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Women's Civic-Political Participation Towards an Equitable and Humane Democratic Order

The kind of governance that Nigerians experienced since the pre-independence period has been criticized for, among other reasons, having been characterized by low-level citizen participation. Key aspects of this governance range from the provisions made for participation in the 1922 Clifford Constitution; to those in the 1947 Richards Constitution; to those in the Macpherson Constitution which took effect in 1952; to participation in general elections beginning from 1951(I-IDEA 2000a), which a colleague described as ‘constitutional despotism’;¹ and to the competitive model of democracy which Nigeria practiced just before independence and immediately after independence in 1960, between 1979 and 1983, and which it is practicing now. With the benefit of modern governance parameters, social development practitioners would tell us that low-level citizen participation and social inequity are inextricably linked. In this context, the next line of argument would then be that, in order to have a more equitable and humane society, there is a need for a more participatory political system. Macpherson (1979) warns that a more participatory system would of itself not remove all the inequities of society, but he assumes that a system that offers more citizen participation than the competitive model of democracy is desirable. However, even participatory democracy which is thought to be an advanced theory of democracy that focuses on how class inequalities undermine formal political participation, has been critiqued for paying little attention to sexual inequality and the effects of patriarchy on democracy (Pateman 1983).

Many obstacles have been identified as affecting women's participation in politics and women as politicians, not only in Nigeria, but also across the African continent and around the world. From the identified obstacles, solutions are

usually suggested and strategies adopted by non-governmental organizations and development agencies (Longwe 2000). The often mentioned obstacles include: masculine models of politics; education and training; women's poverty and unemployment; women's dual burden and their traditional roles; lack of confidence; the perception of politics as dirty, given the high level of fraud and corruption; and the role of the media (Shvedova 1998; Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade 2003). As earlier indicated, however, access to resources, money and education are more frequently cited as factors that hinder women's participation in politics. Longwe apprehends many of the 'reasons' given as affecting women's participation in politics as 'blaming the victim'. She argues that women's education does not lead to political empowerment. She states that there is 'absolutely no correlation between the percentage of women in university in a particular country, and the percentage of women in parliament or in the higher levels of government'. Longwe (2000) identifies the key problem as 'the covert and discriminatory systems of male resistance to women who dare to challenge male domination of the present political system' (p. 24).

A recent work that documented the narratives of Nigerian women who had participated in the political party primaries preceding the 2003 elections in Nigeria supports Longwe's position. One of the authors of the report, J. Ibrahim, observed from the narratives of the women that 'it soon became clear that there was a near systematic process of the exclusion of women from, and indeed the subordination of women in the party political process' (Ibrahim 2004:1). The report noted twelve recurring issues in the narratives of the women, and they were all directed at the exclusion of women. A few of the issues cited included: male-centred interpretations of culture and religion such as perceptions that only men can aspire to public office; organized campaigns to slander unmarried aspirants as lacking in morals; high level of violence which characterized the electoral process, including the use of security forces to intimidate women aspirants and their supporters; and claims that some female aspirants were too assertive and independent, and therefore could not be team players.

Given the observations above, we sought to gain insight into: the nature of women's participation in politics and community life/group activities; why women participated in politics and civic life the way they did; and the possibilities for women's increased participation in, especially, politics. Specifically, we reckoned their participation as: candidates in elections; voters, both in recent times and in the past; supporters of female political aspirants, and elected/appointed leaders. We also wanted to know whether women and men would vote for a female politician/leader in future.

Participation as Voters

Literate women in formal work settings, semi-literate women in informal economy and female apprentices were asked whether they voted during the 2003 General/Local Government elections and why they voted. Seventy six point two (76.2) and 76.8 per cent of women in formal and the informal economy, and 53.9 per cent of female apprentices said they voted. The reasons that women in the formal economy gave for voting ranged from: exercise of their civic rights; to hopes that politicians would deliver dividends of democracy; and the thinking that a vote may be important and the country will be the better for it. Omolade said:

I detest the idea of anyone who has refused to vote, complaining about anyone in Government who is not performing, so I didn't want my not voting to be a reason for the wrong candidate to be in position by a difference of one vote.

Literate women in formal work who voted during the general elections but did not vote during the local government elections said they did not know any of the candidates and they were of the opinion that people were not being sincere. Adetutu said: 'The average Nigerian was raped during the general election; so, I did not see the need to waste my time during the latter'

Different reasons were given by women in formal work who did not vote: there would not be a conducive atmosphere for free and fair elections and they did not want to risk their own lives; either lost their voter's card or name did not appear on the final voters' register; and could not see the essence of voting in Nigeria where, after the exercise, the ones voted in fail to provide for the needs of citizens. One woman said she could not register in her place of domicile as there were no voters' cards, and she could not travel to the place where she had registered on Election Day, since travelling was prohibited that day.² Aanwo said she did not vote because, 'I had and still do not have any believe in the PDP³ government, and I also knew the election would be rigged'.

Semi-literate women in the informal economy typically voted because they wanted peace and progress for Nigeria. Some wanted a change, others, a better future, while yet others wanted good leadership, good government and a government that would favour the masses. The responses were mostly optimistic, although some were opportunistic. While some were about security, others were about going through the motion. A few women indicated that they were asked to vote, so they did, hoping that things would get better in the future and their children could go to school. Two women said they voted in case government asked that citizens should produce their voters' cards before they could access social services.⁴ One woman said she voted because she is a member of a political party; another said she wanted to vote for her favourite candidate; yet

another said she thought she should play her part, while another said she voted because others were voting.

For those who did not vote, it was either because they could not locate their names on the voters' register, even though they each had a voter's card, or they had lost their voter's card. Most, however, said they did not vote because voting was a waste of time, as politicians would rig anyway and they did not have the time to waste, and they could better expend their time in search of their daily bread. One woman said they harassed them when they went to vote. This was an apparent reference to political thuggery. Adunola in Ibadan said: 'I don't have the time, the queue was even long and I needed to go and look for my daily bread. After all, we do not gain anything from voting'. According to Niniola in Lokoja:

I don't like voting. I will support anyone that will do good. The problem is that we vote for people who get there and start doing what they like. I believe say we use our hand find trouble for ourselves.⁵

Female apprentices voted: so as to move the nation forward; because they wanted peace to reign; because everyone was voting; and, because 'I just like to vote'. One woman said she voted because of the future of her children. Other responses were that: 'it's a right'; 'it's compulsory'; 'to effect change of government because incumbents were not doing well'. One woman said she wanted a particular candidate to win, while Towoju, a 16-year old, obviously under-age, said: 'They said I should vote'.

Those who did not vote said: I took ill; not interested; could not locate card; no time; and was busy. Three in Lokoja indicated they were under-age. A respondent said: 'I was too busy and the queue was too long, so I had to go back home to finish up what I was doing'. This respondent was a single parent. Amina said: 'I could not leave the shop because my madam went to vote and there was nobody at the shop'.⁶

There are similarities and differences in the reasons literate and semi-literate women gave for voting, or not voting. Most of them voted because according to them, to vote was their right, and by voting, they were hopeful that things would get better, both for them as individuals and the country. One point that semi-literate women made, and which no literate woman made, was that they voted so they could tender their voters' cards to access social services. That was on the assumption that voting was compulsory. Literate women also did not say they were just going through the motions. Semi-literate women were time-conscious. Some mentioned long queues and their implications for time. We have to note that these are women who work in the informal economy, and so earn their living on a day-to-day basis. For them, the long-term benefits of participation as voters in an election are not obvious. What is obvious is the time or, more appropriately, the money they lose queuing at polling booths, or the domestic work that will remain undone until they get back home. In cases like

these, women are unable to partake fully as members of the community because of their other roles as bread-winners and care-givers.

Literate women were asked whether they participated in or had participated in Students' Union/Association elections while in school and why. Seventy-one point six (71.6) per cent of the female workers said they did, while 61.0 per cent of students said they did. The reasons that women in formal work gave for voting while they were students varied, but four reasons were often cited: to elect credible leaders who could represent students' interests; voting was a right that they thought they needed to exercise; they were interested in particular candidates/friends; and they thought they needed to choose student leaders who could present students' opinion and position to the authorities of their institutions. Aanwo in Ibadan said it was usually free and fair and there was little chance of rigging, while Hauwa in Lokoja said: 'I wanted a situation where as students, we could speak or dialogue with the school authority as a body and not as a person'.

The reasons that female students gave for voting in Students' Union/Association Elections in both Ibadan and Lokoja were very much the same, although there were slight differences in a few of the responses from Lokoja. The students said: they had the right to vote, and choose good leaders who would represent their interests; they loved politics; loved to participate in the activities that took place around them; and, they thought their votes would count. The female students in Lokoja added: to encourage democracy among students and allow students to air their views. Jumai in Lokoja said she voted because it was the turn of her ethnic group to pick the presidency of the Department Association, a reflection of the ethnic configuration of the state that owns the polytechnic.

Some of the women in formal work who did not vote did not give reasons for not voting. Two women said they were just not interested in voting; another said she was not active in campus politics; and yet another woman said she took an interest in a particular election but found out she did not like the character of about six candidates who contested in that election, so she gave up on Students' Union elections. Again, Adetutu in Ibadan said:

I knew elections were rigged and won before votes were cast. I remember voting only once, and it was because Christian Fellowships on campus came together to support our own people who did not do any better than the so-called unbelievers.

Adedigba said, 'I was living out of campus and in fact feeling too old to be part of the system'.

