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Young Women Aspirants and Gendered Ageism in Nigeria's Political Parties

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In most countries, women and young people are seldom nominated as party candidates and consequently are grossly underrepresented in political offices (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2023). This is despite several gender and age-related institutional reforms like gender and youth quotas, and reduction in candidacy and voting ages, among others. The gatekeeping role of political parties in this regard is particularly acute, especially in countries like Nigeria, where there is no legal provision for independent candidacy. As a result, despite nearly half of the country's population being women and more than 70 percent younger than 35 years, women and young people continue to be grossly underrepresented in Nigerian politics (Nkereuwem 2023; YIAGA Africa 2023), with young women appearing to be the most affected (Uzor 2019). Yet, it is still not clear how gender and age intersect in candidate selection practices, and what the consequences are for the political recruitment of different age categories of women (particularly young women).

This is because, for the most part, the fields of gender and youth politics have talked past rather than to each other, thus reflecting an underappreciation for the intersection of gender and ageism in the scholarship. Separately, obstacles to women's selection and election across the various stages of political recruitment are well documented (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Madsen 2020; see also Davidson-Schmich, this volume). Youth scholars also highlight age-related discriminatory practices in the candidate selection process (Stockemer and Sundström 2022), ranging from high minimum candidacy age requirements that limit when they can legally

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contest for political offices even after they are granted voting rights (Krook and Nugent 2018), to the culture of ageism in politics that considers them as inexperienced and incapable of political leadership (Oyebode 2014). Yet, the pathway of young women, as a special category of marginalized groups facing both gendered and age-related discriminatory practices in parties, is scantily studied. Only a few studies have attempted to examine the gendered effect of being young candidates (Segaard and Saglie 2021; Belschner 2023); others have rather concentrated on young women's political interests (Briggs 2008; Grasso and Smith 2022), digital activism (Schuster 2013; Lixian 2020), or participation in party youth wings (Ammassari et al. 2023). In other instances where the political experience of young women has been examined, it has been in the context of the legislature (Erikson and Josefsson 2021).

This chapter, therefore, addresses this gap by focusing on the candidate selection experience of young women in parties, as it differs and/or resembles those faced by older women and young men. Specifically, we assess how informal norms and practices interact with formal rules and procedures at the party level to (re)produce generational and gendered recruitment challenges. This way, we further knowledge on whether and, if so, how women of younger age groups are subjected to greater levels of discrimination in parties.

The chapter continues in three main sections. The first section, "Political Recruitment of Women and Young People," highlights how feminist institutionalism (FI) may be expanded to theorize intersectional influences of gender and age in party politics. The second section, "Nigerian Party Context and Methods," contextualizes Nigeria as a good country case to examine such an intersection and outlines the methods used in the study. In the third section, "Young Women's Political Candidacies in Nigeria," we discuss the gendered and age-discriminatory character of the formal and informal rules as well as practices of political recruitment and their effects on young women within Nigeria's political parties, thus highlighting the implications of these dynamics for gender and party politics. Finally, we draw relevant conclusions.

Political Recruitment of Women and Young People

In theorizing the multiple structures of political inequalities that women and young people face, scholars of party politics have relied on the supply

and demand framework (Norris and Lovenduski 1995), arguing that the outcome of a particular party's selection process is best understood in terms of the interaction between factors affecting the supply of aspirants for political office and the demands of selectors (see also Davidson-Schmich, this volume; Runderkamp and Kenny, this volume).

