

Conceptual Considerations in Framing Sexist Hateful Words and Actions in Nigeria: The Paradox of Women Exclusion in Development

Adaku Agnes Ubelejit-Nte, PhD

University of Port Harcourt

Rivers State, Nigeria

Chioma Vivienne Nwokoro, PhD

Eastern Palm University, Ogboko

Imo State, Nigeria

Felix O. Chima, PhD

Professor and Director

Prairie View A&M University

United States of America

Abstract

Feminist and critical scholarship situates sexist discourse in hate speech as creating, perpetrating and justifying dominance and violence against women. This paper is insightful to the increased public awareness and support to address the alarming rate of virulence of speech and actions on social, political and ethno-religious spaces in Nigeria that deflects attention from sexist hateful words and actions. This discourse challenges sexist hate speech as false perceptions that have institutionalized social hierarchies animated by sexual prejudice, stereotypes and the basis for women exclusion in development in private and public spaces. The article analyzes the multiple dimensions of intersectional realities of sexuality, gender and other social categories that are shaped by social practices like spoken or written words, actions and power relations undermining equity and women inclusion. The paper examines the invisibility of legal and constitutional frameworks that particularly address sexist epithets as validating the permissibility of sexist speech.

Keywords: Sexist hateful words; hate speech; intersectional realities; social practices; women exclusion.

Introduction

Feminist and critical scholarship situates sexist discourse in hate speech as creating, perpetrating and justifying dominance and violence against women. The act of discrimination against females based on their biological and physical categories is intensified, produced and replicated through social practices like language. Sexist representation of female bodies is a conceptualization and perception of women and girls in ways that make them malleable sex objects in the public and private domains. This paper contests the prevalent sexist and stereotypical conceptualization and expression of femininity in oral and written discourse. Sexist speech designates an act that expresses partiality in favour of the male sex and prejudice to the female sex (Xiao an, 2006). Society and culture are male centered and male dominance is preserved through sexist and obscene implications. Whereas men are honorably construed with positive qualities in public and private domains women's experiences are contemptuously labeled and culturally limited to the private spaces.

Nigeria's president was quoted thus: 'I don't know what party my wife belongs to but she belongs to my kitchen, my living room and my other room' (BBC News, 2016). This depicts the lived realities of Nigerian women which transcends all social classes. Among other categories of systemic injustice, sexist speech typifying sexism is both overt and covert, more insidious, subtle and regarded as the 'most resistant to change' being interspersed in quotidian language and life. Similarly, AL-Wahsh; an Egyptian lawyer advocated for rape of women in ripped jeans as a 'national duty' (BBC News, 2017). The former reinforces structural inequalities and cultural norms of patriarchal subjugation and social practices that strengthen inequity, place low or no value on women and tag them inferior, lacking and hetero-normative in the society (Donna, 2007; Irizarry, 1985; Dobash and Dobash, 1998).

Scholarly and legally, attention has been deflected from sexist hateful words and actions in Nigeria. Some scholars recognize women as targets of hate speech (Haiman, 1993; Wolfson, 1997) but in practice separate this genre from other categories in hate speech discourse. Similarly, this paper aligns with the views that construe sexism as a form of hate speech that targets women and girls (Donna, 2007; Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy, 2014-2017; Kukah, 2015; Adibe, 2015). Recent attention generally has focused on the new dimension; online sexism (Benton-Greig, Gamage and Garvey, 2018; Bemiller and Schneider, 2010). Bemiller and Schneider (2010) acknowledged sexism as a persistent aspect of women's everyday lives. The study analyzed the content and implications of internet sexist jokes and humor. On the other hand, Donna (2007) underlined the rarity of sexist discourse as hate speech and its invisibility in extant literature. However, this scholarship did not examine how sexist hateful words and actions have been framed for the exclusion of women in decision making processes and platforms. Wika (1998) focused on the socio-economic and political subordination of women in Rivers state and highlighted the need to study cultural practices like language that underpin women's subjugation. In this light, this study takes its point of departure on the view that sexist hate speech perpetrated offline and online is a frame that has remained invisible and unaddressed because it is embedded in the complex social matrix and historical continuities that normalize sexism and relegate women to the background. Whereas Donna (2007) had a linguistic bias this work encompassed the spectrum of cultural studies. The paper examines the invisibility of legal and constitutional frameworks that particularly address sexist epithets as validating the permissibility of sexist speech therefore, the paradox of women exclusion in Nigeria.

