

**Ungendered federalism and institutions of power-sharing in Nigeria: An invitation to struggle**

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**Abstract**

*Federalism is a state form with power divided vertically between central and regional governments in a complex network of institutions and systems as Nigeria. Federalism is embedded with greater democratization features that encourage more political space for women than any other form of government. Again federalism fosters multi-level feminist networks, thereby enhancing women's substantive representation. Consequently, women fared better in federations such as Canada and the USA than in democratized unitary states such as the UK because they could move between government levels. Nigerian federalism, however, since, its inception does not seem to advantage women. In Nigerian federalism fewer women on average sit as regional and national legislators just as the country has continued to struggle to develop. The development has, however, been abysmal to the country despite the practice of federalism for decades. Adopting a qualitative research method and applying descriptive representation approach, this paper seeks to investigate the following questions: To what extent has federalism been beneficial to women in Nigeria? To what extent has the marginalization of women in Nigerian federalism hindered even development in Nigeria. Is the exclusion of marginal representation of women in Nigerian federalism been an invitation to struggle in development and modernization? How would mainstreaming women in Nigerian federalism enhance development and the buoyancy of Nigeria politics? Gendered federalism and institutions of power-sharing in Nigerian is vital for Nigeria to stop struggling to develop. Until women are duly represented in Nigerian federalism as legislators and heads of institutions Nigeria would continue to struggle in her quest for development and modernization.*

**Keywords:** Un-gendered, Federalism, Institutions, Power-Sharing, Invitation



## Introduction

Federalist feminist writers like Bashevkin (1998)<sup>1</sup> Chappell (2002)<sup>2</sup> (Motiejunaite (2005) and Vickers (2010)<sup>3</sup>, have for long engaged federalism literature on how gender shapes political institutions and discourses. They portrayed how this **resonates** in the federal arrangements and informs the federal institutions, practices, ideas, and discourses that constitute 'federal arrangements and impacts women's political participation.

Federalism is a state form with power divided vertically between central and regional governments in a complex network of institutions and systems as Nigeria. Federalism is embedded with greater democratization features that encourage more political space for women than any other form of government. Again federalism fosters multi-level feminist networks, thereby enhancing women's substantive representation. Consequently, women fared better in federations such as Canada and the USA than in democratized unitary states such as the UK because they could move between government levels. Nigerian federalism, however, since, its inception does not seem to advantage women (Mona 2011)<sup>4</sup>.

Gendered federalism and institutions of power-sharing in Nigerian is vital for Nigeria to stop struggling to develop. Until women are duly represented in Nigerian federalism as legislators and heads of institutions, Nigeria would continue to struggle in her quest for development and modernization.

Motiejunaite (2005)<sup>5</sup> argues that mono-national referring to national federations like (Australia, Germany, the U.S. ) are often highly centralized compared with many increasingly decentralized unitary states as found in quasi-federations like Spain with increasingly powerful regional governments. Stressing that political institutions are gendered and that this negatively affects women political representation. The crux of the argument for Motiejunaite (2005)<sup>6</sup> is that when political institutions are un-gendered it helps create opportunities for women in governance. This implies that the gendered division of societies into public and private spheres and the use of 'separate spheres' doctrines legitimize (elite) men's control of public institutions and the exclusion or the marginalization of women from public activities are inherent in gendered federal institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>Bashevkin, S. (1998) *Women on the defensive: living through conservative times* Chicago, 1, University Press

<sup>2</sup>Chappel (2002) *Gendering government: feminist engagement with the state in Australia and Canada* Vancouver, University of British Colombia Press

<sup>3</sup>Motiejunaite, Jurate. 2005. *Women's Rights: The Private/Public Dichotomy*. New York: DEBATE Press.

<sup>4</sup>Mona L. K. and Fiona, M. (2011). *Gender politics and institutions towards A feminist institutionalism* New York Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>5</sup>Motiejunaite, Jurate. 2005. *Women's Rights: The Private/Public Dichotomy*. New York: DEBATE Press.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

This is why Kincaid (2010)<sup>7</sup> argues that political participation is not about voting in candidates but also about representation which is then measured by its inclusiveness and extent of representation of all including women and other minorities. (Kincaid 2010)<sup>8</sup> also confirmed that political participation is not about voting, but also about governance accountability which is measured in terms of government responsiveness to the demands and needs that women advocate for themselves. Contending that only true federations are (liberal) democracies, has the capability to create 'dual democracies and creates more active citizenship that offers more political conditions and levers and conditions where citizens for especially women can use and offer more governance sites through which citizens can access decision-making (Weinstock 2001).<sup>9</sup> Federal arrangements institutions and practices, limit women's opportunities for democratic participation. Some examples are that federations multiple sites that give women more access to decision-makers by letting them move from a blocked site to one more open to reform (Sawer 1990<sup>10</sup>; Bashevkin 1998<sup>11</sup>; Chappell 2002<sup>12</sup>).

