

***WHAT'S ETHNICITY GOT TO DO WITH IT? THE WORKPLACE LIVED
EXPERIENCE OF ETHNIC MINORITY (IJAW) WOMEN IN THE NIGERIAN
CIVIL SERVICE***

B. Alex-Hart

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BIEBELE ALEX-HART

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Abstract

This thesis examines gender and ethnic inequalities in the Nigerian civil service through the lived experience of Ijaw women and the strategies they adopt to combat perceived discrimination. A theoretical framework of structure, culture, agency, intersectionality, and social identity theory underpinned this research. Hermeneutic phenomenological methodology was adopted within which 40 in-depth semi-structures interviews were conducted. Findings indicate that for most respondents, ethnicity is a politicised identity while gender identity tends to be passive. Other emerging identities were revealed such as language, age and indigeneship (having historical ties to one's state of residence). Civil service organisations were found to legitimise inequality regimes with respect to gender and ethnicity. These inequality regimes are definitive of Ijaw women's workplace lived experience. While some participants identified as traditionalists, others adopted strategies such as 'Awaiting Divine Intervention', Masking, Exiting the organisation, Assimilating, Performing, Negotiating and Reforming the system, to combat perceived discrimination in their organisation.

Key words: Structure, Agency, Intersectionality, Inequality Regimes, Gender, Ethnicity

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Abbreviations

FCS – Federal Civil Service

SCS – State Civil Service

FCP – Federal Character Principle

ADI – Awaiting Divine Intervention

RSCS – Rivers State Civil Service

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Contemporary management research has increasingly paid attention to the influence of gender and ethnicity in organizational discourse and processes. The feminist movements and critical race theorists fueled this shift in management literature. Although issues of race have been the primary focus of critical race theorizing, they provided the basis for management studies that focus more specifically on ethnicity. However, a vast majority of these studies have been based in the United Kingdom and the US. In this regard, there has been a greater focus on race, rather than ethnicity, although often the concepts are conflated. This is not surprising as issues of race and racialization are salient in both societies, evidenced by a plethora of studies. An important factor in this shift is also the move beyond considering race and gender as isolated systems of oppression to look at how both categories interweave to be of significance in the lived experience of men and women. Researchers such as Crenshaw (1989), Hill Collins (1989), McCall (2005) and Hancock (2016), to mention a few, have deliberated on the idea of intersectionality, drawing attention to the ways in which race and gender concurrently influence organizational lived experience. This led Ferdman (1999) to argue that there is no such thing as just a man or a woman without reference to ethnicity. This study examines the significance of gender and ethnicity in the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in Nigerian Civil Service. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the workplace experience of Ijaw women has not been previously researched. This study intends to contribute towards filling this gap in knowledge production. In doing so, the following sections of this chapter provide a contextual background for the study. Beginning with a study rationale that is inclusive of a brief history of gender and ethnicity in

Nigeria, the chapter moves on to discuss the rationale of the study, theoretical framework, and finally the structure of the entire thesis.

1.1 Rationale of Study

The creation of Nigeria, which began at the Berlin conference of 1885, involved a breaking up, merging and restructuring of what may be argued as previously independent societies (Achebe, 2012). These communities came to be regarded as ethnic groups and therefore subgroups organized under the umbrella called Nigeria at independence. The extent of ethnic diversity produced by this process left nationalists with the need to create a sense of oneness and national identity amongst the various groups that make up Nigeria if the country was to succeed. Rogger & Rasul (2015) argue that Nigeria is a highly ethnically fractionalized society. With a population of 173.6 million (2013 World Bank estimate), comprising of about 374 ethnic groups (Otite, 1990). Three of these are regarded as majorities (the Ibo, Yoruba, and Hausa ethnic groups) and the remaining 371, ethnic minorities. Lewis and Bratton (2000) argue that ethnicity is the most salient identity in Nigeria, such that national identity does not hold any automatic privilege over ethnic origin.

Successive Nigerian governments have adopted different strategies to foster a sense of nationhood among Nigerians. Significant of such strategies include utilizing a Federal System of Government; state creation, Federal Character Principle, and the practice of indigeneship. A federal system of government was seen as a tool for undermining ethnic and cultural differences (Awa, 1964). The creation of states, which came to be the basis of a federal government, was believed to be a panacea for ethnic minority representation (Akinyele, 1996). The Federal Character Principle, on the other hand, is a quota system that was to facilitate state and regional representation at the federal level of government (Osaghae, 1986). Indigeneship depicts a right of state ownership by those who can claim ancestral ties to the

state (NRN Policy Brief No 5, n.d.). The idea behind this is to enable indigenes and inherent ethnic groups to preserve their culture and heritage (ibid). However, these provisions have not served to quell the 'problem of ethnicity' (Suberu, 1996) in the country and some instances, have intensified inter-ethnic rivalry (Ayoade, 1986; Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Sayne, 2012). This thesis will show how the effect of the above-discussed ethnic equality strategies serves to sustain ethnic stratifications while creating new identities that serves as bases for exclusion. In this regard, ethnic majority power and ethnocentric sentiments still hold sway in Nigerian civil service organisations.

Before expounding on issues of gender in Nigeria, it is important to state that ethnicity is discussed in this thesis as distinct from race. Race is seen as a social construct developed to facilitate domination and oppression on the basis of phenotypical characteristics such as skin colour (Jenkins, 1996). As a result, race holds no analytical validity in Nigeria. This is because; Nigerians are regarded as being of one race, the 'black race'. However, ethnicity, which is also socially constructed, loosely encapsulates cultural, linguistic and ancestral ties that form the basis for collective identities in Nigeria (Ferdman, 1999). While Nigerians in Nigeria may not think of themselves in terms of race, Lewis & Bratton's (2000) argument that ethnicity is the most salient form of identity in Nigeria implies that ethnic ties transcend race in the given context.

Moving on to gender, Salihu et al., (2002) argue that gender inequality in Nigeria is embedded in political, sociocultural and economic policies and practices. Women in Nigeria occupy a subordinated status and are treated as secondary citizens relative to men. In this regard, they are excluded from decision-making processes, and face difficulties in accessing resources (Pereira, 2005). This is evident through customary laws that give men the sole right of land ownership, significant gender gaps in wage and education and gender inequalities in

access to the labour market (genderindex.org, 2014). There is a need for greater research attention to issues of gender and women's rights in Nigeria (Pereira, 2005).

The preceding discussion has important implications for organisational praxis. While the literature is replete with studies and theories of diversity in organisations, Western pedagogy in knowledge production and theoretical perspectives has dominated academic and research practice thereby rendering invisible the social world of non-western contexts (Oyewumi, 1997). In this regard, even though Nigerian women have been the subjects of some academic research, much of these are insensitive to their social world and experiences (ibid). Therefore, at a micro level, the purpose of the thesis is to examine the meaning and significance of gender and ethnicity within organisations through the perception and experience of Ijaw women in Nigerian civil service institutions. Unlike most ethnic minority women in Nigeria, Ijaw women have collectively and outwardly expressed dissatisfaction with their socioeconomic status. In 2002, hundreds of unarmed Ijaw women seized four oil terminals in the Niger Delta region of the country, in a bid to protest their inability for their families to access employment and social amenities (News.bbc.co.uk, 2002). This presents a significant manifestation of women's resistance to perceived disadvantage in Nigeria since independence (ibid). Thereby, making a study of Ijaw women an important means through which the experience of ethnic minority women in Nigeria can be grasped.

Acker (2006) argues that organisations parallel society, and therefore are viable units for examining gender and ethnic inequalities. Organisations not only mirror but also recreate *'ideologies, norms and practices that produce and reproduce gendered and ethnocentric practices and social relations'* (Martin, 1992 p. 208). However, gender and ethnicity are often analysed as independent sources of inequality in Nigerian Organisations (See Mustapha, 2006; Rogger & Rasul, 2015; Omar & Ogenyi, 2004; Mordi et al., 2011). It is argued here, that gender and ethnicity should be acknowledged as intersecting sources of

inequality, which may also intersect with other identities, to furnish an in-depth understanding of inequalities in Nigerian organisations. This thesis focuses on gender and ethnicity because they are regarded as primary identities (Jenkins 1996) with significant implications for individuals' experience in organisations. Nevertheless, other identities will become significant in this thesis such as language, age and indigeneship are also acknowledged.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This thesis uses the concepts of structure, culture, and agency to give voice to the lived experience of Ijaw women in Nigerian civil service. Structure, culture, and agency are viewed as both independent and interconnected processes that play a significant role the opportunities, barriers, and lived experiences of ethnic minority women in organisations. Archer (1995) describes structure as relating to persisting modes of social conduct, material resources and the reciprocal relationship between social elements in disseminating material resources. Structures at the macro societal and micro organisational levels such as legal codes and organisational policies are acknowledged in this thesis. The second element of the theoretical framework, culture, incorporates organisational and societal values, beliefs and ideologies. Agency, on the other hand, depicts individuals' ability to engage in deliberate action towards influencing their contexts. Thus, this thesis describes ethnic minority women as social actors that play a role in their workplace lived experience. This thesis also adopts an intersectional framework.

Although gender and ethnicity are distinct forms of daily social interactions, they also intermingle to bring about a unified structure of inequality (Bradley, 2016). The term intersectionality was used by Crenshaw (1991) to describe the intermingling of social inequalities. She states:

Intersectionality denotes the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions to Black women's employment (Crenshaw, 1991 p. 1244).

She further argues that Black movements and women's movements do not represent the intersecting experiences of racism and sexism that Black women encounter in their social world.

Therefore looking at race and gender solely as different, rather than mutually reinforcing sources of oppression renders Black women's lived experience invisible (ibid). Collins (1989) offers a similar view, arguing that black women are distinctively positioned between two systems of oppression, which when studied, drifts away from hegemonic discourses of race and gender to reveal spaces where axes of oppression and inequality interconnect. Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to denote, how the interplay of race, ethnicity and class have been deliberated and studied by researchers before this (Hancock, 2016). For instance, Anthias & Yuval Davis (1983) discussed black women's employment experience as encompassing three systems of oppression, as Blacks, as women and as working class. Although Crenshaw (1989), Collins (1989) and Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1983) conveyed similar ideas about women's experience of oppression in their discussions, the differences in how they position women's identities still form the basis of debates about intersectionality theory and methodology. Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1992) later argue against the idea of women facing a triple jeopardy, stating that it is implausible to conceptualise individuals' experience in additive terms because the lived experience of oppression is often a product of an intermingling of social identities. Notwithstanding, they offer a caveat to this position, stating that social categories have different ontological orientations and therefore cannot be reduced to each other. Yuval-Davis (2006) states:

To be black or a woman is not another way of being working class, or even a particular type of working class person (p. 200).

Moreover, ways of knowing and doing social categories may vary across cultures. In Nigeria for instance, being elderly is associated with having acquired wisdom, however, in other cultures ageing may be perceived as *'second childhood'* (ibid p. 199). This leads to a critical intersectionality debate of how to conceptualise and analyse different levels of oppression in a given project. In response to this, Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests that intersectional investigations of social categories should, of necessity, take into consideration contextual socioeconomic and political processes to avoid hegemonic practices of first and second-wave feminist discourse in theorising and researching intersectionalities.

'By incorporating these different kinds of differences into our analysis, we can avoid conflating positionings, identities and values. We can also avoid attributing fixed identity groupings to the dynamic processes of positionality and location on the one hand and the contested and shifting political construction of categorical boundaries on the other' (Yuval-Davis, 2006 p. 200).

Yuval-Davis' (2006) arguments underpin the intersectional framework adopted in this study. The term intersectionality has its origins in the United States and since its introduction, much of its theoretical developments have been based on black women lives in the UK and US. In order to avoid conflating the lived experience of Ijaw women with how Black women's lived experience have been theorized in the intersectionality literature, this thesis first engages in a contextual interpretation of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria, before looking at their intersections. A second reason for adopting this approach is that this thesis involves a study of ethnicity in a way that cuts through racial identity. Owing to the notion that most studies of race and ethnicity either conflate race and ethnicity or use them interchangeably, the need for a dedicated conceptualization of ethnicity in Nigeria and through the lives of research participants becomes imperative. Therefore as Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests, this thesis engages with the historical development of gender and ethnic identities, placing them within their social, political and economic contexts in pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial

Nigeria. This culminates in developing an intersectional methodology that takes cognizance of the social location of Ijaw women.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) holds that individuals tend to view themselves and others in terms of social categories (Tajfel, 1970). SIT has its roots in the works of Tajfel (1970) who proposes this theory as a means of explaining group processes and relationships between groups. Tajfel (1978) argues that the social category into which an individual falls and to which they have a sense of belonging serves as a model for self-definition. The process through which such an individual identifies with the tenets of a group and adopts it as his/her own, forms the basis for categorising self and others, and leads to ingroup/outgroup stereotyping, competition and discrimination (Hogg et. al, 1995). This theory will be utilised for understanding how Ijaw women's social identities as women and as Ijaw affects their behaviours and strategies for combating structural and cultural constraints, and how they perceive themselves vis-à-vis members of other social categories.