The reasons female students in Ibadan gave for not voting included: lack of interest in Students' Union elections; and, inadequate knowledge of candidates that contest elections. Modupe said: 'I feel whether or not I vote, persons will be elected and, hopefully, they'll perform well'. Kehinde said she did not believe voting represented the true collective wish of the majority. One reason that

Ajoke in Ibadan gave, and that got support from another student in Lokoja, was lack of trust. She said

I don't trust them. They are just as corrupt as the school authorities and Federal Government that they say they fight against and I don't see them really representing the students.

The reason that stood out as being responsible for female students not voting in Lokoja was the fact that the Authority of the Institution had prohibited the umbrella Students' Union, although departmental associations existed. The students were of the view that: the departmental associations did not run well; too often candidates had no opponents and at times, a winner was known before the elections, so they could not see why they should vote. Omotayo's reason, however, stood out. She said, 'I do not vote because of the time constraint. The period of election is usually weekend that I have to do other things'.

A number of interesting issues have emerged from the responses in respect of women's participation in politics in educational institutions. Students' interests appear to be well cited as a reason for their partaking in elections, and a woman extended the matter appropriately when she noted that 'power with' one another was important when trying to get across to the school authority. It is interesting that students in Lokoja who had no umbrella Students' Union were the ones who articulated the point about encouraging democracy among students, perhaps, appropriately, because of its absence in their own institution. Also important are the testimonies of Jumai who was still a student and Adetutu who is a lawyer. They spoke to the matter of ethnicity and religion in politics in educational institutions, a reflection of how identity politics is played out in the Nigerian (macro) society (I-IDEA 2000a). These two women who obviously inhabit multiple identities participated in the politics of ethnicity and religion. By her testimony, Adetutu was not satisfied with the outcome of the politics of religious identity that played out in the Students' Union election. Unfortunately, going by her responses to all the questions posed, Adetutu took her religion seriously. Another issue that came out is that of rigging, again a reflection of the problem that afflicts elections in the macro society. Aligned to rigging is the matter of distrust, specifically with regard to corruption in government. Ajoke's point will resonate again, in this study, when women and men speak to why they would vote women into leadership positions. A problem of a slightly different nature is the one Adedigba pointed out, and that is how some people feel alienated in schools (Maduka 1991; Luttrell 1997) For Adedigba, the problem was her age.

Active Support for Female Candidates in Elections

Again, literate women in formal work settings, semi-literate women in informal economy and female apprentices were asked whether they had ever supported women who were candidates in elections and why they did or did not support

them. Seventy-six point two (76.2) per cent of literate women said yes; 26.8 per cent of semi-literate women said yes, and 15.4 per cent of female apprentices said yes.

Six of the nine women in formal work who had indicated they had never supported any female contestant did not give reasons. One of the three who responded, Adetutu, said 'I have never supported anyone on the basis of gender'. We recall of course, that Adetutu had supported someone on the basis of religion. Another woman said she had not had the opportunity, while the third woman said 'it is because the female contestants were usually utilized', whatever this means.

Sixteen of the 33 women in the informal economy who said they had never encouraged/supported a female candidate said they had never come across female candidates. However, two of the 16 said they would support female candidates, if they step out for elections anytime, and they added, 'for the sake of Nigeria'. There were other responses. One interesting one was Alake's who said, 'I believe it is against God's will, so I can't support or encourage anybody, be it female or male'. It is important to note that although this woman had indicated that she did not vote during the last General/Local Government elections, the reason she gave was that her voter's card got lost. Much later, as we will show, she was more categorical, and her position became clear.

As for female apprentices, the main reason they had never supported female contestants was that they did not know about female contestants in their area. Another woman said, she just voted, she did not know whether the candidates were male or female. It is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that this group of respondents were the ones who participated the least in voting during elections.

For women who had supported female contestants, they were asked to indicate the nature of support that they gave. Many women in formal work indicated they supported contestants in more than one way. They said they engaged in open campaigns at rallies; one-on-one campaigns; and sought other women's support for the candidates. Some said they did 'underground campaigning', while others said they gave spiritual support in form of prayers. At least, one woman was involved in planning a candidate's campaign, while many gave moral support in the form of words of encouragement. Many indicated they voted for the women, while others said they put their moneys into production of campaign materials. Grace in Lokoja said she encouraged a contestant by letting her know she could make it even in the presence of many male contestants. Adedigba, who is a journalist, said: 'I printed postcards and as a media woman, I gave her publicity on my programmes'. We recall that Adedigba is the woman who did not partake in Students' Union elections because she was feeling too old in the system.

Women in the informal economy who had supported female contestants said they did so mainly by campaigning for the women. One woman said she spoke on a contestant's behalf to the Hairdressers' Association in Lokoja. At least, two women said they assisted a contestant in putting up posters, while one woman said she gave moral and financial support. Yet, others said they voted for the female candidates.

The few female apprentices who had supported female contestants said they campaigned for, and voted for the candidates; prayed for her, and wished her well.

The reasons women in formal work gave for supporting female contestants while in school, and as workers, were diverse. Some said it was because they knew that the women were competent, capable and, would deliver. The other reasons that women gave for supporting women were about women believing more in women, and women affirming women. Itunu in Ibadan said:

I believe in women emancipation. I believe that a woman has equal right to vote and be voted for. Also, I am of the opinion that women, due to their role as homebuilders, will offer quality service if elected into office.

Deborah in Lokoja said: 'To encourage female participation and empowerment in politics, so that better policies for women and children can be made.' Rukayat in Lokoja said, 'Women can be better in politics than men because they are tender hearted, can manage their resources, they are good and fully focused on whatever they do'.

Although one woman in the informal economy said she supported a woman because she was capable, quite a number of women said they encouraged and supported female candidates because: women would listen to women; women needed to get into the positions that men now occupied so as to lift Nigeria up; and what men could do, women could do better. Nkechi said although the woman she voted for in the last election lost, she voted for her because, 'She is a woman like me and she went to school. So, if my children go to school like her and contest election, people will vote for them'. Modinat, who voted for a female candidate that won an election, said: 'We need women to govern us, we are tired of men ruling us, and I believe women can do it better, since they have feeling'.

Tanwa, a female apprentice said she voted for a woman because, 'she is a woman like me and I believe in her capabilities'. Another said she supported a female contestant who was a well-known presenter on TV with prayers because she liked her personality. Interestingly, the presenter contested elections in a constituency that is about seven hours' drive from the respondent's own constituency/place of abode. For Zainab who supported a female candidate who lost the election, she felt that if she had won the election, the chances that

more women would get into such positions would have improved –‘if she is there, other women will also get there’.

From the foregoing, it would appear that women in formal work settings support female contestants in elections more than semi-literate women. This may not just be an appearance, it may be a fact. The reason may be found in the fact that literate women were accounting for the support for female contestants while they were in school and as workers. Higher education ensures that persons are together on a regular basis for at least three years, and so, more than women who had never been in that environment, women who had been in tertiary institutions had more opportunities to support contestants in electoral processes. Important too, was the fact that Students' Union elections represented students' own operation of democratic principles.

Women as Candidates in Elections and Appointed Leaders

Among women in formal work, 14 (33.5%) had been candidates in elections. Medupin said she did not follow through with the elections because ‘another female was contesting, so I stepped down for her to give her my total support’. Ruth said she had held positions of responsibility such as: class representative (twice), chairperson, Local Government Caretaker Committee and President of her Old Students' Association. Out of the fourteen women who had contested elections, five women had contested for the position of the overall head (president/chairperson) of their group. Three of the groups clearly comprised female and male members. Two of the three groups were a social club, and a cooperative society; one was not quite clear about the gender composition of the third group. The positions that the other nine women contested for were: vice president/chairman; treasurer; general secretary; assistant general secretary; and director of publicity and information. The groups/associations in which women had contested elections included students' union/departmental associations; professional, ethnic; cooperative thrift and credit unions; and religious groups.

Two of the five women who contested for the presidency of the groups to which they belonged (a Students' Union Government and a cooperative thrift and credit society) did not win. The reasons they adduced for losing the elections were: rigging of the election and dishonesty and disunity among members. All except one of the other women who contested for positions other than the overall head won the elections. The woman who lost the election believed she lost the election due to discrimination relating to her state of origin. The reasons that persons who won gave for winning varied. They included that: people believed in their competence, ability and integrity; God was in support; did a lot of homework and campaigned hard; and that there was overwhelming support from all members. Esther, who had won the presidency of a Christian Fellowship at school said: ‘I cannot tell, the people might know better. All I can say is that I

have a heart to serve God'. Abosede, a journalist, who possesses a Masters degree, said: 'The other members wanted a female vice chairman to assist the chairman who was male'. Women indicated that the reasons they contested for, and aspired to elective positions were because: the individual wanted to contribute to the progress of the group; members wanted ladies in the executive committee; she wanted to change the status quo; God wanted the individual; and the individual was the people's choice. Aanwo said she was confident she could do well if elected. Hauwa said: 'I believe women too should aspire to the positions that their male counterparts feel are meant for them alone. As a woman, I believe in the saying that what a man can do, a woman can do better'. Four of the fourteen women who had contested for elections did not respond to the question that asked them to state the reasons they contested for the position.

Only twelve female students had been candidates in elections, and there were more of them in Lokoja (8) than Ibadan (4). In Ibadan, a student said she contested because she was passionate about the association, and two others said it was to help their association make progress. In Lokoja, the students said they wanted to serve to effect possible and necessary changes among staff and students; and wanted to work for the progress and success of the union. Rachael said: 'My course mate wanted me to take part as the only lady in HND 1 Public Administration Department'.