While others believe that multiple sites increase the number of veto points those opposed to reform can use to block (Immergut 1992)<sup>13</sup>; or that they fragment and overwhelm women's movements weakening their capacity to represent women's interests and make governments respond and fragment women's citizenship in federalisms (Hausman 1995)<sup>14</sup>. The reason being that decentralization affects the extent of women's representation in regional legislatures, in regional and local roles, and their ability to get governments to respond to demands for gender reform. Bollyer and Thorlakson (2012)<sup>15</sup> distinguish between de/centralization that is downward transfers of powers and the extent to which regional governments exercise the new powers autonomously compared to both levels of government exercising them interdependently. Vickers (2010)<sup>16</sup> stressed that in African federations, like Nigeria, decentralization was adopted both to promote democratization and to 'manage' conflict-producing territorial diversities. However, center/region power struggles also are evident as 'central governments due to the concentration of power at the center controls the activities of the regions. He

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<sup>7</sup>Kincaid (2010). 'Federalism and democracy' in *Federal Democracies*, Burgess and Gagnon, Eds. Routledge.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup>Weinstock, D.(2001). 'Towards a normative theory of federalism' *International Social Science Journal* 53, 167:75-83.

<sup>10</sup>Sawer, M. (1990). *Sisters in suits: women and public policy in Australia* Sydney : Allen & Unwin

<sup>11</sup>Bashevkin (1998). Bashevkin, S. (1998) *Women on the defensive : living through conservative times* Chicago ,1 , University Press

<sup>12</sup>Chappel (2002) *Gendering government: feminist engagement with the state in Austrelia and Canada* Vancouver , university of british Colombia press

<sup>13</sup>Immergut E. M. (1998). The theoretical core of the new institutionalism; politics and society, 26: 1 5-34.

<sup>14</sup>Hausman, M., Sawer, M., and Vickers, J. 2010). *Gender and multilevel governance* Surrey: Ashgate

<sup>15</sup>Bollyer, N. and Thorlakson, L. (2012). 'Beyond decentralization: The Comparative Study of Interdependence in Federal Systems.' *Publius*, 42(4), Fall: 566-91.

<sup>16</sup>Vickers, J 2010. A two-way Street: federalism and women's politics in Canada and the United States, *Publius the Journal of federalism* vol 40

maintained that Nigeria, South Africa, deliberately strengthened local governments at the expense of regional autonomy. The qualities distinguishing federations give organized women unique advantaged for advancing feminist projects. This advantage is available only in different kinds of federations which can be unpacked women's politics into descriptive representations and patterns of organization and advocacy and identifying strategies based on a federalism advantage.

Federalism advantage makes a valuable contribution to political analysis for more than 40 percent of the world's women who live in federations by identifying conditions that help them take advantage of unique opportunities for change. Mona, (2011)<sup>17</sup> contends that federalism advantage organized women by providing opportunities to move from level to level to take advantage of supportive governments and avoid hostile ones. Just as feminism benefits middle-class women and the white and left out black women during the feminists' struggles in the 17<sup>th</sup> century American and Europe. Federalists Weinstock, 2001 make normative / ideological claims about federalisms ' benefits including the superior protection of individual liberties, limited government protection of active citizenship by making more political levers available to citizens, and partial accommodation of national/cultural minorities, ambitions for self-rule through the regional state. Gray (2006)<sup>18</sup>, Riedle (2002)<sup>19</sup>, Vickers (1991<sup>20</sup>), (1994)<sup>21</sup> and (2010)<sup>22</sup>, adopt a conditional approach, by theorizing that federalism advantages women under some conditions which include distribution of powers (Pierson 1995)<sup>23</sup>. Taking a divergent view of the argument *Un-gendered federalism and institutions of power-sharing in Nigerian: an invitation to struggle* submits that gendered federalism usually practiced in asymmetric federalism such as Nigeria disadvantage women as they find it difficult to navigate through the levels of government especially when power is over-concentrated at the center. In Nigerian federalism fewer women on average sit as regional and national legislators just as the country has continued to struggle to develop. Consequently, development has, however, been abysmal to the country despite the practice of federalism for decades. Adopting a qualitative research method and applying a descriptive representation approach, this paper to investigate

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<sup>17</sup>Mona L. K. and Fiona, M.(2011).Gender politics and institutions towards A feminist institutionalism New York Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>18</sup>Gray G. (2006) women, federalism and women-friendly polices Australian journal of public administration Vol 65

<sup>19</sup>Riedle L. (2002) the impact of quebec independence on Canadian federalism University of new Brunswick Law Review Vol 51.

