

City University of New York (CUNY)

## CUNY Academic Works

---

Publications and Research

York College

---

2012

### Gender Relations of Space: Impact on Women's Leadership in Nigeria [Pilot Study]

Oluremi Alapo  
*CUNY York College*

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/yc\\_pubs/274](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/yc_pubs/274)

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

---

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).  
Contact: [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu)

# GENDER RELATIONS OF SPACE: IMPACT ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA [PILOT STUDY]

Remi Alapo  
University of Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Session 19 - Gender, Planning & Governance

Symposium on Masculine / Feminine Geographical Dialogue and Beyond  
Urban Planning Institute of Grenoble, City of territories, Grenoble, France

Université Joseph Fourier, Grenoble, France

December 10-12, 2012.

# INTRODUCTION

- Cultural factors affect leadership of women and men in many ways such as in how they:
  - View their space
  - Sexuality
  - Bodies
  - Decision-making processes
  - Leadership capabilities

# ABSTRACT

- This qualitative phenomenological research study examines women in Nigeria and how they continue to face enormous set-backs regarding development and leadership capabilities. The socio and economic roles that many women occupy in Nigerian society affects leadership roles, especially in the context of sexual division of labor and in decision-making. The national and family culture present prevents women to fully adapt to innovative 21st century leadership. Culture is socialized in a person through the shared values of social groups that in turn play key roles in a person's cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. The national and family culture is one in which the value of collectivism is present and less of individualism. The national culture of work and leadership practices are based on the national culture of beliefs and practices of collectivism. This collectivist culture is deeply rooted in colonial construct carried over into the 21st century that was also translated within many families where women are grouped into subordinate roles in their immediate environment.

- Cultural factors affect leadership of women and men in many ways such as in how they view their space, sexuality, decision-making processes and leadership capabilities. Women within the extended family system, see themselves as working for members of the family as well as the extended family, rather than for their own immediate gratification. As Nigeria is a culturally inclusive society, women view themselves based on their family name, responsibilities, and the societal construct of how a man or woman should or should not behave among peers, subordinates, and others in the work or family environment. Societal constructs are based on age, gender, level of education, region and family background. Decision-making relies on patrilineal family and social structures. Women foremost have to base their leadership styles on national and family culture because they affect their space, personality, attitudes, sexuality, and behaviors more than their male counterparts.
- Keywords: Gender and Sexuality, Cultural Studies, Women and Society, National Culture, Family Culture .

# CULTURAL ISSUES AND LEADERSHIP

- Previous studies confirmed the notion that perceptions of what makes an effective and ineffective leader are similar in content across cultures.
- At the same time, there are large variations on how people perceive leadership in cultures different from each other.

# METHODOLOGY

- This qualitative phenomenological study examines *“gender relations of space and culture in Nigeria and the impact in which they have on women’s leadership.”*
- An open - ended survey questionnaire consisting of a wide variety of questions was circulated to participants based on an initial study on “the Role of culture on the Leadership Styles of Generation X Women in Nigeria”.

# PURPOSE

- For this current study, the purpose of participant's answers on "*the impact of both national and family culture on leadership styles*" was to understand the dimensions of gender and culture as they relate to leadership in a space – organizations in a post-colonial Nigerian society.



# GENDER RELATIONS OF SPACE (TRADITIONAL)

- Northern Nigeria: Seclusion
- South – West: Trading
- East: Farming

# GENDER RELATIONS OF SPACE (ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE)

- Leadership behavior
- Styles
- Goals
- Structure
- Culture (organizational)
- Strategies of organizations

# CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

- Beliefs
- Values
- Ideals
- Religion
- Norms

# NATIONAL CULTURE

- In Nigeria, the national and family culture is one in which the value of collectivism is very present and less of individualism.

