

Nigeria's Bloated Recurrent Expenditure: Interrogating the National Assembly's Proposed Additional Constituencies for Women

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Abstract: Women representative in Nigeria executive and parliament has since 1999 continuously beaten a spiral downward trend from 35/7% in 2014 to 19/6% in 2021. This has generated debates on the need for mechanisms to engender gender inclusiveness in Nigeria. Therefore, the stride of the National Assembly to proffer a *modus Vivendi* to this political malaise is a welcome development. However, there are already two contending debates which the National Assembly's additional constituencies will compound in Nigeria: over bloated recurrent expenditure and National Assembly budget. This paper examines the problems and prospects of the National Assembly's proposed additional constituencies for women in an era of bloated recurrent expenditure in Nigeria. Using the post-colonial state and women's empowerment framework of analysis and qualitative method of research, the paper argues that rather than filling the gap of women participation in Nigeria politics, additional constituencies for women shall aggravate two already existing problems in Nigeria: bloated recurrent expenditure, National Assembly budget and two other new ones. This paper concludes that Nigeria's First Past the Post Electoral System has never engendered inclusive participation anywhere in the world and recommend that the National Assembly should rather change the electoral system to the Proportional Representative System.

Key words: bloated-legislature, recurrent-expenditure, proportional-representation, women-participation

JEL code: K

1. Introduction

Women are grossly under-represented in Nigeria political space. In national parliaments in Africa, women's representation in Nigeria is only ranked above Burkina Faso (6%). Nigeria is tied second to the last at (7%) with Benin Republic. Other regional powers in Africa have greater women representative in their parliaments. South Africa has 47% women representatives in the lower house and 20% at the upper house; Egypt has 27% and 13%; Ethiopia has 39% and 41%; Kenya has 22% and 31%, while Tanzania's single chamber house has 37% women representative. Rwanda has the highest women representation of 61% and 39% (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya, 2021, p. 174).

Researchers Valerie Hudson at Texas A & M; and Donna Lee Bowen and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen at Brigham Young universities found a high correlation with countries that practice pre-modern attitude toward women with

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violent instability and poverty (Basra & Tororo, 2021). Hillary Clinton also collaborated the above finding when she said that, "The subjugation of women is...a threat to the common security of our world" (Ucini, 2021, p. 1). The good news is that women's representation in political decision making has been on the rise globally. The not-so-good news is that the increase has been stubbornly slow, barely 1% in 2018 compared with the previous year. In 2018 the number of women ministers worldwide reached an all-time high at 20.7% (Musau, 2019). The worst news is that in Nigeria women representation is retrogressing and that all parts of Nigeria have burgeoning insecurity: Boko Haram in the Northeast, banditry in North-West and Central, separatism in South-East and South-West and militancy in the South-South. Nigeria is also the World Capital of poverty. The question is does this has a correlation with women under-representation in Nigeria?

Meanwhile, according to Eme (2014), failure to incorporate women's concerns in decision making signifies a major loss for the entire society. Corner cited in Eme (2014, pp. 3-4) added that in Australia it was only when women entered the Australian parliament in significant numbers that issues such as childcare, violence against women and valuation of unpaid labour were ever considered by policy makers, thus Australia now promotes family-friendly employment policies, including work-based childcare. It is also a known fact that for development to be successful, women, who make up a larger proportion of the population, should not be left out, because there is no doubt that both men and women have some potentials and rights to contribute meaningfully to the development of their countries throughout the world, Africa and Nigeria inclusive.

Indeed, women have made great exploits in Nigeria. In pre-colonial Nigeria, Queen Amina of Zaria, led armies to drive out invaders from Zaria; Moremi of Ile-Ife, sacrificed for her people through her selfless leadership, which we are so bereft of these days. The heirlooms of these women are in jeopardy of annihilation. Though eight women are now Chief Executive Officers of banks in Nigeria; Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe (Fidelity Bank), Miriam Olusanya (GTbank), Tomi Somefun (Unity Bank), Yemisi Edun (FCMB), Bukola Smith (FSDH Merchant Bank), Ireti Samuel-Ogbu (Citibank), Halima Buba (SunTrust) and Kafilat Araoye (Lotus Bank) (Egobiambu, 2021), this is just out of twenty-one commercial banks in Nigeria (<https://www.makemoney.ng/list-of-banks-in-nigeria-with-their-details/>). It is 26.25% representation in an area where ascension to office is purely on merit and competence, but still a far cry from the Rwandan experience, where the economy rode to recovery on the backs of women (Adenike, 2013).

This paper thinks that what Co-Chair of the UN Secretary General's Independent Accountability Panel for Women, Children and Adolescent, Joy Phumaphi, said is germane to Nigeria's situation, she said, "we cannot talk about democracy when large chunks of the community are left out. Women comprise 50% of the population but less than 10% of our legislature.... We must not delude ourselves into believing that we have democracy. We have system of governance that we have adopted which is actually oppressing. If your interests are not represented, then you are being oppressed because you are not being given a voice, you are being suffocated. I think we must call for Proportional Representation or a combination of the two systems, FPTP and PR, mix them into one thing and turn it into a brand." (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya, 2021, p. 43).

Maybe, it was because of the lacuna of gender inequality that the Deputy Chief Whip of Nigeria's House of Representative, Hon. Nkiruka Onyejiocha sponsored a bill to add one hundred and eleven (111) additional National Assembly Seats. The bill, which was read for the first time on Thursday, April 22, 2021, sought to alter the provisions of the 1999 Constitution; to commence after the current life of the National Assembly and to be reviewed after 16 years from its commencement, notwithstanding any other provision of the constitution (Akinwale, 2021). However, Nigeria being a post-colonial state led by a petty-bourgeoisie class that does not take inputs from its citizens or when

it does, it does it in a manner that will further feather their political perk. Without looking at its economic, political and workability.

