP. Labour Party polled 1,137,822 votes (28.02%) as against 1,760,994 (43.36%) and 1,162,087 (28.62%) polled by the APC and the PDP respectively.

The impact of religion on political outcomes is also evidenced in the results of the poll that were turned in from states in the North-West. In Kaduna, the APC polled 28.49% of the total votes cast as against 39.56%, 21.01%, and 6.53% polled by the PDP, LP and NNPP respectively. In Kano, the APC polled 29.6% while the PDP, LP, and NNPP secured 7.5%, 1.6%, and 57% of the total votes respectively. In Katsina, the APC secured 45.6% of the total votes cast while the PDP, LP, and NNPP were 46.2%, 0.6%, and 6.6% respectively. In Kebbi, the PDP won with 48% and was trailed by the APC, LP, and NNPP with 42%, 1.8%, and 0.5% of the votes cast respectively. In Jigawa, the APC won with 45.8% and was trailed by the PDP, LP, and NNPP with 42%, 0.2%, and 10.7% respectively. In Sokoto, the PDP won with 47% of the total votes cast while the APC, NNPP, and LP secured 46.9%, 1.08%, and 0.2% of the total votes cast respectively. In Zamfara, the APC won with 57% of the total votes cast while the PDP, NNPP, and LP secured 37%, 0.78%, and 0.3% of the total votes cast respectively. From the percentile of the results given above, it can be noticed that Kaduna state was the only state in the North-West where the LP got a reasonable number of votes. A further review of the local government distribution of the Kaduna result shows that the LP got the bulk of its votes in the state from Kaduna South which is a predominantly Christian area while other candidates got a mass of their votes from other areas in the state which is Muslim predominated. This also is not unconnected to the actions of Nasir El-Rufai mentioned earlier in this chapter. In the case of Kano – the home state of the NNPP candidate, the APC was able to wring out more than 25% of votes. The APC also won in states like Jigawa and Zamfara while it lost to the PDP in Sokoto, Kaduna, Katsina, and Kebbi. A further review of the results polled by the trio of APC, PDP, and the LP in the geo-political zone shows that APC secured 2,652,235 votes, the PDP secured 2,329,536 votes, while the LP secured 350,182 votes. The poor outing of the LP is essentially a result of the religion of its candidate who is a Christian. It is noticeable that the LP which had a poor performance in all zones in the South as well as the North-Central performed

better than the LP in this zone. Similarly, the high performance of the APC against the PDP that fielded a Muslim candidate is a result of the choice of the Muslim-Muslim ticket which helped warm it to the electorate in the zone. It must also not be lost that the number of votes polled by the PDP in the zone is a result of the religion of its candidate.

In the North-East, the PDP won in all the states except for Bornu which was won by the APC. In Bornu, the APC polled 51% of the total votes cast as against the PDP, LP, and NNPP which polled 38%, 1.44%, and 0.9% respectively. In Adamawa, which is the home state of the PDP candidate, the PDP polled 57.2% of the votes cast while the APC, LP, and NNPP polled 25%, 14.5%, and 1.1% respectively. In Bauchi, the PDP polled 48.34% of the votes while the APC, LP, and NNPP secured 35.88%, 3.1%, and 8.17% of the votes cast. In Gombe, the PDP polled 62.2% of the votes while the APC, LP, and NNPP secured 28.8%, 5.1%, and 2.17% of the votes cast. In Yobe, the PDP polled 52.48% of the votes while the APC, LP, and NNPP secured 40.3%, 0.6%, and 4.83% of the votes cast. In Taraba, the PDP polled 48.34% of the votes while the APC, LP, and NNPP secured 35.88%, 3.1%, and 8.17% of the votes cast. In Taraba, which is predominated by Christians, the PDP polled 37% of the votes while the APC, LP, and NNPP secured 26%, 28%, and 2% of the votes cast. a review of the results from the zone shows that the LP candidate secured over 25% in Taraba which is a Christian predominated state. Similarly, the LP polled 14.5% in Adamawa which has a significant Christian population. It is also observed that the bulk of the votes of the LP in Bornu and Gombe came from Christian-dominated Local Governments like Chibok in Bornu and local governments in Gombe South like Billiri, Balanga, Kaltungo, and Shongom. The LP secured more than 20% votes from each of these local governments. This is a testament to how religion influenced the political outcome of the election. The performance of the APC and PDP and even the NNPP can also be traced to religious influence. It is noticeable that the LP which had a poor performance in all zones in the South as well as the North-Central performed better than the LP in this zone.

3.6 Conclusion

Politicians in Nigeria at both national and sub-national levels have always spun religious narratives to win the electorates. As a result of the ethno-religious diversity of the country, these

politicians have always exploited the fault line. They had always whipped up religious sentiments without recourse to what the possible post-election situation would be. From our discussion, it is quite obvious that where faith predominates, the deployment of religion as a tool for political mobilization for politicians has been higher. Hence, religion has been found to play a greater role in the North West, North East, South East, and South-South. The use of religion in influencing the political outcome is however higher in geo-political zones where religious fundamentalism is more prominent, and this is the case with the North East and the North West geo-political zones. Religion, as it is known, is practised by both men and women and so is deployed to them. It is however more dominant in the case of women as a result of cultural orientations. The African culture largely promotes a woman to be subservient to the whims of the man in her life. As a daughter, her wish is at the behest of her father and as a wife she is bound to conform to the wishes of her husband. It is however in question whether this will be the case were the woman to be literate. It also raises the question of the role that literacy plays in mediating the role of religion in influencing her electoral choice.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA, METHODS, AND MODEL

4.1 Introduction

Drawing from the review in the previous chapter, a mixed methods approach was designed to achieve the aim and objectives of the study. For the analytical objectives, the research will be undertaken in two phases through a mixed-methods approach – quantitative and qualitative – for collecting the data among the Nigerian female voters in the target region. The first phase which is the quantitative aspect of the research involves gathering the participants, using representative sampling from both the North and the South, to collect relevant data using a questionnaire-based survey. In this phase, detailed information, such as the demographic characteristics of the participants was collected and information about their religions and political literacy levels about their voting choice was also gathered. As regards the qualitative approach, which is the second phase of the research, face-to-face interaction, in the form of interviews, was used to gather the participants' opinions on the subject matter. Hence, we collaborated with the University of Ibadan, Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis (UI-LISA), Nigeria, and used snowball sampling to sample twenty potential participants across each target region. The rationale behind using snowball sampling is that the first participant in the sample using the convenience sampling approach will be asked to recommend another potential sample who may fit in answering the interview questions.

In summary, therefore, it is important to note that the survey provides a baseline of findings on the interconnectedness of religion, political literacy, and voter choices for female Nigerian voters with evidence from Southern and Northern Regions and then the interviews will all be more in-depth understanding.

4.2 Study Aim and Objectives

The study investigated how religion and political literacy level influence the political outcome in comparison between the North and South, and factors accounting for the disparity in political outcomes in Nigeria. The research was designed to contribute to the volume of literature on the determinants of political outcomes regarding Christianity and Islam to investigate how political outcomes are influenced by religion in Nigeria and to ascertain whether the differences

inherent within the South and the North are informed by a depth of religion and literacy levels. This leads to the research objective which is to achieve the overall aim of the study as stated above. Beginning with the theoretical objectives which focused on the discussion of relevant literature on political stakeholders and their unique characteristics, their perceptions of religion and literacy level and the differences across regions including a discussion of the literature linking other variables unique to the North and South. Specifically, the theoretical objectives highlighted the following:

- The first set out the background process that carries the research forward to the stage where the analytical objectives achieved the research aim.
- The second contributed to the volume of literature on the interconnection of religion and politics in Nigeria.
- The third discussed the relevant literature on religion and its significance as a mechanism for political outcomes.
- The fourth highlighted the policy implications of the research findings; and
- The fifth made recommendations that boost the understanding of how religion and political literacy levels can lead to political outcomes that translate to sustainable development for developing countries.

The analytical objective of the study investigated the general and disparate influences of religion on the electoral process at the regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria.

The imperative of the study lies in the fact that it interrogated the level of social commitment to religious inclinations in politics across regions in Nigeria and its potential influence on political outcomes. The study further examined the way political literacy level moderates the impact of religion on political outcomes, making it the first study to assess this. In a general sense, this research delves into the impact of religion on voter preferences, with subsequent inquiries exploring the significance of political literacy levels. This investigation extends to examine the interplay between political literacy and religious influences on voter choices. Therefore, this study contributes to scholarly understanding within the domains of religion's influence on electoral behaviour and the significance of political literacy in shaping voter preferences.

Drawing from the above, the following research questions were responded to:

- What are the factors that determine the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?
- Does political literacy level create a divergence in the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?
- How dominant are religious values concerning the political outcomes of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?
- Does patriarchy and gender sensitivity influence the political participation level and outcome of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria?

These questions were arrived at following the noticed gap in the literature on women, religion, political literacy, and political outcomes. The following gaps were noticed:

- Prior literature on the impact of religion on electoral outcomes in Nigeria has focused largely on the general populace without taking a cursory look at how women have been particularly influenced by religion in this regard;
- A lot of the analyses have not been regional-based thereby denying us a perspective to understand if and why the events of the two different regions (may) differ;
- Although there have been many journalistic and scholarly works to show that religion influences electoral outcomes in Nigeria and that the influence of religion on electoral outcomes in Northern Nigeria is higher than in Southern Nigeria, much of these have not been statistically proven as it has been based largely on journalistic assumptions;
- Moreover, there has not been any known work examining if the influence of religion on women in the North is different from what obtains with women in the South;
- While there has been literature on the role of political literacy in influencing political participation and electoral outcomes, none has looked at the specific influence of such on women in both Northern and Southern Nigeria;
- There seems to be an underlying assumption that what affects men affects women equally and as such a general study will suffice in the specific case of women in Nigeria, in disregard of the obvious patriarchy that pervades the system;
- There seems to be an assumption that the effect of patriarchy and gender sensitivity on political participation and outcomes is the same for both women in Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria; and

- More importantly, the analysis of the place of religion influencing political outcomes largely stopped at the 2015 election. Hence, they are not sufficient enough in prognosticating about the 2019 and 2023 elections.

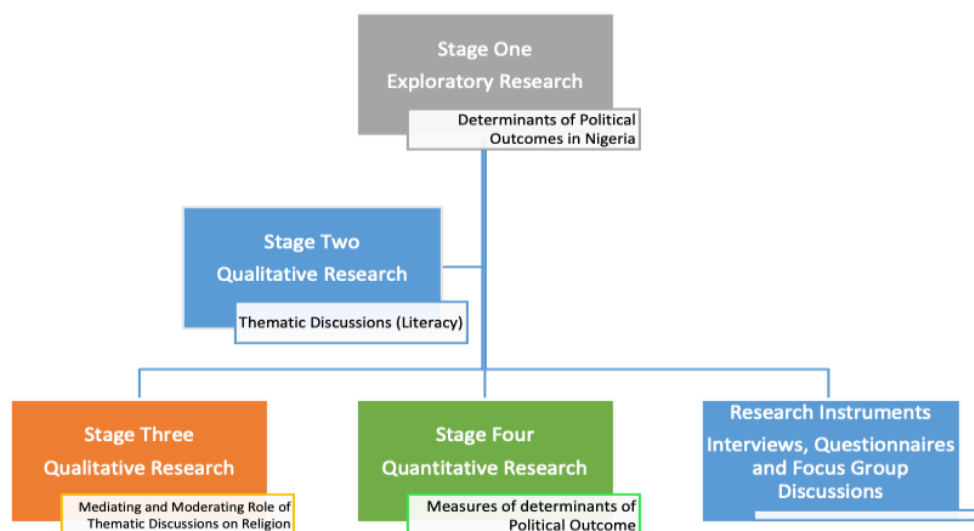
In an attempt to draw a methodological design for the study, some of these difficulties were quite eminent:

- There is a dearth of up-to-date records on political stakeholders in Nigeria and the researcher is concerned that this might pose a slight difficulty in clearly defining a proper sample.
- The data collected was targeted toward active political participants but usually, this was limited, because data were collected close to the 2023 general elections for Federal, State, Local and Senatorial levels of government. Thus, it created some bias for the research since it didn't necessarily reflect a normal period in Nigeria because political stakeholders do not have adequate time to complete questionnaires or grant interviews.

4.3 Methodology

In doing that, however, a cross-section of women was reached across Nigeria and the snowball sampling proposed was effective to reach into communities that may be hardest to reach, particularly within the poorer communities in both the North and South of the Niger.

Figure 3: Research Methodology Process



Source: (Author 2022)

For the quantitative analysis, frequency and percentile approach, and charts for exploratory data analysis were used, while a t-test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 4, and ANOVA for difference was used to test the research hypothesis (hypotheses 2 and 3). In terms of the qualitative aspects, a thematic analysis, which is the most important method of analyzing text or interview data, was employed. The idea is to streamline text responses and organize them for easier coding, analysis, and interpretation of the report. A copy of the questionnaire is attached.

Table 8: Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative Objectives	
Research Hypothesis	Methods
The basis for the choices of the electorate between governorship and the presidential election in Southern and Northern Nigeria are different.	A mix of descriptive statistical analysis, T-Test, and ANOVA
The political literacy level of the female electorate in Northern Nigeria impacts their choice of governorship/presidential aspirants.	
The political literacy level of the female electorate in Southern Nigeria impacts their choice of governorship/presidential aspirants.	
The religious affiliation of the female electorate in Northern Nigeria impacts their choice of governorship/presidential aspirants.	
The religious affiliation of the female electorate in Southern Nigeria impacts their choice of governorship/presidential aspirants.	
Qualitative Objectives	
To discuss what informs the choice of candidate by Nigerian women in an election.	
To discuss the political literacy of Nigerian women.	

To discuss the impact of religion on the political choice of Nigerian women.	Thematic analysis
To discuss the awareness of Nigerian women about the presence of female advocacy groups and the influence of patriarchy on electoral choice.	

4.4 The Study Population

The study population covers Nigerian female voters. The key areas interrogated were the regional divergence of voters' decision-making and political participation as well as the role religion plays in the socio-political determination of the electoral choice of candidates. In addition, the study examined the independent and mediating effects of religion and political literacy levels on voters' decision and their roles in the current Nigerian political setup. It evaluated religious diversity and its advancement of political goals.

This aspect of the research was necessitated by the events of the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria where some religious leaders were instrumental in the emergence of some political candidates. To achieve this, separate studies of the Southern and Northern regions were conducted in religious comparison with the focus on understanding the secularism or otherwise of each region, the authority of their religious leaders and other key variables. These variables were measured against the background that while the Southern region is more liberal, with a more Christian population, and has high literacy rates, the Northern region is dominated by Islam and has low literacy levels.

There are 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria which comprises 6 geopolitical zones. These include North-East with six states, North-West with seven states, North-Central with seven states, South-East, with five states, South-South with six states, and South-West with six states. Political stakeholders are present in all geopolitical zones and are divided between two major contemporary political parties in Nigeria i.e., the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All-Progressives Congress (APC). The South of the Niger - predominantly South-South and South-East as well as the North of the Niger – predominantly North-East and North-West are chosen as the main area of primary data collection for the study due to the presence of a sharp difference in religious views and literacy levels. Table 1 below shows a graphic representation of

the study area. For want of time and financial resources, three states in the first cohort (Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna), and three states in the second group (Abia, Anambra and Edo) were selected for data collection. All respondents for the study were perceived as being politically active.

Table 9: Scope of the study

Geopolitical zone	Location	Selected State	State Governors' Political Party
North-East	North of the Niger	-	-
North-West		Kano	APC
		Kaduna	APC
North-Central		Kwara	APC
South-East	South of the Niger	Abia	PDP
		Enugu (A. to decide)	PDP
South-South		Edo	PDP
South-West		-	-

4.5 Research Design

This study adopted the mixed-methods framework. This study initially set out to deploy the quantitative design. The sampling and administration of the survey were carried out by a research company based in Ibadan, Nigeria with the support of the Bournemouth University. This was done to help in reaching a wider and more comprehensive audience cum respondents. In view of the fact that results from the quantitative study may not be fully self-explanatory, it becomes necessary to deploy the qualitative method as well to supplement whatever result was gotten from the results from the survey.

Therefore, it is important to explore the background and heritage of this methodological approach as well as the epistemological and ontological questions related to the approach. This

chapter specifically discusses the mixed methods approach. It draws our attention to the value the mixed method brings to the interconnectedness of religion and politics in Northern and Southern Nigeria. The section further x-rayed and discussed the usefulness and the origin of the mixed method approach describing it within a coherent methodological and epistemological framework.

4.5.1 Understanding the Mixed Methods Design

The mixed method is an evolving and growing approach to research; that is, the third alternative, following the qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Hanson, et al., 2005; Bryman, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). It suggests a *third* option to the first and second. It is a method that sort of compromises the traditional qualitative and quantitative research paradigms that competed for recognition, especially in the 20th century. Adherents of the two paradigms (quantitative and qualitative) had over the years struggled for the attention and conversion of their opponents and the wider social science audience to their epistemological positions. These two opposing research traditions operate on different assumptions as to the nature of knowledge itself (ontology) and the way and manner by which knowledge is uncovered (epistemology) (Guba and Lincoln, 1988).

For instance, the traditionalist will always pursue the argument that the two paradigms are philosophically different, and so cannot be combined owing to their distinctive worldview (Sandelowski, 2001). They argue that research paradigms are usually not compatible based on their respective ontological and epistemological traditions (Guba and Lincoln, 1988). So, it follows that researchers are compelled to choose between the positivist scientific paradigm associated with quantitative methods and the interpretative constructive or naturalist paradigm usually associated with qualitative methods (Howe, 1985). For instance, research in health care was predominantly of the quantitative or positivist paradigm with the orientation for absolute objectivity from the researcher. This is known as the ‘gold standard. The Positivist paradigm holds the view that there is a single reality and as such tries to identify cause-and-effect relationships via unbiased measured quantitative analysis (Firestone, 1987). Under the positivist tradition, the researchers are assumed to be independent and objective using relatively larger samples to test the raised hypothesis. The overriding assumption in the positivist paradigm is that the investigator is value-free and considered unbiased all through the process of the inquiry.

Quantitative adherents have maintained that research in the social sciences is expected to be *objective*. This is to give their research outcome the capacity to stand the test of *generalization*. This tradition draws extensively from the positivist research paradigm of physical science where the emphasis is placed on quantification and measurement of social experiences through the traditional scientific methods of statistical testing of hypotheses. Here, the emphasis is on formality and the absence of stated values to conform to the positivist paradigm (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

On the other hand, constructivism or the qualitative paradigm evolved as an alternative option to the positivist paradigm as researchers increasingly aspire to the domain of human experience (Schwandt, 2000). In recent times, the qualitative paradigm has elicited more and more attention from scholars and is variously described as naturalistic inquiry, post-positive, constructivist or interpretative methods (Creswell, 1994). Broadly speaking, the constructivist approach maintains that there are manifold realities and as such, there could be diverse interpretations resulting from a single research endeavour (Appleton and King, 2002). These interpretations are influenced by circumstances as a study unfolds. Researchers under the constructivist paradigm tend to expose the reality of others through the process of comprehensive descriptions of their experiences (Appleton and King, 2002). Under this paradigm, researchers are considered subjective with the aim of understanding quite deeply the happenings within the smaller sample.

The qualitative paradigm holds that there are various ways to appreciate and interpret social reality. Hence, multiple interpretations of the same social reality or phenomenon are possible by different researchers. The qualitative approach subscribes to the fallibility of human nature. It argued profusely that the researcher as a human being is fallible, and therefore acknowledges the fact that research outcomes are influenced by the values of the researchers (Guba, 1990). While the quantitative proponents explain cause and effect relationships, an advocate of the qualitative approach argued that it is impossible to make a clear distinction between the two.

4.5.2 Defining the Mixed Methods Approach

Literature has uncovered several definitions of mixed methods. Most of these definitions have some common elements and concepts. For instance, concepts such as quantitative and qualitative methods, especially when they are used in combination. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods is referred to as a mixed method (Howe, 1985; Smith and

Heshusius, 1986; Yanchar and Williams, 2006; Bryman, 2007; Morgan, 2007). The mixed method was defined by Creswell and Clark (2007) as a “research design with philosophical assumptions as well as quantitative and qualitative methods”. They submitted further that mixed method design is a:

research in which the investigator collects and analyses data
integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative
and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program
of inquiry (Creswell & Clark, 2007:5).

Of importance to the above definition, is the notion of *integration*. The defining characteristic of the mixed methods is the integration of findings both from the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. However, Bryman (2007) cautioned that in some mixed-method research, there is little or no integration of qualitative and quantitative results. Bryman, therefore, emphasized the need for a genuine mixture or integration of both qualitative and quantitative components of the results. Johnson et al. (2007:123) defined the mixed method as: a type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e. g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

Mixed methods simply suggest a sibling of the multi-method research approach with a common notation of two components indicated as *qual* and *quan* respectively, for qualitative and quantitative research (Morse, 1991). The notation suggests a strong potential for collaboration that exists in social science research when a mixed methods approach is adopted. The use of the mixed method in this study is done in such a way that the admixture of both models helps to “...*form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when standing alone*”. (Bryman, 2007)

The importance of the mixed method for this study is captured in Creswell and Clark (2007:7) who identified three strategic benefits of a meaningful mixed methods combination to be “...*merging or converging the two datasets by actually bringing them together, connecting the two datasets by having one build on the other, or embedding one dataset within the other so that one type of data provides a supportive role for the other dataset.*” In other words, the strength of this mixed method lies in the complementarity of the results from both data sets such that we can get a better perspective.

Needless to mention, there have been several attempts to identify and classify the types of mixed methods research. These Authors have attempted to develop typologies of mixed methods

research: (Greene and Caracelli, 1997; Creswell, et al., 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkorri, 2006; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). For the sake of this study, we used the embedded design. It was described by Caracelli and Greene (1997), as possessing one dominant method (quantitative or qualitative), while the second provides an alternative supportive role. Under this typology, the embedded experimental model is the most used and known variant in the family of the embedded design, and usually, attention is given to quantitative methodology, while qualitative data are considered secondary (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). The other variant of the embedded mixed method design is called a correlational model. Here, the qualitative data set is embedded within a quantitative design to further explain the outcomes of the correlation model. Under the embedded designs, the methods may follow a concurrent or sequential arrangement.

