Gender Equity Policies and Women in Academic Leadership Positions in Nigeria

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Abstract

This thesis argues that gender roles in Nigerian universities result from socially constructed patriarchal rules, norms, and values. It reveals that the Nigerian university is a masculine-oriented institution that influences gender relations, reasserts and reproduces male dominance through the invisible positions women occupy within the university. Despite efforts to address the systemic issue of gender imbalance in academic leadership in Nigerian universities through the establishment of gender centres and the adoption of gender policies, women are still underrepresented in academic leadership positions. This thesis investigates the intricate formal and informal institutional 'causes' of why a few women remain in academic hierarchies through an illustrative study of four purposively selected universities in Nigeria.

This study draws on Feminist Institutionalism to inform its approach and methodology. Specifically, I first integrate the Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Policy Analysis frameworks (FI-FPAF) to analyse the universities' gender policy documents and explore why formal equity policies have failed to gain real traction, especially for women's academic progression. My findings reveal areas of silence, women's exclusion, and how male dominance is perpetuated in 'formal' policy documents. Second, I combine Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA) to analyse interview data from gender stakeholders and women in academic leadership positions to unveil discourses on the 'informal rules of the game'. In doing so, I bring to light the informal institutional norms and practices that subvert formal policy intent and the hidden aspects of women's promotions. Although the content and enactment of institutional gender policies are gendered and reinforce systems of inequality, I demonstrate how women have navigated constricting leadership alleys and attained academic leadership positions through the interplay of formal and informal institutions.

This thesis shows that analysing formal policy documents and stakeholders' perspectives on informal norms and practices is an asset in interrogating the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership and the constraints on institutionalising gender equality. Thus, through my study of the Nigerian case, I generate new insights into the gendered dynamics of institutional resistance and change, thus contributing to the growing body of research on Feminist Institutionalism in theory and practice.

Dedication

Dedicated to my late father, Mr Taiwo Adekunle Agagu, who first taught me the value of education and my mother, Mrs Olubunmi Funke Agagu, for her unwavering support and prayers. Thank you for making my PhD dream a reality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> *Then an academic, a Nigerian woman, told me that feminism was not our culture, that feminism was un-African, and I was only calling myself a feminist because I had been influenced by western books…gender is not an easy conversation to have. It makes people uncomfortable, sometimes even irritable. Both men and women are resistant to talk about gender or are quick to dismiss the problems of gender, because thinking of changing the status quo is always uncomfortable.*
>
> — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nigerian Writer and Author of *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014)[1]

> *The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognising how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations.*
>
> — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nigerian Writer and Author of *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014)[2]

> *Most times, as a woman, you are hardly nominated for positions because they feel you may not perform well. It is more or less like being profiled to determine your capability.*
>
> — Associate Professor and Head of Department, UNIPORT[3]

The quotations above capture a few of the broad reflections of women on gender equity in Nigeria. My own experience, both as a student and an academic staff member, also includes witnessing instances of gender imbalance and discrimination among academic staff within the Nigerian university system. As an undergraduate student, I noticed women's absence as academics (lecturers in my department were all male, and only two women were academic staff in the faculty that houses about five departments). In the light of gender equity campaigns and pressure from international bodies, the trend changed slightly as few women entered the academy. However, these women held junior or mid-level academic positions. Later, as an academic myself, I experienced, first hand, what it was like to be a *token* (the only female and junior academic staff member in the department). This pattern was also noticeable in other academic departments where women were underrepresented in numbers and placed in lower cadres than their male colleagues. The few senior academic women were often nominated into invincible academic leadership positions. It appeared as though women were only recruited to complete the numbers and not for their competence or skills. Together, these experiences prompted an interest in focusing on feminist research for my PhD thesis; problematising the

[1] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/17/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-extract-we-should-all-be-feminists
[2] https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/42278179-we-should-all-be-feminists
[3] Dr N, Associate Professor and Head of Department, female, UNIPORT, August 2018.

idea of women's underrepresentation, and contributing to a paradigm shift towards gender balance in academic leadership and institutional gender change in Nigerian universities.

Moreover, we know from scholarship that gender imbalances have defined academic leadership over time (Acker, 1992a) and are recognised as an international problem (Madsen, 2012). While women continue to enter the academy, universities often remain a male bastion where men's access to power is maintained and legitimised through processes, rules and discourses that continue to privilege specific ways of operating (Acker, 2006b; Blackmore, 2021; Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Lovenduski, 2005b). In most African countries, particularly Nigeria, the situation is not very different, as men are numerically and hierarchically overrepresented in academic leadership positions (Igiebor, 2018; Katundano, 2019; Longe, 2013; Olaogun et al., 2015; Yusuff, 2014). In developed countries, women's situation in the academy has improved, but progress towards equity in developing countries like Nigeria has been slow and uneven (Odhiambo, 2011; Olaogun et al., 2015; Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018).

In Nigeria, women's universal underrepresentation became a paramount concern and an important issue for democracy and justice during the 1980s and 1990s. Campaigns aimed at increasing women's presence in decision-making placed growing pressure on governments to take positive gender actions. Consequently, the government considered mechanisms such as gender equity/equality policies that were prominent solutions to women's underrepresentation worldwide[4]. As part of an attempt to end the structural gender inequality problem, the Nigerian government participated in gender-sensitive policies, initiatives and legislation through the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the National Gender Policy (Aina et al., 2015). A significant leap was the adoption of the National Policy on Women in 2001, which was later changed to the National Gender Policy in 2006 to address gender disparities in all spheres of life and development (Aina, 2013). Since Nigeria's response to the global call for a gender-equal society through the adoption of the 2006 National Gender Policy, there was a need for other institutions within and beyond government to close existing gender gaps (Aina et al., 2015). This development resulted in the creation of the "Ministries of Women's Affairs at the Federal and the State levels, and the establishment of gender desks/units in almost all the ministries—Federal/State/Local Government" (Aina, 2014, p. 17).

[4] In September 1995, the 189 member states of the United Nations signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women. The Beijing Platform explicitly addresses the exclusion of women from decision-making and sets 'gender balance' as a key goal (Dahlerup, 2006).

Concerted efforts to transform gender cultures within Nigerian universities yielded the establishment of gender centres and the formulation of policy initiatives, which aimed at implementing gender equality principles, policy and practice within the sector. All of these are aimed at rooting out gender discrimination in the university system. However, despite the Nigerian government's commitment to bridge gender gaps, only a few universities have a university-wide "Gender Policy" in place. Even in the universities that do, the numbers of women present in university academic hierarchies remain unequal and pervasive (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Olaleye, 2011; Aina, 2013; Aina et al., 2015, p. 326; Akubue, 2016; Aluko et al., 2017). Available evidence shows that in Nigeria, academic staffs are more likely to be male, a phenomenon resulting from the pattern of access to higher education within the country (Eboiyehi et al., 2015).

Scholars have established the prevalence of gross gender imbalance/disparities, despite gender policy initiatives (Olaogun et al., 2015: 297; Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018). For example, Eboiyehi et al. (2016) conducted a study in three selected universities in southwestern Nigeria and revealed gross gender inequality in senior management positions. The study found that 66.7% of principal officers in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) were males compared to 33.3% females. Only a few women were members of the highest decision-making bodies, such as the University Senate and Council. The study also found that men have generally occupied Vice-Chancellor and Provost of Colleges' positions since its inception. In a similar vein, Muoghalu and Eboiyehi (2018) undertook a study that compared the gender components of Obafemi Awolowo University between 2009 and 2017 and found that there were slight improvements in the percentage of females in academia (from 23.5% in 2009 to 25.8% in 2017) and in student undergraduate enrolment (from 34.3% to 45.6% in 2017). However, they also reported a decline in female postgraduate enrolments (from 39.2% in 2009 to 37.8% in 2017). Notably, regarding the university's decision-making process, there were no significant changes in women's participation except in the Bursar's office. The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors (academic and administration), Provosts of colleges, Deans and Registrars were positions occupied by men. These results are indications that the "gender policy has not brought about the significant transformation needed in the area of decision-making within the universities" (Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018, p. 997). Therefore, this thesis is driven by my concern for the gender equity policy's limited success in delivering positive outcomes for women's academic leadership progression in Nigeria.

More specifically, this thesis investigates gender equity policies and the continued underrepresentation of women in Nigeria's academic leadership positions. It has two principal

aims: first, to better understand the continued underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in Nigerian Universities despite adopting formal gender equity policies. Second, I explore the extent to which informal institutions (norms and practices within universities) subvert the intent of formalised policies and rules, thereby potentially undermining women's advancement. Feminist scholars working on gender and institutions have emphasised the *institutionalist turn* gender research has taken, drawing attention to the role institutions play as determinants of gendered performance (Mackay & Waylen, 2009). Scholars argue that institutions dictate the 'rules of the game' and provide norms and rules of behaviour, which enable or constrain change and undermine opportunities for women (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). As a feminist research project, this thesis focuses on the presence and absence of equity policies and how these support or constrain institutional change (formal and informal dimensions). It aims to uncover the "internal gender dynamics of institutions and institutional change" (Clavero & Galligan, 2020, p. 654), paying sufficient attention to policy and structural constraints limiting institutional change. It investigates 'why' and 'how' women's progression to academic leadership positions continues to be undermined and how informal norms and practices limit or resists institutional gender change. It also explores women's lived promotion experiences and how they negotiate informal institutions to get promoted to leadership positions. In this way, it uncovers the interconnectedness of formal and informal institutions and their influence on women's progression. Thus, this thesis is informed by Feminist Institutionalism (FI), an approach that supports the in-depth understanding and portrayal of formal and informal institutions, how these operate, and the implication this has for women's progression to academic leadership positions. The value of FI and its use to achieve the overall goal of this research is discussed further in subsequent chapters.

1.1 Why Nigerian Universities?

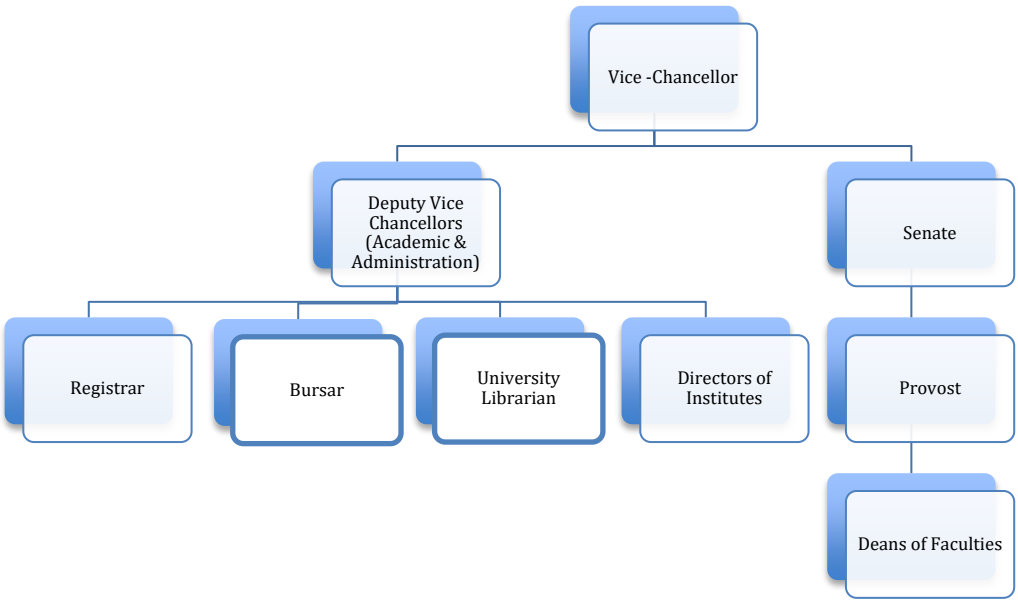
Before delving into the question of "why Nigerian universities?" it is crucial to provide some insights into the Nigerian university system and academic leadership structure as a background to understanding the peculiarities of Nigerian universities. Nigeria is a democratic country with a population of around 200 million located in West Africa. There are 36 states and a federal capital territory in the country, aggregated into six geopolitical zones: the south-west, south-east, south-south, northeast, north-west and north-central. The Nigerian education system is based mainly on the British system, and Nigeria has a three-tier university system: federal, state and private universities. These universities are classified as first-generation universities through to fifth-generation universities. The first-generation universities are generally the oldest and largest, heavily research-focused and capture the majority of federal government funding. Between 1971–1980, the government established second-generation

universities to meet the manpower needs of the reconstruction challenges in the aftermath of the civil war and respond to a global rise in industrialisation (Nwagwu & Agarin, 2008). The shift in the positioning of broad-based university education to specialised education prompted the creation of third-generation universities in the 1980s, which focused on technology and agriculture. The fourth-generation universities, primarily state-owned, were established between 1991 and 2000. The establishment of these universities became necessary when the question of an even spread of educational opportunities for all Nigerians was prominent in the politicians' political agendas. The newer fifth-generation universities typically consist of private and religious-based universities funded by private individuals or organisations. Currently, Nigeria has a total of 262 universities (http://nuc.edu.ng/nigerian-universities).

The internal management or leadership structure of Nigerian universities typically constitutes principal officers responsible for making critical decisions in the university. University management is common terminology used in describing principal officers of higher institutions in Nigeria. However, in this thesis, I use the term *academic leadership* to denote key principal officers in the universities. I define academic leadership as a higher-level position within the university, occupied by those charged with coordinating and directing academic activities within the institution. Ojerinde (2010) and Adetunji (2015) posit that authority flows directly down the line through a maze of authority in Nigerian universities, from the Vice-Chancellor to the other principal officers. The principal officers consist mainly of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, registrar, Bursar and the University Librarian. The other senior management team includes the provost of colleges, directors of institutes, deans of faculties, and academic heads of departments. Ogundare (2009) clarifies that, while the Vice-chancellor is the university's chief executive officer, the Vice-chancellor cannot decide on important matters that affect students and staff without consultation (Adetunji, 2014). For example, on academic issues, the Senate, which comprises of all the institution's professors, provosts, deans, directors of institutes and heads of academic departments, is responsible for regulating academic activities in line with the general guidelines provided by the National Universities Commission of Nigeria (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). Arong and Ogbadu (2010) argue that the Senate is responsible for formulating and establishing academic policies, advising the university council on the provision of facilities to implement policies, regulating examinations and appointing deans and provosts. It also organises and controls admission, student and staff discipline, teaching or learning activities, graduation, and prioritises research areas through various committees.

Universities in Nigeria have a standardised and uniform management structure. As shown in Figure 1, senior university officers in a typical university in Nigeria consist of the principal officers. The number of deans varies according to the number of faculties in the institution. All universities have delineated leadership roles, lines of reporting, and formal management structures that have long been in existence, with even the newest universities replicating the similar management structure of the older universities. This implies that the leadership structures of Nigerian universities are very similar. The management framework is formally structured and does not vary much between institutions. In Nigeria, university leadership arrangements are usually categorised into 'academic leadership positions' and the 'core administrative management positions'. Academic leadership positions comprise the heads of departments, deans, vice-deans/sub-deans, directors of institutes, provosts of colleges, Deputy Vice-Chancellors (academics and administration) and the Vice-Chancellor. In contrast, the core administrative (non-academic) management positions consist of the Bursar, librarian, deputy registrars, and registrar. Academic leadership positions are usually based on appointment/nomination or election, e.g., Vice-chancellor, or progression through the ranks (e.g., progressing from senior lecturer to Associate Professor and then becoming a Professor).

Figure 1: ***Senior Management Structure in a Typical Nigerian University***



This description of Nigeria's university system and leadership structures provides important context for exploring the complex dynamics of gender, power and institutional change (Kenny, 2007). The growing body of research on gender and academic leadership has had little to say to date about the Nigerian case. The focus on Nigeria in this thesis thus allows for the expansion of the feminist institutionalist literature coverage, which conventionally has focused on Western countries, particularly the European and English-speaking countries—UK, USA, Canada and Australia. The exclusion of the African realities is a significant gap that needs to be filled to provide an improved explanatory framework that allows for a more expansive analysis of women's persistent underrepresentation in academic leadership positions. Thus, research focusing on the Nigerian context can potentially add value to the current literature on women's underrepresentation in Nigerian universities and Africa as a whole (Akubue, 2016; Ilo, 2007; Okonkwo, 2013). Alongside this, the application of FI to the realities of the Nigerian university system allows for the advancement of the feminist theoretical context beyond its Western-centric outlook by illustrating new perspectives on the dynamics of institutional (formal and informal) arrangement and women's progression to academic leadership in Nigerian universities.

That said, it should be acknowledged that the findings here will be limited in their generalisability to other contexts. However, as outlined in the introduction, creating generalisable results is not the aim of the thesis. The ways in which gender operates is contextually and institutionally specific. Thus, in-depth qualitative single-case studies are often advocated by feminist institutionalists who acknowledge the importance and complexity of researching these dynamics. This thesis details women's persistent underrepresentation in academic leadership in Nigeria, giving specific attention to gender equity policies/formal institutions, informal institutions, and their interactions. Therefore, it is intended to contribute empirically to the Nigerian/African context and analytically to feminist institutionalist understandings of the limits of institutional change. Moreover, the thesis offers methodological value through the *Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated methodology* that could be applied to the analyses of gender equity in universities and other institutional settings.

1.3 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. In Chapter One, this introductory chapter, I establish the motivation for this study, introduce the problem, and present the study's propositions. In Chapter Two, I review relevant literature and offer a more detailed explanation of the theoretical approach—Feminist Institutionalism (FI). I discuss the foundations of gender inequality and women's underrepresentation in the Nigerian educational

system, highlighting organisational and governmental efforts to address gender inequality in Nigeria. Chapter Two also reviews and synthesises existing literature on why few women are in academic leadership positions. Five key themes emerged: (1) cultural explanations; (2) work–family conflict; (3) Higher Education (HE) power dynamics; (4) promotion structures; and (5) organisational practices. It is evident that there are many complex and connected causes as to why women have not advanced at the same rate as their male colleagues. While these factors are important, I argue that the existing literature may not fully explain why women are still underrepresented in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities despite mechanisms to redress gender imbalance. The chapter also provides insights into FI by highlighting the core FI concepts of gendered institutions, institutional change and continuity, and gendered power relations.

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework and methods used in this thesis. It outlines the more specific discussion of the feminist research design and data collection techniques and the suitability of the methodological approach for this study. This chapter presents what I label the *FI-integrated methodological framework*, which was used to guide the choice of cases, and the collection and analysis of gender policy documents and interview data. I identify a 'two-level' analytical framework: the first-level analysis aims at analysing formal institutions (in this case, the gender policy documents), while the second-level analysis aims at analysing informal institutions (gender norms and practices) within the case study universities. For the first-level analysis, I utilise an "integrated" Feminist Institutionalism (FI) and Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FPAF) to investigate why the universities' gender equity policy failed to gain real traction for women (cf. McPhail, 2003). For the second-level analysis, I employ integrated Feminist Institutionalism (FI) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to analyse the informal rules of the game and what this means for women's progression to academic leadership positions (Lazar, 2014).

Chapter Four presents findings from the documentary analysis. This chapter answers the first research question: *How do we better understand the continued under-representation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigerian Universities, despite the adoption of formal gender equity policies?* I present an overview of the gender equity policies of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and the University of Ibadan (UI), which are the universities having both gender centres and gender policies in place. Gender equity policy documents were analysed using the integrated Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FI-FPAF). I examined the universities' gender policy contents to determine whether they enhance women's progression to academic leadership positions or constrain

them. The themes of absence, women exclusion and male dominance surfaced in the policy analysis. Based on the analysis, the results show that formal policies are indeed gendered and continue to create implicit resistance for women's advancement to academic leadership positions via silences and absences. Evidence presented in this chapter reveals that the positional power of the Vice-Chancellor further exacerbated the *genderedness* of the formal policies. The Vice-Chancellor has the ultimate authority to select gender stakeholders who formulate and implement policy actions. The Vice-Chancellor's positional power means that he (or she, at least theoretically) determines what policies are made, how and when they should be implemented, thus unveiling how male dominance is produced and reproduced within formal institutions. The chapter draws attention to the gendered nature of the supposedly gender-neutral policies in Nigerian universities.

Chapter Five addresses the second research question from the perspectives of gender stakeholders in universities with established gender centres and gender policies in place. As such, it complements the data used in the documentary analysis by exploring the perceptions of those overseeing the university gender initiative and gaining further insight into the university gender policy process and the ways institutional change is limited. In this chapter, I examine the informal rules of the game and identify the specific informal norms and practices in the university gender policy process. Using the integrated Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA), I analysed the interview data acquired from the gender stakeholders' interviews to determine whether informal norms and practices subvert the intent of the gender policy and the processes through which these occur. The chapter reveals two major discourses on limits to institutional gender change in Nigerian universities. These are the nestedness of informal selection of core gender stakeholders in the gender policy formulation process and a gendered logic of appropriateness in the policy implementation process.

Chapter Six presents the perspectives of gender stakeholders in the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), which are universities without gender policies in place. The chapter examines why these universities have established gender centres but have yet to create gender policies. I argue that setting up gender centres alone (without a gender policy) represents an example of a window-dressing approach to gender equity that cannot guarantee gender equity. Perspectives from women at these universities unveil limits to institutional gender change. Issues on the merging of gender centres with other centres also came to light, particularly how the merging processes are

gendered— which is evident through the redirection of the gender centres. I argue this finding aligns with one of Mahoney and Thelen's (2009) notions—of layering in institutional change.

In Chapter Seven, I explore the perspectives of women on their experiences of progression to academic leadership positions. In doing so, I was able to examine the *hidden* life of academic women (with respect to informal institutions) and what it presents for women—advancement or stagnation I argue that there are nuanced dimensions within informal institutions that are concealed and need to be put at the forefront of institutional research to better understand the impact of informal norms and practices on gender equality policies and academic promotion of women. The results demonstrate how women navigate their promotions through a complementary interplay of formal and informal institutions.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by demonstrating that Nigerian universities are *gendered* institutions that operate in a way that systematically undermines women's progression and limits the prospects for institutional gender change through their formal gendered policies and institutionalised informal norms and practices. I draw out significant arguments in the previous chapters, outlining how they fit within broader theoretical debates and situating these findings within a FI lens. Specifically, I employ the notions of gendered logic of appropriateness, institutional resistance, path dependency, gendered power relations and gendered layering. These FI lenses offer linked insights into the *implicit* and *explicit* ways institutions are gendered. I also highlight the theoretical and empirical contributions of the thesis. I conclude by arguing that the gender equity policy can achieve its intended outcomes and gender change could be instantiated in Nigerian universities if there are gender-competent Vice-Chancellors to tackle the historically male-dominated, masculinist structure and culture of the universities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The historical context of women's underrepresentation and efforts to address gender equity in Nigeria provides a background for understanding the gendered nature of academic leadership. As Krook and Mackay (2011) stated, it is crucial to understand "gendered patterns and effects" to analyse institutional change. The primary questions central to this chapter are: what factors have necessitated and shaped women's current relegated leadership status in the Nigerian academic space? What role has history played, and what efforts have been made to redress the current gender imbalance in Nigerian universities? To answer these questions, this chapter offers a historical perspective on women's exclusion and underrepresentation in higher education and academic leadership positions in Nigeria. The purpose is to show that, despite existing gender equity measures, gender inequalities have been submerged and rendered difficult to see, as Thornton (2008) argued. This chapter also presents an overview of previous efforts aimed at gender equity in Nigeria, highlighting key developments such as the emergence of feminist research and activism, the creation of regional, national and institutional gender policies and programmes, and gender centres in universities. This analysis provides relevant insights into the particular characteristics of gender programmes and policies in Nigeria. It is important to note that the scope of this thesis does not allow for a full exploration of the intricacies and numerous details of the history of Nigeria but, instead, focuses on the significant issues relevant to women's underrepresentation and gender equity policies.

Moving forward, this chapter highlights dominant studies that have been highly influential in articulating the issues around gender inequality in Nigerian and international studies. It explores the scholarly explanations for why few women are in academic leadership positions from five interacting categories. The chapter argues that there are many barriers to why women do not advance at the same rate as their male colleagues; however, it ultimately concludes that these explanations are not enough to understand the continued underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigeria. I follow this with an in-depth consideration of the key theoretical framework— FI, highlighting key concepts of gendered institutions, institutional change and continuity, and gendered power relations. I argue that FI represents a valuable lens to theorise women's underrepresentation and the complex gendered and institutional dimensions of academic leadership in Nigerian universities.

2.1 Historical Development of Women's Exclusion in Nigerian Higher Education

Gender inequality in Nigeria has been problematic, with the patriarchal system having negative implications for women's advancement to academic leadership positions. Aina et al. (2015) drew a link between Nigeria's strong patriarchal cultures and gender equality gaps in Nigerian higher education, arguing that male dominance is substantive and creates gendered inequalities of power within higher education in Nigeria. Even though patriarchy in traditional societies allowed disparities and inequalities in power, reputation and access to resources (Ezumah, 2000), the colonial government heralded the Nigerian education system with distinct gender norms while developing its education agenda in the 19th century in terms of access and curriculum[5]. Pre-colonial Nigeria had a traditional form of education which was in the form of oral teachings and transmission of skills (usually the predominant trade of a family) to children (mostly boys), in the form of farming, fishing, trading, tie and dye, handicrafts, black/gold-smiting among others (Aina, 2014, p. 3). Practical skills, particularly for girls, were in the form of housekeeping and the raising of children. Skills' training was gendered back then, as distinctive gender roles existed across Nigeria's cultural groups (Para-Mallam, 2006).

Tracing the establishment of education in Nigeria, Amadiume (1997), Awe (1991), Okome (2000), and Para-Mallam (2006) have described how the advent of Christianity, the Atlantic slave trade, the invasion of Islamic culture and the imperial capitalist system reshaped gender roles and relationships, bringing about significant social changes. Christian Missionaries introduced Western education in Nigeria with the Wesley Christian Missionaries' arrival in 1842 in Badagry. Between 1842 and 1914, Christian Mission schools began to spring up, mainly in Southern Nigeria. These schools focused on four subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic and religion—to prepare people for their roles as evangelists, pastors, interpreters and teachers. The Mission schools, which started at the primary level, grew to secondary schools following local agitation and interests, especially in the Lagos state area (Aina, 2014, p. 4). Ironically, most of the early secondary schools were boys-only colleges, creating the first group of elites limited to unique locations that were mainly male (Aina et al., 2015). These were the citizens educated by the British colonial government to take over the reins of power at independence (Fafunwa, 1974). During these periods, the entrenchment of Western education in northern Nigeria became more complicated as the natives opposed Christian

[5] For example, Aina et al. (2015, p. 316) noted that most of the early secondary schools were established for only for boys who later took over the reins of power at the independence of Nigeria in 1960 from the British colonial Government. Even when the Girls Secondary School came into existence in 1879, the colonial administration had stressed clerical skills for boys and domestic science for girls in the school curriculum.

missionaries and the concept of Western education. By 1914, Western education eventually started in Northern Nigeria, but about 25,000 Quranic schools were already in existence (Mkpa, 2013).

The inclusion of females in the colonial educational system saw a few girls admitted to study programmes, mainly preparing them for domesticity and low-cadre roles. In Southern Nigeria, formal education organised for girls was mainly through the women's guilds of various churches. The guilds were set up essentially for girls and women to acquire basic home economics, catering, sewing and other domestic skills (Aina et al., 2015). Subsequently, the pressure to boost female education led to the establishment of Queens College as a girls-only secondary school in 1927. The colonial government instituted an education system that merely stressed clerical skills for boys and home management science for girls in the school curricula. In other words, the girls' educational curriculum prepared them for domestic positions rather than being income earners. According to Aina et al., this was consistent with the colonial masters' Victorian philosophy, which signified women's place was in the kitchen, while men governed the public sphere (2015, p. 296). As Agbaje (2019, p. 7) argued, "once colonialism was installed, rigid binaries, including those around gender perceptions, were imposed". During this era, women preoccupied themselves with domestic issues and were to leave the ruling of the society, in terms of politics and economics, particularly to the men (Denzer, 1998; Oguntuyi, 1979). In this way, colonialism introduced a European patriarchal construct based on a "monolithic male-gendered power system" (Amadiume, 1997), which undermined the material foundations for relative female autonomy. The colonial government laid the foundations of Nigeria's educational system and heralded it with distinct gender norms.

Consequently, the first higher institution in Nigeria, Yaba Higher College, was established in 1934 and later became the Yaba College of Technology in 1947 (Aina, 2014, p. 4). When the Premier University was created in 1948, the students moved to Ibadan, the University of Ibadan's nucleus. Out of the first 104 students admitted to the university, only three (3) were female. Essentially, university education in Nigeria is predominantly a colonial legacy. Scholars such as Adeniran (2008), Akinola (2018), Dogo (2014), Makama (2013) and Aina (2014) have argued that, in combination, the traditional patriarchal culture and colonial legacies in Nigeria laid the foundations for gender inequality, especially in the educational sector[6]. Despite the widespread knowledge and acceptance of patriarchal culture and colonial

[6] While education for women in the northern Nigerian region has been constrained by the influence of Islamic religion, patriarchy transcends geo-political regions in Nigeria, and this thesis is not concerned with explaining

legacies as the underlying cause of women's relegated status within the Nigerian society, international, regional, and national governments have advocated for the creation of a gender-balanced society. In the next section, I present an overview of efforts at creating and promoting gender equity in Nigeria at the international, regional and national levels.

2.2 International Organisation, Regional Government and National Efforts at Promoting Gender Equity in Nigeria

Over the past decades, widespread "unequal" power relations have continued to receive the attention of national, regional and international governments (Olaogun et al., 2015, p. 295). An apparent upsurge in feminist organising and pressures by women's groups worldwide in the 1970s steered the development of gender research in most African countries (Mama, 2005). In particular, during the 1974 UN International Year of Women, the dire need to set up structures that address women's participation in development was emphasised. The first World Conference on women, held in Mexico City in 1975, called for the establishment of national machinery to promote women's status. In response to this, by 1976, Africa had pioneered regional structures for women, setting up programmes on women and development, and subsequently established the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) (Pereira, 2002). The Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development put forward a cross-sectoral strategy that prioritised special and diverse training for women and the use of gender-inclusive curricula to facilitate their participation in all disciplines with particular emphasis on science, technology and industry. It also specified the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming policies, measures, and frameworks for increasing and improving education delivery through all tiers of government and relevant institutions of learning at all levels. The broader international women's movement, thus, provided a forum for expressing African women's perspectives.

To facilitate women's academic and managerial development in Commonwealth universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) began a women's programme in 1985 to enhance women's career development. Inspired by the ACU's concern with equity, women's participation, access and quality in higher education, the programme was established (Ilo, 2010). The organisation saw the enhanced recruitment of women into academic management as vital to overall institutional growth, both in terms of equity and of quality (Lund, 1998; Singh, 2002b). In 1998, UNESCO convened a World Conference on

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regional variation, but exploring norms within highly ranked research institutions, all of which are situated outside of the north.

Higher Education, where a panel of experts reviewed gender equality progress in higher education since the Beijing Conference in 1995 (Nyoni et al., 2017). The conference focused on the role of higher education in boosting the participation of women. In compliance with Article 4 of the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century"[7], participants proposed that university chairs, professors and department heads be filled with more women by 2010 (Onsongo, 2011; UNESCO, 1998). Given this, Nigeria has ratified several international treaties and conventions designed to achieve gender justice across sectors (Aina, 2013). Table 1 identifies the most fundamental ones.

Table 1: *International Conventions and Treaties Ratified by Nigeria*

Year	International treaties or conventions ratified
1948	The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights
1966	The Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
1974	UN International Year of Women
1976	The creation of UNIFEM, now called 'UN Women', allowed institutional recognition of the need for a focused approach to women's empowerment at global and local levels.
1979	The UN General Assembly landmark Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
1992	Agenda 21 of Rio's commitment which centrally placed women's contribution in environment management
1993	The United Nations (UN) World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna
1994	The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo
1995	Beijing Declaration and Platform for United Nations.
1997	SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against United Nations
2000	UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular, the MDG3 on Gender Equality and women empowerment.
2004	The African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa
Post-2015	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which also flags 'Gender Equality and Women Empowerment' as a priority goal.

Source: Aina (2014); Aina et al. (2015, p. 296); Gberevbie et al. (2014).

[7] This called for the abolition of all gender inequalities in higher education at all levels and in all disciplines in which women are underrepresented (Nyoni et al., 2017).

Regionally, many African nations had made enormous progress concerning commitments to gender equality in their constitutions, laws, and policies by the late 1970s. The growing networks of gender activists increasingly articulated women's roles in African development during this period. Mama (2006) highlighted the development of regionally-based sites for gender and women's research in Africa despite the disparities in colonial heritages and independence trajectories among diverse African countries. The three major issues identified by Bennett (2002, p. 38) as catalysts were: 1) the intellectual challenge arising from a near-complete absence of gender analysis as a critical tool of social research; 2) the trivialisation of women's experiences and the implications of the outright conflation of the term *person* and the word *man*; and 3) the staggering triviality to "calls for research" which acknowledged the power of gender. The underrepresentation of women, coupled with the fluid knowledge of gender as an analytic concept, impacted knowledge production within the region (Imam et al., 1997; Pereira, 2004).

In 1977, the first regional institution—"Association of African Women for Research and Development" (AAWORD), was founded to encourage women researchers from Africa working on gender and development issues. One of the main goals of AAWORD was to set the agenda for feminism in Africa by promoting research and activism for African women scholars. AAWORD's establishment drew attention to women's important role in academia throughout Africa and the relevance of women's research to other political and intellectual developments (AAWORD, 1985). During this period, the Nigerian government also laid the foundations for social change by aligning with the United Nations (UN) gender initiatives. However, following prolonged military rule and the extreme marginalisation of women from public life and politics under authoritarian rule in Nigeria, the political space available at the national level to resolve violations against women became limited (Pereira, 2004, p. 655). As a result, women's organisations enthusiastically pursued the UN platforms for advancing women's rights in Nigeria. For example, the UN requirement for regular reporting on the implementation of a country's ratified international agreements, such as the CEDAW, provided women-centred organisations with the ability not only to track government reports but also to provide alternative accounts through the Shadow Reports, as was the case in 1999 (West, 1999).

The guidelines for promoting gender issues in all aspects of national life were set in 2009 by introducing the African Gender Policy. The African Union (AU) approach to promoting women's rights and gender equality, in particular, has been influenced in many ways by UN mechanisms and the African continent's unique needs (Aina, 2014, p. 17). The African

Gender Policy (2009) targeted the following issues: migration, family, sexual and reproductive health, social policy, the African youth charter, women's rights and empowerment, gender violence, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Program (CAADP), the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and other critical AU decisions, declarations and instruments having a bearing on the advancement of women and gender equality. Despite these measures, the weak implementation of the African gender policy, captured in Section 1.2 of the 2007 National Gender Policy, explicitly noted that "Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society where men control all aspects of women's lives" (Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006). One context in which this was aptly expressed is women's representation (Otaru, 2015).

At the national level, *gender* and *women's empowerment* had become buzzwords in the fourth republic, particularly within the media space and among civil/human rights groups and development agencies. Campaigns that included women and their rights to fair access, representation control over wealth, benefits, and opportunities were mounted (Para-Mallam, 2006). Over time, women's struggle for inclusion and equality gained attention, especially in debates on progress, democratisation, human rights and good governance. As a result, many women's rights movements focused on campaigning for changes to strengthen women's socio-economic status. As women's activism expanded, the drive for a *Gender Agenda* grew, thus drawing attention to the systematic essence of gender discrimination and its institutional causes and setting out social change strategies.

Consequently, the research environment on gender sprang up in the early 1980s. During these periods, activities in various women's groups were organised within or outside the university environments. The formation of a national-based initiative and centres such as "Women in Nigeria" (WIN), founded in 1982, played increasingly significant roles in independent research and advocacy networks in Nigeria (Bennett, 2002). WIN emerged as a significant force to counteract the subordination and isolation faced by African-based women researchers and scholars (Pereira, 2004, p. 654). WIN's objectives included complex integrated activities such as research, advocacy, policymaking, and information dissemination. The concerted effort created by these women activist groups galvanised feminist scholarship in Nigeria. It made case studies on women's history, demography, ethnology, economic activity, and legal status in Nigeria more widely available to researchers (Odejide, 2002).

As previously stated, Nigeria, like most other countries, is a signatory to most of the international treaties and conventions. Given this, the government made significant efforts in

promoting gender by creating a national machinery—the Ministries of Women's Affairs at the Federal and the State levels and creating gender desks/units in nearly all the government parastatals. As a result of the different regimes that have ruled the country since independence, the national machinery changed severally. For instance, between 1989 and 1998, the National Commission for Women, National Centre for Women Development and a Federal Ministry for Women Affairs and Social Development were established. In 2000, the Ministry of Women Affairs developed a "National Policy on Women" (NPW) in response to the call to integrate women into development. The Obasanjo Administration finally approved the National Policy on Women in July 2001. The NPW identified education (formal, vocational and informal) as a priority sector for intervention strategies for women empowerment, emphasising science and technology for the development and adaptation of indigenous technology to suit women's needs. Accordingly, new development imperatives have continued to support the goal of gender equality, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (National Gender Policy, 2006).

Institutions in Nigeria also incorporated gender into their strategic thinking and planning. For instance, the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan during a conference on Rural Women and Agriculture established critical initiatives, where presentations and conference proceedings centred on the need to create a research bureau and data bank as a key strategy for pooling existing work and improving women's research. During the national conference, networks established an independent research centre named "Women's Research and Documentation Centre" (WORDOC) in 1986. It was seen as a ground-breaking effort to systematically collect materials on women's studies. WORDOC became an independent entity, pursuing distinct political and intellectual objectives. Therefore it acted as a civil organisation rather than a traditional academic entity, taking an activist approach to national and international issues. WORDOC's autonomous management helped ensure consistency in its goals. While university departments, institutes, or centres often need to adapt to universities' changing political and administrative requirements, WORDOC has consistently enjoyed a considerable measure of independence (Odejide, 2002). WORDOC has played a significant role in stimulating interest in women and gender studies in Nigerian universities by identifying priority areas in gender research and developing networks among researchers. They have also been instrumental in providing empirical information and intellectual and political guidelines for researchers and policymakers.

With gender research gaining increasing recognition and attention over the years, establishing Gender Centres (GCs) in Nigerian universities became necessary. It is important to note that

before the establishment of gender centres/units in Nigeria, female academic activism was central due to the absence of the gendered realities of Nigerian universities. Efforts to transform the institutional and intellectual gender cultures within Nigerian institutions yielded a scattering of gender centres and policy initiatives. The last three decades in Nigeria have witnessed the establishment of gender centres as a catalyst for promoting and strengthening teaching, research, documentation and institutionalisation of gender equality across Nigerian universities. However, only a few universities in Nigeria have established gender centres and/or have equity policies in place. Most of these GCs engage in research, teaching, training programmes' advocacy and policy programme development. While this does not compare to over 600 such initiatives in the USA, it does signify a concerted effort within the African scholarly community (Mama, 2009).

The work of such centres is often transdisciplinary and transformative in its intentions. Of the 43 accredited federal universities in Nigeria, only 12 have dedicated gender centres/units, three have gender research groups, and four have prescribed gender policies. Table 2 shows a list of federal universities in Nigeria with gender centres/units/research groups and formal gender-related policy.

Table 2: *Gender Centres in Nigerian Federal Universities*

Federal University	**Gender Centre (GC)**	**Gender Research Group (GRG)**	**Gender Policy (GP)**	**Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (ASHP)**
Obafemi Awolowo University	*		*	*
University of Ibadan	*		*	*
Ahmadu Bello University	*		*	*
University of Port Harcourt	*			
Bayero University, Kano	*			
Federal University of Technology, Akure	*			
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike	*			
Federal University of Technology, Owerri	*			
University of Benin	*			
University of Jos	*		*	
University of Abuja, Gwagalada	*			
Federal University, Dutse	*			
University of Nigeria, Nsukka		*		
University of Uyo		*		* Draft
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka		*		

Gender centres in Nigerian universities range from being research, teaching and training sites to one that reinforces gender equality principles, policy and practice within the university. There are two categories of gender centres existing in Nigerian universities. These are categorised based on the centres' roles and functions since they are designed to meet different purposes.

The first category is the Research and Teaching-Based Gender Centres, whose core focus is research, teaching, and advocacy. This category includes Gender Research Groups (GRG), which drive gender advocacy through teaching and research, with an active component of activism for gender equity. Typically, these centres aim to provide intellectually rigorous teaching and research in gender studies rooted in the specific challenges presented by various African contexts. In practice, this means emphasising teaching (Mama, 2009) and research in pursuit of equality and justice in African contexts. Gender issues are incorporated into various disciplines to include gender dimensions in academic programmes. These GCs' principal activities include research, teaching, workshops, training, documentation, and community service. Typically, most of these centres run gender-related academic programmes, especially at postgraduate levels.

The second group are the Policy-focused Gender Centres which have similar mandates to the teaching and research-based GCs but perform additional activities geared towards promoting gender equity/equality within the university such as gender mainstreaming activities— gender policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These Policy-focused GCs are tasked with facilitating gender equity projects alongside their original mandate of research, teaching, and community services. They are committed to fostering gender equity by designing effective policy instruments that promote gender mainstreaming into university administration, teaching, and research activities. These centres culminate an effort to have concerted and well-synchronised policies and programmes for integrating gender into the university as a whole. As such, university GCs under this category will typically have a centre/unit and a gender policy in place. Currently, only four federal universities in Nigeria fall under this category.

While gender is broadly taken as a development issue in Nigeria, existing studies show that gender indicators are yet to guide governance and university administration (Aina, 2013). With women starting to gain more access to educational opportunities during the democratic era, the presumption that a woman's position is at home has been changed (Aina et al., 2015, p. 297). However, women are still underrepresented in the academic profession, especially in academic leadership positions, despite a national and institutional gender policy (Eboiyehi et al., 2016; Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018; Ogbogu, 2011). An indicative sample of gender imbalance among academic staff in Nigerian universities is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: *Gender Distribution of Academic Staff in a Selection of Nigerian Universities*

Universities	**Male**	**Female**
University of Ilorin	88.4 %	11.6%
University of Nigeria, Nsukka	73%	27%
Federal University Technology, Owerri	83%	17%
Enugu State University of Technology	66%	34%
Imo State University	87%	13%
University of Ibadan	82%	18%
University of Calabar	82%	18%
University of Port Harcourt	88%	12%
Obafemi Awolowo University	82%	18%
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	88%	22%

(Adebayo & Akanle, 2014; Aina et al., 2015, p. 329; Nwajiuba, 2011; Olaogun et al., 2015).

Aina (2014) argued that the gender gap is most pronounced as women move up the academic cadre. She noted that only 24.7% of the principal officers[8] are women, and for the other categories, the trend is the same: Governing Council (16.9%), Deans/Directors (18.3%) and Professors (15.6%). Throughout the history of Nigeria, only about 20 female Vice-Chancellors have been recorded, despite the high number of universities in the country. Currently, there are 262 universities in Nigeria. Besides, Odejide (2003, p. 457) noted that the few women in academic leadership positions are nominated to these positions, not on a full-time basis but in an acting capacity. Igiebor and Ogbogu's study on the representation of women in selected universities in Southwestern Nigeria reflects those of Odejide (2003). According to the authors, women were highly represented as deputy registrars from among the core administrative management positions and heads of departments from academic positions (Igiebor & Ogbogu, 2016). In addition to numerical representation, male dominance is further recognisable in discourses on women's underrepresentation in leadership positions.

What explains this continuing underrepresentation? In the following section, I review key studies that have offered insights and evaluations of the phenomenon, both internationally and

[8]In Nigeria, the principal officers comprise the visitor (usually the president of the federal republic of Nigeria, the Chancellor, Pro-chancellor and Chairman of Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academics and administration), Registrar, Bursar and University Librarian.

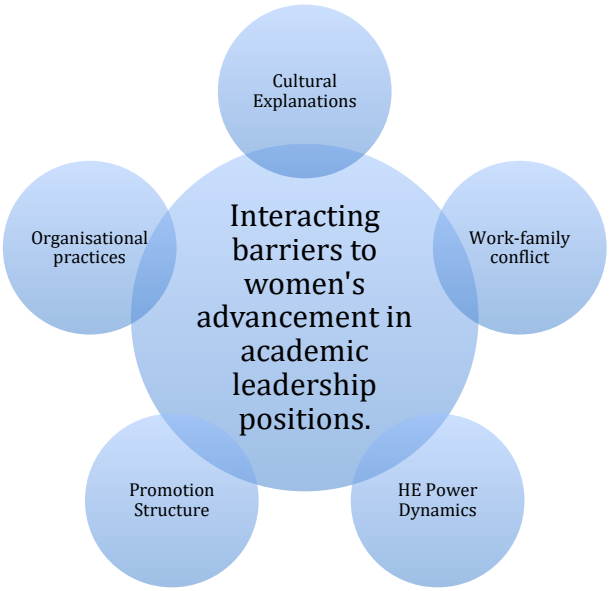
in Nigeria. The literature review identifies key themes which have shaped my analysis of the gender policy documents and interview data. The review also serves as a foundation for applying an FI-informed understanding of how formal and informal institutional dynamics underpin barriers limiting women's academic leadership progression.

2.3 Identifying Barriers to Women's Progression

The emergence of women's representation as an important feminist issue is matched by a rapidly growing body of work on women in leadership, education, and management. The underrepresentation of women in major decision-making processes has been documented (Adegun, 2012; Aina et al., 2015; Bagilhole & White, 2011; Morley, 2012a; Singh, 2008a; White, 2003; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2013). Given that women's underrepresentation in academic leadership positions is a characteristic shared internationally (although the extent may differ), this section reviews key Nigerian and international literature specifically concerned with gender equity and academic leadership. In the Nigerian context, existing literature has examined the representation, experiences, and challenges women face in the Nigerian higher education sector (Aina, 2013; 2014; Odejide, 2003; Ogbogu, 2011; Olaogun et al., 2015; and Akinsanya, 2012). I classify existing research explaining the absence of women in leadership positions into five *interacting* categories[9]: cultural explanations, work–family conflict, HE leadership, promotion structures and organisational practices. Within each category, I identify the formal (rules and regulations) and informal (gender norms and practices) dimensions that present a barrier to women's leadership advancement.

[9] I emphasise the word 'interacting' because I see these barriers as interconnected. These 'interacting' categories highlight the *connected causes* as to why women have not advanced at the same rates as their male colleagues.