# FAMILY CULTURE

- Nigeria is a culturally inclusive society, organizational leaders view themselves based on:
  - Family name
  - Responsibilities
  - Societal constructs

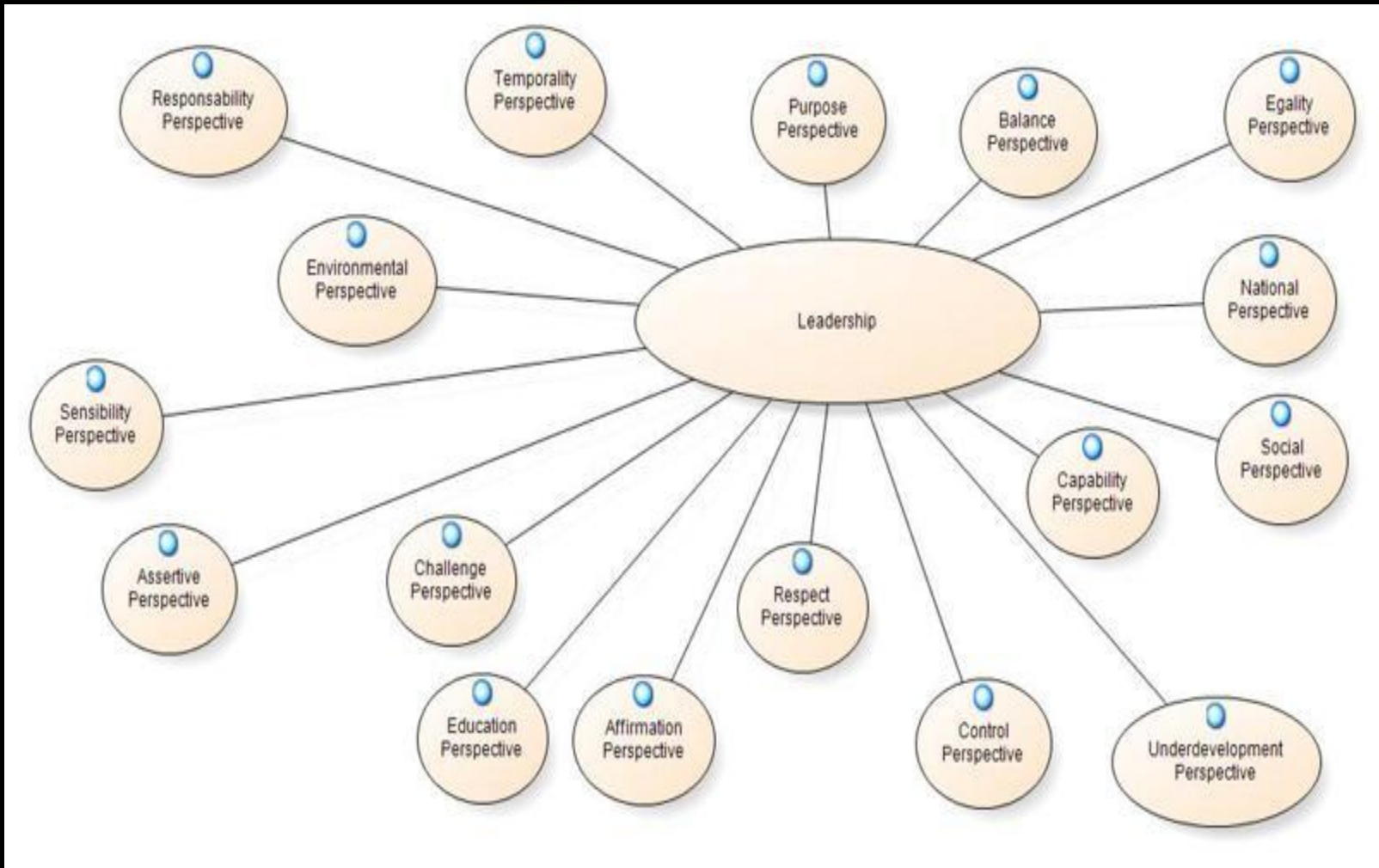
# PRE-COLONIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SPACE

- Personal: Socialization
- Internal: Family Culture
- External Factors: Societal

# POST – COLONIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SPACE

- Social boundaries
- External factors
- National culture

# LEADERSHIP





# RESPONSES-FAMILY/NATIONAL CULTURE

- “From my point of view, culture perceptions in Nigeria affect the leadership role of women because our culture does not easily embrace the concept of women holding leadership positions in the society. Men are perceived as the head of the family even where, as is the case these days, women are the bread winner” (Respondent 010).
- “In Nigeria, the national culture is at least on the surface supportive of women in leadership positions, at the family level it varies. The more wealthy families tend to want women out of the workforce - unless the woman is leading an organization that is socially geared e.g. wedding planner” (Respondent 013).