The ultimate value of the mixed methods research is revealed in the synergistic combination of data in this study. In essence, it brings additional understanding to questions that a single method would not provide. That is, narratives and other representations derivable from qualitative methods added some meaning to the numerical data derived from quantitative methods. On the other hand, the quantitative data added precision to the narratives collected through the qualitative method. In this case, the additional meaning helps to counter or filter subjective preferences for one form of data over another. For instance, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that mixed methods research allows the researcher to address complex research questions as the researcher is not limited by a single method – whether quantitative or qualitative. In addition, mixed-method research ameliorates the potential weaknesses inherent in a single method. This is because the potential weaknesses of a single method could be overcome by the strength of a combination of methods. Successively, the mixed methods approach provides further insights into the case under study, which single-method research may tend to ignore. The decision on which methodology to adopt was based on how adequately it addresses the research question(s) under investigation, more than how it conforms to any existing paradigm (Howe and Eisenhardt, 1990).

There are a few inherent difficulties associated with the mixed methods approach. These difficulties begin with the researcher's preference for one method over another. The researcher's methodological choice may suggest that one method takes preference over the other, irrespective of the appropriateness of the model. That is, the researcher was faced with the burden of balancing the use of both and not exaggerating the use of one method over the other in a mixed methods

study. It is also necessary to point out that the concurrent mixed methods designs can be extremely complex for a single researcher to embark on and therefore require collaboration with other researchers which exaggerates the overall cost of the study. This also has implications for time as such research usually makes it take a longer time to be executed owing to the nuances involved in qualitative data analysis. Finally, in some cases, the fear is that results from each method may appear contradictory, which may necessitate further repetition of data collection and analysis.

4.6 Data Collection

4.6.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data were collected using an online survey approach, utilising a convenience sample of respondents from Nigeria. Specifically, from the northern part of Nigeria, three states were covered: Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna. While from the southern part of the country, the equivalent of three states was also selected to include: Abia, Anambra and Edo. All respondents to the study were found to be politically active. Permission was sought from selected institutions and organisations in the various states where data was collected for easy access of respondents. The online surveys were distributed to women of the voting age. The targeted organisations and institutions as well as individuals were approached based on their qualification as voters, as stipulated by the Nigerian constitution. Therefore, to be part of the interview, a woman must be eligible to vote in Nigeria during elections. That is, a woman must be 18 or over on the day of the election, must be a Nigerian and not be legally disqualified from voting.

To facilitate data collection, the online survey was deployed through a selected internet site and social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Female worshipers from the two main religious sects were deliberately invited to complete the survey for this study. Respondents were given the leverage to contact the author with any questions or concerns to them.

Table 10: Scope of data collection

Region	Zones	States	Number of distributed	Number returned
North	North-west	Kaduna	600	641

		Kano	600	693
	North-central	Abuja	800	670
South	South-south	Abia	600	602
		Enugu	600	603
	South-south	Edo	800	606

The questionnaire was administered to women from both the South and the North. At the end of this process, a total of 4,268 (Four thousand, two hundred and sixty-eight) respondents filled in the questionnaire. From the questionnaire administered, a total of 2204 respondents (representing 51.6% of the respondents) were from the North while a total of 2011 respondents (47.1% of the respondents) filled in the questionnaire from the South. Similarly, of the 4268 respondents, 53 of them (1.2% of the respondents) did not indicate the region they belong to. Hence, these outliers are disregarded and not deployed in further analysis.

The demography of the respondents is explained and presented in Table 10.

Table 11: Demography of Respondents

Variables		Frequency			
		North		South	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 18	5	0.2	5	0.2
	18-24	618	28.1	450	22.4
	25-34	869	39.4	582	28.9
	35-44	653	29.6	665	33.1
	Above 45	59	2.7	309	15.4
Education Level	No formal education	377	17.1	166	8.3
	Primary education	541	24.6	190	9.4

	Secondary education	598	27.1	248	12.3
	Tertiary education	688	31.2	1407	70
Employment Status	Unemployed	274	12.4	154	7.7
	Full employment	337	15.3	570	28.3
	Part-time employment	336	15.3	309	15.4
	Self-employed	771	35	486	24.2
	Seeking opportunities	255	11.5	222	11
	Retired	4	0.2	109	5.4
	Prefer not to say	227	10.3	161	8
Occupation	Urban skilled	283	12.8	574	28.5
	Urban unskilled	280	12.7	286	14.2
	Rural skilled	384	17.4	305	15.2
	Rural unskilled	452	20.5	173	8.6
	Housewife	365	16.7	202	10
	Student	193	8.8	166	8.3
	Not working	240	10.8	284	14.1
	Others	7	0.3	21	1.1
Total		2204		2011	

Source: Author's compilation from SPSS, 2022

In deploying the qualitative method, the semi-structured interview was adopted and a cross-section of women were picked as respondents to cover the various age and job demography in the two regions. The snowballing node was adopted in the choice of respondents and contacts of the respondents were gotten through colleagues. The respondents were interviewed in their offices and a consent form was filled by each of them before the interview session which lasted thirty minutes was conducted. Suffice that there was an initial withdrawal from one of the respondents who happened to be a member of the opposition party. She had informed of her withdrawal after the

conclusion of the interview but later gave her consent when the candidate of her political party did not win the 2023 election.

The questions were designed to elicit responses arising from questions relating to the dynamics of political campaigns and social movements at the regional level and how political outcomes get driven by interactions with religious groups such as the position of the traditional religions in influencing political outcomes. In developing countries like Nigeria, the perception of religion by the government is an instrument for political mobilization. This has been a recurring event in the country's successive elections. The dynamics of this religious influence on political outcomes show some level of disparities between the North and South. This is narrowed down to examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on female voters' decisions. The complementary role of the mixed methods will ameliorate any seeming ambiguities between qualitative and quantitative results. Thus, the interview was conducted to collate opinions that enabled the researcher to compare the interconnectedness of religion and female participation in Nigeria's politics with particular reference to the role of the literacy level of the Northern and Southern regions. The interview was anonymous and took varying minutes to be completed. All the information provided by participants was used purely for the research.

Under the interviews conducted, respondents were chosen based on being a Nigerian female electorate. A total of ten women were interviewed with six coming from the North and four from the South. Respondents were given the option to decide whether or not to take part in the research. Those who finally participated were made to sign a participant agreement form after they had been made to understand what was required of them. For respondents who had relatives in BU or with the research team, they were assured, that their participation would not interfere with their relationship in any way. Participants were permitted to discontinue the exercise at any point they so wished without stating reasons. For respondents who withdrew, the research team also discontinued further interaction with them. But for information already issued by respondents, they were incorporated into the information bank generated for the study, this is done for reliability and accuracy. Respondents were given the option of taking part in the interview either online or face-to-face depending on their preference.

There was no compensation or reimbursement to those who participated in the interviews as there was no envisaged risk for participation, however, the ultimate benefit of the study is that it will help give a voice to women in Nigeria and help build political structure and representation.

Questions were tailored toward eliciting respondents' opinions with options. The interviews were recorded anonymously. The audio records were used solely for transcription, analysis, and illustration in conference presentations and lectures. Respondents were assured of the privacy of the information supplied as no one outside the project was allowed access to the original recordings. This is because Bournemouth University (BU) takes the ultimate responsibility for the study and is the data custodian of personal information, which means that BU is responsible for looking after information and using it appropriately. This is based on the orientation that research is a task that BU performs in the public interest, as part of its core function as a university. To achieve this mandate, therefore, members of the public are involved mostly at the level of data collection and/or generation.

Data management in BU is strictly done following ethical requirements and data protection laws. By these standards, information about identifiable individuals is controlled, however, this does not apply to anonymous research data such as that used in this study. Anonymous research data are data collected without any identifiable link to the person and subject through which the data are generated. Participants were urged to read the BU's Research Participant Privacy Notice to fully understand how their personal information will be managed. To safeguard the rights of personal information, on publication, participants are not identified by any external reports or publications about the research without their consent. This is why participants' information is included on the anonymous form. On security, access and control, BU holds the information collected from participants in a secure location with a protected password. Any personal information not yet anonymised can be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals for research as identified by the Privacy Notice. For instance, BU's staff may be authorized to access the data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure that the research complies with applicable regulations. Another aspect where participant information may be used in an anonymous form is to support related research projects in the future. For this to be possible, anonymised data are uploaded to BU's online Research Data Repository. This is the central location where data are stored and accessed by the public.

This approach to data collection remains quite beneficial as it has the advantage of reaching a large participant of respondents. Responses to the online survey came from a wide range of respondents both from the south and north. 4000 online questionnaires were distributed, completed, and included for analysis. Some items in the online survey were not made optional. For

instance, items on the political opinions of the participants such as gender, governance regime, and belonging to a political party, among others were part of the questionnaire to capture respondents' political opinions.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1. Analysis of Quantitative Data

To proceed to achieving the objectives of the study, the Factor Analysis was conducted to reduce the questions capturing each variable into a single variable. Factor analysis is usually carried out as a data reduction however, two statistical tests conducted to determine the suitability of factor analysis (which were also conducted in this study) are; first, the Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)

measure of sampling and the Bartless test of sphericity. The Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy score has a recommended level of 0.5 while the Bartless test of sphericity is significant if its significance level is not more than 0.05, thereby indicating that there are adequate inter-correlations between the items. In this study, the measure is well over 0.5 for the two Factor Analysis models estimated. Similarly, the significance value of the Bartless test shows that the value is less than 0.05. Thus, the conclusion from these tests allows for the use of factor analysis which establishes the strength of the relationship among the questions factored. Principal component factoring was used as an extraction method. Thus, from this process, single factors were selected for the choice of the electorate, religious influence, political literacy influence, and gender sensitivity and patriarchal influence. The results are presented in Table 11

Table 12: Result of Factor Analysis

Variable Factor Analysed For	Variables Factor Analysed		KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy score	Bartless Test of Sphericity Sig.
	Question	Component Matrix Result		
Choice of electorate	Party of candidate	.734	.760	.000
	Character of candidate	.726		
	Region of candidate	.706		
	Role of Political Influencers	.697		
	Influence of the media	.661		
	The policy of the party/candidate	.649		
Religion	Religion and political choice in LG elections	.805	.678	.001
	Religion and political choice in state-level elections	.798		

	Religion and political choice in Federal elections	.791		
Political literacy	Knowledge of best policies for you	.846	.692	.001
	Knowledge of best policies for the country	.837		
	Ability to discern the truth.	.763		
	Possession of sufficient knowledge to determine electoral choice.	.302		
Gender sensitivity and patriarchal influence	Awareness of the role of women groups in women's political participation	.559		
	Social marginalization of women from voting	.158		
	and electioneering process		.559	.001
	Married women and patriarchal influence on political choice	.622		
	Widows and patriarchal influence on political choice	.484		
	Single ladies and patriarchal influence on political choice	.522		

H1: The Basis for the choices of female electorate in Southern and Northern Nigeria are different.

To test this hypothesis, the study deployed the T-test to test the mean of the choice-centred variables of the two samples – North and South. These variables used to measure and determine what influences the choice of candidates by female voters in the North and the South include the political

party of the candidate, the character of the candidate, the region or ethnic group the candidate belongs to, the role and influence of political or credible influencers, media reports on the candidate, and the main policies or programmes of the candidate/party.

Table 13: Result of T-Test to Check the Similarity in the Basis of Electoral Choice of Female Electorate in Northern and Southern Nigeria

Independent Samples Test				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Party of Candidate	Equal variances assumed	12.628	.000	.000
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.001
Character of Candidate	Equal variances are assumed.	27.521	.000	.000
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.000
Region of Candidate	Equal variances are assumed.	16.061	.000	.379
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.381
Political Influencers	Equal variances are assumed.	23.195	.000	.000
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.000
Media Position	Equal variances are	3.995	.046	.477

	assumed.			
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.478
Main Policy	Equal variances assumed	16.120	.000	.120
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.122

A p-value below 0.05 is a rejection of the null hypothesis and shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the two regions on the specific issue while a p-value above the expected level of 0.05 is an acceptance of the null hypothesis and shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the two regions on the specific issue. From the table presented, the result shows that the p-value for variables such as the political party of the candidate (0.001), the character of the candidate (0.000), and the role and influence of political or credible influencers (0.000) are less than 0.05 while that of the region of the candidate (0.381), the position of the media (0.478), and the main policies or programmes of the candidate/party (0.112) are more than 0.05. This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regions on what influences their choice of a candidate in the area of the party of the candidate, the character of the candidate, and the role of political influencers while there is no statistically significant difference between them in the areas of the influence of region of the candidate, the position of the media, and main policies of the party or the candidates.

H2: The impact of political literacy level on the choice of governorship/presidential aspirants among female voters in Northern Nigeria is the same as in Southern Nigeria.

The findings proceed to test the hypothesis on which this study rests by conducting a regression analysis to test the relationship between political literacy and the choice of the electorate in the North and the South. In running this, a mean value of the questions factored for political literacy was used as the independent variable while a mean variable of the questions factored for choice of electorate was used as the dependent variable. The summary of the regression result is presented thus.

Table 14: Summary Of Results of Regression Analysis Showing the Relationship Between Political Literacy and Choice of Female Electorate in the North and South

Region	RESULT FOR ANOVA		RESULT FOR COEFFICIENT	
	F	Sig.	B	Sig
North	494.701	.001	-0.095	.001
South	330.779	.001	-0.083	.001

From the results shown in Table 13, the ANOVA results show that the sig value stands at .001 which is less than the permitted p-value of 0.05. Similarly, the F-test shows an F-ratio yield that is greater than 1. This establishes that political literacy affects the choice of female electorate in Northern Nigeria. A further review of the results from coefficients shows a sig, value is 0.000 which is less than the acceptable value of 0.05 and a B-value of 1.130 What this means is that there is a significantly weak and negative statistical relationship between political literacy and choice of the female electorate in Northern Nigeria.

From the results shown in Table 13 above, the ANOVA results show that the sig value stands at .001 which is lesser than the permitted p-value of 0.05. Similarly, the F-test shows an Fratio yield that is higher than 1. This establishes that political literacy has a significant relationship with the choice of the electorate in Southern Nigeria. A further review of the results from coefficients shows a sig. value is 0.001 which is lesser than the acceptable value of 0.05 and a Bvalue of 1.089. What this means is that there is a significantly weak and negative statistical relationship between political literacy and the choice of female electorate in Southern Nigeria.

What can be deduced from the results above is that although political literacy influences the electoral choice of female voters, such influence is both negative and weak in both Northern and Southern Nigeria.

H3: The impact of religion on the electoral choice of female voters in Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria are related.

The research proceeded to test the hypothesis on which this study rests by conducting a regression analysis to test the relationship between religious affiliation and choice of the electorate in the North and the South. In running this, a mean value of the questions factored for religious affiliation was used as the independent variable while a mean variable of the questions factored for choice of electorate was used as the dependent variable. The summary of the regression result is presented thus.

Table 15: Summary Of Results of Regression Analysis Showing the Relation Between Religious Affiliation and Choice of Female Electorate in the North and South

Region	RESULT FOR ANOVA		RESULT FOR COEFFICIENT	
	F	Sig.	B	Sig
North	451.481	.000	.793	.000
South	261.928	.001	.845	.481

From the results shown in Table 14, the ANOVA results show that the sig value stands at .000 which is less than the permitted p-value of 0.05. Similarly, the F-test shows an F-ratio yield that is greater than 1. This establishes that religious affiliation affects the choice of female electorate in Northern Nigeria. A further review of the results from coefficients shows a sig, value is 0.000 which is less than the acceptable value of 0.05 and a B-value of 0.793. What this means is that there is a significant relationship between religious affiliation and the choice of female electorate in Northern Nigeria. Put differently, religious affiliation stands a 79.3% chance of influencing the choice of the female electorate in the region.

From the results shown in Table 14 above, the ANOVA results show that the sig value stands at .481 which is higher than the permitted p-value of 0.05. Similarly, the F-test shows an Fratio yield that is less than 1. This establishes that religious affiliation has no significant relationship with the choice of the electorate in Northern Nigeria. A further review of the results from coefficients shows a sig. value is 0.481 which is higher than the acceptable value of 0.05 and a B-value of 0.031. What this means is that there is no significant relationship between religious

affiliation and choice of female electorate in Southern Nigeria. Put differently, religious affiliation stands a 3.1% chance of influencing the choice of the electorate in the region.

It stands to reason therefore that while religion significantly influences the electoral choice of female voters in Northern Nigeria, religion has no significant impact on the electoral choice of female voters in the South.

H4: The level of gender sensitivity and patriarchal influence on the political choice of female electorate in Southern and Northern Nigeria are different.

To test this hypothesis, the T-test method is used to examine the mean of the choice-centred variables of the two samples – North and South. These variables used to measure and determine the level of gender sensitivity and patriarchal influence on Female Electorate in Northern and Southern Nigeria include Awareness of the role of women groups in women's political participation, Social marginalization of women from voting and electioneering process, Married women and patriarchal influence on political choice, Widows and patriarchal influence on political choice, and Single ladies and patriarchal influence on political choice.

Table 16: Result of T-Test to Check the Similarity in the level of gender sensitivity and patriarchal influence on Female Electorate in Northern and Southern Nigeria

Independent Samples Test				
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness of the role of women groups in women's political participation	Equal variances are assumed.	50.572	.001	.001
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.001
Social marginalization of women from voting and electioneering process	Equal variances assumed	60.333	.001	.001
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.001

Married women and patriarchal influence on political choice	Equal variances are assumed.	63.177	.001	.001
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.001
Widows and patriarchal influence on political choice	Equal variances are assumed.	1.551	.213	.505
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.504
Single ladies and patriarchal influence on political choice	Equal variances are assumed.	0.076	.782	.001
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.001

A p-value below 0.05 is a rejection of the null hypothesis and shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the two regions on the specific issue while a p-value above the expected level of 0.05 is an acceptance of the null hypothesis and shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the two regions on the specific issue. From the table presented, the result shows that the p-value for variables such as the awareness about the role of women groups in women political participation (0.001), social marginalization of women in voting and electioneering process (0.001), spousal influence on the political choice of married women (0.001), and male influence on the political choice of single ladies (0.001) are less than 0.05 while that of the influence of the ex-spouse of widows on their political choice is 0.504. This means that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regions on the awareness about the role of women groups in women political participation (0.001), social marginalization of women in voting and electioneering process (0.001), spousal influence on the political choice of married women (0.001), and male influence on the political choice of single ladies (0.001) while there is no statistically significant difference between the two regions on the influence of ex-husband of widows on their political choice.

5.2 Discussion of Results

5.2.1. Similarity and Difference in Basis for Influencing Political Choice

The survey results in this regard showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regions on what influences their choice of a candidate in terms of the party of the

candidate, the character of the candidate, and the role of political influencers while there is no statistically significant difference between them in the areas of the influence of region of the candidate, position of the media, and main policies of the party or the candidates.

The similarity in the basis of the choice of candidate by female voters in the North and South as regard the character of the candidate as reflected in the qualitative data even though the survey result showed a statistically significant difference between the two regions in this regard could have been as a result of the close-ended nature of the survey questions.

Nevertheless, the overlap in the similitude in the basis for the political choice of female voters in the areas of region of the candidate, influence of the media, and policies of the party shows the significance of political parties as a major factor in political mobilization. This is corroborated by the argument of Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) that political parties are gatekeepers in every democracy. The authors argued that political parties have a sacred duty to ensure that it is only the best of the best to make it to the platform of political parties to contest and their use of the media as a tool of political mobilization. This explains why the policies and manifestoes of political parties are considered as important because there seems to be a strong belief and legitimacy that political parties enjoy. Moreover, there seems to be an acceptance by the electorate that political parties must have done their duty of care before it comes out with the policies and manifestoes and as such, when a government fails to keep to the manifesto the party campaigned with, the failure of such a party is taken to be the failure of the political party. This also helps to put in perspective the dimension of the presidential elections of 2015, 2019, and 2023 in Nigeria as well as the election in some states in the country. In 2015, the “Change Movement” was seen as a result of the failure of the then PDP which had been in power since 1999. The marginal development recorded in the country during this period was also a major tool of the campaign against the incumbent government at the time. In 2019, the PDP equally leveraged the “failures” of the four years of Buhari as a ground of campaign against the APC.

In 2023, what the new party, LP, leveraged as a basis of mobilizing voters was that the PDP and the APC had both failed the country and so there was a need for fresh air. Supporters of the party berated the failure of the established parties, which are said to have structure, to move Nigeria to the expected promised land and so would prefer that their newfound love, LP, be referred to as “structureless”. The LP constantly argued that the structure of the party was the people and not a physical structure that is present inwards, zones, Local Governments, States, and the federal level.

The 2023 was tagged as an election between political gladiators against the people. This position is quite interesting given that the Presidential candidate of the LP, Peter Obi, was a member of the APGA before he defected to the PDP where he contested as Vice Presidential candidate of the party in the 2019 elections. However, his movement from the PDP to a relatively unknown party, the LP, simply meant that his past alliances were no longer remembered. This is because the LP has not occupied the presidential seat before and so does not have an ill that can be pinned to it compared to the PDP which already had a 15-year stint in the Presidency as well as the APC's 8-year stint in the Presidency.

Holcombe (2023) explained this further by stating that *"Citizens tend to anchor their political preferences to a party, a candidate, or an ideology, and most of their public policy preferences are derived from those of their anchors. Their anchors tend to come from longstanding associations and political beliefs. They pick up ideas from friends and family and tend to stick with those anchors over time. Their anchors form their political identity. Preferences on individual policies are those associated with their anchors."* What this means is that citizens, regardless of place, tend to choose their anchors in every political system and these are connected to political parties. The parties have a strong role they play in instilling the value of the critical spirit in the electorate.

