

Patriarchy, male dominance, the role and women empowerment in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In the paper, the nature of male dominance and roles in Nigerian family is empirically analyzed and discussed. The data used in the study were obtained through a cross-sectional survey of 233 households in Ibadan between November 1999 and April 2000. ANOVA, paired samples 't' test and correlation statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The result of the study shows that there is no significant intra-urban variation in male dominance within domestic units, but significant intra-urban variation at $p < .05$ is found in male activities/roles within domestic units. A significant difference at $p < .01$ is found between male and female activities/roles within domestic units with the female doing much of the domestic activities. No significant relationship is found between male activities/roles and their socio-economic characteristics. These results suggest that men are majorly affected by cultural orientation, and women empowerment could be enhanced through a re-orientation of men via gender education.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, Nigerian society has been a patriarchy society (Aina, 1998). Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the traditional society. It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women (Stacey 1993; Kramarae 1992; Lerner 1986; Humm 1989; Aina 1998). It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. There are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specified gender roles (Aina 1998:6). Traditionally men do not participate in domestic work including child rearing – such tasks are considered to be the exclusive domain of women. Males are classed as having the following qualities: strength, vigour, virile/powerful courage, self-confidence and the ability to meet the outside world i.e. animal and human intruders head on and deal with it effectively. These qualities were reflected in the kinds of work that men engaged in. Men were responsible for much of what was thought of as “heavy” labour. Men in short provided for their families (Bernard 1981; Aweda 1984; Carrigan et al, 1987; Stock 1995; Silberschmidt,

1999 etc.). Women oversee the domestic chores. They kept houses, processed and cooked all foods. They also help in the planting and harvesting of food crops and cash crops. They were primarily responsible for the bearing and rearing of children from birth on; men were only called upon to assist when extraordinary discipline was considered necessary especially for the boys (Aweda, 1984:184).

1.1 Patriarchy

As observed in the literature, the word “patriarchy” was around before the current resurgence of the women’s movement and women’s studies courses, the concept has been recreated in the past two decades to analyse the origins and conditions of men’s oppression of women (Kamarae, 1992). Originally used to describe the power of the father as head of household, the term ‘patriarchy’ has been used within post 1960s feminism to refer to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination (Kamarae, 1992; Stacey, 1993; Aina, 1998; etc.). The term has been defined as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Feminists have argued that in any of the historical forms that patriarchal society takes, whether it is feudal, capitalist or socialist, a sex gender system and a system of economic discrimination operate simultaneously. It is observed in the literature that the establishment and practice of male dominance over women and children, is a historic process formed by men and women, with the patriarchal family serving as a basic unit of organization. A patriarchy is considered the head of the household and within the family he controls productive resources, labour force, and

reproductive capacities based on the notions of superiority and inferiority and legitimized by differences in gender and generation.

1.2 The nature of men - masculinity and male dominance

It is argued that the roles of men in the family are closely linked to the attributes of masculinity (Silvia, 1999). Studies on masculinity, mostly from the developed countries have revealed about five important conclusions (Short, 1996): that masculinity is not a biological category as much as a social construct subject to change, revision and multiple representations; that masculinity is not fixed, it is a relational, constantly shifting attribute defined in relation to the feminine; that masculinity is a site of interconnection and tension with other sources of social differentiation; that masculinity is both lived and imagined desires; and that masculinity is not only socially constructed and reconstructed, it is spatially grounded.

One of the most difficult questions which have faced the study of masculinity in recent years has been actually defining the object of analysis (Collier, 1995). However, Brittan (1989) distinction between masculinity as an 'essence' and masculinism as an ideology is of use in the analysis of masculinity. According to Brittan, masculinism is the masculine ideology that justifies and naturalises male domination. As such, it is the ideology of patriarchy. Masculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres (Brittan 1989:4). In analyzing masculinity as an essence, we examine things characteristics of the male sex. As Bernard argued:

“It is not so much the specific kinds of work men and women do – they have always varied from time to time and place to place – but the simple fact that the sexes do different kinds of work, whatever it is, which is in and of itself important. The division of labour by sex means that the work group becomes also a sex group. The very nature of maleness and femaleness becomes embedded in the sexual division of labour. One’s sex and one’s work are part of one another. One’s work defines one’s gender” (Bernard 1981:3).