In adopting the theoretical framework of structure, culture, agency, intersectionality and social identity theory the objective is to delineate;

- How ethnic minority (Ijaw) women identify themselves in the workplace.
- How they perceive their gender and ethnicity to be of significance in their workplace lived experience.
- The nature of discrimination experienced by ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the workplace.
- The strategies they use in combating perceived discrimination.

1.3 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis develops into eleven chapters. Chapter two provides a sociohistorical examination of gender and ethnic identities in Nigeria as a basis for understanding their meanings and processes in the Nigerian Civil Service.

Chapter three is an attempt to understand theoretical frameworks used for examining gender and ethnicity, their intersections, and significance in organisations. The theoretical frameworks are presented, after which the concept of identity is discussed. The conflation of race and ethnicity is examined with the goal of presenting them as distinct processes of domination and oppression. The literature on ethnic and gender identity development and the career strategies of women and ethnic minorities are also discussed.

Chapter four connects the historical and theoretical framework of chapters two and three with the methodology. In so doing, the methodology developed in this section acknowledges reality as constructed and therefore allows the researcher to analyse the social construction of gender and ethnicity through the workplace lived experience of respondents. The literature on ethnic minority women in organisations largely conflates race with ethnicity, mostly treating racial minority groups as homogeneous. The aim is to draw insights gained from such studies, but also develop an intersectional methodological framework that is sensitive to the context of the research population. It justifies the use of qualitative methodology and methods used in this study. It also situates the researcher, vis-à-vis respondents, discussing challenges and critical decisions during the research process.

Chapter five discusses the Nigerian civil service, placing it within the context of this thesis. It critically examines gender and ethnicity discourse in the public service, with a focus on equality strategies.

Chapter six to eight provides the analysis of the findings. Chapter six discusses issues that influence ethnic minority (Ijaw) women's choice of the civil service and how they perceive that they are positioned relative to other ethnic groups. The way respondents perceive that they are positioned is pivotal because it may inform their views of gender and ethnic identities as well as the strategies they adopt to overcome structural challenges.

Chapter seven discusses participants' perceptions of discrimination. Using Acker's (2006) Inequality Regimes, this chapter offers a critical examination of how inequalities are created and sustained in organisations. Respondent narrative vignettes are used to provide evidence of issues of structure and culture in organisations that serve as barriers to respondents' career progression. In doing so, organising processes that produce inequality, the legitimacy of inequalities and the visibility of inequalities in participating civil service organisations are brought to light. Through this, emergent identities such as through language, age, and indigeneship that became evident through respondents' stories were highlighted and discussed

Chapter eight discusses strategies adopted for combating workplace inequalities. Gendered and ethnicized activism are discussed separately for analytical purposes; the aim of this was not to portray them as operating independently of each other. However, analysing them separately was useful for creating a deeper understanding the meaning and significance gender and ethnic identities through participants' workplace lived experience.

Chapter nine builds on the findings discussed in chapters six to eight to provide an intersectional analysis of the data. Here, the different ways in which participants discussed their identities as intersectional was discussed, and their gendered and ethnicized agencies were compared. The evidence suggests that ethnicity is a politicised identity while gender is a more passive identity.

Chapter ten provides a synthesis of the main arguments deduced from the analysis of the findings in chapters five to seven. It also discusses the study's contributions, recommendations for further research, policy development and organisational praxis.

Chapter eleven provides a critical reflection on the research process and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

ETHNIC AND GENDER IDENTITIES IN NIGERIA

2.0 Introduction

Ethnic and gender identities in Nigeria have been constructed within different contexts before and after the formation of the country. This chapter examines meaning and significance of ethnicity and gender, contextualising it within the sociohistorical environment of Nigeria. While this is not an anthropological study, the analysis of ethnic identity from pre-colonial Nigeria is mandatory to foster a thorough understanding of gender and ethnic identity in Nigeria. Nkomo (1992) argues that sole reliance on social psychological theories which emphasize individual level remedies (such as Social Identity Theory [Tajfel, 1970], Social Categorization Theory [Hogg, 1987], and Social Attribution Theory [Heider, 1958]) to understand ethnicity in organisations will render a lop-sided and insufficient explanation of the phenomenon as well as provide remedies that foster existing ethnic inequality. The reason for this is that the cognition of individuals is perceived to be less susceptible to intervention. Moreover, the approaches mentioned above ignore the *'historically specific'* development of power and domination, and their role in shaping and fostering inequalities (Nkomo, 1992). A sociohistorical analysis of ethnic inequality will safeguard from proffering essentialist remedies to the problem of ethnic inequality in organisations. In line with this argument, this discussion on gender and ethnicity in Nigeria will be carried out in the context of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. The aim is not to provide a thorough chronological historical analysis of the three epochs in Nigerian history, as this would extend the scope of this thesis. However, the goal is to highlight issues in the various epochs that are significant for the development of both identities in contemporary Nigeria.

2.1 Ethnic and Gender Identities in Pre-colonial Nigeria

Before the Berlin conference of 1885, which precipitated what is now known as the Scramble for Africa and the creation of nations that violated Africa's ancient societies, an example of which is Nigeria, there existed monarchies with their individual group identities:

'The northern part of the country was the seat of several ancient kingdoms such as the Kanem-Bornu, which Shehu Usman dan Fodio and his jihadists absorbed into the Muslim Fulani Empire. The Middle Belt of Nigeria was the locus of the glorious Nok Kingdom and its world-renowned terra cotta sculptures. The Southern protectorate was home to some of the region's most sophisticated civilisations. In the West, the Oyo and Ife Kingdoms once strode majestically and in the Midwest the incomparable Benin Kingdom elevated artistic distinction to a new level. Across the Niger River in the East, Calabar and the Nri Kingdoms flourished' (Achebe, 2012 p. 1).

Western disciplinary theories and concepts dominate much of academic literature and have formed the basis for research in developing economies such as Nigeria. While this approach might have its advantages, management studies in Nigeria that are based on Western generated theories may not shed sufficient light on local conditions prevalent within the country (Oyewumi, 1997). Especially, in analysing gender and ethnic identities, it is essential that an Afrocentric analysis is conducted to avoid misconceptions that may arise from depending solely on Eurocentric conceptions and theories (ibid). Feminists have produced much of what is known today about gender, however, much of this knowledge is based on Western European and American experiences (Oyewumi, 1997). Gender, as a set of beliefs and practices structuring human experience, is relatively meaningless outside of a particular cultural context (Ferdman, 1999). Seeing that gender is a socio-cultural construct, generalising findings from one context to another will render tangible forms of gender relations invisible. Therefore, the analysis of gender in Nigeria must, of necessity, be addressed from a cultural frame of reference, culture being a key component of ethnicity. The notion that gender is socially constructed (Lorber & Farrel, 1991) and Nigeria as a country is a contemporary fabrication (Achebe, 2012) warrants a historical examination in order to gain

a fuller understanding of both identities. What is today known as Nigeria encompassed a diversity of peoples that cannot all be discussed here. Therefore, this account of gender and ethnicity in pre-colonial Nigeria will consider the Oyo-Yoruba, Ijaw and Igbo peoples.

2.1.1 Perceptions of ethnicity and women in the village democracies of the Igbos

The precolonial land mass today known as Nigeria was a conglomeration of sovereign empires, monarchical kingdoms, and village democracies (Onwuejeogwu, 1981; Shillington, 2005). The Southeastern part of the country encompassed communities with socio-ecological, political, economic and territorial independence that are today known as the Igbos (Horton, 1979; Alagoa, 1979). These autonomous communities made no effort to organize under state or nationhood (Umejesi, 2012). They developed a democratic system whereby, elected leaders held no automatic power or privilege over other members of society. Rather, they functioned as partners who were called to carry out specific functions in collaboration with the citizenry (Ojiugo et al., 2014). The Southeastern and southwestern regions practiced communal ownership of resources whereby land was seen as belonging to the people:

‘Throughout the whole of Southern Nigeria, the land is ... communal and belongs to the people generally. The feeling [reverence] partly arises, no doubt, from the belief in the spirits of the earth, the local representative which is usually regarded as the tutelary guardian of the people and its soil, and partly from the worship of ancestors who dwell in it’ (Talbot, 1937 pp. 680 & 682).

These attributes may serve as an indication of the sense of identity amongst the people of the southeastern part of Nigeria. Shared ownership of land and the belief in ancestral ownership is likely to engender a sense of belonging associated with nationhood. Connor (1978) argues that nationhood at its essence engenders a psychological bond that knits a people group together, and distinguishes them from all others. It is the intuitive conviction of a people group, of having a shared ancestry, which makes them a nation, rather than a scientific proof

of blood relations (ibid). Moreover, in light of the notion that the village democracies of the southeastern region had defined territories, they could arguably be referred to as nation-states.

Pre-colonial Igbo communities had unique belief systems and cultural practices. The political culture of the Igbos could be described as '*dual-sex*' (Nzegwu, 1995). Within this structure, women had their own governing councils, *Ikporo-Onitsha*, *N'dinyom*, that addressed their specific concerns and needs as well as social and political interests. This dual-symmetrical structure accorded immense political profile to women both in communities with constitutional monarchies and in non-centralised democracies of the eastern hinterland (Nzegwu, 1995). Pre-colonial Igbo society was divided along gender lines but gender relations were not characterized by antagonism. The socio-political structure of the society encouraged an active inclusion of women in community life. Women were regarded for the spiritual, economic and maternal roles they played in society. Harmonious gender relations were critical for the survival of Igbo societies as men worked alongside women to maintain the societal structure (Nzegwu, 1995).

Amadiume (1987) also provides a detailed and rigorous analysis of the position of women in pre-colonial Igbo society in her book '*Male daughters, female husbands: Gender and sex in an African society*'. She argues that in pre-colonial Igbo society, sex did not necessarily correspond with gender. Individuals who worked hard and impacted society with their industriousness were awarded with titles regardless of their gender. Sociocultural categories were distinguished based on interest groups that performed certain roles in the society. Roles were not rigidly feminized or masculinized, and gender categories were fixed in relation to the social position and not anatomy. Women who had economic and religious power were classified as men because of the powerful position they had. Families were patrilineal and as a result, male children were regarded as custodians of the family lineage. A family with no

male child could pass their daughters from female hood to male hood through traditional ritual rights. A girl or woman who goes through this process became a son and was given every right and privilege associated with being male. Another way families dealt with this issue was to marry more wives into the family. The right to marry new wives was not the prerogative of men as women also had the right to marry more wives into their family. However, the relationship a woman has with another woman to whom she was married, was not a sexual one as opposed to the relationship between a man and his wives. Wealthy single women or female titleholders, who wanted children but could not have any of theirs, were able to take as many wives as they please. These women were regarded as the husbands of their wives. Female husbands were the sociological fathers of any offspring. Children belonged to the lineage of the woman and she played the role of father, provider, and protector. Female husbands were regarded as men. Leith-Ross, (1939) a wife of a colonial official conducted a study of women in Igbo society. According to her, roles were gendered in Igbo society:

‘Culturally, African women were the transmitters of the language, the history and the oral culture, the music, the dance, the habits and the artisanal knowledge. They were the teachers and were responsible for instilling traditional values and knowledge in children. Men were also essential in the transmission of knowledge to the youth because they had a different type of knowledge of the earth and environment, and also of ceremonies and traditions that were performed exclusively by men.’ (p. 34).

She goes on to point out that

‘Woman had extensive knowledge of the natural environment; they were gatherers, which meant that their communities depended on them to provide nourishment or they would face starvation. Indigenous women in Africa held vital knowledge of herbs and medicines that also ensured the survival of their communities; they were the healer’ (p. 34).