Where there is a case of "ineffective gatekeeping", there is often a tendency to resort to primordial sentiments or the rise of anti-democratic elements (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018). When a party fails to do the needful or rise to the occasion by promoting merit, such a party may resort to elements such as region, propaganda in the media –either conventional or new media - and blacklisting a political party. The absence of significant statistical difference in the place of the region reflects the role that ethnicity plays in political choice in Nigeria. Isiaq, Adebisi, and Bakare (2018) explained that ethnicity has been a common decimal in presidential elections in Nigeria, noting that *"Presidential elections in post-colonial Nigeria have always generated tensions, anxieties and controversies, particularly among the electorate. This is connected to the fact that electioneering periods are characterised by hate speeches which in most cases have an ethnic undertone"*. Jameel (2018) re-echoed this place of ethnicity by examining the 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria. He observed that the election witnessed a wide-scale play of ethnicity and religion. In making his argument, he stated thus:

Elections in Nigeria are not necessarily about issues but about ethnicity, religion and regionalism. It is the first time in Nigeria's recent history

(Fourth Republic) that the election result has exposed the huge division between the Muslim North and Christian South. Incumbent Goodluck Jonathan had won in nearly all southern states, which are predominantly Christian except for one (Osun), while his main challenger Muhammadu Buhari won in the Muslim north-east and north-west. This election, described by international observers as the most successful for decades, seems to be compounding the country's regional and ethnic divisions.

The history of Nigerian elections is replete with tales of ethnic parties. From the First Republic to the Fourth Republic, it has been tales of political parties that can best be regarded as ethnic parties (This has been discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis). Horowitz (1985, 293) described ethnic parties as “*those that derive their support from an identifiable ethnic group and serve the interests of that group*”. Horowitz (1993) further explains the role played by ethnicity in the scheme of things, particularly in ethnically segmented countries. He noted that “*ethnicity exerts a strong direct impact on electoral behaviour in ethnically segmented societies, through generating a longterm psychological sense of party loyalty anchoring citizens to parties, where casting a vote becomes an expression of group identity*”. In a country like Nigeria, the place of ethnicity cannot be over-emphasised as the region of candidates informs the electoral choice across both the North as well as the South.

It must also be mentioned that the similarity in the role of the media in both regions is an acknowledgment of the enormous role that the media can play. Folarin (2002) identified the three traditional functions of the media in any society, and they include surveillance of the environment, correlation of the different parts of the environment, and the transmission of the cultural heritage of the society from one generation to another. With the presence of both the conventional media and the new media, access is granted to all across generational differences and educational disparity. As reflected in both the survey results as well as the interviews, the media is relied on by the electorate for information. While conventional media like the radio and TV are a major source of information for respondents in the North and those women of advanced age, the new media constitute a major source of information for respondents in the South as well as younger female voters. Oboh (2016) noted that the media has a major role to play in the electioneering process by providing the needed information to the citizenry. Kurfi (2010;295) corroborated this by maintaining that “*It is arguable that without access to the full range of information about their world, citizens cannot fulfil their roles, and democracy will wither*”. Norris (1997: 223-224) argued

that the media has to provide the electorate with information. The author stated that *“One of the primary functions of the media’s coverage of the campaign is to increase information about the choices on offer, stimulating interest in public involvement in the process,...watching politicians debate, the major issues during the campaign may stimulate viewers to feel better informed, more aware of the choices on offer, and therefore better equipped to exercise their choice at the ballot box.”*

5.2.2. Impact of Political Literacy on the Choice of Governorship/Presidential Aspirants in Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria

The result from our survey shows that there is a significantly weak and negative statistical relationship between political literacy and choice of female electorate in Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria. The discussion for this is explained in Chapter 6.3.2.

5.2.3. Impact of Religion on the Choice of Governorship/Presidential Aspirants in Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria

The result from our survey shows that religion has a statistically significantly positive impact on political choice in Northern Nigeria while religion does not have an impact on electoral choice in Southern Nigeria. The discussion for this is explained in Chapter 6.3.3.

5.2.4 Similarity and Difference in the Influence of Patriarchy on Political Choice Political Choice

The result from our survey shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two regions on the awareness about the role of women groups in women's political participation, social marginalization of women in voting and electioneering process, spousal influence on the political choice of married women, and male influence on the political choice of single ladies while there is no statistically significant difference between the two regions on the influence of ex-husband of widows on their political choice. The discussion for this is explained in 6.3.4.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter analysis, it can be observed that there only exists a marginal difference in the metrics determining political choice and issues of patriarchy and gender equality in both the North and the South. As against the widely-held assumption that it is only in the North that core policy issues are

not given primacy in determining political choice, this study has established that there is a point of convergence between both the North and the South in how much of an influence region or ethnicity, the media, and party manifesto can be on female electorate in both regions. The study establishes that ethnicity is a prime factor in Nigerian politics and attempts have been made to prove this as reflected in the analysis as well as discussion of past elections in the country.

Similarly, the pervasive influence of patriarchy and the marginalization of women extends across both regions. Women's experiences in the South mirror those in the North, as both face a cultural and religious environment that systematically relegates them to second-class status. Despite the tireless efforts of women's advocacy groups to mobilize, educate, and empower women for political engagement through activities such as organizing rallies and lobbying for gender sensitive legislation, progress remains hindered by entrenched patriarchal structures. Despite the rhetoric of gender equality and adherence to international agreements like the Beijing Declarations on women's rights, the realization of these goals remains largely contingent upon the willingness of male-dominated power structures to relinquish control. Instances such as the stalling of affirmative action and other gender-focused bills in legislative bodies underscore the persistent challenges in achieving substantive gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

6.1. Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

The interview method was used to extract data from respondents towards the qualitative data. A total of ten women were interviewed, six of whom were from the North and four from the South. The respondents were women with post-secondary school education, and this is informed by the fact that interviewing women with lower education status may require an interpreter. The respondents from the North are coded N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, and N6 while the respondents from the South are coded S1, S2, S3, and S4. The respondents were asked questions bordering on four major themes: factors influencing their electoral choice, the role of religion in electoral choice, the impact of political literacy on electoral choice, and gender and political participation.

6.2 Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

6.2.1. Factors Influencing Political Choice

The respondents were asked questions on what were the factors that influence their political choice at the polls. The women tend to agree that competence and fidelity to campaign promises influence their choice of candidate in an election. S1 pointed out that her candidate of choice must be one with a rich background of having worked for the benefit of the state in terms of developmental strides. She pointed out that:

I think that a good portfolio matters because if you are a candidate, the first thing for me is to research and see what you have achieved, and what you have done in the past. You can't just wake up and come and I'll just decide I want to vote. You have to check what exactly you have been able to do in this nation. What impact have you made in the past? So the impact is we have everybody as positive and negative, but if the positive for me is more in my opinion because our opinions are different as individuals if what I consider positive is more then I believe that you are the right candidate for me to support because I compare you with the others too and say that okay this person is better for me.

S2 particularly argued that what informs her choice of candidate in an election is competence as other factors are secondary. She maintained that.

I'm not a religion fanatic. I look at the competence of candidates, of candidates. Someone able, that will be able to handle the issue of the country because of the, you know, presently, you know, what the country is going on and going through. You know, we need a leader that can handle the security challenges that we're having in the country. A lot of things have been going on, so we don't, you know, but like most people, like for a northern part of the country, they somewhat believe in religion. For me, as an Easterner, I believe in competence. A leader who can be able to carry the country along, who can tackle the security in the country. A leader who is a, who doesn't look at the religious aspect of things...I believe in competence.

S4 noted the impact of the failed promises as a major influence on her choice of candidate in an election. She pointed out that.

As of then, it's due to the promises, you know, during campaigns, you hear the major issue we're having in the country, like the basic amenities, the transportation, electricity and all that, that we're lacking. So, you know, the promises keep coming that these things are going to be made available. So, we keep seeing that it remains the same or goes backwards. So those were some of the issues I had then that, okay, I've been voting this set of people. They were making promises that they were going to change this particular issue we've been having. And there's no change. So, what do I do this time around? So that will change my perspective from the former way of voting that I used to. Okay.

This points to the fact that the Female electorate in the South emphasizes the competence and antecedents of political candidates to determine their choice of candidate at the polls. For the female electorate in the North, the emphasis on the place of competence as a yardstick for determining electoral choice was a recurring decimal in the response of the respondents. N1 noted that while competence was relegated to the background by many before the 2023 elections, people have come to realize that their electoral choices come with consequences and so place competence as primary now. The reason for the emphasis on competence stems from the fact that

what contestants promise, they don't get to do it before. Now you will see politicians roasting corn towards the election period. Suddenly you see them roasting corn, hawking water on the streets just to identify with the common man. But beyond the election and assumption of

office, you see them trying to throw off the streets with sirens blaring siren all over the place. So, the political class is disconnected from the people. That is why you see that they want to empower citizens. They talk about empowering citizens with wheelbarrows. At this point, this is not what we need.

N2 was quite categorical about her preference for competency as a major yardstick for determining political choice. She also added that the question of fairness is another factor that determines her choice of candidate. Nigeria operates what is called federal character which is the position that political offices be rotated among the different regions of the country, thereby creating an atmosphere of fairness. So, for her “...*first of all, I go for competence, and then that ruling system, okay, whose turn is it next?*”

N3 was quite emphatic on the role of competence in the choice of a candidate at the polls. She averred that her electoral choice is informed by a candidate’s plan as a general contribution to society. She noted that her choice would be “*Any government that will come in and deliver, at least let's see something done, maybe infrastructure, there will be roads, all this kind of thing. At least, or maybe the medical sector is functioning at some point. Somebody that can implement at least something.*” N4 equally posited that the background of a political candidate is a major determinant of her choice of candidate. For her, as a result of the penchant for many a Nigerian leader to be all out for fame and money, it is important to know a candidate’s “*economic class, your race, your religion, maybe how honest you are...What you have done for the people...and religion-wise too*”. This line of thought was followed by N6. She argued that the political character of a candidate is the major determinant for choosing a candidate in the election. She noted “*Previously, we used to have allegiance based on affiliation to political parties. But what we have now, we have a third force which we pick to the yearlings of the common man on the street. So, it informs my decision for the forthcoming elections*”.

N5 pointed out that her choice of candidate will be informed by the level of digital compliance of the candidate. For her, she would prefer a candidate who is “...*a little bit still young, vibrant, intelligent, and digitally inclined because right now I believe everything we do right now involves technology. So, if we have somebody that doesn't welcome that idea. For me personally, I prefer somebody that appreciates change, especially. Because sometimes you would hear somebody tell you, tell somebody, go and open a bank account, the person will tell you, oh, I am*

not into banking, whatever, just give me my money cash. So if you have such people leading you, their idea of everything will be a take. Well, I prefer somebody that is young, vibrant, and open for change.” This means that such a candidate must be in tune with recent trends in the technology world.

A pattern that can be noticed in the responses of the respondents from both Southern and Northern Nigeria is that they all seem to opine that one consequence of their political choice should be the development of the country and as such the political character of a candidate is quite important. This is reflected in the background, competence, and leadership acumen of such a candidate.

6.2.2. The Impact of Political Literacy on Electoral Choice

Another theme that the qualitative data focused on is the question of the impact that political literacy has on electoral voice. To test this, the respondents were asked questions on how democratic the Nigerian system is what regime they consider best for the country, whether they get sufficient information to critically assess political candidates, how trustworthy they feel political candidates are, and their role as a voter or level of engagement in politics.

While all the respondents agreed that elections are good for the democratic system, their views vary on whether the Nigerian system is democratic enough or what system is best suited for Nigeria. S1 maintained that it is her belief *“that democracy is the best. Democracy is the best because you can select your leaders, your voice counts, and you are responsible for whatever decisions you make at the end of the day. So, you have, once you elect your people, it means that you've made a decision. You've taken responsibility for every decision. And if you choose not to participate too, you've also made a decision. So, for me, democracy is still the best any day, any time.”* For her, while the Nigerian democratic experiment is not where it ought to be yet, it is also not too far from the ideal. S2 opined that while Nigeria is a democratic state, the country is not practising democracy as it should be. S3 also argued that *“Nigeria is not a democratic country because people are not being carried along nor does people's opinion or people's interest matter”*. S4 maintained that the problem with the Nigerian democratic experiment is the usage. In her words, *“I think the only issue we are having concerning democracy is the usage. I think we misuse it and most Nigerians don't fully understand what democracy all is about.”*

The respondents from the North also seem to share in the sentiments of those from the South on this. They all agree that the democratic experiment in Nigeria is not working. N3 noted that the problem with democracy in Nigeria is that things are not right. She maintained that *“The way things are going if only we can do it right, but we are not getting it. So, we need a rigid hand.”* N6 equally noted that the system in Nigeria is *“Democracy in paper but not in practice. Yes, not in practice. We have a long way from practising democracy, but like every system, it evolves. And then because of the non-participation of the key, key players in the electoral process. But thankfully, there's a huge shift in the dynamics of the electoral process this time around. So, what this 2022 electioneering phase is showing is that elections will never be the same again in Nigeria.”* N2 however holds a position different from others as regards the system best suited for Nigeria. She advocates a middle ground between militarism and democracy. She believes that.

I don't think either military or democracy is good enough for Nigeria. I think that we have to come up with something, like a system of government that works for us, that takes into account our cultures and our differences as a people. It could be a pseudoform of democracy, I don't know. Something that is a mix of democracy and, not authoritarianism, I don't know, but something that works for us. Because at the moment, the military regime is... People say, oh, Abacha did this or he did that, there was this development. But then there were cases of human rights abuses. We still have cases of human rights abuses, even in democracy in Nigeria. It then means that it's our culture. So, we have to find something that works for us as a people. I don't know, I don't think that this is working for us.

The respondents were also queried on whether they have access to sufficient information to guide their electoral choice. For S1, *“Well, I don't think that the information is ever sufficient because you find out that except in a few cases, you only know what people want you to know about them except in a few situations where investigations are carried out and these things just come out like that. So, I don't believe that you can ever have sufficient information, but at least you have information that you say, okay, I can use this and then hope for the best. But I don't believe that any information is sufficient when you are making decisions because sometimes you made your decision, the election is over and then some kind of news will start dropping that you are so disappointed.”* For the respondents from the North, there is a convergence in the position of the respondents as regards whether they have such sufficient information. They all agreed that they did not get as much sufficient information to navigate their choice as a result of the bias of the source. Their position is summed up in the position of N2 *“I can't confidently say I have enough*

information. Because as a media practitioner myself, I have a distrust for the media. So, I would always question every information they put out about any candidates. So no, I would not wholly trust or acknowledge it as the complete and total truth about that person. Okay. Like I did explain to you earlier about my research.”

On the question of how trustworthy political candidates are, the respondents doubted the fidelity of the political candidates. The respondents believed that political candidates often talk without action. S2 posited that.

You know, I don't, because you know what they say they don't do? During the campaign, they give you fake promises. And when they've been elected, you see them do something else. So, I don't trust their promises. We see them making fake promises at the end of the day. What they say is not what they do. You see them telling you different kinds of things. But by the time they are being elected, you see them doing another thing, doing different things entirely. You can't trust them based on their promises.

S3 also argued that *“For me, it's no. Because I said no because of what we have experienced in the past. Now there are so many factors to what they see. Especially when they say uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. It's usually easy to say things, but when you get there, it's a different ball game entirely. So, most times, they don't even get to see most of the promises they make during the campaign and all that. So, it's a no for me.”* Toeing that line of thoughts, S4 averred *“I would say they don't because most times it's much of words than action. I don't know what usually happens out there, but the promises come, and the words keep coming but once they get there you find out that the action is zero.”*

For the respondents from Northern Nigeria, there is also an agreement that political candidates often lack fidelity. N6 was emphatic on this as she maintained *“No, they don't. They only say, but I don't think they even have an understanding of the campaign promises. They don't. They don't. They don't.”* N3 also stated *“Well, truly on that ground I can't say because at times it's not the person that came into office that did the project. At times what you are expecting to be done, has already been on the ground by somebody else, then this one is coming in to complement to complete it. So thinking this person is the one that is doing this based on his promises, not knowing it's someone else's plan.”*

On the question of the role of the voter or the level of engagement of the respondents, the respondents noted their commitment to voting in elections. While S2 stated that she had not voted before but will in the 2023 elections, others stated that they have always performed their civic responsibility. To further this, S1 argued that she feels she is actively engaged in the politics of the state. S2 noted that for her, her role *“...as a voter, my role as a voter is to make sure I have my PVC, my voter's card, that is the most important thing. And secondly, I make sure that I cast my votes, or I cast my votes based on competence. Okay. I'm not supposed to be biased as a voter.”* For S3, *“My role as a voter, I believe voting is my right as a citizen as far as I'm of the age. So doing what I am supposed to do as a citizen of a country, a state or a local government, is an obligation. If I were to obey the laws of the land, what would the laws say if you are of age like 18 and above? you are entitled to vote, choosing a leader. So, I think it's not something I don't have an idea of. It's something that is a right. And if you know your right, you should make use of it.”* N1 maintained that she is actively engaged and goes ahead to describe her role particularly since she is in the Civil Society Organisation (CSO). She narrated one of her experiences.

So, I come from an informed angle that I know that I have to exercise my civic responsibility, and I do that. Like the last election, the electoral guideline says that, and you should give preference to the elderly, pregnant women and all of that. But on getting to the polling unit, I discovered that you wouldn't even be able to identify who was an electoral official from the voter because everybody was struggling at the same time to have access to their voter register to ensure that they are accredited...The voting area cannot be differentiated from where citizens should queue. And then I asked all party agents to step aside, polling officials to man the stations and ensure that no one exceeded setting perimeter to the voting area and the voting material, security agents, too...From where I'm coming from, I always want to participate.

While N2 maintained that she had never voted before, she noted that her role as a voter is:

...to work for a better system. We have a very odd system of rigging and so many questionable practices surrounding elections in Nigeria. So, I believe that if we can fix these things, then we will see the will of the people playing out, and then we'll see our role as voters. People will be more eager to want to vote because they know that at the end of the day, their vote is going to count towards who is going to be the next president or governor or chairman or whatever leadership position it is

that they're voting for. But because at the moment, we don't have these checks, even if we have them, we need to fix the systems and then we can see our rights as voters coming to play and to stand more and more. So for the fact that you have never voted before, as a Nigerian, you have never exercised your franchise.

N3 stated that she only votes in elections in which she feels she has a candidate that she trusts. For N4, she has always participated in all elections save for the 2019 elections. N5 stated that she believes she is actively engaged to an extent as she sees voting as her playing her part. She noted *“I think the mentality around is my votes don't count. That is why a lot of people don't vote. But to me as an individual, I believe, okay, I have done something that I am supposed to do. This is my right as an individual, as a member of the society. So, I leave it up to the people in charge for them to do their job. Because to me, if I relax, at home and say, hey, my vote doesn't count, then it will never count. So, I believe my vote is my voice. So, for me, passing my vote is a major factor for me as an individual.”* N6 noted that her role as a voter is to be unbiased in her choice of political candidate.

6.2.3. The Role of Religion in Electoral Choice

In assessing the position of the respondents on this theme, they were asked how much of an influence religion is in their choice of a candidate and if they feel that God/Allah/Any supreme being decides who will win an election. On the question of whether their religion influences their electoral choice, S1 stated thus:

No, it doesn't. It doesn't. Like I said, for me it's about portfolio. I'm not one of those people that believe in tribalism. I'm a very neutral person. I don't believe in looking at someone based on his religious point of view or anything like that or culture. For me, a Nigerian is a Nigerian. A human being. I look at people more as humans before I start looking at their religion or culture or anything like that. No for me. Are you a good person? Play the bigger role in anything I do because I don't believe I believe that you can be the same religion as me, and you have a character I consider inappropriate. You can be someone that is a different religion I consider your character to be more appropriate. So, for me, it is not about religion or culture I believe in. Are you a good person? Are you a good human? If you're a good human, then it goes for me.

S2 also argued that religion is not a factor in determining electoral choice for her. She maintained that:

My religion cannot, but it is because of what is happening in the country now. I think most of these, uh, religion leaders, they are telling their, uh, members whom to vote for. But for somebody like me, I keep on treating myself as an example. No one would dictate to me who to vote., I go for who I, prefer, my, my preferred candidates. I don't believe my religion or my spiritual leader to tell me what to do. Because tomorrow, if I'm going through anything, they won't be there for me. Okay. I don't know if I can tell you. Yeah. They will not be there for me. So, it's me who does what I want, and I should go for the candidates that I need, not my religion or spiritual leader to tell me whom to vote for. But for me, anybody I feel has competence, I vote for the person. I don't vote based on religion or, any other thing. I build, I vote based on competence. And whom I know, I trust I can be able to handle the issue of the country.

S3 toed this line as she argued that.

It matters because religion is, for me, it's a personal thing. I might be a Christian and my choice of candidate is also a Christian but that doesn't make the person my candidate just because we are of the same religion. No, I tell people maybe because I have more Yoruba friends that are Muslims. I respect people's religion and I don't judge people based on their religion. I look at individual persons. Who are you? Aside from your religion, what do you stand for? So that's just it for me. I don't believe religion or anything because really, religion has failed us so many times. But, for me, religion is not a yardstick for choosing a candidate. The candidate was of the same religion, no.

S4 argued that although religion used to be a factor in determining electoral choice for her in the past, it is no longer a factor. She noted that.

To be sincere, before I became more enlightened, do you know where we are coming from? Actually, in Nigeria, we are much of religious people. So, then the mentality has been that okay, I'm a Christian, I'm a Muslim, so my religion comes first. Someone from my religion comes first. Then I usually do that. I check if you're not from my religion, why do I vote for you? So, when enlightenment came in, I now know that it is more of humanity. Humanity comes first. So, if someone, even if the person is not from religion and he has humanity in his heart, that he has these intentions to save humanity first. So that

should be the person I should vote for, not my religion. So, for now, religion doesn't matter in my choice of a candidate compared to before.

N2 agrees that religion is a factor in her electoral choice. She noted that.

I'm not even going to lie. It does sometimes, but as I said, for me, my choices in voting for a candidate in Nigeria would first be on whose turn it is supposed to be based on the zoning system. But your religion does influence your choice? Not necessarily, because if I believe that it's the turn of a Muslim, for instance, like it's supposed to, it's the zoning is supposed to come from a particular place or for a particular religion then obviously it would be unfair of me to insist that this person should get it because they are Christian or they are a traditional worshipper because it's the turn of the Muslims now so they should get it. Looking at that because you have mentioned your religion doesn't matter.

