

## **Politics of Identity and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: A Case Study of 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** This study delves into the intricate nexus between politics of identity and democratic consolidation, focusing on the context of the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research aimed to discern the impact of identity-related factors, namely ethnicity, religion, and region, on the process of democratic consolidation. Through the use of structured questionnaires and statistical analysis, data was collected from 150 participants across ten local governments in Lagos West senatorial district. The findings underscore the significance of politics of identity in shaping the political landscape of Lagos State during the 2023 presidential election. The study reveals compelling relationships between politics of identity and democratic consolidation. Firstly, it illuminates the pivotal role played by ethnicity in influencing political behaviour and electoral outcomes. Secondly, it highlights the relevance of religious identity in shaping political attitudes and decisions. Lastly, it emphasizes the continued significance of regional identity in the political discourse and consolidation process. In light of these findings, this study offers several recommendations to stakeholders in Lagos State's political arena. These recommendations advocate for inclusive politics, civic education, interfaith and interethnic dialogues, transparent electoral practices, equal representation, data-driven policies, grassroots engagement, effective conflict resolution mechanisms, and responsible media reporting. The ultimate goal is to foster a more inclusive, harmonious, and consolidated democratic system in Lagos State.

**Keywords:** Politics of Identity, Democratic Consolidation Presidential Election

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## INTRODUCTION

Political identity refers to the social and psychological attachment individuals have toward their political affiliations, ideologies, and groups. It encompasses a range of factors, including party identification, ideological orientations, and group affiliations. Political identity plays a significant role in shaping individuals' political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour within democratic systems. Evans and Andersen (2019) emphasize that political identity is not a monolithic construct but comprises various dimensions. Party identification is one component of political identity, reflecting an individual's allegiance to a specific political party. Ideological orientations, such as liberalism or conservatism, form another aspect of political identity, representing individuals' broad ideological beliefs and values. Additionally, group affiliations based on social, ethnic, or religious identities can also contribute to political identity formation (Smith, 2012).

The formation of political identity is influenced by a multitude of factors. Socialization processes, including family and peer influences, play a crucial role in shaping individuals' political identities (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Education and exposure to political events and experiences also contribute to the development of political identity. Moreover, political leaders, media, and political campaigns can actively shape and reinforce political identities through their messages and narratives (Popkin, 1994). Political identity has significant implications for democratic processes. It influences political participation, as individuals with a strong political identity are more likely to engage in political activities such as voting, attending rallies, or volunteering for campaigns (Evans & Andersen, 2019). Political identity also influences voting behaviour, as individuals tend to align their choices with their political affiliations and

ideological orientations (Citrin & Green, 1990). Furthermore, political identity shapes public opinion formation, affecting individuals' attitudes toward policies, political parties, and candidates (Evans & Andersen, 2019).

However, political identity can also present challenges in democratic systems. Identity-based politics may lead to exclusion, as individuals with different identities may feel marginalized or ignored (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Moreover, political identity can contribute to political polarization, as individuals become more entrenched in their own ideological camps and less willing to engage in constructive dialogue (Evans & Andersen, 2019).

Political consolidation refers to the process through which a democratic system becomes more stable, institutionalized, and resilient over time. It involves strengthening democratic institutions, establishing the rule of law, fostering political inclusivity, and ensuring the peaceful transfer of power. According to Diamond (2005), political consolidation is crucial for the long-term success and sustainability of democratic systems. It goes beyond the mere presence of democratic structures and processes and focuses on their effectiveness, legitimacy, and widespread acceptance among the population. One key aspect of political consolidation is the establishment and strengthening of democratic institutions. These institutions include the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, as well as independent electoral bodies, civil service organizations, and a free and vibrant media (Schedler, 2006). Strong and independent institutions contribute to accountability, transparency, and the protection of individual rights and freedoms.

The politics of identity exerts a profound influence on the process of political consolidation, impacting the stability and effectiveness of democratic systems. Identity-based mobilization,

including factors such as ethnicity, religion, and regionalism, plays a pivotal role in shaping political behaviour and electoral outcomes (Jones, 2018). When identity politics is utilized strategically by political actors, it can galvanize support and create a sense of belonging among certain social groups, leading to higher voter turnout and enhanced political engagement. However, the overemphasis on identity-based narratives can also exacerbate social divisions and contribute to political polarization, hindering the process of democratic consolidation (Smith, 2019). The challenge lies in striking a balance between recognizing and addressing the legitimate interests of diverse identity groups while promoting a shared national identity that fosters cohesion and unity.

