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THE ECONOMICS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

**POLICIES IN TURKEY AND OTHER
EMERGING ECONOMIES**

Edited by

Meltem İnce Yenilmez and Gül Ş. Huyugüzel Kışla



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How patriarchal power structures undermine women's empowerment and gender equality

The case of Nigeria

Özgür Tüfekçi and Mohammed Hashiru

1 Introduction

Though it is common knowledge, Nigeria is highly characterised by patriarchy from time immemorial (Aina, 1998). Despite deliberate attempts by governments and NGOs, patriarchy appears to dominate all spheres of the Nigerian economy and politics, thereby only entrenching patriarchy in the state. Generally, the highest populated African state continues to define the roles and responsibilities of men and women as manual and domestic, respectively.

The nature of patriarchy in traditional Nigerian society not only paves the way for men to dominate women but also impedes the activities of women in formal and informal decision making, which further weakens women's empowerment in the country. Evidently, women in the largest economy of Africa are not key players in political nor economic circles. It is a worrying phenomenon, especially now that women in leading economies have exhibited a significant level of ability in shaping political and economic discourses. A country which is a hub of African commerce continues to struggle to bring a significant number of women in the same round table with their male counterparts for decision making despite the constitutional provision of equal rights and privileges among male and female citizens. Patriarchy prevails amidst gross violations of women's rights through domestic violence, female genital mutilation, among others. Politically, women have been relegated to political offices at the lower level, with an insignificant number of them occupying those spots.

Unlike previously written papers and articles on the subject matter, analytical examination in this chapter will be in the context of feminist theory of discrimination and constructivist theory of identity. Employing an interdisciplinary approach of secondary data analysis and literature review, this chapter is divided into three subsections with objectives of examining

blindness has meant that the variance influence of colonialism on African men and women has not been given attention until lately (Mama, 1997).

Domination of males in politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures is another factor that hinders the political participation of women. Male-dominated political parties often have a male perspective on matters of national significance that let down women, as their viewpoints are often overlooked and not reflected in the politics of their parties. Women are also frequently not voted for at the position of power within structures of the party because of gender biases of male headship. Just like mentioned in the culture and tradition subheading the society does not condone women keeping late at night though most political conferences and meeting often happen in the mid-nights, particularly in times when one is keenly involved and wants to seek a political post. Women who are mothers with children and a husband at home do not usually find it easy. Makama (2013: 132) further finds it significant to comment that most successful women in politics are those with helpful husbands, those who have turned into husbands, those lacking husbands, those who are done with childbearing, and those who are associated with the military, for example, daughters of past leaders and politicians. Some examples of these people are Akunyili (helpful husband) Iyabo Obasanjo (a divorced and daughter of the former president), Condoleezza Rice (single), Sara Jubril (widow), and Hillary Clinton (a former flagbearer and wife of a former president).

6 Conclusion

Going through the literature of PPS it is evident that this famous African adage – *until the story of hunting is written by the animals too, the hunter would continue to be glorified by hunting tales* – summarises the panacea. It means that until women who have not given in to a patriarchal psyche become exegete of religious verdicts, texts, societal norms and culture male exegetes shall continue to build on the PPS of the society in the name of God. This goes to reply the famous patriarchal argument that women do not need to lead in order to feel or be empowered when in essence the body of patriarchy, which shapes the power structure in the society, can do so owing to the leadership advantages their own structure continues to provide. Both Islam and Christianity, which are the leading religions in Nigeria, have been used by the PPS to further bring women under the control of men through the repetition of verses and their exegesis by the patriarchal exegetes who determine the meaning what God and His prophets' decree for the society. Though these religions were alien to the lands of Nigeria, the culture and tradition of the land before the advent of Christianity and Islam seem to be mostly encouraging and supporting PPS even though women were actively instrumental in those times. It is these collective shapes, influenced by the religion, culture and tradition, that translate into the patriarchal political nature of the state. As evident is the poor performance of women in the most recent general elections held in 2019. The government of President Buhari appointed very few women in his government in the wake of several women among the least who contested but lost elections. Not only are women poorly represented in the highest political portfolios, but the same is the case in the local and national party positions. The violent elections in some areas that barricade many females who want to vie for political positions are largely perpetrated by men and have resulted in some women perceiving politics to be “dirty” and meant for only the masculine gender. The largely occupied masculine in the game of politics has also discouraged women who are nurturing political ambitions, and even if they do, they go in for less competitive positions where they end up not inspiring the massive representation of women because they are least represented in the party decision-making body. One of the effective solutions to this problem is, first and foremost, to identify and accept the problem itself. When people (women) toil to ensure that

they get equity in every sphere of life, they show lackadaisical attitudes towards established policies to salvage them since the PPS is so deeply rooted in the society. The kind of epistemological orientation of these women is the one influenced by the PPS. Breaking away from the PPS epistemology would require a form of rigorous education of women on the need to survive a world without the PPS.

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