N3 stated that religion is not a factor for her in making her electoral choice. She noted *“I go for the best. It doesn't matter what religion. No, it doesn't matter as long as we the society will benefit from you doing the right thing does it.”* N4, a Muslim, slightly differs as she states that her religion can be a major influence on her political choice at times. N5, a Christian from the North, seems to agree with this as she stated that the influence of religion on her political choice is not total although it is substantial.

I wouldn't say 100 % like I want to mention. If the person has all those things and is bringing, since he's a Muslim, I believe there are other Christian candidates too that can balance it with him. So, if you can get a deputy or a vice for a Christian, it's fair because at least it shows that you have respect, or you acknowledge other people's religion. But once you just acknowledge just your religion and maybe your vice or your deputy is same religion with you. It looks as if you are neglecting the other people. So, I just believe if you're a Muslim at least get advice or a deputy that is a Christian. So that's more like an influencer for your vote. Yes. I would not want my faith to be neglected...The truth is right now I would look at religion also...So everybody would want at least his person to be in a particular class.

N6 who is also a Christian from the North maintained that religion will play a role in her choice of political candidate in the 2023 elections because of the events of insecurity in the country. She stated, among others, that *“For us Christians, we don't even really bother about elections. We don't bother about elections. And then the few who are involved in elections have not done so well that we leave on his prior orders to want to be involved in the electioneering process. I think what has*

changed in recent times is this issue of insecurity because I come from Benue, and we've been greatly affected by insecurity and then just today we are residing in Kaduna."

On whether God/Allah/Any supreme being plays a role in determining the outcome of an election, S1 answered in the negative. She noted that.

Even if we look at the scriptures or any religious book, even if God has told you to stand up and help yourself, God does not calm down. I always tell people that if I come to you and I say, what can I help you with? And you say only God can help me. I tell people that at that moment, the person serving us, God is standing in front of you because God does not come down by himself to come and help you. God has given you the brain and the capacity to think for yourself. So why can't you make decisions? God is already leading you. You cannot just lie down and believe that God will come and make you magic, or you snap your finger, and it happens like that. It doesn't happen like that. That's why God gave us the human brain and gave you to think with it. So, it's not God who selects our leaders. We are the ones who will select our leaders by ourselves.

S3 and S4 also answered in the negative. S4 noted that *"I don't think so. I don't think so. Why? Not everything that happens is the will of God. Because, you know, as much as looking for where I'm coming from, if in as much as the will of God, God also gave us our own will to work with. So, it's not everything that is the will of God. So, someone can win and it's not the will of God."* On her part, S3 noted that.

Okay, for me, God is a spiritual being and God cannot come down to choose. God is still going to use humans. So why don't we say, God gave us the grace to make choices? So God is not going to dictate for us what to do. God is just giving us, okay, you have a mind of your own. This is good. Let me use that word, this is good. It was said in the Bible that good and bad, it is left for you to choose. So God is not coming down to make choices for us all because it is God. God will still use humans to do whatever he wants to.

S2 however differs on the role of God in determining the winner of an election. She noted that.

Yeah. God decides who will get to that position. Yes, I do believe in God, because what God does not, what God doesn't want to, cannot happen. If I believe in Israel, he can decide to choose, choose anybody that he wants to. He might not even say, he might not even decide to like, being that I'm a Christian now, he can decide to put a Muslim man there. He must not be a Christian, but the person that he feels like, okay, let me, this person if it's all, it's suitable to be there.

N1 believes that a supreme being is not the determinant of who wins an election. She noted thus:

I don't believe so. I believe that it is us as a people that will make that decision. Unfortunately, from a Nigerian perspective, since the people have a will for who they want, there are systems in place historically in Nigeria that will disenfranchise people's will from actually coming to pass. So, when you see it, it looks like there's some magical power that is at work and working against, but not necessarily. It's just that there's this horrible system in Nigeria that prevents the right thing from happening. But in a sense, maybe God has a will, but we also have a will as a people to make a choice. We have the freedom of choice to decide who will be our leaders...

N2 also argued that while she believes that God controls the affairs of men, the issue of electoral choice is a matter of choice and one which humans have power over. She pointed out.

If you have a political candidate and there are some things they do, and you believe this is not supposed to be done in the sight of God? Would I still vote for them? I wouldn't. If they're a horrible person, I would never vote for somebody that is a criminal or somebody that has a questionable character. I mean, I've never voted in Nigeria to be honest. If I had the chance, I would not intentionally vote for somebody that I know has a questionable character, especially with things like human rights abuses. Or somebody that, if you just know this person, has a questionable history or questionable behaviour or something odd and off about them. Yeah, I wouldn't. And that was one of the reasons why I was against Buhari's presidency from the onset. I don't know. It was just odd.

N3, N5 and N6 also argued that God decides the best, but man exercises a freewill. In other words, it is God who decides in the long run. N3 stated that *"it has to be who God says wants... but usually, you have your choice, but God determines. He decides the best"*. N4 argued that it is a matter of predestination. Hence, man's choice is naturally fated to align with predestination. She noted that:

Honestly, I do...Because maybe when you are born, God will destine him, maybe you are going to be so -so -so and so if you are destined to be a king, you will be a king. If you are destined to be president, you will be president. So, no matter what happens, because we have seen instances that people will come and vote or come to an office...and they come from nowhere and you see the person will become maybe governors. We've seen that like Mallam Shekarau, he was nobody. He was a common teacher. When he goes around campaigning, people will

be calling him a madman, but he's now a senator. He was a, he was a governor in Kano State. So. Honestly to me if you are destined to be a governor or a president if God has ordained for you.

6.2.4. Gender and Political Participation

This theme examines the responses of respondents in the area of patriarchy and female political participation. In this regard, three questions were asked questions bordering on awareness about female political advocacy groups and their activities, the presence or otherwise of political and social marginalization of women in Nigeria, and whether the male personalities in their lives influence their political choice.

On the awareness of the respondents on the presence and activities of female political advocacy groups, only S1, S4, N1, and N2 claimed such awareness of any female political advocacy group. It is instructive to note that of these four, S4 and N1 are both involved in advocacy and so this must have informed their knowledge of the presence of such groups. Other women – S2, S3, N3, N4, N5, and N6 – claimed non-awareness of such groups.

The respondents also answered questions on whether they feel women are socially and politically marginalized. S1 stated that women are socially and politically marginalized. She explained thus:

Yes, I believe so. You know, culture plays a lot in Nigeria. We have situations where we still have this issue where they feel that because you are a woman, you shouldn't be in certain places. And for the women to you have to believe in yourself before someone else believes in you. We have women who have also withdrawn to believe that I think that for me, if it's up to this level, then I should relax and allow a man to do it. So, it's not just the men that are marginalizing us or discriminating against us, there is self discrimination from the women too. Where the women believe that...why should that contest with him or why should that compete with a man? It's been God said that the man is above the woman. So, the men are doing it, and the women are also doing it because they find out that women approach women too and say, why would you be competing against a man? Is it like you don't have respect or is it like you don't have shame...You come as a woman; you don't believe that you are capable of doing something.

S2 pointed out the disparity between men and women as she noted *“Yes, you see, they do. Generally, they don't believe in women. They believe women should be in the room. Like they say, our president usually says that women belong in the other room. So, in the North, they marginalize*

women, unlike from my side of the country, where I came from. We don't, we have equal rights, both the men and the women. We have equal rights in terms of whatever we are doing. So that is what I can say for now.”

S3 equally agreed that women are marginalized stating that.

Few women have been socially marginalised from voting or the election process. because of some cultures, especially the Northerners, that tend to believe or obey what the religion or their spouse says. So, I think women are being marginalized and it is making women not getting involved especially with us, politics and all that...I feel so because the mindset is, that politics is a hard game. So, it's usually for the men, people that can stand it, that has the power to and all that. So, most times when women desire a particular post, at the end of the day, you just find out that the woman is not saying anything again and women are put in the position whereby they are being held. They are not the person held in the post, but they are kind of supporting or assisting kind of. So, I feel women are marginalized.

S4 equally noted that women are marginalized. She pointed out that being born a woman is a disadvantage. She even explained further that.

It's much more in the Northern part. Most of my work is in the north. I think fan north, Zamfara, Katsina, Yobe, and Sokoto. So most times before you see women participating in anything in governance, it's on the day of voting. Or let's say the day that any of the candidates that they just leader or the traditional leader decide to bring the women out to come and take whatever their desired candidate has brought. Then on the day of the election, that's the only time you see the women actively participating and it's based on what they've been told by the traditional leaders and the religious leaders. Okay, this is the person we want you to vote for. This is how you're going to do it. And I think we had the program, we had the outreach in one village like that. And most of them were like, ah, so this is the person they said we should vote for.

I think when they saw the picture also, I think it is the person we are told to vote for. I would have said it in our support...Okay, so they don't even know who they are voting for. They have no idea.

N1, N2, N3, and N4 maintained that women are indeed marginalized socially and politically in Nigeria. N2 however contextualizes the idea of marginalization to be in the area of participation

and not the area of voting. She pointed out instances where the position of the Women Leader of a party in a couple of states in the North is occupied by a man. She noted that.

I'm sure there are. I'm not really into it. But yes, I think there might be. I don't know. Yes, yes, there are. Because I just remembered one of APC's conventions for women. So yes, I'm aware of it. I would not say they have been marginalized from voting. But I would say they may have been marginalized from participating in taking up more active roles. So, in participating as potential candidates for a political position, they may have been marginalized in that sense. But in terms of things like voting, casting votes, in terms of things like acting as people who gather others to vote, in terms of organising rallies, or bringing women together to participate as voters. Yes, but not as contestants.

N5 argued that the issue of the marginalization of women politically is largely a function of the woman's level of exposure and individual personality. She opined that it is quite difficult to marginalize a woman who has great exposure, citing the instance of a known female political activist, Aisha Yesufu, who is equally a Muslim but from Edo State. For N5, the marginalization of women is aided on the grounds of culture, religion, and politics. She argued *"Yes, women are greatly marginalized. First, culturally, second, religiously and then politically. The belief system for us women too. We have the mindset that men should always lead, and we form. The highest you will get as representation politically is maybe a woman leader and we have had records of states presenting men as women leaders in Nigeria too. Yeah, it's poorly represented"*.

The question of the influence of the male figure on the political choice of the respondents elicited various responses. S1 stated that her spouse does not influence her electoral choice. She stated *"...for me, I don't believe that my husband's opinion... Because presently, even presently, we have different political opinions. What I'm looking for is different from what he's looking for. You cannot convince me. You cannot convince me with things that I consider invalid. So, you cannot influence my decision. I have to be able to make up my mind about any political issue or any political candidate. And we will argue it out and is good sportsmanship. So, I don't blame this"*. In the case of S2, she also said her spouse cannot influence her political choice. She argued that while her spouse cannot influence her electoral choice, she is aware that some women's electoral choice gets influenced by the male figures in their lives. she however disapproves of such a situation. She stated thus:

...based on me, my spouse cannot, um, I don't think we have any power to, maybe to stop me from participating in politics. I think my spouse should be a backbone, should be supportive, to, if I'm interested in any political, um, in any political appointment or anything, my spouse should not be a hindrance. Okay. My spouse should not be a hindrance. Yeah. Some people usually do that. They influence, not only the spouse, the family. They influence their, maybe, their partners not, whom to vote for and whom not to vote to. But me personally, I don't do that...So I don't think maybe your spouse or your family should influence you as to whom to vote for.

S3 equally maintained that.

For me, it's a no-no. It's a no. Okay, so I have, I sometimes, okay, I'm married, yes. My view to whatever I want to. I am not bound by what my husband sees or what my husband does, irrespective of his choice of candidate. I still believe I have my way of choosing my candidate too so it's a no. So, he doesn't influence your choice? He does not and I don't think he can because it's something I just enjoy doing personally like okay don't talk me into your candidate I have my candidate too if you are giving me reasons why your candidate is the best, I am also giving you reasons why I feel my candidate can do better. So, on that, we don't agree.

S4, a spinster, maintained that her fiancé does not influence her political choice. She also agreed that it is the case with some women that they get influenced by the male figures in their lives, but it is not with her. She stated *“But for me, their decisions don't determine how I see politics or how I do my elections. Their perspective doesn't affect the way I vote or exercise my civic rights. But for most women here, it does. I've seen it from my sister and some friends, I've seen it. So, it does most times.”*

For N1, she maintained that it is often the case that women in the North are influenced by their spouse although she expressed optimism that it would change in 2023 elections as a result of the state of the country. She noted that.

But like I would say a lot of women are the ones who go to the market every day and see that foodstores are beyond their reach. So, with that alone, hunger, hunger, hunger. This electoral cycle is more around poverty and hunger, nothing else. Because nobody, not even the rich, has the world to do, everybody has felt that. And insecurity also, especially in the northern region, we have seen cases of people who

come out to protest that the government has failed them. And then now they have found a voice that we know. You come after every four years. So, since you have refused to come to us while we are being killed in the numbers in our homes and we've been rendered homeless and all of that, then we will not vote for you. So there is this high level of awareness that it is as a result of the poor performance of the government that things have gone over the roof in the marketplace, and then they are not secured in their homes, and then the farmers, too, are not able to afford farm input, so can't even go to their farms. These are things that touch the grassroots. So, when it comes to decision-making now, that level of influence of spouses over their woman will be limiting, because the woman will always point back and say, it is as a result of the government that things are expensive in the market. So, there will be a shift. There is already a shift happening around gender. Why? Because these women are most affected when it comes to the issue of insecurity. They are most affected when it comes to their purchasing power in the marketplace. They are the most affected. So, it's going to not be as strong as it used to be. Yes. It definitely will be there. It won't be eliminated 100%, but there will be a major shift.

N2 also alluded to the fact that her family might influence her political choice. For her, whatever they say or discuss about a candidate might influence her, but this does not necessarily mean they will decide who she votes for in an election. According to her, this does not mean “*that there's coercion or forceful influence or impact on my decision at the end of the day.*” N3 also believes that her family or male figures do not influence her decision. For her, “*It doesn't influence it at all. So, it doesn't matter who they are voting for or who they believe in. My choice is my choice. Your choice is your choice. We used to do that a lot.*” N4 equally opines that family and male figures somewhat have a level of influence over her political choice. She noted “*In some ways, you know, as a family, we discuss together and you have common reasoning together as you live in the same place, even the extended ones too, since we live in the same community. And you know, when you see maybe this particular candidate you discuss with your family, you say, okay, you tell the person his advantage and his disadvantage. So yes, I think family too is, you know. What did you do for that one? Sorry. I mean, the effect, you know, the political beliefs in any way affect your political choice. Yeah, has great effects, I'm very sure.*” N5 also agrees that family or male figures can be an influence, but she opines that a woman should be able to make her own decisions since she should know what she wants. She explained that.

I wouldn't say in a way yes, but It depends on the individual and the people around you I am not married right now, but As I am now somebody cannot impose a candidate on me because okay, I am getting towards an age that I make my own decision and know what is wrong and what is wrong. So, it simply means when your parents or maybe a spouse or anything or a sibling is telling you because I am from this party, vote this party, I believe yes, it might want to influence your decision. But on second thought, if you think about it, you ask yourself, okay, if you vote for this person, you might enjoy the benefit just for a very short period, maybe because they gave you money.

N6 also noted that her family or male figures do not shape her political choice. She noted *“Like my male family don’t influence my political choice. For me, I’m widely read and then I’m greatly involved in women empowerment for women to take responsibility or take ownership of their development. So I think that wouldn’t shape, per se.”* she explained further that her stance is not unconnected to her family background given that she *“...from a home, that there was no discrimination of whether you being a girl child or a boy child, reaching your potential, I think that helped greatly to shape my opinion, my views, right? But as an individual, no, the male folk don’t influence my decision.”*

6.3 Discussion of Results

6.3.1. Factors Influencing Political Choice

The result from the qualitative result showed that the respondents from both regions tend to emphasize the political character of a candidate as reflected in the background, competence, and leadership acumen of such candidate. It will be recalled that the respondents in the interview mentioned the place of competence, background, and leadership experience of the candidate and these three are embedded in the political character of the candidate. This variance could therefore be explained to be a result of the difference in the understanding of the term, and character of the candidate, by different respondents.

The emphasis on the political character of the candidate aligns with the position of McCann (1997) that when voters come to campaign or support a certain candidate in an election, their (the electorate) values tend to become more compatible with that of their candidate of choice and his political party. This may not be unconnected to the need to remain consistent and avoid selfcontradiction on the part of the electorate. Hence, a female voter understands that her choice of

candidate in an election is a reflection of her core values. Aichholzer and Willmann (2020) also corroborated this stance. The authors developed two principles that guide voters' preferences for personality traits in politicians. They argued that voters often choose candidates that “...*exhibit personality congruence with their personality*” as this creates a form of identification with such candidate. This is where the personal sentiments of the electorate come in. More importantly, and even regarded as the first principle, the authors contend that the electorate always voters prefers their candidate of choice to exhibit traits associated with leadership more than the general population. According to their study, voters “...*want politicians to be more emotionally stable, extravert-assertive, more deliberate-conscientious and open, more honest, but also somewhat more disagreeable—many of the traits associated with leadership, political ambition, and higher media visibility.*” What can be implied from this is the fact that the female electorate, when talking about issues of political character, has certain elements they look out for.

Mohammed and Othman (2020) also identified five essential elements that are considered in political choice and they include loyalty (The act of showing sincerity and sacrifice towards the cause of the people), integrity (The act of being trustworthy, honest, and serving the people without expecting any form of gratification), competency (A synthesis of both oratory capacity and the technical capabilities to deliver on the job. This delivery capacity is quite important in measuring competency), commitment (Fidelity to the oath of office and political will to effect the changes desired by the people), and resilience (The capability and capacity to cope with crises that may come with governance). Ohr and Oscarsson (2013) equally identified the core character traits that define the choice of candidate in an election to include leadership capabilities, trustworthiness, reliability, and empathy. These values define the political image of a candidate and the eventual voting decision. For the authors, the electorate looks out for the politically relevant and performance-related traits of the candidate before deciding their choice of candidate. This is where the political background of the politician comes in as his/her performance and actions in previously held positions give the voter a peep into what his performance and actions will be in the current position sought. It is important to point out that the authors opine that this metric does not change regardless of the political system. In a comparison of the parliamentary system (Where political parties are traditionally stronger) and a presidential system, the authors that the traits expected of political candidates by the voters are closely related.

It is however difficult to point out whether the character traits that the respondents are referring to tilts towards the warmth traits or the competence traits. Lausten and Bor (2017) identified these two traits and noted that much of scholarly works have given premium to competence-related traits in determining political choice. Scholarly works such as Kinder (1986), Funk (1999), McGraw (2011), and McAllister (2016), among others all point to the fact that voters are more swayed by traits that relay the competence of the candidate than warmth. On the other hand, scholars like McCurley and Mondak (1995), Bartels (2002) Ohr and Oscarsson (2013), and Lausten and Bor (2017) all posit that the warmth trait takes primacy over the competence traits. Following the responses of the respondents, they tend to align with the primacy of the competence traits as a determinant of their electoral choice.

6.3.2. Effect of Political Literacy on Political Choice

A review of the qualitative data further shows that the respondents think that Nigeria is not an entirely democratic country as there are certain things which are still missing in the Nigerian political space. It is also interesting to note that while the respondents feel they have enough information to critically assess political candidates, each of them expressed their doubts as regards the fidelity of politicians. The respondents also gave varying answers regarding their level of engagement in the polity. One thing that can be observed is that many of these respondents see active engagement to be all about voting in an election. Safe for S2 and N1, many of the other respondents only limit their political participation in the electioneering process to voting in elections alone just as there are a few who have not even ever exercised their voting rights before. Only a few of them are involved in politics or other aspects of politicking beyond voting.

What this result points us to is the fact that the level of education of a person or level of political literacy does not mean such a person will feel the urge to take her political participation to a higher chance. There is an assumption that a politically literate woman should be more informed than a woman who is not. By extension, since the number of literate women in the South surpasses the number of literate women in the North, therefore the level of political literacy should be higher. The assumption is that educated women are more politically literate than less educated women. This assumption has been faulted by S1 who noted that.

You see, even when it comes to our education, you know that education,
I always tell people, it's not about going to the classroom to read alone.
We have people that are not in school, but they are aware. I believe it's

about being aware of what is going on around you. And I think recently, I've had the opportunity to engage people in the local community. There's a project that I'm working on currently and I was surprised at how aware these people in the rural areas, the core rural grassroots people, I was very surprised at how aware they were of things that were going on, and how involved they are in politics. They are very involved in politics, and they are aware. They will give information about some of these people's portfolios that you are not aware of. We found that most of them, may not have, they don't use social media like that. But it is radio, radio that we are talking about. And then the few educated ones among them don't play with newspapers. It might be old-fashioned, but they don't play with newspapers and radio. They get information from there, so they are aware even though they are not educated in the normal education we talk about, but they are aware. So, it's more about awareness than the basic education we are talking about. So, they are more they are candidates.

This statement by S1 points to the fact that even political literacy may not necessarily have anything to do with formal education and should it be taken as having a connection to it, it does not mean that when you are politically literate, your level of political participation will be higher.

On the contrary, and based on the responses of our respondents, their level of active engagement in the political system is quite marginal. Although there is a corpus of literature that argues that political literacy promotes better political participation, this assertion by S1 is a pointer to the fact that the claim by Wood (2010) that political literacy has a connection to education level and literacy because citizens get exposed to the processes of government through citizenship education which is taught (or advocated to be taught) in schools may not be universally true. As noted by Denver and Hands (1990) and Fyfe (2007), political literacy is not only cognitive but also behavioural and attitudinal. In other words, a politically literate person is not just one who has an understanding of how the political system works but one who is equally involved or an active participant in the socio-political events in the state. Nie et al. (1996) have argued that political participation is strongly connected to formal education and many scholars have even often used education as a variable and predictor for voting, and political activism, among others. For example, Larreguy and Marshall's (2017) findings show that the more a person is educated in Nigeria, the more such a person is likely to be interested and involved in politics as well as vote. Similarly, Bleck (2015) and Kuenzi (2006) also showed in their study conducted in Mali and Senegal

respectively showed that formal education (in the case of Bleck, 2015) and non-formal education (as argued by Kuenzi, 2006) have a way of increasing active engagement in politics.