<sup>20</sup>Vickers, J. (1991), Bending the iron Law of organization: debate on the feminization of organization and political process in the English Canadian women movement in Jeri Dawn wine and justice Lyn restock eds) women and social change: feminist activism in Canada, Toronto on James Lorimer and company

<sup>21</sup>Vickers 1994 Why should women care about federalism in D., M. Brown and J. Hiebert ; canadad the state of federation 1994 , Kingston ,ON Institute of intergovernmental Relations pp 135-151

<sup>22</sup>Vickers 2010). A two way street federalism and women's politics in Canada and united state Publius the journal of federalism 40:3 412-485.

<sup>23</sup>Pierson (1995) Fragmented welfare state federal institutions and development of social policy, governance. 8;4 449-478

the following questions. To what extent has federalism been beneficial to women in Nigeria? To what extent women marginalization in Nigerian federalism hindered even development in Nigeria? Has the exclusion and marginal representation of women in Nigerian federalism been an invitation to struggle in development and modernization? How would mainstreaming women in Nigerian federalism enhance development and the buoyancy of Nigerian politics?

### Theoretical Framework

Following feminist writings and literature on women's political participation there exist two basic schools of thought and theories, Enobong, and. Ayamba (2018)<sup>24</sup> submit that there are two dominant theories –the Radical and the Conservative feminist theories. The radical theory postulates that women have equal rights as men. They also believe that the persona –the personal issues women go through in their personal and domestic lives is also political. Establishing that women have potentials and rights just like their male counterparts in all things especially in economic, political, reproductive, and human rights but are however restrained through male dominance and institutional structures. Radical feminists also state that the reason behind male dominance in the public sector administration is the result of gender inequality. According to the radicals, male dominance is the major reason women are marginal in politics (Umoh, 2010)<sup>25</sup>.

### Federalism and Women Political Representation

Political activities in any particular time and place reflect the values, beliefs, and attitudes which are commonly held in society. While politics according to Harold Lasswell (1936) can be defined as the struggle for the determination of who gets what when, and how. Appadora (2011)<sup>26</sup> submits that government is the machinery through which societal affairs or interests are articulated, formalized, and decisions there-from, implemented, to achieve the good of the public. In another conceptual development Ekemam, (2013)<sup>27</sup> explained that forms of government refer to the formula, structure, model, or basic nature of a given entity which aims at determining and administering the affairs of the society's mass of people for their common good. There several forms of government, such as democracy, republic, communism autocracy, oligarchy, theocracy, fascism, aristocracy, federalism, Kleptocracy monarchy, plutocracy amongst others (quad magazine 2020). States adopt government partners/forms based on the historical antecedents that inform the peculiarity of their constitution in a given phase of history. This implies that states adopt a form of government considered appropriate and convenient for them according to the nature of the state, peculiarities, and circumstances in their state formation.

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<sup>24</sup>Enobong, D. U and. Ayamba, A. I. (2018) Gender and Leadership in Nigeria (1999-2015): The Nigerian Experience International Journal of Social Sciences federalism Vol 12

<sup>25</sup>Umoh, E. D. (2010). 50 years of Male Dominance in Public Administration and Financial Management in Nigeria; Uyo; Doran Publishers

<sup>26</sup>Appadorai A. (2004) the Substance of Politics India Oxford university Press New Delhi

<sup>27</sup>Ekemam, (2013

According to Chand (2012)<sup>28</sup> the word federalism is derived from a Latin word called feodus which simply means a treaty or agreement. To Chand, a federal polity comes into existence either as a result of centripetal or centrifugal forces. This infers that for some inescapable forces or reasons sovereign and independent states either because they are so weak to resist foreign aggression and invasion individually, or because they are economically backward when standing on their own voluntarily agree to unite believing that in union there lies strength, therefore they agree to form a federal union (Chand 2012).

Many times scholar use federation and Confederation interchangeably as if they are one and carry the same meaning and set up similar forms of government. On the contrary, the two terms are different and refer to two different forms of government. According to Chand (2008) confederation is a union of independent states which consent to forgo permanently part of their liberty of action for certain specific objects and they are not combined under a common government. Their union is on the basis of equality and the most obvious motive of such a union is to gain security and strength in foreign relations and economic matters. This could emanate as a result of centrifugal or centripetal pressures and needs.