Leith-Ross’s (1939) account of Igbo women shows some of the roles women played in the society. However, (Amadiume, 1987) critiques her description of roles within Igbo society as gendered, stating that applies a Eurocentric interpretation to the culture and beliefs of the

Igbo society. Amadiume (1987) argues that Leith-Ross's (1939) initial description of some roles as feminine, and her later account, in a different piece of work, that she (Leith-Ross) noticed 'peculiar' conceptions of sex such that there was no differentiation between sexes or the possibility that the transposition was acceptable in society, is contradictory. Leith-Ross (1939) research did not take into consideration how Igbo cultural interpretations of sex and gender affected gender relations and positioning (Amadiume, 1987). She, therefore, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the gender system and role distribution in pre-colonial Igbo society. Although women played the roles described by Leith-Ross (1939), such roles were not gendered (Amadiume, 1987).

2.1.2 Perceptions of ethnicity and women in Ijaw Society

The Ijaws are located in the Niger River Delta area of present day Nigeria. The pre-colonial Ijaw people practiced a decentralised political system like their Igbo neighbours (Alagoa, et al. 2009). According to (Ariye, 2013), they had a heterogeneous system of government whereby; clans existed autonomously with no central authority. Although most clans engaged in fishing, farming and salt production, clans existed autonomously and practiced different types of leadership (Ariye, 2013). While some clans such had a hierarchical administrative system led by chiefs and monarchs, others had no centralized system of authority (Orji, 2011). Although there were mostly male monarchs, there were also instances where women ruled. They practiced a dowry system of marriage whereby the groom paid a dowry to the family of the bride and upon marriage, their children had the freedom to choose to identify with either their mother or father's lineage (Enemugwem & Sara, 2009).

Awe (1992) contends that while African historiography neglects women's narratives, African oral traditions paint a more holistic picture of all sectors of the population. Consequently, this analysis of women in pre-colonial Ijaw society makes use of myth and oral traditions to

illuminate the gender cultural beliefs of pre-colonial Ijaw society. A myth is a type of folklore that centers on sacred stories about cultural heritages (Gazin-Schwartz, 2011). They are significant within specific social settings ranging from families to entire nations. Social groups 'own' the folklore, subscribe to the beliefs encoded in myths, and grasp the traditions and practices that are buttressed by folklore (ibid.). Such traditions are significant in the creation and maintenance of cultural and social identities (Gazin-Schwartz, 2011). Folklore is often transmitted via oral traditions (ibid.).

Ijaw oral traditions divulge beliefs of a female creator who created gender-less humans that were given the freedom to choose their gender and destiny (Leeming, 2010). The women chose their gender and who they will become, how they will live and how they will die (ibid). Among this group of humans created where two women, one woman asked for rich and famous children and the other ('Ogboinba') asked for magical powers. They both choose to live in the same city. When they became of age and took husbands, the woman who requested rich and famous children began to have children, and Ogboinba's magical powers begin to grow. Ogboinba soon becomes discontent and wants children of her own and engages the female creator in a battle, which Ogboinba eventually loses (Leeming, 2010).

The Ijaw oral tradition reveals the appreciation of women and centrality of motherhood in Ijaw society (Alagoa, 2003). This is significant for understanding pre-colonial Ijaw society. Though the creator was portrayed as woman, her creation was gender neutral. The freedom for her creation to choose their gender paints a picture of gender equality and freedom. Ogboinba is considered to be heroic because of her bravado and the victories she encountered along the way (Okpewho, 1998). Although she does not succeed in her quest:

'She exemplifies a Republican, self-assertive individualism that sets much store by taking one's fortune, as it were, in one's own hands' (Okpewho, 1998 p. 75).

This portrayal of divinity in Ijaw mythology is markedly different to the image of a male creator that is used to perpetuate male superiority in Euro-American religious philosophy and symbolism (Oliver, 1989). In the latter, the presumed masculine creator has formed the religious basis for legitimizing prejudiced social structures that oppress women (Schneiders, 1986). The maleness of Jesus has also been used as a support for maleness as normative for humanity and the superiority of men (ibid.). It must be noted that although the creator is portrayed as a woman in Ijaw creation myth, no gender is portrayed as normative to humanity. In similar vein, no gender is portrayed as superior to the other as humans are given the freedom to choose their gender at creation.

2.1.3 Perceptions of ethnicity and women in Oyo Empire

Unlike the Igbos and their Ijaw neighbours, the Yoruba people of Oyo Empire practiced a centralized and hierarchical system of government (Ujemisi, 2012). The Oyo Empire gained popularity and prominence between the 14th and 18th centuries (Shillington, 2005). The Alaafin, who was a spiritual and political leader of the people exercised, supreme authority over the people (Ujemisi, 2012). The administrative system was a complex hub of checks and balances involving a hierarchical structure of traditional rulers that served as a check to each other (Davidson et al., 1966). The empire's economy was based on trade with Europeans and included commodities such as slaves in exchange for cloth, firearms, and cowries (Law, 1977). Its strong economy and powerful military force was a means through which the empire exerted its authority and influence over neighbouring lands (ibid). Conquered lands became vassal states, which were somewhat autonomous, having their own individual governmental systems (Muiu & Martin, 2009). The absence of a central governing system for vassal states meant that they could grow their own military might to the extent of being instrumental in the eventual collapse of the Empire (ibid).

Figure 1: Pre-colonial Oyo Empire



Source: <http://www.reunionblackfamily.com>

Onyewumi's (1997) seminal study of gender in Oyo-Yoruba society (see figure 1) sheds light on the positionality of women within that society. According to her, gender was not an organising principle of old Oyo society, and gender categories did not exist'.

'Social ... categories like 'men' and 'women' or 'king' – did not exist. Oyo social categories were gender-free in that the anatomy did not constitute the basis for their construction and elaboration. Access to power, exercise of authority, and membership in occupations derived from lineage, which was regulated from within by age, not sex' (Onyewumi, 1997 p. 83).

She posits that feminist concepts emerge from the logic of *'patriarchal nuclear family, a family form that is inappropriately universalised'* (ibid, p. 3). She uses the Yoruba language

to demonstrate that Yoruba families were not gendered but based on kinship such that seniority is the organising principle within the family:

'Seniority is the social ranking of persons based on their chronological ages. Hence, the words egbon refers to the older sibling and aburo to the younger sibling of the speaker regardless of gender. Seniority principle is a dynamic and fluid; unlike gender, it is not rigid or static' (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 3).

Within the Yoruba family, gendered nomenclature was not used in referring to children. They are referred to, as 'omo' regardless of their gender and the category 'oko' which is usually glossed as the English word husband, comprises both men and women while 'iyawo' refers to women marrying into a family. Therefore, the 'oko' is superior to the 'iyawo' because of their status as birth members of the family while the 'iyawo' on the other hand is a family member by marriage.

'In the Yoruba case, all the members of the lineage as a group are called omo-ile and are individually ranked by birth order. All the in-marrying females are as a group known as iyawo-ile and are ranked by order of marriage. Individually, an omo-ile occupies the position of oko in relation to the in-coming iyawo. This insider-outsider relationship is ranked, with the insider being the privileged senior. The mode of recruitment into the lineage is the crucial difference--birth for the oko and marriage for the iyawo' (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 3).

The absence of gendered meanings in Oyo-Yoruba language as portrayed by Oyewumi (1997) shows that no gender was regarded as normative or superior in old Oyo society. This is a shift from the English language, in which the generic human is constantly masculine as evidence of the Euro-American portrayal of humanity as essentially male with females a derivative or even improper version of the male (Schneiders, 1986).

The preceding account of pre-colonised inclusive peoples in their separate groups of what is today known as the Southern part of Nigeria is relevant to this thesis because it allows for a historical understanding of ethnicity and perception of women and their identities before colonialism. In relation to ethnicity, it can be gleaned that there was a multiplicity of distinct

inclusive peoples with a diversity of ethnicities, histories, economies, governmental systems and political structures (Ayoade, 1986). While some inclusive peoples lived autonomously despite sharing common beliefs about ancestral origin, others such as the Oyo Empire had a centralised system of government and engaged in wars of conquest where it allowed vassal states to maintain autonomous identities (Muiu & Martin, 2009). Based on an examination of indigenous African inclusive peoples, Muiu & Martin (2009) delineate six basic characteristics of political systems in pre-colonial Africa:

First, they were based on kinship and ancestry. Second, custom and tradition – rather than written constitutions – established rules and procedures of governance. Third, power in Africa was both circular and sacred. Fourth, women played a key role in the African political systems and institutions ... Fifth, indigenous political systems were inherently democratic ... Finally, rural communities (villages) constituted the basic level of indigenous African political systems (Muiu & Martin, 2009 p. 47).

Gordon (2003) states that the terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic group’ gained validity in African societies during colonialism. He further argues that cleavages in pre-colonial Africa were not interpreted as generating ethnic groups until Europeans applied this name to them. Connor (1978) suggests that although the term ethnicity was originally associated with *ethnos*, the Greek word for nation, in contemporary parlance ethnicity is used to refer to ‘a *group with a common tradition and a sense of identity which exists as a subgroup of a larger society*’ (p. 30).

In applying Connor’s (1978) argument to pre-colonial African Igbos, Ijaws and Yorubas, it is not likely that these inclusive peoples viewed themselves as a subgroup of a larger society. It is more likely that they existed as autonomous, equally valid, entities.

With regard to gender in pre-colonial Yoruba, Ijaw and Igbo societies, it can be gleaned that women were not viewed in opposition to men in these societies (Oyewumi, 1997). Furthermore, Igbo women had substantial family, economic, political and societal influence

(Afisi, 2010). Imam's (1988) presentation of African females paints a vivid picture of pre-colonial African woman as strong, powerful and proactive, distinct from the picture of African women painted in contemporary literature. Imam (1988) posits that this earlier position of women has been concealed and misrepresented in the post-1885 fabrication of African history. The role of women in civilization and development of African society has been underrepresented in historiography. Klienberg (1988) states:

'It is one of the scandals of the world which we live that females have been systematically omitted from accounts of the past, indeed it warps history by making it seem as though only males have participated in events thought worthy of preservation and by misrepresenting what actually happened.' (p. 1).

Eurocentric and masculine notions of history have dominated popular literature. For instance, Amartya's (1994) discussion of gender inequality makes the insinuation that gender inequality is an undeniable fact of human nature. He asserts that:

'It is a known fact that the world in which we live in is characterised by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men. Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States.' (p. 13).

However, Engel's (1884) step-by-step examination of the origins of societal domination by males suggests that ownership of private property by men earned them dominance in society. According to Sacks, (1974) women in Africa were more likely to own property than men, and it is the preoccupation of women in producing for private or family consumption that put them in a complementary position to men. Women played a significant role not only in their families but also in society. However, this nature of identification and relations was to be changed by colonization.

2.2 Gender Reconfiguration and an Arranged Marriage: Ethnic and Gender Identities in Colonial Nigeria

As previously discussed, colonialism in Africa was precipitated by the Berlin Conference of 1885. According to Achebe, (2012) Nigeria was handed over to Britain '*like a piece of chocolate cake at a birthday party*' (p. 1). The Berlin conference culminated in the creation of '*artificial boarders and boundaries to create artificial countries within Africa that they [European powers] could control*' (Hamza, 2014, p. 1). It has been argued that, to establish their authority over the country, British anthropologists studied ethnicity in Nigeria purely for the reason of facilitating colonialism (Ekeh, 1990). Ukiwo (2005) suggests that the early studies of ethnicity were aimed at providing colonial administrators with necessary information such as historical origins, economic systems, ethnic and linguistic groupings as well as kinship, economic and administrative systems for drawing up '*ethnographic sketches*' and administration (Ukiwo, 2005 p. 10). The need for such studies was borne out of the desire to quell challenges to the colonial administration from groups with pre-existing decentralized methods of governing such as those in southeastern and central Nigeria (Ukiwo, 2005). These studies were not aimed at identifying or understanding existing patterns of inter communal or ethnic relations, conflict and conflict management within the various kingdoms. In fact, these studies were only collected in the interest of European domination (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010). Such studies failed to uncover the background of kinship structures, and the significance of pre-colonial inter-ethnic relations and alliances for '*colonial and post-colonial*' ethnic identity formation and conflict (Ukiwo, 2005). Rather, European economic interest was primary in drawing and redrawing boundaries (ibid). In the situations where colonial administrators recognized pre-existing ethnic boundaries, inter-ethnic relations and alliances, this was for the purpose of for facilitating the divide and rule tactic applied by the British to conquer pre-colonial states (Muiu & Martin, 2009). For instance, the British fuelled conflicts in the region by supporting one group against another,

which eventually led to the decline and eventual fall of states (ibid). Through these tactics, European powers were able to topple economic, cultural and sociopolitical systems to establish colonial rule. In so doing, Africa was

‘Re-defined and re-mapped ... to allow for better political control through proxies, such as local traditional chiefs’ (Hamza, 2014 p. 1).