Economically, this will increase the budget of national assembly, which has attracted a lot of umbrage amongst Nigerians, like this: Nigeria health care budget is 46 billion naira for 200 million people; Nigeria's education budget is 48 billion for 200 million people; Nigeria's Legislature budget 125 billion naira for 465 people-*politicians vs Nigerians* (Ikheloa, 2021). It will also increase Nigeria's current recurrent expenditure: the 2021 budget presented by President Buhari includes N5.65 trillion recurrent expenditure, about 43% of the entire budget, plus personnel cost of N3.76 trillion, and debt service of N3.12 trillion (Jonathan, 2020, p. 2).

Politically, Uganda has practiced reserved seats on First Past the Post (FPTP) Electoral System for thirty-two-year (32yrs: 1989-date), it has only 35% representation whilst Rwanda that has Proportional Representative (PR) System has 61% representation (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya, 2021). The women reserved seat is also fraught with being (women quota MPs) perceived as second-class MPs; they are expected to inform constituency MPs in their districts whenever they visit their constituencies; at official or social functions, the constituency MP speaks first. In Uganda the open seat-the directly elected political position- has now been named in no uncertain terms "ekifo kyabasajja" (men's seat) and women's reserved seat, has now acquired a status of a semi-official position, women contestants stated that even their fellow women question why they had to vie for men's seats (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya, 2021, pp. 51-52).

On workability, Morna, Tolmay & Makaya (2021, p.39) declared that constitutional or legislated quotas in the PR system are the most watertight way of achieving gender parity. Reserved seats whether in the FPTP or PR system are best avoided. They noted, "The FPTP electoral system has never worked for any country. Countries that have more women in both parliaments and councils have the PR electoral systems. In Africa we have Rwanda as an example. Indeed, democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political arena. Women are abysmally under-represented in Nigeria; urgently and now is the time to change the narrative.

This paper examines the problems and prospects of the National Assembly's proposed additional constituencies for women in an era of bloated recurrent expenditure in Nigeria. It demonstrates that there is urgent need for mechanisms to drastically upped women representation in Nigeria's political space but argues that additional one hundred and eleven special seats for women in a FPTP electoral system is not the way to go, because it will exacerbate Nigeria recurrent expenditure and the budget of the National Assembly, more so, it has never given a quantum leap to women participation anywhere in the world. The paper recommends a constitutionally backed PR electoral system within the present number of National Assembly's constituencies in Nigeria.

The paper used Longwe's framework of five hierarchical "levels of equality". (March, Smyth, & Mukhopadhyay, 2005) and post-colonial state theory. Qualitative method and secondary data collection were also used.

The paper is sectioned in the following order: the contending debates on women participation in politics; context and methodology; theorizing the post-colonial state and women empowerment (Longwe) framework analysis; the additional national assembly seats for women in Nigeria; contending debate on recurrent expenditure and national assembly budget; the case for proportional representative (PR) electoral system to enhance women participation and recommendation/concluding remarks.

2. Contending Debates on Women Participation in Politics

Women participation in politics could be grouped within the realms of identity politics which Dalglish (2013, pp. 70-72) noted is an attempt to address the lacuna of political representation, or any form of politics that seeks to transform a mass of diverse preferences into policies, by channelling them through institutions of representation without resorting to direct violence. Identity is the product of power, whence its politics; its leitmotif is empowerment and the vehicle in this politics is for the oppressed and excluded groups to have a voice, as speaking enables “marginalized groups [to] generate a self-designated identity...that is instantiated by the individual identities of its constituents”. Indeed, he further emphasized that representation in liberal democracy is partial, despite its claims to be neutral. Therefore, women groups and its interest friendly groups must pool resource together to see that policies and institutions for women participation in politics are those that empowers, give them real voice and instantiated the identities of its constituents.

Meanwhile, women navigate a more complicated maze of challenges than men do along their leadership journeys. Originally termed the glass ceiling, the new metaphor is a leadership labyrinth which means that women encounter multifaceted barriers that not only result in lack of numerical parity between women and men in leadership, but also critical gender differences in leadership positions. Research into the glass cliff shows that women, relative to men, are preferentially appointed to precarious leadership positions coupled with greater risks and criticism; have inequitable divisions of domestic labour, the structure and culture of contemporary organizations; domestic and child-rearing expectations impose an added burden on women climbing the leadership ladder; women are less likely than men to hold line, as opposed to staff roles that are more visible, have more responsibility, and fed into senior leadership positions. Even when women are in similar positions to men, they often have fewer responsibilities, are less likely to receive formal job training, and are less likely to be included in important networks. Moreover, women confront greater barriers to establishing critical mentor relationships than men do. There are explicit biases against women in elite leadership positions, the deeply ingrained stereotypic beliefs that women take care and men take charge give rise to crafty biases against female leaders. Abundant research demonstrates that people's intuitive notions of leaders are culturally masculine (Eagly & Carli, Koenig et al., Powell & Graves, 2003; Ryan et al., cited in Goethals & Crystal, 2017, pp. X-XIII).

Though these prejudices are hard to detect, social scientists have devised tools to do just that. People are asked to evaluate identical information: Half the people are told it is a man's resume, the other half, a woman's overwhelmingly, when evaluating candidates for leadership positions, identical qualifications are deemed “better” or “more meritorious” when there is a male name attached (Davison and Burke & Goldberg cited in Goethals & Crystal, 2017, p. X). The 2016 US presidential election also revealed the animosity that many Americans harbour toward women who seek power; the hostility the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton faced throughout her career in public office, many have demonized her as a woman, wife, and mother, and labelled her a “radical feminist”, and, in a notable moment during a presidential debate, as a “nasty woman”. This backlash against female power-seeking was epitomized in the choice of campaign slogan “Trump that Bitch”. Remarkably, Americans' hostility toward women and feminism predicted support for Republican candidate Donald Trump almost as strongly as their political party affiliation (Goethals & Crystal, 2017, p. XIII).

