



The Influence of Ethnicity on Electoral Decisions: A Study of Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election

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Abstract. Voting behavior in democracies has long been a subject of interest for political scientists, sociologists, and researchers. It not only determines the composition of governments but also reflects the political dynamics of a nation. In Nigeria, ethnicity has historically played a crucial role in shaping electoral choices, influencing democratic representation and political stability. This study examines the extent to which ethnicity influenced the voting behavior of the electorate during the 2023 Presidential Elections in Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. The findings reveal that ethnicity significantly influenced voter decisions, with approximately 75% of respondents acknowledging its impact. Many interview participants highlighted the lack of comprehensive civic education as a major challenge, advocating for voter education programs that emphasize candidate qualifications over ethnic affiliations. This study contributes to the discourse on identity politics and democratic governance in Nigeria by highlighting the challenges posed by ethnic-driven voting patterns. To mitigate the negative effects of ethnic polarization in elections, the study recommends targeted civic education initiatives led by the Nigerian government, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), and educational institutions. Implementing a civic education curriculum that fosters national unity and encourages policy-driven electoral choices will be critical to strengthening Nigeria's democratic process.

Keywords: Voting, Election, & ethnicity

1. Introduction

Voting behavior in democracies has long been a topic of interest and research for political scientists, sociologists, and researchers worldwide. The way

citizens cast their votes in elections not only determines the composition of governments but also reflects the pulse of a nation's political dynamics. From early investigations into the influence of religion and social class on voting patterns to contemporary inquiries into the impact of social media and identity politics, the field has continuously evolved. In democratic nations, understanding how and it is crucial to understand why individuals vote the way they do to maintain the integrity of the democratic system. There is a widespread impact of ethnicity on voting behavior and multifaceted issues within the realm of political science and democratic governance. Ethnicity and regionalism have historically played significant roles in shaping voting preferences in Nigeria. Assessing how these identity-based factors affect electoral choices in the 2023 election can provide insights into the enduring power of identity politics and its impact on democratic representation.

While diversity is a hallmark of many modern democracies, the impact of ethnicity on voting behavior often raises concerns and challenges the core principles of political equality, representation, and the collective decision-making process. Ethnic divisions have led to the polarization of voting behavior, where individuals predominantly vote for candidates or parties that align with their ethnic background. Such polarization can create a fragmented and less cohesive society, hampering national unity and social cohesion. Towoju, A. J., & Abdullahi, A. (2023). The exploitation of ethnic identities for political gain often results in candidates and parties appealing to ethnic interests rather than broader societal concerns. This can lead to the prioritization of ethnic issues at the expense of broader policy considerations. In some instances, ethnic minorities face barriers to voting, such as voter ID laws or gerrymandering, which disproportionately affect their participation in the democratic process, which was experienced in the last

Presidential Election in Nigeria. The equal representation principle may be compromised by certain practices, negative preconceptions and prejudices associated with certain ethnic groups affect the perception of voters. Such stigmatization influences voting behavior and results in the exclusion of marginalized ethnic communities from the political mainstream. The focus of this research however is to comprehensively determine the extent to which ethnicity Influence voting behavior of Electorates in Nigeria during the 2023 Presidential Elections.

2. The Concept of Ethnicity in Politics

In politics, ethnicity is a strong and persistent influence. Identity manipulation as a weapon of governance has been stressed by African political identities. Matshanda, N., and D. Thompson (2023). It is crucial in determining political systems, voting patterns, the creation of policies, conflicts, and the establishment of peace. The idea of ethnicity in politics is broad and intricate, including a variety of topics including identity, representation, and government. Results show that identity negotiations are based on how people see their occupation and the meaning that is associated with it. Towoju, A. J., & Asiyanbi, K. A. (2022). This paper critically develops the idea of ethnicity in politics by looking at its definition, historical foundations, function in political processes, difficulties it presents, and effects on governments and society. Similarly, because of the unique relationships political parties form with these groups, ethnicity also serves as a barrier. Towoju, A. J., & Asiyanbi, K. A. (2022).

The concept of ethnicity is intricate and multidimensional, including several facets of human identity and culture. When viewed in terms of political mobilization against racial oppression, the concept of transnational minority gains greater normative consistency than when it is justified in terms of cultural acknowledgment. S. Latour (2023).