Forty out of the 56 women in the informal economy sampled in this study were members of community, religious and trade groups/bodies, and cooperative thrift and credit groups. Only eleven (19.6%) women had contested elections or had been appointed to various positions in religious, community groups and trade guilds. The positions that the women had occupied included: President, Kogi State Hairdressers' Association; Director of Socials of Rivers/Bayelsa States Community Association in Kogi State; Provost of the women's wing of Igbo Community Association and, deaconess of a church. The associations/groups in which these women took up leadership positions were groups that were composed of predominantly female members – Hair Dresser's Association and women's wing of Igbo community; and those that had male and female members – Rivers/Bayelsa States Community Association, Tailors' Association and the church. The reasons that most of the women were appointed, or elected, were that they were seen as capable of moving the association/group forward. For Hassana, it was that 'They are afraid of me because I will tell the truth, I respect myself, I am hard working, and I don't hide my feelings'. Another woman said: 'People like me, and majority of them told me to contest and I did'.

Some of the women in the informal economy who were not members of groups and/or who had never contested elections or been appointed to positions gave reasons. Toun said: 'My husband doesn't like it and I don't want to go against his wish'. Even then, she was a member of a religious group – Good Women Association. One woman in Ibadan said older persons should not be

seen to be joining unnecessary groups. The woman, a trader, is above 50. Two women who belonged to religious groups and their town unions said they were unable to contest because they were not literate.

An overview of the groups to which these women belonged showed that many who belonged to groups/associations participated mostly in activities of women's societies/groups. In the church, for example, only two women indicated they were deaconesses, and that is how far they could move up the ladder of leadership in some churches. Interestingly, women in the informal economy mentioned their affiliations to religious groups more than they did other groups. In the town's associations, women were mostly in the women's wing except for Yime who was the Director of Socials of her community association. Only two women, one each in Ibadan and Lokoja, said they were members of the ruling People's Democratic Party. A woman in Lokoja said she joined the party because her brothers were involved in it. A woman in Ibadan said she also belonged to a group of women called Delta Women in Politics, and she joined because she was planning to contest for a position in the year 2007.

Most of the female apprentices in Ibadan said they did not belong to any religious, ethnic, political, cooperative thrift and credit group because they were still apprentices and were not allowed to join any association until they had graduated. However, the reason Aina gave was, 'My husband did not like me associating with people'. Only five female apprentices in Ibadan and six in Lokoja said they belonged to religious groups, cooperative thrift and credit societies, social clubs and youth movements. Some of the associations to which the women in Lokoja belonged were: Islamic Sisters' Society and Muslim Students Society; Drama Club, and Community Youth Development Associations such as Ajobaje Youth Development Association, Adankolo Youth Mass Movement and Youth Association of Mopa.

Most of the eleven respondents who indicated they were members of groups said their groups did not have elective positions. Positions were held mainly by appointment. Only one was elected as a youth leader, and she was elected to the position of the General Secretary of the Youth Fellowship of Christ Apostolic Church. Four of the eleven had held positions of: financial secretary; marshal; chief and assistant chairlady. The groups to which these women belonged were groups comprising both male and female members and female members only. Two women gave the reasons they got into the positions. Mariam said, 'because I be better person, and I don te for the association'.⁷ Mary stated: 'because I'm playful and friendly with all'.

Would Women Vote for a Woman who is Contesting for Governorship/ Presidency or Head of a Group with Female and Male Members?

Eighty-three point three (83.3) per cent of literate women in formal work, 92.9 per cent of semi-literate women in informal economy and 87.2 per cent of

semi-literate female apprentices said they would vote for a female who is contesting for the overall leadership of the country, the state or other groups with male and female members. Female students were asked the same question, specifically in relation to their students' union/departmental association elections and 84.7 per cent said yes.

Among women in formal work, two women said they would not vote for a woman as overall leader, while five did not respond. Interestingly, among the five that did not respond, two, Aanu and Abosede, both Masters degree holders, had themselves sought for, and won elective offices. The reasons given by the two who would not vote for a woman varied: according to Omolola, 'women are always humiliated in the society, even if she's doing her best, she may be sabotaged'; but for Kanyin the reason was that, 'women are too harsh'. Among women who said they would, eight added provisos: will vote for anyone, male or female who is qualified and will achieve; will vote for the woman if she is capable, eligible, qualified for the position and if she's God fearing, have people's interests at heart, honest and hardworking. Adetutu said: 'certainly not because she happens to be female, but if I felt she were deserving of my vote'. And Aanwo affirmed: 'If she is competent and up to the task of doing a successful job of it, yes I would, not because she is a woman, but based on merit'. Two of the eight women who had said yes with provisos had also sought and won elective offices.

While these women appear to be cautious about the kind of women they would vote into topmost leadership positions, many women want women without provisos and they gave a lot of reasons. The reasons include: a need to have more women in leadership positions; the women will be representing women, and women political office holders are pulling their weight. Others are that women are sincere, dedicated, honest, prudent and hardworking. Idiat said: 'Women are meticulous, mild, God fearing and they account for whatever they spend well, though there may be exceptions, they are few'. Oyinade submitted: 'Everybody is born with wisdom and knowledge to administer, if given the opportunity'. Rebecca added, 'Women are hardworking, honest, intelligent, straightforward and lovely: see Dora Akinyuli of NAFDAC'.⁸ Hauwa said: 'as a woman, I look forward to the day that a woman leader will emerge as a governor or even the president of Nigeria, it has been men all along, so why not women now'. Rukayat said: 'A woman has natural endowment – love, kindness, patience, tolerance. These attributes are required to be an effective leader, and they are found in women'.

Twenty female students in Ibadan said they would vote for a woman as leader, while nineteen female students in Lokoja said yes, they would. Two students each in Ibadan and Lokoja said they would not. Twelve of the students in Ibadan said they would vote for a female with provisos, while only two of the women in Lokoja would do the same. They said they would vote for a female president at school if she was: committed; not a figure head; up to the task;

capable (it is the office not the gender); academically and morally sound; and intelligent, honest, brilliant and can think fast. Enitan said: 'If she knows what she is up to, and not just a figure head, with some people calling the shots behind the scene'. Modupe posited:

If I believe she is committed, I will. Gone are those days when people thought women could not deliver the goods (they are too weak, too fragile, they said), but women continue to prove them wrong by holding important positions.

Chigozie said, 'I will, if I feel she is capable of doing it and I know definitely there will be a difference in their way of ruling because females are more considerate than their male counterparts'. So, even among the students who were demanding that female candidates have sterling qualities, they were still of the opinion that women are better leaders.

For those who would unconditionally vote for women, the reasons they gave were: men and women have the same capabilities; they just believe in women; women are better managers of resources; men have not met up to expectations; women shun bribery, corruption and always seek the way forward; they are mothers; would like to erase the notion that only men should rule; men and women have equal rights to rule and women are more reliable, have human feelings, and are not corrupt. This category of respondents displayed a lot of confidence and excitement when they spoke about their belief in women. Fullerat said, 'I will vote for a woman president in my department because I believe so much in women and I believe women are better managers of resources than men'. Jumai submitted: 'Well, I would vote for her even if she does not have more supporters than the male contestant. I prefer womanhood'. Omotayo argued, 'I believe a female student will perform better than their male counterparts because of the wisdom bestowed on ladies by God'.

Those who would not vote for a female president would not do so for the following reasons: 'I hate politics'; 'Because I don't believe in voting. Voting, as I said, does not represent the interest of people' – Kehinde; 'It is preferable for a female to contest for the post of Vice-President of a Students' Union/ Departmental Association than a president. She won't be able to cope at times, so it is better she is assisting someone' – Apeke; while Tolani said, 'Since she is a woman, other members of the association may not want to cooperate, thinking that a woman cannot rule or dictate to them'.

An overwhelming majority of women in the informal economy said they would vote women into the highest offices in the public sphere. Only three said they would not. The reason one of the three gave was that 'It is against the will of God'. This is Alake who said she had never encouraged nor supported a female candidate, and who also said, 'I can't encourage anybody female or male'. Now, she has come clear and she concluded by saying 'God has made them the head so they are the one that is suppose to hold the position of authority'. Maimuna said women 'can't supervise people. Anything wey woman

say im wan do, e go take am wicked'.⁹ Another woman said, 'What a man can do as governor or president, a woman cannot do'.

The reasons so many semi-literate women would vote a woman to the topmost position vary. Fadeke said: 'Women are wonderful; they will use the brain God has given them, to normalize things'. Some women said they wanted a change and they thought women could bring about the desired change. Many said what men could do, women could do better. Adedotun referred to Deborah in the Bible. She said: 'Look at Deborah in the Bible, what was difficult for men to do in her time was done by Deborah easily. So, a woman can do better than a man at any point in time'. Oreoluwa wondered why men thought women could not do what they could do. She said, 'After all, there is no special role for the penis in those jobs, and some women even attain higher than men'. Other women said women were: 'kind-hearted, they will listen to fellow women'; 'they know where the shoe pinches'; 'women can discuss with women'; and 'women are not money conscious, selfish, callous, stingy, arrogant and dictatorial like men'. Some others said women 'know how to manage things and because they are mothers, they cannot but respond to the yearnings of people'. Anike said: 'Women have feelings as mothers. If women were up there, since we've been grumbling, their breasts would have reacted, because they will remember the day they put to bed'. Caroline said: 'Women stand by their words to ensure that things go well. Their yes is yes and their no is no'.

Although some women had indicated they would vote women as governors, presidents and heads of groups, they were cautious, and not as optimistic as the majority. Hassana said, 'If the woman will be able to do it, because I know it's not easy and I cannot'. Another woman said she would want to know what a woman could do: 'at least we've seen what men can do'.