According to Childs & Krook (2008, pp. 22-23), political scientists have subjected to empirical analysis questions like “Do women act for women?” and “Do women in politics make a difference?” To know if increase in the number of women in political office (descriptive representation) results in greater attention to women's policy

concerns, or women's impact (substantive representation). Some studies find that the presence of women does indeed alter legislative discourses, proposals, debates, and outcomes (Carroll; Grey; Swers cited Childs & Krook, 2008), others uncover little or no difference in the styles and behaviours of male and female officeholders (Crowley; Gotell and Brodie; Tremblay/Pelletier cited in Childs & Krook, 2008). The explanation on why women do not appear to act for women is that there are simply too few women to make a difference. It was observed that women's greater presence produces a "critical mass" in favour of women friendly policy change. This has gained wide currency as a justification for measures like quotas to bring more women into political office. Thus, many international organizations advocate that their member states aim for 30% women in decision-making positions, on the grounds that 30% constitutes the point at which women may become a critical mass in favour of women-friendly policy change.

Indeed, studies have shown that countries which adopted quota policies, specifying that women form at least 30% of all candidates, they introduce more bills on women's issues than assemblies where women's numbers are low (Franceschet/Piscopo; Thomas cited in Childs & Krook 2008). Women issues include policies that achieve equality for women, address women's special needs, enable women to undertake their traditional roles as caregivers. They include issues of concern to the broader society; thus they encompass opposing positions on, abortion, childcare, divorce, domestic violence, equal pay, equal rights, family issues, parental leave, pensions, rape, reproductive rights, sexual harassment, women's health, and work/life balance. In the developing world, they include access to water, child marriage, land ownership, inheritance, bride price, genital mutilation, and university admissions; and from its historical angle, they are issues like universal suffrage, wage labour, and widows' benefits (Celis, Meyer & Tripp cited in Childs & Krook, 2008, pp. 24-25).

Literatures further show that women more than men lead in a participative manner, suggesting not only that women lead differently but also that they may lead more effectively (Goethals & Crystal 2017); they tend to be more communal-oriented toward the concerns and needs of others, and less agentic-focused on individual achievement and advancement, and that is reflected in their leadership style. (Carli and Eagly cited in Goethals & Crystal, 2017, p. X). Scholars like Borkowski and Ugras (1998); Eagly, Gartzia & Carli (2014); Franke, Crowne & Spake (1997); Schwartz & Rubel (2005) and World Bank, (2012), agreed that beyond differences in style, women bring to bear important and distinct perspectives, values, and priorities in leadership. Women are more likely to demonstrate cooperation and endorse social values that promote the welfare of others and are less likely to support unethical decisions. Greater gender diversity in the upper echelons of companies is associated with greater philanthropy, fewer employee lay-offs, and fewer unethical business practices. Also, increased leadership empowerment of women is associated with greater policymaking that represents the concerns of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities, as well as increases in standards of living, societal gender equality, and national wealth.

Therefore, female leaders are more likely than male leaders to focus on the welfare of others and, though the differences are small, as a broad generalization, we can say that research suggests that women have, overall, a leadership effectiveness advantage (cited in Goethals & Crystal, 2017, p. X).

There are also growing literature that are skeptical of the impact of a "critical mass", it says that policy change does not automatically follow from an increase in the proportion of female legislators; it focuses on identifying the conditions that may prevent individual women from pursuing reforms on behalf of women as a group and they noted the followings: party discipline, institutional norms, legislative inexperience, and the external political environment, including the electoral system and divisions among women, like race, class, age, and party affiliation, which may

prevent the formulation of a collective legislative agenda. This diversity and constraints, they suggest is crucial to explore how individual identities and interests facilitate, as well as undermine, cooperation among women in political office (Childs & Krook, 2008, p. 24). Furthermore, to Cornwall & Goetz (2005, p. 784), women in office do not necessarily defend a feminist position on policies. Indeed, for some women, winning and keeping office can be contingent upon downplaying feminist sympathies. They example of Iraq where the 31 per cent female occupant of assembly seats in Iraq and they offered no protection against the conservative Islamist assault on the country's Ba'ath-era secular family law, a significant proportion of women in the assembly were at the forefront of calls to reinstate Sharia law in personal relationships. Which made it difficult for those opposing the law, who were always confronted with: "See you are wrong because even these women are supporting us."

This paper re-echoes the position that you cannot talk about democracy when large chunks of the community are left out. Therefore, women inclusiveness must be the aspiration of all political system globally, more especially Nigeria, because gender equality brings a lot to the table. And the good news is that women's representation in political decision making has been on the rise globally. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of women seated in parliament grew in 2018, with a regional average share at 23.7%, according to the just-released 2019 edition of the biennial Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Map of Women in Politics. Ethiopia saw the largest increase in women's political representation in the executive branch, from 10% women ministers in 2017 to 47.6% in 2019. Among the top African countries with a high percentage of women in ministerial positions are Rwanda (51.9%), South Africa (48.6%), Ethiopia (47.6%), Seychelles (45.5%), Uganda (36.7%) and Mali (34.4%). The lowest percentage in Africa was in Morocco (5.6%), which has only one female minister in a cabinet of 18. Other countries with fewer than 10% women ministers include Nigeria (8%), Mauritius (8.7%) and Sudan (9.5%) (Musau, 2019). Again, in Africa, women inclusiveness in party politics is abysmal, only the African National Congress (ANC) has a quota for women in its National Executive Committee.