It speaks about the social and cultural characteristics that set one group of people apart from another and characterize them. Drawing on the finding that nations in eastern Europe without organized ethnic minorities have seen a dramatic decline in democratic norms J. Rovny (2023). Shared language, religion, traditions, customs, and a feeling of shared history are a few examples of these characteristics. An individual's ethnicity is a crucial component of who they are and frequently influences their political, social, and cultural connections.

Many of the notions that are now the outcome of empirical research on ethnic ethnocultural identity are

the result of reflections that are not always able to be applied to the correct degree, according to an examination of trends in the evolution of this contemporary problem. E. Fursova (2023). Cultural traits that set one group apart from another are intimately linked to ethnicity, and belonging to an ethnic minority is a marker for a number of disadvantages. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L., Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023).

This can include distinct cultural customs, rituals, and practices as well as the language, dialects, and accents used within the community. Certain holiday customs, traditional attire, and food preferences, for instance, might be significant components of ethnic identity. Depending on one's race and ethnicity, political problems might reflect either threat or contempt in different ways. Jin, R., Gonzalez, F., and Wang, I. (2023). A shared narrative or historical context may serve as an ethnic identity marker. There may be a need for required race and ethnicity fields if race and ethnicity documentation is incomplete, as this could result in a lack of awareness of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). Stories of migration, settlement, hardships, and victories that are passed down through the generations are frequently a part of this common past. The idea of citizenship in multicultural citizenship ought to be stronger in its political foundations and free from metaphysical presumptions. Gianni, M. (2023). It contributes to the development of a shared memory among ethnic group members and advances our knowledge of the brain mechanisms behind discriminatory and prejudiced ethnic attitudes as well as the perception and cognition of ethnicity. Keltikangas-Järvinen, L., Saarinen, A., and Ravaja, N. (2023).

While socioeconomic and political factors seem to have less of an impact, ethnicity might be associated with a specific geographic location or place of origin. Regional effects and voter participation rates for ethnic minorities also seem to be significant drivers. A. Clark (2023).

People who identify as belonging to the same ethnic group frequently have historical ties to a particular region or homeland, and they may view it as an essential component of who they are. For this reason, identity group stratification must be formally included as a pillar alongside political and economic understandings of any political economy framework. Green, A., Chelwa, G., and Hamilton, D. (2023).

Political ideology is shaped by semantic representations of political concepts processed in an

environment free of any polarizing agenda, and these representations bias how real-world political information is construed into a polarized perspective. These geographic ties can be a source of cultural pride and connection. Baar, J., Rodriguez, P., Bruin, D., and FeldmanHall, O. (2023). Ethnicity can also have a big influence from religion. Religious organizations, rituals, and beliefs may be shared among ethnic groups. Additionally, the results demonstrate that racial, gender, and political ideologies are determinants of agreement. Grayer, M., and Barnes, A. (2023). give new insights into the roles of peers and families as significant socializing agents during the negotiation of ethnic and national identities among immigrant youth. In certain cases, religion and ethnicity are closely entwined, and people may identify with an ethnic group based on their religious affiliation. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). Belief in kinship or common ancestry can also characterize ethnically perceived deservingness; these characteristics are important to comprehend potential prejudice when ethnic minority in the welfare state are confronted by street-level bureaucrats. Terum, L., Øverbye, E., and Fekjaer, S. (2023).

This could be following one's ancestors to a shared ancestral line or viewing the ethnic group as "one big family." Family trees and genealogical data frequently show ancestry; ethnic identification is closely linked to the demand for closure and cultural acuity. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Social identification, or the sensation that oneself and others identify as belonging to a specific ethnic group, is frequently associated with ethnicity. Put another way, when a particular political party is in power, people are more inclined to understand democracy in illiberal terms, such as stressing the need of deferring to authority. J. Bryan (2023).

This identity, which can be self-defined or assigned by society, influences how people interact with one another and create group attachments. It also sheds light on the dynamics of political representation in civilizations that have experienced war. J. Barceló and M. Barín (2023). The old traditions of governance can offer a political formula that democratically chooses leaders and organizes governance, overriding the influence of political parties and ethnicity. This formula is based on societal interests and concerns and is supported by non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and professional associations.