Figure 2: ***Interacting Barriers to Women's Advancement to Academic Leadership Positions***



Cultural Explanations

Bassey et al. (2012), Lukaka (2013) and Smulders (1998) examined the cultural factors that restrict women in leadership positions as a consequence of the "social gender construction and the assigning of different tasks, obligations and expectations for women and men" (Eboiyehi et al., 2016, p. 186). Although these cultural biases are prevalent in many Western countries, as social and family policies still support the traditional breadwinner model (Sjöberg, 2010), they are also deeply rooted in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, *patriarchy*, an informal norm, prioritises men as the individual authority and decision-makers within and outside the home (Agbalajobi, 2010; Alade et al., 2015; Olojede, 2009). It was initially used in defining the father's dominance as head of household. During the post-1960s' feminism, the word *patriarchy* is often used to refer to the institutional organisation of male hegemony and female subordination (Aina, 1998; Makama, 2013). The term is described as a system of male dominance that subjugates women through its social, political, and economic structures, thereby structurally defining the parameters for women's unequal positioning. As Eboiyehi et al. argued, patriarchy evokes the concept of male dominance, not only through the use of coercion but also through institutional structures, upholding the expectations that regard men as leaders and women as followers (2016, p. 194). According to the authors, Nigerian universities are strongly patriarchal, with men ruling over practically all the senior management roles. They attributed the gender equality disparity in Nigerian university management to pre-colonial patriarchal practices. The notion of leadership hinges on masculinity and the assumption that men made better leaders and managers than women.

Sadie (2005) argued that traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes about women's role and status in society are still prevalent in the African context. Being part of this structure, many women find it challenging to dislocate from this cultural tradition so as not to become ostracised. Aina (2014, p. 14) argued that gender roles are precisely defined, with numerous taboos used to ensure conformity in patriarchal societies such as Nigeria. This has promoted inequality in status, influence, and access to resources between men and women. Nguyen (2013) claimed that women are expected to follow a country's ingrained hegemonic cultural norms. The author further argued that, in seeking to advance their careers, these cultural standards frequently place women in a disadvantageous role compared to men. Ballenger (2010) claimed this philosophy explains why women are confined to lower management positions with limited incentives and authority in formal institutional settings.

Aina et al. (2015) problematised Africa's patriarchal structure and informal arrangements as having dangerous implications in higher education. Yusuff (2014) stated that the historical male supremacy had created an unfavourable work climate in the academic setting for women. Aina noted that gender equality is seen as Eurocentric and strange for African essence, ethics, and cultural values in most African higher education institutions. As such, these are often regarded with fear and trepidation (2014, p. 3). Abiodun-Oyebanji and Olaleye (2011) argued that, regardless of the need for executive managers, women were not welcome to occupy such positions. According to Aina (2014, p. 4), this results from colonial influences on the Nigerian educational system (2014, p. 4). Odhiambo (2011) observed that the European colonial masters, whose social power structure was fundamentally patriarchal, set up universities in Africa to cultivate the African male elites who appealed to their interests. Aina stated that the Eurocentric values and African's cultural factors had culminated in gender-insensitive policies, resulting in an increased gender imbalance in university leadership (2014, p. 13).

According to Alade et al. (2015), Nigerian society perpetuates a system that recognises motherhood as a critical element that excludes women from achieving career goals. Potentially eligible women often shy away from any noticeable role, whereas the few women who venture into male-cultural professions are branded as "rebellious women" (Fakeye et al., 2012; Omotola, 2007). Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012, p. 4757) observed that discrimination against women is not merely an outcome of their gender, but rather the role that culture plays in society, promoting male dominance and elaborating mistreatment of women. Gberevbie et al. (2014) argued that traditional beliefs and practices that consider a man superior to his female counterpart encourage discrimination in domestic and formal arrangements. Stressing the

position of religion, Aina et al. (2015) and Olaogun et al. (2015, p. 302) maintained that the various religions in Nigeria adhere to the belief that the man is the head of the family and has greater powers of influence and decision-making. In contrast, the woman is considered the weaker vessel with less power in marriage and is taught to be submissive to the man. Therefore, the notion of "traditional position" and women's cultural location means that women's advancement to academic leadership is "slowed down in ways that men are not" (J. Pyke, 2013, p. 446).

Work–Family Conflict

Studies on work–family conflict have argued that the time spent by women on role performance in one domain decreases the time spent on demands and efficiency in another domain, especially in competitive workplaces (Baker, 2012) and place pressure on them. Women academics trapped between two 'greedy' institutions—family and the university—describe the existence of universities as "under bounded systems" with a lack of clear borders around time, positions and authority (Alderfer, 1980), which often break down more women than men (Ely & Myerson, 2000; Morley, 2013b). The paths into leadership roles are daunting for women with family commitments as they clash with the *ideal worker* paradigm (Harris et al., 2013). Females with families cannot contribute equally as do their male counterparts, nor can they invest the same amount of time improving their skills set to succeed equally to their male counterparts in their careers (Woods, 2015). The perceived imperative to care for children, the sick and the elderly could also result in negative equity for women in the workplace (Grummel et al., 2009 Guillaume & Pochic, 2009).

Scholars have argued that women's low participation in academic management results from increased family responsibilities (Bagilhole & White, 2011; Özkanlı & Korkmaz, 2000). For example, Özkanlı and Korkmaz (2000), in their studies, identified a lack of willingness by women to take up leadership responsibilities. According to the authors, this is because the women have accepted, internalised and reproduced the traditional social roles prioritising motherhood. In the "mommy track" theory, Probert (2005) claimed that regular career interruptions associated with childbirth and childcare undermine women's success in progressing to academic leadership positions. Sharabi and Harpaz (2013) clarified that the obstacles to women's career success were due to women's triple responsibilities, forcing women to abandon their jobs to bear and care for children.

In Nigeria, Ogbogu (2013a) pointed out that academic women's work–family conflict experiences were immense and pervasive. Such experiences were often accentuated by

women's various roles linked to work (formal) and family (informal) factors. In a patriarchal society like Nigeria, the author observed that female academics are more likely than men to encounter a high level of work–family conflict involving conflicting demands due to socio-cultural expectations about the role of women in the family, as well as a lack of institutional support and awareness of family issues. According to the author, many factors, such as long work hours, overcrowded work schedules, insufficient work facilities, family and household obligations, and the teacher–student ratio, accounted for greater tension between women academics between work and family. Travelling for meetings, conferences, workshops, supervisory duties, study-leaving, and even transfer could boost and potentially accelerate promotion to a higher status; however, some (mostly married) women's inability to meet such requirements has robbed some well-qualified women of top positions (Akinsanya, 2012, p. 139, Aluko et al., 2017, p. 66).

Eboiyehi et al. (2016) have identified that a lack of encouragement from husbands contributes to women's low representation in senior management positions. According to the authors, before embarking on any career development programme, women often need permission from their husbands. The study also found that many husbands have discouraged their wives from working or pursuing job opportunities, while others have prohibited their wives from rising to higher positions. Younger married academics interrupt their work to raise children and attend to family duties typical of their multifaceted roles. As a result, women's academic activities, such as their research, are altered and compromised for the family, especially in their earlier careers (Ogbogu, 2009). Childcare and domestic work have been highlighted as factors inhibiting women from career progression (Ogbogu, 2011). Since academia is designed as a *carefree zone* that assumes that academics have no other obligations than their career (Lynch, 2010a), careers of women with children tend to lag behind those of childfree men and women (Portanti & Whitworth, 2009). Ogbogu argued in favour of promulgating gender-friendly policies, such as those that allow women to combine work and family responsibilities without creating contradictions between raising children and pursuing an optimal career path (2009, p. 22).

Higher Education (HE) Power Dynamics

The literature on leadership argues that unequal power distribution exists between men and women, with most institutional leadership structures largely male-dominated. International research on higher education leadership and management shows that men dominate the leadership and management of universities. An eight-country analysis of women in university leadership in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and the

United Kingdom, carried out by the Women in Higher Education Management Network, shows a consistently low representation of women in most countries, especially at the Vice-Chancellor/Rector level (White & Ozkanli, 2010). According to Johnson (2005), there are instances where gender problems are brought to bear on progress, which explains "why there are only a few female rectors or Vice-chancellors all over the globe" (Yusuff, 2014, p. 272). Fitzgerald (2011) argued that emphasis on profitability, competitiveness, and the academic market's inalienable logic makes senior higher education management a masculine domain. The historical notion of leadership akin to masculinity is still common today. According to Højgaard (2002), social norms of gender and leadership exclude women, and top leadership is seen as a masculine domain. The conventional view is that the skills, competence and temperament considered central to leadership, for example, independence, assertiveness and authority, are rooted in a socially constructed masculinity concept (Knights & Kerfort, 2004; Morley, 2012a). Rice (2012) argued that the key elements linked to masculinity are often valued, with men put in advantageous roles regarding access to resources and authority. She claimed that men utilised these privileges in their career advancement.

The current university system has been described as a highly masculine organisation, privileging male-built allocated values such as aggressiveness and competitiveness over cooperation (Nielsen, 2014). Leadership is seen as masculine and a form of career capital, while femaleness is perceived as negative equity, irreconcilable with intellectual and managerial prowess (Binns & Kerfoot, 2011; Smit, 2006). With men having the decision-making power and authority on strategic direction and resource distribution, there is a possibility that women's interests in institutions will not be adequately taken care of, thereby creating an impact on the production of future female leaders (Gumbi, 2006; Kiamba, 2008). Udegbe (2005) noted that the situation is much worse in developing countries, especially countries with weak regimes and volatile governments. Studies show the dire numbers of women in positions that create an opportunity to influence institutional policies (Onsongo, 2011; Singh, 2002a). Leadership conceptions are profoundly problematic for women, as they are seen as gendered entities with characteristics considered inadequate for leadership. For example, in Sri Lanka, Morley and Lugg (2009) noted that leadership is deemed to be challenging, aggressive, authoritarian and more appropriate for men. The misconception in Nigeria is that women are usually considered deficient in reliability (Babajide, 2000).

The creation of women's leadership identity is influenced by cultural assumptions of what it means to be a leader (Ely et al., 2011). On the one hand, the prototypical leader is seen in most cultures as typically a masculine man, while women are thought to be carers, selfless and

lacking the attributes required for effective leadership roles (Bain & Cummings, 2000; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). In Nigerian, women are still under-represented in the higher echelons of leadership roles in both social and organisational senses due to the cultural ethics and norms that only men make excellent and efficient leaders (Longe, 2013). This disparity is replicated and nurtured more profoundly due to systemic structural disparities within organisations (Adebowale, 2009). In this way, the dominant cultural ideologies and informal norms imported into formal academic settings are likely to affect women's upward career mobility severely. The society's patriarchal nature also contributed to men's resentment of women's leadership (Akinboye, 2004), resulting in the increased marginalisation of women in institutional leadership decision-making. Odejide (2003, p. 458) noted that, due to the history of militarisation, the concept of leadership in Nigeria is often related to authoritarianism and power, and male leaders were deemed suitable for dealing with students' unrest. This presumption is characteristic of highly patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, where social interactions and activities are regulated by patriarchal socialisation structures and cultural traditions that foster men's interests (Nwajiuba, 2011). Consequently, this has consequences for how women develop their leadership identities because handling reputation, discrimination, and others' judgment may become an extra workload that dissuades women from applying for highly visible senior roles (Kram & Hampton, 2003; Morley, 2013b).

Promotion Structures

The literature on women's underrepresentation has revealed that women's progression to the upper ranks of academic cadre has been complicated sometimes by promotion systems and structures (Akinsanya, 2012; Terosky et al., 2014; Trower, 2012; Ward, 2001; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2013). Research carried out at Spanish universities shows that the promotion committees' gender structure is a deciding promotion factor, but the effect depends on the position at stake (Bagues & Zinovyeva, 2010). The fundamental argument here is that discriminatory appointment, and promotion practices hinder women's progression. Husu (2004) demonstrated how gender is implicated in professorial recruitment through gatekeeping practices. Gatekeeping involves several phases of the selection process as it applies to decisions in which candidates are shortlisted, interviewed and appointed. It implies the granting of privileges through the influence of the elites, enabling some to gain and others to lose (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Women usually find it difficult to gain access to desirable networks, especially when the gatekeepers are mainly men (Gersick et al., 2000; Husu, 2004, McPherson et al., 2001; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

A key criterion for academic promotion in Nigeria and most universities worldwide is the number of articles published in internationally refereed journals and engagements in international networks (Ogbogu, 2009). Academic careers are shaped more by the *publish-or-perish* syndrome (Akinsanya, 2012; Aluko et al., 2017, p. 66; Sax et al., 2002) and contemporary quantitative performance measures (Astin, 2012; Gläser & Laudel, 2007). The ability to secure research funding is considered a predominant requirement for a senior university management position to be held by professors (Leberman et al., 2016). Access to performance measures such as citation indexes, journal impact factor scores and collaborative patterns has become an ingrained practice in an increasingly competitive and individualised academic system, representing a threat to gender equality (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Nielsen, 2015; Saunderson, 2002; Thomas & Davies, 2002). Women academics find themselves in insecure positions regarding their career development, as they bear significantly higher workloads in teaching, service and lower-level administration (Aluko et al., 2017; Leberman et al. 2016; Terosky et al., 2014). While women are no longer entirely barred from entering the profession, gender standards are misaligned with women's workload when considering publishing productivity for promotion (Cress & Hart, 2009; Trower, 2012).

Furthermore, Adadevoh (2001) noted that what constitutes acceptable criteria for promotion is a major issue in Nigeria. For example, the weighting attached to teaching, community service and research differ among Nigerian universities. In Nigeria, the system of accountability that defines an acceptable measurement for research and productivity varies from institution to institution and may have an implication for gaining access to positions of power (Odejide, 2003). Aina (2013) pointed out that, due to the considerable absence of women as academics and decision-makers, men in high leadership positions use male perspectives in making decisions on recruitment and promotion. Evidence from Nigeria suggests that the recruitment and selection exercise is male-controlled, with little to no female participation (Ogbogu, 2016). The author argued that universities perpetuate a pervasive masculine value favouring complete male participation that serves as an impediment to females.

Organisational Practices

Studies on organisational practices demonstrate how women's positions and behaviour are defined and shaped negatively in the workplace. Such disadvantages include underrepresentation, limited power and access to resources (Chacha, 2021; Madsen, 2012; Maurtin-Cairncross, 2014). These barriers are described using metaphors such as *leaky pipelines*, *micro-politics* and *chilly climate*, *sticky floors* and *glass ceilings*. The leaky pipeline is used descriptively and normatively to describe women's progression within organisations. It

is used descriptively to characterise women declining from the system or stagnating in their professions. Normatively, it suggests an unavoidable gap between policy reform and organisational change, with gender equality ultimately achieved in the end (Allen & Castleman, 2001). Akubue (2016, p. 53) noted that women face an invisible barrier that inhibits them from climbing to the top management position. Jones et al. (2012) and Reilly (2013) explored the chilly climate that silences women in subtle ways. Lantz (2008) argued that gendered assumptions, stereotypes, and unwritten rules contribute to women's underrepresentation in leadership positions. Maruzani (2013) demonstrated that gender discrimination, in the form of gender stereotypes and sexism, undermines women's appointment into leadership positions. According to the glass ceiling theory, obstacles exist in female professions' advancement due to gender stereotypes (Woods, 2015). Alev et al. (2010) clarified that higher reputation and income-attributed performance is based on male characteristics and roles because males and females have adopted stereotypical responses motivated by their gender. Salas-Lopez et al. (2011) and Herrera et al. (2012) pointed out how social structures discourage career-engaged women from ascending the ranks. According to the authors, a small number of women in high-ranking roles have embraced the institutionalised conventional male-dominated organisational culture that promotes male ego and gender stereotypes.

Lack of mentoring for women was identified as a contributory factor to the low number of women in higher education (Ali & Coate, 2013). According to Ogbogu (2011), mentoring has a chain-building effect, enhancing self-confidence and creating career awareness that aids academic promotion. An excellent example is the New Zealand Women in Leadership (NZWIL) program which have increased women's self-confidence and networking skills, enabling them to apply for promotion and gain it (Harris & Leberman, 2012). Ogbogu (2011), however, indicated that gender disparity in academia would continue for a long time due to the lack of female mentorship in Nigeria. Additionally, Ely et al. (2011) argued that the shortage of women in top management roles has made them inadequate as role models, making role modelling challenging for young leadership aspirants.

Existing research on networks has focused on inequalities in the networks of people with different social identities, such as age, sex, ethnicity, social class and gender (Ibarra et al., 2010; McGuire, 2012; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Studies have shown that, while men have greater exposure and access to higher-status sponsors and supporters, strategic network partners and strong coalitions, women face obstacles to networking due to family commitments, time constraints and unwillingness to participate in network activities (Forret &

Dougherty, 2001; Linehan, 2001; Tonge, 2008). Scholars argue that the lack of access to network circles impede women's career advancement opportunities (D'Exelle & Holvoet, 2011; Woods, 2015). Ely et al. (2011) found that men and women made different use of their networks. According to the authors, women's approaches to networking are partly pragmatic, with men being better resourced. The culture of organisations, including universities, can be a challenge for women's networking (Pritchard, 2010). Berry and Franks (2010) reported that women are often not given opportunities to practise what they are good at, especially when the organisation's male-dominated culture impacts on their advancement. By selecting those "with common attributes and characteristics to oneself", strong male-based networks operate (Grummell et al., 2009, p. 335; White, 2013) and often exclude women. D'Exelle and Holvoet (2011) found that networks perform the gatekeeper's functions by maintaining the status quo—traditional norms and organisational cultures that strengthen society's stereotypical perceptions. Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) illustrated the concept of gender and networking as social activities by explaining how networking is gendered, that is, how gender networking produces, enhances or counteracts systemic gender differences. According to the authors, the lack of knowledge of routinised gender norms in networking is a significant reason why systemic gender disparities persist. Practices aimed at counteracting inequalities are not always effective because they usually have unintended consequences, such as creating new inequalities (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012).

Scholars have found the concept of institutional resistance useful in analysing opposition and failed attempts at gender equality policy adoption (Bergqvist et al., 2013). Mergaert and Lombardo (2014) discussed resistance to gender initiatives in the European Union (EU) research policy using Feminist Institutionalism theory. The authors demonstrated that implementation had been hindered by individual and institutional resistance to gender mainstreaming. According to them, an organisation's culture, whether open or closed to gender equality, has repercussions for the degree of opposition faced in the gender mainstreaming implementation. Similarly, Stratigaki (2005) presented empirical evidence of institutional resistance to gender change within the European Council, suggesting that the potential for more radical gender mainstreaming has generated a strong resistance. Male-dominated decision-making bodies embraced the gender mainstreaming agenda and responded by eroding positive actions, thereby undermining the gender equality project. Where institutions have cultures that support male rights and power, gender mainstreaming initiatives can run up against opposition.

Morley (1999) and Pyke (2013) explored the issues of micropolitics. They theorised how power is exercised informally and subtextually in organisations by exposing how the informal relays of power alienate and exclude women. Morley (2006) pointed out universities' gendered micropolitics, which are subtle and nuanced ways of discrimination. Micropolitical practices in academia denote 'actions, relations and perceptions which reflect the operation of informal power and impacts on academic recruitment/progression' (O'Connor et al. 2017, p. 4; Sümer et al. 2020, p. 16). As Currie et al. (2002, p. 4) stated, "many people working at universities are in a state of denial about how women are handled in most universities around the world." Carvalho et al. (2012) argued that the assumption that universities are impartial institutions where men and women are expected to succeed based on qualifications; makes *veiled* prejudice more invisible. The subtle nature of gender inequalities in universities has become more institutionalised and challenging for women. Kjeldal et al. (2005) explored how deeply gendered workplace structures and behaviours exist within formalised equity policy guidelines, highlighting how assumed gender-neutral practices are highly gendered and disadvantageous for women. Universities are trying to create equal opportunities by removing systemic institutional barriers through formal policies; however, informal rules and practices still exist, affecting women and men (Kolb et al., 2003; Longe, 2013). Van den Brink et al. (2010) argued that gender equality is often difficult to enhance due to the presence of multi-faceted gender inequality practices, especially in a traditional male academic setting with weighty traditions and *thick* values. In Nigeria, scholars have argued for the promulgation of gender-friendly policies to advance women to leadership positions and approach gender discrimination with more institutional backing (Aladejana & Aladejana, 2005; Bakari & Leach, 2007; Ogbogu, 2009, 2013b; Muoghalu, 2010). While there have been attempts by some universities in Nigeria to address gender disparities in academic leadership, Muoghalu and Eboiyehi (2018) argued that these interventions have been unsuccessful in enhancing gender equity at the universities where it was adopted.

2.4 Research Gaps

While the five barriers explained above have been identified by scholars investigating the Nigerian situation, to date, less attention has been given to the significance of institutional context. Exploring the university system as an institution embedded in colonial history with patriarchal traditions and imported rules and norms that serve as a barrier to women's academic leadership is an underexplored area. In this section and subsequent chapters, I explore in more depth how FI literature is applied to the higher education context to identify the connections between the barriers identified in the key studies and to uncover why gender

equity policies have failed to gain traction for women's progression to academic leadership positions.

The underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions is, by now, a well-documented phenomenon. Research in the field of gender and higher education has focused increasingly on the exclusion and discrimination of women in academic leadership positions (Aiston & Fo, 2020; Allen & Flood, 2018; Bagihole & White, 2011; Currie et al., 2002; Mabokela & Mlambo, 2017; Morley, 2012a; Probert, 2005; Singh, 2008b; White, 2003; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2013). While the importance of women's underrepresentation is widely recognised, only a few systematic studies into the gendered nature and institutional dynamics of women's underrepresentation in Nigerian universities exist. The literature on women's underrepresentation in Nigeria has generally addressed women's relative exclusion from the formal leadership sphere and the causal variables that hinder women from progressing at the same rate as their male counterparts. For example, Akinsanya (2012), Aina (2014), Odejide (2003), Ogbogu (2011) and Olaogun et al. (2015) examined the political and patriarchal influences impacting formal university policies in Nigeria higher education. Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012) explored gender issues in the formal recruitment and selection practices of Nigerian universities. Aina (2013) offered a critical examination of policies on gender equity for actual transformational shifts within Nigeria higher education. Even though research in each of these areas yielded important insights into women's underrepresentation, the role of formal gender policy measures, gender stakeholders and informal institutional practices remain largely unexplored.

Recent trends have challenged previous assumptions and pointed to new research directions (Mackay, 2004). According to Mackay and Waylen (2009), research exploring women's underrepresentation has taken an "institutionalist turn," with scholars calling attention to investigating the role institutions play in the allocation and (re)distribution of resources and how the ordering power and authority are constituted, legitimated, exercised and controlled. In effect, the environment becomes structured through the *rules of the game*, providing norms and codes of behaviour that enable or constrain actors and open up or close down opportunities for women (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). From the literature reviewed, it is apparent that there are complex and connected causes as to why women have not advanced at the same rates as their male colleagues. However, what is missing from these studies is the gendered nature and institutional dynamics of women's underrepresentation in academic leadership positions. Studies conducted to date have not addressed the questions of why and how the gender policy and implementation practices of some universities have failed to

achieve intended outcomes. While research on informal institutions conducted by feminist scholars has mainly involved the political arena (Bjarnegarg & Kenny, 2015; Brunner, 2013; Chappell, 2011; Galea et al. 2014; Kenny, 2011, 2013a; Mackay, 2009; Waylen, 2013, 2014, 2017), an in-depth study of informal institutional frameworks in Nigeria is almost non-existent. Besides, Nigeria's institutional discourses have concentrated primarily on systemic structural and cultural inequalities that are slowly holding women back regarding their career development to leadership positions. There is scope for further investigation regarding whether institutional practices limit formal gender policies' capacity to achieve institutional gender change and advance women to academic leadership. It is worth noting that this study does not focus on the informal political arena; instead, it aims to explore the Nigerian university setting where power dynamics and small "p" politics operate.

This study argues that the gender culture in Nigerian universities' is constructed around a "masculinities or male-oriented paradigm" (Brunner, 2013; Connell, 1995, p. 77). The significance attached to masculinity, in effect, influences institutional policies and practices. This study investigates the norms and practices dominant in Nigerian universities to understand why men continue to hold more privileged positions than women. This study argues that the emphasis on academic leadership as a male position provides an outlet for demonstrating masculinity, thereby perpetuating informal norms with negative consequences for women. Hooper suggested that denigrating femininity is "a strong instrument in constructing and sustaining masculine hierarchies" (Hooper, 2001, p. 71). The key point is that, while formal gender policies are in place, the informal norms in universities in Nigeria are especially resistant to change, thus playing an important role in the academic gender regime structure. The friction between formal rules and informal norms explains why women are marginalised compared to men.

The literature review on women and academic leadership in Nigeria suggests a significant gap in research regarding gender equity policy, institutions, and actors within the universities. As such, a more in-depth analysis, especially from a gendered perspective, becomes imperative. In Nigeria, current discourses have not given enough attention to the informal rules and norms underpinning universities' operations. Specifically, questions around the role of informal institutions in constraining or enabling women's advancement to academic leadership positions have not been explored. This includes how gender norms operate within universities and limits to institutional gender change. The intractability of gender inequalities in academic leadership positions calls for a fresh approach to explain why existing formal gender policies have failed to ameliorate the situation. To address this weakness, FI 'is utilised in this study to

examine the gendered institutional dynamics of academic leadership and the complex interplay of formal and informal institutions in Nigerian universities. This provides a means for understanding the lack of institutional impact of gender policies and the persistent gender imbalance in Nigerian academic leadership positions. For the most part, the primary concern is to interrogate how efforts at institutional gender change are subverted, and in turn, how this affects opportunities for academic leadership progression of women in Nigerian universities.

In this study, I emphasise the institutional salience of gender and utilise this as a primary category in analysing the rules, policies, and practices within Nigerian universities. Given this, I have purposefully chosen FI as the theoretical framework for this study. The FI framework fits my contention that gender is a significant organising principle of academic institutions in Nigeria and operates in both visible and invisible ways. The following section presents the theoretical aspects of FI and examines FI's value in exploring the persistent underrepresentation of women in Nigerian universities' academic leadership positions.

2.5 Feminist Institutionalism

FI is a synthesis of New Institutionalism (NI) and feminist political science. It specifically highlights gender as a fundamental institutional element and explores ways of challenging the dynamics of power and change (Kenny & Mackay, 2009; Weiner & MacRae, 2014). NI has been a valuable approach for examining the relations between institutional characteristics and agency (Hall & Taylor, 1996; March & Olsen, 2006), focusing on informal conventions, as well as formal rules and interactions between institutions and actors (Lowndes, 2010, p. 71). NI emerged in the late 20th century after the behavioural revolution, which attempted to convey a more scientific approach to criticise traditional institutionalism, which focused mainly on formal rules (Lowndes, 2010, p. 67). According to Chappell and Waylen (2013), NI demonstrates that the *rules of the games* are critical to organising institutions, restricting and empowering actors and influencing outcomes. However, the authors established that NI's overemphasis on formal rules is a major weakness, especially with less attention placed on how informal rules function alongside formal structures to influence actors and outcomes. According to Kenny, the NI literature pays little attention to the gendered foundations of institutional norms, usually failing to understand that institutional norms often prescribe *appropriate* male and female modes of behaviour, rules and values for men and women with institutions (2013a). It failed to account for the gender mechanisms that operate within institutions, thus undermining the possible role of gender differences in the broader institutional process (McBride & Mazur, 2010).

Dominant approaches utilised by scholars in understanding gender relations include traditional institutional theories, which focus on formal institutional barriers (Acker, 2006a; Bagilhole, 2002a; Bergmann, 2005; Eveline, 2005), and neoliberal viewpoints, which emphasise individual agency and how inequality is an outcome of individual decision making (Hakim, 2000, 2004). Other studies highlighted by scholars on women in higher education incorporate globalisation theories focusing on higher education changes and broader economic change. It examined how gender differences are replicated through higher education reform processes and broader economic change (Eveline, 2005; Morley, 2005a; Thornton, 2004; Vu & Doughney, 2006). While containing important insights, these approaches are unhelpful in understanding the institutional dynamics of inclusion and exclusion from an informal context or exposing women's hidden lives in universities. None offers an adequate explanation of gender discrimination in terms of the role informal institutions play in reproducing women's relative disadvantage or advantage. Mainstream literature from the United Kingdom (UK) used a practical, pragmatic approach to investigate the informal rules. This is exemplified by David Richards and Martin Smith's (2004) work, which examined common notions within the UK civil service, such as the public service ethos and political neutrality. Despite acknowledging unequal power structures and systemic gender inequality, they do not specifically discuss gender as an essential component of these ideas and processes. The study gave a great deal of primacy to actors, their norms and practices. It excluded the institutional context they work within, thus, "underplaying power disparities, hierarchies and structures operating around gender" (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 609). To address this weakness, FI is employed as a framework for this study. Feminist scholars have sought to synthesise feminist insights with NI theory by explicitly addressing the following central themes, which are valuable for this research: (1) gendered institutions; (2) institutional change and continuity; and (3) gendered power relations (Kenny, 2007; Krook & Mackay, 2011; Mackay & Meier, 2003; Mackay & Waylen, 2009; Mackay et al., 2010; Waylen, 2014).

Gendered Institutions

The central contention of feminist scholars is that all institutions are gendered (Krook & Mackay, 2011). Institutions are seen as the rules of the game: the rules, norms and practices that regulate political, social and economic life (Chappell, 2002, 2006; Mackay, 2009). Gender not only exists at the subjective or interpersonal level in which humans classify and organise their relationships with others; it is also a function of institutions and social structures (Mackay et al., 2010). Gender relations have been increasingly conceptualised as social systems, as new conceptions of gender have slowly shifted feminist study from an individual level towards institutional analysis. Gender relations are not only seen as institutional but also

institutionalised, rooted in specific institutional structures, controlling and influencing social interaction (Kenny, 2007). Institutions create standard gender norms and behaviours through the everyday activities of "doing gender" that are considered acceptable in each institutional context (Cavaghan, 2015; Mergaeret et al., 2014).

Feminist research has highlighted how institutional arrangements are gendered (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Gains & Lowndes, 2018; Wagle et al., 2020; Waylen, 2011). A gendered institution implies that gender is present in the practices, ideologies, and distribution of power and play out within institutions' daily logic and practice (Acker, 2006a). Feminist accounts of institutions have shown that the rules of the game, both formal and informal, are gendered because they prescribe suitable male and female modes of conduct, laws, and values within institutions for men and women (Chappell, 2002, 2006; Mackay et al., 2010). Institutions are designed and structured by gendered expectations (Annesley & Gains, 2010; Weldon, 2002), resulting in outcomes shaped by gendered criteria. Such outcomes, in effect, help to reproduce broader perceptions of social gender expectations. As Grace (2011, p. 98) stated, a gendered policy outcome denotes how "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action, meaning and identity, are shaped in terms of the contradiction between men and women". To say that an institution is gendered means that the "constructions of masculinity and femininity are enmeshed in the daily culture or 'logic' of institutions rather than 'existing in society or being defined within individuals, which they then carry to the institution as a whole" (Kenny, 2007, p. 93). While femininity and masculinity constructions are present in societies, the masculine ideal underpins social frameworks, norms, and behaviours, influencing behavioural patterns and ways of valuing things (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013; Tamerius, 2010).

In a particular institutional environment, there are formal and informal dimensions, which define appropriate action. It includes rules developed, communicated and implemented via widely recognised official channels (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). Formal institutions are characterised by "consciously designed and clearly defined" codifying rules (Lauth, 2000, p. 24; Lowndes, 2005, p. 292; Pejovich, 2006) and vary in form from constitutions, statutes and bylaws to individual contracts and organisational guidelines (North, 1990, p. 47). According to Chappell (2012), formal structures are often delineated by the complexity of implementation since formal rules include measures to identify non-compliance, the degree of rule breach, and procedures for punishing offenders (North 1990, p. 48). A third party typically undertakes official compliance in formal institutions, which gives it legitimacy (Streeck & Thelen 2005, pp. 10–11). Identifying systematic implementation of formal gender rules across officially accepted channels and the forms women are deliberately or

unintentionally discriminated against is relatively easy. Challenges to formal rules such as these are sanctioned, and punishments are applied when rules are violated. According to Chappell and Waylen (2013), applying formal rules creates both intended and unintended gendered implications. For example, the authors noted that reforming formal rules may create an official standoff against gender inequality but may not eliminate all institutionalised forms of male sexism (because informal structures, gender norms, and the hierarchical relationships under which they function are not wiped out by changes under formal rules). As the authors argued, while gender norms can be eliminated from formal frameworks such as implementing equal employment opportunity policies, earlier gender rules can survive informally and continue to uphold the exact (old) expectations and power structures. So, where formal rules are modified, informal rules may continue to work in conflict with the formal rules.

Informal institutions are more difficult to describe, especially because they integrate "socially transmitted laws, normally unwritten, developed, communicated and applied beyond the purview of officially approved networks" (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). Such rules are concealed and rooted in everyday activities, disguised as normal and taken for granted. It is these features that make informal structures not only hard to define but also *sticky* and resistant to change. Scholars have emphasised the customary aspect in defining informal institutions (Casson et al., 2010), especially the traditionally transmitted information and heritage called *culture* (North, 1990, p. 37), which are the customs, rituals, moral principles, religious beliefs, and all other standards of behaviour that have passed the test of time (Pejovich, 1999, p. 166). Informal institutions are viewed as traditional instead of modern and primarily operate outside the formal institutions. As with formal institutions, the way informal institutions are applied is a distinguishing feature. Enforcement is carried out through self-evaluation and execution by internal actors (Lauth, 2004). For example, it can be enforced by individuals such as clan leaders and even by the state itself in cases of official corruption (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). Helmke and Levitsky (2006) argued that sanctions and compliance behaviour cannot even be called into question, thus enabling certain informal institutions' invisibility. According to these authors, informal institutions range from bureaucratic traditions to clientelism, which plays vital roles when coexisting with or interacting with formal institutions. They provide a typology of the power of informal institutions, stating that informal institutions can play the role of either competing (if incompatible with formal rules) or substitutive (if results largely align with those of the formal institution) where formal institutions are ineffective (Helmke & Levitsky 2004, 2006).

FI emphasises the interplay between formal and informal institutions, pointing out how informal institutions reinforce formal institutions and prove to be especially resistant to change. According to Kenny (2013a), feminist institutionalist scholars are paying more systematic attention to informal norms and behaviours as structures and have explored their interplay with formal structures to understand differences in the outcomes of gender equality. Scholars have argued that, while formal and informal organisations can be analytically distinct, they are closely related (Azari & Smith, 2012; Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Grzymala-Busse, 2010). Informal institutions are evolving and functioning in constant interaction with formal institutions. On the one hand, where there is a good match and close overlap between the old formal and the new informal, rules-in-use will reinforce change. These protocols, in effect, ensure strict adherence to standard procedures. On the other hand, informal conventions may circumvent formal requirements (maybe in the face of changes to formal arrangements) or coexist alongside formal arrangements as a parallel institutional structure.

Feminist studies have drawn attention to how formal and informal organisations interact in ways that influence gendered outcomes. For example, Susan Franceschet's (2011) research, which analysed the gender analysis of women's political participation in Argentina and Chile, showed how the interplay between formal and informal institutions facilitates or inhibits positive and progressive women's policy outcomes. The author argued that interactions have gender-based implications which affect women and men differently as social actors and create distinctly gendered results. For example, in Chile's case, informal norms such as finding consensus and avoiding confrontation strengthened traditional gender relations and mobilised prejudices to keep particular problems off the policy agenda (2011, pp. 71–73). Consequently, female lawmakers in Chile face considerable constraints in acting on their gender preference because informal norms encourage lawmakers to avoid addressing potentially polarising issues, particularly reproductive rights for women (Kenny, 2013b. Although gender norms may work with, or against, formal institutions to enshrine gender inequality, male bias can also potentially be destabilised (Banazsak & Weldon, 2011). According to Chappell and Waylen (2013), this process could give new opportunities for those disadvantaged by previous institutional arrangements. For example, the authors noted that implementing parental leave for men entails improvements to informal rules followed by reciprocal changes to informal rules and norms that promote formal rule change. The consequences of interactions between formal and informal rules and standards are complex and need to be explained through in-depth, context-specific research (Chappell & Waylen, 2013).

Institutional Change and Continuity

FI draws attention to the gendered aspects of institutional reproduction and resistance, documenting the specific challenges of institutionalising equality policies and illustrating how gender norms and traditions are enforced in institutional design and operation (Kenny, 2013a). Kenny examined the fundamental continuities of political recruitment and explained the unique and gendered difficulties of institutionalising a new gender-balanced strategy within pre-existing institutional contexts. She pointed out that elements of the 'old' and the 'new' tend to coexist, shaping and constraining one another (2009, p. 58). Although the central contention of feminist institutionalism is that constructions of masculinity and femininity are entangled in the daily life or logic of political institutions, the masculine ideal underpins institutional structures, traditions and norms. It influences institutions in cross-cutting ways and at several institutional levels and also limits the expression and articulation of marginalised perspectives (Kenny, 2007; Kronsell, 2016; Mackay et al., 2010, p. 580). For example, Katzenstein (1999), cited in Kenny (2007), analysed feminist activism in the military and Roman Catholic church. The author emphasised the importance of interaction between social actors, institutions and gender norms. In her research, she demonstrated how the formal rules played a normative role in male-dominated societies by establishing and preserving space for feminist agitation while also shaping how feminist activists see themselves and prioritise their agenda. A feminist institutionalist study that examined how institutions can be resistance sites included Chappell's research on the International Criminal Court describing the gendered "silences" and "inactions" (Chappell, 2014a, 2015). FI work maps out the dynamics of resistance and backlash, highlighting the active ways actors counter and obstruct gendered institutional change through new formal rules (Kenny, 2013b; Krook, 2016; Mackay, 2014). As Chappell put it, FI can "undo the taken-for-grantedness" of institutions to reveal the extent to which what is portrayed as "neutral" is actually gendered (Chappell, 2002, p. 11).

FI also draws on "historical institutionalism" to problematise the idea of path dependence, which demonstrates how change is a gendered mechanism, with 'gendered legacies' and distinct barriers to feminist policy reform (Mackay, 2011, p. 187). Feminist approaches to institutionalism indicate that there is a need for various interpretations of change, taking the different types of institutions into account—that is, how they work and interact with other institutions in complex institutional environments, different degrees and forms of path dependency, and change trajectories (Kenny, 2013b; Mackay, 2011, p. 188). Feminist institutionalists pay attention to the endogenous causes of institutional change and stasis, such as institutional resistance and reproduction (Kenny, 2011; Mackay, 2009; Minto & Mergaert, 2018; Thomson, 2018). Nevertheless, they also accept that changes in gender relationships or

broader gender norms can be major triggers of externally induced change (Waylen, 2011, p. 2017). Variations in gender structures, norms and practices offer potentially important reasons for institutional outcomes and strategic engagement opportunities (Chappell, 2006; Lovenduski, 1998; McBride & Mazur, 2010). Complex relationships exist over time and space between different types of institutions that shape gendered patterns of advantage and disadvantage (Burns, 2005, p. 139). These legacies and experiences may enable or hinder the establishment of new institutions and change agendas (Mackay, 2014). Pollack noted that institutional choices made in the past continue or become 'locked in', thereby shaping and limiting actors in later times (Pollack, 2005: 364). For example, colonial and patriarchal legacies of prior institutional configurations could still retain a substantial hold on identities in contemporary HE, making them sticky and resistant to change due to the uncertainty related to institutional design. Kenny (2011) pointed out that gender norms and gender relations are particularly sticky institutional legacies to deal with. She argued that gender remains a major means of resisting institutional reforms at both the symbolic level and in day-to-day interaction.

The path-dependence theory suggests that the idea of persistence is formed by the "environment in which they are nested" and by their continuing relationships with other institutions that interlock, overlap, complement, or contradict them (Mackay, 2014, p. 553). Mackay's concept of *nested newness* points to how current gender traditions and legacies influence new institutions, reducing change and innovative prospects. According to her, new institutions are not new because they are often blank slates, where the institutional environment deeply shapes the capacity for new paths. This means that new institutions are primarily informed by past legacies and initial and continuing relationships with existing institutions. In most instances, institutional creation is best understood as a "bounded innovation" within an existing structure (Mackay, 2009, p. 5). In her post-devolution work on Scottish politics, Mackay showed how the Scottish Parliament's institutions are profoundly affected by historical gender legacies and ongoing interactions with existing institutions. The study showed that no institution is a blank slate, whether new or radically reformed. The institutional environment profoundly affects the capacity for new directions, no matter how drastic the break from the past may seem. Institutions always have different creators, often with conflicting ideas and different aims. They are affected by the environment in which they are nested and their ongoing relationships with other institutions (Aggarwal, 2006; Mackay, 2014). Based on historical institutionalist perspectives, Mackay's concept of nested newness indicated that institutions are carriers of diverse interests and ideas, including those from the past, that conflict with and contradict institutional designers' objectives (Chappell, 2011, p.

166; Mackay & McAllister, 2012). Since institutional change and (re)design are "embedded and disputed" processes, it is also especially difficult for designers and reformers to regulate them (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001, p. 643).

Feminist institutionalist scholars frequently stress the importance of "what happens afterwards" (Mackay, 2006, p. 172). The path-dependence claim indicated that moments of change and innovation are followed by a "lock-in", generating self-reinforcing patterns that are strengthened over time (Pierson, 2004, 2016). Institutional reproduction, as already shown, is far from automatic. Instead, institutions need active tendency, ongoing adaptation and adjustment in response to, for example, changes in the environment. Thus, the inability to effectively sustain an institution eventually causes it to collapse rapidly (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 25). Building on these observations, Kenny (2013b) argued that gender equity pioneers re-shaped institutions with varying degrees of success, opening opportunities for greater participation (Annesley, 2010; Beyeler & Annesley, 2011; Freidenvall & Krook, 2011; Grace, 2011). Nevertheless, there is a possibility for constant norm regression, drift and reversal, which creates resistance for women and makes institutionalising gender equity reforms difficult (Halford, 1991, p. 160; O'Connor, 2001). For example, in the International Criminal Court case, Chappell claimed that nothing had changed in the ICC's investigation of gender-based crimes. She showed that the ICC continued to uphold "gender norms that regard women's rights as less important than other rights, and crimes of sexual harassment as less serious than others" (Chappell, 2011, p. 173). In this case, power ties have remained intact because gender changes have been "forgotten" with the old path re-incorporated into existing laws (Leach & Lowndes, 2007, p. 186; Mackay, 2009, 2011). Institutional change processes are constrained by the fact that institutions are instruments of gender distribution that privileges certain actors, strategies and paths over others.

Gendered Power Relations

While power is an analytical component in NI, it is criticised for failing to account for gendered power relations as a critical element in institutional analysis (Kenny & Mackay, 2009). Scholars have expressed their reservations on using NI as an adequate framework for analysing gendered power dynamics (Kenny, 2007; Kenny & Mackay, 2009; Mackay & Meier, 2003; Mackay et al., 2009). Feminist institutionalism showed that institutional power dynamics have a significant gendered dimension, which is usually overlooked in the NI analysis (Mackay et al., 2010). The feminist literature highlights institutional power dynamics, pointing to how power asymmetries are explicitly gendered and how powerful actors anchor their privileged institutional positions (Kenny, 2013a). In particular, institutions are recognised

to reflect and strengthen asymmetric power relations, privileging some groups over others (Kenny, 2007; Kenny & Mackay, 2009). Kenny argued that a feminist institutionalism approach provides valuable insights into power relations, which are often underpinned by new institutional analyses (2007, p. 91).

FI scholars have approached the conceptualisation of institutional power relations more nuancedly. While institutions impose strong constraints on the human agency, they are also the product of a human agency formed through negotiation and conflict (Lovenduski, 1998, 2005b). The overlooked by-product of men's social domination sets the rules of the game, allowing them to "structure institutions, establish laws, legitimise specific expertise and develop moral codes that shape culture in ways which preserve control over women" (Addabbo et al., 2018, p. 63; Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995). Even officially codified systems remain ambiguous and subject to confusion and conflict (Skowronek & Glassman, 2008). There is also a lot of action in the conceptual context of specific rules and how institutions are enforced regularly (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

Lovenduski's (2005b) study on gendering institutions stressed the importance of recognising gender power relationships within organisations and how gender is integrated into the organisational culture. Feminist institutionalism focuses on the representation of structural norms, beliefs, and procedures, demonstrating how gendered bodies undermine and question hierarchies of institutional power (Childs, 2004; Hawkesworth, 2003). For example, Mackay pointed out the possibility of "rewriting the gendered coding of political norms as paradigmatically masculine" (2008, p. 130), demonstrating how women's bodies have become a standardised feature of the Scottish post-devolutionary politics (Mackay, 2006; Mackay & Meier, 2003). The "gaps" and "lax spots" between institutions and their actual interpretation, implementation, and compliance provide room for institutional actors to disrupt and question institutional power relations. Strategic actors also seek to interpret formal rules in their interest or try to circumvent or subvert institutional structures that clash with their interests (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 27). Chappell (2002) argued that, although institutions are not solely male interests, they often exploit women. This is because public life has permitted a series of male-centred hierarchical practices to emerge without notice or protest (Lovenduski, 2005b, p. 27). Not only are masculinist attitudes and values defined as central to the functioning of public institutions, but these are also deeply entrenched and invisible. For example, Chappell argued that the expectations within Westminster style bureaucracies such as merit, neutrality, and career service are profoundly gendered. What is preferred is a masculine picture of a moral, independent, and impartial public servant with a full-time and continuous work record. These

gender stereotypes have made it impossible for women to rise in these bureaucracies' ranks and contribute to policy decisions and outcomes that disregard gender inequalities (Chappell, 2002, 2006, p. 228). While gendered power dynamics are present across institutions, they are also institutionally specific. The construction of masculinity and femininity and how this determines what resources are distributed is dependent on the institutional setting (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 602; Kenny, 2013a, p. 37). Attributes that are considered masculine and feminine and how these are intimately associated vary across class, race, culture and time. Thus, FI redirects attention to "institutions as a major determining variable shaping feminist strategies" (Chappell, 2002, p. 8; Findlay, 2015).

Why Feminist Institutionalism?