Among female apprentices, the five women who said they would not vote for a woman as overall leader gave the following reasons: 'it's against my religion'; 'I don't believe that women can do the job, and they will only waste peoples time during the voting exercise'. Another said a woman would not be taken seriously; she could be cheated and she wouldn't know, adding 'no good make woman dey contest'.¹⁰ Another just said she would vote for a man. Interestingly, the respondent who did not believe that a woman could do the job had held the position of Financial Secretary of the Youth Fellowship of her church. Well, she wasn't president, one would say.

Female apprentices who would vote for a female head also gave reasons why they would, and they were not really different from those that literate and semi-literate women had given thus far. Olonade said: 'Women are sympathetic, they think deeply and they will listen as they would to their children'. Another woman said women have milk of kindness, and since they are mothers, they will do better.

There were also those who would vote for women, but with provisos. Abike said:

Table 2.1: Women's Civic-Political Participation

	A		B		C		D		E							
	Yes Frequ- ency	No Frequ- ency	Per cent age													
Literate Women in Formal Work (42)	32	10	76.2 23.8	30	10	71.4 28.6	32	9	21.4 78.6	14	28	33.3 66.7	35	2	83.2 16.8	4.7
Female Students (46)				28	17	61.0 39.0				12	32	26.1 73.9	39	4	84.7 15.3	8.7
Semi-Literate Women in Infor- mal Economy (56)	43	13	76.8 23.2				15	33	58.9 41.1	11	45	19.6 80.4	52	3	92.9 7.1	5.4
Semi-Literate Female Appren- tices (39)	21	17	55.9 44.1				6	32	82.1 17.9	5	33	12.8 87.2	34	5	87.2 12.8	12.8

Key:

A: Did you vote during the last General/Local Government Elections?

B: Did/do you vote during Students' Union Elections?

C: Have you ever supported a female candidate in an election?

D: Have you ever been a candidate in an election?

E: Would you vote for a woman who is aspiring to the position of President/Governor or the overall head of an organization with male and female members?

Source: Data generated from the open-ended questionnaires completed by (or for) all four categories of female respondents who provided information during fieldwork.

'It is only if I know the woman and I can see and sense that she is capable, then I will vote. But if I sense that she will just be there for the sake of it, I will not'.

Inunkan will vote for a woman who believes in God because, according to her, the woman will do whatever she promises.

Literate Men and Women's Participation in Politics

When asked whether women should contest elections into public offices, twelve of the fourteen men in formal work in Ibadan said yes, while two said no. All the men in Lokoja (fifteen) said yes. One of the twelve (Abayomi) who said yes in Ibadan said: 'provided she has her husband's permission'. When asked whether female students should contest for students union/departmental association elections, all the students in Ibadan and Lokoja (sixteen each), said yes, female students should contest.

The men were asked to specify the positions that women should aspire to occupy. Among the men in formal work who said women should aspire to occupy public office, only five thought women should occupy offices lower than the presidency. They said women should aspire to be senators, councillors, deputy governor, commissioners, vice president and members of the National Assembly. The reasons they gave are: 'these are the areas where their roles can be well displayed by virtue of their natural gift and intellect' – Abayomi; 'women are to take supportive role' – Ade; 'certain women have left indelible prints in this nation. The lady in charge of NAFDAC and the Lagos Stock Exchange are clear indicators that women can hold such positions' – Adamu; 'because the fear of God is in most women than men. They do not have the love of money at heart as men do' – Alonge; and,

Brilliant women can even deliver more goods than some men. However, care should be taken in electing women into public offices because of their peculiar position in the family – Audu

Out of the five who thought women should occupy positions that are lower than the overall leader, three – Abayomi, Ade and Audu said they would not vote for a woman who is contesting governorship or presidential elections. The reasons they gave were consistent with their position that women should not aspire to the highest position. Abayomi who is a lawyer said, 'I don't believe in women leadership except where there is no capable and fit man'; while Ade said, 'They are to advise or support their male counterparts'; and Audu argued, 'Official functions of a governor or a president does not only require intellectual ability but also combine physical ability that women may not possess'. We observe that Adamu and Alonge, who had earlier indicated that women should occupy positions less than the overall head, said they would vote for women who are aspiring to be governors or president. Alonge reinforced his earlier position when he said,

'They will not be partial in their decisions. They will rule with the fear of God at heart'. The two men who said women should not contest elections to public offices stated that:

Without prejudice to the right of women to hold political offices, such positions tend to have negative effects on the home, especially the children who are the victims of broken or unhappy homes. Society suffer for children without home training – Ola.

'The woman may not have time for her family since she may have to attend so many meetings which may occupy much of her time', argued Oni. When Oni was asked whether he would vote for a woman who is contesting for governorship or presidency, he said yes, provided such a female would not misbehave when she gets to power, and that as the adage goes, what a man can do, a woman can do it as well. His concern shifted from the family to whether or not the woman would misbehave in office. Somewhat consistent with his earlier position, Ola would not vote for a female who wants to become governor or president, but he also shifted ground a little on the concern for the family. He said: 'Women are not mentally and emotionally stable to be effective in such offices. Her home will also suffer for it. Society too will suffer'. This is an interesting point that Ola has made here. The surprise is that if women were that mentally and emotionally unstable, why would men like him be willing to commit children to the care of such women, such that children will suffer when the mentally and emotionally unstable women are not there?

One respondent, Fola, said women should aspire to occupy 'positions that their educational background fits'. His reason is that, 'no one should aspire to public office on quota basis'. This is an obvious response to women's demands for affirmative action. Fola further stated that he would vote for a female governorship aspirant, 'if she's sound, balanced and not overtly feminist'. Fola is clearly resisting the women's movement.

The other men who thought women should aspire to occupy any position said: 'women and men are equal before the law and the Lord'; 'women have to sit up because they have been relegated to the background'; 'they have equal right with men as entrenched in the constitution'; 'they are human beings like men and should be given the chance to thrive for ability to rule is about intelligence, not sex'; 'not aware of any law that confines women's aspirations to particular positions'; 'perhaps things will be better if women were at the helm of affairs'; 'have confidence and trust in women's service delivery, especially if given the opportunity to be in government'. Specifically, Shola said: 'Women are better managers of resources and good listeners.' Joshua indicated that, 'Men and women are endowed equally by our Creator'. Zaki affirmed that, 'Women are equal to men in intellectual capability and even more suited in discharging official functions than men'. Haliru said, 'I sincerely believe that women are

more dedicated to their jobs than their male counterparts, they are not easily influenced to perpetuate evil in the office and, above all, they are mothers, therefore, they have love for all and sundry'. Yemi posited: 'The society is made up of men and women. The knowledge acquired for both sexes are the same from same institutions'.

All the men who said women should aspire to any position also said they would vote for a female governorship or presidential aspirant. While a few of them added provisos, most reinforced their earlier position about the reason a woman should aspire to occupy any position. A man cited the examples of Margaret Thatcher and Benazir Bhutto.

Male students in Ibadan were split in equal halves about the positions that they want women to aspire to. Eight felt that they should aspire to any position, while the rest eight felt that they should aspire to occupy positions such as vice president, general secretary and treasurer. In Lokoja, the majority of male students said women should aspire to the positions of vice president, general secretary, director of welfare/socials, and according to Mejabi, 'any position apart from the president'. Taiwo in Ibadan said: 'They could aspire for any position, publicity secretary, treasurer, social secretary and vice president'. Yele in Ibadan said: 'sensitive positions like financial secretary, treasurer and so on'. Fijabi said, 'They should vie for relatively feminine offices like treasurer, financial secretary, assistant to any office, general secretary, etc.'

The reasons they gave for specifying that women aspire to occupy positions that are less than the overall head were that: 'women are light-hearted as regards stealing and corruption: they are good custodians of funds as they have no courage to mismanage money in whatever form'; 'they can manage money better than men'; 'they care more than men'; 'they hate cheating and have good and legible handwriting'. They also said some tasks are easy to handle, and the risks involved low, so it is better that women attend to those tasks, given their fragile nature. Also, women should support the president, for example, by giving him advice. In Ibadan, Taiwo said, 'Ladies know how to handle financial transactions and social activities more than men'. Odedele said:

Some positions are culturally defined and women can easily succeed in these regard. Women tend to be more accountable and transparent than men. Other positions are usually demanding as president and secretary and also because of the cultural factor, people don't always vote women into such positions.

While Yele said, 'It would be safe to keep your money and finance in care of a woman', Fijabi said:

Certain offices are feminine relative to others. Also, women can hardly undergo the rigours associated with certain offices and the dangers therein and women are often not able to harmonize certain key/very demanding offices with their private/domestic responsibilities.

In Lokoja, Joshua, Yisa, Zubairu and Daniska gave the following reasons: 'The fact is that female cannot be head Biblically (Adam and Eve)'; 'They might not be able to cope with attendant problem of being a president. But as secretary general, all they need do is to take minute of meetings and be in charge of all correspondence. Again, they are more financially prudent than men'; 'Due to their nature women cannot take positions like the presidency, so it is better for them to act as an assistant'; and, 'As stated earlier, women are tools to support men and with this position they can assist the men if the need arises or in absence of the men they can deputize'.