Method

This study is a critical inquiry into the social constructions of sexist hateful words and their usage in real life experiences of women. Specifically, the study focused on only textual analysis of literature on sexism, sexist hate words and verbal uses. The use of systematic or textual analysis was useful in identifying issues related to threats or acts of verbal, symbolic, physical and sexist representations of women. As the aim of the paper is to critically explore the permissibility of sexist hateful words and actions as a frame for stereotypical representation, the texts or literature were carefully selected to suit this objective. The texts used include contemporary literature on linguistic sexist perceptions and constructions of women, online reports of women's experiences with the hashtag - *#Being female in Nigeria*; and other documented evidence of negative portrayal and stereotyping of women. Using Carol Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to be' (WPR) approach, the study examines the different framings and conceptualization of sexist hateful words and actions. The assumptions that underpin these constructions rooted in the deep-seated prejudice against women, the produced effects and how stereotypical representations of women are reproduced and sustained in quotidian language or discourse were analyzed (Bacchi, 2009). Also, explores why sexist hateful words and actions are unaddressed because they reflect the complex social matrix and culture that subjugate women to their male folk. The following sub-sections discusses emergent themes from the literature.

Hate Speech

Hate speech problematization officially dates to the period before the Second World War. The debate on whether to regulate hate speech as an infringement on free speech had been a moot point that re-echoed in different national legal and policy discourse. The United States constitutional framework for free speech known as the 'First Amendment' maintains that 'one man's vulgarity is another's lyric' therefore, offensiveness of expression is not by itself enough ground for the suppression or regulation of free speech. It prohibits and punishes such types of speech as 'fighting words' under its 'low First Amendment value. However, hate speech including sexist epithets among others are protected by the First Amendment. (U.S Bill of Rights, 1791). Hate speech has been variously conceptualized in close and open-ended forms.

Public discourse on hate speech had earlier excluded expressions of hatred or antipathy based on sex or gender from the definition of hate speech (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); Tsesis, 2002; Neisser, 1994). Initially, emphasis was placed on offensive words that conveyed racial or religious hatred. Varying corpus of perspectives on hate speech address violence catalyzed by contempt or hate spread through aggressive overtures, discrimination or stigmatization sparked by stereotype and prejudice against sex and other 'protected characteristics' as constituting hate speech (Wolfson, 1997; Council of Europe, 2015; Kukah, 2015; Phillipson and Heinze, 2018).

The history of hate speech in Nigeria is as old as the Nigerian nation. Each of the three major ethnic nationalities has an ethnic slur (sobriquet) for each other. For instance, the Igbo refer to the Hausa as 'Nama' (cow), Yoruba as 'ofe mmanu' (He that eats oily soup) and Hausa call the Igbo 'Nyamiri'. Also, the Yoruba tag the Igbo 'Aje-okuta-mamumin' (he that eats stone without drinking water), the Hausa 'Alimajiri' (common). The transition to an independent national government prepared the ground for regional leadership and representation with the emergence of regional political parties. Politics and government have followed this trend during and after the years of military incursion with structures and decision-making processes shaped by ethnic alliances and platforms. However, hateful words and violent reactions they engendered have encumbered nation building and portend consequences that cannot be ignored.

Perhaps, discourse on hate speech had stirred up public and government concern since most violent world conflicts had been fueled by words such as World War II, Rwandan genocide, South Sudan and others. The alarming rate of virulence of speech and action around ethnic, religious and political spaces portray deep-rooted grievances that one ethnic nationality or religion has toward another. Ethnicity and religion remain the defining variables that override the nation's political and economic interests hence their proclivity to hate speech. The renewed wave of agitation movements by indigenous groups have further intensified the ethno-religious divide and hate speech. Studies on hate speech paradigm in Nigeria problematized its use by the media and the correlation between rancorous campaigns and electoral violence characteristic of general elections in Nigeria especially, in 2011 and 2015 (Jega, 2007; Akubor, 2015; Olowojolu, 2016; Adibe, 2012; Egwu, 2003; Kukah, 2015). Campaigns thrived on incitation of hatred inadvertently, exacerbated the unresolved conflicts and existing deep seated ethnic or religious animosity against others. Political campaigns were deliberately focused on ethnic or religious references and remain potential impediment to national development.