On the supply side, women and young people often have to strategically match their political drive, ambition, and interest with the constraints of resources such as time, money, and experience before they can decide to come forward (Norris and Lovenduski 1995). On one hand, women receive less encouragement to run for political offices due to cultural biases about gender roles (Fox and Lawless 2004) and to societal stereotypes that politics is not a woman's affair (Osori 2017). On the other hand, young people are often at a life stage where they are still building their professional careers, thus less likely to have acquired the financial resources or the political experience required to execute a political campaign (Ashe 2020), or even the time to dedicate to a campaign (Perron 2018). Young women, in addition to building their professional careers, are also likely to shoulder more of the labor involved in gendered roles like home management and childcare, which further limits their willingness and ability to come forward, in comparison to both young male and older women politicians (Joshi and Och 2021). Yet their inability to come forward is, in turn, interpreted by party leaders to justify their male-dominated recruitment outcomes, claiming that because too few women and young people come forward, they must therefore be less politically ambitious or politically inexperienced (Rehmert 2022; DeSmedt and Vandeleene 2024).

But even when women and young people do come forward, they may face direct and imputed discrimination from party selectors (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; see also Davidson-Schmich, this volume). Given that party selectors cannot know all aspirants on a personal level, they often have to consider "background characteristics as a proxy measure of abilities and character" (Norris and Lovenduski 1995, 14), with such shortcuts often leading to direct discrimination, where aspirants are judged based on the characteristics associated with their group, or indirect discrimination, where they are passed over by selectors based on unfounded fear that the party may lose votes if such aspirants are nominated. Some scholars have argued that these evaluations may also be connected to the scarcity of women in party high-status positions (Cheng and Tavits 2011). It is possible to make a similar argument for young people within Nigerian parties, as

they rarely reach leadership party positions, despite constituting the largest member group (see Afrobarometer 2020). Aside from the positions of youth leader, which until recently were mostly occupied by older men (see Sahara Reporters 2012; Ibe 2014), Nigerian parties do not generally have young people holding high-status positions like party chairperson or secretary. This points to how gendered and age-biased demand and supply side factors can be, and to the need to examine them within their institutional contexts.

To achieve this, gender and party scholars rely increasingly on FI, a variant of new institutionalism that explores the interaction between gender and political institutions (Krook 2010; Bjarnegård and Kenny 2016). As Bjarnegård and Kenny (this volume) highlight, parties need to be examined beyond their formal rules, as informal norms and institutions both moderate their application or altogether sideline them to produce gendered outcomes (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2019). Women have been shown to lack access, support, and endorsements, as homosocial networks of men prefer to endorse only fellow men in their networks (Bjarnegård 2013; see also Josefsson, this volume). This is particularly acute in African party contexts where formal institutions are weak, giving room for such homosocial networks, in the form of 'godfathers' who anoint 'godsons' (Adeoye 2009, 269), and even go as far as substituting the names of female candidates who won party primaries (Omotola 2012). We contend that, if this argument is stretched further, a focus on informal party networks will also highlight a potential tendency for ageism, especially within the African party context, where old age is associated with sagacity and older people are thus accorded venerated places of authority as compensation for their wisdom (Oyebode, 2014).

By emphasizing the role of power in party institutional structures, party politics is rightly regarded as a site of unequal power relations. Yet these unequal power relations are not only manifested along gender lines. Given that some marginalized groups belong to more than one outgroup, from an intersectionality perspective, scholars highlight the need to account for more than one unequal power relation at a time—as age, race, and ethnic identities of women have been found to influence their institutional structures of opportunity (Celis et al. 2014; Stockemer and Sundström 2019; Belschner 2023). For instance, in the Netherlands and Belgium, some parties preferred minority women to minority men as part of what Celis et al. (2014, 47) call the "complementarity bonus"—being able to count them as both women and

representatives of a minority ethnic group. A similar advantage is recorded by Stockemer and Sundström (2019), whose analysis of the persistent rise in women's representation in the European Parliament since 1979 showed that the youngest age group of women representatives accounted for most of the increases.

Yet, Grahn (this volume) cautions that the so-called complementarity advantage may be less of an advantage, as it is still part of the strategies of elite men to perpetuate their privileges. This explains, in part, why even when parties grant some form of gender or age-related concessions, they may not translate into improvements in the representation of women and young people. This may especially be the case in institutional contexts where the increased representation of a marginalized group implies a loss of political power for the dominant men, and where the desire to maintain the status quo may see these dominant men resorting to informal rules to circumvent formal reforms. In Nigeria, clientelist practices that pronounce the influence of godfathers, prebendal, party, and communal elites are often pointed as the main reason women and youths find it challenging to penetrate the party selection systems (Adeoye 2009; Uzor 2019).