Language is a crucial aspect of ethnicity. Fanso, V. (2023). An ethnic group's common language or dialect can act as a unifying factor, enabling members to

communicate and express their identity. Nevertheless, religious institutions belonging to ethnic minorities engage in political activities and support their demands for self-governance. L. Csáji (2023). Various languages can represent various ethnic groups. In general, the city's population settlement patterns appear to be more shaped by the class dimension than the ethnic dimension. Russo, A., Benassi, D., and Consolazio, D. (2023). Majority youth use cultural repertoires of ethnic purity and "normal" youthfulness to manage their shifting social positions, but this also begs the question of whether they can use cultural repertoires that do not imply nativist white identity politics. A sense of belonging and loyalty to the ethnic group is essential to ethnicity. Verschraegen, G., Clycq, N., and Driezen, A. (2023).

A sense of solidarity, a sense of belonging to a distinct community, and a dedication to maintaining their cultural legacy are common among members of an ethnic group. Moreover, ethnic lobbying groups can employ normative and strategic framing techniques in their lobbying campaigns to further their particular goals. DemiNr, T. (2023). We find that a set of attachments often called civic nationalism—including patriotism, national identity, and respect for one's country's institutions—are connected with better citizenship on virtually all of our outcomes, whereas ethnic nationalism is frequently connected with worse citizenship. It's important to note that ethnicity is not a fixed or universally defined concept. Roberts, A., and L. Dražanová (2023).

It may be pliable and susceptible to alter throughout time. People may identify more with more than one ethnic group or believe that other aspects of their identity, such as nationality or personal beliefs, are more important. However, dividing benefits fairly among stakeholders, planning public spaces in the village rationally, and preserving the collective memory and cultural identity of the village as a tourist destination are all effective ways to realize the governance of ethnic-minority villages. Li, X., and Fan, H. (2023). The results of this dynamics study emphasize the significance of the family as a variable in political analysis. Ethnicity can have a substantial impact on a number of elements of life, including political representation, social interactions, access to resources, and group dynamics. Bellettini, G., Schafer, J., Ceroni, C., Cantoni, E., and Monfardini, C. (2023). In a multicultural and diverse culture, it can also affect how people see themselves and how others see them. A key concept in social science and anthropology is the idea of ethnicity as a social construct. Trends in the contemporary issue of ethnic ethnocultural identity demonstrate that many of the constructed concepts are

still the product of reflections that are sometimes difficult to apply to the right extent rather than being the outcome of empirical research. E. Fursova (2023).

It highlights that human social interactions and how societies define and classify the sociocultural foundations of ethnic relations in the context of migration and integration, as well as identifying potential areas of social exclusion between or cultural division within groups, are what produce ethnicity rather than being an innate or biologically determined trait. In 2023, Segersven, O., Arminen, I., and Simonen, M. Genetics and biology do not determine one's ethnicity. Apart from the positive approach of showcasing the discourses of good neighborliness and coexistence as represented by a unique local identity, they also suggest a de-ethnicizing approach to undermine the figures that contradict the former. Ö. Cetin (2023). In contrast to physical traits like blood type or skin color, ethnicity is not a set quality that a person has from birth.

They identify as "permanent sojourners"; they are eclectic but tend to maintain a cultural cognition ordered around their homeland culture; they have multiple contacts across ethnic groups and reserve cultural differences in social interactions. Rather, it is shaped and defined by cultural, social, and historical factors. Chen, S., and Liu, J. (2023). Ethnicity is fluid and subject to change. The setting provided by the curriculum, opportunities for discussion, peer interaction, and the perception of representation from one's own racial or ethnic group were all factors in fostering a sense of belonging. Usher, E., Han, J., Abney, J., Cole, A., DiGiacomo, D., & Patterson, J. (2023). It is not a category that is constant or stagnant. expands the growing body of empirical evidence on the relationship between parental ethnicity and adolescent development and is conducive to policy recommendations for interventions in the development of adolescents with ethnic minority parents. People's perceptions and definitions of their ethnic identity can change as societies evolve, interactions occur, and cultural elements shift. Sheng, D., Chen, Y., Bai, Y., & Lyu, L. (2023). Since ethnicity is subject to social meanings and classifications, these findings offer fresh perspectives on the socialization roles that families and peers play when young immigrants negotiate their national and ethnic identities. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). It's not a term that is accepted by all societies, and what is regarded as an ethnic group in one may not be in another. In actuality, it's a very vague idea, and it's far from having an objective equivalent to race or ethnicity. Neale, B., Panofsky, A., Sohail, M., Zhang, S., Dauda, B., Molina, S., Allen, D., Fuentes, A., Ghosh, N., Mauro,