When male students were asked whether they would vote a female as leader, eight students in Lokoja said no. Joshua was one of them and he reinforced his earlier position that women cannot be head Biblically. Zubairu said, 'This is because women can easily be influenced by the management. Women are meant to help male and not be leader'. Mejabi argued, 'She would always be controlled by her spouse and so decisions will not be completely on her own'. Daniska said, 'I wouldn't vote for a female student, the reason is that if given a chance and she probably wins the election, men are in trouble; they would whip the arse of every man and oppress men and their fellow women'. Positions were pretty hard in Lokoja where more female students had contested elections than in Ibadan. To the same question, all the students in Ibadan said yes, apparently consistent with their earlier response that female students should contest students' union/departmental association elections. All the students who said women should contest for any position in Lokoja also said they would vote for female candidates. The reasons they gave were that: 'gender discrimination should be discouraged, women are more responsive and attentive to issues than their male counterpart' – Gafar; Ayodele avowed that 'even in the class, some ladies do better than their male counterparts. Because research has shown that women make good managers as they can be meticulous', and added 'When God said women should submit, He did not say that they should not aspire. Everybody has a right to become anything'; and, Daniel said:

I doubt if there is any constitution that limits the leadership aspirations of women be it union/association or even the government circle. Therefore all positions are opened to anybody, anywhere in the world as far as I am concerned.

Male respondents were asked to indicate whether they had ever encouraged female members of groups to which they belonged either to contest elections, and/or supported them during elections. Most of the men in formal work said they had encouraged and/or supported female candidates during elections. One of those who said he had never encouraged or supported female candidates, Zaki, who belonged to a Church group said, 'by doctrine of my church, women are only ordained as deaconesses, they cannot go further'. When those who had encouraged women to contest elections were asked the reasons they did so,

Abayomi, consistent with his position, said: 'This is because there are posts that trustworthy, honest and sincere persons should occupy, and women qualify for such positions'. Fola, the man who appeared to be resisting the women's movement, said: 'There was a post for which the most preferred person was a woman and it would be retrogressive not to encourage the woman'. Somewhat consistent with his earlier position, Haliru said, 'I believe they can manage the resources of our club more than men, that is why I encouraged one to be our treasurer'. Audu, also consistent with his position of not supporting a female for the highest office said, 'I have always encouraged women to be elected as either treasurer or vice chairman of executive committees'.

Only seven male students from both Ibadan and Lokoja said they had never encouraged female students to contest elections or supported female students during elections. One man said he was actually not politically active, while another said he had not had the opportunity to do so. Zubairu, who was the auditor general of a departmental association said: 'This is because women are not good in keeping secret. Women are too tender for holding executive position'. Remember, Zubairu had said he would not vote for a female leader because they can be influenced by management and that women are supposed to help men and not lead. In Lokoja, Chris, who was the director of finance of his departmental association, said he had never encouraged a female to contest because 'man is more competent in the area of agility, and they are also bold'. He had also earlier said he would not vote for a female leader because it involved rigorous exercise which could be too strenuous for women.

One wanted to know why those who had encouraged women did so, and took particular interest in those who said they would not vote for women as overall leaders, but had encouraged/supported women. Joshua, a Catholic, who had indicated that it was not Biblical that women should lead even though he conceded they could aspire to be vice presidents, and, who would not vote for a female as leader said, 'The fact is that women should take part in the call of leadership'. I think what Joshua objects to is women being the overall head. Mejabi, who is also Christian, who would like women to aspire to any position apart from president, and who would not vote for a female leader because she would always be controlled by her spouse, said: 'They have some good inputs to make and sometimes could be very sincere in their contributions'. Dauda, who thinks women should aspire to be treasurer of the union because they are light-hearted in respect of stealing and corruption, and who would not vote for a female leader because 'it would amount to waste of vote, as I do not believe that women have the driving spirit to lead a union like men do. They may not be able to face harassment from members of the association'. He said he encouraged a woman to contest, 'because I do not believe that women should be kept out in the executive committee of the union'. It appears Dauda is also concerned that women should not take on the overall leadership of the group.

Daniska, who had earlier indicated that he would not vote for a female as leader because if she won, men would be in trouble, and who had also said his association, the National Association of Kogi State Students did not have female members, said: 'I once encouraged a woman and my reason is because we discovered that the association is financially backward and I for one suggested that with a woman in our midst we can use them to source funds from our Kogites rich men'. It is strange that Daniska said they did not have female members. In Ibadan, Odedele who had favoured women to occupy the position of vice president and treasurer was coincidentally, at the time this data was collected, the President of the University of Ibadan branch of the National Association of Kogi State Students, and he had indicated that two of their female members held the positions of Vice President and Treasurer. We recall that Lokoja is the capital of Kogi State, and so Daniska who said they did not have female members is talking about the same association, that had a branch in Ibadan. Perhaps it was the Kogi State Polytechnic branch of the association that did not have female members, and this would also be strange. If this is indeed true, the reasons may not be far-fetched. Given his views about women, with males like Daniska in the association in Lokoja, female students in the institution who were indigenes of Kogi State would most probably give the association a wide berth. This may be one of the reasons that female students in Lokoja identified with, and had given the indications that they were committed to religious groups.

In Appendix I, we will find an overview of the assessment of women's potential for participating in politics (public life) and the assessment of their performance in public life, as stated by literate women, semi-literate women, and literate men.

Discussions

We note that although all male students in Lokoja conceded that women should contest elections, the majority thought women should aspire to positions other than the overall head. When asked whether they would vote for a woman as overall head, half the male students in Lokoja said no, they would not, while all the male students in Ibadan said they would. As we had earlier observed, it is interesting that positions are hardened among male students in Lokoja, where more female students had contested elections, than in Ibadan. Given the reasons that the students proffer, we are supposed to believe that women are incapable of handling positions of leadership, particularly overall leadership in the public sphere.

The picture is not so gloomy though. On aggregate, many men were positive that women should, and could, take up leadership positions, including the topmost jobs; and only a few women said no, women should not take up leadership in the public sphere. The men and women who said no appear few, but influential,

given that women are still few in political offices. Another way to view the seeming low resistance to women's participation in public life is to say that the big yes to women's participation in politics is a recent decision to say yes to women, and so we can sit back and relax and assume that women will contest elections, and that when they contest, men, in particular, will not get in their way with determination (Longwe 2000; Ibrahim and Salihu 2004).

It appears better that one takes the decision to be cautious, and this includes the decision not to underrate the determination of those women and men who said no to women's participation in the public sphere, and so take them seriously. The reasons they are saying no are the reasons we have to take them seriously. The reasons/arguments – that: they are more suited to handling certain positions; they can't cope in certain positions; their children/family will suffer; they are not mentally and emotionally stable; they will not be taken seriously; they will be wicked; it is against the will of God; and religion forbids it – all suggest that either women should look on while men take charge of public affairs because men are more suited to govern, or born to govern, or that women should play the subordinate roles that men assign to them in the public sphere. While it is clear that men put forward and proffer self-serving reasons and arguments, the reasons women give often border on fatalism.

The position of some literate men and very few literate women on the involvement of women in civic-political affairs, therefore, shows that their views are tied to the 'nature' of women; the 'femininity' of women; religion; the structure of power and 'natural' structure of duties and responsibilities in the private sphere; the type of political office that is sought by women; an uncritical sense and account of the African culture; and the feminization and masculinization of certain foci of power and office. These, no doubt, stem from how men, and, to a lesser extent women from the above data, perceive women. It is a reflection of their understanding of who women are, and what women ought to believe in; not necessarily what women believe in.

Although our data show that, in the main, women (and many men) affirmed women by expressing confidence that women have the potential to handle public affairs well, like some women are currently doing, we also cannot ignore the fact that many women, especially among literate women (and a few men), said they would vote for women as overall heads with provisos, that is, if the women fulfilled some requirements. Clearly, women are correct to demand that women who they vote into positions of responsibility meet certain standards, for we do not want to vote in women who will mess up the reputation of women, given that we desperately need to show other women and all men that they can trust us with those positions. However, knowing as we do that most of the women who said they would vote for women if they fulfilled certain requirements voted during the 2003 General/Local Government elections, one has been wondering whether they made the same demands of the men that they voted

for one and a half years before they were asked these questions. We have raised this because we want to be sure that the demand that women meet certain standards is not a mask to conceal resistance to women taking up positions of responsibility. As earlier observed, most of the yes with provisos came from literate women, both workers and students.

We know that persons who are literate like to convince themselves that they take decisions from a rational and objective point of view, even if we fail to acknowledge that normative ideologies that prevail in our contexts affect our rationality and objectivity (Clark and Wilson 1991).

One of the reasons/arguments put forth by those who would neither support nor vote for women as overall leader is that which supposedly takes its root from religion. Semi-literate female respondents and highly literate male respondents cited God, their religion and the Bible as part of the reasons they would or would not vote for female leaders. We therefore decided to ask female and male religious leaders to tell us what the will of God is, in respect of the participation of women in politics. Specifically, we asked that they speak to the position of their religions on women's participation in politics, and tell us what they preach to their followers about women and politics.

The matter of religion also had to be taken seriously because, in this study, respondents made a lot of references to religion, God, the scriptures; and so, we thought we should check how seriously they took their religions, and determine the amount of religiosity that respondents displayed. We therefore took, per category, the percentages of respondents that made references to religion. There were two items in each of the open-ended questionnaires that were administered that required that respondents speak to religion, so those two items were not reckoned along with other items in the questionnaire. We found that: thirty-two literate women (68.1%) in formal work made references to religion, and half of this percentage referred to religion more than twice. Thirty-two female students (69.6%); 91.1 per cent of semi-literate women in the informal economy; 39.5 per cent of female apprentices; 31.03 per cent of literate men in formal work; and 37.5 per cent of male students, made obvious references to religion. References to religion were high among literate women (workers and students) and semi-literate women, but more so among semi-literate men.