Pre-existing inclusive peoples were stripped of their economic and political autonomy, reducing them to ethnic groups in the sense that they became subgroups of the British colonial government that eventually became Nigeria (Nyambegera, 2002). In this regard, ethnicity was created in - what is today known as - Nigeria by lumping together peoples of different ancestral and cultural heritage and creating boundaries to separate them from other groups that had been put together regardless of their differences or similarities (ibid). This ‘divide and rule’ strategy adopted by colonial masters was strengthened by the creation of majority elite groups that were used to maintain ‘order’ (Deng, 1997). The British pursued ‘*territorial separation through segregation and partition*’ of its colonial territories (Christopher, 1988 p. 233). They adopted the divide and rule policy in contrast to the policy of assimilation espoused by French colonists. Their sense of racial superiority was so excessive that making ‘English men and women’ out of colonial subjects was out of the question (ibid.). Divide and rule meant that inclusive peoples were divided (e.g. the Kanem-Bornu empire which included what is now North Cameroon, Southern Chad, Southern Libya, Northeastern Nigeria, and Eastern Niger) and a census conducted in a classificatory manner. Colonial government classifications split and re-split groups into discrete groups on phenotypic characteristics and ethnicity (Christopher, 1988).

‘The British form of divide and rule usually meant that they left most strong social structures in place to use as auxiliary service agents of the British Empire. However, they would send representatives from the smaller ethnic minorities that had grievances against the larger ethnic groups and provide them with British education and then installing them as the new colonial civil service and law enforcement. This

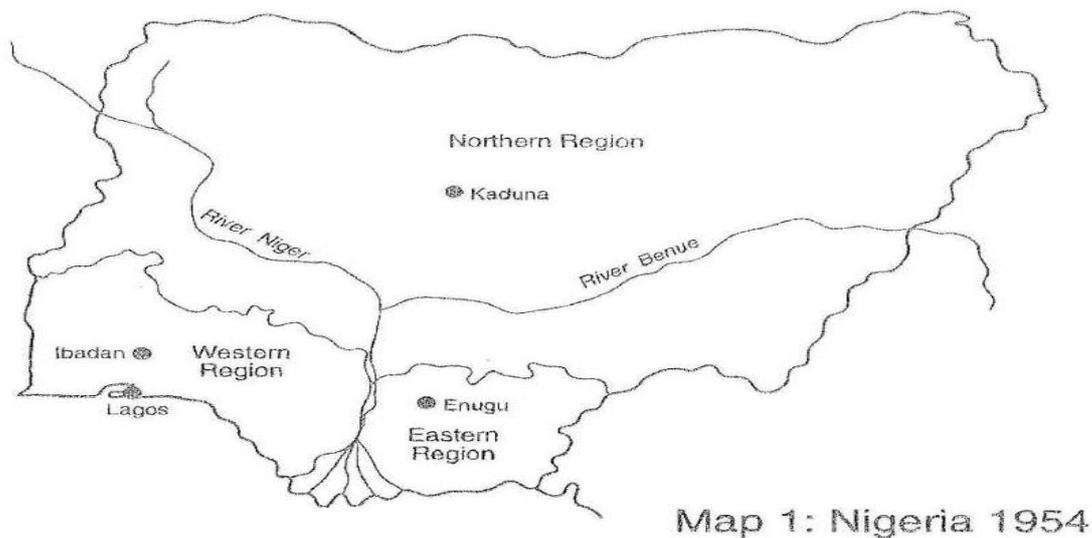
manipulation of ethnic divisions allowed the prevention of cross-ethnic anti-colonialist mobilisation (Hamza, 2014 p. 2).

Ethnic classifications became binding because it formed the basis of collecting census data and colonial rule was administered based on these distinctions (ibid.). This laid the foundation for ethnocentrism, which in turn gave way to competition for power at the national level (Obi, 2001).

The Richards Constitution of 1946 introduced 'Regionalisation' as a foundation for governance (Mustapha, 2006). This bureaucratic and political process culminated in the creation of Nigeria as a nation state through a process of social categorisation. Ethnic groups with similar language, culture, beliefs, and histories were merged to form the 'Youruba', 'Hausa-Fulani' and 'Igbo' majority groups (Osaghae, 1991). These three groups were given control over the Western, Northern and Eastern regions respectively (ibid) (see figure 2). Regionalisation gave rise to the conferment of 'majority' and 'minority' status to ethnic groups whereby these three ethnic groups were termed the majority while every other ethnic group in proximity to these groups were termed as minorities:

'The ethnic minorities in each region were forced to accommodate as best they could the rising tide of majoritarian hegemony in each region' (Mustapha, 2006 p. 4).

Figure 2: A historical map of Nigeria showing the three federal regions created by British colonial rule.



Source: <http://www.waado.org>

The MacPherson Constitution of 1951 that followed, further entrenched the principle of regionalisation by creating economic structures along regional lines; giving incentives for elites to unite by region; and introducing regional parliaments (Mustapha, 2006). Regionalisation gave rise to the formation of political parties along ethno-regional lines (ibid.) and aided the development of ethnocentrism in the Nigerian space (Mundt & Aborisade, 2004). Despite this machination of ethnic groups by colonial administrators, and the subsequent grouping and regrouping of ethnic groups in the bid for nation building, most Nigerians still view their ethnicity in primordial terms (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Where it might be possible to argue that ethnic group membership was an ascribed identity prior to regionalisation, this process has brought about the acquiring of ethnic identities. According to Jenkins (1996), an acquired or achieved identity is taken up in one's life journey and is not necessarily a product of self-direction.

'Strong ethnic ties often are felt and expressed in kinship terms, and thus often central to the definition of self. However, the Nigerian case demonstrates that ethnicity is often wrongly understood as primordial. While ethnic identity indeed has ancient roots, this does not mean that one's ethnic identity is identical with that of one's

ancestors. In Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, we see extraordinary change, as in the bonding of two separate groups to form the Hausa-Fulani culture, in the emergence of a Yoruba identity over what were previously separate societies in conflict, and in the formation of an Igbo identity among villagers who previously were largely unaware of one another. Both in the colonial period and since ethnic identities have been manipulated for political purposes' (Mundt & Aborisade, 2004, p. 703).

Regionalisation and the merging of distinct people groups to form the nation Nigeria have significantly impacted the nature of inter-ethnic relations in the country (Ayoade, 1986). Various psychological investigations have shown that intergroup discrimination can be sparked by something as basic as dividing people into groups with little or no thought regarding the consequence to them (NG, 2005). For the purpose of this research, Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides a good theoretical basis for understanding how an individual's thinking as a member of a social category, such as an ethnic group or gender, influences their subsequent behaviour and attitudes in social systems (Korte, 2007). It provides an integrated way of understanding intergroup relations by linking the individual with the social structure (NG, 2005). It explains these relations from an identity perspective, which is the main thrust of this investigation¹. Ingroup members are driven to adopt attitudinal tactics for acquiring and retaining ingroup/outgroup comparisons that favour self and their group as a result of the importance of social identities in the evaluation of self (ibid.). It is argued here that the re-grouping of people groups and the further classification of those groups as Nigeria accompanied by the centralisation of resource control gave rise to depersonalisation and intensification of competitive tendencies. This forceful co-joining of distinct ethnic groups to form a fractured Nigeria in the colonial era culminated in the creation of states and local governments in post-colonial Nigeria.

Also noteworthy of ethnic machination in colonial Nigeria was the management of education within ethnic groups. People groups in Northern Nigeria practiced Qur'anic education while

¹ See chapter 3.3 & 3.8 for discussion of identity, social identity and Social Identity Theory (SIT)

those in the South had their own educational systems, which were aimed at transferring religious and traditional beliefs as well as developing the intellect and character of children (Imam, 2012). This system of education was prevalent in the South until 1842 when Christian missionaries introduced Western education (Fafunwa, 2004). However, the British colonial administrators made a committed effort through their policy of divide and rule to prevent the missionaries from introducing Western education to the North (ibid.). More so, schools started by missionaries and other voluntary organisations were given grants while Qur'anic schools were excluded from such aids (Imam, 2012). This policy created a massive educational gap between the North and the South (Ibid.). The educational divide that this caused is very significant in the development of inter-ethnic relations in Nigerian society and organisations up until today. The first evidence of its implications was in the military.

Before (World War II) WW2, recruits from the North dominated Nigerian military. The commencement of the war gave rise to the need for skilled personnel such as store men, technicians, nurses and clerks, which could not be found in the North because of the lack of education prevalent in the area. British colonial drivers looked to the South, which was more educationally advanced, to meet this need. This changed the configuration of the military with those from the South gaining dominance (Peters, 1997). However, the South was seen as restive and a threat to colonial rule (ibid.). British colonial hegemony was almost ended by the Sepoy Uprising (1857) in India,² as a result of which they introduced ethnic groups that were more pliable and receptive of colonial rule. A quota system was introduced as a scheme for taking power from ethnic groups classed as 'restive and unreliable' and given to more 'reliable' groups such as the Sikhs, Gurkhas and Punjabis (Barua, 2013). This also led to the introduction of a quota system in Nigeria for strategic and political reasons, to play down ethnocentrism and conflict as well as curb the powers of ethnic groups (Igbos and Yorubas)

² See Hibbert, C. 1978. *The Great Mutiny*. New York: Viking Press.

which were perceived as ‘unreliable’ while empowering the Hausas which were seen as more compliant to British rule (ibid.).

‘In 1958, ... the British instituted regional quotas to ensure that the northern region represented 50% of the army, while the eastern and western regions had 25% representation each’ (p. 21).

This quota system was introduced to the army rank and file but not the officers’ corps (Barua, 2013). The adoption of this basis for recruitment created tension in the army rank and file, which was to have serious consequences for independent Nigeria. Apart from ethnicity, colonialism also had significant consequences for women:

‘Colonialism ... was an alienating historical condition that erased and silenced the voice of women... British policy of indirect rule resulted in the installation of a sexist administrative structure that, despite the demise of British imperial rule, has persisted to this day’ (Nzegwu, 1995 p. 445).

Lindsay (1999) provides an apt account of the impact of colonisation on gender relations and women’s identities in Nigeria, through her examination of the 1945 Nigerian general strike. 40,000 Nigerian workers engaged in strike action to protest their low wages in the face of acute inflation (ibid). Workers demanded breadwinner wages because this was the practice in Britain at the time and this practice was in place for British expatriates in Nigeria. British workers were supported by *‘family (or breadwinner) wages’* (Lindsay, 1999 p. 784):

‘Ideally, employers were to pay for the production of the labour force through wages disbursed to men. In return, wives’ unpaid domestic work enabled men to sell their labour outside the home’ (ibid, p. 784).

British worker’s trade unions supported the family wage because it was a viable means of raising men’s earning power and by extension, increasing their power and status within the family. Thus, the gender ideology of labour, of male breadwinners and women as housewives was reflected and reinforced through family wages (Lindsay, 1999). Nigerian workers, on the other hand, wanted an increase in their wages due to persisting inflation. They accused the

colonial government of being racist for instituting different pay models between the British and Nigerians. However, the colonial government argued back, stating that:

'African families were too different from European ones to justify similar entitlements ... women worked outside the home, especially after marriage; spouses generally did not pool their incomes; polygyny was widespread; and households were often composed of families much larger and more extended than those of the European Bourgeoisie (Lindsay, 1999 p. 785).

Cultural differences between the coloniser and colonised, specifically relating to gender and domestic arrangements were used to defend racial discrimination in wage fixing. Although Nigerian women's trading activities were key for the survival of striking workers and funding the strike, workers demanded *'a universal male breadwinner model and family allowances on the basis of equality with expatriate men'* (Lindsay, 1999 p. 787). For women, their support for the men was not with the goal of creating male wages or racial equality; rather they were interested in the men having more substantial economic power (ibid). This activism by women depicts a practical expression of Hudson-Weems (2000) ideas about African Womanism. She argues that feminist movements do not represent African women's interests because of their tendency to be gender exclusive. In her view, even though African women are aware of gender inequalities, women like to be women and like men to be men. This means that women work with men in the society for the overall good of the community, and the family is usually central to African women's activism. However, these beliefs and family structures were reconfigured during colonialism because workers' claims to *'primary household provider'* undermined women's support and shaped the image of the worker as masculine (Lindsay, 1999 p. 787). In the mid 1950s, colonisers conceded the demands of the strikers. On the condition that:

'African families had to be reshaped in a European image' (Lindsay, 1999 p. 788).