The avalanche of hate speeches that flooded the Nigerian media in 2017 exposed the loopholes in the constitution and raised controversies about the adequacy of constitutional provisions to check hate speech. The reference to Nigeria as a 'zoo' and its government as pedophiles by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and the adoption and use of the lyrics of a hate song from an artiste of northern Nigeria extraction to deride and incite genocide against the Igbos were cases in point. Others include the vacation notice from Arewa Youth Congress to all southerners residing in the north before October 1, 2017, vacation notice from some elements of the Oduduwa ethnic background, south west Nigeria to all northerners, among others.

Chapter 4, Section 39 of the Nigerian constitution contains the 'right to freedom of expression and the press'; Sections 59-60, 373-381 of the Criminal Code apply to the southern states; and sections 391-40, 417-418 of the Penal Code apply to the northern states. Also, section 95 of the Amended Electoral Act, 2010 sanctions only hate speeches in political campaigns or slogans. These are merely libel laws against character assassination, defamation and other breaches of peace contained in these sections of the constitution. Again, the Cyber Crime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015 enacted by the National Assembly prohibits the use of social media to promote bigotry and hatred in the society. There are no definitive hate speech laws in Nigeria. Legal discourse on the availability of hate speech laws in Nigeria have been polarized because of these laws resulting in arguments for and against the promulgation of new hate speech law. Social critics argue that hate speech ban is a strategy by governments to suppress and quieten the opposition which negatively impacts on democracy (Phillipson and Heinze, 2016; Herz and Molnar (eds), 2012).

Sexist Hateful Words and Actions

The history of sexist speech is the history of male dominance that instituted unjust power relations and violent sexual subordination of females (Nielsen, 2004). All women and girls are prone to sexist hateful words and actions at all levels of social interaction. Social media platforms have facilitated the increasing visibility of sex based verbal hostilities. An elaboration of international organizations, actions and efforts to eradicate sexist hate speech is pertinent.

The Council of Europe through its various strategies advocated action against hate speech especially the sponsored 'No hate Speech Movement', in 2017 raised awareness through a perceptive campaign that contested sexist hateful words against females. Articles 34 and 40 of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011) mandated members to criminalize all kinds of violence pertaining to sexist hate speech. Similarly, a non-governmental platform; Women in Nigeria in 1982 set out to fight discriminatory and sexist stereotypes and practices in private and public places Kramarae and Splender (2004).

Sexist hateful words establish frames of women exclusion in society that are explicitly connected and ingrained in oral discourse particularly euphemisms and proverbs. Sexist speech is culture-relative, an index of sexed identity, a reflection of the values of any society and embedded in the complex social matrix and historical continuities that relegate women to the background. This remains an act of oppression that is inextricably linked to the historical and social bases of violence against women and girls (Nielsen, 2004). It depicts the permissible contents of speech and actions in a nation's laws. Words influence actions and contemptuous sexually-explicit expressions can trigger violent behaviour against women. Actions and words are equal, pervasive in nature but sexually suggestive hateful words and actions are offensive, denigrating and lead to vulnerabilities of women and girls. Sexist speech employs both the 'hostile' and 'benevolent' components of sexism through hate-blended vituperations and subtle derisions that allegedly devalue women positively (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Extant body of literature employ sexist epithets that entrench prejudice against women (Gairdner, 1990; Whillock, 1995) especially classic literature (Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and others). Varying dimensions exist in the expressions of sexism through provocative, derogatory remarks, allusions, gestures and inflammatory statements about women and girls. Sexist hateful words are used by males of all age strata and females have been socialized to accept, bear or ignore them. Submissiveness is portrayed as a quality of femininity while assertiveness and raw force are masculine traits. Adichie (2017) in a narrative of personal experience and practices that subordinate women affirms the influence of internalized behavior on the accentuation of power dominant relations and negotiation of gender differences between boys and girls. Inherently, African culture depicts women as lacking self-worth which can only be complimented by a husband. The process of gender socialization adds a nuanced interpretation to the normative expectations of gender roles which serves as a springboard for legitimization of women exclusion in society. Sexism is a creation of male socialization that produce attitudes, behavior, feelings and thoughts that normalize and permit sexually denigrating comments.