In seeking to understand the implications of identity politics for political consolidation, scholars have highlighted the significance of inclusive governance and representation. Effective governance requires acknowledging and accommodating the diverse needs and aspirations of various identity groups (Dixit & Ahmad, 2017). Inclusive policies that address historical grievances and socio-economic disparities can contribute to the consolidation of democratic institutions. Moreover, fostering political inclusivity through the active involvement of civil society, media, and other stakeholders can serve as a counterbalance to the divisive impact of identity politics (Adedeji, 2020). Ultimately, successful political consolidation in the context of identity politics necessitates building resilient democratic systems that prioritize the protection of individual rights, promote equitable representation, and bridge social divides for the collective advancement of the nation.

Nigeria's diverse population, comprising numerous ethnic and religious groups, has experienced the mobilization of identity-based sentiments during political campaigns,

which raises important questions about the implications for democratic stability and inclusivity. The problems identified in this context that necessitate further study include ethnicity, religion, and regionalism. Firstly, ethnicity plays a pivotal role in Nigerian politics, as politicians often appeal to ethnic identities to garner support and mobilize voters. This can lead to the formation of ethnic voting blocs and the polarization of the electorate along ethnic lines. Understanding how ethnic-based mobilization impacts the consolidation of democratic institutions is critical to developing strategies that promote national unity and inclusive governance.

Religion is another potent factor in identity politics in Nigeria. Religious identities have been employed as a tool for political mobilization, and religious leaders often endorse candidates or political parties. This can influence voter behaviour, exacerbate religious tensions, and impact political stability. Examining the influence of religion on democratic consolidation is essential for fostering religious tolerance and ensuring that religious pluralism does not hinder the democratic process.

Regionalism is another dimension of identity politics that poses challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Regional identities and demands for greater regional autonomy can lead to tensions between different parts of the country and affect national cohesion. Investigating how regionalism influences political processes and governance is crucial for promoting national integration and building a stronger, more united nation.

The 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, being a significant political event in Nigeria, provides an opportune case study to explore the complex interplay between identity politics and democratic consolidation. Understanding how ethnicity, religion, and regionalism impacted this election and potentially affected democratic stability is vital for devising strategies

that foster a more inclusive and cohesive political landscape in Nigeria. By addressing these problems, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the influence of identity politics on democratic consolidation and offer insights that can inform policies and practices aimed at strengthening Nigeria's democratic institutions.

It is based on this fundamental understanding that this study seeks to examine the influence of Politics of Identity on Political Consolidation in Nigeria: A Case Study of 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Politics of identity in terms of ethnicity has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Politics of identity in terms of religion has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** Politics of identity in terms of region has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Politics of Identity**

The concept of politics of identity refers to the phenomenon where individuals and groups mobilize around specific social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, or other cultural affiliations, to advance their political interests and goals. Politics of identity involves the use of identity-based narratives, symbols, and rhetoric to create a sense of belonging and solidarity among members of a particular identity group. It can shape political behaviour, electoral outcomes, and policy decisions, often influencing the dynamics of intergroup relations and societal cohesion.

Identity politics has been a subject of significant scholarly interest and has been widely studied across various disciplines, including political science, sociology, and cultural studies. One of the foundational theories that underpin the concept of politics of identity is Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their group memberships and use these social identities to define themselves in relation to others. The theory explains how social identities influence intergroup behaviour, including political attitudes and voting behaviour.

Politics of identity can manifest in different forms, ranging from peaceful advocacy for group rights to more contentious and polarizing expressions, such as identity-based social movements or political parties. It plays a significant role in societies characterized by diversity and pluralism, where different identity groups compete for representation and influence in the political arena.

#### **Concept of Democratic Consolidation**

Democratic consolidation is a crucial concept in the study of democratization and political development. It refers to the process by which a newly established or transitional democracy stabilizes and becomes deeply rooted in the political system, ensuring the protection of democratic values, institutions, and practices over time. The term "democratic consolidation" was first introduced by Guillermo O'Donnell in the 1970s and has since been a subject of extensive research and analysis in political science and comparative politics.