M., Neale, B., & Lewis, A. (2023). Ethnic groupings are defined and classified by societies and institutions according to common cultural markers, which can differ from location to location.

The necessity for required race and ethnicity fields is suggested by the variable completion of race and ethnicity paperwork, which can result in a poor understanding of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). Language, religion, customs, traditions, and cultural practices all have a significant impact on ethnicity. This emphasizes the significance of taking internal factors like the desire to learn one's ancestral language into account when analyzing ethnic identity. In 2023, Tram, J., Huang, A., and Lopez, J. Understanding the neural processes involved in ethnicity perception and cognition, as well as ethnic prejudices and discrimination, is enhanced by these cultural traits, which are acquired and transmitted through socialization and interaction with one's cultural environment rather than being predetermined by one's genetics. Keltikangas-Järvinen, L., Saarinen, A., and Ravaja, N. (2023). An individual's social identity is greatly influenced by their ethnicity, and being a member of an ethnic minority is a marker for a number of disadvantages. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L., Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023). The class dimension appears to predominate over the ethnic dimension in determining population settlement patterns inside the city. It is frequently a component of an individual's self-concept and can impact how they relate to others both inside and outside of their ethnic group. Russo, A., Benassi, D., and Consolazio, D. (2023).

Ethnic identification is closely associated with the need for closure and cultural intelligence, since people frequently identify with their ethnic group as a means of expressing their shared cultural heritage and experiences. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Perceived differences are frequently used to define ethnicity, although these distinctions can be very subjective and change depending on the multidimensional trust measure and the generational status and ethnicity interaction. Murphy, K., Sargeant, E., and Ali, M. (2023). It is maintained that the concept of citizenship in multicultural citizenship should be independent of metaphysical assumptions and stronger in its political underpinnings. What one society may consider a distinct ethnic group; another may view as a subgroup or regional variation of a larger ethnic category. Gianni, M. (2023). People's interactions and the environment in which they live might influence their ethnicity. Ethnic identity formation and maintenance can be influenced by historical events, political boundaries, migratory patterns, and urbanization. For

individualized, multidisciplinary treatment, considerations related to ethnicity and place of birth must be taken into account. The following people are listed in the same order: Sheikh, J., Khalil, H., Shaikh, S., Hebbbar, M., Zia, N., Wicks, S., Jayaprakash, S., Narendran, A., Subramanian, A., Malhotra, K., Chapman, R., Gillett, C., Gleeson, H., Robinson, L., Chu, J., Lathia, T., Selvan, C., O'Reilly, M., Manolopoulos, K., Arlt, W., & Kempegowda, P. (2023). Identity politics, in which groups organize around a common ethnic identity to fight for rights, interests, or political objectives, frequently revolves around ethnicity. This suggests that, in a situation where parents and the community have low socioeconomic status, ethnic capital can play a significant role in influencing their children's educational opportunities. Modood, T., and K. Iqbal (2023).