In this thesis, I used FI as the baseline for examining gender inequality in academic leadership in Nigerian Universities. FI provided the most practical approach to this study. It provided the framework needed to understand why formal gender equality policies—such as efforts to advance women to academic leadership positions—often fail to produce their intended impacts. Feminist work on gender and institutions suggests that gender is an issue that exists in all institutions (Wagle, 2019). Given this, a gender analysis of the formal and informal institutional dimensions of Nigerian universities is essential. It sheds insight into institutional change and continuity, and power relations that facilitate the continued underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigeria. The role of formal and informal institutions and their interplay is an important component of feminist institutionalism (Wagle et al., 2020). Formal and informal institutions provide rules and norms that either constrain or motivate actors to achieve institutional goals (North, 1990). Even though FI acknowledges both formal and informal institutions' roles as central to institutional processes and outcomes, it encourages feminist researchers to examine both types of institutions in isolation (Wagle et al., 2020; Zenger et al., 2000). While the formal institution is relatively easy to identify and target, informal institutions are more difficult to detect as they are generally (although not always) hidden from the public eye. Thus, they may not be subject to scrutiny from the public, women's movements or institutional designers. Formal rules about gender can survive in an informal guise and continue to operate to "enforce the exact (old) expectations, relationships, and power structures" (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 607). Even if informal institutions are known by the public and institutional designers, they may not be considered gendered. The taken-for-granted nature may leave them bypassed as an object of reform.

One of FI's advantages is its flexibility in analysing formal and informal institutions independently or interdependently. In this study, FI provides a baseline for analysing formal

institutions (gender policies) and informal institutions (gender norms and practices). On the one hand, it specifically explores the formal dimensions of universities' approach to gender equity, i.e., the existence and adoption of gender equity policies, established structures and specified rules and procedures, quality practice, gender accountability, monitoring and compliance. It helps determine whether formal rules (in this case, gender equity policies) are actively maintained or enforced in Nigerian universities. On the other hand, FI deepens understanding of the informal dimensions of the universities' gender equity practices, revealing specific gender norms prevalent within the universities which undermine women's advancement and indicate the role of gender stakeholders in limiting institutional gender change. An exploration of formal and informal institutions, using FI as a theoretical framework, provides a critical perspective/ answers to questions such as: why have gender equity policies failed to advance women to academic leadership positions? What are the prevalent informal norms and practices in Nigerian universities? How do these informal norms and practices subvert the intent of formal gender policies and undermine women's advancement? Why has the prospect for institutional gender change remained futile in some universities? Why are women excluded from institutional leadership structures and processes?

FI stresses the importance of informal institutions by emphasising the effect of gender norms and traditions on formal institutions' functioning and interaction. Mackay et al. (2010, p. 576) pointed out that "the specific influence of informal institutions and the interplay between formal and informal institutions have not been fully brought to the forefront" in gendered and non-gendered institutional analysis. An FI approach highlights the need to consider a continuum from highly formal to informal (Bjarnegard & Kenny, 2015; Kenny, 2013b). According to Evans and Kenny (2020), on the one hand, informal practices may reinforce change and ensure compliance or conflict with formal rules on the other hand. Informal norms and practices override formal rule changes or exist alongside formal arrangements as a parallel institutional framework (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006). Informal networks are also "mobilised in favour of women, to push for policy change" (Piscopo, 2016). Understanding the interaction between formal and informal dimensions is crucial for investigating how informal structures complement, compete with, subvert or even substitute formal rules (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006, p. 12) in Nigerian universities. It is also useful in investigating how actors mobilise informal rules to resist formal rule changes or utilise them for their interests (Bjarnegard & Kenny, 2015; Hinojosa, 2012). Thus, an investigation into the interplay of formal and informal institutions in Nigerian universities unveils women's attempts at disrupting the existing gender status quo.

A feminist institutionalist lens uncovers the machinations of gendered power as both institutional—that is, playing out within institutions—and institutionalised, i.e., incorporated in formal (written rules and policies) and informal institutional structures. FI recognises that there are processes relating to the production and reinforcement of asymmetrical power relationships among different actors (Kenny & Mackay, 2009). Exploring how and where these different power structures operate and interact, and their influence enhances our understanding of the dynamics of institutional continuity and change in Nigerian universities. FI employs the path dependency theory of historical institutionalism, which shows the historicity of power relations. That is, the historical path institutions have taken over time, making them *sticky* and resistant to change (Waylen, 2014). The path-dependent perspectives help understand how patriarchal legacies permeating Nigerian universities have placed women at disadvantaged positions for leadership and why equity policies have not levelled the playing field. To understand male supremacy (through holding academic positions of power) in Nigerian universities, it is necessary to analyse power relations from a gendered perspective. FI provides valuable insight into the complexities of inclusion or exclusion (Kenny, 2007) and how power dynamics sustain women's exclusion from policy and decision-making processes in Nigerian universities. FI, thus, provides a framework for understanding purposeful attempts at gendered change, that is, how and why attempts to create new, gender-friendly institutions often fail. FI provides the tools needed for analysing gender issues in institutional change processes from a feminist perspective (Kenny & Mackay, 2009).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter traced the historical development of women's underrepresentation in Nigerian universities. It reviewed key strands of Nigerian and international scholarship explaining the absence of women in leadership positions. The chapter also explored FI as a core theoretical framework, providing critical insights into key FI perspectives of gender, institutions (formal and informal), change and power. It further discussed the value of FI for this study. To understand the continued underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities, this chapter argued that FI offers compelling conceptual tools to explore the research question and guide the analysis of document and interview data. The feminist research methodology employed in this thesis is discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

Scholars have argued that new approaches, conceptual tools and methods are needed to provide deeper insights into the gendered modes of interaction and expose how seemingly neutral institutional processes and practices are gendered (Kenny, 2007, 2009; Lovenduski, 1998, 2005a; Mackay, 2004). As Krook and Squires (2006, p. 45) argued, there is "no distinctive feminist methodology"; rather, a range of diverse perspectives or feminist positions are often incorporated together. A variety of methods can be used to answer particular feminist inquiries, with each revealing gendered power dynamics in ways that others may not (Ackerly & True, 2013). Feminist researchers look to make a difference in women's lives through social and individual change (Brunner, 2013). They are concerned with challenging the silences in mainstream research about the "issues studied and how the study is undertaken" (Letherby, 2003, p. 4). This chapter highlights new orientations for feminist work on gender equity and academic institutions, and draws on these to select the specific methods and tools that I use in this study of Higher Education in Nigeria.

In traditional research, women were regarded as *others* because they were neither male nor the norm (Letherby, 2003, p. 6). As discussed in Chapter Two, the university is seen as a traditionally male occupation, and women have rarely been visible in academic leadership in Nigeria. Feminist research changes that by concentrating on the specific experiences of women and providing a voice. Wanca-Thibault and Tompkins (1998) emphasised the significance of feminist research and its value in reframing a research field. For example, reframing an institution as a site of domination and power problematises privileged forms of leadership. Feminist researchers need to question "who has the power to know what, and how power is implicated" in institutional processes (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 13). This thesis acknowledges women's historical and current place in a patriarchal society like Nigeria and seeks to understand their position within the broader academic institution. The feminist perspective is the best way to approach this study because of its value in changing women's positions positively and by providing an avenue for their experiences to be heard by university management and policymakers. In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the methodology and research design that guide this study. Specifically, I describe the research methods and process, including the sampling techniques, data-collection methods, data analysis, and validity and reliability issues. I also discuss my positioning and self-identification as a researcher and how this has influenced my research approach.

3.1 Feminist Qualitative Research

Feminist research takes a *problem*-driven approach rather than a method-driven one, employing a broad range of theoretical and methodological frames and synthesising different methods innovatively to answer specific questions (Krook & Squires, 2006; Mackay, 2004; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). As such, feminist researchers are open to combining traditional positivist tools and methods with interpretive methods, often for strategic reasons (Childs & Krook, 2006a; Mazur, 2004). They also draw on tools and methods from other disciplines (Kenny, 2013a; Krook & Squires, 2006; Mackay, 2004; Randall, 2002; Tickner, 2005). Therefore, feminist research is generally characterised by methodological pluralism, "an eclectic and open-minded approach to methodological issues" (Childs & Krook, 2006a: 23; Kenny, 2013a; MacRae & Weiner, 2021).

The shift from individual to institutional analysis has significant methodological implications (Kenny, 2013a). The institutional turn has raised new questions and research directions, thus, provoking a reconsideration of appropriate methods and frameworks (Lovenduski, 1998; Mackay, 2004; Randall, 2002) to capture the complex and relational understandings of gender (Lovenduski, 1998, p. 335; Mackay, 2004a; Randall, 2002). Debates in the field have highlighted the perceived shortcomings of standard methods and frameworks, arguing that behavioural measures are "particularly ill-equipped to deal with 'messy' and 'complex' issues of gender" (Mackay, 2004, p. 110; Randall, 2002). Quantitative methods are considered problematic due to their confusing interpretation of *gender* with *sex* and reporting findings as gender when only information about sex is obtained (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995). This does not imply that quantitative methods or conventional methodological frameworks are irrelevant in feminist institutionalist research. Instead, feminist scholars suggest a reconceptualised and clearer understanding can be advanced when using a gendered framework to analyse underlying assumptions (Lovenduski, 1998; Mackay, 2004).

A feminist qualitative method adequately captures "meanings and interactions," providing rich and in-depth narratives of women's experiences and perceptions of gender differences (Mackay, 2004, p. 110). The aim of qualitative research is to answer why and how a specific phenomenon may occur instead of *how often* (Berg & Lune, 2012). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research facilitates the exploration of women's lived experiences and subjective views rather than imposing an externally defined view (Maynard, 1994). Qualitative research also provides an opportunity to quote women's views and expressions while analysing the data (Wagle et al., 2020, p. 113). Where the research objective is to capture and understand women's experiences, knowledge, gender and power relationships and

institutional behaviours, the feminist qualitative approach is, arguably, a better approach. The focus on Nigerian universities offers an interesting context for the qualitative approach because gender stakeholders and women in these universities are likely to have peculiar experiences, understandings and perceptions of gender equity and academic leadership. In this study, the knowledge, experiences and views of gender stakeholders and women are explored in relation to the institutionalisation of gender equity and women's progression to academic leadership positions.

Feminist qualitative methods are crucial for understanding what really matters in women's persistent underrepresentation in Nigeria. In this study, textual (policy documents) and verbal (interviews with gender stakeholders and academic women) data were gathered and examined through a gendered lens. Common tools and techniques used for understanding the perceptions of research participants include (but are not limited to): interviews, focus groups, ethnographic studies, questionnaires and social surveys (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). For example, research on gender and organisations generally uses qualitative and historical studies and greatly rely on in-depth case studies (Childs & Krook, 2006b). Most obviously, interviews and ethnographic methods are crucial in revealing the feelings, logic, perspectives, and institutional actors' experiences that other methods simply cannot (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Simons, 2009). These techniques are often in-depth, detailed, time-consuming, and field-intensive (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017); however, they are crucial in recognising the contextually specific ways in which informal institutions undermine women's progression. In this study, the interview data are utilised as primary information, while the policy documents are secondary data sources. The participants' expressed views are interpreted to show how they gave meaning to specific themes.

The use of methods and approaches that facilitate in-depth case studies for gender research, such as interviews, participant observation and process tracing, has been advocated for by feminist and institutionalist scholars (Chappell, 2002, 2006; Childs & Krook, 2006b; Kenny, 2013b). Although there are many ways in which feminist and institutional research are conducted, a case study is most suited to understand the research question at hand. As elaborated in the rest of the thesis, what matters in women's underrepresentation is institutionally and context-specific. Feminist scholars suggested that a flexible multi-method approach that is sensitive to "cultural, spatial, and temporal specificities" is needed to investigate the complexities of gender (Childs & Krook, 2006a, p. 25; Siim, 2004). This is necessary because the interaction between gender and institutions is multifaceted and dynamic (Culhane, 2017). As Lovenduski (1998, p. 350) stated, "the successful application of the

concept of gender to the investigation of institutions must consider the complexities of gender, nature of the particular institution and the kinds of masculinities and femininities that are performed." These dynamics are not wholly transportable to other contexts, considering that gender operates differently across settings. While case studies offer clear benefits for studying the informal and power and gender, its subject of criticism centres on generalisability issues (Abbott, 2001; Pierson, 2004). Scholars have argued that the criticism of generalisability is misplaced, especially if it is based on the assumption that a case study should be judged on the same criteria as survey research (Kenny, 2013b).

A more appropriate approach to case study findings is to recognise the "specifics of individual contexts and allow them transferable across contexts, such that it is possible to draw conclusions that can inform analyses of other cases" (Childs & Krook, 2006b, p. 25; Culhane, 2017). Krook and Mackay's study, for example, drew on several single-case and multi-case studies to establish how institutions and gender interact in similar and converging ways (2011). Similarly, Waylen (2017) combined single-case and multi-case studies, which explicitly use the language of feminist institutionalism and the concept of informal institutions to test and generate an overarching theory. Given this, the case study approach offers an excellent method for examining women's persistent underrepresentation in academic leadership positions. It is useful for highlighting how gendered mechanisms operate within individual cases (universities) and for "discovering and revealing the complexity of interactions that triggers these mechanisms" (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 21–23; also see Sayer, 2000, p. 14). By unpacking the gendered mechanisms, the case studies contribute empirically to the specific context they are situated within and analytically to broader feminist institutionalist theory building. Therefore, the main aim of this research is not to compare the different cases but to identify specific gender mechanisms in the case studies and understand their dynamics with gender equity policies and informal institutions, which can inform other analyses.

As argued previously, feminist research advocates the use of approaches and methods that contextualise gendered meanings and interactions (see pp. 49) to capture the relational dynamics between institutional actors and expose the gendered foundations of seemingly neutral institutional processes, practices, and norms (Childs & Krook, 2006a; Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995; Lovenduski, 1998; Mackay, 2004). In response to these calls, this study proposes a Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated Methodology (FIMM) as suitable for this research. The following section expands on what this approach involves and why it is an appropriate

methodology to translate feminist institutionalism as a theoretical perspective into an empirically oriented research design.

3.2 Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated Methodology (FIIM)

This study's primary aim is to provide a distinct perspective into gender equity policies (formal institutions), gender norms and practices (informal institutions), and the interplay of formal and informal institutions in Nigerian universities. It is imperative to integrate feminist approaches that best investigate and analyse how and why equity policies are gendered and the roles of gender norms and systemic biases, limiting the possibility of institutional gender change and undermining women's progression to academic leadership positions. Thus, the FIIM used in this thesis has been crafted from several frameworks to answer these research questions. My idea of a FIIM is a form of methodological pluralism that draws on FI and two other approaches that focus on feminist policy and feminist-oriented discourse analysis. I integrated FI with the Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FI-FPAF) to analyse gender equity policies, which addresses the *formal* institution. I also integrated FI with Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA) to analyse the interview data which constitute the *informal* institution. By utilising a FIIM, new insights are offered into gender equity policies and academic leadership.

As MacKay et al. (2010, p.580) posited, "one of the central insights of feminist institutionalism is that formal and informal institutions are gendered". Organisational frameworks are developed based on their formal rules and informal culture, which in the long run, shapes human behaviours. An informal culture can either complement the organisation's formal rules or be in tension with them (Brunner, 2013, p. 38). FI argues that the underlying masculine ideal in formal and informal institutions reproduces norms and values that marginalise women and limit the possibility for institutional gender change (Mackay et al., 2011, p. 582). In uncovering how institutions are gendered, feminist institutionalism offers a practical approach to "understanding how formal and informal institutions interact to influence attitudes and behaviour towards women's equality" and how this interaction then shapes the relational space for women (Memusi, 2020, p. 28). FI is undoubtedly important for understanding women's agency. By emphasising gender as a category of analysis, FI allows for a better theorisation of formal and informal institutions' gendered nature and the power relations within and across these institutions (Krook, 2010). Notwithstanding the significant contributions made by FI, some feminist researchers have found it incapable of providing in-depth insight on inequality, power and change in specific contexts or socio-environments

(Findlay, 2015; Memusi, 2020). Findlay pointed out that FI exhibits three weaknesses— "its analysis of power, its conceptualisation of change and agency, and its insular point of reference" (2012, p. 3). In this study, I did not focus on these weaknesses; instead, I incorporated the FPAF and FCDA perspectives to FI to deeply understand the institutional (formal and informal) gendering process in Nigeria academic institutions.

Like Kenny and Mackay (2009), I maintain that feminist research methods can be modified to emphasise the process and extent of gendering and re-gendering of institutions. This is especially useful for this study, as feminist institutionalism does not sufficiently highlight why gender equity policies have failed to achieve their intended goals; the role of gender stakeholders and their varied interests within institutions; how informal institutions subvert formal gender policies; and what the interplay of formal and informal institutions presents for women, especially concerning their advancement to academic leadership positions. As argued in the previous chapter, while formal rules are identifiable (as they are often codified in official documents, constitutions and codes of conduct), informal institutions (the unwritten rules) are difficult to identify and research (Lowndes, 2014; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013; Wagle, 2019). The invisibility of informal institutions has raised the core methodological question of identifying informal institutions and recognising their pervasive importance. As Waylen (2017, p. 4) notes: "informal institutions can often be difficult to perceive… but we know they are there because of the effects they have on other things." Identifying informal institutions and understanding how they shape formal institutions and outcomes requires using techniques that provide an inside view of institutions' hidden lives (Chappell & Waylen, 2013; Lowndes, 2014; Rhodes & Noordegraaf, 2007). As different norm sets govern both formal and informal institutions, in this thesis, I probed how gender norms operate in either sphere, how they shape attitudes and behaviour, and the subsequent power relations that determine the position of women. The idea of formal institutions (rules) and informal institutions (norms and practices) are important to explain women's continued underrepresentation in academic leadership positions.

Since the discussion has highlighted the important role that norms play in institutional settings (formal and informal) and how these privilege specific actors, I take this as an invitation to incorporate an analysis of institutional dimensions and gender norm functions. I employ a range of tools to identify how these formal and informal institutions are gendered and its implication for women's advancement. Unlike most works on feminist institutionalism, this study uses an *integrated* gender lens. This is a unique perspective from other studies that employ FI focusing on institutional change and academic leadership (Bencivenga, 2019;

Clavero & Galligan, 2020; González et al., 2018; O'Connor, 2017, 2020, among others). While FI has engaged with other perspectives such as feminist poststructuralist discourse, feminist political economy and queer theory (Kenny, 2007; Mackay et al., 2009; Smith, 2008; Findlay, 2015; Spary, 2019); an integrated *FI and FPAF* and *FI and FCDA* perspective employed within the realm of higher education is considered rare. Therefore, a FIIM widens the range of analytical influences for this study and provides a broad theoretical underpinning for gender policy research. In the next section, I described the Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FPAF) and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). I highlighted why an integrated FI-FPAF and FI-FCDA approach is vital for this study.

Feminist Policy Analysis Framework

Beverly A. McPhail, in her work, "A feminist policy analysis framework: Through a gendered lens," designed a model to look at policies through a gendered lens by posing a series of viable questions to be asked in feminist analysis. Although McPhail presents the FPAF for use by social workers, she stated that the framework could be used by other analysts in other disciplines (McPhail, 2003); hence making it an ideal analytical framework to analyse university' gender policy documents. The FPAF is grounded in both feminist thoughts and systematic policy research. Thus, it offers a guide— a series of questions- for systematically analysing a policy from a feminist viewpoint (McPhail, 2003, p. 42). The feminist policy analysis framework is not rooted in one feminist theoretical perspective; instead, it contains questions and approaches shared by multiple feminist viewpoints. According to McPhail (2003, p. 45), the FPAF is an action-oriented model with the explicit goal of eliminating women's sexist oppression. An intrinsic feature is the assumption and fundamental belief that "all policies affect women" (Vamos, 2009), thus offering a perfect tool for exploring how policies can serve as a constricting mechanism for women's academic career progression. McPhail (2003) argued that the framework's underlying objectives include identifying silences, exclusions, and stereotypical assumptions about women embedded in any policy that perpetuate traditional patriarchal oppression. She also emphasised that the focus should be on rectifying any discrimination and exposing its existence in current and future policies by providing examples of how men and women are treated differently, highlighting the implicit stereotypes and expectations of women embedded in policies, and recognising how women's lives and roles are controlled and constrained by policies. McPhail's FPAF presents examples of questions that are asked during policy analysis. This falls under ten constructs—equality, special treatment and protection, myths of gender neutrality, multiple identities, context, language, equality/care and rights/responsibilities question, symbolic vs material reforms, role equity vs role change and power (McPhail, 2003, p. 47).

Although the FPAF may not be considered mainstream by some, analyses of policies utilising or adapting constructs or questions outlined in the framework have been identified. For example, policy analysts have found FPAF questions helpful in analysing social and government policies. In analysing the intricacies of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) in California and Texas, Kanenberg (2007) reveals the complex existence of SCHIP as both a women-supporting programme and a women-oppressive gendered programme. Specifically, patriarchal stereotypes about family, household and economy were evident in the SCHIP areas related to eligibility for services and service delivery. In contrast, the study also showed that by promoting women's participation in the labour market, SCHIP challenges traditional androcentric norms of women's reliance on men. Vamos (2009) critically explored the broader political, economic and social factors present within the United States' Title X and what the policy means to women and the larger society. She noticed that family planning policies disproportionately impacted women and children and pointed out that patriarchal views and assumptions dominated the Title X legislation. Royster (2017) examined how university administrators interpret guidelines and enact policies on recent federal legislation combating sexual violence on college campuses. Deploying a feminist policy analysis approach, she examined the difference in interpretation and policy development from the federal guidelines and the effect on current attempts to prevention and response efforts. The author showed that administrators recognised several conflicts resulting from the federal guidance—interpreted federal guidance differently, with respect to which employees are designated mandatory reporters and how they are notified and trained. The research also revealed a discrepancy between survivor agency and institutional obligation to report matters relating to the implementation of guidelines. Dhewy (2017) used the feminist policy analysis framework to expose the shortcomings of RPJMN 2015-2019 and the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan for KPPPA in the use, translation, and implementation of the gender perspective. The author found that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) were not recognised in RPJMN 2015-2019 and KPPPA's Strategic Plan 2015-2019. Moreover, women's issues and other marginalised groups' concerns were eliminated from development agendas due to policies that lean toward a new developmentalism model.

While the feminist policy analysis framework has been used as a single analytical framework, policy analysts and feminist scholars have also integrated it with other frameworks. McPhail's questions implicate a feminist construction of oppression that aims to expose and rectify gender bias in policies. For example, Nyori-Corbett and Moxley (2017) combined the feminist policy analysis and the transnational feminist framework of policy analysis to assess the

Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and its re-authorisation, revealing the TVPA's limitations in addressing the diminished status of poor women in the developing world. Using five questions emanating from McPhail's (2003) framework (Does the legislation value women?; Does the TVPA address gender inequality?; Does the TVPA label women unique or different from men, thereby setting a double standard as a result?; Does the TVPA empower women?; and Is role equity a goal of the TVPA?) the authors explored the extent to which the TVPA is unresponsive to the economic realities that make women in developing countries vulnerable to human trafficking. The study revealed that gendered poverty is the primary cause of human trafficking, and it interacts with other causal factors. Based on their analysis, the authors emphasised the need for a paradigm shift from the criminalisation of victims to one embodying prevention, thus offering considerations for the future re-authorisation of the Act.

Drucza and Rodriguez (2018) provided a feminist policy analysis of seven gender equality policies within Ethiopia's agriculture sector. The authors studied the quality of the agricultural gender policies in Ethiopia through a feminist lens. They discussed how the diverse needs of women working in the country's agricultural sector are enshrined in the policy. A sample of seven policies was chosen based on three selection criteria: a) national policies specific to gender equality; b) national policies from the agricultural sector that relate to gender; and c) current national development plans that govern the agricultural sector. The authors integrated Krizsan and Lombardo's (2013) Frame of analysis to the McPhail (2003) FPAF by adapting Krizsan and Lombardo's quality criteria (which focus on both policy content and policy process) as analytical criteria, with selected questions from McPhail (2003) FPAF as research questions. Seven analytical criteria applied to the policies and questions chosen from the Feminist Policy Analytical Framework (FPAF) were utilised to assess each of these criteria. Table 4 shows a sample of the authors' analysis criteria and questions. The study revealed a little understanding of structural issues resulting from gender-based cultural and social norms and practices. Most of the policy documents studied— especially those related to gender— recognise the presence of gender norms and socio-cultural obstacles that could potentially impede gender equality. However, these norms were not addressed in the policy documents. The authors noted examples of how statutory laws challenge customary laws at the community level, affect the successful implementation of the policy, and hinder women's rights. Evidence also showed that none of the policies incorporated these concerns into their priorities or action plan despite recognising these as risk factors. The results showed that the current strategy is ad-hoc and inadequate to produce the necessary change required to achieve the GTP II goals

of achieving middle-income country status in Ethiopia by 2025. The next section discusses why I utilised the FI-FPAF to analyse the university's gender policy documents.

Table 4: *Analysis Criteria and Questions*

Analysis Criteria	Research Questions
Gendering of the policy	. Does the policy aim for gender equality? . Does the policy include sex-disaggregated data consistently? . Does the policy treat men and women differently in order to achieve gender equality? Does the policy consider gender differences in order to create more equality? . Does any special treatment of women cause unintended or restrictive consequences? Is there an implicit or explicit double standard? . Is the policy defined as 'gender-neutral'? Does the presumed gender neutrality hide the reality of the gendered nature of the problem or solution? . Are gender stereotypes challenged or reinforced? . Is gender mainstreamed throughout the document relegated to a separate section?

Source: Drucza and Rodriguez (2018).

Why FI-FPAF Approach?

This thesis employed the integrated FI-FPAF approach to analyse policy documents. It is used as an integrating framework for examining gender equity policies. Working from the evidence presented earlier in the thesis that a wide gender disparity exists between men and women in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities, there is a lack of research that critically examines the content of the university gender policy in Nigerian universities, with a feminist lens in the foreground. I used the concept of institutional resistance, drawn from FI, to mean any form of opposition to the goal of gender policy and the change it promotes. Consequently, resistance implies a tendency to maintain the status quo and resist change (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013, p. 299, Mergaert & Lombardo, 2014). For FI, institutions are the site of power relations that create and challenge gender differences (Kantola & Dahl, 2005). As Mazey pointed out, organisations are critical filters that can either support policy reform or oppose it (2000, p. 339). On that basis, Kantola (2006, p. 34) suggested addressing the "resistance" and opportunities that institutions provide for feminist struggles in different ways and times.

Scholars have paid attention to how individuals within institutions trigger resistance to gender when they internalise existing informal gender norms and act to preserve the status quo. For example, in the European Council, Braithwaite's (2000) study established a strong male bias evident in the gender representation of staff, especially at middle and top management levels. The author also found that work practices are rarely based on consultation and collaboration and that workloads are incompatible with family responsibilities (2000, p. 11). The author pinpointed the cause of resistance to change within the European Council to the *genderedness* of institutional culture. Gender policies can challenge the order of institutional gender norms and practices that create inequalities within a given institution. However, the institutional change it creates can also trigger resistance (Benschop & Verloo, 2011, p. 286). Building on FI, an emphasis on institutional resistance will help explore how formal gender policies can be a resistance tool for advancing women to Nigeria's academic leadership positions. Hence, by utilising the FI-FPAF approach, this study contributes to FI by responding to the call of Mackay and other feminist scholars (Mackay, 2011; Mackay et al., 2010) to recognise patterns of institutional gendered control, resistance, replication, continuity, and change.

The selected questions from FPAF prove useful to explicitly uncover the implicit gendered assumptions, exclusions, and dynamics of unequal power relations embedded in policy documents. It helps expose hidden reflections on power, which act as an important leverage for men's access to power. Therefore, I utilised McPhail's (2003) FPAF to identify those subtle forms of gender biases and limitations for women in policy documents. Seven FPAF

questions were employed to analyse institutional resistance and gendered power relations. Although the FI is useful in assessing specific aspects of women's underrepresentation, it does not fully account for the micro-processes/elements that this chapter is interested in—identifying silence, exclusions, institutional resistance and power relations in policy documents. Hence, the need for an integrated approach using both FI and FPAF.

The relationship between policy and institutions is critical to understanding visible and invisible ways in which policies might reproduce or sustain institutional gender inequality, underpinned by policy contents. Crucially, there is a need to understand how, through policy content, women's underrepresentation in academic leadership positions is facilitated. The FPAF upholds many of FI's key themes, proceeding with feminist values of eliminating false dichotomies, reconceptualising power, renaming or redefining reality consistent with women's experiences, and acknowledging that the personal is gendered. The FPAF framework, therefore, provides an in-depth examination of how policies affect women. Furthermore, one of the strengths of this framework is its flexibility, as there is room for adaptation and modification of both the constructs and the specific questions that guide a policy examination (Kanenberg, 2007; Vamos, 2009).

Integrating both frameworks (FI-FPAF) helps uncover the underlying conceptualisations of power in policy documents and gendered assumptions that underpin gender inequalities interventions in Nigerian universities. The integrating framework assumes a synergistic relationship between the study of institutions and gender policy from FI and Feminist Policy perspectives. Together, these frameworks make gender inequality visible by identifying resisting mechanisms in policy content and contributing to diagnosing ineffective gender policies in Nigeria.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

Lazar (2007) argued that the FCDA advances rich and nuanced analyses of the complex functioning of power and ideology within discourses underpinning hierarchical social arrangements. Feminist critical discourse analysis examines the "complex, subtle and not so subtle ways frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and contested in specific communities and discourse contexts" (Lazar, 2014, p.182). It stems from the recognition that the issues addressed (with a view to social change) have material and phenomenological implications for groups of women and men in specific communities. This is especially pertinent considering that the operations of gender ideologies and institutionalised power

asymmetries between (and among) women and men are complex and intertwined with other social identities that are variable across cultures. FCDA demystifies the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology in discourses, offering a broader linguistic mode (Lazar, 2005) and a wide range of analytical tools for detailed analysis of contextualised texts and talk (Lazar, 2014, p. 182).

Michelle M. Lazer's (2014) work, *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Relevance for Current Gender and Language Research,* identified key principles of FCDA, which I adapt and connect with the theoretical lens (FI) explicated in detail in Chapter 2. Lazar explains that the major principles of FCDA include: (1) feminist analytical activism; (2) gender as ideological structure and practice; (3) complexity of gender and power relations; (4) discourse in the (de)construction of gender; and (5) critical reflexivity as praxis (Lazar, 2014). A central concern for FCDA is the critical analysis of discourses that sustain a gendered social order where men are accorded male privileges systemically (Lazar, 2014, p. 184). The principle of feminist analytical activism presents an open commitment to achieving just social order through discourse analysis (Lazar, 2007). It advocates for "analytical resistance" with the potential for "creating critical awareness and developing feminist strategies for resistance and change" (Barer, 2013; Lazar, 2005, p. 6). The focus is more specifically on critiquing discourses that sustain a patriarchal social order or mobilising theory to create critical awareness and develop feminist strategies for resistance and change (Lazar, 2014, p. 184). FCDA offers an analysis of discourse. It unveils sites of struggle where forces of social (re)production and contestation played out. The workings of power and ideology that sustain oppressive social structures and hierarchical gender relations are revealed using FCDA.

The second principle of FCDA, "gender as ideological structure," focuses on the material implications of ideology. Lazar described the prevailing conception of gender from a feminist perspective as an ideological structure that divides people based on sexual differences (men and women) into a hierarchical relation of domination and subordination, respectively. FCDA acknowledges the differences between women and men, gender pre-defined expectations and the forms of sexism they are differentially subjected to as complex social actors (Lazar, 2005; Powell, 2020; Sohail et al., 2020). Lazar went on to say that gender ideology often does not appear as domination. On the contrary, it is hegemonic—appearing to most people within a given community as consensual and broadly accepted (Lazar, 2014, p. 186). The taken-for-grantedness and normality of dominant and heteronormative discourses on gender serve to mystify and obscure the difference in power and inequality at work.

Lazar argued that the third FCDA principle of "complexity of gender and power relations" includes two critical insights, which are (1) the recognition of difference among women (and men) and (2) the recognition of "the pervasiveness of subtle, discursive workings of modern power in many societies today" (Lazar, 2007, p. 148). The mechanisms of power are diverse and complex, but asymmetric relations are also produced and tested in various ways for and by different groups of women. According to Lazar, contemporary feminist theory has shown that to avoid making universalising claims; gender needs to be viewed as interconnected with other socially stratified identities such as race/ethnicity, social class and position, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, culture, nationality and professional contexts (2014, p. 189). It points to an intersectional approach that "helps to expose historical silences and to understand oppression and privilege as lived experiences and process situated in and shaped by material, political, and social conditions" (May, 2015, p. 6). Research using FCDA approaches explores how women's interests and oppression differ across different contexts. It considers all aspects of women's oppression together with the systems that produce and perpetuate such oppression to understand how those forces intersect and create deep-rooted barriers to justice (Nartey, 2020). FCDA engages more broadly with the different aspects of power relations, especially in terms of top-down institutional power and how individuals within institutions contend with and resist social structures and strictures. However, the discursive analysis of individual or collective challenges falls within the constraints and possibilities offered by historical social structures and practices (Lazar, 2014, p. 188).

The fourth principle deals with the role of discourse in constructing and deconstructing gender. FCDA explores how gendered power relations and ideologies are contested, negotiated and (re)produced, focusing on what Lazar describes as implicit or explicit "gender relationality" (Lazar, 2007, p. 150). For Lazar, FCDA's focus on gender relationality entails an analytical focus on two kinds of relationships: discursive co-construction of ways of doing and being a woman and a man in particular communities of practice and the dynamics between various forms of masculinity, specifically in terms of how these participate within hierarchies of oppression that affect women (Connell, 1995; Lazar, 2005). The analysis of gender in discourse includes the construction of gender relations, i.e., ways of doing things as a woman in relation to a man, which exposes power asymmetries (Browning, 2016). Furthermore, the emphasis on forms of masculinity is of interest in terms of how they entrench or challenge gender orders that limit women's opportunities. According to Lazar, one must have a critical awareness of the relations between (groups of) women. For example, how women can unite to oppose discrimination or propose a change, or how women operating in androcentric cultures perpetuate sexist attitudes and practices against other women. Lazar

argued that the methods used in FCDA call for a wide-range level and foci of analysis on the construction and deconstruction of gender (2007, 2014, p. 192). The reason for this multiplicity of approaches is that the analysis of gender, power, ideology, and discourse is complex and multifaceted (Browning, 2016).

The final principle of FCDA is what Lazar described as "critical reflexivity as praxis." This principle emphasises FCDA interest in analysing discourse and applying the results of such analysis to achieve broad changes. According to Lazar, FCDA is interested in the "reflexivity of institutions" (2007, p. 153, 2014, p. 193). She provided two explanations on the subject. The first illustrates how institutional reflexivity can lead to positive and progressive institutional practices. For example, Lazar described how the awareness of feminist concerns for inclusivity and opportunities for participation has led to positive changes in some organisations. Secondly, however, institutional reflexivity can lead to the use of feminist values for non-feminist ends. Lazar cited the example of advertising which is often "used for persuasive effect by governments and other institutions to acknowledge the existence of progressive (feminist/anti-racist/anti-homophobic) discourses for pragmatic reasons or from a desire to project an enlightened self-image" (2007, pp. 152–153; Browning, 2016). Reflexivity of institutions is of interest to FCDA in terms of progressive institutional practices that allow for critical (self) awareness of individuals' capacity and the strategic appropriation of feminism to further non-feminist goals. FCDA is valuable for analysing how institutionally produced discourse creates or limits change within institutions.

In terms of methodology, FCDA has been utilised increasingly by a diversity of feminist scholars to analyse a range of studies, including women's advancement in academic medicine (Cameron et al., 2020), gender language and STEM education (Parson, 2016), sexual harassment in the Japanese political and media worlds (Dalton, 2019), migration narratives of dual-career Zimbabwean migrants (Makoni, 2013), and the representation of feminism in Estonian print media (Marling, 2010). Lazar's collection also provides several examples (see Lazar, 2005, 2007, 2014). Some FCDA studies collect and contextualise linguistic data using ethnographic methods, including interviews and participant observation. In contrast, others undertake close textual analysis of written and spoken discourse to interpret and explain societal structures (Besnier & Philips, 2014). FCDA analysis includes meanings overtly expressed in communication and the nuanced, implicit meanings to get into the subtle and contradictory representations of ideological assumptions and power relations in contemporary societies (Lazar, 2014). FCDA makes it possible to "examine how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in various ways through textual representations of

gendered social practices and interactional strategies of talk" (Lazer, 2005, p. 10; Kawana, 2010, p. 112). In this thesis, I used an integrated FI-FCDA approach to analyse the main themes from the interview data. In what follows, I emphasise why I have chosen to use an FI-FCDA approach for analysing the interview data.

Why FI- FCDA Approach?

According to Clavero and Galligan (2020, p.655), "identifying informal rules and evaluating their role in facilitating and constraining institutional change towards gender equality poses methodological challenges" because informal rules are (mostly) hidden. Carefully designed methodologies are then required to overcome the challenge (Chappell & Waylen, 2013). In line with this, I employed FI-FCDA as an integrated approach for examining the workings of gender, power relations and change in an informal institutional context within Nigerian universities. Using this approach, I make a case for putting the *informal* into broader institutional and discursive frameworks for understanding the continued underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions. To improve *informal* institutions' analysis, I integrated gender and informal institutional discourse as a key dimension that is frequently missing from current institutional analyses. The social construction of gender and how patriarchal ideologies fuel such gendered assumptions are integral to this thesis' research questions. Understanding discursively enacted challenges and lapses in the status quo is a critical analytical concern for FCDA. This is a crucial concept to bear in mind when considering the fact that, despite the adoption of gender equity policies in Nigerian universities, evidence still shows wide gender disparities in academic leadership.

While feminist institutionalism enables the identification of informal norms and practices, feminist critical discourse analysis makes possible an understanding of the workings of these informal norms and practices by creating discourses on the limits of institutional gender change. It is imperative to understand the relationship between discourse and institutions and why some discourses become more institutionally embedded than others, especially given that discourses are institutionally embedded and manifest through institutional norms and practices (Weedon, 1987, p. 109). The synergy between discourse and institutions arises from the mutual understanding that routinised behaviour is embedded within institutions, which is a key concern of gender equity and is difficult to change (Spary, 2019). It is therefore important to combine an analysis of FI and FCDA to understand informal institutional processes—why some informal institutional norms and practices become embedded in particular institutional contexts, as well as their effects. For example, exploring limits of institutional gender change

in universities having a gender policy and gender centre and universities without a gender policy.

Goetz explained that gender-sensitive institutional change is aimed at "routinising gender-equitable forms of social interaction and challenging the legitimate forms of social organisation discriminating against women" (1997, p. 2). This research not only focuses on institutional norms and cultures but also explores the discursive meanings underpinning informal norms and practices within the universities. Thus, integrating these two approaches (FI and FCDA) yields greater insights. An integrated FI-FPAF enables the analysis of institutional norms and cultures and institutionally embedded discourses articulated by gender stakeholders and women in academic leadership positions, which situates why and how informal institutions subverts the intent of formal gender equity policies. The purpose of identifying and analysing discourses on informal norms and practices is to problematise the discursive articulations of gender inequality to understand why and how women's progression to academic leadership positions is undermined and how institutional gender change is limited. Given that gender norms and informal institutions often remain unperceived as they are naturalised as part of the status quo, FI-FCDA offers a significant advantage of uncovering hidden power relations within informal institutions, which can be challenging to locate when only FI is used.

3.3 Case Selection and Methods

To circumscribe this research within a manageable limit, the study population consists of women in academic leadership positions such as academic heads, deans, vice-deans/sub-deans, directors of institutes, provosts of colleges, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Chancellor; and women in senior academic leadership positions through promotion—professors, associate professors and senior lecturers in purposively selected universities in Nigeria. A study sample of two top-ranking first-generation and second-generation universities were purposively selected for this research. The universities selected are the University of Ibadan (1948), Obafemi Awolowo University (1960), University of Port Harcourt (1975) and the Federal University of Technology, Akure (1981). The choice of the four universities was based on the following criteria: Webometrics and National Universities Commission (NUC) ranking of institutions in the country, size and type of university, years of existence, highly visible Equity Unit or a comprehensive set of policies such as the university-based Gender Policy, proscribing gender discrimination. While two of the selected universities (OAU and UI), which are first-generation universities, share similar features and tick similar criteria boxes,

UNIPORT and FUTA are second-generation universities but are unique and could not be readily substituted for another.

The primary logic behind the case selection is selecting universities that have been in existence for a long time and capturing informal elements within the universities. This provides a baseline to explore the extent of colonial or patriarchal influences on Nigerian universities and its implication for women's advancement to academic leadership. Apart from the long history of existence, the first-generation and second-generation universities are mainly federal universities, enjoy more funding and attention from the federal government, have the largest student enrolment and staff strength in the country. Given this, the universities represent a sort of best-case scenario because it is assumed that these top-ranking universities will readily embrace the idea of gender equity. This research is not aimed at exploring women's progression in universities that do not rank and are not responsive to gender equity. Selections were not based on geo-political zones because I do not expect regional variations since the case study universities are wholly owned, controlled and funded by the federal government. The express aim of selecting the cases (universities) is not for a comparative purpose, as each case is unique. Instead, I explored what operated in individual cases. Table 5 shows the selected case studies for this research. A description of the research activities in Nigeria is shown in Appendix 9. It detailed some of the difficulties encountered during the fieldwork and how I surmounted these challenges.

Table 5: *Selected Case Studies*

Type of University	**Name of Universities**	**Year of Establishment**
First Generation Universities	University of Ibadan (UI)	1948
	Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	1962
Second Generation Universities	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	1975
	Federal University of Technology (FUTA)	1981

Data Collection

This research employs mainly qualitative methods to examine the research questions. Qualitative methods are essential to fully understand the problem behind the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities. Data were collected through the purposive sampling technique. According to Bernard (2002), purposive sampling is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants; instead, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can willingly provide the information by virtue of knowledge and experience.

However, the goal of this study is to focus on a particular characteristic of a population that is of interest and is likely to contribute appropriate data. With purposeful sampling, the approach lends credibility to this research (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008), as it aligns with the question that this thesis is interested in answering. This research employed two types of qualitative methods—documentary analysis and interview.

Bowen asserted that document analysis, like any other qualitative tool, requires that data be checked and interpreted to gain context and understanding for developing empirical knowledge (2009, p. 27). This thesis's first step towards opening the black box of persistent women's underrepresentation in academic leadership is collecting and analysing documentary data (gender policy documents), illuminating why the gender equity policies have failed to achieve their intended goals. The documentary data represents the formal institutional dimension this thesis aims to explore. To achieve this, I gathered relevant gender equity policies from OAU and UI. The rationale behind this selection is because these are the only universities with a functional gender policy in place (are classified under the research, teaching and policy-based gender centre. See page 20). Next, I analysed the relevant gender equity policies in selected universities to identify how gender issues are addressed in gender policy texts, determine policies that focus on women, programmes designed to achieve them, and the meanings underpinning existing gender policies. This is aimed at understanding the nature and intent of gender policies in Nigerian universities. The analysis of the universities' formal policies is essential in analysing the micro-elements of institutional resistance and construction of the masculine academic culture to better understand the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions despite the existence of formal gender equity policies. Therefore, understanding formal rules necessitates comparing policy content to actual practices to determine how strict formal rules are and to what extent they guide women's advancement (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016).

Interviews are an important tool within case study research, particularly to determine the informal aspects of institutions (Kenny, 2013b). It helps understand what leeway the formal framework leaves for informal practices to play a part in advancing or undermining women to academic leadership positions (Bjarnegård, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015; Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2016). Interviews are a particularly useful way of uncovering hidden meanings and perceptions (Tansay, 2007) and provide a means of corroborating facts obtained through the collection of documents. Interviews also make up for both the limitation and lack of documentary sources. For example, it is unlikely that the informal rules of the game are written down in official documents (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 102–103). To unravel the

actual rules and practices (informal) that influence the operation of gender equity in the universities, I interviewed gender stakeholders about "how things are done with regards to gender equity in the university." For this study, two forms of in-depth interviews were conducted with various participants in Nigeria. First, an in-depth interview was conducted with gender stakeholders, i.e., the heads or representatives of the gender centre and other selected gender equity committee members in the selected universities. The interview provided further insight into the gender policy process—which actors are involved, how and why, and "the discursive strategies employed" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 97). The inclusion of various categories of research participants is designed to gain a more rounded perspective on the gender policy process and how informal elements within the universities interact with formal rules. Correspondingly, the perspectives of the gender stakeholders are important, as it is the structure that provides the context and the environment within which gender policies are formulated and implemented. As such, it is imperative to consider the influence exerted by this structure. I argue that a more explicit conceptualisation and theorisation on the role of stakeholders in the gender policy process (formulation and implementation) provides a better understanding of factors influencing the policy choice/decisions of gender stakeholders; how policies are defined and identified; and ways in which gender norms and practices are carried forward in gender policy design.

In total, seven gender stakeholders, purposively selected from the four case study universities (Obafemi Awolowo University—OAU; University of Ibadan—UI; University of Port Harcourt—UNIPORT and Federal University of Technology, Akure—FUTA) were interviewed; however, the extent of the interview varied[10]. Table 6 shows the sample size of gender policy stakeholders interviewed. Interview participants were purposively selected from among the university gender stakeholders, comprising current and former directors of the gender centre and gender equity committees. The reason for the small sample size is that, most of the time, qualitative inquiry focuses on small samples to allow for an in-depth understanding of the subject of the study (Onwughalu, 2011). As a result of the small interview sample and ethical requirement, the participants' names are not mentioned due to the risk of compromising the interviewee's identity. The interview followed a semi-structured guide drawing on questions about the policy intent and how informal norms and practices play out in the policy process (policy design and implementation).

[10] Questions asked in interviews with policy stakeholders in universities without a working gender policy were limited when compared to universities with a functional gender policy.

The second in-depth interview elicited information from women in academic leadership positions such as professors or associate professors or senior lecturers who hold positions as academic heads, deans, vice-deans/sub-deans, directors of institutes, provosts of colleges, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Chancellor. The interview participants were purposively selected based on their experience; that is, women occupying academic leadership positions for two years onwards. This group of women's perspectives are capable of building an illustrative picture of the gender power structures and prevalent informal norms in Nigerian universities. Thus, providing critical insight into the hidden life of HE systems and the barriers it presents for women. Although the literature on women in academia has provided helpful background in this area, first-hand data on women's promotion experiences were beneficial because they described aspects of the informal norms that have personally affected them. In total, 17 interviews were conducted with women in academic leadership positions in the four universities. Table 7 shows a sample of the women selected for the interview. All interviews were audiotaped with the informant's permission (except for a participant who preferred not to be recorded) and later transcribed.