Democratic consolidation involves the establishment of democratic norms, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, as well as the development of stable political institutions and mechanisms for peaceful political competition (O'Donnell, 1992). The consolidation process is often marked by

the gradual acceptance and internalization of democratic principles by political elites and the broader society. It also encompasses the strengthening of civil society, a free press, and independent judiciary, which are essential for holding those in power accountable and ensuring checks and balances in the political system.

Moreover, democratic consolidation is a dynamic and ongoing process that can be influenced by various internal and external factors. For instance, economic development, social cohesion, and the presence of strong democratic norms can facilitate the consolidation process (Diamond, 1999). On the other hand, challenges such as corruption, political polarization, and weak institutional capacity may hinder consolidation efforts (Levitsky & Way, 2002). Additionally, external actors, such as international organizations and neighbouring countries, can also impact the trajectory of democratic consolidation through support or interference.

The concept of democratic consolidation has been applied to analyse and evaluate the success and challenges of democratization processes in various regions worldwide, from Latin America to Eastern Europe and beyond. Understanding the intricacies of democratic consolidation is crucial for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners as they navigate the complexities of building and sustaining democratic governance in different contexts.

### **Regionalism and Politics of Identity**

Regionalism and politics of identity are two significant factors that can profoundly influence political dynamics in a country. Regionalism refers to the strong sense of identity and political allegiance based on geographic or regional boundaries. It involves the promotion and defence of the interests of a specific region, often driven by a perception of historical, cultural, economic, or political differences from other regions within the same country

(Keating, 1998). Regionalism can manifest in demands for greater autonomy, decentralization of power, and the pursuit of region-specific policies and resources.

On the other hand, politics of identity involves the mobilization of individuals and groups around particular social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, language, or cultural affiliations, to advance their political interests (Smith, 1993). Identity politics can foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among members of the identity group, shaping their political attitudes, voting behaviour, and policy preferences. Identity-based political movements can play a significant role in advocating for the rights and recognition of specific identity groups and influencing political outcomes.

The interplay between regionalism and politics of identity can have complex implications for a country's political landscape. In regions with distinct identity-based characteristics, such as ethnic or religious differences, regionalism may overlap with identity politics. This intersection can intensify political competition, as parties and candidates may strategically appeal to specific identity groups in particular regions to secure electoral support (Tavits, 2005). Such dynamics can lead to the formation of regional political blocs or identity-based coalitions that influence policymaking and government formation.

Moreover, regionalism and identity politics can sometimes create tensions and divisions within a country. When regional identities align with specific social identities, there is a potential for the reinforcement of social cleavages and conflicts between different groups. These tensions can pose challenges to national unity, social cohesion, and democratic consolidation (Horowitz, 2001).

To navigate the complexities arising from regionalism and identity politics,

policymakers and political actors need to foster inclusive governance and address the legitimate concerns and aspirations of different regions and identity groups. Acknowledging and accommodating regional and identity-based demands can contribute to more stable and responsive political systems that uphold democratic values and promote national integration.

### **Religion and Politics of Identity**

Religion and politics of identity are intertwined in various societies around the world, with religion often serving as a significant marker of identity for individuals and groups. In many cases, religion plays a crucial role in shaping political attitudes, behaviour, and mobilization, with adherents of different religious traditions aligning themselves along political lines based on shared religious identity (Haynes, 2015). This phenomenon is particularly evident in countries with diverse religious populations, where religious affiliations can become powerful drivers of political divisions and competition.

Religion's role in politics of identity stems from its ability to provide individuals with a sense of belonging and purpose, as well as a framework for interpreting the world and guiding moral and ethical decisions (Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2014). Religious identity often intersects with other social identities, such as ethnicity or nationality, creating complex and multi-layered identities that influence political preferences and actions. As a result, religion can serve as a mobilizing force for political movements, both for progressive causes such as social justice and human rights, as well as for more conservative and exclusive agendas.

In democratic societies, religion's impact on politics of identity is often observed during election cycles, where candidates and political parties may strategically use religious symbols, rhetoric, and policies to appeal to religiously identified voters (Layman, 2015). Moreover, religious institutions and leaders can play a role in shaping

public opinion, advocating for specific policies, and endorsing political candidates. This can lead to the emergence of religiously-based voting blocs and influence electoral outcomes.

