



SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Our societies are changing such that the gender roles rapidly change. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. The article examines the influence of social change on traditional gender roles. Two hundred and twenty seven respondents consisted of 135 Females (59.5%) and 92 Males (40.5%) participated in the survey. The study adopted descriptive method of research design. The age of respondents ranged between 15 to 56years with the mean age of 36years. Two hypotheses were tested and the results revealed that there is statistically significant difference between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles in selected local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study further reveals that there is statistically significant difference between social change and female gender supports in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria. This research work attested to the fact that the shifts from male breadwinner and female career model to double-income and single-parent or female headed households have transformed the established ways of distributing work between men and women. In policy terms at least, women are no longer seen as being solely responsible for family work and care. House chores that were regarded as solely the females' work are now being shared by women and men. Contemporarily, though Male gender is still regarded as the head of the family and is still ahead of female gender in the provisions of family needs, female gender share in all household expenses, such as house-rent, decision making, payment of children school fees. To promote gender equality in this post millennium development goals (MDGs) era, there is need for more women empowerment programmes and projects, enlightenment campaign on more female involvement in decision making and inclusion of women interest in development policies in Nigeria.

Key words: *Social Change, Traditional Gender roles, Contemporary gender roles, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Feminist theory generally defines gender as a social construct that includes ideologies governing feminine/masculine (female/male) appearances, actions, and behaviors. For instance, gender roles would be that males were supposed to be the educated breadwinners of the family, and occupiers of the public sphere whereas, the female's duty was to be a homemaker, take care of her husband and children, and occupy the private sphere. However, our societies are changing such that the gender roles rapidly change as well. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. Therefore, according to contemporary gender role ideology, gender roles have been and still are constantly changing all over the world. Gender role theory posits that boys and girls learn the appropriate behaviour and attitudes of the family and overall culture they grows up with, and non- physical gender differences as a product of socialization (Gilbert and Radar, 2008). The theory also proposes that the division of labour drives the sex- differentiated behaviour between two sexes within a society. Thus, the division of labour creates gender roles, which in turn, lead to gendered social behaviour (Gilbert and Radar, 2008). Gender role theory is grounded on the supposition that individuals socially identified as males and females tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave. As a consequence, the theory predicts that males and females will develop different skills and attitudes and that they will behave differently. The physical specialization of the sexes is considered the distal cause of gender roles. Men's unique physical advantages in terms of body size and upper body strength provided them an edge over women in those social activities that demanded such physical attributes such as hunting, herding, and warfare. On the other hand, women's biological capacity for



reproduction and child-bearing is adduced to explain their limited involvement in other social activities (Wood and Eagly 2002).

Gender role theory “treats these differing distributions of women and men into roles as the primary origin of sex-differentiated social behavior, their impact on behavior is mediated by psychological and social processes” According to Gilbert, gender roles arose from correspondent inference, meaning that general labor division was extended to gender roles. Socially constructed gender roles are considered to be hierarchical and characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy by social constructionists. Gender serves as a critical factor in structuring the types of opportunities and life chances with which individuals and groups are faced, and strongly influence the roles they play within the social institutions (Egbue, 2010; Ortner, 1974; Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). Although, the roles of men and women vary from culture to culture, Fenstermaker (2002), Wood and Eagly (2002), observed that men’s roles were generally valued and rewarded than women’s roles. Traditionally, men had been socialized to see their primary family function as that of provider and breadwinner, who is expected to take care of the household expenses, while a woman as a homemaker should be responsible for home routine activities such as childbearing and rearing, home keeping, seeing to the affairs of husband, providing emotional support for household members and taking charge of other household management. Accordingly, girls were married off early in life to begin life as homemakers and women that were fortunate to work in formal organizations were considered temporary employees, expected to stop working after the marriage or childbirth Talcott Parsons called these traditional gender roles as instrumental and expressive roles of men and women.

During much of our adult life, our activities are sex-segregated. Typically, men and women play different roles in the home, in the work place and as a consumer (Benokaitris, 2002). Shafeer (2004) argues that traditional gender roles are constructed as facts that exist because they are taken for granted, implying that neither men nor women have a choice but to conform to this naturalized code of conduct. Couples tend to keep to traditional gender roles because according to Benokraitis (2002), traditional gender roles promote stability, continuity, and predictability. More so, each person knows what is expected of him or her, and rights and responsibilities are clear. For instance, among the Yoruba ethnic group, in keeping to socially constructed gender roles, Fafunwa (1987) was more specific that women are to be submissive, care for the children, keep the house clean, and support the husband. Thus, traditional gender roles dictate how people should dress, speak, act, and be responsible for roles. Boys and men are supposed to wear short hair, no earrings, very little jewellery, and shirts, pants, or shorts. Women on the other hands and girls are supposed to wear earrings, long hair, blouses, skirts, hair bows, and smell like flowers and spices (Cahill, 2010)

