

IMPACT OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY ON POLITICAL STABILITY IN KWARA STATE: A STUDY OF 2023 GENERAL ELECTION

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Abstract

Nigeria's democracy is shaped by deep-seated ethnic and religious identities, which often influence political behavior and stability. Kwara State, known for its ethno-religious plurality, provides a critical case for examining how diversity impacts electoral processes and governance. The central problem addressed in this work is the extent to which ethno-religious factors determined voter behavior and election outcomes in the 2023 general election, and how these dynamics affect political stability in the state. Findings revealed that voters participated in the 2023 elections were influenced by ethnicity and religion in voting decisions. Political parties were also perceived to exploit identity-based sentiments, which shaped electoral outcomes. However, the study recommended inclusive governance, stricter regulation of campaign practices, voter education, and interfaith dialogue, as well as empowering civil society and engaging traditional leaders in peace building to foster long-term stability. The study adopted a survey design with a sample of 300 respondents were selected using simple random sampling across six (6) Local Government Areas in the state. Furthermore, for the collection of data both primary and secondary sources were used. Social Identity Theory served as the analytical framework, emphasizing the role of group loyalties in shaping political choices. The theory proved useful in explaining how ethnic and religious affiliations acted as both unifying and divisive forces.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Ethno-Religious, Political Stability, Kwara and Nigeria