Tapan (2015)<sup>29</sup> confirmed that on the basis of concentration and distribution of power, there are two types of governmental forms- a unitary and federal form of government. To him, the federal form of government is a modern innovations that came into existence after the advent of the American constitution. For Hamilton (1991)<sup>30</sup> a federal state is an associate of states that forms a new one. Garner, quoted in Chand (2008)<sup>31</sup> on his own part posits that the federal state is a system in which the totality of the governmental power is divided and distributed by the national constitution or organic act of the parliament that created it. Aroney (2016)<sup>32</sup> stated that federalism comes in many forms. Believing that there are definitions and criteria that have been used to identify and classify the various types of a federal system. Some of these include historical context distinguishing them on the bases of religious and secular, social and political, and personal and territorial contexts as well as symmetry and asymmetry federalisms.

Symmetric federalism which is my case study refers to a federal system of government in which each constituent state to federation possesses equal

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<sup>28</sup>Chand S. 2012).Principles of political science for graduates and post graduates students of India universities and also useful for competitive examinations S. Chand & company PVT Ram NAGAR New Delhi

<sup>29</sup>Tapan B. (2015) Comparative politics institutions and processes New Delhi India Trinity press

<sup>30</sup>Hamilton (1991)The federalist papers, Oxford :Oxford University Press

<sup>31</sup>Chand S. 2012).Principles of political science for graduates and post graduates students of India universities and also useful for competitive examinations S. Chand & company PVT Ram NAGAR New Delhi

<sup>32</sup>Aroney, Nicholas, Types of Federalism (2016). Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law, Forthcoming, Available at SSRN:

<https://ssrn.com/abstract=2783119>Appadorai 2004 the sub stance of politics Oxford University press New York

powers. In asymmetric federalism, no distinction is made between constituent states. This is in contrast to asymmetric federalism where a distinction is made between constituent states. Australia is one example of the symmetric federal system. In Australian federalism, the 6 states are equals in autonomy and representation and in the parliament aside from differences in their representation in the House of representation that are due to their different populations. Again, the United States is another symmetric federation as each of the 50 states in the union has the same standing and powers under the United States constitution. This Union' was and is a union of states, equal in power, dignity, and authority, each has the competence to exert that residuum of sovereignty not delegated to the United States by the Constitution itself (Coyle, Thomas 1911)<sup>33</sup>.

Asymmetric federalism on the other hand stands as the opposite of symmetric federalism. It is that kind of federalism where the constituents units do not have equal powers in the federation. Chappel (2002) contends that symmetrical federalism fosters feminist ideas but when federations are asymmetrical they choke democratic freedom and features in the system. In asymmetric federalism such as Nigeria intrinsically thwarts feminist political space and activities. Asymmetric federalism not only obstructs feminists' political freedom but also allows little space for women and is also unfriendly for them. Contrary to other variants of federalism such as those practiced in Australia which Chappel (2002<sup>34</sup>) concedes enables greater democratization and more political space for gender equality in federations than asymmetrical federations. Bashevkin (1998)<sup>35</sup> however, believes that in conservative systems women fared better in federalism than in unitary states such as the UK because they could move between government levels to find which is friendlier. This is why Jill (2011)<sup>36</sup> argues that federalism does not seem to advantage women since fewer women on average sit as national legislators in federal states than in unitary federalism. Confirming Jill (2011) argument SEO(2015)<sup>37</sup> Nigerian election observation report revealed poor political outing of women in 2015 gladiators' and senatorial primary elections in Nigerian federalism as indicated in table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Gender disparity in winners of primaries in 2015 Nigerian election

Position	No of candidates	Total no of female candidates	Gender ration (women-men)
Governors	760	87	11.45%

<sup>33</sup>Coyle, W. H. P. (1911) in *Error, v. Thomas P. Smith, Secretary of State of the State of Oklahoma*, et al. Legal information institute Law.connell.edu

<sup>34</sup>Chappel (2002) *Gendering government: feminist engagement with the state in Austrelia and Canada Vancouver*, university of british Colombia press

<sup>35</sup>Banaszack, Lee Ann, Karen Beckwith and Dieter Rucht eds. 2003. *Women's movements facing the reconfigured state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>36</sup>Jill, V. (2011). *A two-way Street: federalism and women's politics in Canada and the United States*, Publius the Journal of federalism vol 40

<sup>37</sup>SEO version 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report - page

56 <https://www.iri.org/2015%20Nigeria%20Election%20Observation%20Report/1/assets/basic.html/page48.html>

Deputy governors	747	122	16.33%
Senators	1,774	269	15.16%

Source: SEO 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report

Overall, for 760 gubernatorial candidates for governor and deputy governor, women were only 87 (24-16%). women were only 122 out of the 747 senatorial candidates. The percentage of female candidates for the house of reps was not better, out of 1774 candidates only 269 were female representing 16.33% of women's presence in the primaries across the country. The percentage of men and women is an indication that asymmetric federalism Nigeria practice as Jill earlier argued does not favor women.