- “Family culture both nationally and locally have had influence on women leaders. Parents are raising their female children with the advice to maintain good morale fortitude. Female leaders are tasked not to bring shame to the family or community, but to lead exemplary lifestyles” (Respondent 030).
- “National culture for women these days in Nigeria is not as intense as 10 to 20 years ago. This is the same for family culture, as women nowadays are heads of organizations and heads of families. In the past, it was a taboo for many women to be in leadership positions or even head households making more money that their husbands. Times are changing” (Respondent 031).

- “They play both negative and positive role on women’s leadership. Positive because there is a lot of good morals, respect, integrity and courtesy. These are virtues an average Nigerian woman has and is thought from childhood. Negative because it is believed that the woman should spend a lot of time at home, travel less, to mention but a few and this will limit her scope” (Respondent 002).
- “...Being Africans we were brought up to put family first before career. This may seem too much for some people but so many women have achieved major success in both areas without failing in any but have been able to juggle the two together. We have also been programmed biologically to work at many things at the same time so we do not have to give up one for the other. Success means giving and getting the best out of both family and career” (Respondent 003).

# RESPONSES – FAMILY / NATIONAL CULTURE

- “In Nigeria culture, men are suppose to be leaders while women can be deputy or an assistant and the same apply to the family and this belief is affecting women in leadership...” (Respondent 006).
- “The natural tendency of Nigeria’s culture is to assign family roles to women. This culture is weakening as more and more women continue to succeed in the corporate, political and business worlds” (Respondent 008).

- “From my point of view, culture perceptions in Nigeria affect the leadership role of women because our culture does not easily embrace the concept of women holding leadership positions in the society. Men are perceived as the head of the family even where, as is the case these days, women are the bread winner” (Respondent 010).
- “In Nigeria, the national culture is at least on the surface supportive of women in leadership positions, at the family level it varies. The more wealthy families tend to want women out of the workforce - unless the woman is leading an organization that is socially geared e.g. wedding planner” (Respondent 013).

# RESPONSES – FAMILY/NATIONAL CULTURE

- “Family culture both nationally and locally have had influence on women leaders. Parents are raising their female children with the advice to maintain good morale fortitude. Female leaders are tasked not to bring shame to the family or community, but to lead exemplary lifestyles” (Respondent 030).
- “National culture for women these days in Nigeria is not as intense as 10 to 20 years ago. This is the same for family culture, as women nowadays are heads of organizations and heads of families. In the past, it was a taboo for many women to be in leadership positions or even head households making more money than their husbands. Times are changing” (Respondent 031).

# CONCLUSION

- Cultural factors affect leadership of women and men in many ways such as in how they view their space, sexuality, decision-making processes and leadership capabilities.
- As Nigeria is a culturally inclusive society, women view themselves based on their family name, responsibilities, and the societal construct of how a man or woman should or should not behave among peers, subordinates, and others in the work or family environment.
- Decision-making relies on patrilineal family and social structures.
- Women foremost have to base their leadership styles on national and family culture because they affect their space, personality, attitudes, sexuality, and behaviors more than their male counterparts.