These universities (Obafemi Awolowo University— OAU; University of Ibadan— UI; University of Port Harcourt— UNIPORT and Federal University of Technology, Akure— FUTA) were selected as the study sample for this research. However, during the research, I discovered that while these four universities had well-established gender centres, only two had formal gender equity policies. Consequently, documentary data could not be collected in two universities (UNIPORT and FUTA). The extent of the interviews conducted in these universities also varied because participants did not have experience with the way gender policies feed into university systems, processes and organisational culture. As such, there were limited responses to questions relating to gender equity policy. For example, some specific questions that do not fit with the realities of participants from these universities were not answered by the respondents. It is important to note that the interview questions assumed that top-ranking first- and second-generation universities had both a gender centre and a formal, functional gender policy. My fieldwork showed that this was not the case. More specifically, gender centres in Nigerian universities are categorised into the *research and teaching-based* gender centres and the *research, teaching and policy-based* gender centres. Universities without formal gender equity policies typically fall into the former category.

Table 6: *A Sample Size of Gender Stakeholders Interviewed*

Universities with Gender Centre and Gender Policy		**Universities with Gender Centre but no Gender Policy**	
Name of University	*Sample Size*	*Name of University*	*Sample Size*
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	2	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	2
University of Ibadan (UI)	2	Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA)	1

Table 7: *A Sample Size of Academic Women Interviewed*

Universities with Gender Centre and Gender Policy		**Universities with Gender Centre but no Gender Policy**	
Name of University	*Sample Size*	*Name of University*	*Sample Size*
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	5	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	4
University of Ibadan (UI)	5	Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA)	3

The research was granted ethics approval for data collection in Nigeria by the Human Participants Ethics Committee at the University of Auckland. The approval process included submitting the interview guides, the Consent Form and the Participant Information Sheet, and identifying how participants would be selected and the method of inviting them. The ethics approval process also required identifying and addressing all ethical issues that could arise. For example, in interviews with gender stakeholders and women in academic leadership positions, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the small sample size. However, all possible attempts were made to ensure that the identity of the informant remains anonymous. I also addressed this issue by openly acknowledging it to participants by including this information in the Participant Information Sheet and repeating this information at the start of the interview. Potential participants, whose names, positions and email addresses are publicly available on the university websites, were contacted and sent an invitation to participate in the research (letter, PIS, CF, interview schedule).

3.4 Positionality

A feminist methodology considers the researcher's position and experiences and how these impact the research undertaken (Letherby, 2003, p. 6). According to Brunner, in carrying feminist research, self-identification is essential because it helps understand how the data are analysed (2013, p. 56). Understanding one's position when gathering research data positively affects the approach taken when analysing such data. As previously stated at the beginning of this thesis, the idea of carrying out a study on women in academic leadership stems from my educational background and work experience. These experiences and background were crucial for interpreting the participants' views (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002) on issues influencing women's under-representation in academic leadership positions in Nigeria.

I positioned myself as a *feminist* and approached this study through feminist methods and methodologies, which provides a different view from mainstream researchers. According to Ammann (2019), "a presupposition for good work, in an African context, is a general attentiveness to local circumstances, for example, local gender relations and to how they influence our agency". I noted the hegemonic culture of valuing women less and the practice of not considering them for academic leadership. While a university staff member, I had noticed the low numbers of women in senior leadership positions in my institution and other universities. By enacting feminist research, I aimed to provide a voice for academic women in hierarchical, male-dominated and gendered institutions. Analysing the current positions and

experiences of women in relation to academic leadership progression; repositions and equip them to change the leadership status quo within the universities (Brunner, 2013, p. 57).

Mies noted that identifying shared experiences with research participants enables better recognition of "what ties us with and separates us from the respondents" (1991, p. 135). While traditional research methods emphasise the researcher's total objectivity, it is believed that a researcher cannot be completely objective, especially in feminist research (Brunner, 2013). Westmarland argued that "humans cannot process information without some degree of subjective interpretation because there are not computers" (2001, p. 2). Considering this, Mills also noted, "the social scientist is not some autonomous being standing outside the society, as no one is outside society; the question is where he stands within it" (1959, p. 204). Therefore, it is important to identify one's position to properly understand the interpretation of the respondent's experiences and how the research conclusions are drawn. To ensure this research is devoid of personal biases, I distinguished my position in relation to the respondents.

Collins' concept of *outsider within* applied to my position in this study. This concept explores understanding one's *insider* position in a community that is also "excluded" from a specific group (1999, p. 168). Although I have worked as an academic staff member at one of Nigeria's universities, my background and experience were in the private higher education sector. In contrast, respondents for this study were all academic staff in federal universities. The *outsider within* positionality played a significant role in developing the research project. When you have insider knowledge, carrying out a study is beneficial because it provides substantial insight into the culture or group being studied (Brunner, 2013). This allows the researcher to determine the right questions to ask and the sensitivity to bond with the respondents. According to Westmorland, "a close and equal relationship with participants leads to the acquisition of more productive and significant data" (2001, p. 8). However, the issue of lack of objectivity has been a significant concern. To provide an accurate analysis of the phenomenon under study, there is a need to be aware of biases toward the group studied (Brunner, 2013). According to Letherby, "the extent of involvement with the issue under study does not intellectually disempower a researcher, as it is still possible to be critical and analytical about the issue" (2003, p. 131).

Reflecting on my fieldwork, I positioned myself as less of an insider and more of an outsider. In differentiating the insider/outsider status, it is important to highlight the factors that provided this different status. I am a Nigerian, the same nationality as the participants, and speak the official language, which is English. My gender provided me with an insider status

because most of the participants were female, except for two gender stakeholders who were male. This allowed the women to better relate their personal experiences to me. As an academic, I consider myself an insider. In the past, I have worked at the university. Although I was employed in a private university, I have background knowledge of the university setting. I also understand how the university operates as an institution. This was particularly useful because this knowledge provided me with a better understanding of the obstacles women face in a public, masculine-oriented university.

While considering my position, I was more of an outsider because my background as a university staff member is different from those I am researching; therefore, it was possible to retain objectivity considering the data I collected. In my case, although I am a part of the academic community due to my past employment in a private university in Nigeria, I am, however, also undoubtedly an outsider as I am not employed as staff of the universities visited, neither have I held any academic leadership positions in any of the universities. While private and federal universities' institutional structures are similar, the rules and policies regarding academic leadership and gender equity are quite different for both. For example, the recommended criteria for promotion in private universities are less stringent; thus, women's promotion experiences in federal universities are unique. Also, the hierarchical structures in private universities are significantly looser compared to federal universities in Nigeria.

Given that I am keen on knowing what operates in federal universities, it was easy to separate my own experience in a private university from the women in the federal universities. Therefore, I consider my position to be more of an outsider because I have not encountered the institution the same way as the respondents. As an outsider, I have no prior relationship or personal connections with the respondents. My outsider status allowed for objectivity and helped to properly identify important issues that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

As previously stated, the choice of methods used by feminist researchers is dependent on the suitability to unearth the gendered dynamics one wish to understand. To achieve my research goal, a core element of FI—formal and informal institutions, guided the analysis of data. In analysing the policy documents, I extracted a set of questions from the Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FPAF) that directly align with the FI concepts of institutional resistance and gendered power relations; to probe into why the universities' gender equity policies have not achieved their intended goal of advancing women to academic leadership positions. The

set of FPAF questions allowed for probing into how formal rules are gendered and brought to the fore what FI alone might be unable to unveil. For the interview analysis, I constructed a model similar to the one used for the policy analysis. I constructed some questions from Lazar's (2010) principles of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) that directly align with the FI concepts of institutional resistance, gendered power relations and gendered actors. The set of questions constructed from FCDA provided more analytical insights and discourses on gendered informal norms and practices within the various university settings in Nigeria. The method of data analysis is explained further below.

Documentary Analysis

As described above, FPAF functions as an integrated framework used with the FI framework for analytical purposes. Specifically, the integrated FI-FPAF framework is useful for documentary analysis. For this study, questions from FPAF that directly align with the FI analytical criteria and the scope and purpose of this study were selected. Drawing on Drucza and Rodriguez (2018), I employed two essential FI concepts as the analytical criteria and integrated them with appropriate questions from the FPAF. Set of questions from McPhail's (2003) framework that fit the FI analytical criteria were matched together and used to analyse the policy documents. As Kanenberg's (2007) assessment showed, the FPAF framework is lengthy and time-consuming. Including all constructs may not be feasible because some of the constructs often overlap; hence, I selected seven FPAF questions (See Table 8). The questions selected to guide the assessment implicate a feminist construction of inequality, silence and male dominance. The presented FI theoretical concepts primarily serve as underlying theoretical premises which direct the main focus and argument of this thesis and are used for analytical purposes. These concepts act as *guiding concepts* that link and integrate the core findings on formal institutions into more overriding cross-cutting patterns.

Table 8: *FI-FPAF Analytical Strategy for Formal Institutional Dimension*

FI concepts	**Questions from FPAF (analytical categories)**
Institutional Resistance	● Where are the policy silences? What are the problems for women that are denied the status of the problem by others? ● Is the policy defined as 'gender-neutral'? Does the presumed gender neutrality hide the reality of the gendered nature of the problem or solution? ● Is the policy merely symbolic, or dies it come with teeth? Are there provisions for funding, enforcement and evaluation?
Gendered Power Relations	● Does the policy defer to gender norms and social traditions that impair women's involvement in academic leadership positions? ● What is the strength of the authority of the agency administering the policy? ● Who has the power to define the problem? What are competing representations? ● How does this policy affect the balance of power? Are there winners and losers? Is a win-win solution a possibility?

Source: Adapted from Drucza and Rodriguez (2018).

In analysing the universities' gender equity policies, I used open coding (Blair, 2015; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to create broad themes and categories. Open coding involves "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). In the first phase of the analysis, I familiarised myself with the data by repeatedly reading the policy document. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that researchers read through the complete data set before coding, as ideas and potential patterns are identified and formed as researchers become acquainted with all aspects of their data. The policy analysis is driven by the theoretical model (FI and FPAF) and research question. For example, the study is concerned with understanding the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions. Given this, I coded segments of data that were relevant to and captured something interesting about the research question. Specifically, I coded the following sections in the university policy documents—policy rationale and goal, policy action plan (titled sectoral components in the OAU policy document and Gender policy statement in the UI policy document), and implementation responsibilities. Based on this, I generated initial codes and attached labels to index them as they relate to a category. The FI and FPAF presented categories/variables of what to look for to answer the overriding research question. I examined the policy documents for meanings, i.e., what is stated and not stated, and power mechanisms corresponding with the FI and FPAF analytical criteria. For example, I looked out for identified challenges for women in the policy document and whether women

were included in the gender policy action plan. While coding, I was careful to look for the unexpected— what is not clearly expressed or does not fit with the rest of the account. After the initial coding, all the potentially relevant codes were grouped into themes that represent the phenomenon of interest.

Interview Analysis

Drawing on Drucza and Rodriguez's (2018) model, I developed an analytical strategy for analysing the interview data. This model is also similar to the one designed for analysing the policy documents. I drafted some questions originating from Lazar's (2014) FCDA principles. These questions were carefully crafted to reflect the core focus of each of the FCDA principles—feminist analytical activism; gender as ideological structure and practice; the complexity of gender and power relations; discourse in the (de)construction of gender; and critical reflexivity as praxis. The set of questions are capable of unveiling how the "taken-for-granted social assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, negotiated and contested" (Lazar, 2014, p. 186) through the workings of informal institutions. I ensured the FCDA questions aligned with the FI concepts of institutional resistance, gendered power relations, gendered actors, and the goal the interview data aimed at answering. Sets of questions from Lazar's (2010) FCDA fundamental principles that fit the FI analytical criteria were matched to analyse the interview data. The presented FI concepts primarily serve as theoretical premises, which direct the second research question. These concepts act as guiding concepts that link and integrate core findings on informal institutions into cross-cutting discourses, unveiling how and why informal institutions subvert formal institutions' intent and limit the institutional gender change. Table 9 shows specific questions constructed from each FCDA principle and how it aligns with the FI concepts.

Table 9: *FI-FCDA Analytical Strategy for Informal Institutional Dimension*

FI concepts	**Questions constructed from FCDA (analytical categories)**	FCDA principles used in constructing questions
Gendered actors	● Presence of a patriarchal social order? ● How are oppressive social structures sustained? ● How are feminist strategies for resistance and change developed?	*Feminist analytical activism*
Institutional Resistance /stasis	● Presence of a hierarchical relation of domination or subordination? ● Presence of hegemonic ideology ● Are women subjected to forms of sexism?	*Gender as ideological structure and practice*
	● Is there an awareness of feminist concerns for inclusivity? ● Are feminist values used towards non-feminist ends? ● Do the opportunities for women participation result in positive institutional change?	*Reflexivity of institutions*
Gendered Power Relations	● Is there a recognized difference between men and women? ● Are subtle discursive workings of modern power recognized and accepted? ● Does the interest and oppression of women differ in different contexts? ● How do women contend with or restrict social structures and strictures?	*Complexity of gender and power relations*
	● How are the gendered relations of power and gender ideology contested, negotiated, and reproduced implicitly or explicitly? ● How is masculinity that restricts potentialities for women entrenched or challenged?	*Role of discourse in the construction and deconstruction of gender*

Source: Model adapted from Drucza and Rodriguez (2018).

To analyse the interview data, I utilised thematic analysis, used with the NVivo software. The interview analysis aimed at answering the second research question. The NVivo software is useful for managing interviews, finding themes, and extracting meaning (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2011). I utilised this method because of its "rigorous thematic approach, which produces insightful analysis that answers specific research questions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006,

p. 97). The procedure used for coding was the utilisation of NVivo, which involves extracting verbatim codes from the texts to capture the methodological needs of the study's inquiry. First, I started the analysis by familiarising myself with the interview data from gender stakeholders and women in academic leadership positions in the case study universities. Familiarisation with data was internalised through transcription of the interviews (Esterberg, 2002, p. 108). I listened to the audio recordings of the interviews several times for accurate transcription. This research uses an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge from the content of the interview responses and notes made during and after recording. The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the significant themes inherent in raw data without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). Since I was concerned with addressing a specific research question (Research question 2), during transcribing, I noted points of interest that either was a possible theme or provided further insight into the subject matter and analysed the data with this in mind.

Once the interview transcript was completed, it was uploaded into NVivo 12 for coding and analysis. In coding the data, text search queries and word frequency searches were used to identify keywords and phrases/sentences illuminating the particular concepts derived from the conceptual framework. For example, narratives on power within the contents was coded. I also ran keyword searches for "gender equity" and "informal norms/informal practices". NVivo 12 software produced 155 and 31/40 references throughout the transcript texts for further review based on these searches. These references created ten nodes for gender equity and 12 nodes for informal norms and practices. According to NVivo's website, "a node is a collection of references about a specific theme, case, or relationship" (About nodes, para, 2). Nodes are essential to working with NVivo because they allow for the deposit of similar data in one place to look for emerging patterns and ideas. Given this, I coded each segment of the transcript relevant to nodes or captured something interesting about the research question. I was able to pay attention to each theme located within the specific context related to gender equity policy formulation and implementation, and academic women's promotion. Working through the data, more nodes and sub-nodes were developed that identified prevalent informal norms and practices in the universities. The next important consideration was identifying themes. According to Ayres (2008, p. 3), thematic coding strategy begins with a "list of known or at least, expected themes in the data". Once data is collected for thematic analysis by semi-structured interviews, certain themes are expected in the data set because those topics have been included explicitly in the data collection. Codes may also come from a conceptual framework, literature review and personal narratives or experiences.

What counts as a theme is that which captures the important idea related to the research question and implies some patterned answer or context in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). At this point, coded nodes on NVivo were read and re-read to recognise significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). I examined the codes, and some of them fit together into a theme. The theoretical framework has informed these thematic nodes to develop a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the data and identify patterns related to the research questions. In other words, thematic coding is characterised by a reciprocal mechanism in which "coding facilitates the creation of themes, and the creation of themes facilitates coding" (Ayres, 2008, p. 4). At the end of this step, the codes were organised into broader themes that seemed to say something specific about the research question. Appendix 11 shows an overview of the analytical framework employed in each empirical chapter.

In this study, triangulation has been done carefully from the beginning of this research by consulting the literature to find the most relevant and useful theory (Feminist Institutionalism). Triangulation of methods used for data-collection processes was also carried out based on the theoretical framework and the objectives of the study. Information was collected through policy documents and in-depth interviews. Two forms of in-depth interviews were conducted with gender stakeholders in the universities and women in academic leadership positions to gain multiple perspectives on informal norms and practices. The information generated from the various qualitative inquiries were compared, providing sufficient opportunity to validate and substantiate insights/conclusions. Field notes taken during the interviews and discussions also helped triangulate the information, providing additional details about participants' expressions and perceptions at the time of analysis.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the need for feminist qualitative research and argued the case for a FIIM that integrates one or more feminist approaches to FI for investigating gendered institutional rules, norms, and practices. This research blends the Feminist Policy analysis framework and feminist critical discourse analysis with feminist institutionalism because they are needed to provide a clear picture of women's continued underrepresentation in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities. I have explained and justified how the integrated models (FI-FPAF and FI-FCDA) fit this research's overarching aims and its potential to provide insights into the concepts I aim to explore through my research questions.

To understand why gender equity policies often fail to advance women to academic leadership, the integrated FI-FPAF model is useful in unveiling subtle micro-strategies of resistance that perpetuate male dominance embedded in formal gender equity policies. To better understand the universities' gendered culture and norms, the integrated FI-FCDA model proves valuable in deconstructing informal institutions. It is useful in exploring how and why gender norms and practices subvert the intent of formalised policies, thereby unveiling informal institutional discourses that address the complexities of institutional gender change and the continued underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions. While the FI-FPAF model works well for formal institutional analysis, the FI-FCDA model is valuable for informal institutional analysis.

Self-identification and reflection on my position as an outsider within are vital in defining how I carried out the research and interpreted the data. I clarified that my position was less of an insider and more of an outsider. This position helped with my ability to be an objective researcher and identify possible research biases. Contextualising data from the respondents to the policy documents, existing literature and known academic women experiences ensured reliability and ultimately made the research more useful. In the next chapter, I present the findings and discussion of gender policy analysis. I draw on the FI-FPAF analytical approach to create a rich and context-based analysis of formal institutions, in this case, the universities' gender equity policies.

Chapter 4: Formal Institutions and the Continued Underrepresentation of Women in Academic Leadership Positions

This chapter examined the first research question: Given the introduction of formal gender policy nationally and within the higher education sector, how can we better understand women's continued underrepresentation in academic leadership positions? To answer the research question stated above, this study investigated how formal gender policies can advance or constrain women in progressing to academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities. The assumption is that, with gender policies in place, women can progress to academic leadership positions without difficulty. However, as shown in Chapter 2, existing literature reveals that, despite the adoption of gender policies nationally and in various sectors, gender imbalance in academic leadership positions is still prevalent.

To understand the reasons behind this, I examined the gender policy content to determine whether the policy enhances women's progression to academic leadership positions or constrains them. This chapter analyses gender policy documents from universities with functional gender policies in place[11]. The first section presents an overview of the Gender Equity Policy of the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and the University of Ibadan (UI). The following section shows an analysis of the gender policy documents from two of the selected universities, unveiling the various ways in which the content and enactment of institutional gender policies are gendered and potentially reinforce systems of inequality. Informed by a Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Policy Analysis framework, I analysed the gender policy documents and identified areas of silence, women's exclusion, and how the policy perpetuates male dominance.

4.1 The OAU and UI Gender Equity Policies

The OAU Gender Policy is a 31-page document that identifies prejudicial areas based on gender in the university and proposes appropriate action plans to improve them. The document describes the rationale for the policy, its overall goal, expected outcome, detailed action plans and division of responsibilities to promote gender equity. The policy document's overriding goal is to promote gender equity within the Obafemi Awolowo University system and guarantee organisational effectiveness, fundamental human rights, and equity. The policy's

[11] Although, four case study universities were selected (two first-generation universities—OAU & UI and two second-generation universities—UNIPORT & FUTA); it was discovered during the fieldwork that only two of these universities have formal gender policies (OAU & UI). Thus, policy analysis is limited to OAU and UI.

expected outcome is to "institutionalise gender equity" in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, p. 6). The policy structure proposes a need to establish realistic and strategic approaches to ensure and promote women's empowerment to realise the vision of equity between men and women. The OAU gender policy consists of a comprehensive action plan to institutionalise gender equity within the university. OAU's gender equity plan revolves around several institutional commitments and targets. Through its Action Plan, the university aims to purge traditional stereotypes and create a university that is gender compliant. On pages 6–16 of the document, presented under the title 'Sectoral components of the Gender Policy', the policy statement is presented as an eight-point action plan with a focus on the following: student enrolment and welfare; staff employment and welfare; university administration at all levels; teaching and research culture in the university; awareness and sensitisation; gender-sensitive information and communication system; networking and mentoring; monitoring and evaluation (See Appendix 4 for OAU sectoral component and action plan).

Besides, OAU has a second policy—the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (ASHP), a 33-page document premised on several international and regional normative standards to which Nigeria is a signatory. The OAU Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy is a comprehensive document that outlines the university's context of sexual harassment, the types and examples of harassing behaviours, statement of commitment, the rationale for the policy, objectives of the study, policy statement and implementation strategies, procedures and structures. The overriding purpose of the policy is to eliminate all forms of sexual harassment within the university. The policy's specific objectives include: creating an enabling learning and working environment devoid of sexual harassment; projecting a high level of ethical and moral values for the university; establishing an institutional best practice on zero tolerance for sexual harassment; maintaining decent relationships; guarding and protecting the academic image of the university; sensitising members of the University community on sexual harassment and addressing the problems surrounding sexual harassment (OAU ASHP, 2013, p. 13). For this study, I focused only on the university gender policies, as it is the most relevant document addressing the issues this research intends to examine. The gender policy document selected for analysis resonates well with this thesis' research goal and appears to be the most referred document within the university environment in terms of gender issues.

The UI Gender Policy consists of nine main chapters outlining the context of gender equity in UI. The policy document provides the background and rationale for the policy, details the institutional objectives, outlines the university Gender Policy statements, and highlights the

allocation and implementation responsibilities. The policy document is a 28-page document, approved by the Senate of the University of Ibadan on August 14, 2012, and presented as the 'University of Ibadan Gender Policy.' According to the vision, the university aims to be a "world-class university where gender equity is institutionalised, and students and staff integrate gender-friendly perspectives into personal and professional dealings in achieving the aims and goals of the University" (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 14). The UI Gender Policy Action Plan identifies goals and measures for operationalising the gender policy. It identifies processes and initiatives needed to meet its targets and objectives. The UI gender policy covers 12 action plan areas under the following headings: secure space; engendering the curricula; student enrolment and performance; service; staff recruitment, training and advancement; equity in representation; institutional culture; networking; research and innovations; engendering resource mobilisation and budgeting; student welfare and staff welfare (see Appendix 5 for the goals and strategies of each action plan).

Given that the OAU and UI gender policy action plans contained several initiatives and programmes to be adopted to generally ensure the augmented attainment of the policy goal—to institutionalise gender equity; it is assumed that the policy could potentially enhance women's progress to academic leadership positions (OAU Gender Policy, 2009: pp. 10–12; UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 18). However, existing literature reveals that gender imbalance in academic leadership positions is still prevalent in most Nigerian universities. Therefore, I argue that the gender policy is ineffective in advancing women to academic leadership positions because of: (a) policy silences on strategic tools for achieving policy goal/intent, (b) exclusion of women-specific initiative(s) in the policy action plan and, (c) embeddedness of male dominance in the policy. These three form the dominant themes and are presented in the next section. An integrated FI and McPhail's Feminist Policy Analysis Framework (FI-FPAF) was utilised to analyse the documentary (policy) data. I integrated the core FI perspective of institutional resistance and gendered power relations with relevant questions drawn from McPhail's Feminist Policy Analysis Framework. I work with the FI concepts and selected FPAF questions that reflect points of convergence across both frameworks, specifically identifying silences, exclusions, and power in the policy content. Therefore, this chapter sets the scene for the following chapters, which applied a similar integrated (FI-FPAF) analytical approach to the role of informal institutional gender arrangement and its impact on women's advancement.

4.2 Silences, Exclusion and Male Dominance in Formal Gender Policies

Below, I explore the themes of silence, exclusion and male dominance that emerged from the policy content to better understand the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigeria. Table 10 shows a summary of the findings in each university policy document.

Table 10: *Key Themes from OAU and UI Gender Policies*

Themes	Sub-themes	OAU	UI
Silence	Absence of sanctions for non-compliance of the gender quota ratio	*	
	Absence of gender equity funding	*	*
Exclusion	Exclusion of women-specific initiatives in Gender policy		*
Male domination	Male dominance embedded in Gender policy	*	*
	Coupling of gender equity with decision-making powers	*	*

*= Present

Absence of Sanctions for Non-compliance of Gender Quota

My idea of *silence* refers to the deliberate or unintentional exclusion or failure to address core needs that aid the actualisation of gender policy goals. The metaphor of silence captures that which is not specified or is stated unclearly in policy documents. According to Dahl (2017, p. 93), scholars have viewed the concept of silence from various perspectives. Silence may take different forms, such as an outright exclusion, absence, or attempts to underplay certain aspects of gender equity, which are at variance with the university's prevalent patriarchal norms. For example, Oinas' (1999) study viewed silence as an unwillingness to utter voices on specific issues such as political embeddedness (involvement in local power relations) or personal connectedness (the personal networks related to the elite role). Ferree (2004) considered silence a form of soft repression embedded in institutional practices and processes. Producing silence can vary from a simple side-effect of the ordinary ties of dominance in civil society to a more systematic isolation policy that prevents social movements. Kumar et al. (2016) treated the notion of silence as avoiding responsibility, promoting the status quo and hindering progressive thought processes in institutions.

Feminist contributions to analysing silence have been made with scholars such as Bacchi (2009), Dahl (2012), Kronsell (2006) and Whitworth (1994) discussing and articulating the importance of silence. For example, Whitworth (1994) argued that the quest for gender issues

in policy statements is as important as looking for silences and absences to comb for explicit statements on gender. According to the author, this is because the "construction of assumptions around gender is produced as much by 'what is not said' as 'what is said'" (Whitworth, 1994, p. 75). She also acknowledged that, although the silence surrounding gender could be intentional or unintentional, the silence also promotes unintended or unintended gender relations between the sexes. In a similar vein, Kronsell (2006) suggested the need to study what is not said, implying that understanding silence is important. Her study on Swedish conscription practice in the Swedish military revealed the presence of resistance to gender transformation. Carol Bacchi contributed to the research on silence with her 'What's the problem represented to be' (WPR) approach (Bacchi, 2009). Bacchi developed a synchronic discursive policy analysis where identifying silences is one out of six dimensions. One of the dimensions/questions (Question four), which is relevant to this theme, deals with silences—what is left unsaid in the representation of the problem or what is deemed *unproblematic*. This aimed at raising, reflecting and considering issues and perspectives silenced within the problematisation. Policy analysts consider the WPR questions useful in identifying silences in legislative solutions. For example, Hearn and McKie (2010, p. 151) demonstrated that in Finland and Scotland, while the policy focused on securing the safety of women and their dependents, it does not problematise the gendered nature of violence. Inspired by poststructuralist ideas, Dahl discussed how to capture and articulate what is not in the text and identifies the manifestations of power (2012). The silence Dahl talked about is not the type this chapter focuses on. Here, attention is directed to the silences that generally limit the potential for gender policy implementation—that is, the silence that hides the presumed reality of the gendered nature of the solution and brings about limitations in the implementation of the policy. This silence is related to subtle institutional resistance. In this research, the type of silence I refer to is suitable for capturing what is at stake when salient issues are made silent or invisible in policy documents.

In exploring silence, I build upon previous research and therefore expand on the concept of silence. I argue that silences (presented as absence) can be an expression of resistance. To provide a critical understanding of women's persistent underrepresentation in academic leadership positions in Nigerian universities, I identified and articulated what was missing from the university gender policy, thus drawing out policy silences in the OAU gender policy. Two dominant forms of silence were identified in the gender policy document: 1) absence of evident sanctions for non-compliance of the gender quota ratio; and 2) absence of budgets for the implementation of gender equity. In the case of OAU, although the policy identified the use of a gender quota as an important initiative for advancing women to academic leadership

positions, left silenced are sanctions for non-compliance with the gender quota. Two critical dimensions underlay the OAU gender policy: a) a mix of targeted women's initiatives aimed at improving the positions of women and a mainstreaming approach, and b) strong evidence of improved women's representation by using quotas. The gender equity policies represented a dual view of the institutional support measures and programming goals. Targeted actions for women were included, thus, embedding a gender lens into programme areas. There is an explicit reference to women-specific issues; for example, OAU gender policy highlights positive actions to promote women's representation in specific areas. Of the eight sectoral components developed to promote gender equity in the university, four were considered more women-specific; that is, they were explicitly aimed at women. This implies that the content of the four policy components has been conceived, designed and developed specifically to address women's issues in the university.

The action plan showcases women-specific initiatives intended to create equal opportunities for women to become employees or be promoted, thereby increasing women's share in academic leadership positions. Opportunities were open for faculties to use gender quotas by ensuring a 70:30 male to female ratio in the employment of academic and technical staff; providing crèche and day-care facilities for staff; maternal care for females and establishing mentoring programmes for female academic staff. The women-specific initiatives also aimed at encouraging full inclusion and participation of women in decision-making within the university by setting a target ratio. A male/female ratio of 70:30 is stipulated in the policy for appointment to headship positions in the departments, units and centres, membership of all university committees, and gender/diversity officers for all significant administrative units, creating a basis for more gender-representative committees. The policy also included programmes that provide women with short-term releases to write and publish research results (see Appendix 8 for women-specific initiatives in the OAU gender policy document). Therefore, it is accurate to assert that specific action plans/initiatives that recognise and address the needs of women clearly and concretely, imply support/effort to counter the current imbalances in the university system.

As identified in the policy, quotas are a significant part of the solutions proposed to address obstacles that impede women's access to power structures and gender balance in the university. As a result of its relative efficiency, its potential for increasing women's representation is substantial, as it presents a qualitative jump for women (Dahlerup, 2007; Franceschet et al., 2012; Krook, 2008, 2014). The implicit aim of quotas is not only to increase women's present representation or alter policymaking in a gender-equal manner but

also to permanently break down the barriers women face in their career advancement (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2011, p. 187; Rahat, 2009). The type of quotas proposed in the OAU gender policy requires that there should be:

• At least a 70:30 ratio (male and female) in all appointments to headship positions in the departments, units, and centres.

• At least a 70:30 ratio (male and female) of all university committees' membership and gender/diversity officers for all significant administrative units (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, pp. 9–11).

While the quota ratio was stipulated, the policy was silent regarding sanctions for non-compliance. Notably missing from the policy document was any detailed consideration of non-compliance. As Mazey points out, institutions are critical "filters" that can either help or oppose policy changes (2000, p. 339), and "monitoring inaction, silence and lacunae" (Chappell, 2014a, p. 193) are vital elements that should not be overlooked (Wright & Thomson, 2015). If sanctions for non-compliance are not explicitly stated in gender action plans, then silence is evident. Scholars have concluded that the most successful quotas are those with requirements for placement mandates and stringent non-compliance penalties (Humbert et al., 2019; Jones, 2009; Krook, 2016; Larserud & Taphorn, 2007; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009). For increasing the representation of women in leadership positions, the role of strict and measurable sanctions cannot be overemphasised, as their inclusion in quota policies discourages non-compliance (Htun & Jones, 2002; Krook, 2009). Where there are strict penalties, high compliance with quotas tends to occur because there is a real risk that needs to be mitigated. However, with soft sanctions, risks might not appear as particularly high, leading to non-action. The OAU case shows that, although gender quota has the potential of inclusion for women, with the absence of sanctions, it may facilitate non-compliance and, consequently, the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2013; Johnson, 2016). This silence is a form of institutional resistance for women and can potentially facilitate women's underrepresentation in academic leadership positions. Scholars have argued that, even when policy action is focused on women or has gender quotas present, there is a high tendency; it could still infuse institutionally embedded resistance (Krook, 2008) and hostility because they are viewed as displacing merit (Humbert et al., 2019).

Even though the goal of gender equity is clearly stated in the policy documents, the document was silent on (and excluded) essential elements that could enhance the actualisation of the policy goal, which remains problematic for women's advancement. If critical tools for implementing gender policies are silenced or absent in policy documents, then women's

underrepresentation will persist. The inherent absence can mask the concerns of other marginalised social groups, notably women, and dramatically increase the risk of gender policy implementation failure (Montoya et al., 2000). As such, the core element in any gender policy plan should be clearly stated because a flawed policy action plan translates into an ineffective policy. The study of resistance in the OAU gender policy shows that silence can act as a tool or mechanism that implicitly facilitates the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions.

Absence of Gender Equity Funding

The advent of the OAU and UI gender policies are linked explicitly to the funding and support from external sources such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John D, and Katherine T, MacArthur Foundation. However, these funding sources, in the form of grants, are only for a limited period. While both universities have taken up the idea of gender equity, it is relevant to note that the universities are each responsible for their gender policies. Tools to reduce gender inequality, such as budget plans or impact assessment methods, were absent in the OAU and UI policy documents. As to the OAU gender policy, Appendix 8 highlights the resources required for implementing the gender equity policy; however, there were not explicitly stated. Resources needed were identified, but there were no budgets or provisions for how the funds will be generated or possible national and international sponsors. In the UI gender policy, resources were not identified. Section 6.20 only stated that "financial issues are to be overseen by the person nominated by the bursar" (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 21). The absence of budget/financial resources in the OAU and UI gender policy is an identified form of institutional resistance to actualising gender equity.

The core purpose of gender equity funding is to "change policies, programs and resource allocation so that they promote gender equality and the empowerment of women" (Sharp & Dev, 2006, p. 1), and should be identified in feminist policies (Mazur, 2002, pp. 30–31). The specific budget/resource allocation for the implementation of the policy was not provided within the policy document. This tends to make the policy appear merely symbolic and may significantly impact actualising policy action plans (Budlender & Hewitt, 2002, p. 20). If there is no budget, how then can gender equity be effectively implemented? Expecting gender equity implementation with no budget or sufficient resources is futile. The decision concerning how monetary funds are to be/are used is a decisive means for institutional commitment and control and should be included in a comprehensive gender equity strategy. Therefore, it is possible to characterise the absence of budget in the OAU and UI policies as a case of what Elson describes as "lip service about gender equity" (2004, p. 633). This implies

situations where gender equity is not a priority for the policy framers and management, given that majority of the funding for the gender policy, has been from external sources. With the absence of a budget plan and relying solely on external support, this creates a situation where gender equity action plans crop up now and then, but only to decrease in salience and intensity until yet another international organisation opens up an opportunity for gender equity grants. The OAU and UI gender policy cannot succeed if this vital tool is absent and its importance is not understood.

Scholars have pointed out that institutional opposition to the introduction of gender equity may take the form of insufficient resourcing, under-staffing or inadequate gender training of staff (Braithwaite, 2000). It can also take the form of dedicating insufficient funds, time and personnel to the process of gender equity/equality and excluding non-hegemonic voices (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013). The *zero-budget* position of the OAU and UI gender policy creates resistance to actualising the goals of gender equity in the universities, which, in the long run, has the potential of advancing the representation of women in academic leadership positions.

Exclusion of Women-specific Initiatives in Gender Policy

As identified in the document, the goal of the UI gender policy is to achieve gender equity. However, the policy document emphasised strong evidence of a gender-neutral approach, which is akin to gender equality. While the OAU policy document highlights women's issues more consistently and prominently, the UI policy does not mention its alignment with any specific women-specific initiatives. UI's gender policy integrated gender considerations only shallowly; no particular action plans are prescribed to promote women. Despite evidence of wide gender disparities between men and women from the situational analysis conducted in the university (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 6); instead, men and women are treated as relatively unproblematic and unitary categories. According to the policy document, "…the University shall adopt measures to address existing gender imbalances by fostering female and male participation in decision making" (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 18). Not only is unequal gender power (interpreted as the under-representation of women) legitimised as a non-problem in the UI gender policies, but non-action is the proposed solution as well. Gender-neutral language is also expressed in the UI gender policy, as both women and men are assumed to derive benefit from the programmes. Women were not explicitly mentioned. The use of language, which is no doubt intended to assert gender-neutrality, has the potential of aiding the invisibility of women in the policy (Bergqvist et al., 2013, p. 281), thereby making the policy weak as it fails to target or redress discrimination experienced by women.

The case of UI demonstrates a form of implicit institutional resistance expressed through its exclusion of women in policy action plans. Cavaghan (2015) pointed to systemic resistance when institutions display a non-engagement with women's interests and an intentional avoidance of gender inequality as a policy problem. The systematic pattern of non-engagement with, and active exclusion of, gender is what institutional resistance is about (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013). The non-inclusion of women in the policy action plan indicates that their issues do not make it onto the agenda and that the policymaking process does not empower them (Lombardo & Meier, 2009). As a strategy to neutralise the policy, the policy fails by ignoring the accumulation of advantage by males from existing cultural practices by what seems to be a complete absence of a feminist lens (Kjeldal et al., 2005). By failing to include some women-centred initiatives in the policy design, the UI gender policy downplays discrimination and inequality, which runs the risk of facilitating women's underrepresentation in academic leadership. Given the traditional patriarchal foundations of the Nigerian society, such policies fail to honour the complexities of women's lives and their social, political, and economic factors, ultimately aiding in the systematic continuation of inequality for women (Drucza & Rodriguez, 2019). As Benschop and Verloo (2011, p. 286) write: "resistance is usually active when the cultural norms, views, attitudes and values of an individual are the focus of efforts for change." This is undoubtedly the case with the gender equity policies in Nigerian universities. Policies constructed in a space devoid of context and which fail to honour women's realities and their roles in families may result in a programme's misconception or the perpetuation of inequality. Ignoring the role of women only serves to undermine women's capacity to reconceptualise their power. Consequently, this hides the confrontational aspects of power that exist in one group's supremacy over another. Therefore, it is an accurate reflection to assert that the gender-neutral appearance of the UI gender policy hides the reality of gender-specific characteristics in representing disparities and underrepresentation in academic leadership positions.

Male Dominance Embedded in Gender Policy

Findings from both the OAU and UI gender equity policies show evidence of gendered power relations reflected in the policy content. The policy acknowledged that gender disparity was prevalent in both universities, especially in the decision-making cadre (OAU University Policy, 2009, pp. 4, 10; UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 6). In recognising the gender-differentiated access to power in the universities, explicit references to male domination were mentioned in the OAU gender policy document. The documents highlight the dominant male authority for gender equity as the Vice-Chancellor (primarily men). This, in a way, suggests deferring to

gender norms and social traditions, which invariably impair women's involvement in academic leadership positions. In line with the literature on the underrepresentation of women in Nigerian universities, academic staff in leadership positions are more likely to be male, a phenomenon which is explained by the pattern of access to higher education within the country (Eboiyehi et al., 2016). Although women tend to be overrepresented in lower-level academic and middle-level management positions, relative to men, their representation declines at progressively higher levels (S. R. Madsen, 2012; Mama, 2003).

The OAU and UI policy documents recognise gender norms and socio-cultural barriers as the underlining problem of gender disparity in the university. How gender inequality is portrayed in university gender policies is significantly influenced by the "hegemonic cultural beliefs" about gender and micro-level socio-relational structures where beliefs are put into effect (Ridgeway, 2011, p. 6; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). For instance, the prejudicial attitude prevalent in the country and the social roots of discrimination against women were acknowledged in the OAU policy document (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, p. 4). The UI policy document recognises the existence of patriarchal culture and the lack of gender-sensitive policies and institutional mechanisms for gender equality since the university's establishment in 1948. Therefore, the OAU and UI gender policies stand illustrative of patriarchal structures situated in gendered power relations. The policy highlights the apparent underrepresentation of women due to patriarchal culture and prejudicial attitudes towards women. This shows that institutional power relations are historically produced and facilitate inequalities in prestige, power and access to resources (Agbalajobi, 2010; Aina, 2014; Ezumah, 2000; Kenny, 2007, 2013b). The concept of path dependency has been particularly useful in showing that institutional power relations are historically produced and that purposeful attempts at change are difficult. The existing patriarchal cultures within the university structures are epitomised as pre-given and indispensable institutional requisites that are not easily challenged. This shows that gendered legacies of the past often confront gender policies. As Mackay (2014) pointed out in her Scottish Parliament study, the stickiness of gender legacies means that apparently, new institutions do not provide a clean slate to make claims of gender justice.

Coupling of gender equity with decision-making powers

Male dominance is not only signified by the underrepresentation of women in the academic domain but in the disproportionate power that men hold within these spaces and how this is maintained, legitimised and naturalised through the coupling of gender equity with the core decision-maker. In both universities (OAU and UI), overall authority and responsibilities for the gender policies lie with the Vice-Chancellor, a position often occupied by the men. The

attribution of positions arising from the policy documents deepens the relational and contradictory facets of power, thereby putting "the masculine ideal as dominant" (Chappell, 2014b, p. 184) in matters relating to gender within the academic settings. The power in the OAU and UI policies rests with the university management, especially the Vice-Chancellor, who controls appointments and has overall responsibility for implementing the gender policies. For instance, in the OAU policy, it is stated that:

> …the Vice-Chancellor will have overall responsibility for the university's gender policies, including the development, implementation and evaluation and monitoring. (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, p. 19)
>
> ...the Centre will take directives from the Vice Chancellor's office. (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, p. 19)

Similarly, membership of the university Anti-Sexual Harassment committee, such as the chairperson and some representatives, are to be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor (OAU ASHP, 2013, p. 29; UI Gender Policy, 2012, pp. 20, 21). A plausible explanation for this is the influence of existing power hierarchies and gendered legacies on the allocation of overall responsibility for gender equity in OAU and UI. The distribution of power within institutions continues to be ordered by traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. It reflects a gendered division of labour such that, even if women are present within institutions, their roles may be disproportionately subordinate or facilitative to those of men; thus, generally rendering them less visible (Lovenduski, 2005a, p. 58; Verge, 2015). For example, in her study of the Labour Party in Scotland, Kenny (2013a) highlighted that the ideal candidate described by political elites had markedly masculine features. She further argued that "while constructions of femininity and masculinity are both present in political institutions, the masculine ideal underpins institutional structures, practices, and norms" (2013, p. 38). Historically, leadership positions in Africa have always carried the notion of masculinity and the belief that men make better leaders than women (Eboiyehi, 2016, p. 183; Kiamba, 2006). In Nigeria, a wide range of customs, traditions, and cultural stereotypes shape perception and justify how and why powers should be allocated to the men (Aina et al., 2015; Ogbogu, 2011; Olaogun et al., 2015). Mackay (2014) argued that institutions are rooted in existing social ties and defined by past institutional interests that might obstruct change. Thus, existing gendered institutions can positively or negatively impact attempts to create change (Waylen, 2014).

Given that Nigerian higher education tends to be heavily male-dominated and culturally masculinised, the pre-existing gendered embeddedness of the institutions (Chappell, 2011; Kenny, 2013a; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Waylen, 2014, 2017) often come into play. By virtue

of the VC's authority, he/she can control the right and power to establish, change, enforce or ignore gender rules, as well as the standards or criteria used to rationalise decisions when they perceive it as threatening (Kenny, 2007; P. Pierson, 2016). The "invisible by-product" of the social supremacy of men has been their ability to set the "rules of the game", enabling them to structure institutions, create laws, legitimise specific knowledge, define moral codes, and shape culture in ways that maintain their control over women (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995: 20; Tamerius, 2010; Lovenduski, 2005a). The locus of power situated in one office can be daunting if the Vice-Chancellor is not receptive to gender equity. The patriarchal culture tends to influence decision-making and access to hierarchies within institutions (Mackay et al., 2010, p. 583; Thomson, 2017).

Placing the overall responsibility for the university policies in the office of the Vice-Chancellor without any form of checks and balances shows a pattern of power advantage and allows for the reproduction of male hegemony; thus, impeding the advancement of women to academic leadership positions. Moreover, there is a high tendency for interference with the activities or responsibilities of the University Gender Centre (which plays an essential role in the creation, progress and monitoring of gender equality strategies) and its goals. Therefore, this limits the ability of the Gender Centre to make informed, independent decisions, as they are not able to challenge the VC's overall decision regarding gender issues. Because of its positional power, the VC offers the strongest potential for achieving gender equity goals than any other. Thus, the VC is critical in determining gender equity outcomes (especially regarding women's advancement) and may often absorb old ways of operating, adopting former "logic of appropriateness" rather than creating new ones (Chappell, 2014a). Although institutions distribute power, powerful actors are not passive actors in this process; rather, those who hold power actively engage in processes, which anchor their privileged positions while simultaneously attempting to weaken and exclude institutional rivals (Kenny, 2007; Pierson, 2016). Therefore, power is about the institutionalisation of advantage, as institutional winners use and change the rules of the games to enhance their capabilities and political positions (Moe, 2006). The coupling of overall authority for gender equity with the VC's position, which a man occupies in most circumstances, presents institutional power relations asymmetry. The possibilities to expand women's potential are connected to the VC, who has the voice in university decision-making.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter set out an FI and FPAF framework to understand the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions, informed by FI approaches to institutional resistance and power relations, and the selected FPAF questions that connect with the FI approach. This chapter shows that, to understand why gender policies have failed to enhance the increased representation of women in academic leadership, we must first look at policy contents and identify areas of silence/absence and women's exclusion (that act as mechanisms of resistance for women) and how male dominance and gendered power relations is perpetuated in policy content. Looking towards the micro-strategies of resistance, evidence from this chapter draws attention to silence and exclusion in the gender policy content of OAU and UI. Thus, making it unsuitable for advancing women to academic leadership positions in Nigeria.

Findings show that resistance to the goal of gender equality (in the form of silences and exclusions) and the embeddedness of male dominance are dominant explanations for the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions. A lack of adequate tools such as sanctions to ensure compliance and gender budget can generate an aggregated inaction or non-implementation of the gender policy commitments. A distance between the policy intent and implementation strategies is evident, especially considering that important mechanisms that can aid the success of the gender equity policy and consequently advance women to academic leadership positions were either ignored or not taken into consideration. The identified policy silences expressed through absences and exclusion of women-specific initiatives in policy are a striking example of how gender equity can be affected by formal rules, resulting in the persistent underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions. Institutional resistance may significantly impact the formal rules by which an organisation operates, influencing patterns of implementation and non-implementation of gender changes and producing indifference to, or lack of awareness of, gender-based policy issues (Cavaghan, 2017, p. 11). Findings of institutional resistance raise doubts about the actual institutional commitment to gender equity or understanding of what it means to integrate women in gender equity programmes, especially considering that barriers to gender equity (such as the absence of sanctions for non-compliance of gender equity as a whole and specifically for the gender quota ratio, absence of women-focused initiatives and absence of budget plans) were omitted from the policy action plans. The study concludes that, within formal institutions, gendered norms (exclusion, silences, and marginalisation) continue to survive in a formal guise, potentially creating resistance for women (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013).