Taken together, men and women alike use accusations of femininity to mock, motivate or deride men for failure to accomplish a task. Men who show emotion, fear, cowardice or vulnerability are rated or equated with females. These expressions of sexism are prevalent in almost all male dominated areas of life especially the military and sports (Miller, 1997/2007; Stockard and Johnson, 1980). Kramarae and Splender (2004) recognized the pervasiveness of sexist stereotypes and hostility even in the media, workplace, ideological and educational institutions of the state. Similarly, men and women view female bosses as mean and over-bearing. The resonance of culturally and institutionally sanctioned sexism against women and girls is to be understood as framed within the false perceptions of patriarchal sexist expectations and references.

Culturally sanctioned sexism results in gender stereotyped behavior and attitude in both sexual categories. Sexism and patriarchy are viewed as commonly reinforcing each other though sexism exists even in some communist countries where institutionalized patriarchy had been abolished (Lerner, 1986). This behavior presupposes that women behave and act in the way women think they should act and behave while men also do behave and act seemingly as men think they should behave and act (Matlin, 1996). Women look beautiful to win the admiration of men. When a girl lives in affluence then there must be a sugar-daddy who splashes money on her. In other words, she must be a prostitute; a derogatory remark for a female sex worker exclusive of their male patronisers. A woman should not publicly declare herself as the breadwinner even if she is otherwise the husband's ego would be bruised. Africans believe and profess that the place of the woman is in the kitchen. The desire of any girl should only be to get married to a man who is a provider and have children because a man generally expects his wife's life to be centered on him (Sherman and Wood, 1982). When a girl acquires a college degree society perceives her as spoilt, and failure to get married on or before 25 years of age she is castigated and her sexual worth thereafter construed as depreciated culturally.

Ten years ago while the author was doing a PhD programme in Sociology, a male colleague and friend once asked if the author's academic pursuit would not drive potential suitors away (Personal Communication, 2009). More so, cultural bias depicts educated women as sexually obliterated, unmarriageable or incapable of making good wives (Wika, 1998). These and more constitute the institutionally set standards, limits and frames imputed to the female sex. Cultural perception of wives as their husbands properties expose women to the risk of gender-based violence. The patriarchal institution subjects them to economic deprivation particularly in inheritance and exclusion in development.

Sexism portrays women as inferior, deceitful, emotional, seductive, untrustworthy, doubts the veracity of a negative response (No) to men's sexual advances and blames them for victimization (Gairdner, 1990, Kulick, 2003). Adichie's exposition on the struggles of women in Nigeria titled 'We Should All Be Feminists' (2014) elicited a barrage of reactions from an online hashtag 'Being female in Nigeria'. This was a first-hand information that critiqued the sexist nature of the diverse Nigerian cultures particularly by people affected. The group whose conversation produced the hashtag however, dissociated itself from feminism due to its negative construction. This may seem absurd but must be understood in relation to the frame that denigrates women who challenge patriarchy and other androcentric perceptions gender inequality in society particularly, feminism (Gairdner, 1994). The platform is replete with narratives that described different lived experiences of sexism in the home, work place and other public places by Nigerian women. I have been 'told countless times that I will never find a husband because I am too ambitious and outspoken', said one tweet.

On the other hand, in Papua New Guinea childhood and youth initiation into relationship with supporters in preparation for marriage employ sexist slurs to inflame passions for violent rejection of anything female. Men also justify the perpetration of violence against their wives and daughters in order to punish, control and tarnish their image (Counts, 1985; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 1996a, 1997).

Men eulogize masculine values and display dominance over women through placement of low or no status and relational perception of women as animals suitable for reproduction and nurturance roles but incompetent to make reasonable and cogent judgment. Sexist stereotypes exist for the same reason that pushes men to abuse, harass, discriminate, humiliate, batter and even rape females; that is male domination (MacKinnon, 1989; Jeffreys, 2009). Underpinned by the cultural biases that deny women a voice and traditionally legitimize exclusion is the decreasing visibility of women in national development platforms. Women's role in national development is limited by sexual beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes responsible for their underlying susceptibilities.