The social construction of ethnicity and the need to affirm or defend ethnic identity in the contemporary environment are the driving forces behind these movements; the realization of multiculturalism is demonstrated by the rise in students' ethnic identification. Li (2023). Individuals frequently fall into more than one social category at the same time, such as belonging to a nationality and an ethnic group. This is because politically engaged ethnic minority give voters with deep-rooted social identities a nearly existential need for civil liberties and political rights. J. Rovny (2023). The way these various identities interact and intersect complicates the social construction of ethnicity since ethnic stereotypes are "fragments of contacts" between peoples, and it is timely and necessary to evaluate them in light of historical and cultural interaction. Tarasova, E., Makoeva, F., Morozova, L., Zotov, V., and Pozdnyakova, A. (2023). Understanding ethnicity as a social construct is essential to understanding that it is not a fixed or objective classification. The study draws attention to the covert ways in which being classified as a "religious/ethnic minority" could encourage secularization. S. Kheir (2023). It is subject to change over time and differs among communities. This viewpoint also emphasizes how social interactions, politics, and culture shape ethnic identities and how they impact other facets of life, such as politics, social relationships, and cultural practices. Characteristics are essential for comprehending potential discrimination when street-level bureaucrats in the welfare state interact with ethnic minorities. Terum, L., Øverbye, E., and Fekjaer, S. (2023). A person's sense of self and sense of belonging to a specific group are greatly influenced by their ethnic identity, which is a complicated and multidimensional concept. An ethnic community's collective identity is also significant because it affects how opportunities are

recognized and pursued. Pinto, L., Xinyan, L., and Fernandes, E. (2023).

It has a strong connection to the idea of group membership, is a basic component of human social and cultural development, and offers fresh perspectives on the important socializing roles that families and peers play as young people negotiate their ethnic and national identities. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). A person's subjective perception of their ethnic heritage, which may include common cultural, historical, linguistic, and perhaps even genetic characteristics, is referred to as their ethnic identity. Rich cultural identity expression has the power to elevate the status perceptions, feelings of intimacy, and sense of possibility for learning of minority groups among members of the majority group. Arnett, R. (2023).

In addition to providing an identity group stratification lens to economic thought, we present an Inclusive Economic Rights policy framework as a crucial foundational element of human rights, emphasizing political economic tendencies toward identity group stratifications as a means of achieving a "moral political economy." Ethnic identity is the way people perceive and understand their affiliation with a particular ethnic group. Green, A., Chelwa, G., and Hamilton, D. (2023). Ethnic identification is more than just admitting one's heritage; it entails a strong emotional and psychological bond with that group. Ethnic identity is closely linked to cultural acuity and the urge for closure. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Numerous factors, such as family, cultural experiences, religion, language, and societal expectations that emphasize individual differences in experiences, values, and worldviews, can influence one's identity. These factors are linked to identity-focused infrastructure and increase the demand for racialized equity labor. In 2023, Hamilton, L., Nielsen, K., and Lerma, V. The various interconnected elements that make up ethnic identity are directly impacted by colonial conceptions of race, identity, and nationalism. C. Devadoss (2023).

Children investigated their racial identity in a variety of contexts, from their body to classroom materials and passports to their familial roots. This includes shared traditions, customs, rituals, and cultural activities that bind individuals to their ethnic group. Meacham, S., Wee, S., and Kim, J. (2023). In civilizations where race plays a large role in social dynamics, ethnic minority status is a marker for numerous disadvantages. For certain people, therefore, racial identity may constitute a considerable portion of their ethnic identity. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L.,

Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023). People frequently choose to identify with one or more ethnic groups, and this self-identification can change over time. Trends in the evolution of the contemporary issue of ethnic ethnocultural identity reveal that many of the constructed concepts are the result of reflections that are sometimes difficult to apply to the right extent rather than being the product of empirical research. E. Fursova (2023). An essential component of ethnic identity is group membership. Current legislation establishes favorable conditions for the protection of national minorities' rights, aids in the preservation of their identity, and fosters the development of their culture. This involves a sense of unity and belonging to the ethnic group. Lebedintseva, L., and Starovoitova, S. (2023).

Over an individual's lifetime, their ethnic identity changes and is not static. Numerous things, including familial upbringing, social contacts, educational experiences, and historical events, have an impact on it. Individuals may experience phases of discovery and assimilation when they grow and comprehend their ethnic identity. Students are informed by repeated organizational representations of diversity in monoracial terms that multiracial identities are both difficult to accommodate and potentially useful to institutions trying to project a varied image. Giebel, S. (2023). Being a part of a group is essential to ethnic identity. There may be a need for required race and ethnicity fields if race and ethnicity documentation is incomplete, as this could result in a lack of awareness of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). It has to do with feeling included and at home in a specific ethnic community.