Larreguy and Liu (2023) seem to clarify the issue of whether formal education can play a major role in political participation. The authors noted that the reason studies examining the link between education and political participation in developed democracies is the strength of the country's democratic institutions. These institutions, the authors argued, can play a vital role in dictating whether citizens, though educated, will be involved in politics. Political participation, it must be noted, is essentially about weighing the cost (Which is certain) and benefit (Which is uncertain) of such participation. Where persons perceive the costs to be more than the possible benefits, it can be sure that political participation will be buried. Take for instance, a woman who knows that if she decides to be actively engaged in politics, she will have to face the tongue-lashing of men and women, waste resources, as well as put her life at risk in the face of the violent nature of her politics against the possible benefits of getting juicy appointments or elective positions which are not sure, such a woman has a higher potential of picking not to be involved in politics beyond voting. In other words, it takes a woman who places the uncertain benefits above the current costs and will not mind getting involved in politics.

The inference that can be made from this therefore is that while education can be a necessary precursor to political participation, it does not necessarily mean that education will lead to active engagement in politics if the institutions in the country are weak or absent. Further analysis of an educated woman and an uneducated woman will also reveal that the cost-benefit analysis of the duo will come out differently. An educated woman sees politics as a means of survival to shore up her income. The cost, for her, is minimal because she knows she only has to wrestle with the men as she has to hardly bother herself with contesting any position safe for councillorship (The minimal requirement for this is a primary school leaving certificate which may not even have) and that requires fewer expenses. Her stake is low but the benefits she stands the chance of gaining, though uncertain, is higher. Hence, her costs will be minimal to her benefits. In the case of an educated woman, she has to put a lot of things into consideration. She does not only stand the chance of having a party position, but she can also stand for election for higher positions. Knowing full well that the higher the position the higher the expenses as a result of the monetization and violent nature of politics in Nigeria. She has to get the needed manpower to

contend with the violence as well as the money. She also has to deal with the many nocturnal meetings which put her integrity and personality at risk she equally has to deal with the ego of a husband who may consider her as being overly ambitious. While she stands the chance of clinching an elective position, the possibility of getting this is slim. Hence, for her, the costs outweigh the uncertain benefits. In the long run, such an educated woman is discouraged from going into politics compared to her uneducated counterpart.

6.3.3. Effect of Religion on Political Choice

The result from our survey shows that religion has a statistically significantly positive impact on political choice in both Northern and Southern Nigeria. The analysis of the qualitative data also shows that most of the women do not believe that religion impacts their political choices. While all the Southern women argued that religion does not impact their political choice (Only S4 maintained that it used to be a factor but not anymore), only N4, N5, and N6 believe that their religion will impact their electoral choice. Similarly, on the question of God/Allah deciding who the winner of the election will be, only S2, among the respondents from the South, believe that God plays a role in deciding who the winner of the election will although she maintained that man has the right of choice as God will not foist his decision on humans. In the case of the women from the North, only N1 believes that God/Allah does not determine who the winner of an election will be. For the other women, only N4 believes that God takes an absolute responsibility over who wins an election while others agree that God plays a role, but man has the freedom of choice.

The position of the respondents tends to align with the result of some earlier studies that try to study the influence of religion on electoral choice. In a 2016 survey, Barna (2016) reviewed the influences over people's choice of candidate in elections in the United States. The result shows that 75% of evangelicals in the US argued that religion has a lot of influence on their political choice. The result of the analysis of responses from non-evangelical born-again Christians shows that religion takes the most prime position as an external influence on electoral choice with it taking a 30% influence position. Notional Christians (Those who consider themselves Christians but not born-again) have their religion have a 10% influence while their pastors have a 9% influence. In the case of adults without a connection to Christianity, religion has a 15% influence on their political choices. For atheists or other religious sceptics, religious belief has no impact on their electoral choices. The result of this survey shows how much religion impacts electoral choice even

in Western democracies. Some other studies that border on different elections in Nigeria showed the cleavage between religion and political choice in Nigeria. Olowojolu (2015) showed how religion impacted the 2011 elections in Nigeria. Similarly, Obo (2017) established that religion impacted voters' choices in the 2015 elections. Emoghene and Okolie (2020) equally examined the impact that religion has on political choice and concluded that religion impacts electoral choice, and this leads to underdevelopment. They argued that “*religion in Nigeria functions as a means for the perpetration of violence, fuelling ethnic consciences and solidarity, acquisition of power and socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction of lives and vandalizing of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religions.*” This is due to the contention between Islam and Christianity in the quest for power.

Jenke and Huettel (2016) attempt to explain why religion will exert an influence on the electoral choice of female voters in Nigeria. The authors noted that voter's choice has often been defined by the rational choice model which claims that voters decide their candidate of choice at the polls by looking out for the attributes of the candidates, weighing those attributes in the order of their importance and then pick the candidate who possesses those attributes that align with his or her preferences. The attributes that voters look out for are either policy attributes such as key issues or non-policy attributes such as issues of religion, and ethnicity, et al. Jenkel and Huettel (2016) explain this thus:

First, policy and identity variables have different statistical properties. Policy variables are treated like attributes in a multi-dimensional space, like that for other economic decisions; voters prefer candidates whose policies are closest to their own desired positions (e.g., minimal distance in that space). Identity variables, however, are treated like a set of social categories; voters prefer candidates to the extent that voting for that candidate increases their self-perceived status within each category. Second, and critically, policy and identity compete to shape voter choice.

What this means therefore is that a voter is not only faced with going for choices that cater for improving the economy, providing infrastructure, improving the state of education and health, or even provision security, but she is also faced with going for a choice that will ensure that her social group – be it gender, ethnic group, or religion – and its interest is protected. Suffice it to say that it is not enough that a candidate shares this social group with the voter but more about how well the voter self-identifies as well as the groups which the voter chooses to affiliate with. This

explains why a voter can be Christian but choose not to vote for a candidate who is Christian as well or even when the Christian identity of the voter is not what she chooses to identify with in that instance. Where and when a voter chooses to identify with the social group, the issue that arises and subsequently determines her choice is how well the policy utility and the identity utility are synchronized and represented in a candidate. It is almost impossible to see a voter vote for a candidate that she is aware cannot provide the policy utility but satisfies her identity utility. This explains why even political candidates that campaign largely on the strength of divisive elements like religion also make promises that satisfy the policy utility. In return, the voter is convinced that such a candidate can meet both needs of hers. When a voter feels her identity is threatened, her identity utility needs to be protected. Hence, a closer look at the responses of the Northern respondents reveals that Northern respondents who are Christians will place a priority on their religion as seen in the positions of N5 and N6. This stems from the high state of insecurity and “perceived” threat to their Christian faith.

The position of Jenkel and Huettel (2016) explains why religion can be a major influencer of the electoral choice of female voters. The place and methodology of the religion are also a factor that must be mentioned. Where a religion maintains a conservative stance on its preservation and adherence to its tenets, the probability that its adherents will allow it to influence every aspect of their lives is higher. In Islam, the issue of *wala*” or the duty of support or loyalty to one’s faith has been a subject of interrogation for centuries. While it is clear, as stated in *Surah an-Nisa, Ch.4: V.59* that Muslims are expected to vote only for leaders who are most deserving of the position, the criterion for choosing a leader poses a little challenge and has been an instrument for political mobilization towards religious ends by politicians. Makrum (2019) noted that the first two criteria for choosing a leader in Islam are first, having faith in Allah and second, justice and trustworthiness. A leader is not just a leader but one who is seen as a bridge that binds humans and Allah. Hence, when *Kufr* (Unbelievers) are elected above Muslims, it might pose a threat to Islam and endanger the Sharia’h. The argument that some Muslim clerics in Nigeria have often put up in pushing this agenda has been that only a Muslim will protect the interest of Islam. The effect of this can be seen in how Muslim voters in the North rallied around the NPC in the First Republic and Buhari in the 2015 and 2019 elections.

The Christian faith, on the other hand, has been a bit liberal on whether a Christian should vote for another Christian where persons of other faiths are standing for elections. The desire to even go out to vote has been minimal among this demography in the past until the 2023 elections. NI captures this best when she states thus:

I think the major religions, Christianity and Islam, the Christians in the past didn't even bother about election. We still have Christians who don't believe in participating in elections. That is their doctrine. They don't register and they don't vote. So, for such persons, if you have been listening to the conversation in the media stage, the proponents for the Labour Party candidate are saying they will adopt their strategy because of their religion, they go house to house telling people about their religion and their worship and they don't participate in the election. But they have a strategy that they go for door-to-door campaigning, sorry to use that word. So that's the strategy...Another thing that prompted the Christian denomination to get up and participate was the emergence of the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the ruling party. So, if you cannot be sensitive to the other religions, we will mobilise our people, who have never bothered about elections, to get up and go out and vote. As time passed. When politicians come to campaign in churches, a lot of churches don't grant them an audience because they see it as not a good thing. Why? Because there's this belief system that politics is a dirty game. And that is why a lot of people, especially Christians, shy away from it. Why? Because the key players in the electoral space are violent. They use cultures, they use all forms of things. But now the events of the last seven years have helped to shape people's mindset that if I don't participate, it means we will let the bad guys take charge of our future. And because we have not been participating all along, that is why we have found ourselves in this mess. So, the awareness for mobilisation to enrol for the electoral process is high in the Christian denomination, then for the Muslims, they have been more electorally aware in times past.

So, they do register, and they do go out and mass to vote. If you look at the voting population from the south and the Christian-dominated regions and states and the Muslim-dominated, you realise that even children up north have their voter's card. They register and they still go out to vote. Unlike the Christian-dominated, most young persons, or even adults, you see adults of 50, to 60 years telling you in their lifetime they have never registered to vote, and they will never vote.

These dynamics and systems of the two faiths therefore explain why respondents from the different regions vary on the role of religion in influencing their political choice. The Christian in the South does not feel he faces an existential challenge compared to the Christian in the North. Hence, their disposition in allowing religion to influence them will vary.

The position of the two faiths and the belief of their adherents on the same explains the position of the respondents on why they would believe that God decides who the winner of an election will be. Islam, oftentimes, is presented as requiring strict adherence to the dictates of the Quran as well as the Hadiths compared to Christianity which allows for much liberalism. Hence, while a Christian may not feel duty-bound to allow his religion to sway her votes, a Muslim might.

6.3.4. Gender and Political Participation

In the qualitative data, only two of the four respondents from the South claimed awareness of women's groups advocating women's rights. In the North, equally, only two of the six respondents claimed awareness of such groups. On the issue of women's marginalization, all the respondents agreed that women are socially and politically marginalized, although the context of their agreement varies as explained in our thematic analysis. On the influence of male figures on political choice, the respondents do not agree that their spouse or male figures can influence their political choice. For the respondents from the North, none of them agreed that a male figure or family can foist his decision on them but some of them – N2, N4, and N5 – opine that they can exert some influence through discussions about politics with such members of the family.

The non-awareness of female advocacy groups by the respondents as shown in both the survey and qualitative data is an attestation to the invisibility of women advocacy groups in Nigeria. Beyond the operational challenges of funding, it can be observed that even women are hardly aware that such groups exist. This is in agreement with Afolabi (2019). In a study conducted by Afolabi (2019) to test the extent of the visibility and appreciation of female advocacy groups, 57% of the respondents argued that women groups were hardly able to wield any influence in the political system in Nigeria while 53% of them opined that the roles played by these female advocacy groups in Nigeria were not appreciated. The study also showed that women's advocacy groups wield a low influence on women's rights. This indicated that the roles played by women advocacy groups are not visible, or appreciated and have a low impact on policy initiation. This also brings into question the issue and impact of patriarchy as it impacts awareness of the efforts

of such groups as well as the marginalization of women. It must be understood that patriarchy is not just about the male-female dichotomy or male oppression. To appreciate the extent of the impact of patriarchy, it is best that is viewed as a system – a well-oiled and organized system that is designed to keep the woman perpetually subjugated to the man. Johnson (1997) explains this thus:

What drives Patriarchy as a system - what fuels competition, aggression, and oppression - is a dynamic relationship between control and fear. Patriarchy encourages men to seek security, status, and other rewards through control; to fear other men's ability to control and harm them; and to identify being in control as both their best defense against loss and humiliation and the surest route to what they need and desire. In this sense, although we usually think of patriarchy in terms of women and men, it is more about what goes on among men. The oppression of women is certainly an important part of patriarchy, but, paradoxically, it may not be the point of patriarchy.

Walby (1989) identifies two forms of patriarchy namely, the public and the private patriarchy. Private patriarchy is premised on limiting the role and activity of the woman to the home front where she has to submit to her man, the patriarch, who appropriates to her what her role and services should be at the home front. Public patriarchy, on the other hand, is not concerned with limiting women but rather with subjugating them in all areas. In light of this, patriarchy is the foundation on which gender inequality in any patriarchal society is anchored (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013). It drives through various phases of human existence and lays a firm control of even the knowledge base such that the woman is naturally indoctrinated into believing and accepting that she is inferior and should know her place in the scheme of things. This is what is corroborated by the power-knowledge relations postulated by Foucault (1980). Foucault argued that the one in power controls the narrative about what suffices as information and knowledge. Foucault disagrees that knowledge creates power. On the contrary, he believes that *'the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information...[t]he exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power'* (Foucault, 1975: 52). Power and knowledge are neither synonymous nor separate. It is the power that uses and shapes knowledge. It has a productive and reciprocal effect on knowledge. He explains this in his *Discipline and Punish* thus: *"We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'.*

Power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.” Foucault 1975)

This is corroborated by an African proverb: *It is because the tale of hunting is told by men, that is why stories of humans that killed lions are more. Were it to be otherwise, the tale of lions that killed humans would be more.* The fact that patriarchy establishes a man’s world where man wields the power, he equally controls the knowledge scheme. As Foucault argued, knowledge and power are inextricably interdependent. In this case, the man who wields the power controls what the woman hears knows or believes. She is forced to accept the status quo as the norm as shown in Adamu (2004) whose study interrogated how secluded Muslim Hausa Society women in Northern Nigeria tend to have accepted the phenomenon of marginalization. A woman is acculturated to accept whatever her husband says as final. Her opinion matters less where that of her husband is present. This acculturation explains the influence that spouses and male figures have on female voters.

It is even more interesting to note that women are not even conscious enough to mobilize their strength in the voting population towards ensuring one of their own is elected to office. S1 captures the fate of Nigerian women and the refusal, as a result of the impact of patriarchy, to exploit their voting demography towards improved female representation in government. She noted thus:

Yes, yes. I know that women currently in Nigeria, I always tell you that if you want to win the election, win the women. If you want to win the election, win the women. We have a population. And apart from that, women are the grassroots. When you are talking about women, they are the grassroots because, in every home, there's a woman there. Places, where you meet men, are not not get to the homes of men you know you cannot they cannot influence anybody at home but the women are there so the role women play in our local communities now there are places where if you cannot go into those communities and meet those women then the information you even need to get to the grassroots will not get there these women are the ones that are influencing the low income and the main grass community that we are talking about is the women that are influencing them, not the men. So yeah, and that's why political parties, you see that all of them are looking for women to work with. Yes, they are all looking for women to work with. So we're having that kind of influence, that kind of huge, I would say, participation.

6.4 Conclusion

This study has established the idea of political literacy to be one beyond the level of education of an individual and has proven that it is possible for one who is less educated to be

more actively engaged than one who is educated. This chapter argued that when a cost-benefit analysis is done by both classes of women on why they should be actively engaged in politics, there is a high chance that an uneducated woman will be better motivated to be involved in politics than an educated woman. The study also proved that political literacy plays a vital role in determining political choice in both the North and the South. It is however instructive to mention that the study noted that there seems to be a general distrust of the political class. This raises the legitimacy question on the crop of leadership in Nigeria as well as explains why voter apathy is often high in Nigerian elections.

The study equally concluded that religion has a significant and positive connection with political choice in both the North and South. While the result shows that religion impacts political choice, the data from the qualitative data from the South showed otherwise while that from the North was homogenous with the survey results. This may not be unconnected to the fact that the respondents are educated and tend to have a higher chance of reducing or not acknowledging the impact of religion on their voting.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary and Findings

The first research question borders on the similarity or disparity in the factors influencing political choice on both the North and the South. To this end, this study utilises a combination of quantitative and qualitative data and the findings show that there exists only a minimal disparity in the factors driving candidate selection among female voters in both the Southern and Northern regions. Findings reveal that, while there is a negligible distinction in the determinants of political choice between these regions, variations emerge regarding the influence of political influencers, candidate party affiliation, and candidate character. However, both regions align closely in terms of regional considerations, media influence, and party policies. Qualitative data analysis underscores the significance placed on candidate competence or character by respondents across regions, indicating a collective recognition of the imperative for developmental leadership qualities among political leaders as perceived by female electorates. This points to the fact that there is an agreement across the two regions on the vital role that leadership plays in the development drive of the country. This is in agreement with other literature on the leadership glut in Nigeria and how leadership can be deployed to resolve the development quagmire of the country.

Furthermore, as pointed out in other studies, the role of the media and the manifestoes of a political party plays a vital role in determining how and where the pendulum of election results will swing in an election. This explains why there is an intensified deployment of the media – both conventional and new – by political parties to swing elections. This also applies to the embellishment of party manifestoes. For example, this study finds out that one of the issues that the Buhari administration (2015-2023) was held by the electorate to be liable for was the promises made during the campaign by the APC which included fighting insurgency, corruption, and ensuring a naira equals to a dollar but on which it failed in all. The administration's failure nonetheless, these grandiose promises were part of the reasons why many electorate bought into the agenda of the party in the 2015 presidential election. As mentioned also in Chapter Three of this study, the party Manifesto was equally responsible for the defeat of Rabiu Kwankwanso of Kano State in 2003 to the opposition ANPP candidate, Ibrahim Shekarau. This is also discovered to have been the case in some other states.

Following the second research question raised in this study, this study finds out that some of the assumptions in earlier literature on the role of political literacy in influencing political outcomes in Nigeria may be unfounded after all. The result of the quantitative data showed that the influence of political literacy on the electoral choice of female voters is both negative and weak in both Northern and Southern Nigeria. It was also discovered that their level of active engagement in the political system is quite marginal. Most of the women see active engagement to be all about voting in an election. It was equally discovered based on the data collected that while education can be a necessary precursor to political participation, it does not necessarily mean that education will lead to active engagement in politics if the institutions in the country are weak or absent. In other words, while there are more educated women in the South than in the North as reflected in the education demography in the survey data, the education of these women tends to play a marginal role in influencing their level of political participation and this is traceable to the loss of confidence in the electoral as well as political system.

For the third research question, this study equally finds out that there is a variance in the impact of religion on political outcomes among women in Northern and Southern Nigeria. From our quantitative study, we found out that while religion influences the electoral choice of female voters in Northern Nigeria, religion has little impact on the electoral choice of female voters in the South. Survey findings indicate a robust and positive correlation between religion and political choice only in Northern Nigeria while there is a near non-existent impact of religion on political choices in the Southern region. This also aligns with the research findings from the qualitative data where most of the women do not believe that religion impacts their political choice. Insights gleaned from interviews revealed a nuanced perspective, with none of the respondents from the South acknowledging religion as a factor influencing their political choices, compared to only three respondents out of seven from the North who acknowledged such influence. The study observed that the influence of religion on political choices was more pronounced in the Northern region and transcended religious affiliations, impacting both Muslims and Christians alike. This phenomenon is attributed to the prevailing state of insecurity in the country and the perceived existential challenges faced by Christians in the Northern region. It is also traceable to the high level of religious tolerance that is noticeable in the South compared to the North where there is a high level of religious intolerance as occasioned by the high incidence of religious violence in the Northern region. These findings align with the position of prior literature on the impact of religion on

political outcomes on a national and regional basis as well as the variance of the level of such influence in both regions.

In pursuance to the fourth research question which borders on a comparative study of the level of gender awareness and impact of patriarchy on electoral choices of women in Northern and Southern Nigeria, this study finds out that the issues of patriarchy and female marginalization transcend geographical boundaries, impacting both Northern and Southern regions. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses converge, revealing a homogeneity in the awareness of women's advocacy groups and the perceived invisibility of their efforts. Similarly, there is congruence between survey results and qualitative data regarding the patriarchal influence on electoral choices. While respondents predominantly refute direct spousal influence, they acknowledge its prevalence within their social circles. Additionally, the study highlights a notable disparity in political participation by women, as evidenced by their under-representation in elective positions. This therefore nullifies earlier assumptions that the level of patriarchal influence on the political choices of women in the two regions is different. From all indications, patriarchy everywhere in Nigeria, regardless of location, has a negative influence and is aimed at subjugating the female essence.

It is equally discovered that while there are a couple of civil groups whose focus is on the welfare of women in the country, there is little done in the area of promoting the political participation of women. In fact, our survey results and analysis of qualitative data shows that there is little awareness on the part of women on civil groups whose focus is on enhancing female political participation. This may not be unconnected with the absence of funding for areas as this and the fact that such endeavour seem like an attempt to upstage the status quo. While many developmental agencies have programmes that seek to better the lot of the woman, there are no sponsored programmes targeted at improving on women political participation.

7.2 Evaluation of the Outcomes

7.2.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings related to the first and third research questions, it is pertinent that political parties in Nigeria need to be rejigged to be the gatekeepers that they are supposed to be. As gatekeepers in democracy, the political keepers are meant to form guardrails that will prevent persons without the requisite character from getting their party tickets. This is even made easier given that the issue of independent candidacy is still a tall order in Nigeria. Hence, these political

parties need to be refurbished such that they can live up to their responsibilities of gatekeeping politicians of questionable character and those without elements of visionary leadership from getting their party tickets. What is obtainable at the moment is that political parties in Nigeria are all without ideology or policies at best six and half a dozen as they have been identified as a den of crooks who lack any element of visionary leadership. This will prevent religious bigots and opportunists from coming to power. As observed by some of the respondents, political parties often go hand in hand with their candidates in the deployment of religious sentiments to curry electoral victory. Thus, when political parties are rejigged, this trend will be nipped in the bud as they will rather seek issue-based politics against religious sentiments.