In doing so, the goal was to reduce strike actions and to increase labour productivity (ibid). These patterns buttress Acker's (1990) gendered organisational paradigm whereby *'men's*

bodies, sexuality, relationships, from procreation to paid work are subsumed in the image of the male worker' (p. 139). Thus, the necessity of women's employment was to be reduced through men's '*family/breadwinner*' wages, which was to enable them to support their wives and children. Workers, to increase their income, as well as their power and status within the family, supported family wages. Women became excluded from official conversations about family income, which became a subject of industrial relations (Lindsay, 1999). Although Nigerian men were never opposed to women's paid work, they organised under images of '*male breadwinners and a distinctly masculine working class*' (ibid p. 810). It appears that they were seduced by the European ideal of manhood and masculinity because of the economic, power and status benefits that it offered them as men. Nigerian Youth Movement depicted this desire in a newspaper report during the strike action:

*'Until men are treated as men and paid as men on the basis of the services they render irrespective of their race and colour, no Nigerian would be stupid enough to regard himself sincerely as a member of the **British** Commonwealth of Nations'* (Azikiwe, 1945 in Lindsay, 1999, my emboldenment).

The above quote signals the notion that although the crux of the matter was pay; that was also intertwined with issues of race and gender. It appears that the notion, propagated through slavery and colonialism, of the white man being the ideal for manhood (Acker, 2012) was an ideal that Nigerian workers aspired to. Hence, the argument that to be paid like the white man (British worker) is to be treated like a man. The colonial government's acceptance of

'... Family wages' represented a compromise with trade unionists over social reproduction and helped to legitimise men as subjects of the labour relations' (p. 811).

This laid the foundation for women's marginalisation from industrial relations and politics, and the neglect of their economic support of the family (Lindsay, 1999).

Nzegwu (1995) argues that the subordination of women in Southern Nigeria is directly related to the colonial economic and political policies that effectively undervalued women

while concurrently putting men in superior positions where they could make decisions about women. This made women invisible and rendered them *'dependent minors'* (ibid p. 445). The implications of such colonial policies are that women were deprived of education, employment, decision-making powers and access to resources (ibid). Gender roles and practices as espoused by Europeans was that of inequality and female subordination (St Clair, 1994). Women's roles were regarded, by the Europeans, as confined to the family unit, and therefore inferior to that of men, men were seen as possessors of the acumen and intellectual prowess to build and develop society (ibid.). Colonial administration was based on capitalism with emphasis on dominance, supremacy, and hierarchical compartmentalisation of roles such that women were placed in the lower echelons of economic and communal activity (Hunter, 1973).

'Women began to suffer oppression from men. The Shackles imposed by law, custom, religion and attitudes forced women to play; the second fiddle'. In fact, women mostly remained relegated to the last rung of the social and political ladder. Women no longer were given the opportunity to exercise any power except those supervised by men' (Afisi, 2010).

According to Ferguson & King (2006), though contemporary notions of patriarchy and female subordination appear to be ingrained in African societies, they are a heritage of the Neo-Liberal World Order and have continued to shape gender relations since colonialism producing a social order that privileges males. Western influence effectively removed women from their position in society by excluding them from communal economic and political activity (Sacks, 1974). Education and employment in the colonial government were also reserved for males (Foster, 1965). Colonial economic activity was centred on men who were taught the skills needed for large-scale production of cash crops and the role of women in the society was largely ignored (Leith-Ross, 1939). Thus, men were involved in the most profitable ventures leading to a division of labour whereby women were only involved in subsistence farming and production while men engaged in production for export (Dike,

1956). The size and importance of externally facing economic activity engaged in by men continued to increase while that of women (production for consumption) declined in importance (Galletti, 1956). Thus, women confined to subsistence farming had little or no control over the means of production and were excluded from production for exchange and taking part in communal life (Ottenberg, 1959). Women did not accept this with open arms; this change was forcefully opposed at different times, examples of which are the Kimpa Vita rebellion of Kongo and the Aba women riot of 1929 (Saje & Abubakar, 1997). However these revolts did not achieve much success, and African women have continued to play passive roles with little or no rights since then (Bulkachuwa, 1996). European colonial conquest of Africa between the 19th and 20th century made deep seated and lasting impact on the culture, economic, political systems, geography and civilisation of Africa's societies (ibid). Such changes led to the institutionalisation of gender inequality in the cultural norms and practices of Nigeria and indeed Africa, thereby positioning women as subservient in society and organisations (Bulkachuwa, 1996). African colonial domination was marked by the invention of '*gendered traditions*' (Oyewumi, 1997 p. 82).

'Men and women have been invented as social categories and history is presented as being dominated by male actors' (ibid, p. 82).

When the geographical region today known as Nigeria was mapped out as a property of the British colonial masters in the 1885 Berlin conference, Britain gained political, military and economic and social control over the whole region. Colonialism brought Africa into a deeper level of contact/interaction with a society with markedly distinct norms, values, systems, and morals to theirs. These new colonial policies, sociocultural norms, and values formed the basis of the creation of the country Nigeria. In pre-colonial Nigeria, the position of women was determined by the culture practiced within their people groups as exemplified in the previous discussion of the positioning of women in the Ijaw, Oyo-Yoruba and Igbo inclusive

peoples. However, the fusion of African gender culture, with European patriarchal traditions produced a *'hybridised social order that privileges males'* (Okeke-Ihejirika, 2004 p. 4). This led to the re-positioning of women from a place of equality to a position of subordination.

Applying Acker's (2006) discussion of the legitimacy of inequalities³ to the above discussion of gender and ethnicity in the colonial creation (Nigeria), it can be seen that ethnic and gender inequalities were legitimated by the peoples' acceptance of Nigeria - the British creation - as normal. The general belief in the efficacy of the Nigerian state, largely propagated through British education (Hamza, 2014), meant that the various ethnic identities undermined their individual group pursuits, for building the colonial creation, Nigeria. In doing so, however, the divisions and inequalities that were instigated and manipulated through the divide and rule policy undermined the creation of a united Nigerian front. With regard to gender, the reshaping of the 'Nigerian' family through naming men as breadwinners, repositioning them from being partners with women, to being in a position of power and control over their families, served to legitimise gender inequality. The implications of this new order for ethnic and gender identities in post-colonial Nigeria are discussed in the following section.

2.3 Ethnicity and women's identities in post-colonial Nigeria

Three distinct arguments can be delineated from the above discussions of the perceptions of ethnicity and women's identities in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria. First, the Nigerian state was created by the subsuming of pre-colonial nation-states, kingdoms, village democracies, empires, etc. into becoming ethnic groups, i.e. subgroups of a centralized colonial authority. Secondly, although at a 'national' level, ethnic groups and men and women came together to achieve common goals; colonial strategies instituted rivalry and inequality at the local and

³ See chapter 3.9 for a more detailed discussion of Inequality Regimes.

family (gender) levels that later characterised postcolonial ethnic and gender relations in Nigeria. Thirdly, gender relations were reconfigured, creating a hybridized gender culture that translated to male supremacy. It is on these three premises that ethnicity and women's identities in postcolonial Nigeria will be examined. First, ethnicity will be examined within the context of some salient strategies such as a federal system of government, indigeneity and the Federal Character Principle adopted by the postcolonial government for peaceful ethnic co-existence, after which women's identities will be discussed.

2.3.1 Postcolonial Governmental Strategies

'In the initial decades after independence, the relationship between the colonialist powers and their ex-colonies continued, and developed. The new class of elites that they created remained in charge after independence, allowing the colonialist powers to continue to influence their ex-colonies' (Hamza, 2014 p. 1)

When Nigeria attained independence in 1960, Nigeria had 57 military officers with only eight from the North, giving rise to inter-ethnic tension. To quell such ethnic tensions, leaders sought to foster ethnic integration and nation building based on the early Eurocentric Ethnicity Paradigm⁴. As a result of this, Nigerian leaders sought the demise of ethnicity studies (Ukiwo, 2005). This demise was also informed by predictions of Modernisation and Dependency theories based on the assumptions about assimilations that was central to the ethnicity paradigm and later, the desire for nation building. According to Modernisation Theory (Bernstein, 1971), conflicts in developing countries are rooted in pre-colonial rivalry between ethno-linguistic groups that came to form nations (Ukiwu, 2005). This theory predicted that increased education, Urbanisation, and Globalisation would result in the integration of ethnic groups as well as quell ethnic conflicts (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010). Dependency theory (Amin, 1976) on the other hand, postulated that ethnicity was a form of

⁴ Nkomo (1992) explains that the ethnicity paradigm as comprising the theory of assimilation and cultural pluralism model. Assimilation suggests that minority groups will be gradually accepted into society when they adopt the social mores of the dominant culture. While cultural pluralism posits that with the passing of time, all ethnic groups will be accepted into one large culture.

‘false consciousness’ (ibid. p. 1800). In post-colonial Nigeria, ethnicity studies were relegated to the background (Ake, 1985). In an attempt to foster integration and assimilation of ethnic groups, which came to form Nigeria into Nigerians; the leaders of the country were antagonistic of ethnicity studies. They adopted this position; despite viewing ethnicity as the only basis for resource sharing that would foster peace (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010). For instance, the first military president of Nigeria, General Johnson Aguyi-Ironsi banned ethnic associations and town unions (ibid.). Also, researchers who were interested in studying ethnicity and ethnic conflicts were labeled ‘subversive’, ‘unprogressive’, and ‘agents of opposition and imperialism’ (Osaghae, 2001 p. 12 in Onwuzuruigbo, 2010 p. 1799). This was in the bid to foster assimilation of ethnic groups as proposed by Eurocentric scholars. It is argued here that leaders sent mixed messages to the Nigerian populace, as well as being duplicitous. On the one hand, they claimed that ethnicity is irrelevant and derogatory to nation building and on the other hand, they used ethnicity as a means of gaining support for their political ambitions.

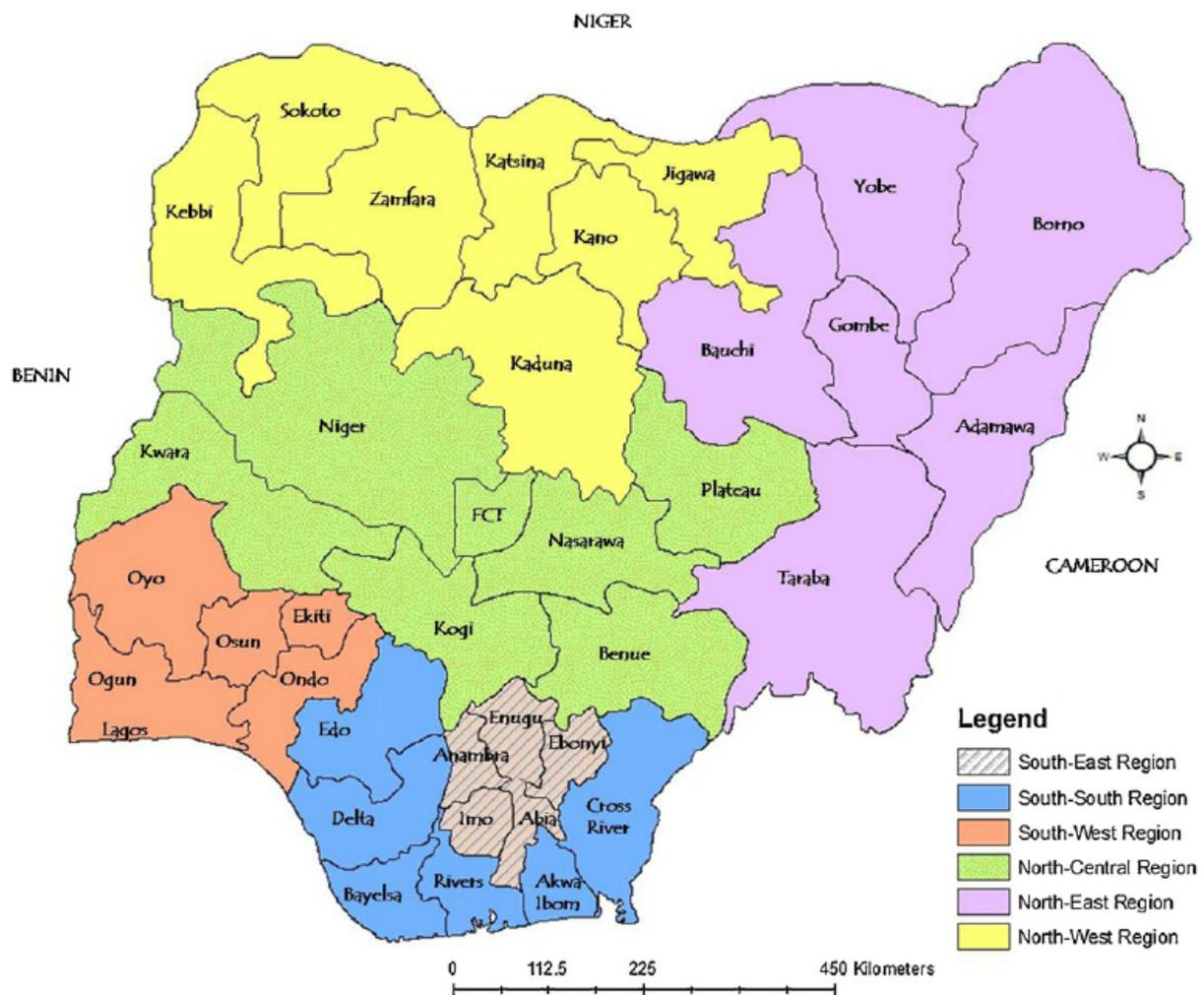
According to Osaghae (2003), ethnic political mobilisation has become more pervasive in Nigeria since the 1990s. General Aguyi-Ironsi who was the second head of state of Nigeria and a member of the Igbo ethnic group, believed that ethno-regional conflict was a bane for Nigeria’s development. He pursued a policy of unification to quell such conflicts and foster development. However, other majority ethnic groups rejected this policy. They saw his policy as a guise for instituting Igbo domination within Nigeria (Mustapha, 2006). This led to the coup of General Aguyi-Ironsi in 1966 and the initiation of a bloody pogrom by Northern soldiers against Igbos in the army (ibid). O’Connell (1967) argues that ethnic majorities engaged in an intense ethnic cold war to prevent the domination of the country by one ethnic group. After General Aguyi-Ironsi’s assassination, the Nigerian government continued to make attempts at managing ethnicity issues in the country (ibid).