Intersectionality and Sexist Hateful Words and Actions

One social process through which Feminist approaches have tried to explain the persistence and reinforcement of inequalities in power relations between males and females remains sexism (Giddens, 2013). Sexist hateful words and actions refer to any form of verbal, physical, symbolic, belief, gesture, humor and act that expresses contempt, inflammatory passion and justify hatred against another based on sex aimed at denigrating the other sex. Sexist speech is a form of social inequality linked to the unequal power relations that have entrenched stereotypes, prejudices and violence against women in gender relations. Sexist hateful words and actions constitute false perceptions ingrained in oral and written discourse that reinforce male dominance as well as maintain gender inequality. The systemic targeting of women is related to the construction of sexist hateful words as normal, acceptable and necessary for their subjugation as objects of male gratification. Intersectionality provides a framework for the analysis of the multiple dimensions of inequality that increase the vulnerability of women to sexist hateful words and actions by implication violence and exclusion.

A consideration of the intersectional contours of gender with other social categories or inequalities is imperative. This provides the link to the gendered nature of women's economic, political, social and sexual interlocking identities that affect their rights and perception in society. Implicitly, intersectionality suggests that sexist hateful words and actions against women are shaped by various inter-related and intersecting systems of inequality like age, patriarchy, ability, class, sexuality and others that shape its construction. The author agrees partially with Donna (2007) that patriarchy renders sexist speech invisible but dismisses the view that third-wave feminism particularly intersectionality contributed to this invisibility as frivolous and unfounded. Intersectionality highlighted the dynamics of systemic injustice and multiple forms of domination ignored by first and second-wave feminism (McCall, 2005; Thompson, 2002). Sexist hateful words and actions are closely connected to the cultural and institutional factors that reinforce male domination and female subjugation.

Crenshaw, (1991) highlights that intersectional inequalities are often ignored because laws and policies lack the ability therefore, address only one form of oppression.

Paradox of Women Exclusion in Development

Issues of women development have been treated as a separate category from the general development perspective. Plausibly, men and women contribute, benefit and are touched differently by development as illustrated by the Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD). These models attempted to explain the differential effect and benefit from development by men and women. Women constitute about half of the Nigerian population yet mainstreaming women in the development process had been difficult while women's issues apply to minorities and other vulnerable groups. The role of women in ensuring the sustainable development of any society cannot be over-emphasized. In this wise, the United Nations view the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment as an over-arching issue integral to ensuring the sustainable development goals. The targets for the attainment of this goal are expressed in nine different plans.

Traditionally, women's role in development had been limited to the private sphere but women are breaking some of these barriers. Changes in both the public and private spaces over the years have created opportunities for women's development. Education is one such imperative for development that provided the leverage for women. Women are scaling through such impediments to self-actualization like lack of education. Nigeria women have made appreciable gains in education in relation to girls' enrolment in school especially in the South west, South east, South-south and North central geopolitical zones of the country. The gender gap in education has drastically reduced particularly within the four mentioned geopolitical zones (Nigeria Education Data Survey, 2015). They have entered disciplines that were formerly exclusively male dominated. Contrastingly, these educational outcomes have not produced the expected results by ensuring that their potentials are fully utilized and fairly rewarded. There is a growing invisibility of women in national development affairs (Okodudu in Wika and Ifeanacho, 1998). The facile manner in which women's issues are viewed and treated reflect the deep-rooted linguistic cultures of the diverse ethnic nationalities. Discrimination against women inhibit social development and precludes women from participating, contributing and benefitting from development.

Poverty remains very high among women and a potent tool of exclusion that instigates cleavages in national development. Nigeria ranked 118 out of 192 in the Human Development Index 2017, in terms of achieving gender parity and 122 out of 144 on the Global Gender Gap Report, 2017. Women suffer marginalization and deprivation of means of livelihood as such poverty is feminized. Undoubtedly, women play salient but enormous role in the general wellbeing of the family. Much of women's work which fall under the category of domestic care are unpaid for. They are economically deprived and socially dehumanized in a predominantly patriarchal Nigerian society. Found mostly in the informal sector of the economy especially the agricultural sector, lack of access to land or capital remains a recurring impediment to income-generation and opportunities for improved conditions of living. Certain cultural practices of inheritance customarily prohibit the transfer of wealth through inheritance to the women except on behalf of their sons. In most of these cultures, women inherit only their mother's cooking utensils and dresses. Ownership of land is solely invested in the male-folk.