While undoubtedly a focus on male dominance draws attention to how men hold on to positions of power, it also draws attention to the institutional context, highlighting the institutional mechanisms that reproduce the "hegemony of men" (Hearn, 2004, p. 49). Findings show the embeddedness of male dominance in policy documents, manifested through masculinity and the coupling of gender equity with decision-making powers. The embeddedness of male dominance in policy documents shows how gendered inequalities of power are institutionally maintained and replicated through the formal gender rules and practices. Given the dominant patriarchal culture prevalent in the universities, the analysis showed that the VC's positional power could alter women's advancement to academic leadership positions, especially when the VC does not support equity initiatives. The VC's positional power also allows them greater access to the formal rules enabling them to protect their power and interests. Where institutions have cultures that maintain male privileges and influence, gender equity efforts are likely to be hindered. The subsequent chapters draw on the insights developed here to understand how informal institutions subvert the intent of formalised rules in Nigerian universities. Crucially for the rest of the analysis, it shows the role of informal institutional arrangements on women's advancement to academic leadership.

Chapter 5: Informal Institutions Subverting Formal Gender Policy: Stakeholders' Perspectives

The preceding chapter established that formal policies are gendered and continue to create implicit resistance for women's advancement to academic leadership positions via silences, absence and the concentration of power for formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating in a single authority (the Vice-Chancellor). This chapter moves on to analyse the perspectives of university gender policy stakeholders[12] on the role of informal institutional arrangements in the advancement of women to academic leadership positions. The primary goal here is to examine the perspectives of the gender policy stakeholders on the *informal rules of the game*. I address the second research question—to what extent do informal institutions (norms and practices within the universities) subvert the intent of formalised policies, thereby potentially undermining women's advancement to academic leadership? I identify the specific gender norms and practices that come to play in the university gender policy process. This chapter also highlights how informal norms and practices influence gender policy formulation and implementation and examines its impact on women's progression to academic leadership positions. Findings revealed two major discourses: the *nestedness of informal selection* in the gender policy formulation process and *gendered logic of appropriateness* in gender policy implementation. It shows a highly informalised system of selection that impacts how policies are formulated which has been exacerbated by the use of connections and the VC's positional power. Evidence also demonstrates how male dominance is created and sustained by displaying masculinist ideology, gender criticism, and non-engagement with gender issues. These findings provide a broader understanding of how the subversion of formalised policies limits the prospect for a positive institutional gender change and undermines women's academic leadership progression.

While the underrepresentation of women in academic leadership positions is investigated by examining the policy documents, this is not enough. Existing studies suggest that an exclusive focus on formal rules is insufficient and that informal institutions often have a profound and systematic effect on policy outcomes (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). Waylen (2014) argued that analysing informal institutions and how they are gendered presents theoretical and

[12] The gender policy stakeholders are selected university staff assigned various roles and responsibilities ranging from the formulation of the gender policy to its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Generally, it is the responsibility of the gender policy stakeholders to ensure that the overall goal of the university gender policy is achieved and sustained.

methodological difficulties as both gender norms and informal institutions can be challenging to uncover. This is because gender norms and informal institutions are often naturalised as part of the status quo, thus, making them unperceived or unremarked (Jenkins & Waylen, 2014; Waylen, 2013). Neglecting the informal institution risks missing many of the *real* constraints that subvert the university gender policy's intent and potentially undermine women's advancement to academic leadership positions.

Helmke and Levitsky argued that efforts to identify informal institutions should do three things. First, they should specify actors' shared expectations about the actual constraints they face, that is, the actors' mutual understanding of rules. Second, specify the community or domain to which the informal rules apply. Third, identify the mechanisms by which the informal rules are communicated and enforced (2003, pp. 25–26). Given that institutional effects are generated by "real human individuals" [13] (Crouch, 2005), the gender policy stakeholders' perspectives are important because they provide the context and the environment within which gender policies are formulated and implemented. The gender stakeholders design institutions, interpret, apply and adapt gender rules on a day-to-day basis in academic environments. As such, it is imperative to study the gender stakeholders within the university to unearth the gendered aspect of the policy formulation and implementation process.

Existing explorations have been interested in questioning why institutions hinder greater women's representation (Kenny, 2013b), that is, why new institutions revert to older practices, which can often signal regression on gendered norms—historical gender bias and gendered power imbalances found in most traditional institutions (Mackay, 2014). Studies have also focused on how informal institutions can inhibit progressive gendered change (Waylen, 2014). Against this background, Mackay and Waylen (2014) argued for the need to investigate the role of gendered actors (used in this study as gender stakeholders) to explore the dynamics of gendered institutional change, insofar as actors can either promote or resist institutional change. Erikson (2019) emphasised that a fruitful way to advance research in this area is to address actors' gendered perceptions of the institutional context, inasmuch as their actions are shaped not only by the institutional context but also by how they perceive and interpret that context.

I used an integrated Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA) to analyse gender stakeholders perception of informal institutions and their impact on

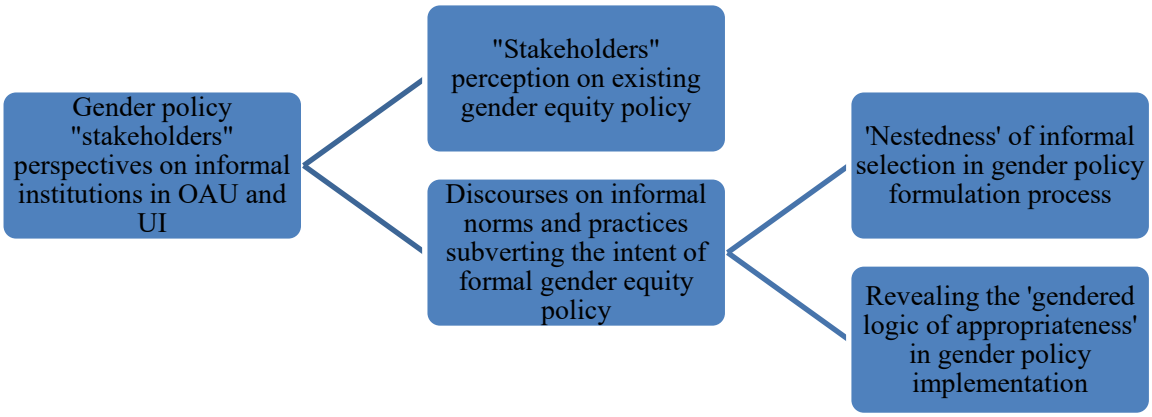
[13] I refer to *real human individuals* in this study as gender stakeholders.

the universities' gender equity policies and process as a whole. As previously explained in Chapter three (see 3.5), I combined the core FI perspective of gendered actors, institutional resistance/stasis and gendered power relations with carefully crafted questions drawn from Lazar's five principles of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). I worked with the FI concepts and constructed FCDA questions that reflect points of convergence across both frameworks, particularly identifying prevalent informal norms and practices subverting formal gender rules in stakeholders interviews. The integrated FI-FCDA analysis of the stakeholders' interview produced discourses on the prevailing gendered structural relations of power that negatively impact gender policy formulation and implementation at the university. This, in the long run, undermines women's progression to leadership positions within the university. This chapter aims to complement the data from the documentary analysis by exploring the experiences and perceptions of those overseeing the university gender initiative and gaining further insight into the discourse on the gender equity policy process.

To accomplish this chapter's goal, four gender policy stakeholders, purposively selected from two case study universities (Obafemi Awolowo University—OAU and University of Ibadan—UI) that had both gender centres and strategic gender documents, were interviewed. The interviews provided a valuable personal perspective to the documentary data and a more comprehensive understanding of the universities' gender policy process. Interviewees recounted their experience of considering gender and provided a deep insight into the nature of informal institutions playing out at the policy formulation stage. Attitudes towards gender policy implementation and viewpoints of gender as a matter of concern in the universities also emerged from the interview data.

The two major themes (with various sub-themes) that emerged from the data analysed are shown in Figure. 3. However, before delving into the themes, I explored the participants' roles as gender policy stakeholders in their university. This provides a background to who the participants are and what they do as gender policy stakeholders.

Figure 3: *Thematic Map*



Participants' Role as Gender Policy Stakeholders

The gender policy stakeholders who participated in the interview were female academic staff and included a former director of the gender centre who is also a member of the university gender equity committee, two current university gender committee members, and a peer educator. Several efforts to have access to the university gender centre directors proved abortive due to their workload and the multiple academic and administrative engagements of these women. Most of the directors of these gender centres hold dual office/positions (their primary academic positions, coupled with being the centre's director). Table 11 shows a description of the interview participants. For the selected participants, pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Table 11: *Description of Gender Policy Stakeholders' Role in OAU and UI*

University	Pseudonyms	Role	Summary of functions performed
OAU	Prof. Grace	Former director and Gender equity implementation committee member	I was a member of the committee set up to formulate the university gender policy. As the former director of the gender centre, I was responsible for providing clear lines of directive, communication and coordination of gender equity policy. As a policy stakeholder, other committee members and I deliberate on gender-related issues and advise university management and the director of the gender centre on gender-related matters. Also responsible for overseeing and enforcing the university gender policy.
	Dr Tolu	Gender equity Committee member	Monitoring and ensuring the implementation of the Gender Equity Policy.
UI	Dr Cynthia	Gender Mainstreaming Committee member	Actively support the implementation of gender policy. Also perform related functions stipulated in the policy document such as advocacy, liaising with external bodies, training peer educators, mentoring, monitoring, and evaluating gender policy.
	Tobi	Peer Educator	Serve as a resource person for gender equity within the university. Also responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy.

The participants' responses revealed that the policy stakeholders generally perform roles that centre on gender advocacy through teaching and research. Most importantly, they facilitate gender mainstreaming activities—gender policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation—by developing appropriate policy instruments that would enhance mainstreaming gender into university. The interview participants highlighted that the role of each gender policy stakeholder differs according to the function they perform and the amount of power embedded in the position they occupy. However, they all work towards achieving the overall objective for which they were created. Figures 4 and 5 show the hierarchical structure of gender policy stakeholders responsible for gender equity in OAU and UI.

Figure 4: *Hierarchical Structure of Gender Policy Stakeholders in OAU*

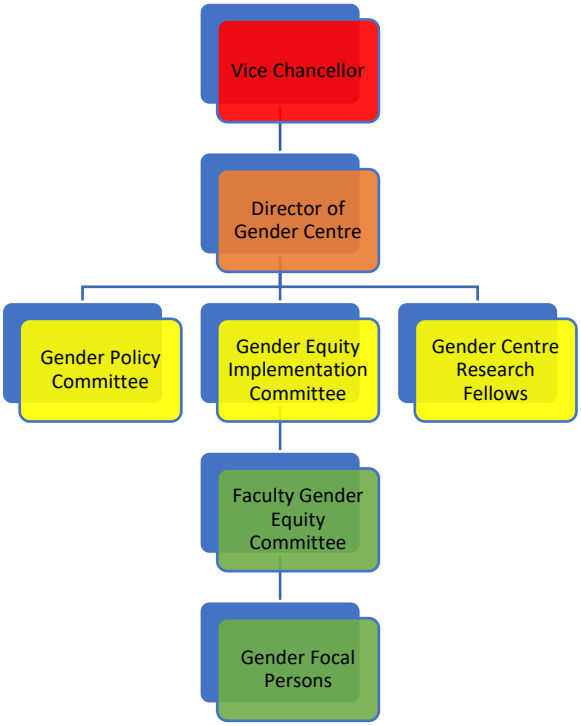
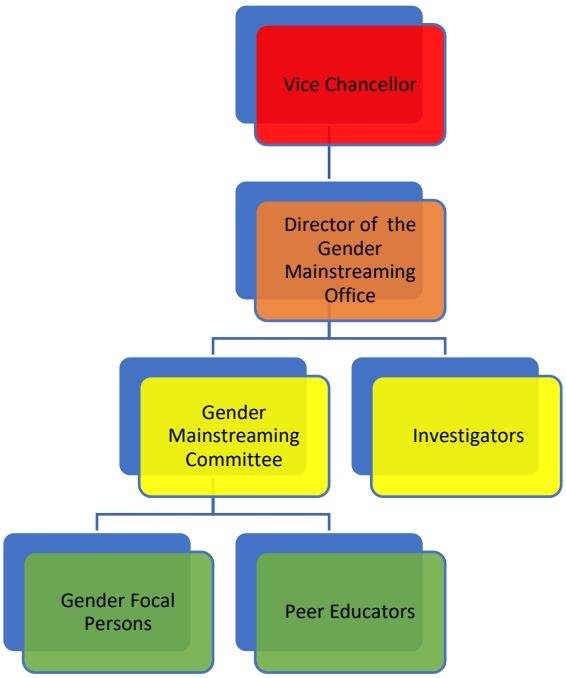


Figure 5: *Hierarchical Structure of Gender Policy Stakeholders in UI*



Keys

Core policy stakeholder
Higher-level policy stakeholder
Mid-level policy stakeholders
Lower-level policy stakeholders

Based on the interviewees' responses, I classified the gender policy stakeholders based on the role they perform. Gender policy stakeholders in universities with gender centres and gender policy constitute the VC, who is regarded as a *core* gender policy stakeholder because of its dominant power and overall responsibility for implementing gender policy in both universities. Next in the classification are the higher-level gender policy stakeholders, such as the director of the university gender centre, who is responsible for providing clear lines of communication, interactions, coordination, responsibility, consensus building, and collaboration towards implementing gender policy. Also included in this category are the chairpersons of the gender equity committees. The mid-level gender policy stakeholders such as the centres' research fellows and members of the University Gender Equity Committees are responsible for conducting gender-based research, training, and overseeing and enforcing the university gender policy. The low-level gender policy stakeholders are faculty/departmental-based gender representatives such as the selected peer mentors or gender focal persons.

5.1 Perspectives on Existing Gender Equity Policy and Implementation

As the interview progressed, I inquired from the respondents their thoughts on the intent of the university gender policy. Evidence from the documentary analysis (Chapter four) showed that the intent of the gender policy is to "institutionalise gender equity." While the policy's intent is visibly stated in the document, I explained to the policy stakeholder that I was interested in knowing their perception/knowledge of the gender policy. I aimed to understand whether the gender policy stakeholder's perception differed from what is explicitly stated in the gender policy document. All the respondents agreed that the primary intent of the university gender policy is to 'institutionalise gender equity' in the university as stipulated by the policy document. Reference was made to the documentary policy, which serves as a guideline for university gender activities. Some of the respondents stated during the interview that:

> *Although I am not among those who drafted the gender policy, as policy stakeholders, we have to follow what the gender policy document specifies unless a periodic review is conducted.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

> *The overall goal of the policy is stipulated in the gender policy. Even our roles and responsibilities as policy stakeholders are identified in the document.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

I further asked the participants what gender equity meant for them as gender policy stakeholders. Findings revealed that the stakeholders' perspectives on gender equity in both

universities (OAU and UI) slightly differed and were subject to different interpretations. The interviewees' perspectives on gender equity are stated below:

> *A condition of fairness in relations between women and men leading to a situation where each has equal status, rights, levels of responsibility, and access to power and resources.* (Prof Grace, OAU)

> *It denotes a fair allocation of resources, programs, and decisions without discrimination to both males and females …and addressing any imbalances.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

> *… utilising gender mainstreaming as a tool to create programmes that look at the empowerment of women and those that involve men.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

> *... allowing men and women to enjoy equal rights, entitlements, responsibilities, and opportunities.* (Tobi, UI)

From the quotes above, the gender stakeholders' perspectives on gender equity in both universities varied. While gender policy stakeholders in OAU viewed gender equity from the perspective of *fairness* in access to power and distribution of resources, the UI gender policy stakeholders viewed gender equity from the standpoint of *sameness* or equality for both men and women. Findings show that the dominant meaning of gender equity in OAU, which is fairness aligns with the generally accepted understanding of gender equity, which means recognising and valuing women's differences from the dominant male norm. According to the International Labour Office (ILO) (2000), gender equity differs from gender equality. The concept of gender equity refers to fairness of treatment for women and men according to their individual needs. In contrast, gender equality means that the different behaviour, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favoured equally (Mencarini, 2014; UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 11).

The UI's policy stakeholders' perception of gender equity as the notion of *sameness* or *equality* misaligns with the general understanding of what gender equity means and stands for. Evidence shows that to ensure fairness, strategies and measures in the OAU gender policy document were designed based on the situational report conducted in the university, which showed gender imbalance in academic leadership positions (see Appendix 6). The policy intended to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent them from operating on a level playing field. Thus, gender equity is about perceptions of fairness

rather than equality of outcome (McDonald, 2000). UI policy stakeholders conceive gender equity as attaining equal opportunities and equal treatment, which is expressly understood as 'women having the same opportunity as men. The *equality* perception assumes women are essentially the same as men and should be provided with equal opportunities and treated in the same way.

As the interview progressed, the participants highlighted gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving the gender policy goal—institutionalising gender equity. The European Commission (1996, p. 2) defined gender mainstreaming as the "integration of the gender perspective into every stage of the policy process (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) to promote equality between women and men. It means assessing how policies impact both the women and men's life and position and take responsibility to re-address them." Gender mainstreaming was first introduced in 1985 at the Nairobi World Conference on Women. It was recognised as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, and subsequently implemented as a tool to promote gender equality at all levels. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Gender Mainstreaming document (2015) identified three primary mainstreaming strategies or approaches to Gender Mainstreaming which are often used together or separately: (a) integration of gender equality in interventions; (b) targeting **s**pecific groups or issues through special interventions; and (3) dialogue with partners on gender-sensitive issues and aspects. Two of the interviewees highlighted the gender mainstreaming approach adopted in both universities. According to them:

> *The gender centre is keen on utilising gender mainstreaming as an approach to achieve the goal of the gender policy. In fact, that is a core gender focus in this university. We understand that eradicating gender inequality is near impossible, but to facilitate the [process of reducing gender imbalances within the system, there is a need to include women. There is no way gender equity can be institutionalised if the men are side-lined.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

> *While it is essential to include men in mainstreaming gender equity in the university, we cannot overemphasise the importance of creating opportunities or enabling environments for women. You can agree that there are peculiar barriers for women in academia because of their gender and the domesticated roles they are required to fulfil. Based on this, we have to look for a way to create a balance and ensure that the objective of the gender policy is attained.*

> *Looking at the policy document, we designed some initiatives to help women progress. I believe equity is a base or foundation for achieving gender equality and not the other way around.* (Prof. Grace, OAU)

Findings show a visible difference in the mainstreaming approach of the two universities. For instance, gender mainstreaming in OAU is a twin-track approach that combines the promotion of women's empowerment through specific, women-targeted activities and mainstreaming. There is a broad consensus about the effectiveness of a dual mainstreaming approach (combining gender mainstreaming and specific measures for women's advancement). A particular example is the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5) and gender-sensitive targets in other goals. The OAU Mainstreaming approach emphasised fairness and the necessity of institutional action to address inequities. These strategies are recognised as distinct, yet intertwined, because the aim of gender mainstreaming is to complement initiatives and projects that focus on women.

In the case of UI, only a single gender mainstreaming approach is emphasised. This clearly explains the gender stakeholder's perception of gender equity as a notion of sameness or equality. Evidence showed that the perception of the policy stakeholders and the mainstreaming approach adopted in the university counteracts the overall intent of the university gender policy, which is to institutionalise gender equity. The UI has focused more on ensuring balance or gender neutrality between males and females without consideration for the significantly underrepresented number of women in decision-making positions. This may be an explanatory factor in why women-specific programmes and initiatives were excluded from the gender policy. Focusing alone on a single-track gender mainstreaming strategy in a university where the situational analysis showed a wide gender disparity in academic leadership between men and women is ineffective in closing the gender gap because the university's deep structures have been left unaddressed. By adopting gender mainstreaming alone, there is an institutional separation of *women's issues* and the entrenchment of the specificity of gender-related issues.

Stakeholders' Perception of the Gender Policy Outcomes

Going further, I asked the participants if the policy was achieving its intended goal or not. Here, I was keen on knowing the extent of the institutionalisation of gender equity within the universities. The response is grouped under two major classifications: "Yes but to an extent" and "No." The interviewees all acknowledged that in terms of gender training and gender

consciousness-raising programmes (as part of efforts in institutionalising gender equity), the policy had achieved its goal in that regard. The participants identified specific gender awareness strategies utilised in OAU, such as Gender Equity Bulletin publications and gender sensitisation[14] via workshops and seminars.

Similarly, in UI, participants identified gender awareness training as a significant area where the most impact has been made. According to the interviewees in UI, this has been made possible through consensus-building workshops, peer educators' workshops, sensitisation workshops, and specialised workshop that addresses specific gender issues in diverse areas due to the diversity of specialities among staff. Though the interviewees agreed that the training programmes have made the university community more gender-conscious, gender stereotypes and biases still persist. One of the interviewees in OAU stated that:

> *The gender centre has been very efficient in the area of training and gender awareness. I believe people know more about the negative impact of gender bias and discrimination, but they are not supportive. Some do not even attend training or seminars since it is not mandatory or comes with a financial perk.* (Prof. Grace, OAU)

Regarding the inclusion of women in management positions and university management support, some of the interviewees noted that, since the introduction of gender equity in the university, there had been a "gradual" improvement in the composition of females in staff employment and appointments to academic leadership positions in the university, especially as Heads of Departments. Others also admitted some form of support for gender equity from the university management. While probing to know the form of support they referred to, they mentioned that, with the university management embracing gender equity, they perceive it as a big step and a form of support. However, they concluded that the support had been a partial one that continually leaves them in doubt regarding the motive of the university management for the adoption of the gender policy.

Probing further to know why the policy is not achieving its intended goals, especially regarding the other policy action plans, some interviewees identified several factors that may have affected the success of the formalised policy. They argued that factors such as the limited role they play as gender policy stakeholders and lack of funding had provided a baseline for informal practices to thrive. Altogether, these factors subverted the potential of

[14]Workshops designed to raise awareness on gender equity issues and aimed at modifying behaviours of staffs and students in the university.

institutionalising gender equity in universities. Regarding the limited role of the policy stakeholders, the interviewees clarified that the level/positions and roles each policy stakeholders perform is very different. According to one of the interviewees:

> *... the "core and higher-level" are the ones who are more recognised, and this position comes with some form of benefits—monetary and otherwise.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

The core and higher-level gender policy stakeholders usually include the Vice-Chancellor or anyone he delegates responsibility to in his absence, directors of the gender centre and sometimes, the chairpersons of each gender equity committee. Findings show that the mid-level and lower-level policy stakeholders play limited roles in their capacity as policy stakeholders. An interviewee mentioned how she frequently finds herself in situations where, even if she *can* implement policy initiatives, her power is limited because her role is not strengthened. According to her:

> *The prospect of instituting gender change in my position is limited. I just see myself as a figurehead. If I were a professor and a member of the gender committee, I believe I would make much impact because people would listen and comply with my directives.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

One of the most apparent issues subverting the intent of the gender policy that almost every interviewee mentioned was lack of funding. While these universities negotiate several forms of support from internal and external sources, there is a high reliance on external funding. International non-governmental organisations such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation have been instrumental in establishing gender centres and creating gender initiatives in Nigerian universities. Within the national space, some First Ladies have offered support for gender initiatives in Nigerian universities[15]. Notable among them are Dame Patience Jonathan, the wife of Nigeria's former president, who was instrumental in building the University of Port Harcourt Gender Centre and Erelu Olabisi Fayemi, the wife of the governor of Ekiti State, who built the OAU Gender Centre. Others have, under the auspices of their NGO's, offered scholarships to women or female students in universities. Abubakar and Ahmed (2014) acknowledged that First Ladies play an instrumental role as gender equality key players through their projects. Although the financial support from external sources has been critical in the launch and success of the initiatives of some gender centres, the

[15]These are the wives of heads of states, presidents, vice-presidents and governors and usually operate under the Office of the First Lady.

sustainability of these centres leaves much to be desired, as universities have powerfully resisted making appropriate budgetary and personnel allocations.

Pereira (2004) noted that although several universities in Nigeria have established gender studies centres, they all struggled from a lack of funding and insufficient institutional support. For example, in OAU, there is no financial commitment to Gender Equity Policy by university management. It appears the university management does not consider the Gender Policy serious enough to make funds available for its implementation, especially when one considers the fact that the initial funding for the development of the policy was from an external source—the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It is a standard organisational practice that institutions should have budgets to implement their policy mandates and achieve their goals. However, these universities suffer from a lack of budget for gender equity implementation. I questioned further to know how and why this happened. One of the interviewees stated that:

> *Usually, after drafting these policies, it has to be approved and implemented. Most times, implementation efforts are constrained due to a lack of finance because there is little or no financial support or budget from the university management.* (Tobi, UI)

Another interviewee stated that:

> *I feel because the idea of gender equity policy/gender centre is externally originated (from international organisations) ... there is little or no commitment from the university. The university management only welcomed the idea because it was externally funded. As part of the criteria for sponsorship, most international non-governmental organisation such as Carnegie international explicitly requires universities to draft and adopt a gender policy as a commitment to make gender equity a priority.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

It is important to understand that the introduction of the university gender policy and the establishment of gender centres in OAU and UI universities were *externally motivated* by international non-governmental organisations such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Ford Foundation, which provide funding or grants. In 2002, the Carnegie Corporation of New York expressed interest in partnering with Nigerian universities. Five Nigerian universities benefited directly from these two foundations, and a continental Partnership for Higher Education in Africa emerged with seven different foundations participating. Gender was an important area where the interests of some Nigerian universities and Carnegie Corporation of New York coincided (Liverpool et al., 2015). In this regard, it is relevant to

note that universities are responsible for their gender policies. In other words, there are no clear structures of responsibility in place between the government and the universities to ensure a continuous institutional commitment. No related national stipulation obligates the universities to report gender equity activities and gender balance numbers. The National Universities Commission (NUC), a regulatory body for all universities in Nigeria, does not monitor, nor is it empowered to sanction any breach of institutional provisions to develop gender action plans.

To a large extent, significant support for strengthening gender equality in Nigerian universities was provided by international non-governmental organisations. As a prerequisite, universities were required to draft, adopt gender policies and have a gender centre/unit within the university. Although the financial support from these international organisations was a critical factor in the launch of gender centres and the adoption of gender equity, the sustainability of these centres and the success of institutionalising gender equity leaves much to be desired, as universities have powerfully resisted making appropriate budgetary allocations. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that gender equity work confines itself to temporary responses to meet temporary requirements and recommendations (Barnes, 2007). This creates a situation where gender equity action plans crop up now and then, but only to decrease in salience and intensity until another international organisation opens up an opportunity for gender equity grants. The lack of long-term, permanent funding makes gender planning difficult and has limited the implementation of gender policy action plans.

I pressed further to know why the university management would accept the idea of adopting gender equity, even if it were externally motivated, and then renege in bringing the policy goals/intent to fruition? One of the interviewees expressed that:

> *I believe it is all about gaining acceptance and recognition ... nationally and internationally.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

From the above quote, most universities seek to be seen and accepted internationally as a university committed to gender equity. Gender equity is strategically accepted and institutionally welcomed because it promotes the university's profile and its visibility. However, that does not generally mean that the support for gender equity continues when the external funding is over. Adopting gender equity in these universities may have become empty gestures as they offer a relatively easy way of demonstrating commitments to women's rights without necessarily altering existing patterns of gendered representation (Htun & Jones, 2002). Findings from the interview showed that a budget was not deemed necessary since the

initiative for establishing gender equity has been externally motivated. This implies that, since the policy 'originators' are different from the 'enforcers', the likelihood of formal institutional change taking root diminishes (Waylen, 2013, p. 215).

5.2 The Subversive Influence of Informal Norms and Practices

The second major theme (as shown in Figure 3) revolved around discourses on informal norms and practices subverting formal gender policies in the universities. The extent to which pre-existing informal rules and norms impact policy formulation and implementation are crucial. By asking questions such as "How do informal rules and norms play out alongside formal rules at the policy formation and implementation stage? Are there gender influences or biases in the way policies are formulated and implemented?" I obtained different responses that contained a wide variety of views and perspectives that identify specific informal norms and practices and how these subvert formalised policies in the universities. The interviewees in both universities mentioned several issues which, they perceived were informal norms and practices. They also identified how these play out—at the policy formulation and implementation stage and its impacts on the institutionalisation of gender equity in the universities.

"Nestedness" of informal selection in the gender policy formulation process

Findings from the interviews highlighted trends of *informalisation*, particularly regarding the issue of selection criteria for higher-level gender policy stakeholders. Informality can be identified when there is an absence of explicit criteria relating to how a process is carried out or where guidelines are very brief or serve a purely symbolic function (Culhane, 2017). While the formal rules regarding the allocation of responsibilities were set out in the OAU gender policy document, these mainly stated *who was responsible for the selection* and not *who should be selected*. In the UI gender policy document, the selection criteria stated that "someone with a track record of interest in gender research/activism is to be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor" (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 21). In both universities, the policy prescribes that the VC has a role as an overall gender policy stakeholder in the policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process. The VC has the overall responsibility for the gender policy and has positional power to appoint the Director of the gender centre or chairpersons of the equity committees. For example, in UI, while the university senate is responsible for selecting suitable candidates for appointment, the VC has the ultimate power to decide who the suitable candidate would be.

Findings showed a *highly exclusive* selection process for higher-level gender stakeholders. A highly exclusive selection process empowers just one person to decide; in this case, it is the VC. Exclusivity is concerned with the level of inclusiveness of the process, that is, how many people are involved in the decision to select candidates (Hazan & Rahat, 2010). The higher the number of people eligible to partake in the decision, the more inclusive the process, whereas the smaller the number of selectors becomes, the more exclusive the procedure is considered (Hazan & Rahat, 2010; Hinojosa, 2012). Therefore, the VC functions as the university's highest authority in matters of gender equity and is specifically responsible for nominating the higher-level gender policy stakeholders. They control the nomination procedures, decide whom to select, when and how. These findings showcase the presence of a gendered actor that promotes a patriarchal social order and shows how gendered structures and male dominance are reproduced and sustained. The VC's positional power and authority in the selection process gives them leverage to employ *informal* selection practices. According to one of the interviewees, the higher-level gender stakeholders' position is an attractive position that provides significant payoffs to career advancement. These payoffs include having an edge in promotion decisions (especially where the individual is not in the professorial cadre yet), financial reward and perks, leadership experience, opportunities and professional networks. According to one interviewee:

> *It is a sought-after position with less rigour because you are either nominated or appointed to the position rather than the usual rigour of interviewing and proving your competence.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

> *It is not like the normal promotion process where you apply. It is appointment-based. The choice of a suitable candidate is the prerogative of the VC or whosesoever it has been delegated to.* (Tobi, UI)

Since the VC holds the overall power to nominate the higher-level gender policy stakeholders, there is a probability of choosing well-connected individuals. One of the respondents has this to say:

> *There is the existence of informal norms and practices in the university [smiling]… but this is not visible. The prevalent informal practices I have observed and personally experienced is the "use of connection". Most people will not say that openly, but we all know what happens "at the top". Informal rules overshadow what is written down, especially in appointments.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

The use of connection allows influential individuals connected with the overall power to be nominated or selected into attractive policy positions even if they do not possess the competence or capability. The role of networks is highlighted as key to ensuring selection in many contexts (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2013). Research on the gendered impact of informal selection suggests that it fosters selection based on personal loyalties and patronage. Thus, it tends to favour the nomination of well-networked and existing individuals or their family members (Bjarnegård, 2013; Kenny, 2013b). Individuals with "extensive local/international connections" and "name recognition" are perceived as being able to further their interests and that of family members or friends. Findings from the study showed that there is an institutionalised informal perception of selection. These findings align with Holgerrson (2013), who argued that, where few formal regulations exist regarding criteria, there is a high tendency for selection to be based on subjective criteria and personal preferences or loyalties, which are often gendered. The interviewees brought to light the fact that the absence of a formal selection process or criteria, coupled with the VC's positional power, can facilitate the practice of informality. An implication is that it can potentially subvert the intent of the gender policy and undermine women's advancement to academic leadership positions in the long run.

Furthermore, I asked the interviewees how informal selection, facilitated by the VC's positional power and the use of connections, may subvert the intent of formalised policies and potentially undermine women's advance to academic leadership positions. Findings from the interviews revealed that a significant implication of "informal selection" is the possibility of the VC prescribing to the selected stakeholders what they must do in their capacity and what they are prohibited from doing. It enables the VC to hand-pick malleable people (mainly women) who would not question or challenge the status quo but show allegiance to the VC. According to one of the interviewees:

> *What do you expect? [smiling]. Of course, they would want someone who would not challenge their directives, even if it is detrimental to the policy's overall goal. They carefully select those that would be loyal to them.* (Tobi, UI)

The fact that equally qualified candidates cannot apply for positions as gender policy stakeholders unless nominated by the VC was mentioned as a possible informal practice that can withdraw interest in gender. The opportunity for the best and most competent candidate to be appointed is limited, as there are no formal processes or committees set up to evaluate the candidates' capability and choose the best. A level playground and opportunity are not presented to eligible women to apply. It is believed that since the selected stakeholders are responsible for influencing gender representation within the university, the selection process

should be formal and visible. One of the interviewees observed that a central element shaping the success of gender equity is the passion for gender equity and the perceived acceptability of core gender stakeholders by others. She further emphasised the capacities and intent of those informally selected. She argued that the perks and attractiveness of the position are significant motivations for them and not because "they are passionate about gender issues or have the right credentials."

Is this to say that merit is being downplayed?

According to the interviewees, although merit may not usually be downplayed, the use of informal selection is often questioned. One of the interviewees stated that:

> *Well, there is no specific stipulations or criteria for determining the best. For example, the grade level of who should apply, experience as a gender expert, training etc. It is not enough to have two publications on gender and call yourself a gender expert. No! It is more than that. Competence/capability, passion and experience are core must-haves! I believe they are people who are more qualified than those informally selected.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

It is certainly not my aim to argue that individuals selected do not merit it. Indeed, generally speaking, due to the nature of the position (academic position), it is difficult to overlook merit. I argue that the exclusion of a fair level playing field for qualified women to vie for the position has detrimental effects on the gender equity outputs produced. It bears explaining here that this can breed systematic exclusion for some women and constrain their participation. As such, arguments around gender equity as a function of women's broader inequality will only be heard from a small number of individuals, with the interests of the diverse population of women to be represented not advanced, and therefore less able to positively impact gender equity outputs. Applying an FI lens to this theme shows the nestedness of informal institutional arrangements within broader intersecting systems (Mackay, 2009). The case study revealed informal selection as an important feature across OAU and UI within the gender policy formulation stage. The VC's positional power and the lack of selection criteria arguably facilitate the use of connections for informally selecting individuals to positions of authority. Thus, the selection process sits within pre-existing informal practices such as the use of connections and is exacerbated by the VC's dominant power. The OAU and UI case highlights the gendered difficulties of embedding gender reforms or institutionalising gender equity within a pre-existing institutional context.

Revealing the "gendered logic of appropriateness" in gender policy implementation

The personal ideology of some academic heads was identified as a norm that subverts the intent of formalised policies. According to the document, "it shall be the responsibility of the Provost, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments/Units to ensure compliance with gender policies by persons and officers under their colleges, faculties, institutes, directorates, Centre's and departments" (UI Gender Policy, 2012, p. 23). Similarly, in the OAU gender policy document, all provosts of colleges and deans of faculties are members of the Gender Equity Implementation Committee and are expected to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Gender Equity Policy (OAU Gender Policy, 2009, p. 21). However, findings have shown that gender appears to be a non-issue for some academic heads, thus impacting the implementation of gender policy within the faculties/departments. Two interviewees stated that:

> *Personal ideologies of the academic heads often reflect in their style of administration. When gender is a non-issue for the VC or members of the governing council, gender equity success cannot be guaranteed. For example, the former VC was very supportive of gender equity, and we could see a visible difference and changes in structures. However, the present VC has been quite relaxed, and we feel he is not supportive like his predecessor.* (Dr Cynthia, UI)

> *At the various sub-levels [department/faculties], there are some non-compliance because of the person's belief occupying the headship position. Surprisingly, despite the awareness and sensitisation programmes, some men still have parochial and stereotypical beliefs about women leading and do not comply with implementing policy actions. This is why we encourage staff to be aware of their right and the policy content so they can report when taken undue advantage of.* (Prof. Grace, OAU)

The idiosyncrasies or ideological perceptions of a policy actor/stakeholder constitute a major factor that impacts their decisions or implementation capabilities. Studies have shown that not only the gendered institutional context influences actors' behaviour but also how individual actors interpret and perceive the gendered context in which they find themselves (Björnehed & Erikson, 2018; Hay, 2011). Even if gender equity is on the universities' official agenda, the importance of gender equity has not been unanimously accepted throughout the university, as witnessed by those working as gender policy stakeholders. This is because individuals' interests are inconsistent with the values/principles of gender equity. Norms privileging

masculinised forms of representation, hegemonic ideology, and patriarchal ideological beliefs result in institutional resistance, shutting out efforts towards institutionalising gender equity.

Furthermore, the interviewees stressed the non-engagement of some departmental/faculty heads with gender issues and how gender stakeholders (low-level stakeholders) responsible for fostering gender equity are often marginalised by staff members for whom gender is a non-issue. On the surface, these academic heads actively create a seemingly institutional image of fully supporting gender equity. At the coalface, where it matters, implementation remains elusive because, for them, gender is a non-issue.

> *Several efforts to ensure things are done with gender considerations in the department and the faculty has been met with gridlock. At a time, I insisted that some women be included in the one committee set up by the dean and was very assertive at the meeting. Some people saw me as being disrespectful because of my insistence*. (Tobi, UI)

The findings showed how some departmental heads or deans pay lip service to gender equity. Recognising this, one could reasonably presume they would not direct much attention towards gender equity, even though they had the authority to do so. The failure of some male academic leaders to support gender equity is evidenced in their inability to shed their entrenched masculinist norms and values regarding women and gender in the organisations they manage (Doorgapersad, 2016; Erikson, 2019). Tiessen (2007) discussed how hegemonic masculine norms, a set of masculine practices, become *natural* and widespread in organisations where men predominate. She argued that these masculine norms and practices need to be critiqued and challenged. These masculine norms and practices apply where men dominate senior management and the decision-making processes—men determine what is important and what will be resourced and prioritised. The few women in senior management find it difficult to challenge such a culture (Erikson, 2019). The case study shows evidence of subverting formal policy with masculinist norms, and in a contradictory way. As a highly patriarchal society, the masculinist norms exert a considerable drag and constrain the potential for "new paths and limits reform" (Mackay, 2014, p. 561).

One of the interviewees also identified verbal gender reproval or criticisms as a reoccurring issue, targeted at female gender policy stakeholders or scholars within the university. Gender equity stakeholders expressed how they often contend with powerful and deeply embedded norms and rules, which subvert formal gender policies (Mackay, 2014, p. 567). Two interviewees have this to say:

> *In the committee meetings, I make contributions, but I cannot do anything because of my position as a junior academic staff within the department. I remember that during one of our faculty staff meetings, I had raised an observation on an issue I felt was a case of gender discrimination. After presenting my case, a colleague said, "Madam Gender, please take your [seat]… We have other important issues to be discussed". They all laughed about it and shelved the case. To date, the issue has not to be addressed.*
>
> *Another senior colleague told me after the meeting to tread with caution, especially with making a case during the faculty staff meeting, as I do not want to be seen as one who thinks or knows too much. Apparently, junior staff are expected to keep quiet or support what the older colleagues say.* (Dr Tolu, OAU)

From the quote above, although there are gender focal persons within the faculty responsible for fostering gender equity, unfortunately, they are often younger staff members. This makes it difficult to call out academic leaders such as HODs or Deans for whom gender is a non-issue so as not to be in their wrong book. Thus, there is an apparent power asymmetry to the disadvantage of junior policy actors working on gender equality. Given that mid-level and lower-level gender actors frequently have limited powers, gender change is likely to face opposition and may "subvert, distort or stymie formal rule change" (Waylen, 2014, p. 221). These findings are in line with Benschop and Verloo (2006), who asserted that intended policy goals cannot be actualised if there is (a) no political or institutional will; (b) if those who should implement the policy have weak institutional positions; and (c) if support from senior management and resources is lacking.

Evidence from this theme revealed that informal practices in OAU and UI are made manifest via the non-engagement of faculty/departmental-based management with gender issues, patriarchal ideologies, verbal gender criticisms and marginalisation of lower-level policy stakeholders. Both the OAU and UI cases stand illustrative of the "gendered logic of appropriateness." According to FI, gendered logics of appropriateness prescribe and proscribe what is acceptable for gendered actors, all of which affects policy outcomes (Chappell, 2006). Nigerian higher education embodies a patriarchal-like institution where its norms and practices sustain a male dominance of the profession. In the case studies, attempts to assert gender equity at the faculty and departmental levels have been repelled or constrained by some academic heads for whom gender is a non-issue. The general lack of interest or commitment

of some academic heads is attributed to the institutions' informal logic of appropriateness embedded in the everyday practice of institutions (Mackay et al., 2009, pp. 256–258). These are not only disguised as standard and taken-for-granted but are also "particularly sticky and resistant to change" (Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 605). In the case studies, *gender as a non-issue* is exacerbated by the lack of monitoring and evaluation of gender equity. Beveridge et al. (2000, p. 391) argued that "a fundamental weakness of implementing the gender policy is the lack of monitoring" of gender initiatives or action plans. The lack of official monitoring of gender equity meant that challenges could not be clearly identified, and impacts remain unknown. Findings demonstrate that gender norms and gender relations are particularly "sticky" institutional legacies with which to contend (Mackay, 2010, p. 188).

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of informal institutions subverting the intent of the university gender policy—the institutionalisation of gender equity and examined norms and practices, which potentially undermine women's representation in academic leadership. The case study puts central emphasis on how informal norms and practices subvert the intent of formalised policies drawing attention to the dynamic processes through which they play out. The chapter showed pre-existing informal norms playing out in the formulation and implementation of gender policies in the university. It showed how the use of connections and the VC's positional power are enabled due to the absence of selection criteria for gender policy positions. As an implication, the findings revealed how the exclusion of a fair level playing field for qualified women to vie for positions constrain participation, thereby enabling male dominance. Moving further, evidence also showed how informally selected stakeholders are unlikely to push for radical gender change to be in the good books of the person who has appointed him/her. Regarding gender implementation, findings revealed how masculinist culture and patriarchal ideology, coupled with the absence of monitoring and evaluation, has resulted in gender as a non-issue for some academic heads. Evidence demonstrated how some academic heads create and sustain male dominance by challenging gender equity through their masculinist ideology, gender criticism and non-engagement with gender issues. This chapter has shown that informal norms and practices play out in both the policy formulation and implementation process, subverting gender policy intent and women's representation.

Findings from the case study support Kenny's (2009) argument that gendered and institutional legacies of the past continue to have a powerful effect on the present. While the university gender policy is formally in place, there are gaps in the policies. For example, in the OAU policy document, there are no particular formal selection criteria established as a basis for

evaluating and assessing the suitability of a gender stakeholder. Determinants of suitability or definitions of merit, such as educational or gender experience/training, are wholly absent from the universities' gender policy documents, thus creating a loophole/gap. In the absence of explicit institutional rules and active maintenance of existing institutional rules, there is the tendency to fall back on "familiar formulas" (Thelen, 2004, p. 292), filling policy gap with elements from past institutional repertoires, including, for example, informal selection, masculinist ideologies and patriarchal social order, as this chapter shows. This is because the emphasis and importance placed on masculine traits in the universities have been institutionalised through years of societal gender roles and patriarchal ideology.

Gender stereotypes are prevalent in the institution, and the "lines between the formal rules and the informal norms have become blurred" (Brunner, 2013, p. 175). This, therefore, presents an illustration of informal institutions surviving or arising to fill the loopholes in formal institutions. In the case study universities, the loopholes in the formal policy were capitalised on to subvert the policy intent. The next chapter explores the perspectives of gender stakeholders in universities without gender policy (UNIPORT and FUTA). This is intended to unveil how institutional gender arrangements (policy absence and the merging of gender centres with other centres) in these universities limit the prospects for institutional gender change or reform. The next chapter helps us understand why universities have established gender centres without gender policies in place. It also revealed the gendered aspect of merging gender centres with other centres.

Chapter 6: Institutional Resistance and Formal Gender Policy

The previous chapter provided institutional gender stakeholders' perspectives on informal norms and practices subverting the intent of gender equity policy in universities having formal gender policy and a functional gender centre in place (OAU and UI). The chapter demonstrated that, while gender policy provides formal rules, informal norms and practices prevent functional policy implementation and limit positive institutional gender change. Findings revealed two major discourses on informal norms and practices undermining the intent of the gender equity policy—the nestedness of informal selection in the gender policy formulation process and the gendered logic of appropriateness in the policy implementation process.

Moving from this premise, it is imperative to consider what happens when formal rules are non-existent or the university gender centres are unable to advance gender equity within the institutions because of the absence of formal rules. This chapter analyses gender stakeholders' interviews on *informal institutions*, exploring their perceived impact on gender equity within the universities. In this case, I focused on universities that have only gender centres but no formal gender equity policy in place (UNIPORT and FUTA). While UNIPORT and FUTA have well-established gender centres, formal gender policies were absent in these universities. As such, the extent of the interviews conducted in these universities varied because participants did not have any experience with the gender policy process. However, I deemed it necessary to investigate why the prospects for institutional gender change are subverted in these universities. Also, I questioned the form in which institutional resistance towards gender equity occurs in these universities.

As previously explicated in Chapter two, there is a growing interest in improving the understanding of institutional resistance, reproduction and obstruction of positive institutional gender change (Chappell, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Kenny, 2013a; Mackay, 2014; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Waylen, 2014, 2017). For example, Thomson (2017) posited that FI scholars have questioned why institutions hinder greater women's representation (Kenny, 2013b); how informal institutions can inhibit progressive gendered change (Waylen, 2014), and why new institutions revert to older practices which can often signal regression on gendered norms (Mackay, 2014). However, the limits of institutional change and how this occurs, especially in the context of Nigerian universities, are still weakly understood. There is a struggle to explain how positive institutional gender change may be constrained by *policy absence* and *mergers*. These two significant themes allowed for further exploration of the limits of institutional

change in Nigerian universities. Concepts like *institutional resistance* and *layering* offered tools that helped capture the dynamics of institutional change and stasis. This chapter adds to the literature on feminist institutionalism and institutional resistance, arguing that an analysis of gender stakeholders' perspectives can be a useful asset when addressing why gender policy absence occurs.