Having stated the above, it should be mentioned that many explanations have been adduced for the differentials in access of both men and women to both natural and material resources in the society. One of these explanations is the gender of individual. According to Richardson (1981), gender is socially and culturally constructed to mean the attitudinal and behavioural characteristics deemed by a society to be appropriate to its male and female members and measured in terms of masculinity and femininity. The differences between those socially and culturally ascribed attitudes and behaviours to maleness and those ascribed to femaleness constitute what is generally referred to as gender differentials. Gender is a function of socialization pattern. Gender roles acquired through the socialization process have strong influence on the perception of men and women about themselves, others, and the world around them. It also has strong influence on the care and support given and received by the two sexes.



What is glaring in any society especially on the issue of sex (gender roles), and gender experience is that males and females play different roles, receive different rewards and experience different vicissitudes of life. These various experiences is summed up and termed 'life course experiences'. These differences in the life course experience or the process of growing to maturity affects or influences the care and support received by individuals up till their later life. These differences are found noticeable in the areas of education, culture, religion, participation in labour market, etc.

Grieco (1998) described the situation in the foregoing as a development management perspective on 'gender and ageing'. According to her, a development management perspective draws our attention to (a) the differences in financial resources and (b) differences in social organization, which make the situation of women even more precarious in the developing world, particularly in Africa than in the (developed) high-income countries of the world. In their efforts to unravel some of the factors that have continued to perpetuate the phenomenon of gender differentials in the care and support receives by individuals in the society, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has drawn attention to the financial insecurities experienced by older women in America and indicated how this vulnerability is produced out of social structures, which systematically give preference to males in earning and employment opportunities over the course of a life time. It has also noted how women, who frequently outlive their husbands, experience a distinct, drop in standard of living on the death of their spouse because much of their societal access to resources has been channeled through that spouse. This situation, experienced in the world's wealthiest societies, is also exacerbated in African society in general, and in Nigeria in particular. That is a situation where widowhood practices frequently absorb the bulk of a wife/wives' resources, property practices remove the roof over her head and entitlement to land on her husband's death and where lifetime earning and saving potentials have been weak in any case given the structure of society (Grieco, 1998).

This division of labour between the sexes has been held responsible for men and women assuming unequal positions in terms of power, prestige and wealth. It should be noted that women's relatively lower status and the tendency for them to have less material resources than men, have constituted the basis for studies and discussions since the 19th century. Today, this situation is a little bit changing with several factors responsible for this change. The change in gender roles from traditional social construction is made possible with the emergence of technological advancement, which gives room for globalization. With globalization, women are no longer customers of kitchen alone but customers of businesses (McInnes, 2006). Men are no longer taking the full responsibilities of providing for the family, but are also assisted by women. With globalization, women empowerment is at a high level of recognition, and women are now being found in different top offices and professional realms. The advancement in information technology has resulted in the opening and the exposure of the people of the world in different and alternative views and consequently influences almost all aspects of human life (Graham, 2008) including traditional gender roles.

Despite various merits of globalization such as giving women liberty to be independent politically, economically and even moved across the globe, many critics fear that globalization in the sense of integration of a country into world society will aggravate gender inequality. It may also harm women economically, politically and culturally (Paulo, 2008). Economically, through discrimination in favour of male workers, marginalization of women in unpaid or informal labour, exploitation of women in low-wage sweatshop settings, and/ or impoverishment through loss of traditional sources of income; politically through exclusion from the domestic process and loss of control to global pressures. Also, culturally, through loss of identity and autonomy to a hegemonic global culture (Conversi, 2010). The process of globalization is not restricted to the economic sphere only. The advancement in information technology has resulted in the opening and exposure of the people of the world



to more than ever before, different and alternative views and consequently influences almost all aspects of human life (Graham, 2008).

Apart from the process of globalization, women now have more opportunities in their careers, especially with women accessing opportunities that are more educational. Women are increasingly taking on the roles of employed workers and professionals, although, these may conflict with parenting. Women have greatly increased their power in decision-making. The mutually exclusive division of roles as either male (Instrumental) or female (expressive) is breaking down. Men are expanding their family roles beyond breadwinners. Young people, travelling to western countries, and then coming back to their country begin to be more flexible and more elastic about performance of traditional gender roles (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). International exposure allows young people to bring new waves, new feelings, and new experiences, so it is natural, that little change towards the equality between man and woman is happening (Abidogan, 2007).