This is further complicated by the fact that ageism is more context-dependent than gender, as it is both relative and temporal (Erikson and Josefsson 2021, 84). It is relative in that being 30 years old might have a different meaning in an urban setting of a high-income country where life expectancy might be over 70 years, compared to a rural setting in a low-income country where life expectancy would be far lower. And it is temporal in the sense that it changes with time, such that discrimination suffered at a youthful age may be reversed at older ages (Bidadanure 2015). As such, age discrimination may produce both positive and negative outcomes for a gendered category of people depending on the type of organization under examination and the age group being investigated. This is evidenced by mixed empirical results, even in contexts where gender and age are perceived as less politically salient than in Nigeria. For instance, contrary to Stockemer and Sundström (2019), Erikson and Josefsson (2021) found that younger ages reinforced negative gendered patterns for women in the Swedish parliament, and Belschner (2023) found that while being young provides a net electoral advantage for young men in Irish elections, young women, though advantaged by their age (compared to middle-aged women), were disadvantaged by their gender (compared to young men).

Nigerian Party Context and Methods

Given that Nigeria is a country where clientelist power relations are salient at the party level, our study focuses on the All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) to tease out how ageism and gendered discrimination are manifested in candidate selection. These are the two major parties accounting for over half of the candidates in the candidacy pool and more than 90 percent of electoral victories, since the return to democratic practice in 1999. Both parties have alternated in government and opposition, with the PDP ruling the national government between 1999 and 2015, while the APC has kept dominance since then until now. This electoral dominance makes them the first point of call for all prospective aspirants in the country, whether for national or subnational elective offices (Osori 2017, 13). Furthermore, unlike other countries with two-party majorities, where either party has a divergent ideological orientation, the APC and PDP exhibit ideological convergence (Husaini 2019). Thus, though neither of them is ideologically opposed to nominating women or young candidates, still they do not need to nominate women and young candidates to differentiate themselves from other political parties, potentially making them less accessible to women and young people.

Importantly, both parties announced gender- and age-related concessions after the passage of the age-reduction bill in 2018 and in the build-up to the general elections of 2019 and 2023, suggesting their willingness to support women and young aspirants. Yet despite empirical evidence that reducing candidacy ages has a mobilizing effect on youth representation (Krook and Nugent 2018), many expressed doubts about it having any effect on youth and women inclusion in Nigeria, mainly because of the hurdle of candidate selection at the party levels (Ette and Akpan-Obong 2023). For example, the APC made the nomination form free for women, while youth were given a 50 percent discount (though for 2023 elections only) across elective positions (Akinwale 2022; Are 2022). Similarly, the PDP allowed female aspirants to pay for the expression of interest form only (Oyero 2022), while a 50 percent discount on nomination forms was given to young aspirants (Ndujihe 2022). While these concessions represented significant steps toward motivating women and young people to come forward, with young women expected to benefit significantly given that they fall under both age and gender categories targeted by the concessions, the proportion

of young women candidates and elected representatives that emerged from both elections was disappointing, when compared to both young male and older women politicians (Àbàtì 2024). This called into question the extent to which formal concessions improved the chances of young women in both parties, and highlighted the need to examine the experiences of young women in the interplay of party formal rules and informal norms and practices.