According to SEO (2015)<sup>38</sup> before the Ekiti and Osun elections INEC realized the breakdown of voters with PVCs in Ekiti. The release showed a total of 371,915 PVCs collected from a total of 657, 256 PVCs. Out of this pool, a total of 47.14% were men and 194,620 were women representing 52, 86%. In Osun, INEC also revealed that the name with more women collecting PVCs at a rate of 53.1 % to 46.9% for men and 46.9% for women (SEO 2015). This shows that women's political participation in asymmetric federalism as in Nigeria is basically on the basis of card-carrying members than as political gladiators. Luke (2019)<sup>39</sup> submits that the levels of female participation and representation in Nigerian politics are low. Arguing that Nigerian sexist and patronage-based political culture, combined with gendered economic and household inequalities, are seen to be the main barriers to women's participation in governance.

Following Nigeria's first democratic elections since military rule in 1999, the proportion of women in all levels of government have remained low at all levels of government, although there have been improvements in women's representation at the local level. Women in Nigeria are active in the economy and civil society. There is some variation across the country, with generally higher levels of participation in the south and urban areas. Levels of education

Percentage of women and women political representation from 1999-2011			
	Total no. Of Seats.	Men/ Percentage	Women/ Percentage
1999	360	347 (96.4%)	13 (3.6%)
2003	339	318 (94%)	21 (6%)
2007	358	333 (93%)	25 (7%)
2011	360	341 (94.72%)	19 (5.28%)

<sup>38</sup>SEO version 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report - page 56  
<https://www.iri.org/2015%20Nigeria%20Election%20Observation%20Report/1/assets/basic.html/page48.html>

<sup>39</sup>Luke Kelly (2019) Helpdesk Report Barriers and enablers for women's participation in governance in Nigeria University of Manchester 24 May 2019.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d430c8eed915d09ddb354a/596\\_Nigerian\\_Women\\_Governance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d430c8eed915d09ddb354a/596_Nigerian_Women_Governance.pdf)



and economic development may explain some of this. However, the high levels of patronage and corruption mean that female representation is sometimes tokenistic rather than substantive, as in the case of first ladies' political initiatives. Various types of women's involvements in politics can be said to be majorly include voting, work on election campaigns, for men than women, engagement in the community, contact with political leaders, and attendance at demonstrations. Whether women 'got together with others to raise an issue' as a measure of inter-election participation broad enough to encompass different political cultures and situations. They use data from the Afrobarometer (2019)<sup>40</sup> survey to estimate how many women participated in this way in comparison to men. The results show that Nigeria has one of the largest 'participation gaps' in Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the gap is greater in terms of 'raising an issue' than for 'voting' which they suggest is because the former 'constitutes a more active form of political participation. Moreover, it takes place in groups rather than individually, so it is not surprising that having access to a political network seems more important than for voting' (SEO 2015).

The results of the primaries as shown in table one above across the country and analysis of the platform where women won their tickets was a strong indication that woman would not fare well at the 2015 general elections and indeed they did not fare better in the 2015 election than the previous elections in Nigeria even when women comparably hold equivalent PVCs to men yet women failed almost woefully in the elections of 2015. SEO (2015) reported that there were a total of 14 presidential candidates and only 1, Prof Remi Sonaiya of KOWA party, was a female. Four parties (1) the Allied congress party of Nigeria ACPN, (2) the African Peoples Alliance (APA), (3) the Citizens Political Party (CPP), and (4) the Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN) nominated a female vice-presidential candidates but they all failed. The results for the other positions were not much better. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development FMWASD reported that there was no female candidate in Jigawa state at all for 2015 Nigerian elections. In Nigerian federalism fewer women on average sit as regional and national legislators just as the country has continued to struggle to develop. A look at table 2 below .showed the disparity between men and women in the 36 states of the federation in the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

Gender Disparity in state Houses of Assembly in the 2015 general election in Nigeria

S/N	Sstate	No of female can	No of seats	Percentage
1	Abia	5	24	20.83
2	Adamwa	2	25	8.00%
3	Akwa-Ibom	3	26	11.54
4	Anambra	4	25	16.00%
5	Bauchi	1	31	3.23
6	Bayesa	4	24	16.7%
7	Benu	0	30	0.00
8	Borno	0	22	0.00
9	cross rive	3	25	12.00%
10	Delta	1	28	

<sup>40</sup>More women- in-governance-report-2019-digital.pdf.