3. Context and Methodology

The National Assembly's proposed additional constituencies for women amidst the bloated budget of the national assembly and recurrent expenditure in Nigeria is the focus of this paper.

The study adopted a qualitative research design. A research design is the planning of scientific inquiry, the scheme that guides the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data generated for a given study (Bassey & Ndiyo cited Enyiazu, 2018). While documentary method of secondary data collection is used in collecting data derived from books, journals, magazines, news dailies and the internet. It is most suitable for this paper because the data required for the study are already in the public domain. What is needed is to refine, interpret, evaluate, and analyze them. We also used content analysis, rooted on systematic logical deductions, which is a method for analyzing and/or retrieving meaningful information from documents and other contents. It is a technique of making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Holsti, cited in Enyiazu, 2020).

4. Theorizing the Post-Colonial State and Women Empowerment (Longwe) Framework Analysis

This work has two frame work of analysis, the first is the Marxist theory of the Post- colonial state theory, which according to Ekekwe cited in Enyiazu, Nnamani, Ugwu & Agbo (2020) rests on the foundation of the colonial

state, which was authoritarian, anti-people, anti-development and a protector of the interest of the foreign bourgeoisies; it was on the basis of this that post-colonial states like Nigeria emerged and is maintained. Unlike the state in the West, where the binding of individuals in the civil society makes demands on the state and their demands are articulated and processed. In a post-colonial state, there is no link with their civil societies, and they do not take citizens demands seriously, rather what matters to the governing petty bourgeoisies is the interest of their foreign bourgeoisies patrons and how to the feathered their political, economics and parochial nest.

This framework is used to bring to the fore, the weakness and the short-sightedness of Nigeria petty-bourgeoisies, which never yield to the yearning of Nigerians; but is now in pretext proposing additional legislative seats for women in the midst of burgeoning national assembly budget and Nigeria recurrent expenditure, as if they are tackling the gap of women inclusiveness, whilst in reality they are actually creating new positions for their wives, daughters and concubines.

On the other hand the Longwe framework, developed by Sara Hlupekile Longwe, is intended to question what women's empowerment and equality means in practice, and, from this point, to asses women's empowerment, which is: enabling women to take an equal place with men, and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay (2005, p. 92). It is centred on five levels of equality as:

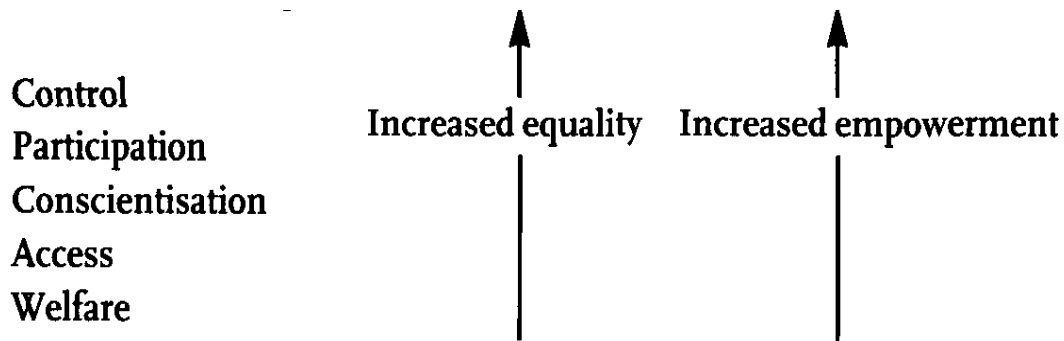


Figure 1 Hierarchical level of Equality

From: March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay (2005, p. 93).

These levels of equality are hierarchical. If an intervention focuses on the higher levels, there is a greater likelihood that women's empowerment will be increased by the intervention than if the project focuses on the lower levels, like welfare, which is very unlikely that women will find the project empowering. It emphasized equal participation in the decision-making process, thus certain resources is more important for achieving women's empowerment than equal access to resources; and neither participation nor access are as important as equal control.

Indeed, using this framework of analysis punctures the inclusiveness of women with the Nigeria's additional seats for women, because it has never worked nor does it empowered women. It has been used in Uganda since 1989, it has made women representatives lower specie to men and derogating questions are being thrown at women whenever they dare to contest the normal seats, which many now perceived as men seat (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya 2021, pp. 51-52).

It also shows that real inclusiveness must include equal participation in decision-making organs like political parties, executive councils etc. (these are where control and decisions are made), which include decision on the best electoral system for inclusiveness.

5. The Additional National Assembly Seats for Women in Nigeria

Pre-colonial Nigeria is replete with the exploits of great women. Women like Queen Amina of Zaria, who led armies to drive out invaders from Zaria; and Moremi of Ile-Ife, whose sacrifice for her people speaks to selfless leadership. Women from Nchara/Ahaba Oloko in Ikwano Local Government Area of Abia State, led by the very courageous Ikonna, Nwanyiukwu Enyia and others, who confronted their warrant chief, Chief Okeugo for daring to enforce an Obnoxious colonial law that women should start paying taxes like their husbands, this led to the famous Aba Women Riot, which engulfed the Eastern Region Nigeria and jolted the colonialist to their morrows. Other prominent women leaders were Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, a crusader and challenger of despotic leaders, who led Egba women on a protest against taxation; Margaret Ekpo, a prominent civil rights activist; and Hajia Gambo Sawaba, who championed the cause of the oppressed in northern Nigeria. Iyalode Tinubu of Lagos exemplifies the rich participation of women on the economic scene (Adenike, 2013; Obienusi, 2017). The legacies of these women are at risk of extinction, because female participation in decision-making in Nigeria is still a far cry from what is obtained elsewhere, even in Africa. The Rwandan experience has shown what gender equality can do-their economy rode to recovery on the backs of women (Adenike, 2013).