This line of argument is also stressed in the work of Lupton (2000) which was essentially on how masculinity is defined, maintained and challenged in occupations and organizations. Infact he argued that masculinity might be regarded as a role that is socially performed enacted and reproduced through discourse. Also that it can be performed by both men and women, is subject to change over time and, on account of its dynamic nature can be studied through observation of action and interpretation of discourse (Kvande 1998). Thus according to him, the notion of work is central to masculine identities providing extrinsic and intrinsic rewards by which masculinity may be judged by self and others (p.34). He stated following Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985)’s argument that the reproduction of (hegemonic) masculinity underpins “the social definition of some kinds of work as ‘men’s work or women’s work’ and the definition of some kinds of work as more masculine than others”.

Recent studies on manhood and masculinity in Africa include works by The Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network (1999), Asiyanbola (2001), Lindsay and Miescher (2003), Lahoucine and Roberts (2004), Adamu (2004). The study by The Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network, (1999) in Nigeria have found that masculinity and manhood are constructed through a gradual, timely, and orderly process, of socially prescribed, family centered and community related roles and responsibilities. The extent of these (male) focused roles is, to a large extent, undertaken

by women at the household level, where primary socialization takes place. Boys are taught by their mothers and shown by their fathers how to be a man and they are excused from performing 'female' tasks around the house. Though generally, Nigerian society is patriarchal, yet where matrilineal nature is found such as in Ilaro community, there were no observable differences in the expectations of male responsibility (The Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network, 1999:69). Asiyanbola's (2001) study shows the co-existence of various masculine and feminine examples in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study by Adamu (2004), explores the reaction to, and management of, dominant masculinity by secluded women of the Muslim Hausa society of Northern Nigeria. Most of the essays in the works by Lindsay and Miescher (2003), according to Schmidt (2004), focus on the colonial period, when different groups of men were engaged in struggles with the colonial state, with the capitalist economic sector, and in the domestic arena - in the first two instances, they fought to preserve or gain political and economic power, while, in the third they attempted to maintain patriarchal dominance in the household.

1.3 Involvement of men in household activities/roles

Many studies, mostly in the developed countries, have examined the relationship between the involvement of women in paid work and their husbands' task sharing in the household. Most of this attention has been based on the assumption (and the hope) that increased levels of economic activity for married women would lead to some change in the traditional distribution of household labour (Shamir, 1986). This assumption was derived from an exchange view of family relationship (Scanzoni, 1975), which attributes the asymmetry of the traditional division of family roles to the asymmetry of paid work

roles. According to this view, husbands ought to share more family responsibility when their wives share some of the economic bread winning responsibility (Pleck, 1983); and a wife who shares the paid employment role should have a right to expect a more equitable allocation of family tasks at home (Bird et al 1984). She should also have more power to achieve such an allocation (Shamir, 1986).

The findings of studies addressing this question are not entirely consistent (Stafford et al, 1977; Shamir, 1986). Even though some studies (e.g Farkas, 1976) have found a relationship between the wife's employment and her husband's family work and a relationship has also been found between the wife's income and her husband's participation in household chores (Scanzoni, 1978). Many studies have failed to find a significant relationship between the wife's employment status and her husband's contribution to family tasks (Lopata et al, 1980; Peres, and Katz, 1983). Also, Pleck (1983) from a review concludes that the proportional division of labour in families does change as a result of wives' paid employment and that this is due to a reduction in the amount of time devoted by the wife to performance of domestic tasks rather than to an increase in the husband's contribution. Nevertheless, McBroom (1987) noted that with rare exceptions (Albrecht et al, 1979) most research shows that sex role orientations held by and about women are changing – becoming less traditional in the sense of less rigid sex-specific definitions on expectations (Mason, and Bumpass, 1975; Mason et al, 1976; Spitze, and Huber, 1980; Thornton, and Freedman, 1979).