11	Eboyin	2	18	11.11%
12	Edo	1	24	4.17%
13	Ekiti	2	26	7.69%
14	Enugu	3	24	12.50%
15	Gombe	0	23	0.00%
16	Imo	1	27	0.00%
17	Jigawa	0	27	0.00%
18	Kaduna	0	11	0.00%
19	Kano	0	40	0.00%
20	Kastina	0	33	0.00%
21	Kebbi	0	24	0.00%
22	Kogi	0	25	0.00%
23	Kwara	4	24	16.67%
24	Lagos	2	19	10.53%
25	Nasarrawa	0	24	0.00%
26	Niger	0	25	0.00%
27	Ogun	3	26	11.54%
28	Ondo	2	26	7.69%
29	Osun	0	26	0.00%
30	Oyo	1	33	3.03%
31	Plateau	0	26	0.00%
32	Rivers	2	25	8.00%
33	Sokoto	0	30	0.00%
34	Taraba	0	24	0.00%
35	Yobe	0	24	0.00%
36	Zamfara	0	24	0.00%

Source: SEO version 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report

### Women Regional Representation in Nigerian Federalism

Afrobarometer (2019) survey that women's political participation and representation in the Niger Delta. The report showed more women- in-governance advocacy round table. The SDN (2019)<sup>41</sup>examined women's political participation in the Niger Delta from two perspectives: Showing that women merely participate just as citizens- as voters, engagement and debate in campaigning, and access to/engagement with party representatives. Again women participate in formal politics; including as aspirants and candidates in elections minimally and the roles and actions of women in both elected and non-elected positions. The report established that as citizens, women were found to be most visibly engaged in politics is during voting and that happens dishearteningly, however, through vote buying and mobilization by men during elections. Consequently, men's interest in women tends to dissipate once the elections are over. While both the average man and woman in the Niger Delta has limited opportunities to meaningfully engage in politics and with

<sup>41</sup>SDN (2019) Women's political participation and representation in the Niger Delta More women- in-governance advocacy round table More women- in-governance-report-2019-digital.pdf

politicians, the situation is worse for women. Table 3 shows women's political participation and representation in the Niger Delta in the 2015 elections.

Women's political participation and representation in the Niger Delta in 2015 elections

1	State	Women	Men
	Abia	7	37
2	Akwa- Ibom	6	27
3	Bayelsa	3	17
4	Cross River	2	26
5	Delta	17	45
6	Edo	1	35
7	Imo	17	76
8	Ondo	8	26
9	Rivers	6	50
Source: More women-in-governance advocacy round table report 2019.			

The poor performance of women is no different in western Nigeria. Table 4 shown below shows the level and percentage of women's political participation from 1999-2011. Again the situation is no different in southwestern Nigeria as Table 4: showing women Legislators' from 2003-2015 elections.

State	Number of seats	Number of women			
Lagos	41	2	5	7	4
Oyo	32	0	1	1	2
Osun	26	0	1	0	0
Ogun	26	2	2	2	2
Ekiti	26	1	0	4	2
Ondo	26	1	1	1	2
Total	177	6	10	15	12
Source: Researcher's Compilation (2016)					

Women Legislators and Law Making Process in Southwest, Nigeria The Fourth Republic witnessed some level of activism on the part of Southwestern women especially as regards their advancement in all spheres of life, particularly in the

political arena. Women in Western Nigeria played the role of agents of peace in the family and in their community.

Women political representation at the federal level from 1999-2015

S/N	Position	No. of Seats	Women in 1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
1	Presidency	2	0	0	0	0	0
2	Senate	109	3	4	8	7	8
3	House of Reprs	360	12	23	26	26	14
4	Governorship	36	0	0	0	0	0
5	Deputy Governorship	36	1	2	6	3	4
6	36 State Houses of Assembly	990	12	38	54	62	-
Total		1533	28	67	94	98	26

Excerpt from Lance-Onyiewu, Maureen (2011), via UN Women's Preliminary Analysis of the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria.

#### **Un-gendered federalism and institutions of power in Nigerian: An invitation to Struggle**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended<sup>42</sup> spelled out the model upon which the structures of all institutions in Nigeria are standing. However the superstructure as Rodney (2010)<sup>43</sup> referred is ungendered. It has no specifications for male and female, not in politics, economy nor the secular sphere. The superstructure started by declaring that "we the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria having firmly and solemnly resolved to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and in-dissolvable sovereign nation under God dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international cooperation, and understanding. To provide a constitution for the purpose of promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the Unity of our people". This declaration being un-gendered lumped the genders together without distinctions as though the sexes are standing on the same footing during the period of colonialism took off at the starting point in politics and nation-building before and after independence.

Following the pattern of the constitution, the electoral Act 2010 which is a bill that Act repealed the electoral Act No 2, (2006) and Independent National Electoral Act CAP. 15, laws of the federation of Nigeria 2004 and enact the electoral Act 2010 that regulates the federal, state, and local government elections and other related matters are also like the constitution. The Act enacted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria also assumed a one size fit all

<sup>42</sup>The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Fundamental Rights Enforcement procedure Rules with Amendments 2011.