Taking into account the stakeholder's perspectives in two universities—the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), this chapter considers additional perspectives that allow for the examination of a different instance of limits of institutional change. I utilised an integrated FI-FCDA framework to analyse the interview data, similar to the previous chapter. In particular, I employed the FI concept of *institutional resistance* and constructed questions from Lazar's FCDA principle of 'reflexivity of institutions' (see page 76, Table 9) to explore the absence of gender policies in these universities, despite having established gender centres. Also, Historical Institutionalism's concept of layering (particularly from Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) framework), adopted by FI, was utilised in this chapter's analysis. The concept of layering in which new institutions are introduced alongside or on top of existing ones, was utilised to explore the merger of the UNIPORT's gender centre with the Centre for Conflict Studies. This chapter's concern is echoed in contemporary feminist institutionalist thinking, which addresses how institutions can be sites of resistance and obstruction to gender-positive change (Thomson, 2017). Integrating an FCDA framework expands the understanding of resistance and reproduction, unveiling mechanisms that generate and regenerate institutional resistance towards gender equity change. It produces discourses or themes around which there has been continual institutional resistance towards gender equity. By viewing institutional resistance or stasis as the central organising principle around which women's underrepresentation revolves, a focus on the mechanisms that sustain inert institutional responses to gender equity is put on centre stage.

Regarding policy absence, I identified barriers to gender equity efforts in UNIPORT and FUTA, explicitly naming them as *resistance*. Scholars have suggested exploring resistance and opportunities that institutions provide for feminist struggles in specific contexts and times (Kantola, 2006, p. 34; Mergaert & Lombardo, 2014). A focus on resistance to gender change can help identify why universities have gender centres but no gender policies that could aid positive institutional change. The importance of a functional gender policy in an institution cannot be overemphasised, as it is an invaluable tool for institutionalising gender equity. Even though gender centres are established in UNIPORT and FUTA, the need to adopt a gender

equity policy has been overlooked or largely dismissed. With only having gender centres, can we say the intentions of its creators or university management towards gender equity are real and not just window-dressing? There is, thus, a clear need to understand policy absence in these universities. The reasons behind this are yet to be explored. Hence, this chapter offers nuanced insights into why gender centres exist without gender equity policies in place.

In exploring *mergers* as a limit to institutional gender change, I examine how the layering of the Centre for Conflict Studies impacts on the Gender Centre, subverting the prospects for gender equity within UNIPORT. Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) assertion of layering is where new formal institutions are layered on top of the original ones. Layering occurs when new rules are attached to existing ones in the form of revisions, attachments and amendments and are, therefore, a less radical model of change (Madsen, 2019). Here, institutions are not wholly replaced or displaced but, instead, added to and modified (Mackay & Meier, 2003; Streeck & Thelen, 2005; Waylen, 2009). Mahoney and Thelen (2010, p. 16) identified four types of institutional change—displacement, layering, drift and conversion—arguing that layering and "conversion" are more likely to be positive gender change strategies. Waylen (2014, 2017) also noted that layering new rules alongside or on top of existing ones allows for creating new governance structures with gendered effects to operate and has been a relatively common way to change institutions. She argued that layering has probably been the most widely used institutional gender equity strategy and holds more promise for gender reform than others. However, she maintained that its effectiveness varied considerably in different contexts (Waylen, 2014). Thus, the importance of the institutional context is paramount in this investigation. While these scholars have often viewed layering as a positive strategy for institutional gender change, findings from this study showed that it could also be utilised as a strategy to undermine or limit gender equity reforms.

To analyse the limits of institutional gender change in FUTA and UNIPORT, this chapter explored two scenarios where gender centres exist without a formalised gender policy in place and where new formal institutions are created on top of existing ones. Can examining policy absences and mergers provide new insights into the limits of institutional gender change? To answer this question, first, this chapter outlines critical insights from FI, highlighting institutional resistance. Second, it delineates how layering—a form of institutional change strategy utilised by change actors for gender equity—is gendered and limits positive gender equity change.

6.1 Stakeholders' Perspectives on Institutional Resistance Towards Gender Equity

In this chapter, I aim to gain the perspectives of gender stakeholders in universities without gender equity policies (FUTA and UNIPORT). Three interviewees were purposively selected for the gender stakeholders' interview—an Associate Director in FUTA Centre for Gender Issues in Science and Technology (CEGIST), an academic staff of the UNIPORT Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGS) and a former director of the UNIPORT gender centre (before it was merged). Even though there were limited questions that participants in these universities could respond to, I considered their perspectives could enrich the research and provide a leeway for future in-depth research on universities without gender policies in Nigeria. Given this, I asked the gender stakeholders three significant questions that focused on their current roles in the university and why there were no gender policies in place and held discussions regarding the merger of the gender centre with the centre for conflict studies.

Role of Gender Stakeholders in Universities Without Gender Policies

This theme explored the roles of gender stakeholders in universities without gender policies, that is, the kind of work they do regarding gender-related issues within the universities. The central focus of the centres provides a directional compass for the roles and responsibilities of staff within the centres. The role of gender stakeholders in universities without gender policies usually centres on research, teaching and advocacy. The gender centres in UNIPORT and FUTA typically deliver academic teaching and research in gender studies engrained in specific challenges within African contexts. This implies a focus on teaching and research in pursuit of equity/equality and justice in African contexts (Mama, 2009). Gender issues are incorporated into various disciplines to include gender dimensions in academic programmes. With regard to staffing, the centres are headed by a director appointed by the Vice-Chancellor of the university. For example, the UNIPORT centre is headed by a director and supported by an array of academic staff domiciled within the centre. During the fieldwork, I observed that the unit has five academic staff, all but one of whom are men. The overall responsibilities of the centre were geared towards academic teaching, consultancy and advocacy. In FUTA, the centre is headed by the director and supported by the associate director and other administrative staff.

An evaluation of the gender centres shows that the focus and mandates of gender centres differed (see Appendix 10 for an overview of the overall goals and objectives of the gender centres). For example, at UNIPORT, the task is expressed as building capacity for sustainability through evidence-based teaching and research in peace, conflict and gender

studies. In FUTA, the focus is on gender-based programmes, especially those relating to agriculture, technology and entrepreneurship disciplines. Unlike the UNIPORT gender centre (designed mainly as an academic unit), the FUTA CEGIST is designed to promote science and technology entrepreneurship and STEM programmes for females. While the role of gender stakeholders in these universities includes research, teaching, workshops, training and community service, they were not saddled with gender policy responsibilities, nor do they focus on promoting gender issues within the university. Typically, most of these centres run gender-related academic programmes, especially at postgraduate levels. In these universities, gender issues are embedded only in teaching and research—not in policy.

Why Create Gender Centres But Have No Gender Policy?

FI has primarily been interested in positive gendered change—how new institutions enact gender-friendly rules (Chappell, 2002; Mackay, 2010; Mackay & McAllister, 2012) and encourages increased representation for women (Kenny, 2013a). However, there is also a growing interest in how institutions resist and obstruct positive change around gender issues within institutions (Chappell, 2014b; Mackay, 2014; Mackay & Waylen, 2014; Waylen, 2014). Thomson (2018) argued that how institutions are structured has an impact on the ability they have to represent gendered concerns and to facilitate women's representation. Building on FI and resistance, this theme questions why institutional change, such as establishing gender centres, has not been enacted fully (adopting gender equity policies) in these universities. In other words, it investigates why universities have gender centres but no gender policies. The interviewees highlighted the three dominant explanations for the non-adoption of gender policy within the universities: a lack of university management support for gender equity, an absence of gender activism/female gender experts, and the non-availability of funds. Based on responses on the first sub-theme—lack of university management support, two of the interviewees stated that:

> *From the onset, there has been no support for gender issues within the university; neither is the management interested in putting the gender policy in place. They know that the introduction of the policy would, in a way, force them to commit to gender equity, which would provide a leeway to distort gender imbalance in leadership positions. The management may not want that happening. They see it as competition or a threat. They think having a gender policy would be a way to feminise the university and give women an undue advantage. They believe that these policies and initiatives are tied to women.* (Dr Nsi, UNIPORT)

> *Having a gender policy is subject to whether the management understands and support gender equality. Their passiveness towards gender issues can significantly impact the prospects of having a gender policy.* (Prof. Layo, FUTA CEGIST)

Given the hierarchical nature of Nigerian universities and the power that reinforces the role of the VC in institutional decision-making, it is perhaps not surprising that the participants pointed to the VC as ultimately responsible for gender equity at their institutions (Eddy et al., 2017). Gender equity policies and other gender mainstreaming policies are formal measures used to promote institutional gender change. As Chappell and Hill (2006) and Gains and Lowndes (2014) emphasise, how *women's interests* are constructed depends heavily upon the political and institutional context. Those in academic leadership positions in male-dominated cultures have greater access to opportunities and mechanisms such as the formal decision-making processes or legitimate authority (Hoeber, 2007), that allow them to influence dominant understandings of gender equity. Illustrating the critical role that the VC has in providing the vision and leading efforts for gender equity/equality, scholars claimed that when university management publicly supports and makes a personal and university commitment to equity, it influences others by sending out a strong signal that universities are committed to equality (Danowitz, 2008; Grenz et al., 2009; Husu & Saarikoski, 2007). Mergaert and Lombardo (2014) argued that institutional resistance occurs when resistance is detected at a collective level and is connected to policy decisions on resources and priorities taken in an institution's higher ranks. Lukes (2004) also maintained that resistance is at work not only when policy-makers make decisions but also when they make non-decisions or take non-action on issues that would not benefit them. In the case studies, university management's unwillingness to introduce and adopt gender equity policies exemplifies implicit institutional resistance. Lombardo and Mergaert (2013) argued that resistance to gender initiatives is a manifestation of power and can be expressed both by acting and by non-acting.

Another interviewee argued that the absence of gender activism or influential female gender experts who could push for the adoption of gender policies in the university was also a factor. According to her:

> *I remember the issue of having a gender policy has been raised severally without much success. Gender activism in the university is shallow because we have only a few women in academic leadership positions interested in gender. If more women were well placed within the academic cadre, the push for gender policy would be worthwhile.* (Prof. Layo, FUTA CEGIST)

The argument for the presence of gender activists or gender experts within universities is due to the significant role they play in influencing gender decisions, such as pushing for the adoption of gender policies and instituting initiatives that advance women to academic leadership positions. Squires (2008, p. 195) argued that "gender experts" and "femocrats" within women's policy agencies have "come to be the privileged speakers for women's interests," thus promoting beneficial policies for women. The entrenchment of women's power within the institutional process is crucial, given the ambivalence of university management towards integrating gender issues into the university. Scholars have argued that policy adoption tends to be high with the existence and strength of feminist activism. This is because academic women who have access to respected academic networks, powerful allies, resources and spaces (i.e., are highly ranked members of academic committees, are seen as authorities in their fields or have powerful allies and supportive national/international networks) can deploy those resources to bolster attempts at gender policy adoption (Kahlert, 2017; M. Pereira, 2017). Weldon (2019) maintained that women's movements are important agents for transforming gender hierarchies. Therefore, it makes sense to say that women in academic leadership positions, especially those with gender expertise or a feminist background, open an enormous potential for cultural and structural change in universities (Peterson, 2019; Wroblewski, 2019). In the case studies, influential gender activists who possess much capacity to create and implement the gender policy (or get others to) were absent. As such, the movement towards positive gender change through gender equity policies has failed to happen in the universities.

The absence of funds has also been an overriding factor highlighted by stakeholders as a barrier to the success of gender equity/equality in Nigerian universities. This situation is not peculiar to FUTA and UNIPORT as stakeholders in OAU and UI (universities with gender centres and gender policies in place) also reported a lack of funds as a significant policy implementation problem. In FUTA and UNIPORT, findings revealed the non-availability of funds as a significant reason for the non-adoption of gender policies. Two of the interviewees stated that:

> *With the current cuts in budgets from the federal government, it is hard for the university management to keep up with demands from all corners. This has led to a prioritising of issues by the university management, and obviously, gender is not a priority for management. I believe the university management would want a gender policy to be in place but are constrained by the lack of funds.* (Prof. Layo, FUTA CEGIST)

> *With just the gender centre in place, there are fewer expenses to be incurred in terms of staffing, projects etc*. (Dr Johnny, UNIPORT)

The argument is that the non-adoption of gender policy is due to the limited availability of funds from both internal and external sources such as international organisations and non-governmental organisations. Adopting gender equity policies requires funds to implement some of the policy initiatives and action plans designed in the policy. In the absence of this, the existence of the gender centre alone is perceived as proof of the university's position and orientation towards gender equity. Therefore, it makes sense to say that having the gender centre alone was a safe option for university management to stay visible to a gender-related cause without having to expend its resources on implementing policy initiatives or action plans. The absence of funds or unwillingness to pursue avenues for funds and grants provides the university management with powerful means to resist introducing or adopting the gender equity policy.

Mergers as Limiting Institutional Gender Change

Going further, I explored the merger of the gender centre with the Centre for Conflict Studies as a way of understanding limits towards gender change in UNIPORT. At this point, I asked interviewees in UNIPORT about what had necessitated the merger of the Patience Jonathan Centre for Gender and Women Development Studies (PJC-GWDS) with the Centre for Ethnic and Conflict Studies (CENTECS) in 2015. This section explored the stakeholders' perceptions of the motivations for the merger. As De Klerk (2011) posited, the motivations behind institutional layering vary between contexts. They can result from one set of actors striving to maintain the status quo to new actors attempting to displace entrenched norms or values or as a complementary system of filling gaps in the institutional structure. Unravelling the contributing factors to the merger in the case studies aids the identification of limits to institutional gender change.

In response to the question, one of the respondents alluded that the merger was necessary because of the interdisciplinary nature of gender research and regional consideration. At the same time, the other emphasised political influence as a factor. While alluding to the collaborative nature of gender research, the interviewee stated that gender research is closely integrated with conflict studies, hence the merger. According to him:

> *Gender studies is a broad and interrelated discipline. It has the potential to achieve much impact when integrated with peace and conflict studies.* (Dr Johnny, UNIPORT)

The assertion here is that each centre's focus was similar, interlinked and interdependent, working closely with public participation in several projects, thus, necessitating the merger between the two centres.

With regard to the sub-theme on regional consideration and political influence, the contextual focus of FI facilitates an examination of how "past legacies inform institutional design and consequently, the lack of fit between intention and outcomes which is central to understanding institutional origins" (Chappell, 2011, p. 164; De Klerk, 2011). This is especially apt for the UNIPORT case, as the interweaving of regional historical legacies with informal norms and practices consequently affects the processes of gendered institutional change. Feminist institutionalists have found Historical Institutionalism valuable for understanding the role played by historical factors in resistance to institutional change towards gender equality (Clavero & Galligan, 2020). One of the interviewees argued that the university management had selected priorities that reflected the political and economic relevance of the region in which the university was sited. He argued that the university management did not blindly merge the gender centre, as it aimed to serve strategic interests aligned with regional relevance. In other words, the gender centre was used towards non-gender ends. The interviewee had this to say:

> *By merging the centres, I believe that the University management selected priorities that address the current political and economic situation of the Niger Delta region. This is aside from the need to push for Internally Generated Fund (IGR) and sponsorship for the university.* (Dr Johnny, UNIPORT)

Findings showed that regional factors within the region had influenced the merger. There is a significant regional push for peace in the Niger Delta region where UNIPORT is situated. For over four decades, a series of conflicts rooted in the quest for resource control has been the bane of the region. The subsisting conflict situation is alleged to have stemmed from the clash of interest between the federal government, oil multi-national companies, and the Niger Delta residents (Chinda & Amugo, 2010). In 2009, after concerted efforts to resolve the conflict within the region failed, the Yar'adua/Jonathan government announced an amnesty programme. Although the amnesty programme saw a large number of activists surrender their weapons in exchange for government training; this was short-lived as new militant groups such as the Red Egbesu Water Lions, Niger Delta Red Squad (NDRS), Adaka Boro Avengers, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), and the Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF) emerged in 2016. These new groups started from where the former militant groups left off with renewed bombing of oil facilities and abduction of oil workers (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017). With efforts

geared towards finding lasting solutions against militancy in the region, the merging of the centre appears to reflect regional considerations and priorities aimed at obtaining buy-in from the federal government, communities, multinational and corporate organisations located within the Niger Delta region. One such relationship led to the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Center for Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGS) in 2018 to invest in peacebuilding, gender-related research and capacity building in the Niger Delta region (PIND Foundation News, 2018).

The second interviewee believed that politics played a considerable role in the merger, especially considering that the gender centre was established by the wife of the former president, Patience Jonathan, and the centre was merged in 2015, which coincidentally was the year the president was voted out of office. According to her:

> *The centre may have been merged for two significant reasons. One explanation is that the exit of the president and his wife from the presidential office may have created fears that ongoing support for the centre would cease. The other reason, I believe, is political. The merger may have been strategically used to delimit efforts to create a gender-neutral university or make the other program (conflict studies) relevant.* (Dr Nsi, UNIPORT)

Merging as a political explanation featured widely in this interviewee's narrative. One of the arguments is that the regime change may have resulted in the merger. Prior to the merger, the centre enjoyed much attention from the office of the then First Lady, Mrs Patience Jonathan. For example, the centre had a newly built building with infrastructural facilities donated by her. With the exit of the president and the First Lady from office, there were fears of funding support from the government through her, coming to an end. This meant that the centre's financial support through the office of the First Lady dwindled because of the president's exit from office. While the gender centre had been established by the president's wife, who possessed an unwavering amount of power at that time, the president's exit from office ultimately led to the centre being merged. This shows that the institution created (the gender centre) was not durable. The lack of durability of the centre indicates that the centre was unlikely to survive in the event of a change of government. The lack of continuity of projects is an underlying issue prevalent within the Nigerian political space (Ahmed & Dantata, 2016; Egonmwan, 2004). In Nigeria, it is an observable norm that new leadership is often concerned with making its own impression. As such, past leadership policies and programmes are shelved or distorted if considered non-expedient (Ugwuanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2013). The

succeeding administration rarely pursues its predecessors' policies, which explains the university management's fears regarding funding or support from the new administration since they did not create the project.

Another perception is that institutional resistance stemming from the presence of masculinist culture within the university may be a significant explanation for the merger of the gender centre. Scholars seek to understand how actors—institutional agents—purposively and intentionally create, maintain or destroy institutional arrangements to create or maintain privileged institutional positions and roles (Muzio et al., 2013). Sometimes, offices are created to absorb the loyalists of power holders, and after the expiration of their tenure, such offices fail to exist, or another successor would bring in their cronies, and the cycle continues. According to Mackay et al. (2010), these *subversives* (institutional agents) can disguise the extent of their desire for change by appearing to work within the system[16]. However, the authors maintained that the new institutions could significantly impact the existing ones that they are alongside or on top of. The stance here is that change is brought about through actors utilising their power to capitalise on the openings created by fluctuating contextual circumstances by altering the agenda and institutional processes, thereby affecting processes of institutional change.

The case study revealed how change (merger) is gendered—through the redirection of the gender centre. From the evidence provided, the question arises: How does the institutional layering of the centre for peace and conflict studies with the gender centre affect the prospects for institutional gender change in the university? Scholars interested in the consequences of institutional layering have observed that the effects of institutional layering largely depend on the way institutional actors interpret and reproduce different arrangements in diverse situations and for different reasons (Felder et al., 2018). A significant implication of the merger is that the gender centre's mission is chewed up and spat out in barely recognisable ways by replacing attention to women's initiatives with less gender emphasis (Baden & Goet, 1997; Mannell, 2012). This implies that gender equity efforts within the university are subdued within the peace and conflict intervention. As a result of the merger, the centre for conflict studies gained prominence over the gender centre, thereby altering the gender equity prospects in the university. This, in effect, has led to a decline of support for women and/or gender issues, thus distancing the nuances of women's experiences.

[16] Subversives are change agents who "seek to displace an institution, but in pursuing this goal, they do not themselves break the rules of the institution" (Heijden, 2010, p. 236). Subversives are mainly linked with layering, as they seek to bring change to the edges of an institution, which "make their way to the centre" (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010, pp. 25–26).

Moreover, the goals of the centres merged or layered on top of each other are not complementary with each other, thus, raising issues about the schism between the gender centre's intention and outcomes (De Klerk, 2011). As Mackay et al. (2010) argued, the extent to which the new institution impacts the existing institution affects its success. Streeck and Thelen also claimed that layering may eventually crowd out the old policy system (2005, p. 24). Although the idea of peace and conflict can dilute the adverse reactions that are created in putting gender within the peace and conflict issues, the importance of gender in the daily realities of men and women within the universities risk being overlooked and neglected (Mannell, 2012)—thus imposing a significant challenge for addressing gender inequality in the universities.

6.2 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the existence of gender centres without formalised policies in place, is a window-dressing approach that limits the potential for gender equity within the universities (Rao & Kelleher, 2005). Perspectives of the gender stakeholders on policy absence in UNIPORT and FUTA shed more light on the subtle manifestations of resistance that aim to preserve the status quo. Scholars have argued that dominant actors can draw on material and normative resources to justify their privilege and reassert the status quo (Krook, 2016; Lowndes, 2005). While there is an awareness of gender concern in these universities, which is explicated through the establishment of gender centres, the actual effort for gender equity is limited. Establishing the gender centre alone, without a policy, shows the strategic way in which gender changes within the universities are dismissed or resisted. This, therefore, calls for a rethinking of gender centres within Nigerian universities. I argue that gender centres should be recognised as academic units and tasked with promoting gender issues within the universities and saddled with gender policy implementation, monitoring, and evaluation responsibilities.

This chapter also highlighted the role that layering as a strategy for institutional gender change could play in subverting the original intent of the old institution. It illuminates how layering undermines or distorts chances at formal gender equity change. The merging of centres to serve specific political and regional interests provides an underlying mechanism for resistance toward institutionalising gender equity in the UNIPORT. These political and regional interests stem from years of regional historical legacies (in the Nigeria-Delta region) which have remained sticky and difficult to change despite clear awareness of gender equity (evidenced by the establishment of gender centres). The creation of new institutions through layering has been widely used as a gender change strategy (Krook, 2006a), where it is supposedly assumed

that change will be achieved incrementally through this. However, evidence from UNIPORT showed a gendered form of layering, manifested through the merger of the gender centre with the Centre for Conflict Studies. The possibilities for institutional gender change were tempered somewhat by the merging of incompatible and non-complementary centres, as the merged structures are vastly different. When the Centre for Conflict Studies merged with the existing gender centre, the opportunities for gender equity offered by the gender centre were limited. The merger shows gender equity focus being undermined in the peace and conflict goals. Thus, the analysis of the empirical realities of layering provided valuable insights into the limits of institutional gender change (Minto & Mergaert, 2018), especially in universities without gender equity policies in place. The following chapter explores the hidden life of academic women regarding how informal norms and practices are utilised to subvert the intent of formalised policies and what this presents for women—advancement or stagnation. Exploring women's lived experience of informal norms and practices unveils the complexities of institutional design, continuity and change by presenting a more nuanced and realistic account of informal institutions, their design, operation, and effects.

Chapter 7: Informal Institutions and Formal Rules: Promotion Experiences of Academic Women

The previous chapter examined how the prospects for institutional gender change are limited through the absence of gender policies and the merging of the gender centre; thereby improving our understanding of the sources of institutional resistance towards gender equity (Kenny, 2011). This current chapter also addresses the second research question, albeit from the perspectives of women in academic leadership positions: To what extent do informal institutions subvert the intent of formalised policies and rules, thereby potentially undermining women's advancement to academic leadership positions? Alongside formal rules, institutions reproduce gender norms and cultures which reinforce gender inequality. Existing studies have shown that, while institutional barriers prevent academic women from advancing to academic leadership positions (see Chapter 2), some women have broken the glass ceiling and risen through the academic ranks. Therefore, it is important to explore the experiences of these women, their perceptions of these institutional (formal and informal) barriers, and how they have navigated their way to the top. In this way, this Chapter unveils how women contend with power structures and strictures. To illuminate the subtleties of the lived experiences of these women and facilitate an understanding from the participants' viewpoint, this chapter features the use of direct quotes. Sandelowski (1994) noted that "quotes support researcher claims, illustrate ideas, illuminate experience, evoke emotion, and provoke response". According to the author, quotes provide a vicarious experience for those reading them and help "individuate the participants rather than blur them into data". Since this is an exploratory study, I choose to highlight participants' quotes to better understand the subject matter and showcase elements of academic rigour.

This chapter explores the hidden life of academic women, with respect to informal institutions and what it presents for women—advancement or stagnation. Chappell and Waylen (2013) have pointed out that it is imperative to look more into the hidden aspects of informal institutions. This is to provide a more nuanced and realistic account of institutions' design, operation and effects to better understand how to produce more equal outcomes. The argument here is that any effort to understand why gender equity policies have failed to gain real traction for women's progression to academic leadership positions should be complemented by attention to the informal institutions in any particular context and their gender dimensions. It is also important to highlight explicit reflections about how these rules and norms can be unravelled and dismantled.

Here, I report on and analyse the findings of the in-depth interviews conducted with selected women who are currently in academic leadership positions,[17] exploring their lived experiences in relation to the working of informal institutions (informal norms and practices) in their academic career advancement. From the findings, many women have had easy promotion experiences at the start of their careers. However, as they progress through the career ladder, their promotion becomes difficult. Prevalent informal institutions within the universities were a significant cause of these women's difficult promotion experiences. Interestingly, these women have devised strategies to navigate their promotion to academic leadership positions despite the informal norms and practices that act as barriers for them. This chapter argues that, while informal norms impede institutional gender change, it also creates avenues for women's academic leadership progression, thus providing value for showcasing a complementary interplay of formal and informal institutions.

An integrated FI-FCDA framework was employed to analyse the interview data. I particularly integrated the FI concept of *gender power relations* with the set of carefully constructed questions from Lazar's FCDA principles of "complexity of gender and power relations" and "role of discourse in the construction and deconstruction of gender" (see page 76, Table 9). The FI-FCDA analytical framework provided a more detailed understanding of power structures within the universities. While findings from the previous chapters have shown the existence of male dominance within the formal and informal context, this chapter unveils how and where various power structures operate, interact, the force they exert, and how academic women contend with or resist these identified barriers. The women's narratives provided specific examples of constructed gender roles within academia and promotion differentials between males and females in the universities. To reiterate, four universities (Obafemi Awolowo University—OAU; University of Ibadan— UI; University of Port Harcourt—UNIPORT and Federal University of Technology, Akure—FUTA) were selected as the case studies for this research. However, during the fieldwork, I discovered that, while all of the selected universities had well-established gender centres, only two had formal gender policies in place. Thus, two categories of interviews were conducted—one with women in academic leadership positions in universities *with* gender equity policies and the other with academic women in universities *without* gender equity policies. One interesting question this chapter seeks to answer is whether women in both categories of universities have similar or dissimilar

[17]Academic leadership positions include roles such as Director of Centers/Academic Institute, Dean, Associate Dean, Heads of Department. In Nigeria, candidates considered for these positions are academic staff in the senior academic cadre, i.e., Senior lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor.

experiences or regarding promotion.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 17 women occupying academic leadership positions in the case study universities—10 respondents in universities with a gender centre and gender policy (OAU and UI) and seven respondents in universities without a gender policy (UNIPORT and FUTA). The interview participants were purposively selected based on their experience: women who have either held or are currently holding academic leadership positions for two years onwards. The perspectives of this group of women built an illustrative picture of the gender power structures and prevalent informal norms in Nigerian universities. From the interviews, I captured the lived experiences of these women before they attained their current positions. This chapter provides critical insight into the hidden aspect of women's academic careers and the university's promotion systems by exploring their promotion experiences, attempts at academic leadership progression, and career networks. Appendix 12 describes the interview participants. For the selected participants, pseudonyms were used to protect their identities, and only academic titles and leadership positions/roles were provided.

In unravelling the hidden life of academic women, I asked interview participants in OAU and UI questions regarding their perspectives on informal norms and practices, their promotion experience—how easy or difficult it was, how they managed, and whether formal and informal institutions are used complementarily. In UNIPORT and FUTA, I asked the women similar questions as those in universities with gender equity policies (OAU and UI). However, I was also interested to know whether the women's promotion experience would have been different if a functional gender policy had been in place. Despite the non-existence of gender policy in these universities, I interviewed the women, intending to capture the extent of informal institutional arrangement (norms and practices) in these universities to determine whether the experiences of these women were similar or different from the experiences of women in universities with gender policy in place.

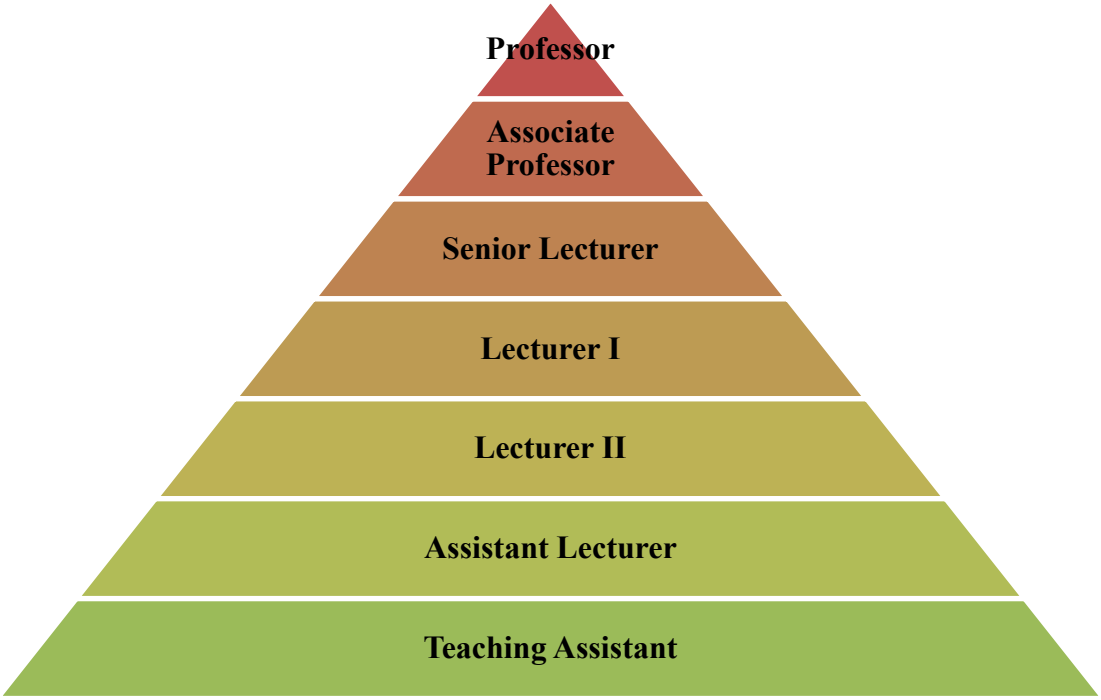
7.1 Unveiling the Promotion Experiences of Women in Academic Leadership Positions

At the start of the interview, I asked the interviewees about their current role/position, how many promotion rounds they had been through and how they evaluated their promotion experience—how easy or difficult was it and at what stage of their career? Identifying the participants' promotion background was a significant consideration in understanding how the women's advancement to academic leadership had been shaped by and navigated within

existing structures. Understanding the opportunities these provided and the role gender and gendering processes at play within their promotion experience was equally important.

In OAU and UI, five of the women in the professorial cadre had gone through four to six promotion rounds, while those in the Associate Professor cadre had gone through three to four promotion rounds. In UNIPORT and FUTA, the interviewees had generally been through four to six promotion rounds, depending on the cadre they were appointed into at the start of their employment. The variation in their promotion rounds is due to the academic cadre they were appointed into at the start of their academic career. For example, one of the women who started her academic career as a GTA had gone through six promotion rounds so far. At the same time, another who started as an Assistant Lecturer had gone through five promotion rounds. Women who started from the lowest entry point of the academic levels and without a Master's degree or PhD have had to go through more promotion rounds than those with these degrees.[18] This situation is similar to the other women who are currently in the Associate Professor cadre. In Nigerian universities, the accepted academic career path (through the ranks) is from Teaching Assistant (TA) to Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor. Figure 6 shows the typical hierarchical structure of the academic cadre in Nigerian universities.

Figure 6: *Hierarchical Structure of Academic Cadres in Nigerian Universities*



[18]In Nigeria, a Master's degree holder is usually employed as an Assistant Lecturer while PhD holders are considered for positions such as Lecturer II (without publication) or Lecturer I (with a certain number of publications).

The promotion procedure in many public universities in Nigeria would typically require all academic staff to satisfy the necessary promotion criteria before submitting the promotion application[19]. For instance, as part of the criteria, an academic may be required to have a certain number of publications, successfully supervise several dissertations/theses to completion, engage in community services and scholarly activities, teaching experience and other requirements. Table 4 shows what typical promotion criteria to the SL, AP and Professorial cadre in the case studies would look like, although there may be slight differences regarding the number of publications one is expected to possess across universities. The sample shown is from the University of Ibadan. As shown in Table 12, the criteria for promotion make a significant shift between levels, from needing to demonstrate *competence* to an *outstanding* contribution to academic research, teaching and service.

Table 12: *Promotion Criteria to Senior Academic Positions in UI*

Lecturer 1	**Senior Lecturer**	**Associate Professor**	**Professor**
A minimum of three years of teaching experience; competence in research; and publications	A minimum of three years of teaching experience; adequate research; adequate publications; and possession of a PhD or its equivalent.	Adequate experience, including where applicable, professional competence; outstanding research and publications; adequate teaching ability for a minimum of three years; and possession of a PhD or its equivalent.	Adequate experience, including where applicable, professional competence; outstanding research and publications; exceptional teaching ability; evidence of leadership in research and postgraduate supervision; administrative ability and competence; and possession of a PhD or its equivalent.

UI Promotion Guidelines. www.ui.edu.ng.

According to Archibong et al. (2010), upon submission, the applications go through an initial assessment at the Departmental Appointment and Promotion Committee, which constitutes the Head of Department as the chair and academic staff of the Senior Lectureship grade (or its equivalent) and above who are not candidates. The assessment made by the Head of Department for the individual candidate along with the recommendations of the Departmental

[19]The number of publications for promotion of academic staff at the various levels in some universities varies. Though the National Universities Commission (NUC) is the body that regulates the academic standard and accredits degree programmes in all Nigerian universities, the Commission does not formulate promotion criteria for academic staff in any university. Academic staff promotion criteria are set up and approved by the Governing Council of the respective universities. And this is the reason why academic staff promotion criteria differ from one university to another.

Appointment and Promotion Committee based on established criteria is then forwarded to the Faculty Appointment and Promotion Committee. This committee assesses the candidate based on the guiding criteria, considering the recommendations from the Departmental Appointments and Promotions Committee. The Faculty committee's recommendations are then forwarded to the University Appointments and Promotions Committee for academic staff (Academics), which seeks the advice of three external assessors who are recognised experts in their fields. In line with the laid-down criteria, this committee appraises the candidate, considering the forwarded reports and recommendations from the Faculty Appointments and Promotions Committee.

It is important to note that promotions up to the grade of Senior Lectureship are considered by the appropriate Faculty/College Committees, which decides, based on the recommendation of the internal assessors' reports as a sufficient basis. If an applicant's promotion is successful, he/she would have to wait for another three years before applying for another promotion except in some exceptional circumstances, such as qualifying for an accelerated promotion or in a case where the promotion is backdated. An accelerated promotion is offered to a staff member based on exceptional performance, such as conducting ground-breaking research recognised nationally and internationally. A backdated promotion is an approved promotion with its effective period backdated, e.g., instead of a promotion taking effect from 2020, it can be backdated to 2018.

Easy-Difficult Promotion Experiences

Responses relating to the women's promotion experiences were organised under two major categories, *easy* and *difficult*, to describe the extent or degree of their experiences. The intention here is to explore these women's promotion experiences across the universities and determine whether they regarded their academic promotions as easy or difficult and why this was the case. Findings showed that, across the two categories of universities, universities *with* gender equity policy (OAU and UI) and universities *without* gender equity policy (UNIPORT and FUTA), the women classified their experiences as a mix of easy *and* difficult. For example, in relating their promotion experiences, most of the interviewees in OAU and UI acknowledged an easy promotion experience from the GTA or AL cadre up until the L1 or SL cadre. One of the women stated that "…the higher I went; the more difficult and stickier it became" (Prof. C, OAU). Similar to the experiences of academic women in universities *with* gender equity policy, respondents from UNIPORT and FUTA (universities *without* a gender equity policy) have also had both easy and difficult promotion experiences. Of all the academic cadres, the GTA, Assistant Lecturer and Lecturer II cadres were considered the

easiest academic level for progressing into, while the Lecturer I to the Professorship cadre was considered difficult. Table 13 summarises the participants' easy and difficult promotion experiences.

Table 13: *Participants' Promotion Experience*

Uni.	Pseudonyms	Promotion Rounds	
		No.	Experience (Easy or Difficult)
OAU	Prof. A	5	Easy (AL to L1 and SL to Prof.) Difficult (L1 to SL)
	Prof. B	6	Easy (GTA to L1 and AP to Prof.) Difficult (L1 to AP)
	Prof. C	4	Easy (L2 to SL) Difficult (SL to Prof.)
	Dr D	3	Easy (L2 to L1) Difficult (L1 to AP)
	Dr E	4	Easy (AL to SL) Difficult (SL to AP)
UI	Prof. F	4	Easy (L2 to L1 and AP to Prof.) Difficult (L1 to AP)
	Prof. G	5	Easy (L2 to SL) Difficult (SL to Prof.)
	Dr H	3	Easy (L2 to SL) Difficult (SL to AP)
	Dr I	4	Easy (AL to L1 and SL to AP) Difficult (L1 to SL)
	Dr J	3	Easy (L2 to L1) Difficult (L1 to AP)
UNIPORT	Prof. L	5	Easy (AL to SL) Difficult (SL to Prof)
	Dr M	5	Easy (GTA to L1; SL to AP) Difficult (L1 to SL)
	Dr N	4	Easy (AL to SL) Difficult (SL to AP)
	Dr O	5	Easy (GTA to L1; SL to AP) Difficult (LI to SL)
FUTA	Prof. P	6	Easy (GTA to SL; AP to Prof.) Difficult (SL to AP)
	Prof. Q	5	Easy (AL to LI; SL to Prof.) Difficult (LI to SL)
	Dr R	4	Easy (AL to SL) Difficult (SL to AP)

KEY
Professor: **P**
Associate Professor: **AP**
Senior Lecturer: **SL**
Lecturer I: **L1**
Lecturer II: **L2**
Assistant Lecturer: **AL**
Teaching Assistant: **TA**

As shown in Table 13, while all the women had experienced both easy and difficult promotion rounds in their career trajectory, the cadre or level these women had experienced the difficult promotion rounds varied. Table 14 shows the academic levels participants had the most difficulty progressing into. Findings show that the women have found their promotion experiences easy, from the lower levels up until the Lecturer I/Senior Lecturer cadre.

Table 14: *Difficult Academic Levels Progressing Into*

Academic Levels	**No. of Women**
Lecturer I – Senior Lecturer	5
Lecturer I – Associate Professor	4
Senior Lecturer – Associate Professor	5
Senior Lecturer – Professor	3

Going further in the interview, I explored why these women considered their promotion experience as easy or difficult. In doing this, I explored women's perceptions in universities *with* gender equity policy (OAU and UI) differently from those *without* gender equity policies to identify specificities within their promotion experiences.

Perspectives on universities with a formal gender equity policy (OAU and UI)

I asked the women why they had considered their promotion rounds easy. The women's general perception of easy promotion is one devoid of any form of constraint or delay, and that involves less strictly codified criteria. For the respondents, there is a level of trust and a feeling of confidence in the promotion process once all the promotion criteria are met. Some of the women noted that:

> *Well, there is a standard period for you to get promoted .....that is after you have spent three years on a level. That means, after every three years, I am due for promotion, and I am sure to get my promotion after satisfying all the promotion criteria, i.e. publications, community service and teaching.* (Dr H, UI)

> *It was easy because there was no form of delay.* (Prof. A, OAU.

> *After putting in my promotion application, I was confident……. really confident of my chances of being promoted.* (Prof. F, UI)

I further questioned why the respondents had considered their promotion experiences as difficult. This was in a bid to understand whether these experiences were generally fraught

with conflicting explanations. The women's narratives of their difficult promotion experiences were empathetic. The account of their difficult promotion experience involved talking about personal circumstances or ordeals related that imparted their perceptions, prospects and choices, for example, to the interviewees' health issues or their families and lost opportunities. However, I was very clear to let the interviewees know they could stop if any aspect of their experiences were upsetting to express, although they showed no hesitancy in discussing their experiences. Several participants showed emotional reactions while talking about the difficult promotion rounds they had experienced. For example, one of the interviewees stated that:

> *You are trying to make me remember a very sore chapter of my life [*Pauses and looks down*].* (Prof. C, OAU)

> *It is unfortunate. At some point, I was broken. I was almost going out of the system.* (Prof. F, UI)

Some of the interviewees' explanations of their difficult promotion experiences revolved around negative institutional experiences such as targeted biases or discrimination playing out within the promotion process and the university. It shows subtle discursive workings of gendered power present within the system. Findings showed that gender and covert discrimination are implicated in the promotion process to academic leadership for some interviewees, especially considering that the women were not offered explanations for the promotion delay nor given feedbacks for why their applications were unsuccessful. In relating their experiences, some of the women had this to say:

> *I had submitted my promotion papers since October 2016, but to date [September 2018], it has not been considered at the Appointments and Promotions Committee (A & PC). Although it is not like this for everybody… this is my case*. (Dr J, UI)

> *When I applied for the senior lectureship position, I was stepped down for one year. I think some politics were playing out that led to this. I had issues with some of them.* (Dr D, OAU)

> *While applying for my Associate Professorship, I had issues with the authority; probably I offended somebody, so my promotion did not come through on time. I knew that our promotion papers were considered… about 6 or 7 of us whose papers were considered on the same day. For some, within three months, their*

promotion came through. For me, it took about three and a half years before the promotion came through, despite the fact I had more publications and experience than those whose promotion came out first. However, my professorship went smoothly. (Prof. B, OAU)

As a young female academic staff, at a point, I was stuck. I believe my promotion was delayed because "they" felt I was going at a faster pace. (Dr I, UI)

From the interviewees' responses, a significant outcome of their difficult promotion experiences was *delayed* promotion arising from covert discrimination and invisible, informal barriers. Although these discriminations may seem visible, they remain subtle because it is covered and unknown to most people in the organisation except those directly involved (Husu, 2001). From the findings, the women experienced discrimination through the promotion process. This demonstrates that the promotion process may not be clear or transparent. Regarding the promotion procedures, ideally, the internal and external assessment should be a blind review process, but this may not always be the case. The composition of the panel or committee and the selection of both internal and external assessors may be biased and result in mixed outcomes. As an implication, this may jeopardise the applications of candidates who are not in good standing with the assessors and members of their networks or caucus, on the one hand.

On the other hand, there may be undue favouritism if the candidates are, in a way, connected to them or are members of their networks or caucus. As Husu (2004) argued, gatekeepers (in this case, the assessors) can either function as an exclusion that controls or holds back certain individuals or function as inclusion that facilitates the promotion of their own or their reference group's interests. This explains why women in this interview who have had issues with the university management experienced delayed promotion. The prevalent network/caucus culture operating in the Nigerian higher education sector often complicates and undermines the promotion process. While these women never delved more into the problems or issues they had with the management, they believed their difficult promotion experience was gendered and discriminatory.

Two interviewees identified personal circumstances as a factor responsible for their difficult promotion experience. Personal circumstances involved talking about critical traumas or circumstances related, for example, to bereavement, pregnancy, unequal care responsibilities

and health-related factors. To a large extent, women's structural location in higher education employment means that women's academic career progression is generally slowed down in ways that men's are not (Barrett & Barret, 2010; Probert, 2005). These factors may entail conditions that may force women into choosing between their families and their career progression. According to two of the interviewees:

> *Transitioning from L1 to SL took a long time because I had some challenges around that period (Pause). I could not publish as expected; as a result, my promotion took longer than necessary.* (Prof. C, OAU)

> *At a point in my career, I had health-related issues. Publishing or promotion was the least on the mind. I had to take a break and focus on my recovery. After recovery, I was on the same level as one of my junior colleagues (Smiles). Despite all, here I am. The good thing is that your promotion can always be backdated.* (Prof. G, UI)

The indisputable fact that women have difficulty progressing to L1, SL, AP and Professorship levels (see Table 14) shows the existence of a *glass ceiling*. The glass ceiling describes the transparent barrier to further advancement once women have attained a certain level within an institution (Pyke, 2013; Wright & Baxter, 2000). Kee (2006) argued that what keeps women from reaching the top is complex and involves the interplay of several factors. Despite the different perspectives from which the women related their experiences, one specific theme recurred consistently in the interview—all the respondents had experienced both the easy and difficult promotion phases; however, the level at which this experience occurred varied. Opinions of difficult promotions ranged from being definite that women experience delays resulting from covert discriminatory promotion practices to the effect of personal circumstances. Although most of the women underscore their experience as gendered, the others attributed their difficult promotion experiences to personal circumstances. These findings align with the broad consensus in the glass ceiling literature that the structure, culture, and processes within organisations lead to gender bias (Acker, 2006b; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

Perspectives on universities without gender equity policy (UNIPORT and FUTA)

In the universities without gender equity policies (UNIPORT and FUTA), the interviewees' perception of their easy promotion experiences were not in any way different from the perspectives of women in universities with gender policies (OAU and UI). However, in relating their difficult promotion experiences, one of the women identified targeted biases as a

perception of her difficult promotion experience, which was also a dominant finding in OAU and UI. Another interviewee revealed that the lack of broader networks made their promotion experience difficult. The respondents had this to say:

> *I believe that factors such as targeted biases can impact on promotion outcomes. This is the reason the same set of people would put in their promotion application at the same time, but some would receive their promotion letters almost immediately while others have to wait without any justifiable reason.* (Prof. L, UNIPORT)

> *Progressing from mid-level academic cadre to senior-level cadre is like growing from a teenager to an adult. These are two phases of life with unique experiences. I did not have many networks while in the mid-level academic cadre, and it was intricate, sort of, moving from this level. Once I scaled through that 'difficult' promotion phase, I found the other promotions relatively easier because I have built [a] broader network over time.* (Dr M, UNIPORT)

The lack of broader networks as an explanatory factor for the difficult promotion experience shows the importance of networks in academic promotions to leadership positions. Burkinshaw and White (2019) acknowledged the importance of networking, especially for women, claiming it provides women with the necessary tools and support within an organisation, which might act as leverage in breaking the glass ceiling. However, as Socratous (2018) argued, women are trying to enter already established networks but find a *hole* or an *obstacle* as the parties involved (in this case, men) are unwilling to engage with new entrants. Women's limited access to influential networks can sometimes result in a difficult promotion experience. Sagebiel (2018) argued that, even in formal assessment procedures, networking leads to unequal chances for women. Academic progression does not result solely from individual merit because it ignores the existing informal support system, often utilised by men (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Sagebiel, 2016). The starting situation for women and men differs, such that men talk about continuity and acceptance at the beginning of their progression to senior academic cadre. In contrast, women talk about the necessity of fighting for acceptance and against gender stereotypes (Sagebiel, 2018). Thus, where men dominate positions of authority, women have limited or no high-status, same-gender contact to draw from and fewer ties to those that matter (Ely et al., 2011).