Religious Leaders on Women's Civic-Political Leadership

Islam

Male Muslim Leaders (MM) – Lokoja

OM: What is the position of Islam on women's civic-political participation?

MM: Women are given political positions in their own right and in accordance with what the Qur'an and the Suna of the Prophet have prescribed.

OM: Do you encourage women to contest elections? What do you preach to and teach your followership about women's political participation?

MM: What Islam says is very simple. Give them what is due to them in accordance to what Allah has prescribed. A woman can become a leader among her womenfolk. A woman will be the spokeswoman, the leader who will be the connecting point between the other stream and this stream, because women are supposed to be brought into direct enlightenment, because the Prophet said seeking knowledge is compulsory for both men and women, so you don't relegate them. But the situation as the West has it today, although not diabolical as such, but an affront to human arrangement as divinely put in place by Almighty Allah. Because women know who they are, you can see, if Islam has outrightly said women should become leaders, today, like we have in some churches prophetesses, pastors and so on, but we have never heard of a woman Imam for obvious reasons (laughs). Is that okay, because the Prophet has told us the position Allah has put women – they are feminine in nature, they are weak, and we should relieve them of the burden of that leadership.

Prayer is not a play thing it is something of concentration, it is something spiritual and it is something of commitment. Where a woman is leading and the child is crying wen wen, and she is running to give breast to the child, how about that? Again, a woman is just standing Alahu Akbar!!! Before you know it, the menstruation just blow up gbam, she is gone. Again the femininity, the fragility of a woman, tender heart/mind does not build her up to withstand the rigour and shock which go along with the present chaotic leadership system. You see, the government should as a matter of fact ask these women to do what they are supposed to do in their rightful places. You know, if you look at education, for instance, and you look at women in the teaching profession, they almost take a lead because they act as mothers, they nurture, they tutor, they have the feeling of mothers, the tenderness. But I as a man will just shout at them, you know that type of thing. Then, medically, when you see the female nurses, they are more tenderly, more caring just because of the nature in which Allah has built them.

OM: Would you support a woman who wants to run for the chairmanship of a Local Government?

MM: Well, as far as I am concerned, going by divine injunction, I will not, because Allah who created her has already assigned her a job which befits her, which is good for her, and is more comfortable for her. For me to ask her to go and do anything outside that, I must be doing a wrong thing.

We are not ruling out the fact that some countries have women leaders like we have today – Megawati, she is having problems there...

OM: The woman in Pakistan

MM: Benazir Bhutto, the former Prime Minister. When you come back to Nigeria, we have Queen Amina of Zaria. She was an undaunted leader, but again, in spite of her prowess she had limitations. Of course, she cannot command and fight wars; rather, she put in place commanders.

OM: So she never went to war?

MM: She never did. She was only directing people to go to war because she never participated physically in war, given that she was a woman. Yes, we may be told, going by modern times, that it is an oppression for us not to allow women to become leaders; yes, but Islam has very much put in place so that nothing disturbs the woman, nothing terrifies her, and nothing makes the woman suffer because of her numerous tenderly job.

OM: What about voting, should women vote in elections?

MM: Yes, they can vote

OM: If they cannot contest elections, why would you encourage them to vote?

MM: Good leadership. A woman can be voted to represent women because in the society women are supposed to be represented; their suggestions, their voices are supposed to be heard, so they can be voted in that context. That is the context of the representation of the womenfolk, not representing men.

OM: What if we write it into our constitution that 30 per cent of the state legislators should be women, what would be your reaction? The logic of what you have said is that women should vote for women. So, perhaps women should vote for women, so women can go and legislate on all matters in the Assembly.

MM: Madam, when we talk of leadership, there are categories of leadership. You know we can have head of state, governors of states and local government chairmen. In these areas, women cannot come in, but they can go to the House of Assembly. That is representation, and you know why? Because they are not meant to represent men and women together, although women are more knowledgeable about a few things that concern them.

OM: If they go to the House of Assembly, why can't they be governors?

MM: You see there is an explanation for that. The process of legislation involves sitting and making contributions, and we put the contributions together and have a leeway out. But the governors, the whole legislature, the

judiciary, the destitute, the criminals are all on his head; he is not in peace. It's too taxing.

OM: Are you saying it is too taxing for the woman or there is something underneath this, something about women not being exactly equal to men...

MM: No, No, No.

OM: ... so they should not come and boss us because God has destined us to be leaders over women and not women lording it over us.

MM: No, No, No. What you should understand here is that men and women are equal in the sight of God. The only problem is where it involves a husband and his wife. The man has an edge over her. The edge of maintenance because that is what God said. The responsibility is never assigned to the woman, it is always to the man. Secondly, in the area of spiritual development, men are supposed to be leaders. In the Mosque, we have never gotten a woman Imam.

OM: Because you don't want one.

MM: No, it is not allowed, since it is a divine injunction, and we cannot go against Allah's injunction.

OM: Show me in the Qur'an.

MM: Alahu Akbar!!!

MM: That what?

OM: That women cannot be Imams.

MM: The Prophet said it in the Hadith and he said it clearly, he said they can only lead women in prayer. If women are gathered together and one of them is learned, she can lead others in prayers, she can't lead men because of the nature of women. Women stay behind in prayers, they should not be mixed up with men. If I am standing and a woman is leading us in prayer, even if she is covered, we are weaker in lustfulness than women. The moment a woman stands before men even in ten minutes... It is the femininity of women; in fact their structure is enough to destabilize a man when she is leading a prayer. Then women are unclean during menstruation.

Female Muslim Leaders (FM) – Lokoja

FM: During the last general elections, FOMWAN participated actively as monitors because we believe in good governance. FOMWAN was like an umpire at polling stations, the chief judge, especially on procedures for voting; validity of some votes – to count or nullify. We made sure the polling booths were orderly, and no thugs were allowed to mess up at any of the polling stations. You know, the way people present themselves in

most cases will determine how much control they can exercise over others. The Grand Khadi has also given a lecture on the role of Muslim women in politics. Because you see, he who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. If women don't participate in politics, how would they be given positions at decision-making levels?

In as much as I encourage women to participate in politics, I will not encourage women that are just coming up to go into politics. Women who have finished bearing children, those whose children have graduated from school and are alone, with the understanding and permission of your husband, you can go for elective position. The responsibility of rushing home to go and cook for the children will no longer be there. We encourage you to resolve with your husband before going into politics. Don't be confrontational with your husband. The support of the husband must be there for you to succeed.

Islam does not say women should not participate in politics; it is not stated anywhere in the Qur'an. I know that for leadership positions in Islam, like being an Imam, I will not support a woman to be an Imam. To be an Imam, you have to be fully clean to lead the congregation because during your menstruation you cannot enter the Mosque.

OM: What about when a woman has reached menopause?

FM: No please. You can lead a congregation of women. That is the rule and we all understand it. Even in the Christian faith, even though you have female pastors or reverends, it is an imposition.

OM: But there can't be uniform attitudes to these issues. Some women would say, for example, that they would rather vote and let men deal with real politics – the decision-making processes.

FM: Well, that is why we are not moving. We need to continue to sensitize and create awareness in them that women should participate at decision-making level, lest their views will not be heard. If women are not there at the decision-making levels, men will push aside their concerns. Look at what is happening to the Child's Rights Act now. It has been debates upon debates. If children were there, they could have insisted that this is our own issue, we want it heard. That is why we are saying women should participate at decision-making levels, so they can present their concerns adequately.

Female Muslim Leader (FM) – Ibadan

FM: There were examples of women in the time of Prophet Mohammed who were politicians. Some were leaders of market women who were consulted when the need arose. But here, a lot of things are intertwined with our culture. For example, why do people have to travel overnight

because they want to campaign? I mean, no husband, whether Muslim or otherwise, would allow the wife leave home four or five days in the dead of the night because she wants to go and campaign. If things are done the way they should be done, if when we vote the results are fair and people who voted are convinced that the results are as expected... after all, in the US, Great Britain, the opinion polls would have projected results. And you know, to a very large extent, as women, women want to be honest. That is why some men, and even women, don't like to work with female bosses; for they say women are too strict – you want to do things the way they should be done. If things are done the way they should be, a lot of women will step out and vie for elective positions.

More importantly, the men who are at the helm of affairs today are some people's children. If they had been properly brought up to be honest, dedicated, loving, they will not behave the way they are behaving now, and things will work out the way they should.

Islam prefers that if women are going into politics, they should not be women of childbearing age. You cannot leave your children unattended and go out to campaign. FOMWAN members have had the luck of holding public offices in politics, and I am happy to say they did not let us down. And again, most of them are not of childbearing age. Their children have grown up, so they have time for the nation. Those who have lost their husbands, for example, whose children are grown up and scattered all over can, since they cannot be left to rot at home, they have to do something.

OM: What about female Imams?

FM: There should be no female Imams. If you observe, women pray behind men. There is the Islamic code for dressing for women. It is in the Qur'an that the entire body of a woman is naked, so anything that you will do to attract the other person out of the way of worshipping God should be avoided. Inside the Qur'an, women are asked to lower their voices more than those of men, because the gift of the Almighty Allah makes women have sonorous voices such that men can get carried away if a woman leads prayers. That is why a woman cannot go in front. Again, when a woman is undergoing the monthly period, she cannot go and pray until the end of the menstruation. If you are an Imam and have a period for five days, who will lead the congregation? God has stated the jobs that are to be done by each sex.

OM: The talk about women being attractive, their voices attracting and distracting men gives one the impression that it is taken for granted that men are not disciplined and that they lack self-control.