Nigeria's National Policy of Women adopted by the government in 2000 has as one of its objectives that the state should ensure women participation in politics equally like men; it stresses the need to redress the imbalance in women's representation in the socio-political life of the nation, especially at the decision-making levels of the three tiers of government. It provides that women can contest for elective posts and be entitled to appointive posts everywhere, irrespective of their place of origin. One of the implementation strategies for achieving the above is through affirmative action of 30 percent female representation in the legislative and executive arms of government, party hierarchy and structures (National Policy on Women, cited in Eme, 2014).

President Goodluck Jonathan exceeded the 30% percent threshold by appointing 35% of women in executive positions (Eme, 2014). This progress at the executive branch has abysmally gone down to 19% representation in 2021 and parliamentary representative stood at 3% in 2000; 7% in 2010 and 6% in 2020 (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya 2021, pp. 179, 224). The former Senate President, Senator David Mark, lamented this underrepresentation of women, noting that women's participation in politics in Sub-Sahara Africa was 20.2 percent, Asia, 17.9 percent, Pacific 14.9 percent and Arab 10.7, in Europe, it is 20.9 (Nordic countries excluded) and Americas, 22.7. Mark (2014) added that Nigeria as a country falls far below the above regionals average, and enjoined the stakeholders in Nigeria to make concerted efforts to address the continued marginalization of women in politics. He pledged the support of the Senate and the National Assembly in ensuring that women take their positions in politics (Mark cited in Eme, 2014, p. 1).

Also, the former Speaker Aminu Tambuwal of the House of Representative and now Governor of Sokoto state, recommended and pledged to support Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to consider dedicating certain constituencies to women in the next delineation of constituencies to improve women's participation in politics in the country (Tambuwal cited in Eme, 2014). It is against this background that any effort to give Nigerian women greater access and representation in politics and decision-making is welcomed.

Therefore, the Bill that sought to create additional 37 seats for Senate and 74 in the House of Representatives (111) for women if passed into law, may be a welcome development. It was read for the first time on Thursday, April 22, 2021, and sought to alter the provisions of the 1999 Constitution. Sponsored by the Deputy Chief Whip, Hon. Nkiruka Onyejiocha who stated that the bill would remedy the low representation of women in legislative

houses, by providing additional separate seats to be contested and filled by only women in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly as a temporary measure to promote women's representation (Akinwale, 2021).

Indeed, if it becomes an Act of the National Assembly, it will be subjected to a review after four general election cycles of 16 years for the purpose of retaining, increasing, or abolishing the temporary measure. It will have six major clauses that alter Sections 48; 49; 71; 77; 91; and 117 of the constitution, Section 48 (1) (a) stated that the Senate should consist of three senators from each state and one from the Federal Capital Territory; and (b) an additional senator for each state and for the Federal Capital Territory, who shall be a woman. "Notwithstanding the provision of subsection (1) of this section, nothing shall prevent a woman from contesting for any of the senatorial seats referred to in subsection (1) (a)," and this subsection (1) (b) should commence after the current life of the National Assembly and shall be reviewed after 16 years from its commencement notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution (Onyejiocha cited in Akinwale, 2021, p. 1).

However, this Bill is fraught with many short comings:

- 1) It will not really empower women, because in Uganda where seats for women has been practiced since 1989, the seats are looked as a subordinate seat;
- 2) It will further worsen Nigeria economy by increasing her recurrent expenditure, amid call by governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria for reduction in the size of the overall expenditure on the government which he argued is unsustainable in the long run (Ifere, Okoi & Eko, 2014, p. 83); and
- 3) It will further exacerbate the National Assembly budget, the statement below is illuminating.



Figure 2 Budget Allocation 465 National Assembly Members and 200 m Nigerians¹

According to Agomuo and Proshare cited in Ifere, Okoi & Eko (2014), since 1999 critics have argued that the contribution of the federal legislative houses to the welfare of the masses pales into insignificance when compared with the expenditure required to maintain their excesses, that each member of the House of Representatives was earning an estimated twenty-seven million naira per quarter as allowances. They spent most of their time sharing money and items that money is appropriated for, they further argued, that people are suffering because they were not in the priority list of legislators. Others have called for the scrapping of Nigeria's bi-cameral legislature to a unicameral one.

¹ Available online at: <https://twitter.com/ikhide/status/1437450780269846530>.

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However, Ifere, Okoi & Eko (2014, p. 83), maintained that the National Assembly has contributed to Nigeria economic development in terms of the significance of some of the bills which have been passed into law by the legislative houses within the period under consideration: the bills for the deregulation of the telecommunications sector, the approval of the Act empowering the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to implement its bank reconsolidation exercise, the power sector reform Act, the Acts which brought into being institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), as well as other relevant pieces of legislation, all of which have contributed to the improvement of the business environment in the country and thus led to an increase in the level of investment in productive activities.

Consequently, in the midst of this debate, this paper is of the position that the National Assembly's business is to make law, some of which will create institutions like EFCC, ICPC etc. and their remuneration for doing this is well documented by the Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC). Therefore, their contribution to the welfare of the masses pales into insignificance when compared with the expenditure required to maintain their excesses.