A Federal system of government was adopted in a bid to promote cooperation and understanding between different ethnic groups O'Connell (1967):

'It was hoped that this form of government would make for a union of the federating units while the Federal Government will retain the central control of vital aspects like defence, security and foreign policy' (Federalcharacter.gov.ng. 2014 p. 1).

In order to facilitate the Federal system of government, states were created to function as federating units. State creation began with the institution of twelve states in 1976, after which successive military heads of the Federation created more states (Suberu, 1996). Minority agitation for more autonomy gave impetus for continuous state creation, which culminated in the 36 states that presently make up Nigeria, with a Federal Capital Territory located in Abuja (Suberu, 1996). These states are further divided into 774 local government areas to foster grass root governance (Barkan, et al., 2001). In the bid for more autonomy and representation of the different entities that make up Nigeria, six geopolitical zones were created, dividing the 36 states into six groups (see figure 3). The South South geopolitical zone made up of predominantly ethnic minority groups; the North West and North Central zones are a broad mixture of ethnic minority groups, as well as Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba ethnic groups. However, the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups dominate the South West, South East and North East geopolitical zones respectively (see figure 3) (Suberu, 1996).

Figure 3: Map of Nigeria showing 36 states and 6 geopolitical zones.

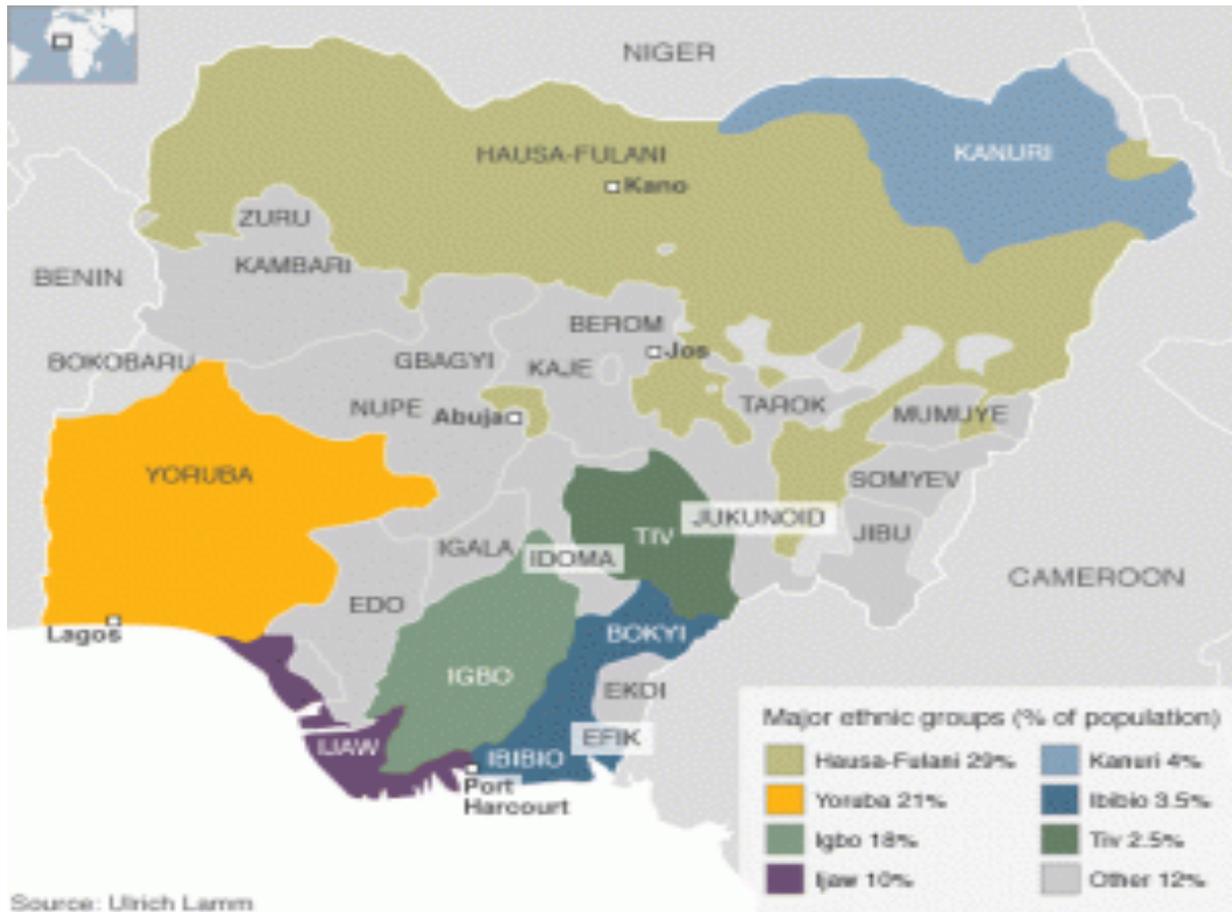


Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/51795009_fig1_Fig-1-Map-of-Nigeria-showing-the-six-6-geopolitical-zones-For-interpretation-of-the

Osaghae & Suberu (2005) contend that in practice, historical majorities created in the colonial era have maintained their dominance while historical minorities are still regarded as such. Majority ethnic groups make upwards of 68 per cent of the population (Lewis & Bratton, 2000). They include Hausa Fulani (29%), Yoruba (21%) and Igbo (18%) (cia.gov, 2012). Ethnic minority groups in Nigeria comprise different levels of ‘minority’ status. Larger minority groups include Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.5%) and Tiv (2.5%) (See figure 4) (Mustapha, 2006; cia.gov, 2012). The bulk of other ethnic groups constitutes the rest of the ethnic minority groups in Nigeria (cia.gov, 2012). Prior to 1990, the popular belief

was that Nigeria was made up of 250 ethnic groups until Otite (1990) provided a list of 374 ethnic groups that was thought to be comprehensive. ActionAid (2011) on the other hand estimated a higher number of ethnic groups at 394. Different authors have offered different reasons for this inconsistency.

Figure 4: Distribution of majority and some minority ethnic groups in Nigeria



Source: <http://www.fragilestates.org/2012/01/29/nigerias-potential-for-sectarian-conflict/>

According to Mustapha (2006) this difference is largely as a result of voluntary merging and sometimes division of ethnic groups due to administrative or political development. Osaghae & Suberu (2005) suggest that the different ethnicity statistics provided by different authors is due to the use of different criteria for delineating ethnic groups. According to them:

‘Although language, kinship, core territoriality and myth of common origin are the main criteria, with in-group self-definitions a correcting factor, there is no agreement on how to treat dialects of languages for example. Do these dialects constitute separate groups, or should they be regarded as sub-groupings or communal groups? (p. 9).

Phinney (1996) argues that there is a lack of clear theoretical background and inadequate empirical base for the concept of ethnicity (Phinney, 1996). However, according to Phinney (1996) most people have a practical understanding of ethnicity, but an accurate distinction of specific ethnic groups is virtually futile. Differences exist within ethnic groups creating a variety of social values and norms between members of the same ethnic group. Also, increasing rate of inter-ethnic reproduction obscures ethnic boundaries because such individuals cannot be assigned specific ethnic groups (Phinney, 1996).

Lewis & Bratton (2000) in their study of attitudes to democracy and markets in Nigeria conclude that ethnicity is the strongest form of identity in Nigeria. In their survey of 3,603 persons aged 18 and over, in 22 of the 36 states in Nigeria, respondents were asked to indicate their most important group affiliation apart from being Nigerian (Lewis and Bratton, 2000). The majority of the respondents (48.2%) indicated their ethnic group as the important identity followed by religious identity (ibid.). According to Hogg et al., (1995) Social Identification and self-categorisation, as manifested in the example of Nigeria, accounts for ethnocentrism, stereotyping and discrimination. Categorisation of self is the cognitive basis of group behaviour (ibid.). A person’s social identity is defined by their categorisation of self and others into ingroups and outgroups. This accentuates how they view themselves as similar to the ingroup prototype and different to that of the outgroup (Hogg et al., 1995). The more that individuals identify with their group, the more they favour their group at the expense of the outgroup (Tajfel, 1974). However, group membership does not always produce ingroup favouritism. Tajfel & Turner (1979) argue that group favouritism is likely to arise in individuals when ingroup membership is a core part of their self-concept; when there

is meaningful outgroup comparison and; the perceived significance of the contrast outgroup. Evidence from Lewis & Bratton's (2000) study seems to reveal that ethnicity is a core part of the self-concept of most Nigerians. The ethnic make-up Nigeria provides ample opportunity for meaningful outgroup comparison and significant contrast outgroups in the scramble for resources. The practice of indigeneity facilitates ingroup-outgroup contrasts.

2.3.2 The practice of Indigeneity

Indigeneity was introduced in the 1979 constitution with the aim of preserving the culture, educational and employment opportunities for members of ethnic groups (internal-displacement.org, 2014). Indigenes are regarded as rightful owners of economic, traditional and political resources in the local community and therefore entitled to use those resources for their betterment, except where those resources are regulated by Federal jurisprudence (ibid). Individuals are given identification certificates that serve as evidence that they belong to a specific state and this is demanded when seeking for various opportunities in all parts of the country (internal-displacement.org, 2014):

'Ethnicity and genealogy serve as the basis to determine if people are indigenes or not, to their allocation of residence. Indigenes are people who can trace their roots back to the community who originally settled in a given location [i.e. a given state of the federation]. Anyone who cannot do this, is considered a non-indigene, a settler or an 'allogene'. (ibid, p. 1).

The notion of 'indigeneity' provides an impetus for increased assertion of communal identities which leads to discriminatory citizenship whereby individuals distinguish between 'indigenes' and 'non-indigenes'; 'sons-of-the-soil' and 'migrants/settlers' (Ayoade, 1986) that form the basis for privilege and acceptance. Nigerians tend to perceive ethnicity and state membership as impermeable (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005): A Nigerian who cannot provide evidence of having ancestral lineage in at least one state of the federation is usually treated as

a stranger in all parts of the country and as such denied privileges and opportunities (Ovadjie & Ankomah, 2001):

'The principle of indigeneship is about 'ownership' of the community, local government or state. But this ownership is not in the narrow juridical sense of owning a piece of private property, but refers instead to the right to recognition as the pre-eminent ethnic group within the unit. It is about the right to determine the rules of engagement in inter-ethnic relations within the unit in question, and the right to dictate the pecking order for enjoying political and economic resources associated with the Nigerian state' (NRN Policy Brief No 5, n.d.).