Two interviewees also highlighted the pressure to prove their competence and capability before being nominated for positions or considered for appointment. The women noted that,

when progressing to the senior academic cadre, there is an intense pressure to prove oneself and gain visibility/recognition within the academic community. However, they argued that the support or opportunities that enhance their chances of gaining visibility are *near absent* as the academic leaders would prefer that the men be assigned valuable responsibilities or nominated, giving the men an edge in being recognised. Two of them stated that:

> *...I had to approach the Dean and tell him I was interested in an assignment and would like him to nominate me. He was shocked and said he did not know I would put myself up for the task nor was willing to do the task because most women would consider it an additional burden, and that was why he had always nominated a male for the task. ... [smiling] it is funny how people make decisions, using gender roles as a yardstick of your capability.* (Dr R, FUTA)

> *It always seems like I have to work extra hard to prove my competence, and when I do, I am seen as a threat. While others buy luxurious cars with their salary, I had to save my salary and use them to attend conferences and train abroad. I have never benefitted from grants that some men have access to.* (Dr O, UNIPORT)

The findings showed the existence of misrecognition and a lack of confidence in women's leadership abilities and potential by the HoDs or Deans, resulting in the pressure for women to prove themselves. Morley (2006, p. 546) asserted that misrecognition is how "wider society offers demeaning, confining or inaccurate readings of the value of specific groups or individuals." The misrecognition of women's skills and competencies stem from gender bias which manifests in all phases in the academy (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018; Morley, 2013b). The way work is valued in a society favours men, making their leadership bids appear valid (Ely et al., 2011). Since visibility/recognition is a predominant ingredient for women's advancement to academic leadership positions, some of these women have had to put themselves out, showing assertiveness and resolve (having to deny themselves of luxury in a bid to save up for conferences). This depletes these women of their energy and aspirations, resulting in difficult experiences.

7.2 Explaining Unequal Promotion Experiences

Having detailed the participants' promotion background and experiences, I further asked their perspectives on informal institutions within the university. At this point, I made an effort to

explain to the interviewees what I meant by the term *informal institutions*.[20] The central aim is to identify specific long-standing informal rules and practices and understand the extent to which this is deeply rooted in the university regarding promotion. In this section, first, I present the perspectives of academic women in universities having gender policies in place and then move further to present the perspectives of women in universities without gender policies. This is aimed at identifying any similarities or differences with regard to how prevalent informal rules and practices play out within the universities.

Perspectives of women in universities with gender equity policy (OAU and UI)

The responses were organised into two major categories—*Indifferent* and *yes,* as none of the women disclaimed the prevalence of informal norms and practices for promotion. Of the 10 participants in these universities, three women had neutral perspectives on the prevalence of informal norms and practices within the university. Two women implicitly acknowledged that discrimination might occur due to the prevalence of gender norms and practices, albeit not often. As she stated:

> *Well, it is not common, but this is not to say it has never happened. It is just not a usual practice.* (Dr E, OAU)

> *Formally, there are no special promotion criteria for men or women as far as I know. Although I agree there are some hidden inhibitions, I mean those silent features that play against women.* (Dr J, UI)

Another believed that informal norms and practices were more prevalent in promotion through appointment than promotion through the ranks because of the standard procedural practice for promotion.[21] According to her:

> *It is difficult to tell that informal norms and practices are used for promotions because there are set criteria and a uniform standard for assessing everyone … male or female. Though, I am aware of some form of subtle discrimination that may come to play in appointments.* (Prof. G, UI)

The respondents with neutral perspectives expressed that, with the standard academic fairness as a process that is mostly in place for promotion through the ranks, the use of

[20]*Informal institution* is used in this study to mean the unwritten, historical or contemporary understandings of the way things are done, or the networks that exists to support non-formalised operating procedures.

[21] Promotion through the ranks refers to the career progression from the GTA or Assistant Lecturer to Professor (see Figure 6). Promotion through appointments or elections is mostly to positions such as Directors/ Deputy directors and Deanship or Provostship respectively.

informal institutions for promotion was limited. At the same time, they also agreed that promotion through appointment could be unfair and discriminatory. I further asked the women who had neutral perspectives on why they had considered their promotions experiences as difficult if they believed informal norms and practices were not prevalent in the universities. In response, one of the women stated that:

> *Experiencing delayed promotion is somewhat normal in this environment. My promotion was not denied; it was just delayed. I got my promotion in the long run, and it was backdated. I would have considered it discriminatory if it was not backdated and if the situation was only peculiar to the women.* (Prof. G, UI)

Another stated that:

> *I would not consider my "difficult" promotion experience as gendered. I believe it is a result of the sloppy promotion procedures in place. For instance, you do not get any formal feedback to let you know the stage your application is at. You continue to wait until your promotion comes out, which can be frustrating.* (Dr E, OAU)

> *I know of someone whose application suddenly went missing, and no one claimed responsibility for this; neither are measures in place to address these issues.* (Dr D, UI)

From the response above, one of the women had considered her promotion experience as difficult because of the sloppy or lax promotion procedures in place, which she believed, have allowed informal norms and practices to thrive. Helmke and Levitsky (2006) argued that some informal institutions remain invisible because measures are not evoked. From the quotes above, the culture of *back-dating* promotions is also considered a high inclination for these women's neutral responses. However, a striking observation was that one of these women had considered her promotion delay as *normal.* These findings resonate with the work of Chappell and Waylen (2013, p. 605), who argued that "informal rules about gender can be harder to observe because gender has been assumed 'natural and immutable'." According to them, these features make informal institutions particularly sticky and resistant to change. This implies that informal norms and practices may not be perceived by, or visible to, these women because there are so normalised and taken for granted.

The other seven women acknowledged the prevalence of informal norms and practices within the university. The women identified the use of connection or networks, otherwise known as

who-you-know in the Nigerian lexicon, and lobbying as some of the informal norms and practices prevalent within the universities. Connection includes the use of class or family privilege, parental or spousal influence and ethnic/religious affiliation. Lobbying is an accepted but unofficial practice that helps secure an advantage in the promotion process. FI scholars have argued that gendered networks (and connections) act as a pipeline through which men share insider information and transmit privilege to other men (Bjarnegård, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015) or those connected to them. Some women stressed the role of connections, gendered networks and caucuses in facilitating indirect discrimination and delayed promotions. According to them:

> *Like I said earlier, my promotion was delayed because I had an issue with someone who had connections with the management. [I quickly cut in] Would you like to talk about these "issues" ma?*
> Her: *Well, I will prefer to not talk about it.* (Prof. B, OAU)

> *There is an internal "power play or tussle" within the department and faculty, which is very unhealthy. The caucus system operating here is very unhealthy. I believe my promotion was delayed because of this. There is no evidence to nail those responsible or make a formal complaint…[Shrugs]; that is why these practices are invisible. It is really a complicated system.* (Dr H, UI)

> *When I was the head of the department in ****, I had a terrible experience. At that time, there were only two women and over twenty men in the department. I came into the position filled with passion. I felt many things needed to be changed because of my exposure (I had studied abroad and at that time, was consulting for the UN, Commonwealth Secretariat and have had several trainings which took me overseas to see how things are done abroad …in terms of best practices). So, I came into the role with a passion for making a change. Unfortunately, the people felt I was too different; I was not playing by the rules. I did not know that being a woman was a threat to them.* (Prof. A, OAU)

> *Some of us have had our promotion delayed because we are not a member of the caucus that holds the current power.* (Dr I, UI)

> *Often, people lobby for their promotion papers to be sent to friends, mentors, senior colleagues they know or their godfather for internal or external assessment.* (Prof. F, UI)

Franceschet (2011) emphasised the significant roles gendered networks and the caucus system play as an informal institution. Dominant members of gendered networks and caucus, which are primarily men, engage in these practices to maximise their relationships' social utility (Azari & Smith, 2012). They achieve this goal by associating themselves with those who are already powerful within the formal institutional structure, such as members of the university management. A significant outcome for women is that these prevalent informal practices replicate and reinforce the formal distribution of power and influence within the academe. Those who have access to power holders within the system enjoy smooth promotion rides and opportunities for advancement. Findings showed how connections and gendered networks create a permissive environment for subtle discrimination to thrive. This finding accords with Morley (1999) and O'Connor (2020), who concluded that micro-politics executed through informal networks, coalitions, gendered devaluation, stereotypes and exclusions continue to govern higher education institutions while permeating women's experiences in higher education. Gendered micro-politics, therefore, make a significant contribution to unequal outcomes for women (Blackmore & Sachs, 2003; Morley, 2003, 2016; Pyke, 2018). Thus, the informal actions, which are sometimes invisible, gradually undermine women's progression to academic leadership.

Perspectives of women in universities without gender policy (UNIPORT and FUTA)

The women in these universities identified informal norms and practices such as stereotypes and sexism, the use of connections and *godfatherism* as prevalent within the university. Perspectives on the use of connections were similar to the responses from the universities *with* gender equity policy. According to two of the interviewees:

> *As a woman, you are often hardly nominated for positions because they feel you may not perform well. It is more or less…like…being profiled to determine your capability. For example, if you have younger kids or you are a religious devotee, they believe because of your domestic roles or parental responsibilities or religious beliefs, you cannot perform specific roles.* (Dr N, UNIPORT)

> *The use of connection, ethnicity and favouritism are the prevalent informal culture in this university. Sometimes, those in charge of recruitment already know those they want to employ even before the positions are advertised. When I was the HOD, we had advertised for a junior academic position. I observed that after submitting their application at the stipulated location, most of them*

had to come to my office to introduce themselves or were brought in by senior colleagues who were relatives or friends with the candidates to appeal for favours. (Prof. P, FUTA)

Two interviewees also highlighted the politicisation of appointments as a current plague within the universities. According to them, this was with the knowledge of some Vice-Chancellors who operate based on nepotism and patronage. One of the interviewees narrated how a former colleague's promotion to professorial cadre was denied for ten years, forcing the man to resign and join a private university where he was elevated. According to her:

Sometimes, those who merit the appointments are not considered by the Vice-Chancellor either because they are unionists or those the VCs' godfathers do not like their faces. This is not limited to this university alone; neither is it peculiar to males or females. (Dr R, FUTA)

Another also corroborated this view as she stated that:

The VC holds the power. Ordinarily, the promotion screening passes through the University Appointment and Promotion Committee, but most often, these committees' members are made up of the VC's cronies. It is not new to hear that some VCs use some fraudulent standards for patronage. Within our ranks, we know that some academic staff have been promoted or appointed when there are other deserving candidates. It is complete damage to the system. (Prof. L, UNIPORT)

Findings showed that within the universities, elements of sexism and stereotyping, rooted in the patriarchal nature of the African/Nigerian culture, exist. These elements evoke male dominance culture through institutional arrangements and functions in ways that preserve and reinforce inequality between men and women, such as differential opportunities and privileged positions in the universities. Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012) argued that discrimination against women exists, not because of gender, but because of the role that culture plays in promoting male dominance and elaborating on women's mistreatment in Nigerian society. As Eboiyehi et al. (2016) stated, Nigerian universities are highly patriarchal, with men dominant in virtually all senior management positions. While academic leadership is associated with productivity, competitiveness, and strategy, it is also socially defined as a masculine domain (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2013). The godfatherism context determines who gets what, when and how. Although these are largely

hidden, their influence is enormous, virtually replacing objective criteria such as qualifications and performance. Adeoye defines the term as the connection between a godfather and a godson. A godfather is a boss, mentor, and principal, while a godson is the beneficiary and recipient of the godfather's legacy. A godfather can build unbelievable respect and followers in the community and possess a well-organised influential standing and general acceptance from the followers' choice (2009, p. 72). According to Ely et al. (2011), informal networks may shape career paths by changing access to positions, channelling the flow of information and referrals, creating power and credibility, providing emotional support, feedback, security and increasing the speed of promotion. Lenshie (2013) argued that in Nigeria today, most Vice-Chancellors or other influential academic leaders are often motivated by primordial factors. According to the author, where ethnicity is less pronounced, religion assumes dominance, and where religion is less dominant, ethnicity precedes. In some other areas where ethnicity and religion assume moderate status, godfatherism becomes operational. This situation revealed itself in the case studies as recruitment/appointments criteria in Nigerian universities are watered down to accommodate special interests while excluding those who merit the positions.

7.3 Navigating Formal Rules and Informal Practices in the Promotion Process

Moving further along, I asked the women how they managed to navigate their way through to their current academic leadership positions, given the prevalence of informal norms and practice and their difficult promotion experience. By asking these questions, I intended to explore the extent these women relied on formal or informal institutional arrangements for their career advancement and whether formal and informal institutions were used simultaneously or not. Similar to the previous section, I first present the perspectives of academic women in universities with gender policies before presenting the views of the academic women in universities without gender policies. Findings show that the perspectives of women in universities with gender policy were resonant of the opinions expressed in universities without gender policy. A significant theme raised by the interviewees was the perception that progression from mid-level to senior-level academic positions requires a fundamental knowledge of *how to,* to avoid difficult promotion experiences. This is about effectively self-promoting to gain recognition, access to networks, privileges and entitlements that seemingly flow to those who know *how to* (Pyke, 2013).

Perspectives of women in universities with gender equity policy (OAU and UI)

Four of the women interviewed either said "no" or did not give a response. For example, when asked if they had relied on both formal and informal institutions for promotion, one of

the women was silent (with a slight grin on her face) while two others gave an unconvincing "no." The remaining women implicitly agreed that, at one point or the other, they have had to rely on both formal and informal institutions for their career advancement, even though the promotion process in Nigerian universities follows a formal procedure. The women explicitly clarified that the extent to which they relied on informal norms and practices was less than the formal procedures. According to them, the use of informal institutions for promotion was dependent on fulfilling all formal requirements. They emphatically stressed the importance of satisfying all formal criteria for promotion, especially for promotion through the ranks, since "the formal largely orders the direction the informal takes" (Zenger et al., 2001, p. 8). According to them:

> *You can not underestimate the place of formal institutions. The university criteria for academic staff promotion are very clear and specific.* (Dr D, OAU)

> *It would help if you did your homework right before taking it a step further.* (Dr I, UI)

> *For me, I made sure I had done the needful, that is, having all the promotion requirements and submitted my application. When I realised some of those, we had submitted our applications together with had received their promotion letters, and mine was not forthcoming; only then did I decide to pursue the informal routes.* (Dr H, UI)

The women highlighted how informal institutions are utilised with the universities' formal promotion procedures—directly or indirectly. On the one hand, informal institutions were used directly through the women's personal connections to the people that matter, e.g., mentor-mentee relationships. On the other hand, informal institutions were used indirectly through third parties, for example, the candidate's spouses, parents, relatives and friends. This reiterates the extent of influence 'networks' exact on the promotion process to academic leadership. According to the interviewees who utilised informal institutions indirectly:

> *I was able to get valuable and privileged information that helped me with my application from my uncle, a retired professor, who was well connected with the university management here.* (Dr I, UI)

> *I leveraged on the "old boys" network for my career advancement in terms of information. For example, an old/senior Professor and my husband attended the same Secondary School, so he saw me as one of them, and I leveraged on*

that. In fact, it was through him I got the information about the CODESRIA gender institute, which I utilised for my promotion and appointment. (Prof. A, OAU)

At this stage of the interview, one of the women who had initially said she had never employed informal institutions in their career advancement unconsciously described an occasion when the informal institution was used, albeit indirectly. According to her:

At a point, I was worried about my promotion, and my husband had to contact one of his childhood friends who happened to be in one of the top management positions in the university at that time. My application would have been delayed but for the intervention of my husband's friend. (Prof. G, UI)

As to those who employed informal institutions directly for their promotion, they stated that:

I realised there are 'inner circles', and sometimes, you need their support as you progress. I quickly understood how the game was played. You know, you cannot be a "loner" in the academy. (Dr I, UI)

I was strategic about it. I had to do much academic collaboration with accomplished male professors within the department and faculty while also being respectful and calm. (Dr D, OAU)

I had to build academic relationships, especially with senior colleagues. That is why I am probably where I am. Sometimes, I send my papers to them for preview before publishing. You cannot dispute the fact that the men have valuable social networks and lookout for opportunities for each other. (Prof. F, UI)

Since the promotion application passes through many processes, one cannot tell what happens at different stages. You need someone to give you an "insider" update or feedback regarding your application since there is no formalised system. I learnt the art of lobbying. Not for anything in particular (I had checked and fulfilled all the promotion requirements). I just needed someone who could help me monitor my application, so it does not go missing. (Dr J, UI)

Evidence from the interview showed the interplay of formal and informal institutions in promotions. While informal institutions emerge with formal rules and operate in constant interaction alongside (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006), it was also a way to contest gendered power relations within the universities implicitly. FI scholars have emphasised the interplay of formal institutions (such as laws and rules) and informal institutions (such as norms and practices) as factors for explaining outcomes. According to Lowndes (2019, p. 543), informal rules are as important in "shaping actors' behaviour" as formal laws and policies. Insights from the interview data showed that women have found it easier utilising the formal institution with informal institutions—what I call an *institutional mix*, in their career trajectory and progression to academic leadership positions. However, as the interview progressed, two women quickly pointed out that the interplay between formal and informal institutions and how it is reinforced depends on the university's pre-existing culture, academic environment, and the university management's orientation towards gender issues. The women stated that:

> *Ideally, they should not be any need to employ both formal and informal institutions for promotion because academic promotions follow a formal procedure, especially for advancing through the ranks…but [a short pause] because of the non-gender-friendly environment I have found myself in, I just have to.* (Dr D, OAU)

> *Sometimes it is a culture to have godfathers or people to look up to.* (Dr E, OAU).

> *I understood that I was operating in a highly competitive environment where it is often hard to be heard, and performance is sometimes evaluated differently. The environment is masculised, and there are so many patriarchal rooted challenges; so, you just have to find a way to fit in.* (Dr H, UI)

The narrative here is that in a gender-friendly academic environment with non-patriarchal culture and gender-supportive management, the interplay between formal and informal institutions tends to be limited, and vice versa. FI scholars have argued that institutional legacies and wider environments must also be understood as gendered with gendering effects (Chappell, 2011; Mackay, 2014). In this respect, a non-gender friendly environment and culture were breeding grounds for informal norms and practices to thrive. Evidence from the study showed that women have resorted to using informal institutions as a backup plan or the second-best strategy when formal institutions do not work as expected; and also because of

the prevailing patriarchal culture, problematic promotion procedures and non-supportive management.

Perspectives of women in universities without gender equity policy (UNIPORT and FUTA)

Responses on informal institutional arrangements in UNIPORT and FUTA showed the prevalence of the use of networks and connections in career progression. However, the women emphasised that employing only informal institutions to advance academic leadership can sometimes backfire. In terms of utilising the identified informal norms and practices for promotion, the views of women in these universities align with the perspectives of women in universities *with* gender policy (OAU and UI). Regarding the inevitability of fulfilling all formal requirements for promotion before deploying informal institutions for promotion, all the women took a similar stance. While three women explicitly claimed they had not relied on informal institutions for their career advancement, two said they have. I observed that the remaining women were not comfortable revealing the answer to this specific question. According to the women who have not employed informal institutions:

> *I do not want to be entangled in their politics. So, I just submitted my application and continued to develop myself. So far, my promotions always come through, but not as fast as some others.* (Dr N, UNIPORT)

> *No! if I had done that, I would not have had those 'difficult' promotion experiences.* (Dr R, FUTA)

Two interviewees explicitly stated that they have had to use informal institutions in their career advancement, albeit for a reasonable cause—to pursue a *deserving* promotion. According to them:

> *If you mean using informal norms and practices for an undeserved promotion, NO. People who do that usually run into a lot of trouble. This is why we have many petitions written to the University council and the National Universities Commission due to unmerited promotions discovered by colleagues. This is an academic community, and when people notice you are unduly favoured, they start digging for evidence, especially if it is a senior academic position.* (Prof. Q, FUTA)

> *Yes! But mine was a case of targeted biases, and I had to involve my mentor, who pushed my case, seeing that I was more qualified than the other candidate.* (Dr M, FUTA)

These quotations demonstrate that the progression to an academic leadership position may not always be a neutral process. The use of connections and networks as social capital is a significant aspect of the informal institution utilised by women in their career advancement. Some women recognised the importance of their mentors, which showed the relevance of gendered organisational structure and connected leadership and hierarchical influence (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018; O'Connor et al., 2014). Evidence showed that progress through the career ladder depends not only on performance but also on specific characteristics of the individual. For example, Morley pointed out that the questions of who self-identifies or who is identified by existing power structures (2013a, 2014) are determinants of women's progression to academic leadership positions.

I further asked the women whether the situation for women could have been better if a gender policy had been in place. The interviewees welcomed the idea of having a university gender policy, as they saw it as a potential tool for addressing gender issues within the university. According to some of them:

> *Yes! This would be a welcome development. Don't be surprised; many do not believe gender inequality or discrimination exists in this university. Even women! The male culture is perceived as normal, and women do not see anything wrong with this. Introducing a gender policy would open their understanding, so they know that those subtle discriminations they think are normal are not.* (Dr N, UNIPORT)

> *Patronage system and politicisation is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the university. With the adoption of the gender policy, these practices can be nipped in the bud.* (Prof. L, UNIPORT)

> *It is an indisputable fact that we have more men as senior academics and in academic leadership. For instance, we have just two women in my department and about ten men. I try my best to advocate for the recruitment of more women. Since I am not a member of the recruitment committee, there is little I can do. If an effective gender policy is in place, I believe there would be more considerations for women.* (Dr R, FUTA)

The women's perspectives are consistent with the idea that the adoption of gender policy is capable of bringing about a gender change within the university through its training and

awareness programmes. The women believed that if a gender policy were adopted, there would be more consideration for women in recruitments and appointments and a limit to gendered practices. For them, this would mean a form of intervention to existing culturally inscribed norms embedded within the system that many often ignore. The case studies revealed that, even though the university is assumed to uphold the meritocracy principle, informal institutions are utilised as pathways to a less difficult promotion experience.

7.4 Conclusion

Findings showed that women had experienced difficult promotion round at one point or the other. However, while the interpretation of this concept varied, the outcome was the same for all the women: delayed promotion. In OAU and UI, while some women perceived their difficult promotion experience as gendered (a result of discriminatory/targeted biases), others saw it in relation to personal circumstances. In UNIPORT and FUTA, progression to academic leadership positions was discussed as broadly associated with stereotypes, with a preference for nominating men for specific positions where they potentially gain the recognition and visibility that aids their advancement. Targeted biases were also identified as a factor for women's difficult promotion experience; although, they agreed that this was not limited to the women alone. However, a significant observation is that, although most women agreed that gendered practices were prevalent, this was not seen as a problem.

Perspectives on informal institutions were mixed. Results showed positive and neutral responses to the prevalence of informal norms and practices within the universities. Indirect discrimination, use of connection/informal networks and lobbying were majorly identified as the prevalent informal practices at play in the universities. Participants with neutral perspectives argued that informal norms and practices are not prevalent because of the standard academic fairness in place, especially for promotion through the ranks. Evidence from this study showed that the prevalence of informal norms and practices could potentially subvert women's progression to academic leadership through delayed promotions and fewer opportunities in appointments and elective positions, especially for those without connections. However, the culture of backdating promotions compensates for the delayed promotions. Therefore, the culture of backdating promotions explains why some women do not consider their promotion experiences as difficult or why they are not comfortable vying for elective positions.

Regarding women's promotion experiences in universities with gender policies and universities without gender policies, findings reveal similar promotion experiences and similar

informal norms and practices at play. However, it is interesting to know that while perspectives from OAU and UI revealed that formal gender policies have made little or no impact in facilitating women's progression, the women in UNIPORT and FUTA were optimistic that the introduction and adoption of gender policy had the potential to achieve measurable gender changes in the structure and culture of the universities. Findings from these two categories of universities, therefore, suggests that formal policies are useful only if they come with action plans that can support implementation and a mechanism to shift the informal norms and practices while also ameliorating the external or exogenous constraints that exist outside (e.g., selection of external assessors).

In navigating their advancement to academic leadership positions, the interviewees in both categories of universities highlighted the importance of developing strategies of resistance through the use of formal and informal measures for advancement (formally by going overboard with the stipulated promotion requirement and informally through the use of direct or indirect informal measures). These findings emphasised the interconnectedness of formal and informal institutions. Scholars argued that formal and informal institutions may be analytically distinct, but they exist in close relationship to each other (Azari & Smith, 2012; Grzymala-Busse, 2010). Given the constraining, highly unequal gender environment, women have had to find a way to challenge gendered power relations and entrenched masculinities that resists the potentialities for women's progression to academic leadership positions. Findings across the universities demonstrated how women navigate their promotions to academic leadership positions through the interplay of formal and informal institutions. As women climb up the academic career ladder, coupled with satisfying all promotion requirements, they rely on a strong informal support network and practices. These came directly from their primary relationships or indirectly through a third party. Informal networks significantly influenced women's difficult promotion experiences and had impacted their academic progression to leadership positions. While scholars such as Bjarnegård (2013), Kenny (2013b) and Franceschet and Piscopo (2014) argued that men have greater access to male-dominated networks or power monopolies, this study revealed that women are now leveraging on the "old boys" network and devising mechanisms to fit in— directly (through personal connections) or indirectly (through third parties, which are mostly men). Women have taken personal responsibility for their academic leadership progression by developing their own strategies for navigating the patriarchal power structures and gender discrimination. As Banazsak and Weldon posited, the interaction between informal or formal institutions shapes gender equality outcomes (2011, p. 270).

Zenger et al. (2000) argued that it is essential to ask whether the use of one type of institution increases or decreases the functionality of the other—i.e., whether formal institutions complement or substitute for informal institutions. Findings from the study show a complementary interplay between formal and informal institutions. Evidence revealed the existence of complementary institutional interactions in both categories of universities, that is, where the formal and informal institutions motivate similar actions to advance women to academic leadership. This study showed that the interplay of formal and informal institutions delivers greater functionality for women's advancement to academic leadership positions. However, formal institutions appear to influence the trajectory of informal institutions. While the interplay of formal and informal institutions for women's progression to academic leadership may be satisfactory at an individual level, it does not transform the system. For some women, where the formal institution appeared to be lopsided, the informal norms and practices opened avenues, which were utilised strategically as backup plans. Therefore, it makes sense to say that informal institutions play an essential role in the repertoire of actions aimed at attaining academic leadership, as they can be utilised to complement the formal institution for career advancement. Thus, the informal can undermine, replace, support or work in parallel with the formal institutions (Azari & Smith, 2012; Radnitz, 2011). This study has provided valuable insights into how women in Nigerian universities navigate forward despite difficult promotion situations. The findings demonstrate that, within informal institutions, there are complex dimensions hidden, taken for granted, which need to be placed at the forefront of institutional research to better understand the influence informal norms and practices have on advancing women to academic leadership. In the next chapter, I conclude this research by drawing out the significant findings of this thesis, situating it within FI perspectives.

Chapter 8: Advancing the Careers of Academic Women Through Gender Equity Policies in Nigerian Universities: Reality or Mirage?

The thesis explores the big questions of why and how efforts at institutional gender change have failed to gain real traction for women in Nigeria, especially regarding women's progression to academic leadership positions. Over time, gender equity has impacted Nigeria's broader social structure, where patriarchy and stereotyped gender roles are strongly entrenched. Studies have shown that Nigerian universities are largely male-dominated, with a wide gender disparity in academic leadership. Hegemonic cultures embedded within Nigerian society have continued to be reflected in institutional rules and practices within these academic environments. Efforts to institute a *gender culture* within Nigerian institutions saw the establishment of gender centres and the adoption of gender policy. However, the idea of gender equity being incorporated into the universities has not been well-received in all the universities in Nigeria. Only a few of these universities have been open to the idea. This thesis focuses on selected universities that have embraced the idea of gender equity within their institution and investigate whether this has led to significant institutional gender change.

This thesis is centrally preoccupied with questions that seek to understand why gender equity policies have failed to gain real traction for women and how informal institutions subvert the intent of formal policies, thereby limiting the prospects for institutional gender change. It locates these questions in an empirical case study of formal gender policies and informal institutions within selected Nigerian universities. In answering the central questions of this thesis, Chapter 4 explored why the gender policies of the selected universities have failed to achieve their intended goal (to institutionalise gender equity). Chapters 5 and 6 unveiled institutional gender arrangements within the selected universities, revealing discourses on informal norms and practices that subvert gender policy intent. Chapter 7 explored how women capitalise on informal institutions to advance to academic leadership. This final chapter revisits these findings, providing an overall argument of the main empirical and theoretical conclusions of the thesis. It further assesses the significant contributions of my research and highlights areas for future study.

8.1 Nigerian Universities as "Gendered" Institutions

Existing research on gender and institutions highlights the active process involved in creating and sustaining gendered institutional power hierarchies, providing compelling evidence that there are significant gendered dynamics at work within institutions (Chappell et al., 2017;

Gouws, 2020; Lowndes, 2020; Thomson, 2018; Wagle et al., 2020). This is true for Nigerian universities as women are continually underrepresented in academic leadership (Adamma, 2017; Akanji et al., 2019; Opesade et al., 2017; Orisadare, 2020). This study demonstrates that formal and informal institutional dimensions of Nigerian universities are gendered and continually undermine women's progression and limit the prospect for institutional gender change. The result of this study shows that the universities are gendered in the following ways.

Gendered Formal Equity Policies

In line with FI, this thesis argues that formal rules are gendered, having both intended and unintended gendered implications. Evidence from Chapter 4 draws attention to the underlying continuities of inequality (silences, absences and exclusion) and how male domination is perpetuated in the policy document. Incorporating the OAU and UI Gender Policy into the university strategic plans aligned the policy statements with the underlying university stipulations and helped substantiate the university's will on gender and equity issues. While the adoption of gender policies and the establishment of gender centres in these universities may sound promising, the reality is far more complex in terms of institutionalising gender equity. While mainstream accounts on gender policy in Nigeria draw attention to the need for policy adoption to address gender equity concerns (Abiose, 2008; Ogbogu, 2013b), evidence shows underlying continuities of gender inequality, especially in subtle forms, embedded in the gender policy documents. Research on women's underrepresentation in academic leadership in Nigeria identified that gender equity interventions have been unsuccessful (Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018). This thesis expands on the literature by identifying the *specifics*, that is, unveiling *how* formal gender policies are gendered, the forms in which these play out, and the implications for academic women. Looking towards the mechanisms of institutional resistance, Chapter 4 uncovers restrictive mechanisms and elements of gendered power relations in the form of silence, absence, exclusions and male dominance embedded in the gender policy contents of OAU and UI. Evidence showed that these restrictive mechanisms create a gap in the gender equity policies, making it a weak policy with a low capacity for institutionalising gender equity and advancing women to academic leadership positions.

Institutionalised Informal Norms and Practices

Chapters five and six focus on the gendered patterns of informal institutions. The analysis of informal norms and practices points to *why* efforts at institutional gender change have been difficult. Findings show that neither the adoption of gender equity policies nor the establishment of gender centres had changed the existing gender disparities in the universities,

especially in academic leadership. In particular, universities with gender policies (OAU and UI) showed a highly informalised stakeholders' selection process that impacts how policies are formulated. It also revealed prevalent patriarchal ideologies, which affects the implementation of gender policies. In universities without gender policy, the absence of an equity policy and the *gendered layering* of the gender centre limits the prospects for institutional gender change. In understanding how and why informal institutions subvert gender policy intents in the selected universities, three major discourses which emphasised the limits to institutional gender change emerged: a) nestedness of informal institutions; (b) logic of appropriateness; and (c) gendered layering.

The institutionalisation of formal rules is constrained by the informal rules of the game, such as behaviours, values and mindsets prevalent in organisations, which are collectively called "informal institutions" (Mackay et al., 2010; Wagle et al., 2020, p. 239). The Nigerian case demonstrates the gendered difficulties of embedding change within a pre-existing institutional context. Evidence from this case study draws attention to the gendered norm of informal selection, which has been problematised in other contexts (Bjarnegard, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015; 2016; Bjarnegard & Zetterberg, 2017; Kenny, 2013b). This thesis adds to the existing literature on the informal selection of gender stakeholders as an informal practice that subverts the intent of formal gender policies. The selection criteria for core gender stakeholders are informal and unwritten, frequently determining outcomes and recreating gendered consequences. In the absence of a functional formal rule for selection, gaps are filled with informal institutional repertoires, including the use of connection or networks and masculine hegemonies. Existing work on informal institutions has pointed to how the continuation of gendered informal institutions, such as patronage and clientelism, undermine formal rules aimed at challenging male dominance (Kenny, 2013b; Waylen, 2014).

Findings from the interviews showed a similar narrative, where gender stakeholders emphasised how the Vice-Chancellor's positional power enables *informalised selection* through the use of connections and gendered networks. Indirect discrimination, use of connection/informal networks, caucuses, and lobbying were identified as the prevalent informal practices at play within the universities. The Vice-Chancellor's positional power to appoint policy stakeholders creates a power advantage pattern that allows for the reproduction of male hegemony and women's profound disadvantage (Chappell & Mackay, 2017). A significant implication of the informal selection for women is that, the exclusion of a fair, level playing field for qualified women to vie for positions constrain participation and, in the long run, limits the performance of selected stakeholders. Informally selected gender

stakeholders are unlikely to push for gender change, thereby enabling male dominance. The practice of informal selection is questionable, not just from a gender perspective but also from the standpoint of transparency and fairness. This finding highlights the distinct problem that informal selection creates for women and questions the "success and sustainability of gender equity" and institutional change within universities (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016, p. 388).

Scholars have argued that masculine practice in organisations is an invisible phenomenon but plays a pivotal role in reproducing gender dynamics (Lewis & Simpson, 2010; Wagle et al., 2020). Evidence from the universities revealed the coding of academic authority as masculine and highlighted the presence of gendered actors in the universities that sustain patriarchal structures. Given the *logic of appropriateness* at play within the universities, the institutionalisation of gender equity is faced with challenges. As explained in Chapter Two, the Nigerian university system evolved within a patriarchal society and has retained gendered characteristics that provide a source of power for men. Acker (1990) argued that the organisational structure is not gender-neutral; rather, it creates and maintains the gendered nature within an organisation.

Feminist theorists have also taken this argument further by explaining that the gendered nature of any organisation creates gender discrimination (to male advantage) and reinforces power disparities between males and females (Acker, 2006b; Britton, 2000; Britton & Logan, 2008). Evidence presented in this thesis indicates that this theoretical connection is present in the case study universities. As gendered institutions, Nigerian universities produce and reproduce gender discrimination. Findings from this study demonstrate how informal rules around masculinity and patriarchy continue to shape the behaviour of some academic heads. It establishes how some academic heads served to reproduce male dominance by challenging gender equity through their masculinist ideology, gender criticism and non-engagement with gender issues. It also reveals how masculinist culture and patriarchal ideology, coupled with the absence of gender policy monitoring and evaluation, result in gender as a non-issue for some academic heads (Chappell, 2011). One explanation for this is that the gender stakeholders responsible for ensuring gender equity compliance at the departmental or faculty levels are mostly junior staff whose roles are not empowered. As such, some academic heads are often difficult to manage, as they use their privileged positions to exhibit male hegemony and patriarchy without repercussion. The limited powers assigned to the stakeholders at the departmental or faculty levels mean that they cannot effect the desired gender change. This argument is in line with Bagilhole (2002b, p. 23), who stated that "the question of where power is placed in an organisation is relevant because being relatively powerful enables

individuals to exhibit varying responses to equity policies, including those that reduce their effectiveness, without fear of retribution."

Much of the literature on institutional gender change has focused on how layering is widely used as a strategy to achieve incremental gender change (Krook, 2006b; Waylen, 2014). However, this thesis draws attention to how layering is utilised as a strategy to limit or distort prospects of institutional gender equity change. For example, the UNIPORT case exemplifies how change (merger) is gendered—through the redirection of the gender centre. Findings show that when the goals of the centres merged or layered on top of each other are not complementary, the prospects for institutional gender change are limited. Evidence from Chapter 6 also shows the interweaving of regional historical legacies with informal norms and practices, consequently affecting institutional gender arrangement within the university and institutional gender change processes. While UNIPORT and FUTA have an established gender centre, the centres' goals are not directed towards institutionalising gender equity. Instead, the centres' activities are directed towards specific institutional interests, i.e., gender, peace and conflict (UNIPORT) and science and technology entrepreneurship (in FUTA).

Creating the gender centre alone (without a gender policy in place) is seen as a powerful strategic means through which the university management can circumvent formal gender rules and consolidate academic leadership advantages. Given the absence of gender equity policy in UNIPORT and FUTA, institutional gender change prospects are very limited. Aina has argued that gender equity/equality is regarded as Eurocentric and strange to African essence, cultural values and ethics (2014, p. 3). This explains why universities are not fully open to institutional gender change. For example, findings showed that having a gender centre without a gender policy is more or less a window-dressing approach—a strategic way to dismiss or resist gender change within the university. This thesis reflects Mackay's "liability of newness," which explained the stickiness of informal institutions, providing a powerful explanation for why it is hard to make gender reforms stick (2014). This author believes new formal institutions are not blank slates or free-floating carriers of various—often conflicting—values and ideas. She argued that new institutions are characterised by past institutional legacies and formed by initial and ongoing experiences with established institutions (formal structures and rules, informal rules, traditions and norms) within which they are nested.

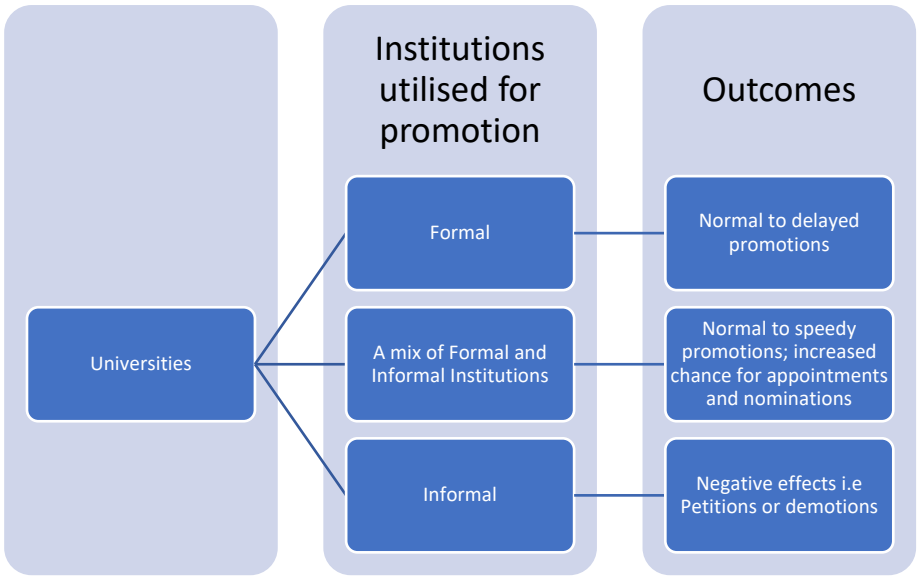
8.2 Women's Academic Promotions: An Interplay of Formal and Informal Institutions

Having established that formal gender policies in Nigerian universities are indeed gendered and informal norms and practices are highly institutionalised, the question that comes to mind is how the few women in these universities have attained academic leadership positions. This thesis answers this question by exploring how these women navigate their academic promotion through an interplay of formal and informal institutions. This thesis points to the ways in which institutions interact and interconnect with each other, alternatively supporting or blocking efforts at institutional gender change (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Madsen, 2019) and women's progression to academic leadership positions. Chapter 7 provides a fine-grained analysis of gendered power relations by detailing the promotion experiences of academic women. The chapter evaluated the hidden life of academic women, detailing their lived promotion experiences and found that the promotion process was gendered (a result of discriminatory/targeted biases) and beset by informal practices of use of connection/informal networks, caucus and lobbying; creating unpleasant experiences for them.

The focus of this thesis is not only geared towards understanding how women's progression are undermined, but also how some women are able to navigate beyond these limitations and attain academic leadership. This thesis explores how prevalent informal norms and gendered practices have impacted women's career progression, how these have occurred and how women have navigated their way to the top— findings from this analysis highlight a complementary interplay of formal and informal institutions in women's career progression. Formal and informal institutions play a critical role in perpetuating and altering the gendered nature of academic leadership in Nigeria. Although intended to institutionalise gender equity, formal rules are constrained by policy gaps, patriarchal culture and informal rules within these universities. The informal rules and practices were useful tools for negotiating the male-dominant culture, structure, and unequal power relations in the women's career progression to academic leadership. Existing studies have uncovered the interaction between formal and informal institutions to understand the contextual dynamics between the two, which serve to "keep men in and shut women out" (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015, 2016; Johnson, 2016, p. 399). The findings at hand demonstrate a complementary interplay of formal and informal institutions through which women fit into academic leadership. Specifically, it pointed to the ways informal connections and networks, and formal promotion procedures are deployed to advance women to academic leadership.

Feminist scholarship has shown that women are less likely to put themselves forward for academic leadership nominations (Nash & Moore, 2018); however, findings from the case studies show that this is not the case in Nigeria. Most of these women often present more than the promotion requirements. Although there are formal rules for promotion, there is also a strong and consistent sense of how things play out informally in practice. While some women rely on the culture of promotion backdating, others pointed to the deployment of formal and informal institutions for their career advancement. However, the evidence demonstrates clear limits to relying *solely* on informal institutions. In all the cases, the women interviewed emphasised that relying solely on informal institutions for academic leadership promotion could backfire, sometimes resulting in a demotion. The promotion backdating method, even though effective, is considered a slow process and mainly utilised by women who are not connected or who chose not to play by the informal rules of the game. While informal institutions may be typically seen as damaging, they are often mobilised, especially by women with connections and networks, as a pathway for a smooth and easy promotion experience. As revealed in the interviews, the promotion outcomes when women utilise formal and informal institutions range from normal to speedy promotion and increase opportunities for nominations and appointments. Figure 7 shows how promotions are navigated via formal and informal institutions and possible outcomes based on women's experiences.

Figure 7: *Lived Promotion Experiences of Women and Outcomes*



Although informal networks significantly influenced women's difficult promotion experiences, women have also utilised this for promotion. While informal institutions have historically been seen in negative ways—through particularism, clientelism, patronage and nepotism and often involving illegal practices (Waylen, 2014, p. 213)—they also work to fill

gaps in formal institutions and can "coordinate the operation of overlapping (and probably conflicting) institutions" (Azari & Smith, 2012, p. 37; Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). Bjarnegård and Kenny (2015) have argued that, even though some feminist scholarship generally views informal institutions as negative, they perform a variety of functions and may reinforce or facilitate gendered change. In countries where formal institutions produce high levels of uncertainty, actors draw on "clientelist ties to counteract that uncertainty" (Adams & Smrek, 2018, p. 18). This thesis shows that existing informal rules within the universities were utilised in a complementary way with formal academic promotion requirements for advancing to academic leadership positions. As women climb up the academic career ladder and satisfy all promotion requirements, they rely on strong, informal support networks. These came directly from their primary relationships or indirectly through a third party. While the study demonstrates the difficulties of institutionalising gender equity in the face of ongoing contestation and powerful institutional and gendered legacies, it also illustrates the potential for women's career progression.

8.3 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

The theoretical and empirical work of the thesis builds on FI, which has been used to answer the big questions of why gender policies often fail to achieve their intended goals; how institutions are gendered and re-gendered, as well as what limits institutional gender change (Kenny & Mackay, 2009; Waylen, 2009). These questions are important, especially when considered from a feminist perspective. As Mahoney and Thelen (2010) have noted, understanding how institutions are constructed also provides insights into how they might fall apart. By focusing on specific institutional contexts (formal and informal), this study draws attention to the active and dynamic processes through which "institutions are gendered and re-gendered" (Kenny, 2013a, p. 683). This study unveils some of the complex, contradictory and often subtle ways gender plays out, formally and informally, within the universities. This thesis argues that insights from FI help develop the understanding of gendered academic institutions in the following ways.

First, a feminist institutionalist approach establishes gender as a crucial dimension of formal and informal institutions. This thesis provides powerful evidence that there are significant gendered dynamics at work within academic institutions in Nigeria that mainstream approaches have not recognised. In line with existing work on feminist institutionalism, the thesis argues that it is imperative to critically consider the formal dimension of institutions to understand the limits to institutional gender change. Evidence from the case study draws attention to the implicit ways gender equity policies reproduce or sustain institutional gender

inequality. It reveals specific gendered mechanisms such as silence, absence, exclusion and male domination. Evidence suggests that more is required before adopting formal gender policy, especially during the agenda-setting stage. This is because, within formal institutions, gender norms and practices continue to survive in a formal guise. This thesis, therefore, argues that, to understand why gender policies have failed to gain real traction, we must first examine policy contents and identify areas of silence/absence, women's exclusion (that act as mechanisms of resistance for women) and how male dominance is perpetuated in policy content.

Relating to the informal dimension of institutions, the case studies draw attention to the dynamic processes through which informal norms and practices play out (Annesley, 2015; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015, 2016, 2017). This thesis shows how stakeholders resist institutional gender change by unpacking the dominant gender ideologies at play within the universities. It shows how gender ideologies intersect with the notions of culture. For FI, a key element in the construction of gender is the devaluation of women and "naturalising" their subordinate position relative to men (O'Connor, 2020, p. 147). Discourses on informal norms and practices subverting institutional gender change within the universities, such as the nestedness of informal selection associated with the use of connections, patronage and gendered networks, and logics of appropriateness, are founded on an androcentric view. Targeted biases resulting in difficult promotion experiences for women is also rooted in socio-cultural patriarchal mores. Many women in this study attributed their difficult promotion experiences as gendered. The stereotypical attitudes towards women reflected rather 'patriarchal ideas' and were particularly exhibited by men (O'Connor, 2020, p. 148).