6. Contending Debate on Recurrent Expenditure and Nigeria's Budget

Recurrent expenditures are recurring in nature, i.e., spending that is consumed, whose benefits last for only a limited period. It includes salaries and pensions, fuel for cars, newspapers, etc. Capital expenditure is mostly investment in assets that are used over time, this will include the provision for ports and rails whose economic lives go beyond months. The real difference is the impact of both spending; while salaries are paid in cash and the taxpayers have immediate economic use, roads are built over time but their economic impact last longer (Aja, 2020). Recurrent in Nigeria has consumed about 50.6% of total budget expenditure and 88.5% of revenue in the last decade². The 2021 budget presented by President Buhari includes N5.65 trillion recurrent expenditure, about 43% of the entire budget, plus personnel cost of N3.76 trillion, and debt service of N3.12 trillion. This has been the trend from 2011 to 2020, the cumulative Federal Government personnel costs — pensions, and gratuities rose to about N20 trillion, thus pushing the recurrent expenditure for the 2020 budget to N4.84 trillion (around 45% of the total budget) (Jonathan, 2020, p. 2). The graph below says it all:

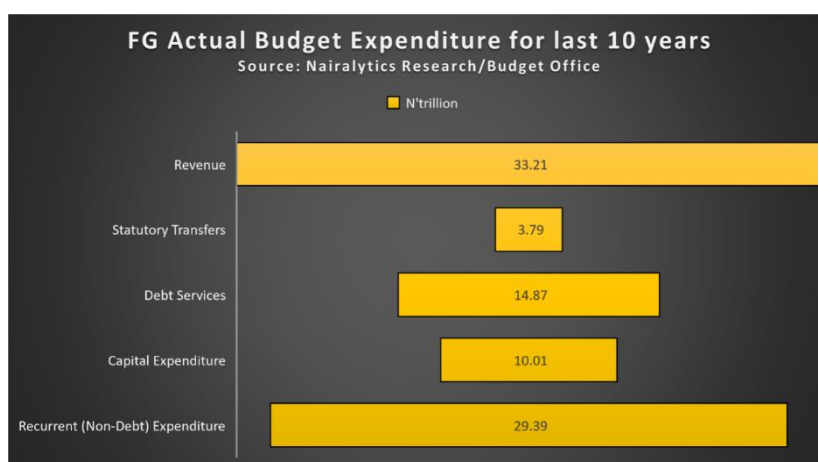


Figure 3 Recurrent and Capital Budget Allocation for the Last Ten Years³

² Available online at: <https://nairametrics.com/2021/01/19/nigeria-spends-n29>.

³ Available online at: <https://nairametrics.com/2021/01/19/nigeria-spends-n29>.

Indeed, economists have for years pointed out Nigeria's high spending on recurrent expenditure compared to capital expenditure, as a phenomenon that is inimical to economic growth. That it leads to increased borrowing, which exacerbate the economic crises, rather that capital expenditure should supersede the recurrent expenditure in a budget, for economic growth to happen (Jonathan, 2020). A study by the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research demonstrated that a budget with a higher capital expenditure will always yield a better economy; this was also backed by another research carried out by a group of economic analyst on "the empirical retrospect of the impacts of government expenditures on economic growth: new evidence from the Nigerian economy" published in *the Journal of Economic Structures*, which "recurrent expenditures of government were found to be significantly impacting on economic growth in a negative way" (Jonathan, 2020, p. 4). Furthermore, Bomede cited in Jonathan, (2020), noted that rise in recurrent expenditure is not good for any economy because it attracts inflation, currency devaluation, and eventually poor foreign exchange rates. Perhaps, this has Nigeria in mind, where inflation, currency devaluation, and poor foreign exchange rates has gone spiral within the years.

These findings appear to send a strong warning over the rising trend of recurrent expenditure in Nigeria and it is a red flag on the proposed additional constituency for women in the states and National Assembly. Rather, within the existing constituencies, a proportion of say 30% or 40% should be apportioned to women.

7. The Case for Proportional Representative (PR) Electoral System to Enhance Women Participation

According to Morna, Tolmay & Makaya (2021, pp. 41-42), there are three main types of electoral system:

- 1) The Proportional Representation (PR) or "list system", where citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidate gets selected in according to where they sit on the list. It has two types of list systems: an "open" list system, voters determine where candidates appear on the list and a "closed" list system, the party determines where candidates appear on the list. It is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.
- 2) The Constituency or "First Past the Post" (FPTP) system, where citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus, a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system "the winner takes all".
- 3) As each system has pros and cons, another emerging trend is the growing number of countries adopting mixed systems, a combination of FPTP and PR.

However, since the early 1990s, many African countries have successfully implemented both voluntary and mandatory gender quotas in their legal systems and party platforms, which depend on the strong will and commitment of the party leadership to promote women in politics. President Olusegun Obasanjo's affirmative action policy that led to women constituting 15 percent of all his appointments and President Goodluck Jonathan's 35% came close to this trend. Quota system means that the burden of recruitment is not placed on the individual women but on those controlling the recruitment or nomination process. Mostly it aims at a proportion of at least 30%, which is thought to constitute a "critical mass" (Eme, 2014, p. 7).

Ghana was the first African country to introduce gender based affirmative action using quotas for women in the 1960s. At the time, a law was passed by the then President, Kwame Nkrumah, to enable the nomination and election of at least ten women to the then national assembly. Today, there are at least 56 political parties in 24

countries that make use of quota systems. In countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, India, Italy, Argentina and Brazil, quotas are prescribed by the constitution. In Namibia, Nepal and Belgium, electoral law requires political parties to field a prescribed number of women on the grounds of representativeness. Elsewhere, political parties such as the African National Congress (ANC) imposed a quota on themselves, in response to women's pressure within the party, in South Africa it is voluntary and operates on a party basis. In 1994 it was 30% but this was increased to 33% of the 1999 list, this shows the ANC's commitment to the democratic principles of gender equality and inclusiveness (Egwu & Afolabi, 2005, p. 13).