The preceding quote demonstrates how the issue of ethnicity is implicitly replicated in the practice of indigeneity. Although the focus of the policy is on state membership, the criteria of having ancestral lineage within a given state in order to be conferred with the status of indigeneship, conflates the meaning of indigeneship with ethnicity. In so doing, it creates a dual citizenship status for Nigerians: State citizenship, which is by virtue of having ancestral roots in a given state of the country and Nigerian citizenship. A state citizen who migrates from his/her state to another state within the federation is vulnerable to blatant discrimination and sociopolitical and economic exclusion for the simple reason that he/she is not regarded as 'indigene'. This has sparked up a number of indigene/settler conflicts in the country such as the Tiv-Jukun conflict, North-South Kaduna conflict and Ijaw-Itsekiri war. A close look at these conflicts will reveal that they are also inter-ethnic.

The 1999 constitution, which currently governs the Nigerian polity, does not discuss the issue of 'indigeneity' (internal-displacement.org, 2014). It neither defines this concept, state what it means to be an indigene, or addresses whether an individual can attain the status of 'indigene' after a long period of stay in another state (internal-displacement.org, 2014). This situation has left grey areas in terms of the definition of 'indigene' and if a person can acquire this status by residing in a given area for a certain amount of time (ibid). Article 42 of the 1999 Federal Constitution proscribes selective discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity or

place of birth; however, this has not stopped the practice of 'indigeneity' and the treatment of 'non-indigenes' like foreigners (Sayne, 2012):

'Today Nigeria's state and local governments have free rein to pick who is an indigene. The 1999 Federal Constitution arguably allows this, and allows state and local officials to hand out public goods in line with their decisions. Under the constitution and related legislation, the lower two tiers of government have first-line responsibility for guaranteeing access to land, schools and public jobs within their boundaries. The constitution uses the term 'indigene' but does not define it and does not mention settlers' (Sayne, 2012 p. 3).

Aluaigba (2009) argues that despite the prohibition of discrimination on ethnic grounds, individuals living outside their state of origin are treated as foreigners. Because specific ethnic groups dominate some states, discrimination on the basis of indigeneship also tends to be interpreted as ethnic discrimination:

'Over a million Nigerians are labeled as non-indigenes in the place where they live, while an increasing number of people are unable to prove that they are indigenes of any state. Such rise results from the proliferation of states and local government areas' (internal-displacement.org, 2014).

An example of the effects of such a practice in Nigeria was the dismissal of 2, 604 state civil service employees in Abia state of Nigeria in August of 2011 on the sole basis that they were 'none-indigenes' of the state which comprise of members of the Igbo ethnic group, the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria (Punch, 2013). The practice of indigeneity has also resulted in conflict in Plateau and Taraba state to name just two (Sayne, 2012).

According to Eliagwu (2005), Nigeria has recorded about 140 cases of ethnic conflict, some of which are associated with the practice of indigeneity. Social identities such as ethnicity acquire positive or negative outlook when compared with other groups. According to Ng, (2005) when ethnic groups are put side by side with other ethnic groups, there are three possible responses this can spark up. The first response is inaction, i.e. continue existing as usual. The second possible response involves the social mobility of ethnic group members from one group to another for reasons of '*personal social upward mobility*' (NG, 2005). The

decision to take this action is based on perceived permeability of group boundaries. By permeable ethnic boundaries, it is meant that individuals can move from their group to a higher and more attractive group status. Perceived permeability can lead to interpersonal action where by individuals engage in action that will enable them to be assimilated into an ethnic group with more privileges. A consequence of this is that, though individuals move, the group status remains the same (ibid). However, the practice of indigeneity restricts social mobility in Nigeria by making ethnic and state boundaries impermeable. Due to increasing rate of population growth, unemployment, poverty and migration, many have come to perceive indigeneship practices as a means of propagating inequalities and denial of access to resources such as land ownership, participation in local politics, educational and employment opportunities (Sayne, 2012).

The third possible response discussed by Ng (2005) involves collective action by ethnic groups. This could either be group deliberation and implementation of creative means for achieving upward social mobility or competitive means. This response is precipitated by individuals' perception of group boundaries as impermeable and that their fate is bound with that of the group. Therefore, the only way to change their social identity status is by collective action. Ethnic groups that respond through social competition directly challenge the basis for outgroup supremacy (Ng, 2005). It appears unlikely that ethnic minorities will organize together towards achieving upward mobility of their ethnic groups due to the impermeability of state and ethnic group membership.

2.3.3 Federal Character Principle

In 1961, a regional quota system in the same proportion as the 1958 quota system was introduced to the officer corps (Mustapha 2006). This quota system was not accepted by public opinion as it was the belief that it would oblige the nation to

'Send subgrade people for training merely to satisfy Regional as opposed to the national interest' (Okeke, 1992 p. 64 in Mustapha, 2006).

The use of quotas was extended to the educational sector in 1967 with the aim of ensuring fair ethnic participation in the public sector (Mustapha, 2006). This was largely necessitated by the educational gap between the North and the South. While the East and West (jointly referred to as the South) were closely related in terms of educational achievement, the North was lagging behind (ibid.). The result of this was that Northerners lacked relevant expertise and qualification to take up positions in Federal Governmental Institutions. The belief was that the introduction of regional quota in the educational sector would help close the gap in educational attainment and, by extension produce, Northerners qualified to take up public sector employment (Mustapha, 2006). The quota system was such that educational opportunities were offered to potential students on four main grounds:

'(i) academic merit; (ii) educationally less developed states; (iii) catchment area, or the immediate surrounding states of the educational institution; and (iv) the discretion of those running the institution in question. While academic merit was determined by the applicants' results in external examinations such as the West African Examinations Council or the Joint Matriculation Examination, the educationally less developed states and the catchment area of each institution were determined by the government and handed down to the institution. At the level of the federally owned unity secondary schools, the quota formula is 20 per cent on merit, 30 per cent on the state in which the school is based and 50 per cent on the equality of states. At the intermediate level of the technical colleges, teachers colleges, polytechnics and colleges of art and science, the quota formula is 20 per cent on merit and 80 per cent on the equality of states. In 1981, the quota system was extended to federal universities, based on a ratio of 40 per cent for merit, 30 per cent for catchment area, 20 per cent for the educationally less developed states and 10 per cent for administrative discretion' (Mustapha, 2006 p. 34).

The introduction of this quota has had some measure of success in reducing the attainment gap between the ethno-regional zones of Nigeria but has not succeeded in closing this gap (Oyovbiare, 1989). Mustapha (2006) argues that one reason for the persistence of this gap is that States in the West and South have proceeded to reduce their dependence on national governmental education by building their own educational institutions while, states in the

North have not made reasonable attempts in this regard. He further states that while there has been a scramble in the West and East for educational opportunities, some Northern states have not been able to fill their allotted slots. This has led to the opposition of the quota system by Southerners. Van Den Berghe (1987) argues that:

'The irony of this course is that such a policy necessarily reinforces and perpetuates existing cleavages and, by alienating the more 'advanced' groups, frequently exacerbates rather than reduces conflicts' (p. 41).

Introducing, a quota system in education did not serve to quell ethnic minority discontent, or close the educational gap between Northern and Southern Nigeria. Differences in the levels of political and socio-economic development between federating units led to:

'Various sections of the country feeling excluded, marginalized and ignored in the scheme of things in the nation (Federalcharacter.gov.ng. 2014 p. 1).

This precipitated the introduction of a Federal Character Principle (FCP) in the 1979 Constitution. The FCP is a quota system that states that every state of the federation must have a minimum and a maximum of 2.75 percent representation in all federal government insittutions. Section 14, Subsection 3 of the 1979 Constitution describes it thus:

'The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies' (Federalcharacter.gov.ng. 2014 p. 1).

The term 'Federal Character' was defined as:

'The distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote unity, and foster national loyalty and give citizens of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which in their desire to nourish and harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria' (Federalcharacter.gov.ng. 2014 p. 1).

To benefit from the FCP, citizens are required to produce an indigeneship certificate that serves as proof of state membership. The FCP prescribes that at least one minister must be appointed from each state of the Federation, and offices such as permanent secretaries,

secretaries to the federal government, personal staff of the president and ambassadorial and armed forces appointments must be evenly distributed between states (Suberu, 2001). When recruiting for two positions, the FCP stipulates that one must go to the North and the other to the South. And when two positions are available, this must be distributed throughout the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria (Mustapha, 2006). The implementation of this principle was marked by dismissals and employments of persons according to the quota (Mustapha, 2006). This led to frustrated career expectations and discontent of minority group persons who saw the principle as a scheme to institutionalise discrimination in the public sector (Suberu, 2001). The FCP was initiated to foster unity and state representation in Federal Government Institutions, but the afore-discussed evidence shows that the FCP has not achieved this (ibid). Though the principle prescribes that there shall be no dominance of persons from certain ethnic minority groups, quotas are administered according to three main grounds; the North/South divide and the six geopolitical zones of the country or on a state by state basis depending on the number of vacancies to be filled. These categories are too broad to represent the various ethnic groups embedded within such divisions. One state may encompass up to four different ethnic groups and as such state representation will not necessarily imply ethnic group representation. For instance, Delta State comprises four ethnic groups: the Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw and Isoko ethnic groups. Moreover, majority ethnic groups (i.e. Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) are dominant in twenty-two of the thirty-six states of Nigeria. Whole geopolitical zones are often regarded as synonymous with these groups. For instance, Southeast geopolitical zone is dominated by the Igbos, the Southwest by the Yorubas and the Northeast by the Hausas (See Figures 2 & 3). Hence, an application of quota system either on the basis of equal representation of states or geopolitical zones will inevitably mean that these ethnic groups will almost always be the majority in federal government institutions.

Van Den Berghe, (1987) asserts that uneven dissemination of scant resources is a common characteristic of almost all multi-ethnic nations. He further argues that such societies take one of three strategies to resolve ethnic inequalities and conflict. A multi-ethnic society may enforce a Universalist policy while ignoring ethnic differentiation. This approach is usually welcome by ethnic minorities especially in a society where ethnic marginalization and discrimination is the norm but is later rejected when ethnic inequalities persist. Another strategy that might be adopted is the use of quotas, positive discrimination, and the like. Van Den Berghe, (1987) argues that these kinds of policies exacerbate ethnic cleavages and, by extension, ethnic conflict. The third approach he discusses is the combined use of both strategies; he argues that this has the gravest consequence of the three approaches. And in his estimation, Nigeria has adopted this third approach.

According to Van Den Berghe (1987) a multi-ethnic society aiming at equal opportunities between ethnic groups can achieve this through the use of a benign quota strategy coupled with a federal system that supports ethnic autonomy. However in the case of Nigeria, quotas are not distributed on the basis of ethnic groups but on one of the following; the North/South divide, the six geo-political zones or state indigeneship, depending on the number of positions to be filled. This practice is problematic because it pays little or no attention to the representation of ethnic groups, which was the reason for institutionalizing quotas in the first place. It appears that the goal of the FCP is to cause an erasure of ethnicity such that citizens will shift from identifying themselves based on ethnicity to identifying themselves based on state membership. However, Lewis & Bratton's (2000) research shows that despite this policy ethnicity is still a salient form of identity in Nigeria. Hence, there appears to be a disconnect between governmental policies and the perceptions of Nigerians at the local level. One reason for this may be the duplicitous practice of Nigerian politicians since independence. On the one hand, they seem to drum up ethnic sentiments from the people for

the purpose of winning elections (Badru, 1998) on the other hand; they promote policies such as the FCP that amount to the invisibility of ethnicity in governmental policies and structures. In doing so, the dominance of the majority groups are preserved, while ethnic minority groups end up with limited resources to enable them to organise towards challenging the majorities. Hamza (2014) argues that the same divide and rule tactic is employed by elites in postcolonial societies:

That's probably the over-looked aspect of colonialism, the way that many of the indigenous groups have been brainwashed to use the tactics that their colonial masters are using on all of them, on their own local ethnic communities (p. 1).

Ethnic quotas have been seen as an important tool for redressing persistent distributive inequalities (Wilkinson, 2003). In a collectivistic socioeconomic setting where ethnicity is a core part of individuals' identity (Geertz, 2014; Lewis & Bratton, 2000) where a person's ethnicity can determine the opportunities and privileges available to him/her as hitherto discussed, quotas may prompt the extension of the opportunities and privileges to minority groups. Dunning & Nilekani (2013) argue that this theoretical position is consistent with:

'primordialist ... some constructivist and psychological theories, in which the sanctioning of particular ethnic categories by the state makes ingroup and outgroup distinctions based on the categories politically salient' (p. 35).