In light of the findings and observations related to the second and third research questions in this study, the study recommends that government, political actors, civil society actors, and international actors, governments at both the national and state levels are urged to implement comprehensive political literacy programs at least three years preceding an election cycle, to reach all corners of the country. These initiatives should target all citizens and be adequately resourced. Additionally, governments should prioritize the development of institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Electoral Management Bodies (EMGs) to enhance public trust in the electoral process. These institutions need to be strengthened to restore the confidence of the electorate in them to improve the electoral system. When people know that their votes will count, their confidence in the electoral system will be boosted the more. Comprehensive political education and the strengthening of political institutions can also reduce religious tension and reduce the impact of religion on political outcomes. This point was equally reiterated by S3 when she stated, *inter alia*, “The reason religion has a strong impact on elections is because of the absence of strong political education...If political education is there and people know that their votes will count, they will have stronger trust in the system and may not allow factors such as religion to determine their choice of candidate”.

It is also to note that concerning the third research question, governments at the states and the centre need to put in place a law or policy that allows the protection of minority groups be it in terms of tribal or religious groups. The only reason religious sentiments will thrive is because one religion feels marginalized in the scheme of things. There is also the promotion of religious tolerance by governments such that the provision of Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) that Nigeria is a secular state should be strictly adhered to. When a government ensures that there is fairness justice and equity in the allocation of the state’s resources across all religious

groups in the state, the feeling of marginalization which becomes a breeder for religion to influence political outcomes will be weakened.

In line with the results of the first and second research questions, legislation should be enacted to mandate all electoral candidates to participate in debates, allowing voters to familiarize themselves with candidates' proposed agendas and subject them to scrutiny. One of the things that a debate will do to the electoral system is that it allows the electorate to have a first-hand view of the minds of their would-be leaders. What has been observed in political circles in Nigeria is that candidates contesting elections only go about sloganeering without any clear-cut blueprint stating their short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals and how they aim to achieve these goals. The norm often is to see them throw ideas to the electorate without any blueprint on how they aim to achieve such goals and without a time frame within which such will be achieved. The implication of this is that it becomes difficult to hold the leaders accountable for what they promised as they can just do a haphazard job. With political debates, political accountability is enhanced and this can help enhance political participation and engagement by the electorate (See Brierley, Kramon, and Ofosu [2020]).

Furthermore, regarding the fourth research question, the study suggests that both central and regional governments should implement gender-sensitization programs for personnel involved in civic and voter education. Affirmative action measures for women in politics should also be pursued to increase their participation. At the moment, there is a 35% affirmative action law that says that 35% of elective positions should be reserved for women but this has only existed on paper. As pointed out in Chapter Two of this study and acknowledged by respondents in our qualitative study, the number of women representatives in Nigeria's legislative houses both the centre as well as the state is on a steady fall. The level of patriarchy is also evidenced in how women in politics are treated with disdain and the system is wired in such a way as to make them fail. More often than not, it is difficult for a woman to be a wife and a politician at the same time without being subjected to different types of sexual and physical harassment. This is aside from the slurs she is meant to face for standing up to men in politics. There is therefore a need for a systemic commitment towards remedying the situation. While the law on Affirmative Action is in place, governments at various levels must show commitment towards putting this into practice by conceding positions to women so as to improve women's political participation.

Similarly, political actors are encouraged to adopt processes that facilitate women's advancement within party leadership structures and ensure equitable competition with men. Efforts

should be made to mitigate the monetization and violence associated with Nigerian politics while refraining from using divisive tactics such as religion and ethnicity during campaigns. Civil society organizations are called upon to enhance their funding mechanisms and utilize media platforms, including social media, to raise awareness of their activities among women. Greater engagement with rural women and intensified advocacy efforts are also recommended.

International partners in the country also have a role in this. It is recommended that these international actors should support civic societies that are aimed at political literacy and promoting women's political participation. Funding is a very key part of the success of this venture but this seem to be missing at the moment. Hence, international partners must realize that women in Nigeria, nay Africa, are faced with a peculiar challenge in the face of patriarchy and so there is a need for both human and financial collaboration towards supporting the civil groups that are working in this area.

7.3 Limitations of the Project

Several limitations were identified in this thesis. Firstly, the study's robustness could have been enhanced by a larger sample size of female voters in the two regions. Despite setting a target of 2000 women for the survey in each region, the sample was restricted to pilot states, representing only a small fraction of the overall female voter population in both regions. Similarly, constraints arose from the number and demographic characteristics of participants in the qualitative study. The absence of translators prevented the researcher from engaging with a more diverse group of uneducated women. The inclusion of such individuals in the interviews could have addressed the lack of homogeneity in the results for certain study objectives. Given their inclusion in the survey, it is believed that uneducated women could have provided insights into their motivations for political engagement, as well as their perspectives on issues such as the influence of religion and patriarchy.

7.4 Agenda for Future Research

This study has paved the way for potential future research endeavours. It has laid the foundation for a comparative analysis of the impact, or varying levels of impact, of traditional media and new media on political decision-making processes. The findings suggest that educated individuals tend to rely on television and social media platforms for political information, whereas many uneducated women prefer radio broadcasts. Consequently, this raises inquiries into whether

television exerts a greater influence on political choices compared to radio, or if traditional media channels foster greater political literacy than newer media platforms.

Furthermore, the study's outcomes indicate a significant level of distrust towards the political class. Therefore, future investigations could focus on assessing the extent of trust in political leadership across different regions. In delving into the intricacies of politics and juxtaposing Nigeria's political landscape with that of other nations, there emerges a paradigm shift wherein political positions are perceived as opportunities for embezzlement, commonly referred to as the notion of the "National Cake." Such inquiries hold the potential to contribute towards redefining the standards of political governance and leadership within the country.

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The Interconnectedness of religion, political literacy, and voter choices for female Nigerian voters: Evidence from Southern and Northern Regions

Welcome

Welcome and thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview measuring the interconnectedness of religion, political literacy, and voter choices for female Nigerian voters: Evidence from Southern and Northern regions.

We are gathering data to improve women's participation in politics in Nigeria with special focus on their religious beliefs and literacy level as part of a doctoral research project.

The purpose of the project is to improve political outcomes and understand the differences in the two hemispheres i.e., Northern and Southern Nigeria. This project will also aid our understanding of how attitudes fit together, have coherence, and shape voter choices.

Be assured that all answers you provide will be kept in the strict confidentiality and you will not be identified in any way in the data. Participation in this interview is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

To take part in this interview, you must be a woman and be eligible to vote in Nigeria during elections. Please see information below to check who can vote in Nigerian elections and if all these apply to you confirm by clicking next.

To vote in General Election you must:

- be 18 or over on the day of the election ('polling day')
- be a Nigerian
- not be legally excluded from voting

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Omowonuola Pp Okunnu ookunnu@bournemouth.ac.uk, Professor Darren Lilleker DLilleker@bournemouth.ac.uk or Dr Anastasia Veneti aveneti@bournemouth.ac.uk

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[Note that: we will only ask 1 or 2 questions from each section as we only have about 25 to 30 minutes from this interview]

Section 1: Political Opinions

1. **What governance regime do you consider most effective for Nigeria?**
2. What factor determines your choice of a candidate?
3. Where are you most likely to receive trustworthy information about political candidates?
4. On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the federal government level?
5. On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the state government level?
6. On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the local government level?
7. Do you agree that the character of the political candidate matter when making a political choice?
8. Generally, do you feel the information you receive via TV, Radio, Print and social media about political candidates place them in good light?
9. Do you agree that political candidates do an excellent job in explaining campaign promises in the years leading to an election year?
10. Do you agree that political candidates do an excellent job to make?
11. Generally, do you believe candidates mostly tell the truth?
12. I feel I have sufficient information on the candidates to decide who to vote for

Section 2: Gender and Politics in Nigeria

1. Are you aware of the role of Women Groups in Women Political Participation?
2. Do you feel women have been socially marginalized from the voting/electioneering process?
3. If married, do you agree that your spouse influence your political choice?
4. If widowed, do you agree that your ex-husband's political belief influence your political choice?
5. If single, do you agree that your brother, father, or male friend's views influence your political choice?
6. Does the conception of your family's general political beliefs in any way affect your political choice? ***Family here could go as far as your extended family***.

Section 3: Religion and Politics in Nigeria

1. Which of the following best describes your religious affiliation?
2. Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of local councillorship candidates during general elections?
3. Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of governorship candidates during general elections?
4. Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of presidential candidates during general elections?
5. Do you believe only ALLAH/JESUS CHRIST/Gods decides the elect political candidate for each society?
6. Which of this do you believe is likely to lead to social change?
7. Is it wrong in the sight of ALLAH/JESUS CHRIST/Gods to choose political candidate of your own choice?
8. There is no connection between your political choices and what is right or wrong in the sight of Allah/God

Section 4: Political literacy

1. Do you feel that Nigeria is a democratic country?
2. In your opinion, how important are elections to democracy?
3. Do you vote in all elections for which you have been eligible to vote?
4. Do you feel that you are actively engaged in democracy?
5. Do you feel you have sufficient knowledge about all the parties and candidates to make an informed choice?
6. I feel I can determine which promises politicians make are trustworthy

Page 7: Thank you for your time.

Appendix B

Ref & Version: Post-Major Review

Ethics ID: 39745

Date: 30.01.2022



Participant Agreement Form

Full title of project: ("the Project") [The Interconnectedness of religion, political literacy, and voter choices for female Nigerian voters: Evidence from Southern and Northern Regions]

Name, position, and contact details of researcher: [Omowonuola Okunnu]

Name, position, and contact details of supervisor: [Professor Darren Lilleker and Dr Anastasia Veneti]

To be completed prior to data collection activity

Agreement to participate in the study

You should only agree to participate in the study if you agree with all the statements in this table and accept that participating will involve the listed activities.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (insert PI Sheet Ref & Version) and have been given access to the BU Research Participant Privacy Notice which sets out how we collect and use personal information (https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/governance/access-information/dataprotection-privacy).	
I have had an opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop participating in research activities at any time without giving a reason and I am free to decline to answer any question(s).	
I understand that taking part in the research will include the following activity/activities as part of the research:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being audio recorded during the project• my words will be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs without using my real name.	
I understand that, if I withdraw from the study, I will also be able to withdraw my data from further use in the study except where my data has been anonymised (as I cannot be identified) or it will be harmful to the project to have my data removed.	
I understand that my data may be included in an anonymised form within a dataset to be archived at BU's Online Research Data Repository.	
I understand that my data may be used in an anonymised form by the research team to support other research projects in the future, including future publications, reports, or presentations.	
	Initial box to agree
I consent to take part in the project on the basis set out above (Section A)	

_____ Name of participant (BLOCK CAPITALS)	_____ Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	_____ Signature
--	-------------------------------	--------------------

_____ Name of researcher (BLOCK CAPITALS)	_____ Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	_____ Signature
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Once a Participant has signed, **please sign 1 copy**, and take 2 photocopies:

- Original kept in the local investigator's file
- 1 copy to be kept by the participant (including a copy of PI Sheet)

Appendix C



Participant Information Sheet

The title of the research project

The Interconnectedness of religion, political literacy, and voter choices for female Nigerian voters: Evidence from Southern and Northern Regions **Invitation to take part**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

Although research on the determinants of political outcomes has been a subject of debate for many decades and perhaps centuries, findings are often awash with nuances and not on par with realities at the regional level. There are more questions arising from dynamics in the societies, related to political campaigning and social movements at the regional level; how political outcomes get driven by interactions with religious groups and interests; as well as the position of traditional religions in a developing country like Nigeria. The perception of religion by the government in Nigeria is mostly a tool for political mobilization. This has been a recurring key indicator in Nigeria's successive elections. However, there appear to be fragments of disparities in degrees of influence of religion on political activities at the regional levels. Most research conducted on this subject consider the general outlook of the influence of religion over political participation and electoral outcomes, but the outcomes of this research may not paint a true picture of the deeper contexts. Consequently, the aim of this project is to examine the independent and mediating effects of religion and literacy levels on voters' decision and electoral outcomes at regional levels amongst female voters in Nigeria. A mixedmethod approach will be adopted to ameliorate any contradictions between qualitative and quantitative findings, whilst also embedding the findings of this research in the experience of participants and stakeholders considered in the research. The findings of this research will contribute to academic debate and help understand the political dimensions of Nigeria's democracy and policy making.

The purpose of this interview is to collate your opinion on comparing the Interconnectedness of Religion and female participation in Politics between Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria, accounting specifically for the role of Literacy Level. The interview is anonymous, and it will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. All the information provided by you will be

used only for fulfilling the research purpose. Your opinion is valuable to me and my research team.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a Nigerian female political magnate.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a participant agreement form. We want you to understand what participation involves before you decide on whether to participate.

If you or any family member have an on-going relationship with BU or the research team, e.g., as a member of staff, as student or other service user, your decision on whether to take part (or continue to take part) will not affect this relationship in any way.

Can I change my mind about taking part?

Yes, you can stop participating in study activities at any time and without giving a reason.

If I change my mind, what happens to my information?

After you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any further information from or about you.

As regards information we have already collected before this point, your rights to access, change or move that information are limited. This is because we need to manage your information in specific ways for the research to be reliable and accurate. Further explanation about this is in the Personal Information section below.

What would taking part involve?

You will be asked to take part in an interview of about 30 minutes which can be online or faceto-face depending on your preference.

Will I be reimbursed for taking part?

You will not be compensated for your time; however, the output of this research will help develop Nigeria in terms of more representation for women.

What are the advantages and possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits to you participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help give a voice to women in Nigeria and help build the political structure, and for representation.

Whilst we do not anticipate any risks to you in taking part in this study, you may wish to withdraw at any time if you are not convenient with any of the questions.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

Questions will be asked with some options as regards your opinion.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio of the interview will be recorded anonymously. The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and the transcription of the recording(s) for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

How will my information be managed?

Bournemouth University (BU) is the organisation with overall responsibility for this study and the Data Controller of your personal information, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest, as part of our core function as a university.

Undertaking this research study involves collecting and/or generating information about you. We manage research data strictly in accordance with:

- Ethical requirements; and
- Current data protection laws. These control use of information about identifiable individuals, but do not apply to anonymous research data: "anonymous" means that we have either removed or not collected any pieces of data or links to other data which identify a specific person as the subject or source of a research result.

BU's [Research Participant Privacy Notice](#) sets out more information about how we fulfil our responsibilities as a data controller and about your rights as an individual under the data protection legislation. We ask you to read this Notice so that you can fully understand the basis on which we will process your personal information.

Research data will be used only for the purposes of the study or related uses identified in the Privacy Notice or this Information Sheet. To safeguard your rights in relation to your personal information, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible and control access to that data as described below.

Publication

You will not be able to be identified in any external reports or publications about the research without your specific consent*. Otherwise, your information will only be included in these materials in an anonymous form, i.e., you will not be identifiable.

Research results will be published in reputable academic journal, and on media outlets such as Punch Newspaper, Nigerian Tribune, etc.

Security and access controls

BU will hold the information we collect about you in hard copy in a secure location and on a BU, password protected secure network, where held electronically.

Personal information which has not been anonymised will be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals and when this is necessary for the purposes of the research or another purpose identified in the Privacy Notice. This may include giving access to BU staff or others responsible for monitoring and/or audit of the study, who need to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations.

Further use of your information

The information collected about you may be used in an anonymous form to support other research projects in the future and access to it in this form will not be restricted. It will not be possible for you to be identified from this data. To enable this use, anonymised data will be added to BU's online Research Data Repository: this is a central location where data is stored, which is accessible to the public.

Keeping your information if you withdraw from the study

If you withdraw from active participation in the study, we will keep information which we have already collected from or about you, if this has on-going relevance or value to the study. This may include your personal identifiable information. As explained above, your legal rights to access, change, delete or move this information are limited as we need to manage your information in specific ways for the research to be reliable and accurate. However, if you have concerns about how this will affect you personally, you can raise these with the research team when you withdraw from the study.

You can find out more about your rights in relation to your data and how to raise queries or complaints in our Privacy Notice.

Retention of research data

Project governance documentation, including copies of signed **participant agreements**: we keep this documentation for a long period after completion of the research, so that we have records of how we conducted the research and who took part. The only personal information in this documentation will be your name and signature, and we will not be able to link this to any anonymised research results.

Research results:

As described above, during the study we will anonymise the information we have collected about you as an individual. This means that we will not hold your personal information in identifiable form after we have completed the research activities.

You can find more specific information about retention periods for personal information in our Privacy Notice.

We keep anonymised research data indefinitely, so that it can be used for another research as described above.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Professor Darren Lilleker or Dr Anastasia Veneti

In case of complaints

Any concerns about the study should be directed to Bournemouth University by email to researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk.

Finally

If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed participant agreement form to keep.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.



Post-Major Review Version

Showing

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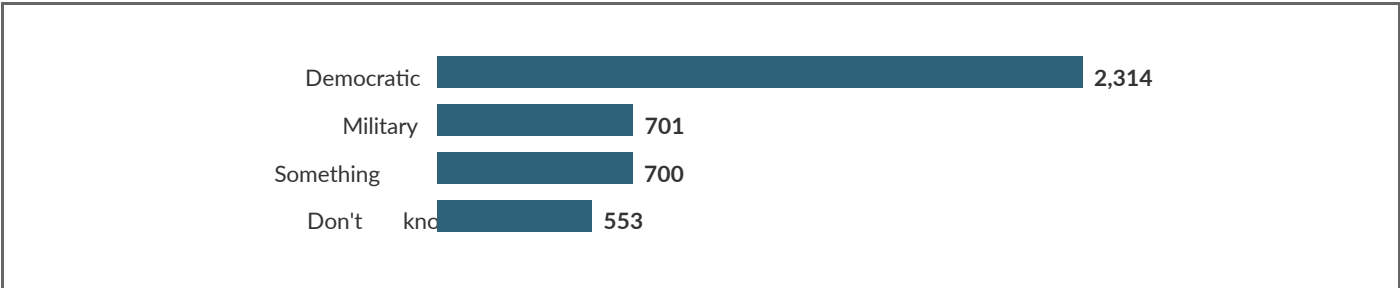
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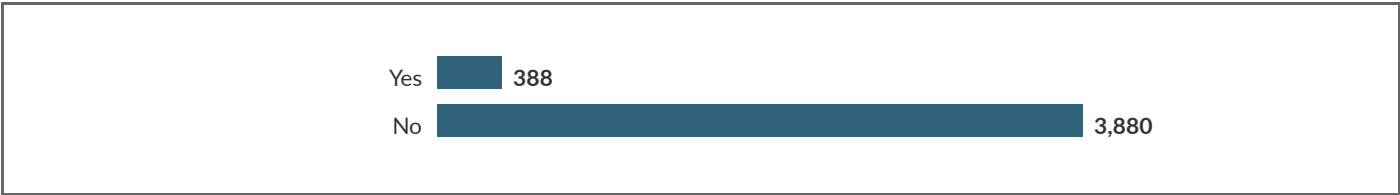
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1 What governance regimedo you consider most effective for



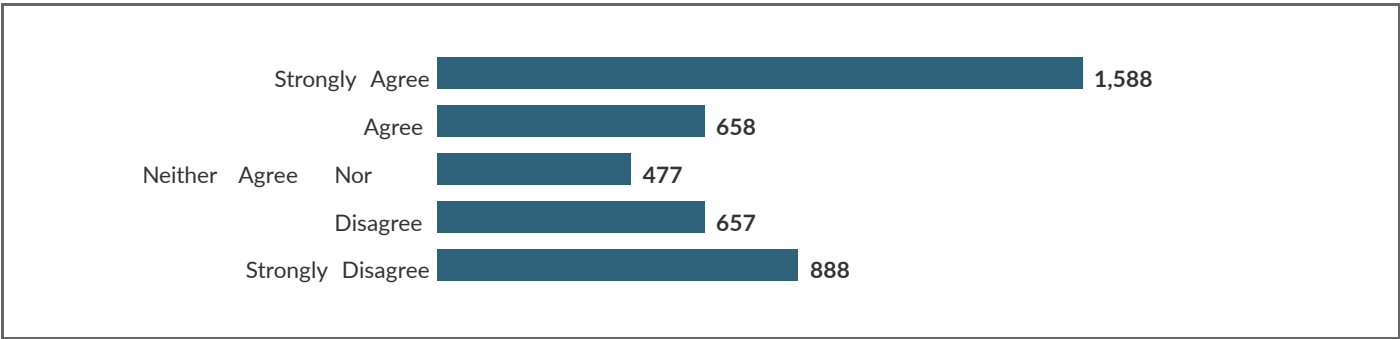
2 Do you belongto a political



3 What factor determines your choice of a candidate?

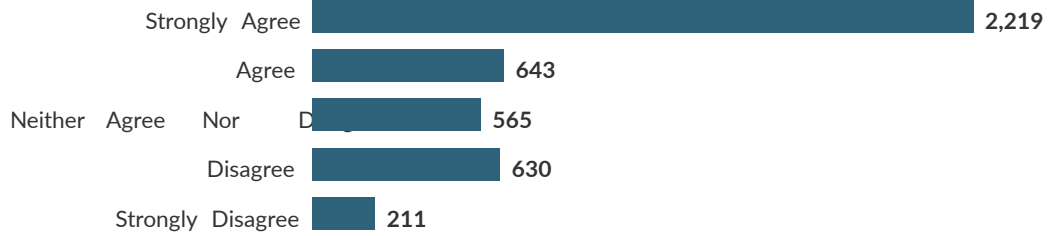
3.1 The party the candidate

3.1.a The party the candidate



3.2 The character of the

3.2.a The character of the



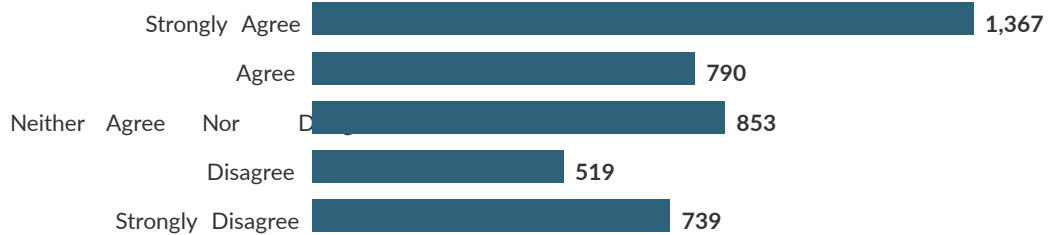
3.3 The ethnic region the candidate is

3.3.a The ethnic region the candidate is



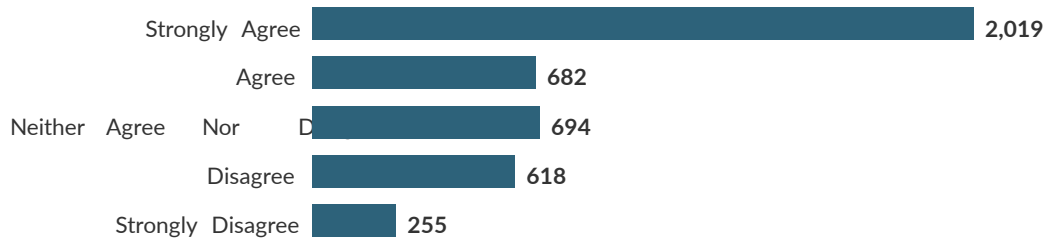
3.4 The recommendation of political or credible