Politically, women inclusion in the social structures and processes of governance portrays a blighted condition. All forms of discrimination against women reflect an institutionally entrenched form of sexism (Nwauzor, 2016) reinforced by the hegemonic structure of male domination. There is an interplay between cultural norms, values, beliefs and practices and women's invisibility in governance. Women who defy this prescribed codes of conduct through political participation are stereotypically conceptualized and described with sexual innuendos. An analysis of women political participation in the nascent democracy shows that few women have been involved in the political structures and decision making processes and suppose marginal progress in political inclusion.

Table 1: Participation in April 2011 and 2015 Elections by Gender

Office contested	2011			2015		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
President	19 (1)	1 (0)	20	13 (1)	1 (0)	14
Vice-President	17 (1)	3 (0)	20	10 (1)	4 (0)	14
Governor	340 (36)	13 (0)	353	293 (29)	1 (0)	380
Deputy Governor	289 (35)	58 (2)	347	317 (25)	63 (4)	380
Senate	801 (101)	92 (8)	893	625 (101)	122 (8)	747
House of Reps	2188 (335)	220 (25)	2408	1507 (346)	267 (15)	1774

Number elected in brackets. Source: Salihu (2011) updated by Nwauzor (2016)

The legitimacy of beliefs, stereotypes and cultural prejudices that discriminate against women have been sustained and reinforced by men’s attitudes, ego, pressures and insecurities (equal power relations). Female subjugation is a status symbol and reflection of the male-female power dynamics that play out in stereotypical representations of women. Women affairs are left in the hands of the first ladies at both the state and federal levels with the establishment of a ministry of women affairs. Culturally entrenched prejudices ingrained in discourse mutually reinforce institutionalized exclusion of women in private and public spaces.

Nigeria is a signatory to so many international treaties, charters and conventions on the rights of women especially, the Article 18 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right. Like other international agreements entered into by Nigeria, the non-domestication of the protocol has impeded its implementation in the country. Looking closely into the Nigeria constitution, it contains anti-discriminatory legislations but acknowledges child marriage. The perceived gender gaps in the constitution such as the absence of an affirmative action sustain the obnoxious and harmful cultural practices which institutionalized discrimination and exclusion. Section 42 of the Nigerian constitution as interpreted by the apex court explicitly guarantees women equality in inheritance and access to property ownership. Invariably, the rejection of the Gender Equality Bill by the Senate or lack of provision of any protective laws that conscientiously seek to address sexist hateful words and actions against women validate their permissibility. More so, the invisibility of sexist epithets has been intensified by the culture of silence that forbids women to discuss private or family issues in public.

Conclusion

This article has sought to examine the ways in which sexist hateful words and actions have been framed and conceptualized in academic and policy discourse. Scholarship on sexist speech has evolved from feminist and critical discourse as a form of hate speech that targets women and girls. It has assessed how sexist speech is produced, institutionalized and tolerated by the cultural and institutional factors that undermine women inclusion and gender equality. The paper acknowledges the pervasiveness, visibilization and invisibilization of sexist epithets in everyday interaction. The negative construction of women in favor of the men strengthen male domination and structural inequalities. The article shows the ambivalence in scholarly articulations on the constituent of hate speech and the shift towards sexist speech problematization. It challenges the use of hateful sexually suggestive words as responsible for the vulnerabilities of women and girls. Also, the notion of sexist speech as normal and an integral part of everyday language that is rooted in the male-stream culture of domination by violence.

Despite considerable attention at addressing hate speech the federal government has abdicated its responsibility of providing legal and constitutional frameworks that particularly address all sexist colorations. Contrary to existing corpus of critiques of sexist speech the work frames the invisibility of legal and constitutional frameworks that particularly address sexist hateful words and actions as validating the permissibility of sexist speech therefore, the paradox of women exclusion in Nigeria. Sexist hateful words and actions are cyclically perpetuated, permissible and invisible due to the hegemonic nature of patriarchy and female subjugation in Nigerian cultures. Furthermore, by focusing on the systemic nature of women subordination and the impact of these complex deep rooted social processes and historical continuities on social constructions of women the study frames how sexist ideologies have remained unchallenged. The discussion of the inter-related and intersecting realities of age, sexuality, ability and others that create multiple dimensions of oppression reveals the cause of overlooking these multiple oppressions to be the lack of policies to address them.