Methodologically, we draw primarily on elite interviews and publicly available interviews (including newsletters) of young women and men aspirants of both parties for national and subnational legislative offices during the 2019 and 2023 general elections. We also interviewed party leaders across national and subnational levels, focusing on the Kwara and Oyo state chapters of APC and PDP. Kwara, an APC-led state at the executive and legislative subnational levels, and Oyo, a PDP-led state at the executive and legislative subnational level, make it possible to capture unique differences and similarities that may arise from an opposition party-led state at the subnational level and vice versa for the government party-led state. Interviews focused on individual experiences about the nature of party selection practices, the roles of gatekeepers, money, and godfathers, as well as what leverage aspirants used to navigate the selection process. Speaking with party leaders, we were interested in their statutory and non-statutory roles in selecting party candidates and how they decide which candidate selection method is to be used. While we triangulated the opinions gleaned from all interviews with relevant provisions of individual party constitutions, we also triangulated some of the opinions expressed by young aspirants about the influence of godfathers, delegates, and money in candidate selection processes with those of party leaders.

Young Women's Political Candidacies in Nigeria

To investigate the interplay of formal and informal rules, norms, and practices of parties, we focus on the gender–age biases in the candidacy requirements and selection practices of the two major parties—the APC and PDP. This way, we highlight the entry challenges that young female aspirants encounter both in their attempt to come forward and the effect of the various selection methods on their candidacy prospects.

Candidacy Requirements

The APC and PDP have a fairly similar set of formal rules on candidacy requirements, as contained in their party constitutions. Beyond the complementary provisions of citizenship, age, and educational qualification, aspirants in both parties must show financial good standing (All Progressive Congress 2014; People's Democratic Party 2014). While "financial good standing" literally means being up to date in payment of membership dues, it means far more than that in practice: it includes sponsoring party activities at the minimum. Simi, a young female aspirant at the 2023 Ekiti House of Assembly (HoA) election, recounts in her newsletter how, in addition to paying her dues, she "had to cover the costs for several [party] activities in my ward" (Olusola 2022a). All young aspirants interviewed for this research echoed this practice. Confirming the widespread nature of the practice, a party leader claimed that the financial donations count toward party recognition, especially for aspiring members: "Anytime the party has a programme, you attend, or you send a representative, and donate to the party because you must be a financial member of the party. This will make people recognise you and give you support."[1] Notice how recognition of financial membership is equated not just to the payment of party dues but more importantly to donating to party causes. It is on such a basis that party support and endorsement are given.

Elsewhere in her newsletter, Simi mentions where such recognitions come in handy:

> When declaring your intention to run for an elective position at the ward, you must be nominated by 20 persons from at least two-thirds of the Wards within the constituency; these persons must be registered party members and registered voters. Do you see why it is important for me to go on all those visits and donate towards party activities? Make dem no unlook my form wen time reach. [This can be loosely interpreted as, "So, they do not disappoint me when the time for nomination comes."]
>
> (Olusola 2022a)

The visits alluded to in this quote are another important informal ritual that aspirants are expected to perform even before buying nomination forms. Nothing in the constitutions of both parties mandates such visits. However, once aspirants decide to run for office, they must pay informal visits to key

stakeholders within their party. The point of these visits is to get the endorsement of such stakeholders, at least in principle, such that when it comes up in their ward meeting that they are declaring their interest in contesting for an elective position, they can have some members who would back their aspirations. While these visits are not limited to young female aspirants, Simi's record of one such visit suggests how intimidating it can be for young female aspirants:

> I went with an "uncle" to meet this elderly party man. He asked me about my household, and I told him. He asked for my family name, etc., but he did not know my dad or grandparents. He then asked me where my husband is from, and when I said Òndó [another state in the Southwest], that even worsened matters. He straight up told me he could not introduce me to anyone or support me because how could I expect to come from Abuja, be married to an Ondo person, and not have my father resident here [Ekiti], yet wanting to hijack things? The person who took me to him kept trying to tell him about how I had been back in the town for a while; he did not even want to listen. However, he said he would make his findings and get back to me. When I left him, I heard he had asked my ward chairperson to meet with him on my matter … This is Nigeria, where it is not your value that matters but who your father is, where the fact that my husband is from another state is a minus for me.
>
> (Olusola 2022b)