<sup>43</sup>Walter, R. (2009) How Europe underdeveloped Africa Panaf publishing Abuja, Nigeria.

position by putting the sexes in one lump. The declarations of both the constitution and the electoral. The act did not specify the role of males and females in the new nation that was created and in politics. They did not state the percentage of men and women in political leadership and governance. The constitution and the electoral Act were framed as though the sexes had equal starting politics and representation in politics, economic and social status in the country. These superstructures the Nigerian constitution and the electoral Act are so ungendered that it has no place for males and women from the beginning to the end nothing showed what men or women should get or expect in the federation. This is what ---- called technical marginalization. A kind of marginalization whereby the targeted group/groups are skillfully marginalized out of the mainstream of the scheme of things.

Lisa in *Gender and Governance* maintained that the state is where the power is. Where women are technically schemed of power from the state where the power is they cannot by struggle and as one half of the nation is struggling it becomes an unavoidable invitation for the nation to struggle on every side especially in development. Lisa by referring to what theorist Louis Althusser (1971)<sup>44</sup> called the apparatus of rule explained that rule through apparatus of rule consist of institutions, capacities, and ideologies. This also includes a set of instructions such as legislatures, courts, civil and welfare service bureaucratic, prisons, schools, armies, navies' policies. The apparatus of the rule also encompasses juridical, military, and police forces. Military and para-military, administrative, and therapeutic capacities (Fraser 1989)<sup>45</sup>. When the apparatus of rule un-gendered it affects the weak and minority members of the state. The state according to Lisa (2003)<sup>46</sup> is where the power is because That is the state can authoritatively impose specific ways of making and enforces legal decisions. The apparatus of rule poised to give the sexes equality or equity need to specify positions meant to be occupied by the sexes. This is why Norris and Lovenduski (1995)<sup>47</sup> established that in politics the apparatus of rule reflect the supply and demand model which is the most dominant framework use in the study of political recruitment (Norris and Lovenduski 1995) and (1993)<sup>48</sup>. Also, Randal (1987)<sup>49</sup> confirmed that the supply-side factors such as resources, time, money, experience, and motivational factors, ambition, interest, confidence, and influence who decides to run for office.

On the demand side, selectors evaluate applicants in accordance with a wide range of factors including both formal and informal criteria established by following constitutions and acts establishing them. The effect of ungendered constitutions and acts especially in federalism on political recruitment can be seen as both supply-side and demand-side effects. Due to wider systemic issues

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<sup>44</sup>Louis A. (1971 quoted in Lisa D. Brush (2003) *Gender and governance*, AltaMira, division of Rowman and Littlefield publishers UK

<sup>45</sup>Fraser, N. (1989) *Unruly practice: power, discourse and gender in the contemporary social theory* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

<sup>46</sup>Lisa D. Brush (2003) *Gender and governance*, AltaMira, division of Rowman and Littlefield publishers UK

<sup>47</sup>Lovenduski (1995) *Political recruitment , gender race and class in the British parliament*; Cambridge, Cambridge university press

<sup>48</sup>Lovenduski, J. and Norris P.(1993) *Gender and party politics*: London Sage

<sup>49</sup>Randal V. 1987 *women and politics* London Macmillian.

such as the public-private divide, the sexual segregation of the workforce, and patterns of gender socialization, women are likely to have less time, money, ambition, and confidence than their male counterparts. Alternatively, the effect of gender on the selection process can be a product of demand, either through direct or indirect discrimination (Norris & 1995)<sup>50</sup> explained.

Lisa (2003)<sup>51</sup> argument of the state being where the power is –is hinged on the distinction between a private zone of individual and freedom and the public realm of collectivity and subjugation. States and social policies shape how people think and act. The decisions and actions of bureaucratic, civil servants, legislatures, and social workers amongst other things, the state can determine. The state is where the power is as argued Lisa, because states and social policies also determine the limit and possibilities of collective struggle. States establish the degree of say” vulnerable members have in decisions that affect their physical safety, environmental sustainability, economic viability, degree of inequality, and civil quality of life and where people reside and work.

Confirming Lisa’s position Enobong & Ayamba, (2018)<sup>52</sup> in *federalism: gender and leadership in Nigeria 1999-2015, the Nigerian Experience* found that due to the characteristics and features of womanhood women are not interested in politics compared to men. Some of the reasons adduced for the lethargic attitude of women in politics include the fact that women are financially handicapped as confirmed by (Randal 1987)<sup>53</sup> hence politics demand a whole lot of liquid cash. Again in asymmetric federalism politics is often violent-ridden. Enobong and Ayamba (2018) concede that asymmetric federalism such as Nigeria leaves little or no space for women who are disadvantaged through the recruitment model as posited by (Norris & Lovenduski (1995). Gender is about power just like state and social services. Through gender relations, people continually recreate and reinforce the distinctions between masculinity and femininity.