Paradoxically, sexist speech provides the frame for the exclusion of women socially, politically, economically and otherwise. These imperatives of development are skewed to favor men. Sexist hateful words and actions draw insight into the invisibility of legal and constitutional frameworks that particularly address sexist ideologies as validating the permissibility of sexist speech therefore, the paradox of women exclusion in Nigeria. A similar campaign and public awareness to the one against hate speech in the country is necessary to change the stereotypical representation of women ingrained in every-day language. If calls to regulate hate speech are viewed as opposition to government policies, then regulation of sexist speech may equally be conceptualized as limiting men's rights and challenging their power. Men build, protect and respond to ego and pressures of subjectivity by denigrating women. Finally, the need to recognize the debilitating effect of sexist hateful words and actions to women's contribution to national development must be emphasized. It is hoped that this discourse will be taken further towards the elucidation of the social norms that drive sexist speech and the criminalization of sexist speech and not just at the realm of scholarship. Every woman or girl is potentially at risk of sexist speech particularly and violence in general.

References

- Adibe, J. (2012). Ethnicity, hate speech and nation-building, retrieved from <http://www.elombah.com/index.php/article/jideofor-adibe/12345/ethnicity-hate-speech-and-nation-building>, on 6/06/2015
- Adichie, C. N. (2017). Dear Ijeawele or Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions.
- Adichie, C. N. (2014). We should all be Feminists. Nigeria: Fourth Estate.
- Akubor, E.O. (2015). **Campaigns and Electioneering: Reflecting on the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria** Paper presented at the Two-Day National Conference on "The 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: The Real Issues"; Organized by the Electoral Institute, Abuja. Venue : Electoral Institute Complex, INEC Annex, Opposite Diplomatic Zone, Central Business District, Abuja. 26th – 29th July, 2015 <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Conference-Paper-by-Emmanuel-Osewe-Akubor.pdf>
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing Policy: What the problem represented to be?* French Forest: Pearson Education.
- BBC News (2017). Egyptian lawyer jailed for saying women in ripped jeans should be raped. <https://www.bbc.com/news>... Accessed 22/5/18.
- BBC News (2016). Nigeria's president Buhari: My wife belongs in kitchen <https://www.bbc.com/news>... Accessed 22/8/17.
- #BeingfemaleinNigeria – hashtag on Twitter @ <https://twitter.com/shashtagsbeingfemale>
- Bemiller, M.L. and Schneider, R.Z. (2010). It's not just a joke In *Journal of Sociological Spectrum*, Midsouth Sociological Association Volume 30(4), pages 459 – 479.
- Benesch, S. (2012). Words and Weapons in *World Policy Journal*. Accessed September 22, 2017.
- Benton-Greig P, Gamage, D. and Garvey, N. (2018). Doing and denying sexism: Online responses to a New Zealand Feminist Campaign against sexist advertising. *Journal of Feminist Media Studies*. Volume 18 (3) pg349 – 365.
- Cameron, D. and Kulick, D.(2003). *Language and sexuality*. Cambridge university press.
- Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy (2014-2017). www.coe.int
- Counts, D.A. (1985). Tamparonga: The big women of Kaliai In J.K. Brown, Virginia Kerns and contributors. *In Her prime: A new view of middle-aged women*, South Hadley MA: Bergin and Garvey publishers, Inc, pp49 – 64.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*. 1991; 43(6):1241–1300
- Dobash, E.R. and Dobash, R. P. (1998). *Rethinking violence against women*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Donna, L.L. (2007). A thorn by any other name: Sexist discourse as hate speech In *Discourse and Society*. <http://das.sagepub.com/content/18/6/719> accessed on 22/9/17. DOI: 10.1177/0957926507082193
- Egwu, S. (2003). *Electoral Violence and the Democratisation Project: The Nigerian Experience*
- Gairdner, W.D. (1994). *Constitutional crack-up: Canada and the coming show down with Quebec*. Toronto: Stoddart.
- Gairdner, W.D. (1990). *The trouble with Canada: A citizen*. Toronto: Stoddart.