This anecdote presents multiple paradoxes. First, most of these party elites are men and difficult to reach/convince. Scheduling appointments to visit them requires having access to either their subordinates or knowing the right people to follow you, as did Simi, with the service of "an uncle." Yet many young female aspirants lack such access when compared to their young male counterparts, thereby missing out on the local politicking that goes into the candidate selection process. Several young women aspirants ended up consulting with the "wrong" people, resulting in them losing out before the candidacy race ever began, as the people they consulted with were not as influential as they had thought: "the real political stakeholders were not willing to meet with me, the ones who agreed to meet did not wield as much influence as they had pretended to have. So, I would say I consulted the wrong people and lost out of the nomination"[2] (cf. Bjarnegård and Kenny 2016, 384). Even when they agree to meet, due to the persuasive influence

of an intermediary, they are also difficult to convince, as they are quick to dismiss young female aspirants as uncompetitive for unfounded reasons, as was the case with Simi.

Second, no consultation visit happens without aspirants giving away money and other material items—first to the subordinates, who introduce them to the party elites and schedule the appointment for the visit, and more importantly to the main party stakeholder during the visit. Given that such monies are unaccounted for, there is no threshold of how much money is appropriate. Political endorsement eventually becomes a matter of the highest bidder; with young women aspirants having limited access to informal networks that can provide them with such resources and political influence, they are often outwitted in the process. This is relatable to the instrumental resource component of homosocial capital where men are more likely to access the resources valuable to politics than women, simply because men are considered to be more preserving of the clientelist system (cf. Bjarnegård 2013, 171).

Aside from money, young female aspirants are also quizzed during these consultation visits on issues of ancestral roots and marital status—something their young male counterparts do not experience. While questions like "Who is your father?" could be directed at anyone without eliciting any undertone, being asked by a political stakeholder whom you visit to solicit political endorsement carries with it the sound of "Who do you think you are?" or "What is your claim to any authoritative privileges in our community?" For Simi, it did not matter that she was unequivocally a Yoruba lady seeking to represent a constituency in her father's state of origin; with such a question, her ancestral roots are doubted. This is because it is easy to doubt the ancestral lineage of female descendants especially because of marriage customs that require women to adopt their husband's family name, whereas a male descendant who continues in his father's family name makes it easy to trace the ancestral lineage of men in general.

Moreover, urbanization has created scenarios where most young millennials are born and raised in urban cities far away from their ancestral homes with little or no familiarization with the societal and political structures of their ancestral homes. Here lies the difference between young female and older female aspirants. Older female aspirants were not only born but to a large extent raised within their ancestral homes before the massive urbanization of the 1980s and 1990s, which saw families relocate to urban centers, like Lagos and Abuja. As such, older female aspirants can, for the most part,

trace their familiar lineage and convincingly present their claims. While this is not a justifiable reason to exclude young female aspirants, it points to how gendered ageism can be manifested in informal practices of parties. Suppose Simi was to be unmarried or married to a non-Yoruba man, it might even have had other negative implications for her candidacy.

So, while neither party's constitutions outrightly outlaw young women from contesting on their platforms, the informal norms that guide the application of the formal candidate requirements make it doubly challenging for young female aspirants that come forward, when compared to the experience of their young male and older female counterparts. These findings mirror similar findings from Thai and Scottish parties, where Bjarnegård and Kenny (2016) found gendered local practices that distinguished outsiders from insiders, with women often viewed as unpredictable and as such not trusted to maintain patronage relations. Similarly, at the core of casting doubt on the ancestral route of young women is the fear and lack of trust in their ability to maintain patronage relations, resulting in an uneven playing field for young women.