FM: I don't think it is because they are not disciplined. If it is because they are not disciplined, it would not have been said by the Almighty Allah because He created us, He knows what gifts he has given everybody. He knows if there is no attraction between the opposite sex, the question of love and marriage will not come in. It is the way he has created them. If they want to discipline themselves, there is a limit, the limit of elasticity. After that, the thing will break. Once the human aspect sets in, they get lost. So, to a very reasonable extent, we shouldn't harass them with whatever God has given us. Like you get to some public places, like a bus, you see a girl or a lady with mini-skirt or hot pants. She sits and suddenly begins to pull her skirt or dress down. She pulls a cloth that is not elastic. In some cases, you will see the colour of the pants they have on through their clothing. The level of discipline also varies in men. There are some that can hold themselves longer, but for others, immediately they see it they start shaking, and all sorts of things come into their heads. Along the streets you see these youngsters, when they see such girls, they start slapping them at the back, push them, draw them; they wouldn't do it to anybody who is decently dressed, and that is the difference.

Christianity

Male Christian Leaders (MC) – Lokoja

MC: Culture has been the problem from time immemorial. Women had been unfortunate to be maltreated in all ways and it is just maybe civilization that is now emancipating them. It is an inexhaustible action though, it will continue, it's an evolution and there is nobody that can stop it. I don't even think it can be slowed down; rather, it will continue to gain momentum. But then you see, the bulk of the whole thing now rests with the women. Unfortunately, women are used to attacking themselves and they find it difficult to come together and, because of that ... maybe it's a natural tendency, men always exploit that and we are able to sort of divide and rule. If women can learn to respect one another to the extent that they can come together irrespective of whatever level they are in the society, then it will be a beautiful thing because then the evolution will be faster and more concrete. When you look at women in politics now, and you look at the number of women in politics maybe some years ago, you don't find a lot of activists now, if I'm right. When they showed Mrs Margaret Epko on TV the other day, you know, the woman was still breathing fire and you have very few of them now. Who would you say is like Mrs Ransome Kuti now?

They have been given more position in Government now...

OM: Or have more education now...

MC: Yes they have more education, but when you look at individuals, who are in government, are they activists? Are they? What do they stand for? So we need to, one way or the other, encourage them to come out of their shell. We need to let them know that the fact that you have education does not automatically confer on you the ability to convince the male that, listen, don't give dole outs to us. We can fend for ourselves to the extent that you will have to reckon with us. Instead of saying that, alright ministerial post, let us give them 5 per cent, or 30 per cent; they have not worked for it, but you just give them. Whereas if they have the attributes, people will respect them; and respect is very very important in politics, especially in this country. If we want to move forward in a democratic dispensation, we should encourage women activists positively so that we can have a continuation, not a situation where you have, unfortunately, women being afraid to come out and so they would rather hide and accept positions that are given to them, instead of mobilizing properly.

On the other hand, it might be that the men just know how to squeeze them up and silence them because now that money is the root of all intrigues in politics, if you don't have money you just say well, let me ally myself and make some money. Whereas in those days, the women never thought of money in the sense of leverage. No. They believed in something, they say it, and then mobilized people of like mind and get them to gently do something. But now, we count so much on money, as against principles. We don't fight for principles, we don't look at issues anymore, and that is dangerous even for democracy. And I hope and pray, you know that women who will stand up for principles will come out, irrespective of the money they are going to get.

My sister was very active in the North until her death. She was at one time the General Secretary of NEPU Women's wing when Gambo Sawaba was the President. And I kept asking the children... no one is inheriting their mother's activism. They say when we do that now, we won't get money and we will starve, which is the truth but it is because of misplaced priority, the thinking that money is everything.

OM: I think the Anglican Church in Kogi State has a female priest ...

MC: No we don't. What happened was, before the Diocese of Lokoja was inaugurated in 1994, this area was part of the Diocese of Kwara and the Bishop at that time ordained three women as priests. Among the three, two happen to come from here, and the third from Ilorin. At the time the Bishop made the dedication, the Church of Nigeria had not given authority for Bishops to ordain women. Although Bishops are autonomous within their diocese, when it comes to issues of this nature, Lambert Conference says each Church should go back home and decide what they want to do.

Up at Lambert, there is nothing wrong with ordaining women or making them priests, but you cannot just do it, go back to your Church because it is a very sensitive thing. The Church of Nigeria said and they said it was too early. They were not against it, but they were looking at the division it has caused in the United States, in UK, in Australia. It is too early for us to introduce it, especially where our culture is even deeper in terms of man/woman relationship, worse than in the liberal cultures where the ordinations were already causing divisions. The Church then decided that we should take our time. The Bishop in Kwara then decided to emphasize the rights of the Bishop in his territory, given that the Bishop has considerable power in his diocese. Except that on this issue, a general consensus had been reached, and irrespective of what the individual thought, once a consensus had been reached, and the decision taken at the Episcopal level, that is the House of Bishops, all bishops of the Church of Nigeria will abide by the decision of the majority. Because if you don't, according to the law, you can be sanctioned by 75 per cent of the bishops. Even the primate, if the primate decides to do anything that is wrong, we just need four bishops to summon an Episcopal meeting ...

Female Christain Leaders (FC) – Lokoja

FC: As much as I would want our men to consider women, you know men generally... We encourage women to vote, and you know, women are more than men. You can even say it is because of our votes that they win. And then when it comes to positions, some will say women's position is in the kitchen. I am of the opinion, even as a clergy, that women be given more political appointments than we have presently, so that we would demonstrate our integrity, our ability. If women are in positions, because they are frank and they work hard, they would also want results. They would prefer that things are done the way they should be done. I believe women will not condone theft, corruption and laziness. Women are thorough. In the ministries, where you have women, they perform well except when men get in the way and frustrate you, especially when they want to spend money as they like.

I am of the opinion that we should still make effort, and insist that women should be put in positions of authority, and we will not fail them. Now we are even learning about how to better the lives of the majority, especially the poor people. The money in the country is presently circulating among those who are rich. If they put more women, the women can in turn pull up more women. But some men say that women are so strict, and that women may not want to work with other women. I have heard men saying that.

OM: I think they use that to divide us. They use that to set us against one another.

FC: After all, men who occupy positions of power, the ones at the top, do have clashes, much more than women.

OM: Do you preach against women who vie for political offices?

FC: No. In the Bible, a man was supposed to go to war, he felt lazy and Deborah said let us go, and they won the war. She led the war. It's in the book of Judges. Also, Esther too, delivered her people.

OM: You have said women should be submissive in their private lives and you have also said women will perform well if allowed to function in public life. Is there no problem with this? Some will say if you're going to be submissive, you're not going to be able to take part in public life.

FC: Thank you very much. Let me clear that area. In the family, a woman has to be submissive to her husband. But a woman is not competing with her husband when she wants to get into political positions; she is competing with other men.

OM: What if a husband objects to the wife's political aspirations? We are not talking about reaching the top position in a career or in the work place.

FC: I think only a few men will object to their wives being at the top. We have female commissioners whose husbands are in the civil service, and the husbands are not even of the rank of a director in the service. Yet, they are happy because at the end of the day their wives will bring 'brown envelope'. I mean the ones that they have worked for, not the ones they lobby and do all kinds of things to get. We cannot rule out the fact that some men may object. Look at the churches. I am a pastor in my church. In some churches, you don't have women as pastors or evangelists because of the oppression of women. But like the founder of my church would say, in heaven there will be no difference between man and woman. I am the district coordinator of my church. I have about eighteen or nineteen male pastors in my district. There are just five women clergy, and I am the head of all as the district coordinator. We can have a few cases where men would say I don't want my woman to participate, but what about what they, the men do? At any rate, a responsible woman will not mess herself up as a politician.

Submission to husband is about total respect for husband. Seek his advice. This is not to say that the husband will not seek advice from the wife. You know some men are dictators; they do not seek the opinions of their wives. That is not what the Bible is saying here. A woman should respect and honour her husband. You see, if the husband loves the wife, everything will be okay. He will not do anything that will harm the wife. When a man

loves his wife, you can be sure that there is nothing that he demands from the wife that he will not get.

Female Christian Leader and Academic (Prof. W) - Ibadan

Professor W does not see any basic contradiction between her beliefs as a christian and the theory of evolution, for instance. As a matter of fact, she said she uses the history of palaeobotanical studies to teach scientific ethics as there are lessons about humility, flexibility, dialectical thinking, honesty and hard work, amongst others, that can be drawn from this history. Alongside other women, she is leading the campaign for the ordination of female priests by the Anglican Church in Nigeria. She believes that practitioners of any religion who condone oppression of, and discrimination against particular groups are acting contrary to the spirit of their religion. She believes that there is much wisdom to be gained from Ifa, the traditional Yoruba god of knowledge. She reiterated the fact that Yoruba traditional religions did not just have priestesses; they had goddesses who were, like the male gods, intermediaries between the almighty One and the people. She uses this to question the view among those opposed to the ordination of female priests on the grounds that women cannot represent God to the people because God is male. Furthermore, some in the Church of Nigeria who oppose the ordination of women give as one of their reasons the fact that such a step is against 'our culture'. She then asks: which culture are they referring to - the culture of Nigerians or the Jewish culture, which is represented in the Old Testament? Her own response to them is that Jesus is beyond culture.