However, one clear finding from most of the recent studies (Derow, 1977; Niemi et al, 1981; Matsuhima, 1982; Vanek, 1984; Nordenstam, 1984; Michelson, 1985; Scarr et al, 1989; etc.) is that women even if employed and regardless of social class still do the

greatest share of household and childcare activities. While the time they devote to these activities is diminished, it still is much more than the time anyone else gives. In general, traditional household sex roles appear to have stayed the same in the great majority of families.

1.4 Objective of the paper

The interest in this paper is to explore the contemporary nature of male dominance and role in the Nigerian families in Ibadan. The significance and importance of this study lies in the fact that sexual equality in the area of gender roles and responsibilities is one of the tenets of the women's liberation movement. Division of labour in these areas has been important to the movement because it is perceived as a major stumbling block to career equality for men and women. As long as women are burdened with the responsibility of a household and children while they pursue a career, they can never devote enough time and energy to occupational demands to compete with men who can and who are encouraged to devote their entire time and energy to pursuing careers. The null hypotheses tested in the paper are that: (i) there is no significant intra-urban variation in the (a) male dominance and (b) activities/role within domestic units; (ii) there is no significant difference between male and female activities/roles within domestic units; and (iii) there is no significant relationship between male activities/role within domestic units and their socio-economic characteristics.

The paper is divided into four sections. Following the introductory section is the methodology of data collection and analysis in section two. Discussion and interpretation

of the results of the analysis is presented in section three while section four contains the implications of the findings and conclusion.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The data used in the paper was obtained from a questionnaire survey of 233 households in Ibadan city, Nigeria between November 1999 and April 2000. Information was collected on some socio-economic variables which include age, income, educational level, household size, number of children in the household, age of the youngest child, number of cars in the household, family type, religion, and presence of househelp in the household. Information was also collected on involvement daily in the following domestic activities: cooking, clearing the house and the surroundings, fetching water, getting rid of household wastes, and shopping. Respondent was asked how often he or she participated on daily basis in those activities (a code of 1 is assigned if often). The information collected also includes measures of responsibilities of men and women in the household. Such responsibilities include housework, childcare, household subsistence, household service work and kin work, financial management (a code of 1 is assigned if responsible). Men are known to be domineering. As such information collected included measures of decision-making in the household as reflected by the choice of the household's current residence. Respondent was asked the following questions, who decided to locate/relocate residence here? Who defined the search space? Who actually choose this particular house or land location? Respondent was expected to state in each case whether it is the woman only, man only, woman and man, relatives or

friends. A code of 1 is assigned if man only, otherwise 0. This is used in the analysis of male dominance.

In order to get a representative sample, Ibadan metropolis was stratified into three residential densities (high, medium and low density residential areas) following existing studies on Ibadan (Filani et al 1994). From these residential areas, 44 neighbourhoods were selected. What is referred to as neighbourhoods in this paper are actually defined by the National Population Commission (NPC) as locality. Each of the three residential density areas comprises of localities. High density residential areas is more widely spread so 22 neighbourhoods were selected. From medium density residential area 12 neighbourhoods were selected and 10 neighbourhoods in the low-density residential area. Also in the high density residential area 105 questionnaires were administered. In the medium and low density residential areas 77 and 51 questionnaires were administered respectively. The number of questionnaires administered in each neighbourhoods were proportional to their respective projected 1996 population as given by the National Population Commission (NPC). From each of the neighbourhood systematic random sampling technique was used to select the dwelling units and a household particularly a woman and her spouse were interviewed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), paired samples 't' test and correlation statistical techniques were used to analyze the data.

3.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure I show the average percentage of men and women involvement in household residential location decision-making in Ibadan. This figure is derived from appendix 1 to 3 which shows the percentages of involvement in household residential

location decision-making in each of the residential areas in Ibadan. The figure shows that men are domineering. In all the residential areas, more men solely take decision on household residential location.