Economic recessions in developing countries of the world have forced many women to enter the labour force in order to increase the level of income (Elson, 1999). Fatoye, (2010) stated that in no small measure has the economic meltdown affected gender roles in Africa as a whole. That the-changing pattern of gender roles has been fueled by the emerging economic meltdown especially in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria. Traditionally, socioeconomic model of Nigeria has been based on two differentiated gender roles, by which men have been usually regarded as the main household breadwinners and women, as those whose careers would end in the kitchen. Despite the fact that men are still very much respected and accepted as the household head and breadwinners, husbands alone no longer solely, provide household economy.

The economic meltdown has increased the unemployment rate of men, and has left no choice than to empower women in household economy of care. During the economic recession that began in 2008, many jobs disappeared from industries traditionally dominated by male workers, such as manufacturing, health care and other service industries. Economic meltdown or crisis has made a very large number of men to lose their jobs, and on the other hand, has elevated women consciously and unconsciously. Consciously because many wives see the economic meltdown as a room for economic independence on their side while unconscious in the sense that women found themselves in the labour market and workforce to search for the money to support the family. Thus, economic equality requires changing the workplace structure to accommodate difference, like the fact that women have babies and men do not (Reddit, 2010).

In a review of studies carried out in 2003 by Martha (2010) that involved people from 44 countries, the result shows that economic meltdown makes women happier than men because it provided more jobs for women and make them focus on personal problems while men focus on financial success and world issues or matters outside the home (Martha, 2010). However, Zenevich (2009) argues that women in the workforce have achieved a lot over the past century but still a long way from equality between genders. Men still occupy the vast majority of leadership positions in both private and public sectors, and they are paid more. However, with few women in the workforce, things have also changed at home. Men are now taking more responsibilities like cooking, cleaning and taking care of children when the women are delayed at work, caught up in a traffic hold-up or as a result of body ache due to stress at work. Yet, women still do more of house chore than men fair share (Yemen 2009).

Now in contemporary societies, social change as illustrated is likely to affect traditional gender roles among couples at household level. Household level, as a unit of reproduction, production, consumption, and socialization is the positive point of intervention of change in gender roles (Udegbe, 2012). How social change affected the traditional gender roles in Nigeria is still unknown. This paper intends to bridge such gap. The importance of this paper is premised on the fact that Nigeria is a patriarchal society where traditional roles are



characterized by a strong culture of patriarchy. Patriarchy is defined as rule of men where men control the available resources and women are dependent on them (Oyekanmi, 2008). According to Walby (2000), the concept of patriarchy is indispensable for an analysis of gender inequality based on the beliefs that men and women are the opposite sex. The concept of patriarchy therefore must remain central to feminist understandings of society. From the foregoing therefore, the objective study is to find out if there is any change in traditional gender roles among couples in a household with a view of identifying contemporary gender roles. The purpose of this study was to investigate how change has affected traditional gender roles in the contemporary times (Provision, decision making and financial support) among couples in Lagos State. Two hypotheses were tested with the t-test for independent samples at the 0.05 level of significance namely (a) there is a significant difference between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles among couples, and (b) social Change will significantly affect Female gender involvement in household decision making

METHOD

Design

The study adopted a descriptive method of research design because the researcher did not carry out any active manipulation of the independent variables in the study. The independent variable is gender. The dependent variables are household chores, decision making and financial provision. The study utilized quantitative method of data collection. Only married people were selected as respondents for this study in two local government areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study is designed mainly to get a detailed account of changes in gender roles in these selected local government areas of Lagos state, Nigeria. This study covers ten percent (10%) of all local governments' areas in Lagos State, Nigeria. Lagos State has 20 constitutionally recognized local governments, 10% of these local governments are two (2). The two local governments included are Ojo local government and Ikorodu local government area, Lagos Nigeria. These two local government areas were picked from all the twenty constitutionally recognized local government areas through simple random technique (Lottery method). This was to ensure that all local government areas have equal chances of being selected for the study. The researcher employed multi-stage sampling techniques in getting to households and selection of married couples in the study. A total number of 250 questionnaires were distributed. The 250 questionnaires were considered relatively adequate to enable us to achieve the goal of this study. It should be mentioned however that, only 227 were analyzed due to either non completion of the questionnaire or incomplete information supplied by the respondents during the data collection stage which if included in the analysis may invalidate or causes fatal error in the computation and analysis, this therefore represents 90.8% of the returned questionnaire.

