

Gender Self-Endangering: The Sexist Issue in Nigerian Politics

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ABSTRACT Sexism has become a major problematique in Nigerian politics. Women have been politically considered an endangered species, and their low participation in Nigerian government and politics is often associated with cultural, religious and economic constraints, and male chauvinism. Economically, some feminists perceive women's marginality in the conduct and management of public affairs as arising from their entrenchment to the globalized capitalist relation of production. A relation, which ensures that majority of Nigerian women are peasants and housewives. Nonetheless feminists have failed to fundamentally unravel in their explanatory analysis, the feminine gender self-immolatory attitudes. Feminine gender - self - destructive factor in the decline of women participation in government affairs is often carpeted in sexist analysis. For instance, women account for sixty percent of Nigeria's population and by implication, half of the nation's electorates. This electoral power has not been converted to an assertive feminine electoral and political advantage over the years, and particularly in the 2003 elections. Besides, the female population seems not to know what it desires in terms of elective positions at all levels. Women seem to be lacking in confidence and courage that competitive politics demands, and therefore, comfortable with playing a second fiddle rather than assuming the front-role leadership. In addition to the complex factor, gender mainstreaming through the First Lady's office had over the years only been promotive of the privatized economic interests of the First Ladies. Utilizing a field survey, the basic concern of this paper is therefore to examine the self-defeatist behavioural manifestations of the Nigerian womenfolk. The paper believes that Nigerian women are largely unconscious of sexism in the contemporary world as a class struggle in non-production relational terms.