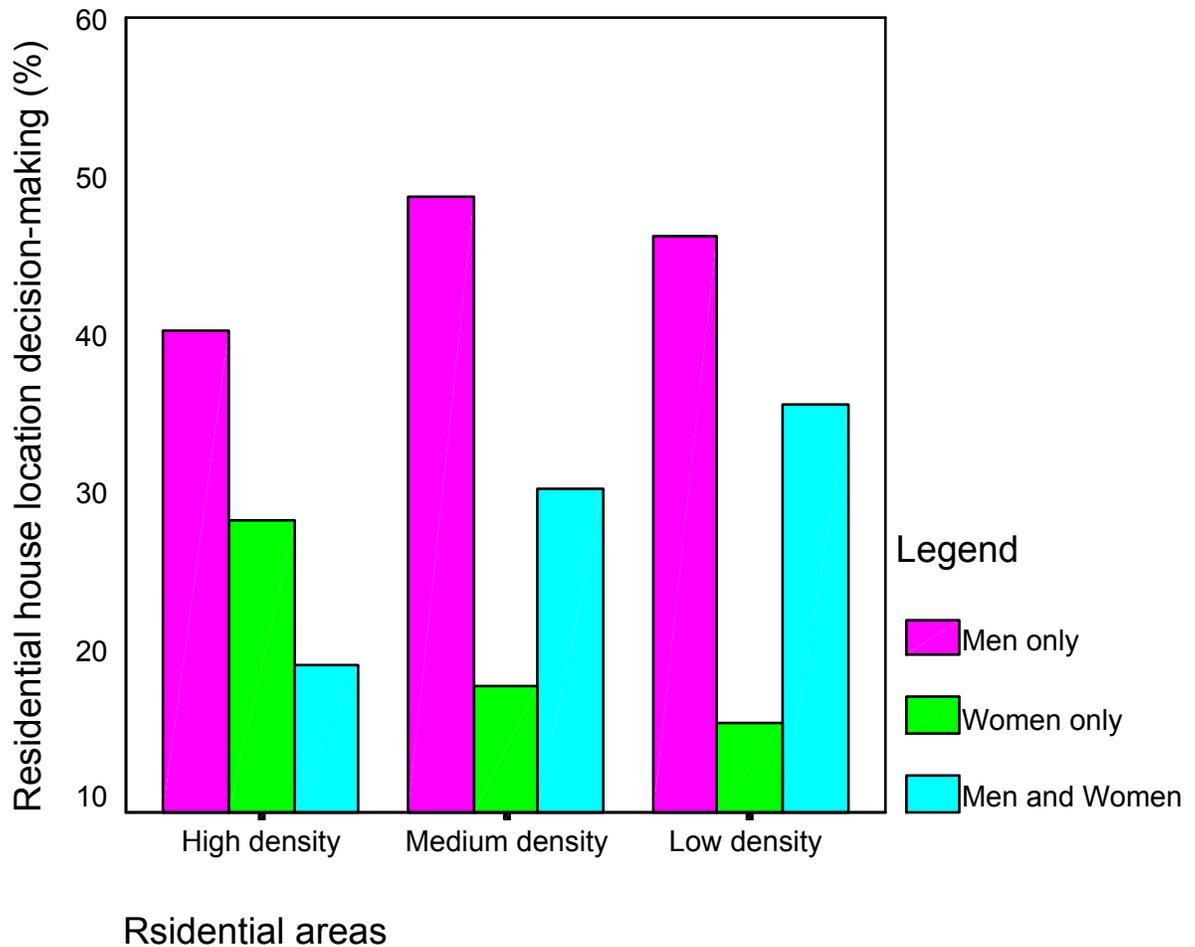


Fig. 1: Male dominance in decision-making in the household (%)

Table 1 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) result of male dominance within domestic units in Ibadan. From the table, F value is .704 and the significance value is .496. This result is not significant. Therefore we accept the null hypothesis that there is

no significant intra-urban variation in male dominance within domestic units in Ibadan.

This result implies that male dominance within domestic units is still very rampant.

Table 1: Result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result of male dominance within domestic units

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.382	2	1.191	.704	.496
Within Groups	387.510	229	1.692		
Total	389.892	231			

Table 2 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA) result of the activities/roles involvement of men within domestic units in Ibadan. From the table, F value is 3.397 and significance value is .036. This result is significant at $p < .05$. This result implies that there is significant intra-urban variation in men's activities/roles involvement within domestic units in Ibadan.