In South Africa, women held 27% of the 400 parliamentary seats in 1998. The ANC's quota for women is the proportional representation system used for nominating party members to the electorate as candidates. In the 2004 elections, 131 women were elected altogether, comprising 32.8% of the 400 seats available. The African country with the highest proportion of women in the national parliament is Rwanda. In the 2003 elections, 48.8% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies were women 39 out of 80. The proportion in the Upper House was 30% with 6 women elected out of 20 seats. Rwanda's quota system combines a constitutional provision (Article 76); a quota of 24 seats in the Chamber of Deputies chosen by electoral college with a "women only" ballot; and a system of women's councils and "women only" elections at sector and district levels (Egwu & Afolabi, 2005, p. 14).

Indeed, of the 54 African countries, 23 have the FPTP system; 18, the PR and ten African countries have a combination of the two systems. The remaining three countries are in transition. Forty African countries have constitutional, legislated or voluntary party quotas. Six out of the top ten countries in the African ranking of women in parliament, including the top three (Rwanda, South Africa, and Namibia) follow the Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system. Two countries in the top ten, Senegal and Tanzania, have a mixed system. The other two countries in the top ten (Ethiopia and Uganda) have the First Past the Post (FPTP) system. All have quotas. Women constitute 34% of parliamentarians and 30% of councillors in African countries with the PR system. The lowest representation of women (17% at both local and national level) is in FPTP countries with no quotas. Constitutional or legislated quotas in the PR system are the most watertight way of achieving gender parity. *Reserved seats whether in the FPTP or PR system are best avoided.* Candidate quotas that oblige parties to field certain proportions of male and or female candidates are fairer and better regarded by political parties (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya 2021, p. 39). Figure 1 is graph for parliamentary representation in Africa, Nigeria is 6% (No: 180).

To Adenike (2013, p. 163) and Morna, Tolmay & Makaya (2021, p. 68), the PR system is thought to produce more balanced and representative tickets. The candidate selection process under PR is more centralized. Nominations under the PR system are also more idea-centred, whereas nominations in FPTP are more candidate-centred. Within PR systems, there are a number of electoral variations that can be used to enhance the representation of women and ethnic minorities: there is cumulative voting, wherein each voter has as many votes to cast as there are candidates for a position, and may allot all or some of those votes to a single candidate; another is preference list voting, which allows voters to specify their own order of preference within a party's list of candidates and, "panachage", which allows voters to vote for more than one candidate across party lines. Each of these variations enables women's or ethnic associations to organize electoral support for the candidates who seem best able to represent their group interests. Across the globe, women are better represented in countries with the PR than the FPTP system, or a mixture of the two systems.

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ANNEX 4 Women in parliament (LH) by rank 2021

Rank (IFU)	Rank (Africa)	Country	Region	Lower house		
				Seats*	Women	% W
1	1	Rwanda	East	80	49	61%
12	2	South Africa	Southern	397	182	46%
15	3	Namibia	Southern	104	46	44%
16	4	Senegal	West	165	71	43%
19	5	Mozambique	Southern	250	106	42%
31	6	Ethiopia	Horn	547	212	39%
33	7	Burundi	East	123	47	38%
34	8	Tanzania	East	384	141	37%
37	9	Uganda	East	459	160	35%
39	10	Cameroon	Central	180	61	34%
47	11	Zimbabwe	Southern	270	86	32%
52	12	Angola	Southern	220	65	30%
59	13	South Sudan	East	383	109	28%
66	14	Egypt	North	591	162	27%
67	15	Mali	West	121	33	27%
75	16	Cabo Verde	West	73	19	26%
77	17	Tunisia	North	217	57	26%
79	18	Djibouti	Horn	65	17	26%
82	19	Algeria	North	462	120	26%
83	20	Niger	West	166	43	26%
89	21	Somalia	Horn	275	67	24%
92	22	Sao Tome and Principe	Central	55	13	24%
93	23	Lesotho	Southern	120	28	23%
95	24	Madagascar	Southern	192	44	23%
96	25	Seychelles	Southern	35	8	23%
106	26	Kenya	East	347	75	22%
109	27	Equatorial Guinea	Central	100	21	21%
114	28	Morocco	North	395	81	21%
115	29	Mauritania	North	153	31	20%
118	30	Mauritius	Southern	70	14	20%
123	31	Togo	West	91	17	19%
132	32	Madagascar	Southern	151	27	18%
132	33	Zambia	Southern	129	28	17%
133	34	Comoros	Southern	24	4	17%
134	35	Guinea	West	114	19	17%
136	36	Gabon	Central	142	23	16%
137	37	Libya	North	188	30	16%
140	38	Chad	Central	156	24	15%
147	39	Ghana	West	275	40	15%
149	40	Guinea-Bissau	West	102	14	14%
152	41	Congo (BRC)	Southern	500	64	13%
155	42	Sierra Leone	West	146	18	12%
158	43	Cote d'Ivoire	West	255	29	11%
159	44	Congo	Central	151	17	11%
162	45	Liberia	West	73	8	11%
163	46	Botswana	Southern	65	7	11%
168	47	Eswatini	Southern	73	7	10%
170	48	Central African Republic	Central	140	12	9%
171	49	Gambia (The)	West	58	5	9%
172	50	Benin	West	83	7	8%
174	51	Burkina Faso	West	127	8	6%
180	52	Nigeria	West	360	21	6%
ND	53	Sudan	North	-	-	-
ND	54	Eritrea	Horn	-	-	-

Source: IFU website accessed February 2021.
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Figure 4 Women in Parliament in Africa by Rank 2021

Morna, Tolmay & Makaya (2021, p. 177).