A better understanding of the TCKs' identity paradigm resulted from group membership, which gives people a network of support, access to shared cultural practices, and a sense of connection to their heritage. Multicultural identity integration was also highlighted as being essential to TCKs' well-being because it affects self-consistency and self-efficacy. Kwiatkowska, A., and Mosanya, M. (2023). The necessity of taking into account internal variables, such as the desire to acquire a heritage language, while studying ethnic identity is further reinforced by the fact that it frequently comes with a common past and a collective memory that binds the group together. In 2023, Tram, J., Huang, A., and Lopez, J. White majority youth manage their shifting social position by drawing upon cultural repertoires of ethnic purity and "normal" youthfulness, but this also raises the question of whether they can draw upon cultural repertoires that do not imply nativist white identity politics. Ethnic identity plays a significant role in shaping an individual's social interactions, worldview, and self-

esteem. Verschraegen, G., Clycq, N., and Driezen, A. (2023). It is a step in the right direction for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups to be better represented in population genetic assessments since it can foster a sense of pride, preserve cultural traditions, and provide a source of resilience in the face of persecution or misfortune. Vilà-Valls, L., Font-Porterías, N., Flores-Bello, A., Aizpurua-Iraola, J., Casinge, S., Bojs, K., & Comas, D. (2023). But when it becomes ethnocentrism and exclusivity, it can also be a source of conflict and division since mobilized ethnic minority give socially embedded electorates a nearly existential demand for civil freedoms and political rights. J. Rovny (2023).

While ethnic identity can contribute to cultural diversity, it can also present difficulties. People with dual identities strengthen their sense of national identity and support members of their own group more when their collective sense of national identity is threatened by biased broadcast news. H. Kim (2023). Because people or groups with various ethnic identities are occasionally placed against one another, it may result in bias, stereotyping, and discrimination. However, research also reveals that voluntary disclosure is positively and significantly correlated with ethnic diversity. In 2023, Kabara, A., Bazhair, A., Khatib, S., Abdullah, D., and Amosh, H.

The magnitude of these associations was consistent across grades 5 through 11, suggesting that maternal cultural socialization messages are necessary to maintain ethnic-racial pride throughout adolescence. As a result, families must continuously support their youth's development of ethnic-racial pride in order to counteract the effects of discrimination. Striking a balance between preserving one's ethnic identity and fostering a sense of unity and understanding with other ethnic groups is essential. Alvarado, C., Schilo, L., Stein, G., Christophe, N., & Robins, R. (2023). Ethnic identity has become more flexible due to globalization and increased mobility. Complex violence, especially when conducted by state forces and among members of an ethnic group that has historically been targeted collectively, also enhances ethnic identification and ethnic grievances. For F. Villamil (2023).

A greater understanding of the Mien ethnic group's culture and their assimilation into the dominant society are significantly impacted by the fact that many people today identify with various ethnic backgrounds or feel cut off from conventional ethnic affiliations. Alwi, A., and Tongdhamachart, N. (2023). Because ethnic identity is dynamic, inclusive and adaptable definitions of identity are essential. Using the game of imitation as a novel approach, it is possible to identify

potential areas of social exclusion or cultural divide within groups as well as the sociocultural underpinnings of ethnic relations in the context of migration and integration. In 2023, Segersven, O., Arminen, I., and Simonen, M. The human experience is intricately linked to ethnic identification and group membership. Stressors encountered during migration and cultural identity conflict are linked to psychological disorders in newly arrived people. Boelen, P., Laceulle, O., Chung, J., Mooren, T., Knipscheer, J., Brink, F., & Rahim, H. (2023). In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, acknowledging and valuing the diversity of ethnic identities is crucial for fostering inclusivity, social cohesion, and mutual understanding. It also highlights the significance of the social and economic factors that influence an individual's choice of racial identity. Duncan, B., and F. Antman (2023). The impact of interpersonal and intergroup relative leader-member exchange on members' behaviors may differ depending on the subgroup identities, and it is crucial to acknowledge that ethnic identity, like any other form of identity, is a personal and subjective experience that should be honored and celebrated as part of the rich tapestry of human culture. Huang, S., Li, H., and Jiang, J. (2023).