Table 2: Result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the activities/roles of men within domestic units

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	37.234	2	18.617	3.397*	.036
Within Groups	958.968	175	5.480		
Total	996.202	177			

*Significant at $p < .05$

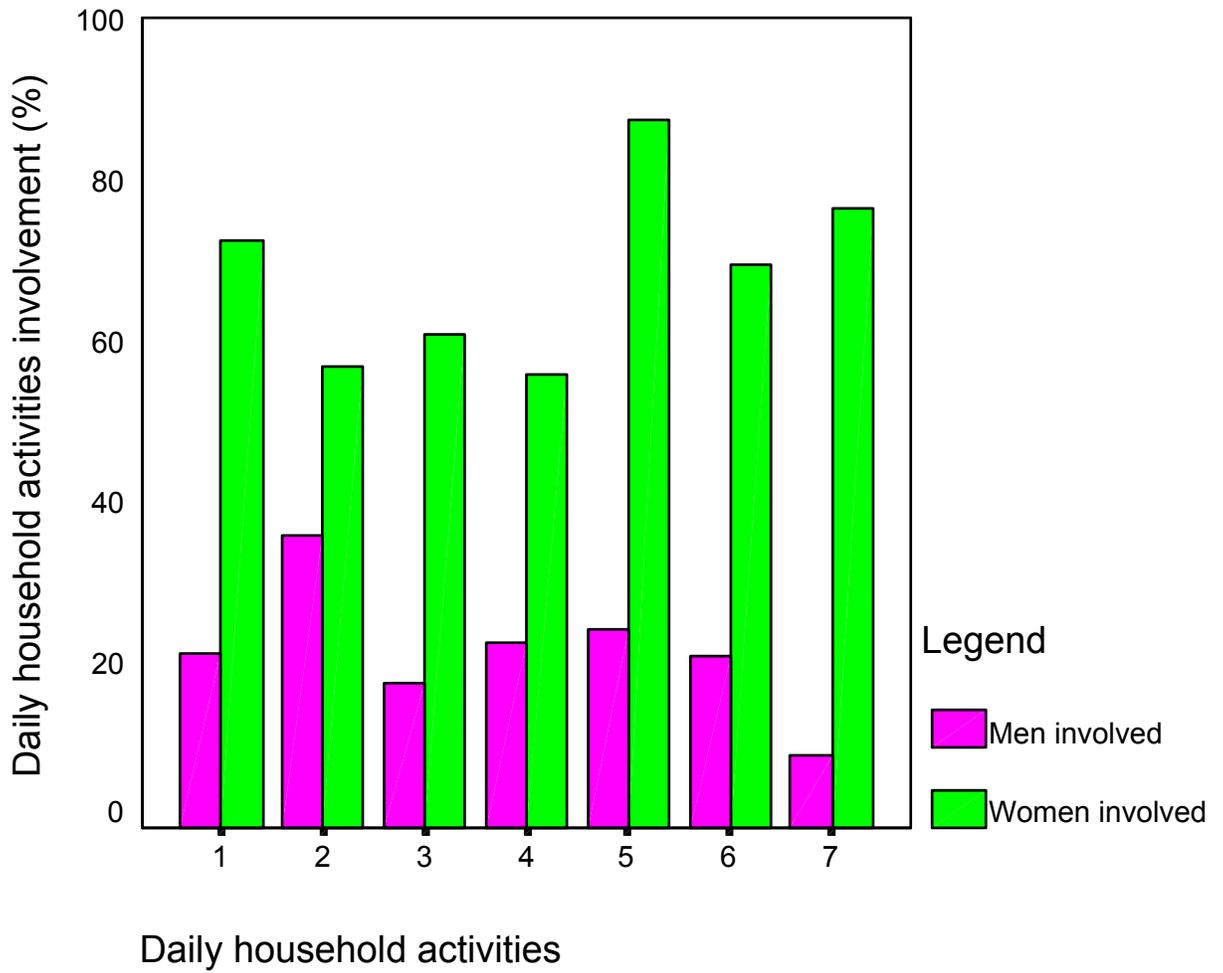
Table 3 shows the result of the paired sample 't' test statistics of female and male activities/roles within domestic units. The 't' value from this table is 13.380 and the significance value is .000.