- Giddens, A. And Sutton, P.W. (2013). *Sociology (Seventh Edition)*. India:Wiley and sons.
- Glick, P. and Fiske, S.T. (1996). The ambivalent sexism inventory: Different hostile and benevolent sexism In *Journal of personality and Social Psychology* Volume 70(3).
- Global Gender Report (2017). <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the> ... Accessed 16/6/18.
- Haiman, F.S.(1993). *Speech acts*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University press.
- Herz, M. and Molnar, P. (eds) (2012). *The Content and Context of Hate Speech*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ibeh, N. (2015). Nigeria 2015 :Hate speech on the rise – Human Rights Commission; Premium Times, March 26, 2015
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 20.
- Irigaray, L. (1985). *Speculum of the other woman*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Jeffreys, S. (2009). Prostitution, trafficking and feminism: An update on the debate. *Women’s Studies International Forum*. Volume 32(4) pp316 – 320.
- Jega, A. and Ibeanu, O. (2007). Elections and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria, Nigeria Political Science Association, Nigeria
- Kramarae, C. And Splender, D. (Ed). (2004). *International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women’s issues and knowledge*. Routledge.
- Kukah, H. (2015). Hate Speech Social Media and The 2015 Election; Hate Speech; Social Media and the 2015 Election ... pointblanknews.com/pbn/.../hate-speech-social-media-2015-election/ Retrieved 24/9/17
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press.
- Mackinnon, C.A. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge: Harvard University press.
- Massaro, T. M. (1991). Equality and Freedom of Expression: The Hate Speech Dilemma <http://sholarship.law.wm.edu/wmir> retrieved 22/09/17
- Matlin, M.W. (1996). *The psychology of women (3rd edition)*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality in Signs: *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Chicago Journals, Volume 30 (3): 1771–1800. JSTOR 10.1086/426800. Doi: 10.1086/426800 Accessed 30/3/19.
- Miller, L. (2007). Women in the military in Down to Earth Sociology. *Introductory Readings (14th end)*, James Henslin ed. New York: The Free Press.
- Neisser, E. (1994). Hate Speech in the New South Africa: Constitutional Consideration for a Land Recovering from Decades of Rational Repression and Violence. *South African Journal of Human Rights* 10. Pp.333-356.
- Newman, D. and Grauerholz, M. (2002). *Sociology of Families*. Pine Forge Press.
- Nielsen, L. B. (2004). *License to harass: Law, Hierarchy and Offensive Public Speech*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Nigerian Education Data Survey(2015). <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/files> retrieved 16/6/18.
- Nwauzor, A. A. (2016). Women Participation in Nigerian Politics from 1999 to 2015. *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences* Volume 9 (1), pp264 – 274.
- Olowojolu, O. (2016). Role of Media in 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*. Vol. VII, No.7, 2016, pp.1-12. 33.
- Phillipson, G. P and Heinze, E. (2016). *Debating hate speech*. United Kingdom, Oxford: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sherman, H.J. & Wood, J.L. (ad) Hamilton, P. (1982). *Sociology: traditional and radical perspectives*. London: Harper & Row.
- Stockard, J. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Sex roles, sex inequality and sex role development*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice Hall.
- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)*.
- Thompson, B. (2002). Multiracial feminism: recasting the chronology of Second Wave Feminism. *Feminist Studies*, Volume 28 (2): 337. JSTOR 3178747. Doi: 10.2307/3178747. Accessed 30/3/19.
- Tsisis, A. (2002). *Destructive messages: How hate speech paves the way for harmful social movements*. New York: New York University press.
- U.S. Bill of Rights (1791). <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/bill-of-ri...> Retrieved 18/6/18.
- Whillock, R.K. and Slayden, D.(1995). *Hate speech*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Wika, J. N. and Ifeancha, M. I. (1998). *Women in Development: The Evidence from Nigeria*. Akwa Ibom Belpot

- Wolfson, N. (1997). *Hate Speech, Sex Speech, Free Speech*. Praeger: West point, Connecticut.
- Xiaolan, L. (2006). Sexism in Language. In *Journal of Language and Linguistics* Volume 5 (1) pp 1-8.
- Zimmer-Tamakoshi, L. (1997). "Papua New Guinean Women in Town: Housewives, Homemakers and household managers". In L. Zimmer-Tamakoshi (Ed). *Modern PNG Society*, Bathurst, Australia: Crawford House Press.
- Zimmer-Tamakoshi, L. (1996a). "empowered women" In W. Donner and J. Flanagan (Eds). *Social organisation and cultural aesthetics: Essays in honour of William H. Davenport*, University of Pennsylvania Press. pp 84 – 101.