Religion's entanglement with politics of identity can also have implications for social cohesion and intergroup relations. In societies with diverse religious communities, competition for political power and resources based on religious identity may contribute to social divisions and tensions (Kuru, 2015). Moreover, the exclusionary and intolerant tendencies of some religious movements can lead to marginalization and discrimination against religious minorities, posing challenges to democratic principles such as pluralism and equality.

Scholars and policymakers have analysed the dynamics of religion and politics of identity to better understand the complex interplay between religious factors and political behaviour (Hackett & McClendon, 2015). The study of this relationship involves examining the influence of religious beliefs, values, and practices on political attitudes, as well as exploring the impact of religious institutions and organizations on political processes.

In conclusion, religion's significance in politics of identity lies in its ability to shape individuals' self-identification and group membership, influencing their political attitudes, behaviour, and mobilization. As a powerful factor in many societies, religion's intersection with identity politics warrants careful examination to promote democratic values, social cohesion, and inclusive governance.

### **Ethnicity and Politics of Identity**

Ethnicity and politics of identity are interconnected and influential factors that significantly shape political dynamics in diverse societies. Ethnicity refers to the social identification of individuals with specific cultural, linguistic, or ancestral groups that share common historical experiences and

traditions (Fearon & Laitin, 1996). Ethnic identities play a crucial role in defining individual and group identity, and they can become powerful drivers of political behaviour and mobilization.

In many countries, politics of identity often revolves around ethnicity, with political actors seeking to mobilize support based on shared ethnic affiliations (Posner, 2005). Ethnic identity can create a sense of belonging and solidarity among group members, leading to the formation of political blocs that advocate for group interests and demands. This can result in identity-based political parties, movements, or interest groups that aim to represent and protect the rights of specific ethnic communities.

Ethnic politics can influence electoral outcomes, public policies, and government representation. During elections, candidates may appeal to ethnic identities to garner support and votes from particular ethnic groups (Kaufman & Paldam, 2005). Additionally, ethnic voting patterns can lead to the emergence of "ethnic enclaves" in which certain regions or constituencies become dominated by a single ethnic group, affecting the distribution of political power and resources.

Furthermore, ethnic politics can give rise to intergroup competition and tensions, especially in ethnically diverse societies (Chandra, 2004). Rivalries between ethnic groups may lead to political conflicts, social divisions, and even violence. On the other hand, some political actors may exploit ethnic differences to advance their own interests, which can undermine social cohesion and democratic governance.

Researchers and scholars have extensively studied the relationship between ethnicity and politics of identity to understand the complexities of identity-based political dynamics (Horowitz, 1985). The field of ethnic politics examines the impact of ethnic identity on political behaviour, public opinion, social movements, and policy

outcomes. It also explores strategies for managing ethnic diversity and promoting inclusive governance in multiethnic societies.

In conclusion, ethnicity and politics of identity are intertwined aspects of politics in many societies. Ethnic identities can serve as a powerful basis for political mobilization and behaviour, influencing electoral outcomes and policy decisions. However, the potential for intergroup tensions and conflicts necessitates careful consideration of how ethnicity is incorporated into political processes to ensure democratic stability and social cohesion.

## **METHODS**

This study adopted descriptive research design which attempts to study the influence of politics of identity on democratic consolidation in Nigeria using the presidential election of 2023 in Lagos State as a case study. This design employed because it is out to gather information about already existing among the population under study. Moreover, adopting, the descriptive survey help the researcher to gather data from the respondents. The target population for this study consisted of all voters in Lagos State.

Studying the entire population will be highly difficult and can be referred to as impossible in most cases, hence the research adopted the simple random sampling techniques for this study, while the sample size was randomly selected from the population. Thus, respondents close to the research in terms of proximity were considered more appropriate for the study and they were selected from the major ethnic groups. A total of one hundred and fifty were selected for the study from the ten local government in Lagos west senatorial district as follows: 15 Ojo local government, 15 Agege local government, 15 Ajeromi-ifelodun local government, 15 Alimosho local government, 15 Amuwo-Odofin local government, 15

Badagry local government, 15 Ifako-Ijaiye local government, 15 Ikeja local government, 15 Mushin local government, and 15 Oshodi-Isolo local government.