Data collected from the field were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The two hypotheses were tested using independent t-test Analysis of Variance. Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 17.0 versions) was used for the data analysis to ensure accuracy.

RESULTS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Below is the presentation of the socio-demographic data of married gender in selected local government areas of Lagos State, based on the information retrieved from them.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Demographic Data	Values	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	92	40.5
	Female	135	59.5
	Total	227	100
Age	15-25	28	12.5
	26-35	82	36.6
	36-45	87	38.8
	46-55	21	9.4
	56 and Above	06	2.7
Total	224	100	
Marital Status	Married	207	93.7%
	Widowed	08	3.6
	Separated	03	1.4
	Divorced	03	1.4
	Total	221	100
Educational Qualification	SSCE	02	0.9
	NCE/OND	47	21
	BSC/HND	94	42
	MSC/PGDE	69	30.8
	PHD & ABOVE	12	5.4
	Total	224	100
Religion	Islam	70	31.3
	Christianity	54	68.8
	Total	227	100
Occupation	Civil Servant	157	71.7
	Business	26	11.9
	Artisan	02	0.9
	Others	34	15.5
	Total	219	100
Ethnicity	Yoruba	191	86
	Hausa	04	1.8
	Igbo	21	9.5
	Others	06	2.7
	Total	222	100

Source: Field survey, 2013

The above table on socio-demographic data revealed that, out of 227 respondents, 40.5% of them were males while 59.5% of them were females. Response to Age interval shows that 12.5% of the respondents are between 15-25 years of age, 36.6% of them are between 26-35years, 38.8% of them are between 36-45 years, 9.4% of the respondents are between the age of 46-55 while 2.7% of them are 56 years and above. From these responses, it revealed that the majority of the respondents are between the age of 36 and 45 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were in age bracket to actually understand some vital changes that had taken place in traditional roles.

The educational qualification of the respondents as shown in the table above, 0.9 percent of the respondents are school certificate holders, 21% of them are NCE/BSC holders, 42% of them are BSC/HND holders, 30.8% of the respondents have MSC/PGDE, while 5.4% of them have PhDs and above as their educational qualification. It is evident that majority of these respondents have formal level of literacy. Although, the level of literacy is high among

male and female respondents, however, there are more female respondents with NCE/OND certificate than their male counterparts who possess higher qualification. In all, the above educational pattern reflects the national pattern of literacy. It has been reported by the National Population Commission (NPC) that 66 percent of the male population have had some level of education, only while 57percent of female are in the same category.

The table further shows the occupational distribution of the respondents. For instance, 71.7% of the respondents are civil servants, 11.9% of them are businesspersons, and 0.9% of them are Artisans while 15.5% remaining respondents are doing other jobs other than those in closed options. When closely observed, the results of the data analysis revealed gender roles as a reflection of societal perception of allocation of roles in patriarchal society. This is because, more women are found more in petty trading, craft making in the study areas than their male counterparts who are more in formal sector of the economy. On the ethnicity of the respondents, 86% of the respondents are Yoruba, 1.8% is Hausa, 9.5% are Igbo, and 2.7% of them belong to other ethnic groups. The implication of this is that the views of the Yoruba ethnic group are dominant in this study.

Table 2: T-test for independent samples showing the difference in traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles

Gender	N	MEAN	SD	Df	T	P
Male	143	1.15	0.36	168	-8.753	<.0.05
Female	27	1.22	0.42			

T (143) = -8.753; P < 0.05

The t-test of the hypothesis revealed that the 5% significance difference is more than the analyzed level of significance of 0.033. This simply denotes that the objective under this hypothesis is significant. Hence, the t-test revealed that “There is statistically significant difference between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria”. The male section has (M=1.1538, S=0.3621) and the female section has (female=1.222, S=0.4237), .t(170)= -8.753,p=0.083, sig=0.05

Table 3: T-test for independent showing Social Change and Gender involvement in household decision making process

Variable	N	MEAN	SD	Df	T	P
Male decision	126	1.04	0.20	129	-3.66	<.0.05
Female decision	05	1.4	0.05			

T (126) = -3.66: P < 0.05

The t-test analysis for hypothesis indicated that 0.000 significance level of the analysis is less than the designated 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis on the other hand is accepted. Hence, the t-test however revealed that “There is statistically significant difference between change and female gender involvement in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria” (Male = 1.0397, S=0.1960) and that NO section has (M=1.4000, S=0.5477).t (131) =3.663, P=0.000.sig =0.05

DISCUSSION

The results from the present study show that contemporary gender roles are different from traditional gender roles. There is statistically significant difference between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria”. The findings were obtained from information collected from respondents on how their parents played their respective gender roles before they got married. The overall responses indicate that the majority of respondent’s fathers were responsible for providing for the family such as payment of school fees, payment of house rent, house chores, and decision making. (These responses indicated the traditional roles of male gender).