While in the past the FPTP system used to dominate, this is no longer the case. Most post conflict countries have opted for the PR system. There is also an increasing shift and openness to mixed electoral systems, since there are pros and cons to both the FPTP and PR system, this “middle ground” is where some countries aim to be, however, constitutional or legislated quotas in the PR system are the most water tight way of achieving gender parity. Reserved seats whether in the FPTP or PR system are best avoided as it may be perceived as undemocratic. However, Candidacy reservation must be accompanied by a high level of buy-in by political parties and the creation of an enabling environment for women candidates (Morna, Tolmay & Makaya, 2021, p. 68). The claim that PR facilitates the entry of women into elected office in established democracies has been confirmed in a series of studies: in their study of stable democracies, Darcy et al. cited in Adenine (2013, p. 163), concluded that, “on average twice a proportion of women (20.2%) are currently elected to list PR systems as compared to SMD (10.2%).” Based on her study of 23 democracies, Rule also cited in Adenine (2013) suggested that whether elections are run using some form of proportional representation, or using a single-member district system, is the most important predictor of women’s levels of political representation and that M-SMD/FPTP systems are more uniformly disadvantageous for women’s representation. Therefore, Nigerian women’s organizations interested in increasing the level of female political representation are advised to focus on the adoption of PR (Adenine, 2013, p. 163).

Indeed, the PR systems have been used across the globe to address the need to close the gender-gap in political-bureaucratic development. Nigeria can benefit from these best-practices. Figure 4 show that it has produced more gender inclusiveness in Africa. Not additional constituencies for women in a FPTP system proposed in Nigeria which shall exacerbate the already much maligned National Assembly budget and worsen Nigeria economy by increasing Nigeria recurrent expenditure at a time Nigeria is struggling to reduce her recurrent expenditure. In 2012, the Central bank of Nigeria through the Bankers Committee did not increase board membership to promote gender parity of a 30% level of female representation on the board of banks, rather, it placed quarter, based on the existing number of members of board. Study by Akinsanya, & Olushile (2019, p. 23), showed a steady increase in the percentage of seats held by women on the boards of banks in Nigeria. As at 2018, female representation on the board

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of banks amounted to 25.3% showing that board of Nigerian banks are inching closer towards gender parity and it revealed that although female representation on the boards of banks is relatively low at 25.3 percent compared to CBN quota of 30 percent, it is still higher than the average of 20 percent held by the 6 biggest banks in terms of asset size across the globe. Table 1 shows the trend of growth in the banking sector.

Table 1 Total Board Members for All Banks by Year

S/N	Year	No. of women	Percentage of women	No. of Men	Percentage of men	Total
1	2011	32	14%	201	86%	233
2	2012	33	15%	191	85%	224
3	2013	42	18%	190	82%	232
4	2014	45	21%	169	79%	214
5	2015	51	24%	161	76%	212
6	2016	53	24%	169	76%	222
7	2017	55	26%	160	74%	215
8	2018	52	25%	153	75%	205

Akinsanya & Olushile (2019, p. 23).

Today eight women are Chief Executive Officers of banks in Nigeria; Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe (Fidelity Bank), Miriam Olusanya (GTbank), Tomi Somefun (Unity Bank), Yemisi Edun (FCMB), Bukola Smith (FSDH Merchant Bank), Ireti Samuel-Ogbu (Citibank), Halima Buba (SunTrust) and Kafilat Araoye (Lotus Bank) (Egobiambu, 2021). This out of twenty-one Commercial Banks in Nigeria⁴.

Indeed, this paper argues that because Nigeria is a post-colonial state led a petty-bourgeoisie that does not care for her citizens, this proposed law to create additional 111 national constituencies is not altruistic but rather another way to feather their nest; it is more opportunities for their wives, sisters, daughters and concubines, which shall worsen Nigeria's economy.

Again, according to the Longwe framework, levels of equality are hierarchical, where empowerment to women comes at the level of participation that gives them control; like the banking sector where they now have a number of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Additional 111 seats for women does not give women control nor empower them. In Uganda they are second-rated legislators and are looked at as trespassers when they want to contest in the conventional constituencies. It is not comprehensive: it does not cover gender equality at the executive and party levels at the federal, state, and local government levels.

8. Concluding Remarks/Recommendations

There is no doubt that there is need for political mechanism to remedy Nigeria's abysmal gender representative ratio of 19% executive and 6%, while countries like Rwanda, South Africa and others have far above the 30% critical mass threshold.

However, the 111 additional federal constituencies in a FPTP electoral system, will not fill the gap of gender inequality in Nigeria, because it has not so anywhere in the world, let for Nigeria with her additional baggage of bloated National Assembly budget and excessive recurrent expenditure. In Uganda where it is in operative, its women occupants are looked at as inferior representatives and trespassers to men domain when they aspire to contest

⁴ Available online at: <https://www.makemoney.ng/list-of-banks-in-nigeria-with-their-details/>.

on the conventional constituencies. It is also not comprehensive: it does not cover gender equality at the executive and party levels at the federal, state, and local government. In Nigeria, recurrent expenditure and National Assembly budget are problems, which have contributed to Nigeria's economic woes.

Therefore, the paper concludes and recommends that Nigeria adopt the PR electoral system; where parties should proportionately place a certain percent of women for elections in various constituencies, seats and positions in all election and positions in the executive branches and party executives. This is what has worked in other places, and it will certainly work for Nigeria.

Women groups should also galvanize themselves and use everything in their arsenal to bring to the fore the abysmal level of women representative in Nigeria and for it to be remedied.

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