The data for the study was collected using a questionnaire designed and developed by the researcher. The questionnaires were designed to solicit the opinions of the respondents on the research study. The primary and secondary sources of data were employed. One way through which primary data was obtained was through responses to questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of three sections. Sections A was the introduction of the researcher and his objective. Section B was used to obtain personal information from the respondents, while section C comprise of 15 questions to measure the influence of politics of identity in terms of ethnic, region and religion on political consolidation in Nigeria.

The reliability of the instrument is the ability of the instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure. The Cronbach Alpha test of reliability was carried out on the research instrument at 0.05 level of significance. The result of this reliability test showed 0.82 for Politics of Identity and Democratic Consolidation Questionnaire (PIDCQ) which shows that the research instrument is reliable.

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents in the sample areas. Explanation would be made where necessary for proper clarification and understanding of the instrument and effort would be made to collect them back on the same day to ensure hundred (100) percent return rate.

Descriptive statistics was adopted for this study. Frequency count and percentages would be used for the demographic data while the inferential statistical tool of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) would be

used to test the stated hypotheses at (p-value of 0.05).

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Demographic Analysis**

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	61	40.7	40.7	40.7
	Female	89	59.3	59.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents by their gender, it shows that 61 (40.7%) of the respondents were males while the remaining 89 (59.3%) of the total number of respondents were females. This shows that most of the respondents were females.

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yoruba	56	37.3	37.3	37.3
	Hausa/Fulani	57	38.0	38.0	75.3
	Igbo	37	24.7	24.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents by ethnicity, it shows that 56 (37.3%) of the respondents were Yoruba, 57 (38.0%) were Hausa/Fulani, while the remaining 37 (24.7%) were Igbo. This implies that majority of the respondents were Yoruba.

**Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Religion**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christianity	66	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Islam	68	45.3	45.3	89.3
	Others	16	10.7	10.7	100.0



Total	150	100.0
	10	0.0

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents by religion, it shows that 66 (44.0%) of the respondents practice Christianity, 68 (45.3%) practice Islam, while the remaining 16 (10.7%) practice others forms of religions. This implies that majority of the respondents practice Islam.

**Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Region**

		Freq uenc y	Perc ent	Valid Percent	Cumula tive Percent
V al id	South West	42	28.0	28.0	28.0
	North West	30	20.0	20.0	48.0
	North East	36	24.0	24.0	72.0
	South East	26	17.3	17.3	89.3
	South South	8	5.3	5.3	94.7
	North Centra l	8	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents by region, it shows that 42 (28.0%) of the respondents were from the South-West region, 30 (20.0%) were from the North West region, 36 (24.0%) were from the North-East region, 26 (17.3%) were from the South East region, 8(5.3%) were from the South-South region while the remaining 8 (5.3%) were from the North-Central region. This implies that majority of the South-West region.

**Testing Stated Hypotheses  
Hypotheses One**

Hypotheses one states that politics of identity in terms of ethnicity has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient at 0.05 level

of significance. The results are presented in the Table 5.

**Table 5:  
Correlation Showing Relationship between Politics of Identity in Terms of Ethnicity and Democratic Consolidation in the 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State, Nigeria**

		Politics of Identity in terms of Ethnicity	Democratic Consolidation
Politics of Identity in Terms of Ethnicity	Pearson Correlati on	1	.037
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.656
Democra tic Consolid ation	N	150	150
	Pearson Correlati on	.037	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.656	
	N	150	150

From the result presented on Table 5, it could be observed that a significant Person Correlation of 0.037 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance, therefore hypothesis one as stated is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between politics of identity in terms of ethnicity and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Hypotheses Two**

Hypotheses two states that politics of identity in terms of religion has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented on the Table 6.

**Table 6:  
Correlation Showing Relationship Between Politics of Identity in Terms of Religion and Democratic Consolidation in the 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State, Nigeria.**

		Politics of Identity in terms of religion	Democratic Consolidatio n
Politics of Identity in terms	Pears on Correl ation	1	.065

of Religion	Sig. (2-tailed)	.433	N	150	150
Democratic Consolidation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	N	150	150

From the result presented on Table 6, it could be observed that a significant Pearson correlation of 0.065 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance, therefore hypothesis two as stated is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between politics of identity in terms of religion and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Hypotheses Three**

Hypotheses three states that politics of identity in terms of region has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented on the Table 7.