Literature revealed that one of the causes of gender inequality is lack of female gender involvement in decision making process in the household (Christy,1990 UN, 2005) This research confirms the earlier findings that under patriarchal system, there is unequal participation of women and men in decision making process at home.

Contemporarily, findings show that changes have occurred in traditional gender roles. Now, financial provision and decision making is no longer men exclusive roles, likewise, kitchen is no longer the exclusive place for women. Family financial provision and decision making are made possible by both husband and wife. Couples share most of the gender roles. This research however revealed that women support their husbands by giving them money, support them morally, in cash and kind, payment of school fees, support in the provision of shelter and also assist where necessary. This indicates that there exist significant differences between traditional gender roles and contemporary gender roles. Gender roles are moving beyond traditionalism and towards egalitarianism for both men and women. The driving force behind this shift was as a result of changes in society.

The findings of this study confirmed what has earlier been found out in literature on the changing roles of gender in globally. For instance, it is more glaring and there is no denying the fact that our societies can change such that the gender roles rapidly change as well. The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. A 2003 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that about 1/3 of wives earn more than their husbands (Dunleavy, 2007). With the importance of education emphasized nationwide, and opportunity for tertiary education, women have begun furthering their education. Family structures are changing, and the number of single-mother or single-father households is increasing. Fathers are also becoming more involved with raising their children, instead of leaving the responsibility to the mother. Gender equality allows gender roles to become less distinct and according to Donnalyn Pompper, is the reason that men no longer own breadwinning identities and, like women, their bodies are objectified in mass media images.

These differences exist as a result of economic situations in the country which thrown many earlier employed men into labour market. Today, many men depend on their wives income to make ends meet. This study was in agreement with earlier findings by Coontz, 1997 and, Whirlpool Foundation, 1996 in their contributions to the changing roles in the societies. The implication of this finding is that gender roles are no longer sacrosanct. This paper argues that housework combined with full employment means that women often experience greater stress than men. Women have either more responsibility or a greater share of the domestic work. In addition, women do more of the tedious work household chores combine with supplementing family income. Theoretically, every role has rights and responsibilities that are defined by a culture or group. In practice, however, role strain may occur as norms or role expectations change House chores that were regarded as solely the females' work are now being shared by both gender. Males were traditionally set aside as provider of the family is no longer sacrosanct, though they still remain the head of the family.

Apart from women sharing in household economy, they also involved in decision making. Ironically, only those who contribute financially to household economy are part of decision making at home. The finding shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between change and female gender participation in household decision making process in selected local government areas, Lagos Nigeria. This finding confirms the earlier findings by Sjoberg O. (2010).

According to the responses gathered from respondents, most of respondents' mothers were not involved in decision making at home. This research work testified to the fact that gender roles have gradually changed from what is regarded as traditional gender roles to contemporary gender roles because of change. In the contemporary Nigeria society, the traditional gender roles have changed



Conclusion

Gender and gender roles are a significant part of the world of individuals, communities and society as a whole. Understanding gender roles in a non-deterministic sense creates the opportunity for people to become aware of the potential sources of information which shape our internal world. More critically it means that we can understand gender and more specifically gender roles as having the potential to be altered by the knowledge, discourse and changes that affect every segment of society of which gender roles is inclusive. Ultimately, this study has been able to provide some insight into contemporary gender roles in the society. Change in gender roles is an inevitable experience that came to existence as a result of many factors, and which will require much greater acknowledgements from policy makers worldwide and, in particular more from developing countries such as Nigeria. In order to promote gender equality in this post Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era, women empowerment should be adequately focused on, while the existing women empowerment programmes should be strengthened. The multidimensional and contextual nature of empowerment must be given adequate focus to ensure maximum effectiveness of empowerment programmes (Malhotra and Boender, 2002). Also, empowerment decisions should be made specific to the community context as well as to ethnic and cultural contexts and socio-economic status (Egbue, 2010)

In the development policy, women interest needs to be adequately captured as this has not been the practice among the development practitioners. There is need to eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality by encouraging and harmonising the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects. The involvement of female gender in decision making was only made possible made the financial contribution they made at home. There is need for vigorous campaign for more involvement of women in decision making at home.



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