3.4.a The recommendation of political or credible



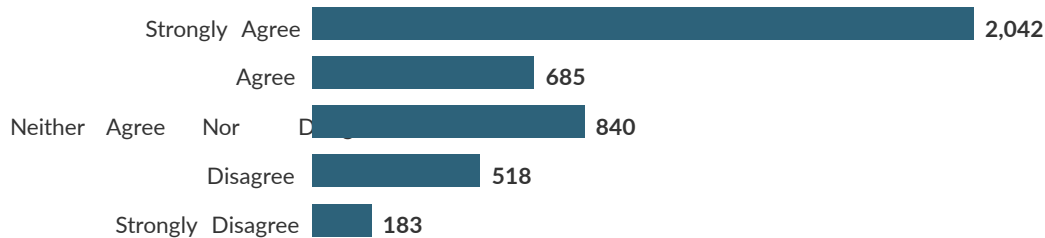
3.5 What the media says about the candidate

3.5.a What the media says about the candidate



3.6 The main policies or campaign

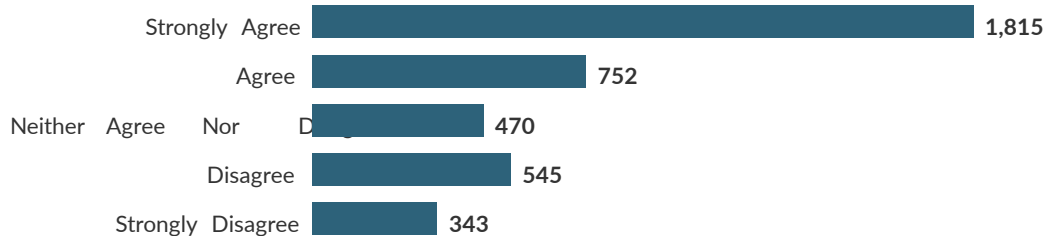
3.6.a The main policies or campaign



4 I am most likely to receive trustworthy information about political candidate

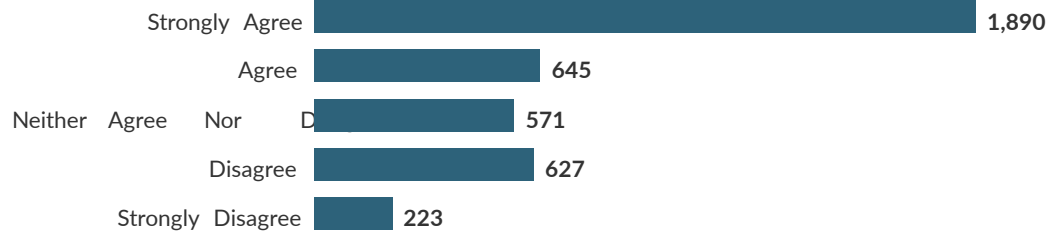
4.1 TV

4.1.a TV



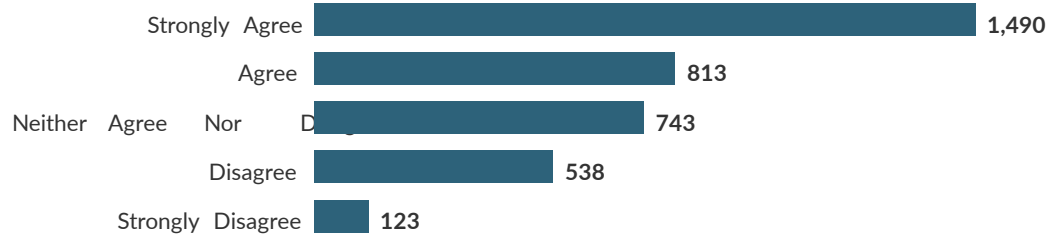
4.2 Radio

4.2.a Radio



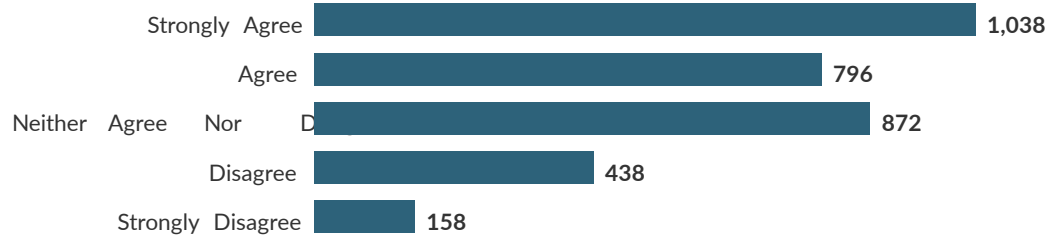
4.3 Print Media (e.g. Newspaper, Magazines)

4.3.a Print Media (e.g. Newspaper, Magazines)



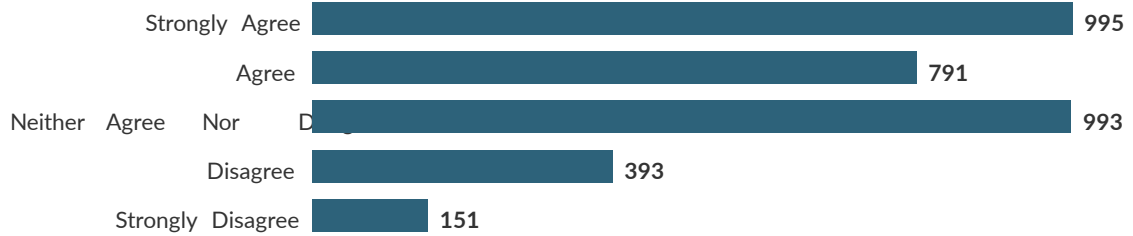
4.4 Online Blogs, Articles, YouTube.

4.4.a Online Blogs, Articles, YouTube.



4.5 Social Media: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook,

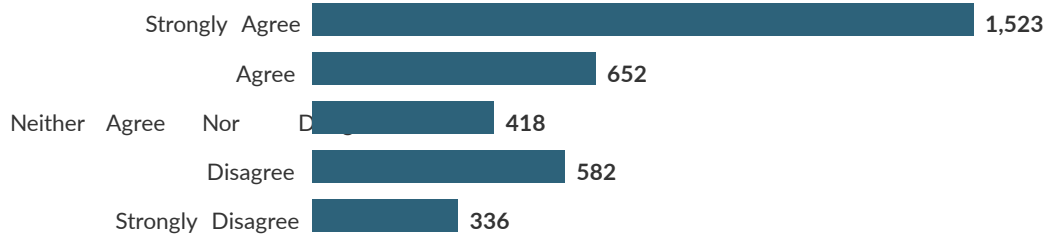
4.5.a Social Media: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook,



5 On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the federal

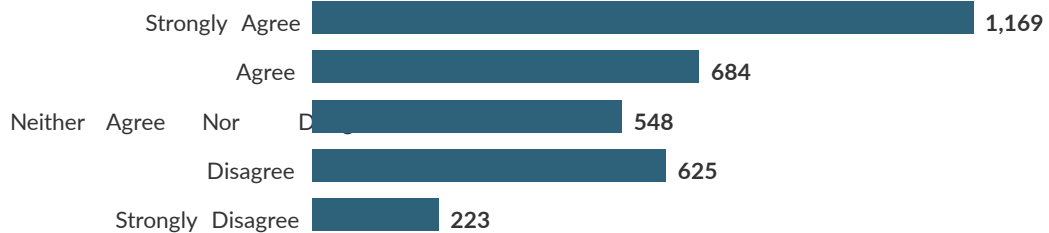
5.1 Political party of the

5.1.a Political party of the



5.2 Religion of the political

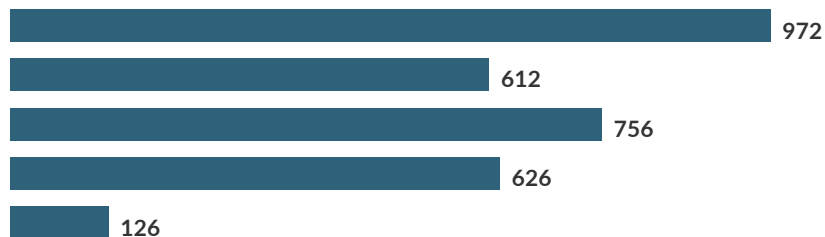
5.2.a Religion of the political



5.3 The ethnic region the candidate is

5.3.a The ethnic region the candidate is

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



5.4 The recommendation of political or credible

5.4.a The recommendation of political or credible



5.5 I research all information channels before making my

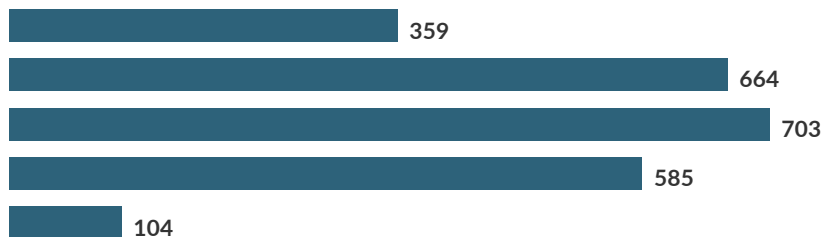
5.5.a I research all information channels before making my



5.6 Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in

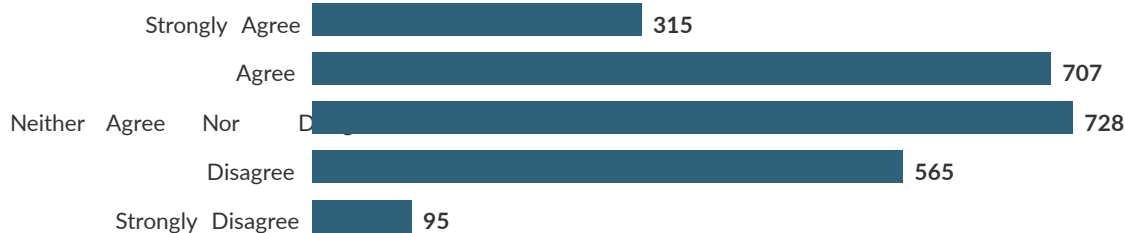
5.6.a Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



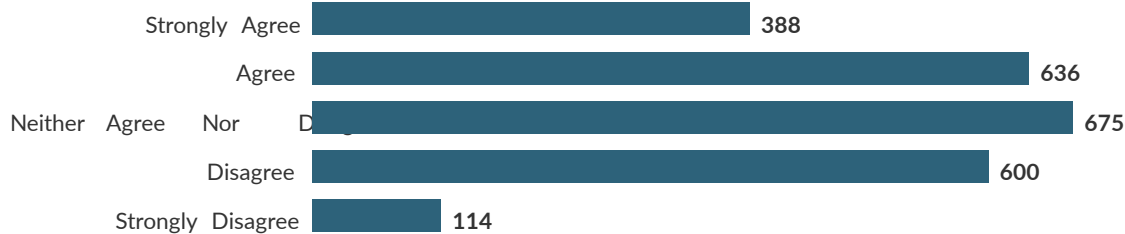
5.7 Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people

5.7.a Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people



5.8 The family upbringing of the candidate

5.8.a The family upbringing of the candidate



5.9 Manifesto reading and campaign / sessions hosted by political

5.9.a Manifesto reading and campaign sessions hosted by political

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



5.10 Political debates

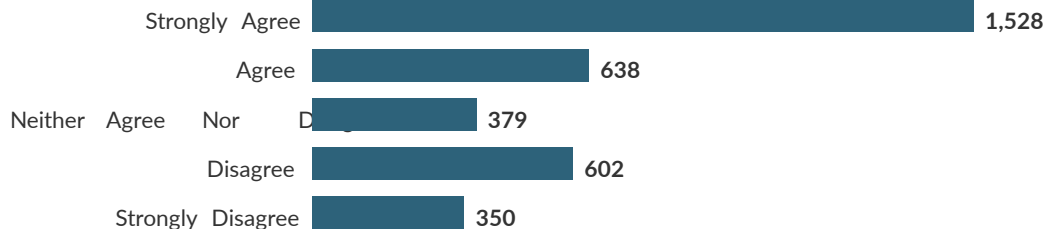
5.10.a Political debates



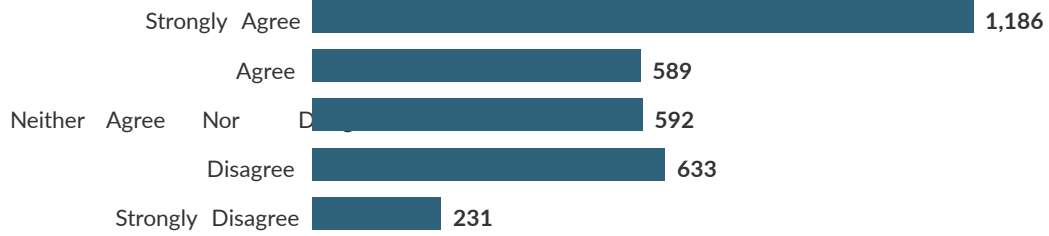
6 On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the state

6.1 Political party of the

6.1.a Political party of the

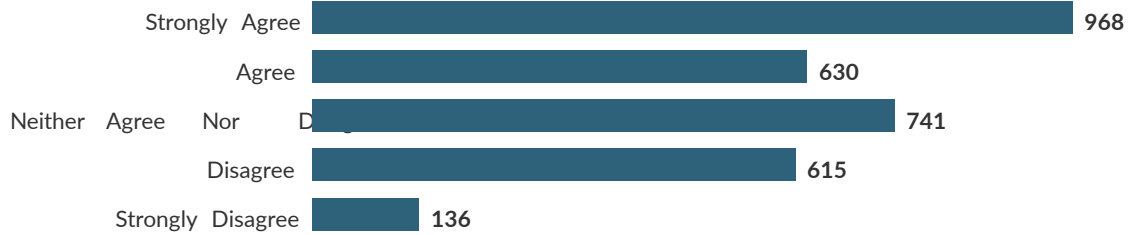


6.2 Religion of the political



6.3 The ethnic region the candidate is

6.3.a The ethnic region the candidate is



6.4 The recommendation of political or credible

6.4.a The recommendation of political or credible



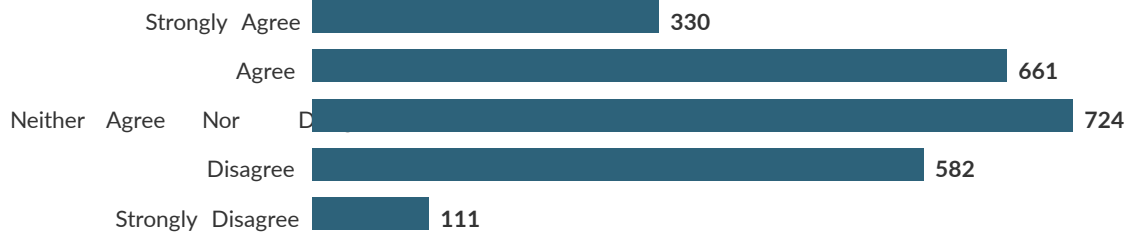
6.5 I research all information channels before making my

6.5.a I research all information channels before making my



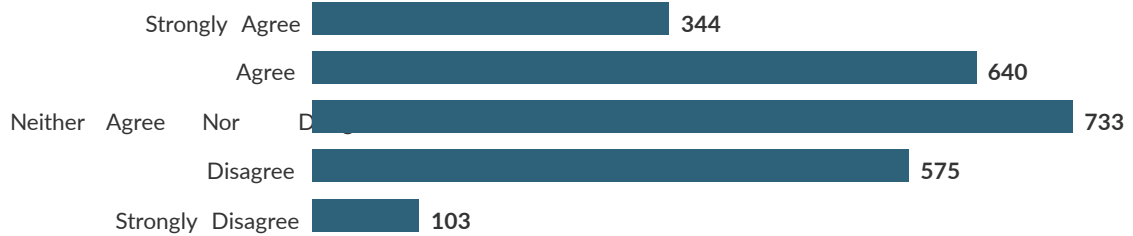
6.6 Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in

6.6.a Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in



6.7 Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people

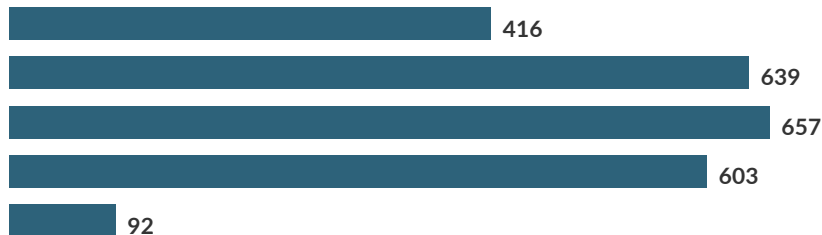
6.7.a Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people



6.8 The family upbringing of the candidate

6.8.a The family upbringing of the candidate

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



6.9 Manifesto reading and campaign sessions hosted by political

6.9.a Manifesto reading and campaign sessions hosted by political



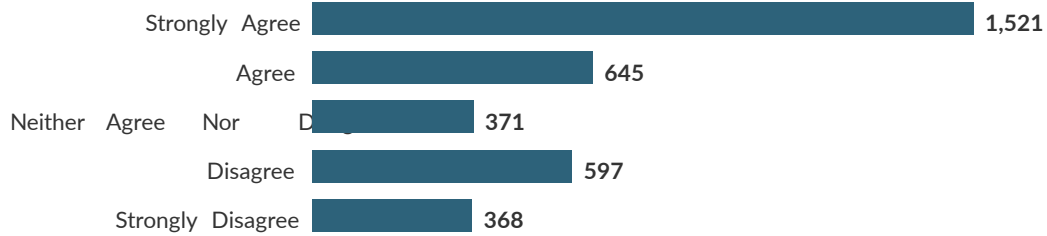
6.10 Political debates

6.10.a Political debates



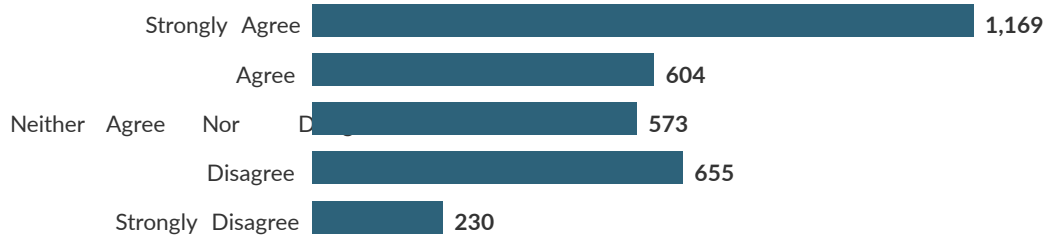
7 On what basis do you assess a political candidate at the local

7.1 Political party of the



7.2 Religion of the political

7.2.a Religion of the political



7.3 The ethnic region the candidate is

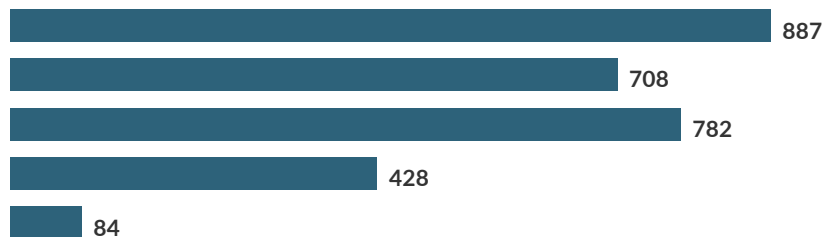
7.3.a The ethnic region the candidate is