Ethnicity in politics is a complex and enduring phenomenon that significantly influences political systems, voter behavior, and governance structures. Its historical roots, contemporary challenges, and implications for societies and governments are multifaceted.

The key to managing ethnicity in politics lies in recognizing its importance while addressing the challenges it poses to political stability, governance, and development. As the world evolves, adapting policies and strategies to accommodate the changing dynamics of ethnicity will be essential in building more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous societies.

3. Methodology

A mixed methods approach was adopted, the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative research, to back up quantitative facts with qualitative knowledge. Both structured and unstructured methods, such as one-on-one interviews and structured questionnaires created specifically for the purpose of gathering data from the study population, were employed in this research to collect data.

4. Findings

My ethnic background influenced my voting decisions				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Strongly Disagreed	30	7.5	7.5	7.5
Disagreed	73	18.3	18.3	25.8
Agreed	162	40.5	40.5	66.3
Strongly Agreed	135	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data Obtained, (2024)

Key: SD (Strongly Disagreed) D (Disagreed) (Agreed) SA (Strongly Agreed)

The table provided outlines respondents' responses regarding the influence of their ethnic background on their voting decisions. Among the 400 respondents surveyed, 30 individuals, constituting 7.5% of the total, strongly disagreed that their ethnic background played a role in shaping their voting decisions. Additionally, 73 respondents, representing 18.3% of the total, expressed disagreement with this notion.

Upon analyzing the percentage distribution of responses, it is evident that approximately 75% of respondents provided positive responses, indicating that the majority agreed that their ethnic background indeed influenced their voting decisions.

Conversely, a significant proportion of respondents acknowledged the influence of their ethnic background on their voting decisions. Specifically, 162 respondents, comprising 40.5% of the total, agreed that their ethnic background influenced their voting decisions. Moreover, 135 respondents, accounting for 33.8% of the total, strongly agreed with this statement.

5. Research Question in Corroboration with the Responses of the Interview

The interview responses underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to reduce the influence of ethnicity on voting behavior, addressing both societal attitudes and systemic issues.

Most respondents, including noted that the lack of comprehensive civic education programs was a major challenge in the last general elections. These programs should emphasize evaluating candidates based on their policies, qualifications, and track records rather than ethnic backgrounds. Respondents believe that

effective civic education can significantly change the electorate's mindset in future elections. This view aligns with quantitative findings, where over 70% of respondents acknowledged the significance of ethnic identity in shaping their overall sense of identity.

6. Discussion of findings

Ethnicity has been a longstanding and influential factor in shaping voting behavior in Nigeria. S. Latour (2023). As a country with over 250 ethnic groups, ethnic identity often plays a crucial role in political dynamics and electoral choices. Ethnicity has long been considered a dominant factor in Nigerian politics, often thought to heavily influence voting behavior. However, recent analyses suggest that its impact may not be as significant as traditionally assumed. The roots of ethnic-based politics in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era, Bryan (2023). When British colonial administrators used a divide-and-rule strategy, fostering divisions along ethnic lines. This legacy has persisted, influencing political alignments and party formations Fanzo, V. (2023). In Nigeria's political history, many political parties have been formed along ethnic lines S Latour (2023), often aligning with the major ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo in the southeast. This alignment has reinforced ethnic identities as a basis for political support.

7. Conclusion

The assessment of voting behavior during the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of electoral participation in Nigeria. The 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria offers a crucial opportunity to analyze and understand the evolving voting behavior of the Nigerian electorate. This study has highlighted the influence of ethnicity on voter decisions, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of electoral participation and the broader implications for democratic governance in Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

The Nigerian government, through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the ministries of education at the states level working in conjunction with the Universal basic education commission (UBEC), should implement a targeted civic education initiative. As stakeholders in the Nigerian project the federal ministry of education should inculcate educational modules into the civic education curriculum reflecting the need for a more nationalistic

idea and thoughts. This will help to reshape voter behavior towards policy-driven choices when citizens attain voting age. The National Orientation agency on its part should work closely with civil society organizations in the information space to project the same Nationalistic ideals Abinitio.

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