Through gender relations states police and make variations within masculinity and femininity. Gender as far as Mona and Fiona (2011) described is about drawing a clear, bright line between men and women. They contend that gender is not a trait but a system for dividing people. If this argument is to be followed it, therefore, means that Nigerian federalism would profit women better when it is un-gendered. In line with this position Lisa (2003) submitted that with gender people are assigned their places in the gender order because gender is a central mechanism of social recognition. (Lisa 2003)<sup>54</sup>. Stretching the argument further she stated that the divided powers inherent in federalism make feminists' goals harder to achieve. Consequently, asymmetric federations with key jurisdictions are controlled by their regional government. From 1960 to

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<sup>50</sup>Norris, P and Lovenduski, J. (1995) *Political recruitment: gender race and class in British parliament*, Cambridge, University press

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup>Enobong, D. U and. Ayamba, A. I. (2018) *Gender and Leadership in Nigeria (1999-2015): The Nigerian Experience* International Journal of Social Sciences federalism Vol 12

<sup>53</sup> Ibd

<sup>54</sup>Lisa D. B. (2003). *Gender and governance* Littlefield, Inc. UK AltaMira Press

date Nigeria, when Nigeria was declared a sovereign federal state, the country has continued to struggle to develop. Looking at Lilliputian positions that women clinched politically across the country as shown by various tables above it becomes clear to all that women have been systematically schemed out because the constitution and other acts failed to specify the roles of the male and female in the state from inception when it was declared a federation. When we consider the Radical feminist theory which theoretically underpinned this paper, we can see that the Radical argument position that the Persona is political is screaming at us. Consequently, I can argue that technically scheming women out of juicy positions in politics, economy, and others have been an invitation for the country to struggle to develop hence the irreplaceable contributions of women in Nigerian development are missed. For the country to develop and occupy its enviable position in the comity of nations then Nigerian federalism has to be gendered.

### Summary

Gendered federalism and institutions of power-sharing in Nigerian is vital for Nigeria to develop. Since independence Nigeria has made a lot of concerted efforts to develop to no avail. Although progress has been made as the country is not where it was some 60 years ago but when the country's development is juxtaposed with other young independent countries like South Africa it will be glaring to all that Nigeria has not achieved much since her independence in October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960. The modernization so far achieved by Nigeria cannot be compared with her contemporaries as far as independence is concerned, countries like Malaysia, and India not minding the population of India. Development has been abysmal to Nigeria and this can be traced to the ungendered Nigerian federalism where the powers of women are obliterated, negated, and subjugated (Emordi 2019)<sup>55</sup>.

Until women are duly represented in Nigerian federalism as legislators and heads of institutions Nigeria would continue to struggle in her quest for development and modernization. Nigerian federalism was an un-gendered abinitio therefore there is a need to reframe the constitutions and other Acts to incorporate the roles and percentages of men and women in the scheme of things. Nigerian federalism would have fared better if the agreement has been reached from the beginning on the ratio of males and females to occupy political positions in the federation. As in Americans by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rough agreement had been reached on the structure of the federal government and strict separation of the church and the state that consensus had its limits. The emerging democratic institutions did not allow women or African Americans to vote except for a handful of free slaves in the north (Charles Hauss 2006)<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup>Emordi, A.T.O. (2019).The Exclusion of Women in Governance and Security Issues: Establishing the Cost and Role of Women in Inequality, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) Nigerian Forum, A Journal of Opinion Affairs Vol. 40, Nos 3-4, Lagos Nigeria

<sup>56</sup>Charles, H. (2006) comparative politics fifth edition, domestic responses to global challenges Thomson Wadsworth United states of America

Banaszack (2003)<sup>57</sup> insists that women's movements in asymmetric and un-gendered federalisms have to work with federation's logics and may also involve multiple women's movement to achieve marginal representation. Explaining that in pan-Canadian women's movement looks to the federal government for national standards. Vickers (1991)<sup>58</sup> believes that feminist scholars also critique the effect of federal power divisions which disproportionately affect women's lives, arguing that women in less wealthy states /provinces are disadvantaged by such an arrangement.

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<sup>57</sup>Banaszack, Lee Ann, Karen Beckwith and Dieter Rucht eds. 2003. *Women's movements facing the reconfigured state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>58</sup>Vickers, J. (1991), *Bending the iron Law of organization: debate on the feminization of organization and political process in the English Canadian women movement in Jeri Dawn wine and justice Lyn restock eds) women and social change: feminist activism in Canada*, Toronto on James Lorimer and company.