Second, a feminist institutionalist approach provides critical insights into the gendered dynamics of resistance, change and continuity. Lombardo and Mergaert (2013) and Mergaert and Lombardo (2014) argued that the concept of resistance to institutional change is useful in explaining policy implementation failures. Findings from this thesis show that the concept of institutional resistance is also valuable for explaining policy gaps resulting from a gendered policy formulation process. According to Clavero and Galligan (2020), gender equality principles may be easily introduced into formal structures in an organisation. The authors, however, noted that it is important to translate them into stabilised practices for these formal elements to be successful; otherwise, gender equality goals can easily fade away (2020, p. 655). Evidence presented in this thesis found the gender equity policy process to be highly problematic. For example, informal selection eroded the independence of gender stakeholders to formulate gender policies and initiate action plans without fear or favour. While existing FI

work has shown that informal institutions are crucial to the reproduction of male dominance, often hindering the impact of new rules (Bjarnegård, 2013; Chappell & Waylen, 2013, p. 607; Kenny, 2013a; Mackay, 2014; Waylen, 2017), this thesis showcased how stakeholders enact informal norms and practices. The findings showed that, like formal institutions, informal institutions set the rules of the game but how those rules are enacted, interpreted and implemented is dependent on stakeholders within the universities such as academic heads and university management, especially the Vice-Chancellor.

Wroblewski (2017) argued that managerial leaders are critical actors and potentially vital in driving institutional change, whether internally or externally. However, O'Connor (2020, p. 151) argued that "for leadership to be effective in terms of gender equality, it must be gender competent, i.e. it must demonstrate an understanding of gender as a social construct, be reflexive and agentic." Underlying structures and processes are likely to remain unchallenged without a gender-competent leader (Peterson & Jordansson, 2017; Van Den Brink & Benschop, 2012). Evidence from this study shows that while the VC has the overriding power for institutionalising gender equity within the selected universities, gender equity remained a non-issue to many (especially male academic heads). Apart from informal institutional practices eroding gender policy intent within the universities, it is important to acknowledge that the role played by the VC (as a core stakeholder) in the gender policy process (policy formulation and implementation stage) also matters. Lack of gender competence, as evidenced by informal selection through gendered networks and connections, and a lack of interest in gender issues on the part of the VC, limits institutional gender change. Also, the daily practice of gender norms, especially by male actors, overrides formal gender policy and helps institutionalise informal rules and practices. The institutional context in which stakeholders or actors operate facilitate or constrain gender change. This study shows that stakeholders or actors work within an institutionalised logic of appropriateness to affirm or reinforce norms or gendered values, thus hindering change (Ahrens, 2016; Erikson, 2019). The focus on the role of gender stakeholders expands the understanding of how the dynamics of institutional gender change play out.

Drawing on insights from feminist institutionalism, the thesis argues that patriarchal ideologies also constrain institutional change. Evidence from the Nigerian case points to the complexity of institutional gender change, highlighting the power of patriarchal ideologies over the institutionalisation of gender equity in the universities. Findings show that informal norms and gender practices are particularly sticky institutional legacies to contend with and that gender is a primary means through which institutional change is resisted. While

institutional legacies profoundly shape the operation of academic institutions, they do so in unpredictable ways (Ljungholm, 2017; Schickler, 2001; Thomson, 2019). The informal institutions (rules-in-use) shaped by patriarchal ideologies were found to be more powerful than the formal institutions (rules-in-form or gender equity policy) and have, thus, resulted in a large gap between intended policy outcomes and actual outcomes (Leach & Lowndes, 2007). The unveiling of specific informal norms and practices that subvert the institutionalisation of the gender equity policy adds to the scholarly field that informs institutional designers and feminists who wish to challenge the male stronghold prevalent in Nigerian academia.

Third, power relations are noted as one of FI's key interests (Mackay et al., 2010). Feminist institutionalist approaches place power as a central analytical focus of institutional analysis (Curtin, 2019, p. 127; Kenny, 2007, 2009, p. 250; MacRae & Weiner, 2021). It interrogates gendered power relations and problematises the location of power within institutions (MacRae & Weiner, 2017). With gender being the core of FI, problematising and challenging the hegemonic construction of gender is important in exposing the institutional structures and processes involved in creating and sustaining gendered power hierarchies (Chappell, 2002; Hawkesworth, 2003; Kenny & Mackay, 2009). While existing work has focused on women's powerlessness and disadvantage, this thesis follows the trend amongst feminist scholars in problematising men's power, advantage and privilege (Bjarnegård, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2017; Bjarnegård & Murray, 2015, 2018; Murray, 2014). Findings from this thesis revealed the presence of gendered power relation, not only in gender policy documents (formal) but also in actual practice (informal).

Evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates how male dominance is reproduced and maintained within formal institutions (gender policies) by placing the overall power and responsibilities for the institutionalisation of gender equity in the Vice-Chancellor's office without any form of checks and balances. While the gender equity policy is formally adopted, the policies do not appear functional. Findings from the case study demonstrate that gendered and institutional legacies of the past have a powerful effect on how gender policies are formulated (Chappell, 2015; Krook & Mackay, 2011). The gender equity policies are nested (Mackay, 2006, p. 20) within an existing patriarchal system that has continued to survive. Where institutions have cultures that tend to preserve male privileges and power, initiatives to implement gender equity are likely to be hampered (Mergaert et al., 2014). Given the dominant patriarchal culture prevalent in Nigerian universities, the Vice-Chancellor's positional power could potentially alter women's advancement to academic leadership positions. The underlying picture then is one in which gender inequality is masked by the

appearance of a formal rule on the surface. Male dominance featuring in the formal policy document shows how gendered power relations play out and are institutionally maintained and replicated within formal institutions.

Using the path-dependency perspective, this study shows the informal dimension of power that continues to undermine efforts at institutional gender change. As Rutherford (2011, p. 28) argued, one of the most observed hurdles for women's progression is the patriarchal/masculine culture, which constitutes the male gender role based on power, assertiveness and dominance. These views are characteristic of Nigerian society, where gendered and institutional legacies have a powerful effect on the present. Path-dependent perspectives on gender and institutions have shown that *new* rules are often confronted by gendered legacies of the past (Kenny, 2013a). This study draws attention to the gendered foundations that underpin institutional norms and practices, including, for example, patriarchy, which is problematised in other contexts (Abrahamyan et al., 2018; Nwagbara, 2020; Solati, 2017). Findings reveal that patriarchal legacies perpetuate informal norms and practices within the universities, thus, retaining a substantial hold on some gender stakeholders. This is because the strong patriarchal culture has been infused into the university system (Aina, 2014; Alade et al., 2015; Eboiyehi et al., 2016). In Nigeria, patriarchy gives pre-eminence to men as authority personified and decision-makers in and outside the home (Agbalajobi, 2010; Alade et al., 2015). The norms that operate within the universities are gendered, favouring a masculinist model of a leader because, in highly patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, social relations are often governed by patriarchal systems and cultural practices which favour the interests of men (Nwajiuba, 2011; Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012). These gendered assumptions have made it difficult to institutionalise gender equity, subsequently undermining women's progression to academic leadership positions. Overall, the Nigerian case demonstrates how path-dependency constrains substantive gendered change. FI also reminds us that, even when adopted, new gender reforms can be resisted by actors in various ways, such as "remembering the old" and "forgetting the new" (Mackay, 2014, p. 552). The historical trajectory of male privilege has further strengthened male dominance and advantages in these universities. Consequently, it is unlikely that formal gender equity policies are enough to alter the existing male-dominated logic of the institution in a significant way.

This thesis further demonstrates indications of a gendered path dependency in the way the gender equity policies were constructed and implemented within Nigerian universities. Although gender equity is regarded as a new (formal) imported agenda from the Western world, the development and creation of policy programmes and action plans were highly

influenced by historical patterns of patriarchy and male hegemony. For example, silence, absence, exclusion and male dominance were evident in the policy contents. Likewise, we see the nestedness of informal institutions and logic of appropriateness prevalent in the policy formulation and implementation process, thus highlighting the persistence of the old. These findings show that undoing layers of male hegemony are complex, even within formal institutions. I argue that having a gender policy is not enough to guarantee real transformation in the university, especially considering that academic institutions are not monolithic entities but historically constituted. While it is important to consider the framing of policy contents, there is also a need for institutional gender policy makers to capture historical factors such as culturally ingrained patriarchal ideologies and colonial legacies. Agbaja (2019) reminds us that colonialism contributed significantly to the reconstruction of gender relations in Africa. Much of the inequality witnessed in contemporary times is connected to the legacy of colonialism, which altered the empowered role that African women once had in traditional African societies.

Transforming the university to be gender-compliant needs more rigorous approaches beyond the rhetoric of policy (Mama, 2011). Where gender policies are imported from external sources, they need to be attuned to local conditions, given that the formal and informal institutional contexts in Nigeria are significantly different to those in Western countries. The Western notions of gender difference and equality are in sharp contrast to how women are viewed in African culture (Agbaje, 2019, p. 8). The absence of workable procedures, clear action plans, sanctions and gender competence by powerful players in the university will make gender equity policies remain ineffectual. I argue that taking historical factors and colonial legacies into consideration is critical when formulating policies and institutionalising gender equity in universities. There is a need for feminist institutionalist scholarship to consider these additional levels of path-dependency, which intersect with gender rules and norms, to create institutional resistance towards the institutionalisation of gender equity. As such, this thesis provides an expanded understanding of how and why gender equity policy intent and prospects are subverted in Nigerian universities. For example, considering historical origins and regional influences unveiled gendered layering or mergers as a limit to institutional gender change.

Fourth, FI focuses on formal and informal institutional interplay, exploring how institutions interact in dynamic and often contradictory ways. As previously stated, a significant characteristic of the Nigerian university system is the power asymmetry between males and females. However, evidence from this study revealed a shift of power happening due to

informal institutions. For example, the case of academic women navigating their promotions to academic leadership positions through an interplay of formal and informal institutions. Crucially, the findings show that, while informal networks are a major perceived influence on women's difficult promotion experiences, it is also a mechanism or strategy for women to fit in to academic leadership positions. According to feminist scholars, change is possible because institutions are full of contradictions and conflicting interests and, therefore, can create opportunities to exercise feminist agency (Clavero & Galligan, 2020; Kantola, 2006). Previous researchers (Bjarnegård, 2013; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2014; Hinojosa, 2012; Verge & De la Fuente, 2014) have emphasised that men have greater access to male-dominated networks or *power monopolies*. However, this study demonstrates how women devise measures to fit in by deploying formal and informal institutions for their progression to academic leadership. Sagabiel and White (2013) emphasised how women in academia may develop an all-women network to further career progression, even though such networks may lack the effectiveness of informal male networks. However, findings from this study show women, directly or indirectly, deploying male networks for progression to academic leadership. This finding highlights the current "shaping of leadership networks" within the universities (Burkinshaw & White, 2019, p. 171). While this may work for women with connections or related connections, this may be challenging for women without connections. Thus, this thesis contributes to the body of work on informal networks within feminist institutionalist literature. It suggests that while patriarchal and masculinist practices that exclude women in academic leadership are difficult to challenge and transform, some women can strategically navigate them to attain leadership positions.

This finding demonstrates the importance of informal institutions (rules, norms and practices) alongside the formal (Mackay & Murtagh, 2019). This thesis showed that informal networks and connections, directly or indirectly, shape the career trajectories of women in academic leadership positions. These informal networks are revealed as important features across all the universities. The women used the prevalent gendered logic of appropriateness existing in the universities to their advantage, thus creating strategic advantages that are not immediately visible (Ahrens, 2016, p. 790). This re-organisation of gendered power is only visible through a gendered lens. FI provided a gendered lens that grasps the dynamics of change in Nigerian universities. I argue that the interplay between formal and informal institutions is an example of informal institutions addressing formal institutions' shortfalls. Women have devised an informal avenue to pursue leadership progression; even if they are stymied by informal norms and practices, they are still able to pursue their leadership goals. This is a significant point in the formal and informal institutional interplay debate because it shows that women can break

through an institution's constraints. In the case of the women in this study, they were able to deploy informal institutions, directly or indirectly, through loopholes in the formal policy. An institution's formal policies can be antiquated and discriminate against women, but if actors can identify the soft spots and differences, as in this case, between the formal policies and the institution's norms, this creates opportunities for career advancement (Brunner, 2013). However, I argue that deploying an interplay of formal and informal institutions is unlikely to promote or institutionalise gender equity in Nigerian universities, as these efforts will not change the hegemonic ideologies that perpetuate male dominance. Also, it is presumed that this may not alter the numbers of women achieving significant leadership positions because not all women are able to do this.

Fifth, this thesis adds to a rich research base through its methodology by applying a Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated approach (FI-FPAF and FI-FCDA) to the context of gender equity policies and women's underrepresentation in academic leadership in Nigeria. The institutional turn has witnessed a growing consensus from feminist scholars on the need for new conceptual tools and methods to explore and understand gendered institutional dynamics (Adams & Smrek, 2018; Chappell & Mackay, 2020; MacRae & Weiner, 2021). This thesis fills the gap by pointing to new methodological directions for feminist work on gender policies and limits of institutional change in an academic context. Drawing on FI and mainstream feminist approaches, this thesis makes a case for a Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated Methodology. This is a methodological synthesis of one or two feminist approaches, used together with FI. I argue that the combined insights from these analytical approaches advance existing work on gender equity policies and institutional change.

The feminist institutionalist approach provided the required theoretical base to take the study of institutions (formal and informal) forward. FI's flexibility allowed for the use of methodological pluralism to deeply investigate the research problems. FI is "decidedly pluralistic" (Haastrup & Kenny, 2016), with scholars drawing on different tools to offer a gendered reading of the interactions and structures of institutions. In this study, the methodological plurality of FI is viewed as a real asset. For instance, Ahrens and van der Vleuten (2020) demonstrated how FI could be modified to offer insights into questions that are quite specific to the EU. The authors acknowledged that FI is "stretched by focusing on potential gendered outcomes" (2020, p. 294) without compromising the approach's internal integrity (O'Connor, 2020). While feminist institutionalist scholars working on gender and institutions have employed different methodological approaches and models to analyse formal and informal institutions (Thomson, 2018, 2019; Waylen, 2014), those tools have been used to

analyse political institutions, in Western countries. Since the understandings of masculinity and femininity differ regionally, the nature of these double binds and their implications for male and female representation also differ (Adams & Smrek, 2018, p. 13). Given this, replicating these tools in this thesis is almost impossible as it may not adequately work for academic institutions in Nigeria. Hence, the need for a Feminist Institutionalism-Integrated Methodology. In terms of methodological contributions, the thesis demonstrates that a feminist institutionalism-integrated approach (i.e., FI-FPAF and FI-FCDA) could reveal a great deal about how particular gendered meanings and dichotomies play out formally and informally within the universities. In particular, FI-FPAF reveals the implicit construction of gender and dynamics of unequal power relations embedded in policy documents. It provides insights into how formal policies are gendered, highlighting the implicit gendered assumptions, micro-strategies of resistance, hidden reflections on power and how male dominance is continually perpetuated in gender policy documents. FI-FCDA greatly enriches the informal institutional analysis by illuminating the limits to institutional gender change in different institutional contexts (universities with gender centres alone and universities having gender centres and gender policies in place). It provides an improved understanding of the workings of gender, power relations and change within an informal institutional context. As highlighted above, the FI-FPAF and FI-FCDA offer a valuable means to analytically assess the state of play of gender relations in formal and informal institutions.

This thesis points to how mainstream feminist tools and frameworks can be integrated with feminist institutionalism to achieve specific research goals. For instance, using an FI-integrated methodology, findings from the thesis highlight the ways in which formal policies are gendered and identify prevalent informal norms and practices in the universities and their role in women's progression to academic leadership. It also uncovered how institutional actors circumvent institutional gender change through the day-to-day enactment of gender relations. The thesis points to new directions for research on informal institutions, for example, drawing attention to gendered layering and raising questions as to why universities have gender centres but have no gender policy in place. By integrating feminist approaches with feminist institutionalism, this thesis improves mainstream feminist theory-building, methodology and research. In building a feminist institutionalism-integrated approach, this study takes FI research forward, leading to better gender policy and institutional analysis. Thus, the FI-integrated methodology contributes to diagnosing the problem of ineffective gender policies and women's continued underrepresentation in academic leadership positions. Furthermore, this thesis is the first in-depth study of gender equity policy within the context of Nigerian universities. It, therefore, provides new data and makes a significant contribution to the

Nigerian scholarship on gender policy and higher education. This approach's novel application allows for a more in-depth consideration of underexplored areas that could explain why gender equity policies do not achieve their intended goals for women's advancement.

8.4 Further Research

Evidence from this study demonstrated that formal policies are, indeed, gendered. The documentary data collected to analyse formal institutions in this thesis is limited. An inclusion of the universities' anti-sexual harassment policies to further explore its impact on women's progression would be an area for further research. These can reflect the many stimulating questions that are yet to be asked about women's underrepresentation which, in part, flow from this thesis and may potentially reveal broader institutional processes. Further research could also measure the extent of gender equity institutionalisation in each of the universities by gauging the actual institutional impact of the gender policy on men and women within the universities.

What we already know is that the process of gender is complex and plays out differently. A future comparative gender equity policy research can expand on this knowledge by more within-country and cross-national studies. This research is undertaken in the context of high-ranking, first-generation and second-generation public universities. Additional investigation into the third- and fourth-generation public and private universities would be an area for further research. Likewise, a cross-national study, which connects the knowledge of gender equity in Nigerian universities to those in the international arena, is an area for possible exploration. Doing so could potentially allow for a more detailed exploration and understanding of the dynamic nature and normative foundations of the study of institutions. A comparative case study of the role of informal institutions between countries would be another way to further explore limits to institutional gender change in various contexts.

In conclusion, through an interrogation of the gendered nature of academic institutions in Nigeria, this thesis has improved our understanding of why gender equity policy does not always result in its intended outcomes and why it is difficult for gender change to be instantiated in the universities. While universities set policy goals to institutionalise gender equity within all aspects of the university and promote practical steps towards realising a gender-equal institution, this study shows how and why this goal has failed. Silences, exclusions, and male dominance embedded in gender policy documents have created significant policy gaps, resulting in the low institutionalisation of gender equity. The gender equity policies, although appearing to be gender-neutral, have inadvertently contributed to a

continuation of privileging masculine characteristics of academic leadership in Nigerian universities.

This thesis outlined an FI framework for understanding the informal rules of the game, revealing a complex web of norms and practices and gender stakeholders' roles that shape the formulation and implementation of gender equity policies in the case studies. The explanatory power of FI provided insights into the implicit and explicit ways institutions are gendered. Drawing on the FI concepts of institutional resistance, gendered logic of appropriateness, limits of nestedness and gendered power relations, this study uncovered some of the rules, norms and practices through which Nigerian universities produce gendered outcomes and limit institutional gender change. This thesis also draws on the intricacies of formal and informal institutional interplay, explicitly highlighting how women deploy formal and informal institutions for their career progression. By overtly recognising the formal and informal institutions, and their interaction, this thesis contributes to feminist institutional analysis. Assessing an institution based on its formal policies alone may paint a gender-neutral picture. However, the inclusion of informal norms provides a detailed picture, such that the intricacies involved in the institution's gender power structure are unveiled.

The findings showed that formal institutional policies have been largely ineffectual because of the powerful and problematic forces of informal dimensions. As argued in Chapters 5 and 6, informal norms are not always easy to see in institutions, as they are enacted through subtle and sometimes unconscious practices (Amstutz & Nussbaumer, 2020; Chappell, 2006). Evidence demonstrated that informal elements were far more influential, and the formal policies acted only as a signalling strategy, with little practical meaning and real-life application. The informal norms that are culturally ingrained in the mindsets and practices of some male stakeholders within the universities undermine women's progression. This has implications for the way Nigerian universities, in particular, go forward. According to Brunner (2013, p. 230), positive formal policy changes for women are not enough to change how an institution treats female members because culture takes longer to change than formal policies. This means that when an institution is looking to make formal policy changes favouring women, it must also address cultural concerns. It is untenable for gender equity, as stark as it is in the Nigerian context, to continue the way it is going.

As a practical implication, this thesis unveiled the institutional gendered dynamics undermining women's advancement to academic leadership positions in Nigeria. Being aware of these factors adequately equip women with appropriate strategies and persistence in their

progression to academic leadership. Therefore, this study's outcome is useful to the Nigerian government, policy stakeholders, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and university management to bridge gender gaps and rebalance the leadership challenge in Nigerian universities. It is important to note here that the aim of this research is not to test causal relationships but to bring into focus why gender policies have failed to gain real traction, and the role of informal institutional arrangement on women's advancement in Nigerian universities. In my analysis, I establish that the prevalence of masculinised logic within the universities (Kronsell, 2016) creates path-dependence for how academic leadership and institutional gender change is understood. In the case of Nigerian universities, I have demonstrated that the hegemonic masculinities that place women as secondary actors not only create a power differential that privileges masculinised forms of leadership but also subvert the institutionalisation of gender equity and undermine women's academic progression to leadership positions. My findings show that most of the prevalent informal norms and practices subverting the institutionalisation of gender equity policies were founded on historical legacies and have become locked in and difficult to undo. It is the base on which gendered norms and informal institutions lie, which explains why it is resistant to change. As Lowndes (2020) explains, most of the efforts regarding equality policies and strategies are frustrated due to the lack of accuracy in recognising crucial micro-foundation that influence the way rules, norms and actors interact. The implementation of gender initiatives suggests the need for funding and a strong university management commitment. However, gender-competent Vice-Chancellors to tackle the universities' historically male-dominated, masculinist structure and culture are needed. Institutionalising gender equity needs to come from the top to effect cultural and structural change. Unless this can happen in Nigerian universities, the institutionalisation of gender equity will remain a mirage.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Research Office
Post–Award Support Services

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 83711
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432
ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

16-Mar-2018

MEMORANDUM TO:

Prof Jennifer Curtin
Politics & International Relations

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 020823): Approved with comment

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your study entitled **Gender Equality Policies and Women in Academic Leadership positions in Nigeria**.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

1. The committee seek an assurance that to the best of the researcher's knowledge there is no such significant professional or personal risk to participants.

2. C:4: Instead of using a direct approach to recruit participants, it might be more appropriate to contact the academic institutions first.

3. C:9: Some of the interview questions might lead to comment on employers, e.g. "From your experience, how would you describe the promotion procedure in the university? Does it follow a formal or informal process?"

4. CF, PIS: I suggest not to use an exact date, e.g. 30 December 2018, as the deadline.

The expiry date for this approval is 16-Mar-2021.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Activations team in the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nzinthe first instance.

Please quote Protocol number **020823** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Politics & International Relns Dr Kirsten Locke
Mrs Oluwakemi Igiebor

Additional information:

1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms and/or advertisements, giving the dates of approval and the reference number. This needs to be completed, before you use them or send them out to your participants.

2. At the end of three years, or if the study is completed before the expiry, you are requested to advise the Committee of its completion.

3. Should you require an extension or need to make any changes to the project, please complete the online Amendment Request form associated with this approval number giving full details along with revised documentation. If requested before the current approval expires, an extension may be granted for a further three years, after which time you must submit a new application.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Gender Policy Stakeholder

School of Social Sciences
Faculty of Arts
Human Sciences Building
Auckland, New Zealand
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142
New Zealand

Department of Politics and International Relations
Address: Human Sciences Building, 10 Symonds Street
Phone: +64 800 61 62 63

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Project Title: Gender policies and women in academic leadership positions in Nigeria
Name of Researcher: Oluwakemi Igiebor

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

- From your professional experience, what do you think are the major issues facing gender in this university?
- Are women involved in the making, shaping and implementation of the policy? In which ways are they involved?
- What is the main intent of the university gender policy? Is the policy achieving its intended goal? How?
- How does informal rules and norms play out alongside formal rules at the policy formation and implementation stage?
- Can you say there is a gender influence or bias in the way policies are formulated and implemented?
- To what extent is the institutional capacity of universities to implement gender policy? Are they provisions for funding, enforcement, and evaluation?
- Is gender equality a realistic goal?

- As a gender policy stakeholder within the university, what is your role in ensuring there is gender equality?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for women in academic leadership positions

Department of Politics and International Relations
Address: Human Sciences Building, 10 Symonds Street
Phone: +64 800 61 62 63

School of Social Sciences
Faculty of Arts
Human Sciences Building
Auckland, New Zealand
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142
New Zealand

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Project Title: Gender policies and women in academic leadership positions in Nigeria

Name of Researcher: Oluwakemi Igiebor

- Please tell me about your current role in the University.
- How many promotion rounds have you been through, and how easy or difficult have you found the process of progressing through the university ranks?
- Do you believe that women have the same opportunities to be equally represented in academic leadership positions as men? Why or why not?
- Do you feel there are issues of gender inequality in Nigerian universities today? If so, how would you characterise these? Are there any underlying causes that you think cut across the sector as a whole?
- Have you been exposed to gender inequality, especially regarding career advancement? If so, how have you dealt with it?
- What are your thoughts regarding women's access to power and leadership? What do you think needs to be changed to address gender inequality in academic leadership?
- Are you aware of the university gender policies? How would you describe the policy content, e.g. are women visible in the policy?

- Do you think the policies are women-friendly and encourage the advancement of women to academic leadership? What parts of the policy lead you to believe this? Or, if not, what elements of the policy would need changing?

- What formal rules exist regarding women's access to leadership that might enable or hinder women's advancement?

- What are the long-standing informal rules and practices prevalent within the university? Informal rules can be described as the unwritten, historical or contemporary understandings of how things are done or the existing networks that support non-formalised operating procedures.

- In what way would these informal rules impact women's career advancement in your university?

- Considering the formal and informal norms and practices, which of these appears to be most deeply rooted in your university setting? Why would you consider this to be the case? What do you think about these rules and norms that allow gender inequality to continue?

- From your experience, how would you describe the promotion procedure in the university? Does it follow a formal or informal process or some kind of mix of both?

- To what extent do you rely on formal or informal institutional arrangements in your career advancement?

- Are there ways in which both formal and informal institutions are used simultaneously? How does this happen? Do both institutions work in complementary ways or vice versa?

Appendix 4: OAU Gender Policy sectoral components and action plans

	Sectoral Component	Action Plan
1	Student enrolment and welfare	To reduce gender gaps in both undergraduate and postgraduate student enrolment
2	Staff employment and welfare	To reduce gender gaps in employment at all levels in the university
3	University administration at all levels	To encourage women to fully participate in leadership positions in the university
4	Teaching and research culture in the university	To promote gender-sensitive and research culture
5	Awareness and sensitization	To increase awareness on gender issues at all levels of the university
6	Gender-sensitive information and communication system	To facilitate a gender-sensitive information statistics and information system for all sectors of the university
7	Networking and mentoring	To foster women's mentoring and at different levels of the university
8	Monitoring and evaluation	To enhance the capacity of the university gender centre to carry out monitoring and evaluation activities related to gender policy in the university

Source: OAU Gender Policy 2009

Appendix 5: An overview of the University of Ibadan Gender Policy Plan

ACTION PLAN	GOAL	STRATEGIES
Secure Space	The University shall be a gender-friendly space designed to ensure effective protection of the integrity and dignity of staff, students, service providers and other members of the University community.	Gender education and sensitisation, gender policy publicity, counselling and monitored services, training, surveillance services
Engendering the Curricula	Ensuring that academic departments apply a gender lens to existing and new University curricula and programmes	Workshops, monitoring and evaluation of curricula, providing conducive teaching and learning environment
Student Enrolment and Performance	The University of Ibadan shall support actions geared towards equity in the enrolment and performance of students	Equipping the Academic Planning Office to provide gender-disaggregated data, provision of teaching and learning environment, adopting gender-friending teaching techniques, implementing affirmative actions in enrolment, support services, mentoring programmes, review of student handbook to incorporate gender dimension and monitoring of awards, grants and scholarships for gender equity.
Service	Bringing about changes in cultural attitudes on gender issues	Gender sensitisation, collaboration with schools, other tertiary institutions and community.
Staff Recruitment, Training and Advancement	The University shall encourage equitable staff recruitment and capacity building schemes through gender-sensitive policies, infrastructural development, endowments, and the provision of resources to support relevant activities	Including gender equity as one of the criteria for staff recruitment, without compromising competence; Affirmative Action in the recruitment and capacity development of staff where wide gaps exist; Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the provision of child-care facilities on its campus; reward-system for deserving staffs.
Equity in Representation	The University shall adopt measures to address existing gender imbalances by fostering female and male participation in decision	Gender sensitivity in appointment to management positions without prejudice to merit; provision of incentives and special opportunities to

	making.	facilitate equal participation of competent females and males in all aspects of University activities.
Institutional Culture	Bearing in mind that discriminatory behaviour violates human and academic freedom, the University shall inculcate in its members a keen sense of the dignity and integrity of each person, male or female. To this end, the University shall strive to eliminate gender-based inequalities and stereotypes.	Gender policy publicity; gender-sensitive code of conduct; gender awareness programme.
Networking	The University shall encourage advocacy of gender equity and the University shall support gender-friendly networks and partnerships.	Participation in gender advancement programmes; information dissemination on gender oriented programmes.
Research and Innovations	The University shall support gender-responsive intellectual productivity that contributes to the enhancement of the lives of females and males.	Incorporation of gender perspectives in research and innovations; enhance staff IT capacity skills.
Engendering Resource Mobilisation and Budgeting	Bearing in mind that certain projects may favour one gender more than the other, the University shall adopt a gender lens in project budgeting, design and implementation.	Training; Determine a percentage of University resources to be devoted to gender enhancement.
Student Welfare	The University shall provide a conducive atmosphere for the realisation of academic excellence.	Engendering of Student leadership and programmes; Ensure that there is no discrimination against anyone with respect to student accommodation on the basis of marital status and pregnancy; functional childcare facilities; Conduct periodic quality assessment and evaluation of accredited private hostel facilities; access to medical facilities; safety measures.
Staff Welfare	The University shall endeavour to prioritise staff welfare.	Ensuring that activities of the relevant social clubs on campus encourage family participation and gender responsiveness; Ensuring

		humane and effective processes for facilitating the payment of terminal and contractual benefits of disengaged or widowed staff.

Appendix 6: OAU Situational Analysis Report (2002)

The OAU Gender policy referred to the Situational Analysis Report (2002) which showed the existence of gender gaps in enrolment, employment, and attitudinal behavioral issues. According to the policy, "consultations with ten different categories of staffs showed that there was a lack of understanding of the concept of gender" (OAU University Policy 2009:4). According to the document, female participation in decision-making is minimal:

> "Of the 19 statutory committees, male representation is approximately ten times that of females on the six committees and five times on five committees. The gender gap is widest in the Senate where the ratio is 19 males to 1 female" (OAU University Policy 2009:4).

Similar disparities were recorded at the departmental levels; most Heads of Department were male (out of the 68 heads of academic department, 12 (15%) were female, a majority of whom are acting heads) (OAU University Policy 2009: 10). The policy makes it clear that the "existing low level of gender awareness, and the overt gender disparities in students enrolment and staff employment, coupled with the paternalistic values (which may sometimes be detrimental to the functioning of a university system) need rectification", thus, justifying the need for the policy (OAU Gender Policy, 2009: 5)

Appendix 7: UI Situational Analysis Report (2010)

As shown by the situational analysis report of the Academic Planning Unit (2010), the document stated that gender disparities existed in student enrolment, especially in science-based disciplines, and among staff (UI Gender Policy, 2012:6). Paragraph 2 of the background information of the policy document recognises the existence of patriarchal culture and lack of gender-sensitive policies and institutional mechanisms for gender equality since the establishment of the university in 1948:

> "……the University College was located in a highly patriarchal society which, like that of colonial Britain, reflected social and cultural biases about gender roles. Even in contemporary times, although universities tend to be regarded and spoken of in gender-neutral terms, their operations are often at best gender blind and at worst, gender insensitive. This is exhibited in the lopsided composition of their decision-making bodies, systemic inequities and importation of gender-biased attitudes and language into academic spaces that are supposed to be liberalizing and empowering to all members of these communities" (UI Gender Policy, 2012:6).

Appendix 8: Women-Specific Initiatives in the OAU Gender Policy

Sectoral Component	Specific Objectives	Implementation Strategies
Staff Employment and Welfare	Reduce gender gap in employment at all levels	Ensure a 70:30 ratio (male and female) in the employment of academic staff Actively seek qualified women applicants for senior positions Encourage the employment of the spouses of members of staff Build capacity of female staff through sponsored conferences, training and workshops.
	Encourage a gender-friendly working environment for all staff	Implement schemes to provide female academic staff with short-term releases to write and publish research results. Provide crèche and day care facilities for staff.
	Increase gender awareness among all staff especially those in leadership positions.	Review policies and practices related to employment, i.e. integrating work/family life using gender perspectives.
University Administration at all levels	Encourage women to participate fully in decision-making in the university	Achieve at least a 70:30 ratio (male and female) in the appointment of headship positions in the departments, units and centres. Encourage better women participation in elective positions with special incentives to faculties and units Ensure at least 70:30 ratio (male and female) of the membership of all university committees; and gender/diversity officers for all major administrative units; and the use of gender sensitive language in all university documentation and communication Build the gender sensitivity of men and women currently occupying leadership positions in the university. Establish a gender network- made up of focal points across faculties/divisions in the university Establish a gender equity and

		implementation committee Incorporate reference to gender equity policy in university objectives.
Networking and Mentoring	Foster women's mentoring and networking at different levels in the university Strengthen the existing counselling and support for victims of gender problems	Organisation of formal mentorship programmes for staff at different levels, faculties and departments Create a unit within the centre for gender and social policy studies to provide therapeutic counselling for victims of gender-specific problems The centre should network with units already in existence on counselling.

Source: OAU Gender Policy, 2009

Appendix 9: Description of research activities in Nigeria

Following my preliminary research aim, I travelled to Nigeria to conduct interviews and gather documentary data. My fieldwork was mainly carried out in Nigeria (21th of May to 10th of October). It consisted of interviews with academic women occupying academic leadership positions and key gender stakeholders. On arrival in Nigeria, I contacted some potential respondents whose contacts appear on the university staff profile webpage of the selected universities via email. Though the response rate was low, some of the women requested a formal meeting before the interview. This gave me an opportunity to formally introduce myself to them and explain what my research was all about. The participant information sheet, consent forms and the interview guide were given to the respondent to study before the interview date.

The initial selected universities or research sites for the fieldwork were University of Ibadan (UI), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), University of Nigeria (UNN) and University of Ilorin (UNILORIN). However, I discovered that two of the selected universities: UNN and UNILORIN, do not have a functional gender centre or gender policy. As such, these universities were replaced with another high-ranking university — Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) — that had established Gender Centre's and gender policy. During the fieldwork, I discovered that the UNIPORT's Gender Center has been merged with the Center for Ethnic and Conflict Studies and renamed Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies. In the course of my investigation, I discovered there was a high priority for conflict issues than gender issues. However, I was able to gather valuable information useful for my research.

In UNN, I discovered that the university does not have a gender centre or a gender policy document. The university only has a gender research group. As such, the information I got from the few interviews conducted were limited (focused more on the personal experiences of women). The women could not answer some aspect of the interview question on gender policy. Moreso, I couldn't conduct interviews with key gender stakeholders because of the absence of a gender centre/unit. UNILORIN was also in a similar situation with UNN. Consequently, I travelled to another top-ranking university, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, to conduct another interview, after realising I could do little with the information gathered in UNN. OAU was a perfect choice because the university has a functional gender policy document and a gender centre.

Despite the assurance of their confidentiality and anonymity, access to internal documents in some of the universities was limited. Certain information was deemed highly sensitive or could jeopardise the university's credibility towards gender equality and was thus withheld by the key gender stakeholders. I, however, utilised access to the universities library to gather publications, newsletters, staff handbooks, reports and policy documents useful for this research. During the interviews with key policy stakeholders, some were cautious of their statements and description of informal practices within the universities by defensively responding to these questions to fend off presumed accusations of gender discrimination in the university. Nevertheless, by raising awareness of the predominant concepts left unnoticed, I gathered valid information and asked them to elaborate or re-describe the central aspect of their response in different words.

At the various research sites, some of the women I had initially contacted cooperated and introduced me to other academic women from their professional and social networks. Others provided contact information of possible respondents. These, coupled with the physical proximity, played an important role in conducting this research. However, it was difficult to get participants who were willing to be interviewed due to their busy schedules. Some of the interviews were rescheduled due to impromptu meetings, national/state public holidays and missed appointments. Few women with differing opinions about gender equality in Nigeria declined to be interviewed because, according to them, they do not believe in gender equality based on cultural or religious reasons.

Nonetheless, overall, most of the interviewees were cooperative. Interviews in FUTA could not be completed because of the National Labor Congress (NLC) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike actions which occurred simultaneously. Due to my restricted timeframe, I had to travel back to Auckland. My goal was to have 20 women and eight key gender stakeholders for in-depth interviews; I interviewed 17 women and seven gender stakeholders.

Appendix 10: An Overview of Gender Centres in the Selected Universities

Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies (CGSPS), OAU

The Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies originally started as a 'women studies' Programme in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in 1986. It was then renamed 'Women Studies and National Capacity Building Programme for Child Survival and Development'. In 1996, the programme was upgraded as an autonomous research unit within the university and named 'Centre for Gender and Social Policy Studies' (CGSPS), thus, making it the first university-established GC in Nigeria. The upgrade of the centre positioned it to adequately address new realities confronting not only women and children but also men folks, and the society at large. Since its establishment, the Centre has vigorously pursued its core mandate of teaching, research, training, consultancy and community service on gender and development. In addition to its original role/functions, the centre has been responsible for developing a gender action plan/policy and ensuring the university is gender compliant.

Major activities of the centre since its inception includes building skills and capacity of staff and students in gender analysis and gender activism through workshops; leadership training – mobilization skills for grassroots impact; facilitating a 'gender web forum', with an online community and a crucial avenue for continuous dialogue, sensitisation, and dissemination of gender issues within and outside the country; publication of a biannually 'gender equity bulletin', for the dissemination of gender equity news and activities; female scholarship endowment funds aimed at ensuring the sustainability of scholarships for female since the Carnegie corporation grants ended; and gender policy formulation aimed at keeping gender-equity matters at the front burner. The centre also developed an anti-sexual harassment policy, drafted policy on HIV/AIDS, and established a gender-friendly employment policy. In addition, the centre conducts gender related academic programmes and training, and maintain teaching programme through formalised cooperation with academic staffs employed in other departments. The teaching programme is characterised by multi/interdisciplinarity, which is also the general profile of the centre. For instance, the centre runs an Online Certificate Programme in Gender and Development, PGD, MSc and PhD in Gender and Development. The centre also runs the 'Bespoke Residential Certificate Courses', a four-week programme of learning and building expertise in gender and development issues.

The centre has attracted significant fundings for research projects from international organisations, especially international NGO's such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation. Other partners include development agencies, government

parastatals and foreign universities such as the University of Dalhousie, Saint Mount Vincent University and Simmons School of Management Boston. The university has also benefitted from the benevolence of the wives of former state governors and women philanthropists in Nigeria. Notable among them is the donation of a building worth N60, 000,000 by Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi in 2014. This building houses the CGSPS to date.

Gender Mainstreaming Office (GMO), University of Ibadan

The gender mainstreaming office is a result of extensive research, and programme programmes, funded between 2007 and 2011 by the John D and Katherine T MacArthur Foundation. in September 2006, the University of Ibadan was selected as the trialing center for the Association of African Universities (AAU) training modules on Gender Mainstreaming Project in African Higher Education. This signalled the onset of gender centre establishment in the university. Consequently, the Gender Mainstreaming Office (GMO) was established in 2011 through the down-streaming workshops held by the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) for the university community and surrounding tertiary institutions. The University management sought to sustain the programme due to its success by establishing the GMO. The core of the GMO has been to promote a gender-sensitive institutional culture and widen the scope of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria.

Since its establishment, the centre has undertaken the following activities: engaged in a series of consensus-building workshops for the university's gender policy and sexual harassment policy; peer education and gender sensitisation workshops are held regularly; training through conferences, workshops; research, advocacy and consultancy (gender mainstreaming for organisations and institutions); drafting of the university's gender policy and anti-sexual harassment policy, and investigations of sexual harassment reports. The GMO does not offer academic programmes like the other gender centres; rather, the university's 'Institute of African Studies' runs the gender studies academic programmes at postgraduate levels (MPhil, MPhil/PhD, and PhD).

Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGS), UNIPORT

The Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies (CCGC) at the University of Port Harcourt initially kicked off as the 'Patience Jonathan Centre for Gender and Women Development Studies' (PJC-GWDS) in 2011. The centre was founded by the then First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan, to fast-track the gender equity movement through the National Affirmative Action Initiative, intending to promote gender equity and develop the full potentials of men and women within the university community. The centre's

initial goal was to promote cooperation with national and international organisations in the areas of teaching, training and projects on three critical development fields, namely health, human capital, and material resources. As such, the Centre's core activities were distilled into four basic units of academics, planning and research, information/outreach, and female health and empowerment (UNIPORT Featured News, 2017). Nevertheless, the 'Patience Jonathan Center for Gender and Women Development Studies' (PJC-GWDS) was merged with the 'Center for Ethnic and Conflict Studies' (CENTECS) in 2015 and renamed the 'Center for Conflict and Gender Studies' (CCGS). The justification for the merger has been that both fields straddle gender in significant ways, serving both the academic and practical interests of a well-acknowledged synergetic relationship between gender and peace and conflict studies (www.uniport.edu.ng). As such, the original mandate of CENTECS AND PJC-GWDS, bordering on teaching, research and community service, was pursued as a single centre since the official merger by the university authority. The Director heads the centre and is supported by four other academic staff that teach courses administered by the gender centre.

The centre offers two major academic programmes at PGD and Master's level. The centre runs as a department offering academic programmes: masters and postgraduate diplomas in peace and conflict studies, gender studies and other professional courses relating to peace and conflict studies. Other activities the centre engages in include: partnering with several organisations in the areas of research, capacity building and knowledge-driven advocacy, e.g. partnership initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND); research with a core focus on the center's focal areas — peace and conflict, and gender, especially in the Niger-delta region of the country; capacity building in peace practice and conflict mainstreaming; scholarly publication of monograph series and journal on emerging issues in the Niger-delta (African conflicts profile).

Centre for Gender Issues in Science and Technology (CEGIST), FUTA

The 'Centre for Gender Issues in Science and Technology' was established in 2009 in response to the National Universities Commission (NUC) directive to set up Entrepreneurship Study Centres in all Nigerian universities. The Centre started as an 'Entrepreneurship and Gender Centre' focusing on providing entrepreneurial drive, taking gender sensitivity into cognisance to fuel economic growth, as well as producing graduates well-groomed for self-sustenance and national development. The centre was later renamed the 'Centre for Gender Issues in Science and Technology with its core focus on gender issues and a re-structured mandate to promote gender equity in science and technology, and entrepreneurship

empowerment towards reducing poverty in the context of gender mainstreaming. The centre's staff constitute the director, associate director, liaison officer and other administrative staff.

Key programmes and activities of the centre since its establishment includes the following: conducting research in partnership with foreign-based African academics and Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship (ADF); collaboration with the Nigerian Women in Agricultural Research Development (NIWARD) to achieve the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) aimed at empowering rural female farmers in Nigeria; empowerment programmes and training workshops such as mentoring workshops for female post-graduate students; enlightenment, advocacy and social mobilisation programmes such as the annual seminar on attitudinal changes for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and the 16 days of activism to commemorate the international day for the elimination of gender violence; capacity building workshops and seminars; consulting and counselling services and; leadership, communication and related social competence skills' development.

Appendix 11: Analytical Framework employed in each of the empirical chapters

Chapter 4	• Aim: To address RQ 1- How do we better understand the continued under-representation of women in academic leadership positions in Nigerian Universities, despite the adoption of formal gender equity policies? • Focus: Why GE have failed to gain real traction • Method: Qualitative (Documentary analysis of OAU and UI gender policies) • Analysis: Policy analysis untilising an integrated FI-FPAF approach
Chapter 5	• Aim: To address RQ 2- To what extent do informal institutions (norms and practices within universities), subvert the intent of formalised policies and rules, thereby, potentially undermining women's advancement to academic leadership positions? • Focus: Gender stakeholders perspectives of informal norms and practices subverting formalised policies • Method: Qualitative (Interviews with gender stakeholders in universities with gender policies and gender centres i.e OAU and UI) • Analysis: Integrated Feminist institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA)
Chapter 6	• Aim: To address RQ 2- To what extent do informal institutions (norms and practices within universities), subvert the intent of formalised policies and rules, thereby, potentially undermining women's advancement to academic leadership positions? • Focus: Gender policy 'absences' and mergers- perspectives from universities with gender centre but no gender policy i.e UNIPORT and FUTA • Method: Qualitative (Interviews with gender stakeholders) • Analysis: Integrated Feminist institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA)
Chapter 7	• Aim: To address RQ 2- To what extent do informal institutions (norms and practices within universities), subvert the intent of formalised policies and rules, thereby, potentially undermining women's advancement to academic leadership positions? • Focus: The interplay of formal and informal institutions: perspectives of women on progression to academic leadership. • Method: Qualitative (Interviews with women in academic leadership positions all the selected universities). • Analysis: Integrated Feminist institutionalism and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FI-FCDA)

Appendix 12: Description of participants

University	Pseudonyms	Academic Cadre	Academic Leadership Role
OAU	Prof. A	Professor	Former HOD, Dean and Director
	Prof. B	Professor	Former Head of Department
	Prof. C	Professor	Former Head of Department
	Dr D	Associate Professor	Head of Department
	Dr E	Associate Professor	Head of Department
UI	Prof. F	Professor	Former Dean
	Prof. G	Professor	Associate Dean
	Dr H	Associate Professor	Head of Department
	Dr I	Associate Professor	Head of Department
	Dr J	Associate Professor	Former Head of Department
UNIPORT	Prof. L	Professor	Former Acting Director and HOD
	Dr M	Associate Professor	Former Head of Department
	Dr N	Associate Professor	Head of Department
	Dr O	Associate Professor	Acting Head of Department
FUTA	Prof. P	Professor	Former Provost
	Prof. Q	Professor	Former Head of Department
	Dr R	Associate Professor	Head of Department