Selection Practices

Both constitutions of the APC and PDP provide for three candidate selection methods—direct, indirect/delegate, and consensus primary—as specified in the country's electoral laws, and grant liberty to the party leadership to decide what methods to use at any level (All Progressive Congress 2014; People's Democratic Party 2014). The direct primary involves all card-carrying members of the party in voting decisions, the indirect/delegate primary requires only elected delegates to vote, and the consensus arrangement is such that only a few party elites decide who among the political aspirants would be the party candidate in the election. Placing the methods on a continuum of inclusiveness in participation, direct and consensus primaries would be considered the two extremes—as the most inclusive and most exclusive methods, respectively—while the indirect primary would be the middle of the spectrum.

Though indirect primary is the most preferred method among party leaders of both parties—out of 42 aspirants interviewed in this study, 13 emerged through a direct primary, 17 through an indirect primary, and 12

through consensus—it is doubtful that the relative inclusive nature of members' participation is the reason why party leaders prefer it. Instead, their preference for indirect stems mostly from its less expensive nature of organization for parties when compared to direct primary where all party members form the voting population. However, for young aspirants, direct primary is the most preferred for its perceived "cost-effectiveness" and propensity for a "reliable forecast" of primary voting outcome. Young female aspirants—who, on average, are not as financially buoyant nor as influential within the parties as their older counterparts—place more emphasis on the financial implications and the reliability of the selection method:

> Direct has advantages over indirect in that it could be cheaper as opposed to having to buy delegates because if you are running in an indirect primary, there is no amount of English you will speak. The Nigerian party system requires money. You must buy them, and there is still no guarantee that you give this money that you would get the [party] ticket. Though the direct would still cost you money to an extent, it would cost less than if you go to delegate one by one and do the job of convincing them. Another advantage of direct primaries is that it is easier to have a reliable forecast, you know, the wards where people will stand for you, as opposed to having delegates that could be compromised even one minute to cast their votes.[3]

Though with direct primaries, party aspirants engage in intensive campaigns (even before the main election) to convincingly get the support of ordinary members, young female aspirants consider it worthwhile for its predictability, knowing that such campaigns would serve them, eventually, should they emerge as party candidates. One of the young female aspirants, while narrating her campaign experience using direct primaries, said that "by the time I got to the main election, it was more like a walkover, I had already done the groundwork, I had covered areas that our opponents could not cover, during preparation for primaries."[4] This is not to say that direct primaries are devoid of political manipulations. For example, in both parties, opinion molders like the state governor, party leaders, and party financiers are believed to also shape the voting patterns of the party's ordinary members in direct primaries (Ifowodo 2021). Invariably, it also gives an advantage to the older money-bag aspirants, primary incumbents, or godfather-backed challengers, who are willing to give whatever is needed to buy the votes of

the ordinary members. Nevertheless, as echoed by our interviewees, direct primaries still leave some room for young female aspirants to try their luck.

When indirect primary is the preferred method of candidate selection, the selection practice evolves like a multi-stage contest in both parties—starting with the election of party delegates at congresses, who then constitute the selectorate for later party primaries where party candidates are nominated. Husaini (2019) refers to such congresses as part of the "constituency building phase" due to how it offers opportunities for the party to reward its loyal party activists at various levels, as some of them get elected as party delegates. However, beyond getting rewarded with delegate positions, something else transpires during this phase. Prospective aspirants are informally expected to sponsor loyal party members into positions of party delegates, as a way to position themselves for the later party primary exercise: "Of course, you know how party delegates are selected in Nigeria; you have to sponsor your candidate [contestants for party delegate positions] to become a delegate."[5] Since party delegates constitute the selectorate for candidate selection in indirect primaries, aspirants who can influence the emergence of as many delegates are better positioned to get the support of enough delegates for their candidacy nominations.