7.4 The recommendation of political or credible

7.4.a The recommendation of political or credible

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



7.5 I research all information channels before making my

7.5.a I research all information channels before making my



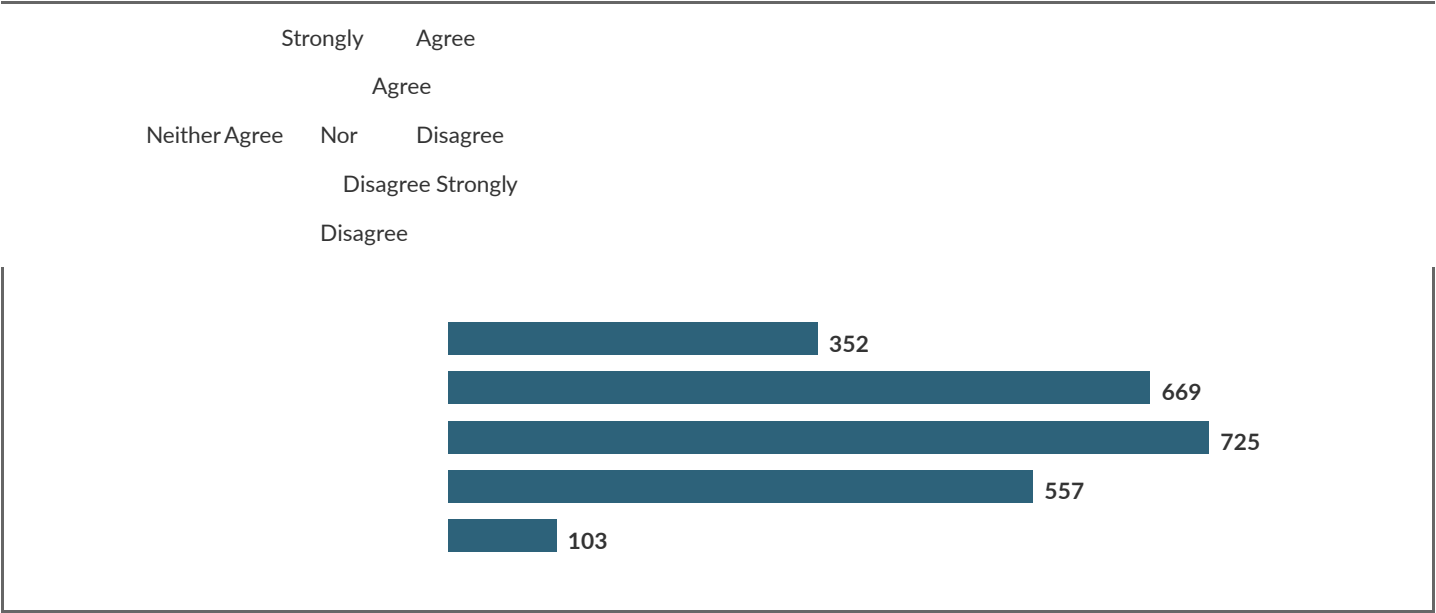
7.6 Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in

7.6.a Number of fundraisers the candidate has done in



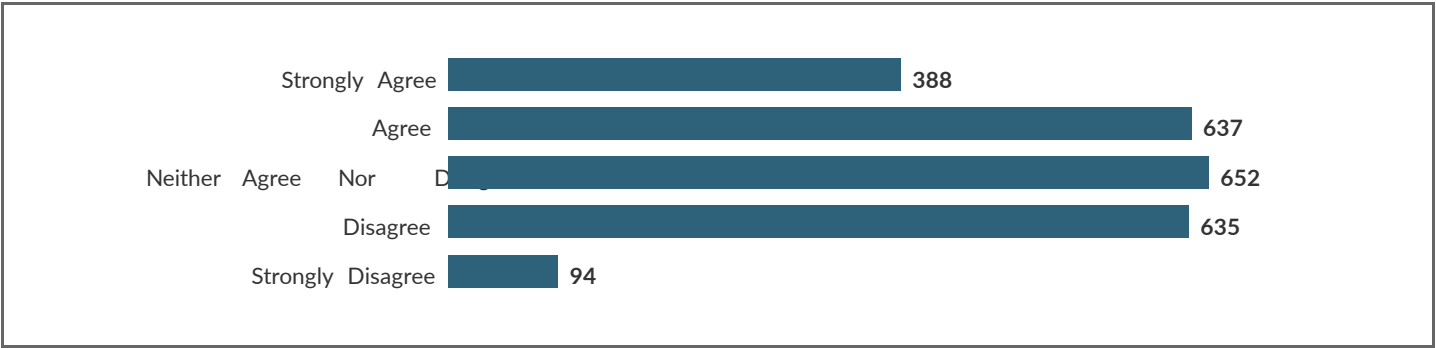
7.7 Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people

7.7.a Attend events where the candidate is addressing the people



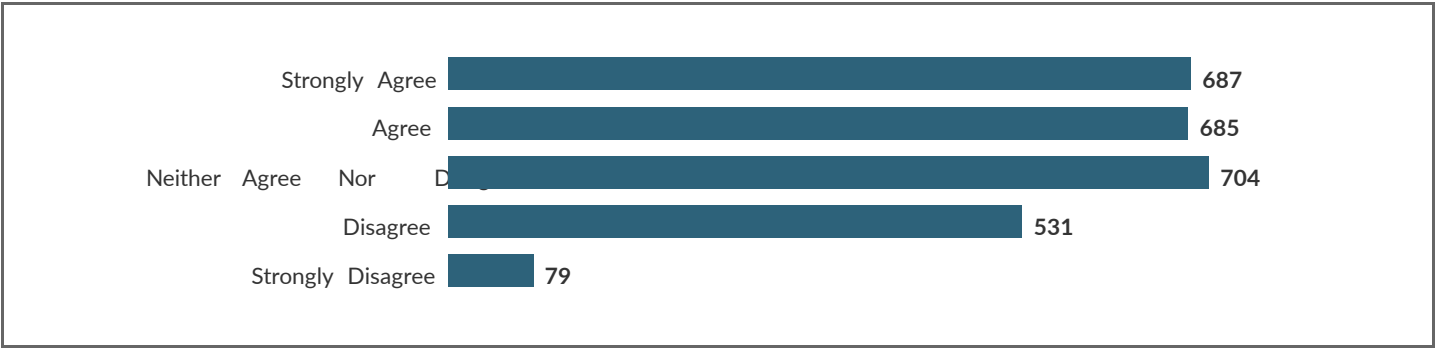
7.8 The family upbringing of the candidate

7.8.a The family upbringing of the candidate



7.9 Manifesto reading and campaign sessions hosted by political

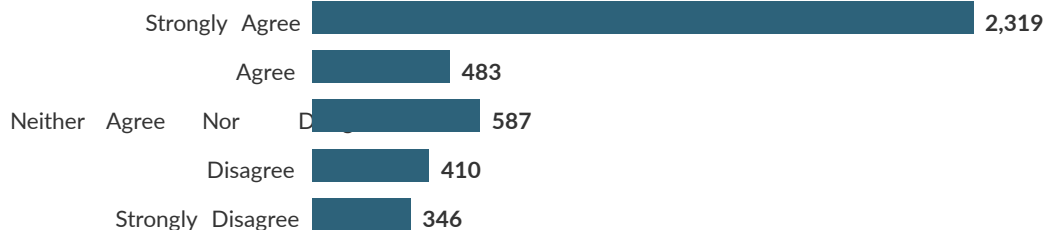
7.9.a Manifesto reading and campaign sessions hosted by political



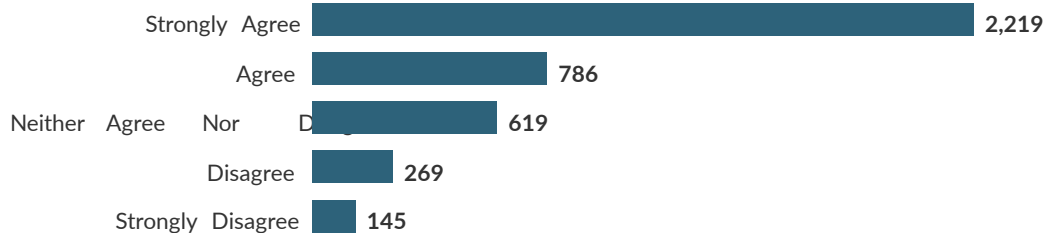
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



8 Do you agree that the character of the political candidate matter when making a decision?



9 Generally, do you feel the information you receive via TV, Radio, Print and other media place them in good light?



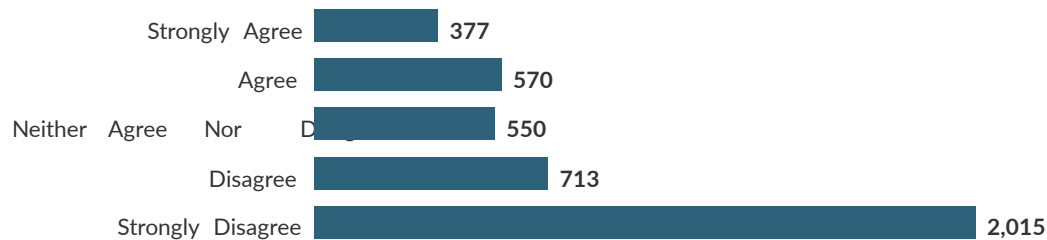
10 Do you agree that political candidates do an excellent job in explaining the issues leading to an election?



11 Do you agree that political candidates do an excellent job

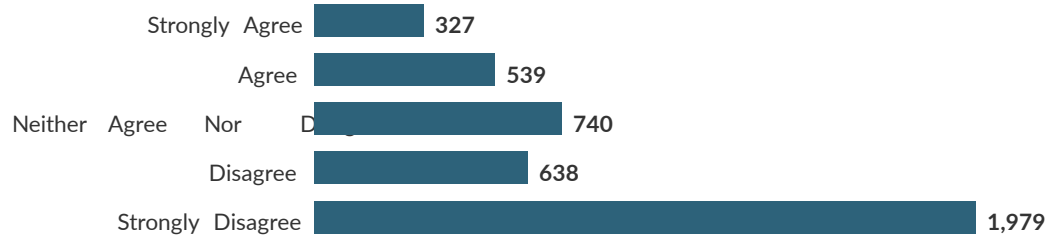
11.1 Best policies for you

11.1.a Best policies for you

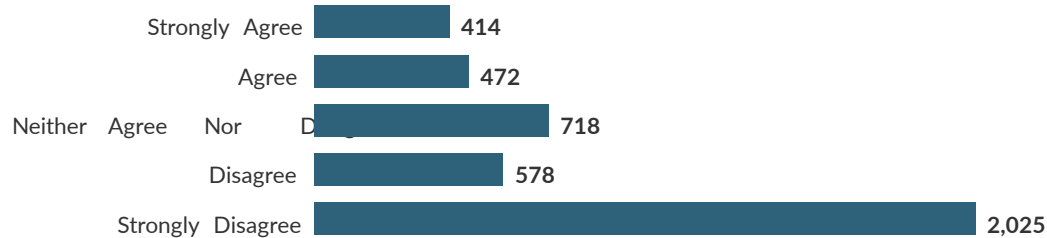


11.2 Best policies for the

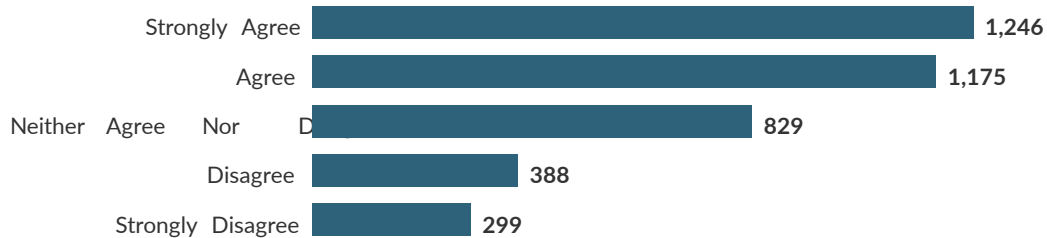
11.2.a Best policies for the



12 Generally, do you believe candidates mostly tell the



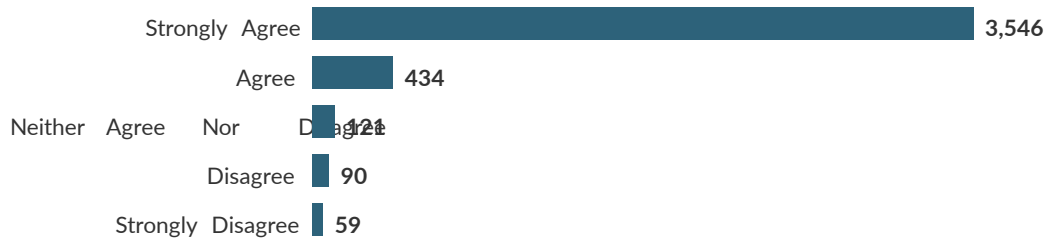
13 I feel I have sufficient information on the candidates to decide who



14 Are you aware of the role of Women Groups in Women



15 Do you feel women have been socially marginalised from the voting/election



15.a If married, do you agree that your spouse influence your



15.b If widowed, do you agree that your ex-husband's political belief influence yo

Strongly Agree

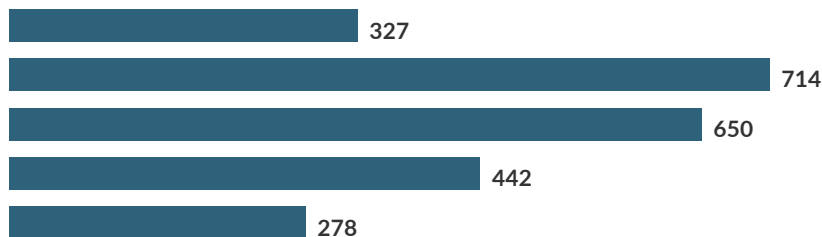
Agree

Agree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Disagree Strongly

Disagree



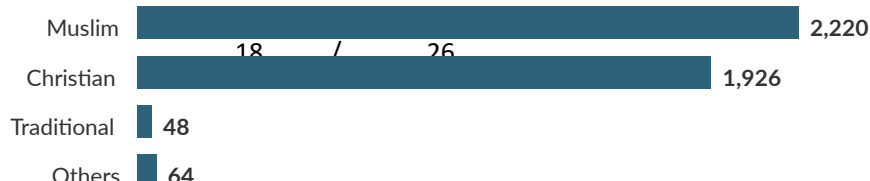
15.c if single, do you agree that your brother, father or male friend's views influence your choice?



16 Does the conception of your family's general political beliefs in any way influence your choice?



17 Which of the following best describes your religious affiliation?



18 Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of local councillorship elections?



19 Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of governorship candidates elections?

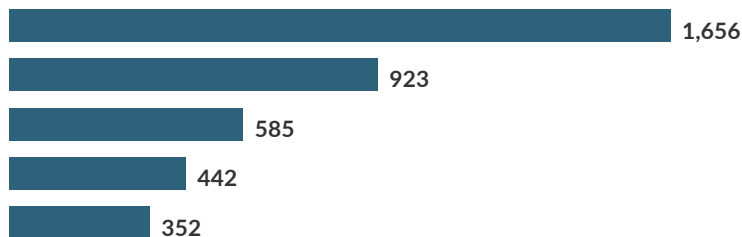


20 Does your religious affiliation influence your choice of presidential candidates elections?



21 Do you believe only ALLAH/JESUS CHRIST/Gods decides the elect political society?

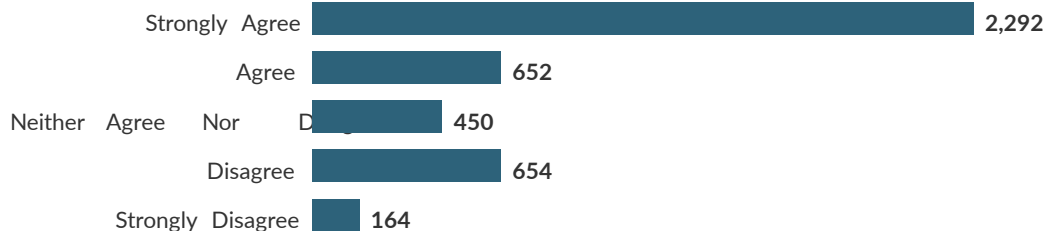
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



22 Which of this do you believe is likely to lead to

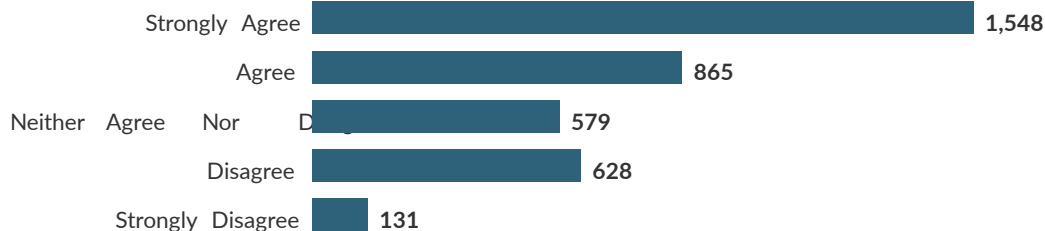
22.1 Collective Reawakening

22.1.a Collective Reawakening

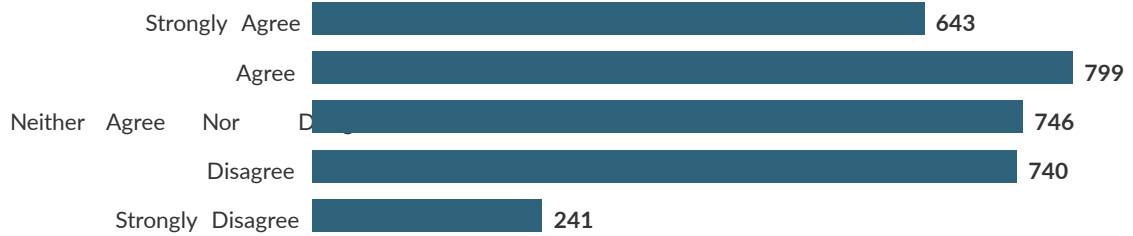


22.2 Massive praying and

22.2.a Massive praying and



22.3 International involvement



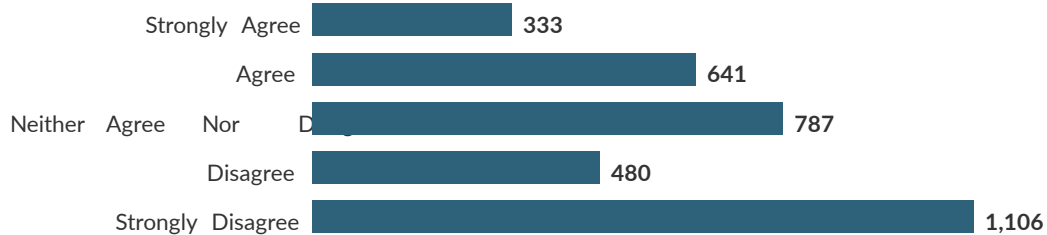
22.4 Military takeover

22.4.a Military takeover



22.5 Change is not

22.5.a Change is not



23 Is it wrong in the sight of ALLAH/JESUS CHRIST/Gods to choose political choice?

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree



24 There is no connection between your political choices and what is right or wrong with Allah/God



25 Do you feel that Nigeria is a



26 In your opinion, how important are elections to



27 Do you vote in all 22 / 26 elections for which you have been eligible

28 Do you feel that you are actively engaged in



29 Do you feel you have sufficient knowledge about all the parties and candidates you are informed choice?



30 I feel I am able to determine which promises politicians make are



31

31.1 The only way to ensure democracy survives in Nigeria is to participate

31.1.a The only way to ensure democracy survives in Nigeria is to participate



31.2 I ensure I consume as much information as possible during an election choice

31.2.a I ensure I consume as much information as possible during an election choice



31.3 I am able to recognize corruption in politics

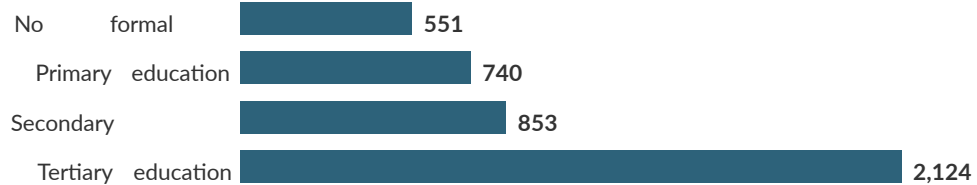
31.3.a I am able to recognize corruption in politics



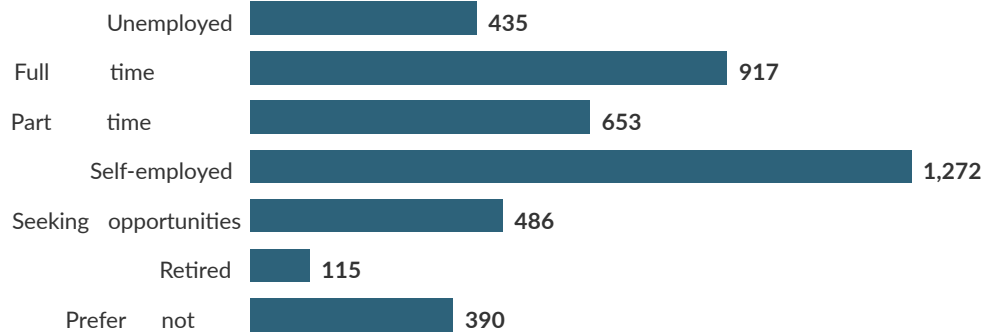
32 What is your



33 What is your level of



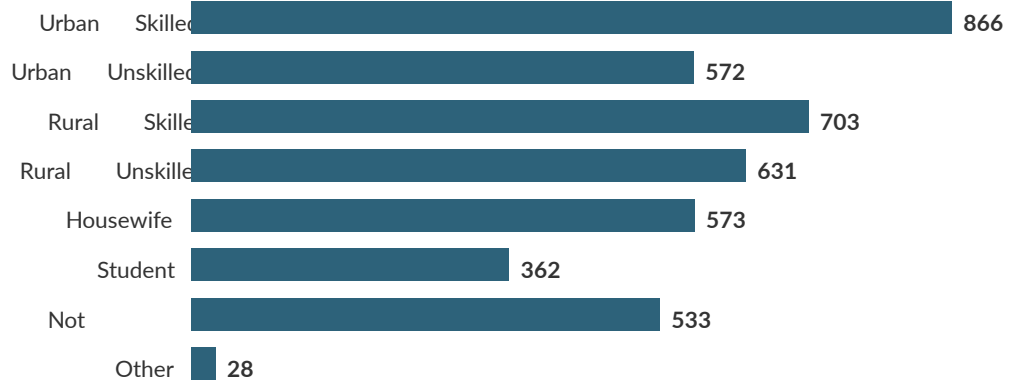
34 What is your employment status?



35 What part of Nigeria are you



36 What is your occupation?



36.a If you selected Other, please specify:

Showing first 5 of 28 responses

NGO

863558-863540-96568329

Development	worker	863558-863540-96568987
Civil	Servant	863558-863540-96608660
Thanks		863558-863540-96650657
An	entrepreneur	863558-863540-96762436