# REFERENCES

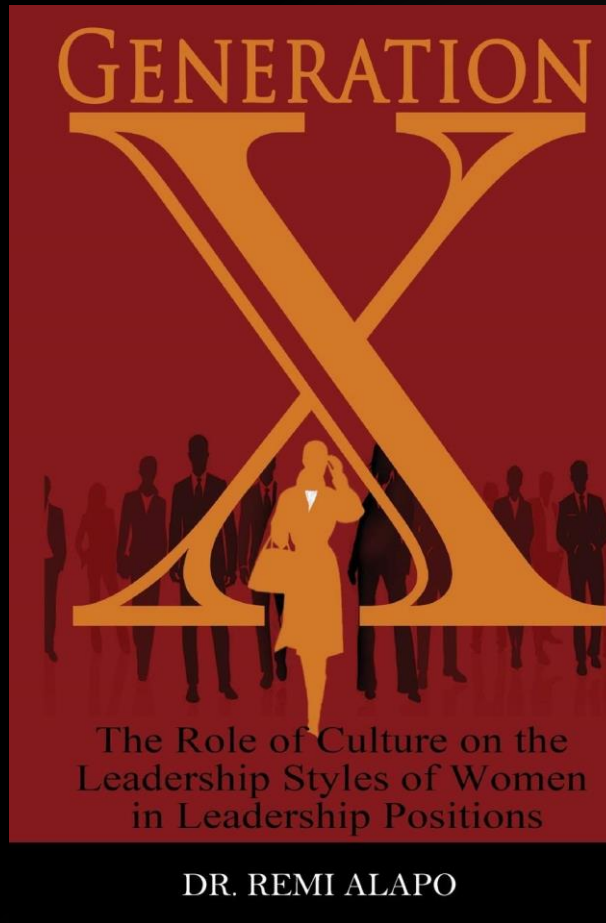
- Ejiofor, P.N.O. 1987. *Management in Nigeria: Theories and issues*. Onitsha, Nigeria: Longman.
- Igunbor, D. (Jun., 2005). Towards effective women's leadership in a globalized world. Paper presented at "When women gain, so does the world" of IWPR's eight International Women's Policy Research Conference. Local Government Service Commission, Delta State.
- Okome, M.O. (Oct. 2010). *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Making headway: The introduction of Western Civilization in Colonial Northern Nigeria. 34(4), 236.
- Okome, M., O. (n.d). Domestic, Regional and International Protection of Nigerian women against discrimination: constraints and possibilities. *African Studies Quarterly* 6(3).
- Okpara, J.,O. (2007). The effect of culture on job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A study of Information System Managers in Nigeria. *Journal of African Business*. 8(1), 113-130.



# THANK YOU

- Questions
- Comments
- Feedback

AVAILABLE ON BOTH AMAZON AND BARNES AND NOBLE.



Dr. Remi Alapo received her Doctorate from the University of Phoenix, Arizona in Organizational Management and Leadership in February of 2011. She is currently an independent researcher with Global Management Consulting. Her research interests include international and cross-cultural management issues in Africa and other regions, especially with women's leadership. *Generation X: The Role of Culture on the Leadership Styles of Women in Leadership Positions* is her first book

on women and leadership. She is available for consultation to grassroots organizations and to women-owned business organizations looking to improve their management, leadership, and decision-making. Dr. Remi can be contacted on her social media fan page:

<https://www.facebook.com/dr.remialapo/>

*Generation X: The Role of Culture on the Leadership Styles of Women in Leadership Positions'* goal is to assist organizational leaders to view Generation X women in positions of power from a different perspective. Women leaders are capable of leading a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization because of their scope of knowledge about growing businesses, and their ability to blend and incorporate new technologies and innovations in the business environment.

*Generation X: The Role of Culture on the Leadership Styles of Women in Leadership Positions* is relevant to the fields of business, cultural, human relations, leadership, management, and cross-cultural leadership and women studies. The cultural values of women in many societies are grounded in the shared experiences of symbols and norms, which are manifested in beliefs and practices. These play obviously a significant role in the leadership styles and expressions of Generation X women who are in leadership positions. This book will also assist *Generation X women in positions* of power in building highly effective and functioning teams in adapting to global business and environmental trends.



CONTENT LATER PRESENTED AT THE  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS  
CONFERENCE (AAG) APRIL 7-13, 2014.  
TAMPA, FLORIDA

## CONTACT INFO

Prof. Oluremi "Remi" Alapo

Adjunct

Department of History, Philosophy, and Anthropology

Interdisciplinary Studies

Cultural Diversity Program

Black Studies

York College, City University of New York

94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd

Jamaica, NY 11451

E: oalapo1@york.cuny.edu

T: 347 444 3256

Faculty Page - [https://www.york.cuny.edu/portal\\_college/oalapo1/](https://www.york.cuny.edu/portal_college/oalapo1/)

*Merci,  
Thank You  
For Your Attention*