While women and young people in general find it difficult to influence this process, young female aspirants particularly find it more challenging, given their limited access to the informal party networks. The only young aspirant who claimed to have been able to leverage such an informal arrangement was male: "In 2015, I was part of the party congress, i.e., how some executives and delegates emerged. I had some that I facilitated their emergence. So, in 2019, when the time came to lobby the party delegates since they were the ones to vote at the primary, it was effortless for me."[6] The inability of young female aspirants to influence the emergence of party delegates who are loyal to them, in turn, not only affects their ability to win the support of enough delegates but also their ability to get the endorsement of influential party stakeholders, with the cumulative negative effect on the outcome of the party primaries, not often in their favor. This way, indirect primaries, as the most preferred candidate selection method of both parties presents an unequal playing field for young female aspirants.

Last, when consensus is the preferred method of candidate selection, the decision of party candidacy is left to a few party elites, among whom the state governor is the most influential, as the unofficial leader of the party at that

level. This implies that a young female aspirant will need to be a strong political ally of the governor or other political power brokers for such a person to be nominated, which is rarely the case:

> [W]here it is easy for a young female aspirant to scale through is when they are already in favour with the main power brokers. For instance, if the governor has a special interest in a particular community and says, I am giving you a female candidate, you know it is the governor, it is all the government that will secure and ensure that the candidate scales through. But for a female aspirant to scale through on her own, it is not that easy. I give it to them, and some of them made it through as a result of that I doff my cap to them, they really tried.[7]

In the build-up to the 2023 elections, to reduce this enormous power of the governor on the candidacy process at the subnational level, amendments were made to the electoral act requiring all other party aspirants who had indicated interest in the candidacy race to grant their consent by tendering their withdrawal and offering support for the adopted consensus candidate (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre 2022; Electoral Act 2022, S.84[10]). Yet interviewees for this study opined that, in practice, this conditionality was either altogether ignored or other contenders had to grudgingly endorse the consensus candidates, as failure to endorse the consensus candidate would spell an act of indiscipline. But in instances where the consensus candidate is a woman, other contenders often explicitly declare their displeasure, forcing party leaders to resort to the adoption of an alternative method of candidate selection, as recommended by the Electoral Act (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre 2022; Electoral Act 2022, S.84[9b]). This further evidences the arguments of Bjarnegård (2013) that homosocial networks are distrustful of women aspirants as highlighted by the varied reaction to the emergence of female consensus candidates compared to when it is a male consensus candidate.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown how age- and gender-biased candidate selection practices of Nigeria's major political parties can be for young female candidates who seek party candidacy nominations. We did this by evaluating

the interaction between informal norms and practices and formal rules of the country's two major parties. This way, this study has stretched further the application of FI in two main ways. Though previous research has always maintained that parties are gendered institutions (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg 2019), by introducing age to the evaluation of party selection mechanism, we have shown that parties can equally manifest gendered ageism. In line with this expectation, the two major political parties in Nigeria, despite regularly announcing gendered and age-related party concessions, are gendered and generationally biased toward their young female aspirants. This highlights the need to see young female aspirants as a distinct marginalized group that require extraordinary attention especially when institutional reforms are being designed to address age and gendered discriminatory practices of political parties.

By implication, scholars of gender and youth politics as well as party politics need to speak often with each other as against the hitherto speaking past another that has been the case in these scholarships. This will surely further our understanding of how women of different age categories are subjected to varying forms of discrimination (Erickson and Josefsson 2021). It is not enough to advocate for gender and youth quotas, or other forms of inclusive rules (Verge and Espírito-Santo 2016); it is also important to examine the dynamics of formal rules and informal norms, how gender may intersect with age in practical implementation, and whether such implementation privileges one category of actors over others.

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Notes

1. Phone interview with an APC Party Leader in Kwara State, January 18, 2022.
2. In-person interview with a PDP young female candidate in Kwara state, January 15, 2022.
3. In-person interview with an APC young female candidate in Abuja, May 26, 2021.
4. In-person interview with a PDP young female candidate in Oyo State, December 8, 2021.
5. Phone interview with a PDP party leader in Oyo State, December 6, 2021.
6. In-person interview with a PDP young male candidate in Kwara State, January 20, 2022.
7. Phone interview with an APC young male candidate in Abuja, May 25, 2021.