Table 3: Result of the paired sample 't' test statistics of female and male activities/roles within domestic units

	Variable	"t"	Sig.
Pair 1	FEMALEACT/ROLES – MALEACT/ROLES	13.380**	.000

**Significant at $p < .01$

This result is significant at $p < .01$. This result implies that there is significant difference between activities/roles involvement of female and male within domestic units with female doing much of the domestic activities (see Fig II).



Key

- 1- Shopping
- 2- Childcare
- 3- Getting rid of household waste
- 4- Fetching water
- 5- Cooking
- 6- Cleaning the house and the surrounding
- 7- Domestic activities generally

Fig. II: Daily household activities of men and women in Ibadan

The result of the correlation analysis of men's involvement in household activities/roles and some of their socio-economic variables is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Result of the correlation analysis between men's household activities/roles involvement and some of their socio-economic variables

Some Socio-economic variables of men	Men's household activities/roles	
	"r"	Sig.
Age	-.114	.135
Family type	.021	.776
Religion	.036	.402
Educational level	.014	.854
Income	.006	.938
Number of cars in the household	.080	.290
Household size	-.039	.605
Number of children in the household	-.015	.847
Age of the youngest child	-.111	.139
Presence of house help in the household	.083	.271

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between men's household activities/roles involvement and their socio-economic variables. This result implies that men's household activities/roles involvement within the domestic units is not affected by the socio-economic status. This result tends to indicate that men generally irrespective of their socio-economic status are conscious and strive to live out their traditional roles. The result seems to suggest that men's household activities/roles involvement is affected majorly by the cultural orientation of men.

4.0 SUMMARY, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The result of the cross-sectional survey shows that there is no significant intra-urban variation in male dominance within domestic units, but a significant intra-urban variation at $p < .05$ is found in male activities/roles within domestic units. A significant difference at $p < .01$ is found between male and female activities/roles within domestic units with the female doing much of the domestic activities. No significant relationship is found between male activities/roles within domestic units and their socio-economic characteristics. This result implies that male dominance within domestic units is still very rampant and women still do the greatest share of household activities. Also, the result suggests that men's household activities/roles involvement is majorly affected by their cultural orientation.

The implications of these result is that men irrespective of their socio-economic status need re-orientation. There is the need for gender education. The need for gender education, enlightenment, awareness and consciousness raising among men must target all age groups irrespective of social class. This is because according to UN (1996) a growing body of research shows that boys as young as three years old are searching for masculine models for their sense of self. Men growing up without a good gender model grow up with an inflated, hypermasculine view of manhood and are therefore more prone to violence (UN 1996:108). Re-orientation of men's mind set via gender education could greatly enhanced women empowerment. This could be achieved through organized seminars, training and workshops for men as well as introduction of gender studies in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

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Appendix 1: Household residential location decision-Making in the high density residential area in Ibadan (n = 105) (%)

Decision	Woman only	Man only	Woman and Man	Relatives	Friends
Who decided to locate residence here?	27.6	44.8	18.1	8.6	1.0
Who defined the search space	22.9	41.0	17.1	12.4	6.7
Who actually chose this particular house or land location?	34.3	31.4	22.9	10.5	1.0

Source: Field survey, 2000

Appendix 2: Household residential location decision-making in the medium density residential area in Ibadan (n = 77) (%)

Decision	Woman only	Man only	Woman and Man	Relatives	Friends
Who decided to locate/relocate residence here?	19.5	44.2	33.8	2.6	0.0
Who defined the search space?	16.9	49.4	31.2	1.3	1.3
Who actually choose this particular house or land location	16.9	53.2	26.0	1.3	2.6

Source: Field survey, 2000

Appendix 3: Household residential location decision-Making in the low density residential area in Ibadan (n = 51) (%)

Decision	Woman only	Man only	Woman and Man	Relatives	Friends
Who decided to locate/relocate residence here?	15.7	43.1	41.2	0.0	0.0
Who defined the search space?	15.2	47.1	33.3	3.9	0.0
Who actually choose this particular house or land location?	15.7	49.0	33.3	2.0	0.0

Source: Field survey, 2000