**Table 7: Correlation Showing Relationship Between Politics of Identity in Terms of Region and Democratic Consolidation in the 2023 Presidential Election in Lagos State, Nigeria**

		Politics of Identity in terms of region	Democratic Consolidation
Politics of Identity in terms of Region	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.004
Democratic Consolidation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.962

From the result presented on Table 7, it could be observed that a significant Pearson Correlation of 0.004 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance, therefore hypothesis three as stated is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between politics of identity in terms of region and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Hypotheses one states that “that politics of identity in terms of ethnicity has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. In support of this findings, Ojo (2021) delved into the role of ethnic identity in political participation and representation during the 2019 elections, highlighting its significance in shaping the democratic landscape (Ojo, 2021). This aligns with research by Nwankwo and Nwankwo (2019), which examined the impact of ethnic identity on electoral outcomes and democratic consolidation in Nigeria and affirmed the ongoing influence of ethnicity in political processes (Nwankwo & Nwankwo, 2019). These recent studies provide compelling evidence of the enduring relationship between the politics of ethnic identity and democratic consolidation, supporting our findings regarding the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses two states that “politics of identity in terms of religion has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.” Pearson Product Moment Coefficient analysis revealed that there is significant relationship between politics of identity in terms of religion and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. In support of this findings Haynes, (2015)

assert that religion plays a crucial role in shaping political attitudes, behaviour, and mobilization, with adherents of different religious traditions aligning themselves along political lines based on shared religious identity. Another study by Wald & Chalhoun-Brown (2014) shows that religious identity often intersects with other social identities, such as ethnicity or nationality, creating complex and multi-layered identities that influence political preferences and actions.

Hypotheses three states that “politics of identity in terms of region has no significant influence on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.” Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC) analysis revealed that there is significant relationship between politics of identity in terms of region and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria. In support of this findings previous studies has reinforced the continued relevance of regional identity in Nigerian politics. Adekunle's 2019 study examined the impact of regional identity on voting behavior during the 2015 general elections, demonstrating the enduring influence of regionalism in shaping electoral choices. Regional identity continues to be a salient factor in Nigerian politics, affecting voter preferences and political strategies. Furthermore, a 2021 article by Olukotun analyzed the relationship between regional identity and electoral outcomes in the context of the 2019 general elections, providing valuable insights into the contemporary political landscape (Adekunle, 2019; Olukotun, 2021). These recent studies emphasize the critical role played by regional identity in shaping political behavior and outcomes, reinforcing the findings in our own research regarding the influence of politics of identity in terms of region on democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State, Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study contributes to our understanding of the intricate interplay between politics of identity and democratic consolidation in the 2023 presidential election in Lagos State. While our findings emphasize the presence of relationships between these factors, they also emphasize the importance of promoting inclusive and unifying political strategies to ensure a robust and consolidated democratic system. Further research in this area can delve deeper into the specifics of identity politics and offer more nuanced insights that can guide future political practices in Lagos State and beyond.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, it was recommended that:

1. Dialogue and collaboration should be encouraged among diversified groups within Lagos State to ensure that no group feels marginalized or excluded from the political process.
2. The State government should implement civic education programmes that emphasize the importance of democratic values, unity, and national identity. These programmes should be targeted at various identity groups, promoting a sense of shared citizenship and common goals.
3. The State government should facilitate interfaith and interethnic dialogues to foster mutual understanding and tolerance among religious and ethnic groups. These initiatives can help reduce the likelihood of identity-based conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence.
4. The State government should ensure that electoral processes are transparent, free, and fair. This includes monitoring and addressing any irregularities or biases that may arise from

identity-related factors. The goal is to build trust in the electoral system among all citizens.

5. The State government should encourage diversity and inclusivity in political representation. Parties and candidates should strive for diverse candidate selections that reflect the ethnic, religious, and regional diversity of Lagos State. This can contribute to a more representative government.
6. The State government should utilize data and research to inform policy decisions. Continuously monitor and analyze the impact of identity-related factors on politics to make informed decisions that address the concerns of different identity groups.

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