I was fortunate to be in the church where I usually worship during the 2005 celebration of Mother's Day, because Professor W. delivered the message. I quickly converted my church attendance, in part, to an observation of the interaction of the religious leader with adherents. She spoke on the theme: 'An Exemplary Mother'. She based her message on the advice of the queen mother (who was not named) to her son, Lemuel, found in Proverbs 31: 3-9. She dealt with the character of the queen mother, from whom she wanted women to take a cue. She was extremely forthright about how some mothers (and fathers), and some women have colluded with men in their corrupt practices in: institutions of learning, government circles, public places and politics. She enjoined women to speak up for the voiceless and the oppressed, and she gave examples of how, at the level of interpersonal relationship, we all get to oppress one another. She then connected this with the question of the ordination of women in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) which she regarded as discriminatory and oppressive. There were uneasy shifts on the long benches when she said that. When she was through, her audience applauded her loud and clear and she responded: 'To God Be the Glory'. Her response is significant, because although she is part of the campaign to get women ordained as priests, she also has put up a personal resistance that gives her psychological freedom. She said she tells

herself, and also tells people, that God has ordained her as priest, it is now left to the Church to acknowledge this publicly through the rite of public ordination.

A Yoruba Traditional Religion – The Worship of Sango

A Female Traditional Religious Leader (FT) - Ibadan

In attendance at the interview was a male ruler (MR), who is considered the custodian of all traditions (including religion) in his domain in a section of Ibadan.

OM: What is Sango?

FT: Among all the gods (Oosa), Sango is powerful. Sango does all things. Sango does magic (*idan*), and fire comes from his mouth. At times, he helps worshippers to fill a basket with water and it won't leak. Sango controls the thunder (*ara*). Sango is helpful in several ways. Look, even persons overseas acknowledge the importance of Sango. Sango provides children, Sango heals and Sango provides relief from problematic situations. Barren women ask for children from Sango and he gives them children.¹¹ When people come to ask Sango about lost items, it doesn't take Sango much time to expose the perpetrator. The clouds will gather and thunderstorm will strike the thief. When Sango strikes with thunder, he doesn't like people weeping and wailing. He would rather they sing his praise. He is Alapadupe, meaning he kills and expects gratitude.

OM: Sango appears rather difficult.

FT: Yes of course he is, but he is also good, as he takes care of people. The Almighty God gave him authority among several gods. The point with Sango is that he dislikes cheating and abhors injustice (*ireje*). He kills thieves. In one instance, some men kidnapped a child. They were arrested by the police, but they kept denying that they kidnapped the child. We then went to the police station, and told the policemen that Sango will seek out the kidnappers. We called on Sango and thunderstorm came down, pulled one of the men from the police station and dumped him outside. When the same thing happened to the second man, the third man quickly confessed that he actually stole the child and handed the child over to Sango's first casualty, and that the child is still alive.

OM: What is Sango's position on women's participation in politics?

FT: Women can participate in politics. The reason is that women possess enormous powers. Their powers are comparable to that of witches. There is nothing a woman cannot do. Today, if a woman is barren and other women decide she has to be pregnant, she will become pregnant. If witches bar a woman from giving birth to a child that is due and women

bring the pregnant woman to Sango, the witches will take flight, and the woman will be delivered of the baby safely.

OM: Are you saying that Sango does not consider that women are inferior to men? You know in the new religions – Christianity and Islam – they say God said women should not partake in politics, that men should be the ones to lead, take care of political matters.

FT: No! No! (*Oti ool!*). Women are more powerful than men in all respects. If a man misbehaves or exceeds limits, a woman can seize his manhood, and if he pleads with the woman, the manhood can be returned. You don't mess up with a woman. If you do, you run into problems.

MR: As a matter of fact, *Ifa man so, o ni obinrin ni iya aiye to bi aiye. Obinrin ni iya orun to bi orun. Ta ni yio so pe ti obinrin bawo?* (Ifa, the Yoruba god of knowledge says women are the mothers of the earth, they gave birth to the earth, and they are mothers of heaven, they gave birth to heaven, who then dare questions the relevance of a woman?)

OM: If a woman approaches you for help in respect of her participation in politics, would you help her?

FT: It is Sango that will help her. But Sango will not support a dishonest person. The first step is that with the aid of bitter *Kola*, we will ask about the woman's character from Sango. If the woman is bad, Sango will alert us, and we will tell her to go to her house, and that she cannot have Sango's support.

OM: I imagine that, given the way the ones who govern us behave, many of the people who are our leaders will not dare move near Sango

FT: No. No. They don't come to Sango. They go to the white garment churches and the imams. Sango will not tolerate dishonesty. When things then get rough for them, they say it is the way God wants it. Our leaders should be made to swear by Sango when they are taking the oath of office. They swear by the Holy Books of the new religions and they know nothing will happen to them when they misbehave, and nothing happens. Let them swear by Sango and they will behave better.

OM: Are there many female Sango priestesses, supporters and worshippers?

FT: Women are the majority.

OM: Now I imagine that, given your position, men don't attempt to be rude to you, and in your work as Sango priestess, no man challenges you. But do you get the feelings that the male Sango priests and the male supporters try to put on airs of superiority over other women?

FT: No, they don't do that.

OM: What is the relationship between Sango worshippers and the adherents of other religions? Do the adherents of other religions consult Sango?

FT: I have been to Jerusalem and to Mecca. Actually, if you look at Christianity and Islam, some of the angels are Sango. Sango worshipping is not restricted to Yorubaland alone...¹²

Given the position of religious leaders on women's civic-political participation; and the references that respondents made to religion, we thought there was a need to find out the kinds of influences that affect and shape respondents and their understanding of women's participation in politics. We asked respondents to indicate the religious, ethnic, political, social and cooperative thrift and credit groups/associations to which they belonged. Most of the women in formal work belonged to more than one group. Most indicated that they belonged to cooperative thrift and credit associations and religious groups. All the female students in Lokoja indicated that they partook in the activities of religious groups and that they were dedicated to those activities. Only six of the students indicated that they took part in other activities like departmental associations, sporting and Rotaract Club activities. In Ibadan, most of the students also took part in religious activities, but they combined religious activities with a wide range of essentially non-religious activities, such as organizing (and ushering at) social events, and participation in the activities of press clubs, ethnic associations, sewing and decorating, sporting, departmental association and NGO activities.

Like women in formal work, many women in the informal economy also typically belonged to more than one group, and they cited their religious groups often, followed by their trade guilds and ethnic associations. Most female apprentices said they did not belong to groups, for reasons that we had earlier alluded to. The few who belonged to groups were members of social clubs, religious groups, cooperative thrift and credit societies and community youth development associations.

In conclusion, on participation in civic-political affairs, women appeared to be attentive to religious leaders, such as the male and female Christian leaders in Lokoja and the female traditional religious leader in Ibadan, for even when the female respondents set standards for prospective female leaders, their standards were different from those that the religious leaders, whose positions were apposite to the women's or ambivalent, had laid down. Some of the reasons the male respondents who will not vote for women who desire to occupy the topmost civic-leadership positions gave (children will suffer; it is not the will of God; they are better at care giving; they are fragile, etc) are in tandem with the positions of the male Muslim leaders in Lokoja, and to a lesser extent, the positions of the female Muslim leaders in Ibadan and Lokoja (who would not want women of child-bearing age to contest elections), and the female Christian leader in Ibadan, who would like women to influence things from behind, like the wife of Pontius Pilate. We have to note that concerning leadership of the religious institutions, all male Christian, and all female and male Muslim leaders, were opposed to women taking the topmost jobs in churches and mosques.

Notes

1. When I was trying to figure out how to characterize the participation of Nigerians in governance pre-1960, I sent a text message to Dr Abubakar Momoh, who is a political scientist. After five minutes, he replied my text message with 'constitutional despotism'. Now, now, I said to myself: 'Does Abu want me to write this down?' So I called him. His position was that there was limited participation in governance by Nigerians prior to the general elections in 1951. And that even then, the Governor General had the power to sanction decisions taken by the legislative councils, and this was the case even after independence. It was when Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, that she had full independence.
2. This is true. There were restrictions on movement, especially of vehicles, on election days.
3. PDP is the People's Democratic Party.
4. In the past, mainly due to voter apathy, some state governments threatened that citizens would be asked to produce their voters' cards if they wanted to access social services and government contracts.
5. Translates to: we bring bad governance on ourselves by voting for those people.
6. We should remember that Amina is an apprentice, and she could not leave the shop to go and vote because her madam had gone to vote. Amina may not also be able to vote throughout the day if, on her madam's arrival, they have customers that they have to attend to.
7. This translates to: because I am a good person and a long standing member of the association.
8. Dr Dora Akinyuli is the Director General (DG) of the National Directorate for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC). She has been visible as the DG of NAFDAC and, has been widely acknowledged as effective in leading an organization that was, until her leadership, unable to curtail the menace of fake drugs and unwholesome food in the economy.
9. Translates to: A woman will introduce wickedness into whatever she decides to do.
10. It is not good for a woman to contest elections.
11. E. B. Idowu (1962:89-95) raised doubts about the positive attributes that have been ascribed to Sango, a former Oyo king, whom he described as self-willed, cruel, tyrannical and passionately devoted to carnage. Idowu indicated that somehow, Sango became associated with 'the wrath' of Olodumare – God. He pointed out that the high moral standards (which are prominent commandments in the Yoruba ethical system and) that are currently being associated with Sango originally belonged to Jakuta. He told us that Jakuta (the one who hurls stones or one who fights with stones) was actually the Yoruba way of conceptualizing 'the wrath' of Olodumare against all forms of wickedness. He then indicated that the sacred day of Jakuta is observed regularly by the priests of Sango, in connection with the worship of Sango.
12. G. Parrinder (1969:30-33) made references to the presence of storm and thunder gods in a number of West African countries.