Based on their research on the effects of quotas in the Indian states of Rajasthan, Karnataka and Bihar, Dunning & Nilekani (2013) conclude that though it is plausible to assume that ethnic minorities who enter into political positions through quotas will target benefits to ethnic affiliates thereby improving their socioeconomic advantages, this analysis is simplistic as it ignores the role of intervening factors. Political patronage, which is the practice in many countries, may have implications for the effectiveness of ethnic quotas. Where the distribution of resources is based on a partisan logic, the use of quotas may lose its essence because it will no longer serve as a regulator for the distribution of resources (Dunning & Nilekani, 2013). According to them, because political parties and partisanship are not divided

along ethnic lines, *'ethnic quotas do not necessarily entail ethnic mobilization or targeting'* (p. 40). They found that the use of quotas for disadvantaged groups did not correlate with the adoption of policies in favour of ethnic minority groups. Such findings may also apply to the Nigerian society where ethnic politics have been banned and inter-ethnic political parties simultaneously promoted. Despite the use of quotas since independence, ethnic minorities still experience discrimination in public sector organisation and uneven distribution of resources. An important argument here is that the FCP and indigenisation policies are contradictory to each other. On the one hand, the FCP claims to foster unity, while indigenisation upholds disunity by giving state indigeneship the prerogative over state opportunities. However, the power struggles between majority and minority groups in Nigeria are also embedded in the use of indigenous languages.

2.3.4 Language Diversity and Ethnic Relations in Nigeria

Africa is the second most linguistically diverse continent in the world, next to Asia, with about 2,138 individual languages, listed (Ethnologue, n.d.). This is close to a third of the world's linguistic heritage (News.bbc.co.uk. (2006). A quarter (520) of these individual languages are listed in Nigeria, making it the most linguistically diverse nation on the African continent (ibid). Dasgupta (1970) argues that ex-colonies face a dilemma with regard to developing a language policy at independence. The use of colonial language during colonization temporarily rendered language rivalry latent (ibid). However, the choice of indigenous language to replace the colonial language usually sparks up tensions and rivalry (Dasgupta, 1970):

'In a multilingual new state, the choice of one national language tends to generate intense language rivalry, especially in those situations where it is difficult to assess the dominance – qualitative and quantitative – of one single language. The choice of a national language involves so many political problems that convenience, rationality, and efficiency are not necessarily the decisive criteria' (Dasgupta, p. 21).

Allan (1978) posits that language is core to individuals' self-concept and identity. Language does not only serve as a marker for group identity, but individuals become aware of the world, their culture, history, traditions and customs in their mother tongue (ibid). And therefore in Nigeria, it is unlikely that all sections of the population will unanimously accept one indigenous language as a national language (Allan, 1978). In 1961, a proposal was made to the national assembly for the institution of Hausa as the Nigerian national language. However, other ethnic groups opposed this move. Chief Anthony Enahoro stated:

'As one who comes from a minority tribe, I deplore the continuing evidence in this country that people wish to impose their customs, their languages, and even their way of life upon the smaller tribes ... My people have a language, and that language was handed down through a thousand years of tradition and custom. When the Benin Empire exchanged ambassadors with Portugal, many of the new Nigerian languages of today did not exist. How can they now, because the British brought us together, wish to impose their language on us? (in Allan, 1978 p. 398).

Allan (1978) states that, although Enahoro's claims of his mother tongue being older than other indigenous languages is unfounded, his speech depicts the sense of meaning and identity that language evokes. It also suggests that other speech communities will perceive any attempt to adopt one indigenous language as official to be an imposition and a tactic towards dominating the country. This is exemplified in Enahoro's statement that:

'we have not fought the imperialist in order to establish a new imperialism in this country' (in Allan, 1978, p. 398).

Enahoro's statements buttress Fairclough's (1989) view dominant social groups may use language as a subtle means of exerting power over minority groups. Fairclough (1989) argues that language is a site of a power struggle, and language use is significant for legitimating and sustaining existing power relations. The rejection of an indigenous language as *lingua franca* due to fears of domination led to the continual use of English as the primary official language. However, the three major languages are also loosely adopted as official languages

(Adegbija, 2004). In a bid to manage the multilingual nature of Nigeria, the Nigerian government has made attempts to ensure that citizens of the country learn at least one of the three major languages – Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa. This is espoused in the National Policy on Education Section 1(8) and Section 55 of the 1999 Constitution (Owolabi & Dada, 2012). In a bid to avoid the tensions associated with fears ethnic domination through language, Nigeria has not developed a comprehensive language policy, and does not collect data about language and ethnicity during national census:

‘There are bogus language provisions in the National Policy on Education ... and in some other government’s occasional documents. The various government documents provide for various linguistic needs in the polity, which include provision for three national languages, namely: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, along the three former regions, which have these languages in their different regions as means of wider communication in the immediate environment’ (Owolabi & Dada, 2012 p. 1678).

The three national languages are used alongside the English language in the National Assembly, in national functions, and in various national electronic media (Adegbija, 2004). Adopting English language as an official language has created relative stability among ethnic groups. It plays a significant role in ‘unifying’ Nigeria’s diverse ethnic groups (ibid). Although other indigenous languages are still widely spoken, (Adegbija, 2004) the use of the three majority languages as part of government’s official language can be viewed as a means through which existing power differentials between ethnic majority and minority groups in Nigeria is sustained. Based on Acker’s (2006) argument that organisations are often a reflection of society, societal power struggles are likely to permeate public sector organisations. It is also worth noting here the Federal Character Principle, coupled with state indigeneship and gender cultural practices, albeit hybridised, have had significant implications for women in postcolonial Nigeria.

This thesis does not argue that all of the gender inequality that is seen in Nigeria today is due to European invasion. However, it specifically argues that the framework of Nigeria that was

instituted by British colonizers was based on a gendered substructure that permeates family, political, economic, social and cultural life. Therefore, the examination of gender in postcolonial Nigeria discusses hybridized gender cultural practices, gender beliefs and cultural practices that may be regarded as indigenous, as well as structures that produce gender inequality in Nigeria.

Okeke-Ihejirika's (2004) analysis of the impact of colonial domination on Igbo women's lives argues that Western laws and education have been fused with indigenous traditions. An interview of Chinamanda Adichie by the Sun interview on 23rd March, 2014 paints a picture of the hybridised nature of the culture in post-colonial Nigeria.

Interviewer: *'You started by telling me that you're not "Mrs." ...'*

Chinamanda: *[cuts in] my name is Chimamada Adichie. If you want to put label for me, put Ms'.*

Interviewer: *'But people know that you're married. As an Igbo girl, you know our culture...'*

Chinamanda: *'[Cuts in again] what does our culture do? Let me tell you about our culture. This thing that you are calling our culture –that when you marry somebody, you'll start calling her Mrs. Somebody –is not our culture; it is Western culture. If you want to talk about our culture, you need to go to people in real Igbo land. But it is true. My grandfather's name is David. His name is also Nwoye. They call him Nwoye Omeni. Omeni was his mother. You know why? It is to help distinguish him because there are often many wives. So, it was his mother that they used to identify him. They know that all of these people came from the same compound, but whose child is this one? You may go and ask people: who is Nwoye Omeni? And they'll tell you it is my grandfather. So the conversation about culture is a long one. I don't even want to have it'.*

Interviewer: *'But, at what point would you change your name?'*

Chinamanda: *Yes; because it's all fused. You cannot then come and impose something on somebody. Nobody should come and impose something on somebody, because, if you come and tell me it is our culture, I'll tell you it is not our culture. Where do you want to start counting? Do you want to start counting in 1920, or do you want us to start counting from 1870?' (The Sun News, 2014, p. 1).*

The above conversation was precipitated by the fact that Chinamanda Adichie, a renowned Nigerian novelist, chose to go by her ‘maiden’ name, rather than bear the surname of her husband. The interviewer was of the view that women’s maintenance of their maiden name after marriage was a Western practice and Chimamanda’s ‘adoption’ of this ‘Western culture’ was going against the norms of her people. However, Chimamanda is quick to note that keeping her maiden name is in maintaining the cultural practice of the Igbos. The preceding conversation illustrates the extent to which Western cultures that were introduced through colonialism have been inculcated into Nigerians; this is so much so that one’s deference back to what was originally practiced by their ethnic group, especially concerning gender, may be viewed as becoming westernized. It symbolizes the attempted erasure of indigenous cultural practices and inculcation of European practices through British Education (Hamza, 2014). Sheldon (2016) states:

‘Analysis of the development of legal systems under colonialism suggests that women were at a disadvantage, as “customary” laws were established based on male testimony that gave men, especially elite men, advantages over women in issues of marriage and divorce’ (p. 7, my emboldenment).

Colonial officers were almost always men; women were excluded from political and economic activities organized by the colonial authority (Sheldon, 2016). Okoli (2007) asserts that colonial education was targeted at strengthening British authority and hold over the colony. Hence, the western way of life was instituted through the educational system through subjects such as *‘literacy, medicine, clerical and industrial education, wage earning, and social mobility’* (Okoli, 2007, p. 36). This form of education was essentially discriminatory and gender-oriented, favouring mostly boys (Okoli, 2007). It sought to erode indigenous ways of knowing and living, replacing it with Western ontology, epistemology, and pedagogy (ibid). These patterns continue to play a significant role in women’s access to education and employment in Nigeria.

Despite the importance of women to the socio-economic future of Nigeria, they continue to be disadvantaged and face exclusion from various aspects of society. According to the 'Gender Report in Nigeria' (2012), only 10 percent of the six million people who enter the labour market annually secure jobs in the formal sector, and only a third of this 10 percent are women. Women who have dependents pay more tax than men because they are not recognised by the law as breadwinners. There are huge differences between inequalities in the Northern and Southern part of Nigeria. Women make up only about 30 percent of public sector employees, and only 17 percent of them occupy senior positions (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Only 9 percent of those who contested for positions in the 2011 National Assembly elections were women, and only 7 percent of members of the House of Representatives are women. Only 4 percent of local government councillors are women (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). The Southern part of Nigeria has more women in public offices than the North (ibid.). However, there are very few women in decision-making positions in Nigeria. This scant representation of women in top positions in the civil service can have significant outcomes in the performance and treatment of women and ethnic minorities in organisations (Ely, 1995). The lower the status of a group, the more salient membership to that group is, therefore when men occupy top organisational positions with women clustered at the bottom, the feminine gender category becomes more (discriminatorily) salient to women and their perception of (negative) gender differences increases in line with sex role stereotypes (ibid.). Fatile & Adejuwon (2010) contend that gender plays a significant role in the career advancement of the Nigerian civil service employees. Table 1 below shows the proportion of men to women employed in Nigeria's public sector, while Table 2 shows the proportion of men and women appointed to top public sector positions between 2001 and 2007.

Table 1: Percentage of men and women employed in Nigeria's public sector (2001-2004)

Year	Women (%)	Men (%)
2001	28.5	71.5
2002	28.7	71.3
2003	30.7	69.3
2004	29.5	70.5

Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria.

Table 2: Male and Female Appointments in Nigeria's public sector (2001-2007)

Year	Judges			Permanent Secretaries		
	Women	Men	Women (%)	Women	Men	Women (%)
2001	146	724	16.8	135	657	17.0%
2002	178	764	18.9	131	697	15.8
2003	184	787	18.9	149	787	15.9
2004	198	809	19.7	154	802	16.1
2005	208	887	19.0	163	839	16.3
2006	208	913	18.6	178	826	17.7
2007	226	901	20.1	208	797	20.7

Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria.

Although no detailed empirical investigation has been done to provide reasons for this gap within the context of Nigeria (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012), the discrepancy in educational levels between men and women in Nigeria may be one of the factors that account for the lack of women in top public sector offices. Though the number of women admitted into universities has more than doubled between 2000 and 2008, there still exists gender inequality in university admissions (ibid.). See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Admission statistics into Nigerian Universities by sex, 2000 – 2008

Year	Gender	Applications by Gender	Total Applications	Admissions by Gender	Total Admissions
2000	Male	238,456	416,291	26,665	45,766
	Female	177,835		19,101	
2001	Male	743,725	1,056,617	54,972	90,769
	Female	312,892		35,797	
2002	Male	580,338	994,380	31,942	51,845
	Female	414,042		19,903	
2003	Male	603,179	1,046,950	59,742	105,157
	Female	443,771		45,415	
2004	Male	486,539	841,878	69,715	122,492
	Female	355,339		52,777	
2005	Male	526,281	916,371	45,256	76,984
	Female	390,090		31,728	
2006	Male	456,953	803,472	52,413	88,524
	Female	346,519		36,111	
2007	Male	911,653	1,302,529	64,706	107,370
	Female	390,876		42,664	
2008	Male	598,667	1,054,060	-	113,100
	Female	455,393		-	

Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria

The gender inequality demonstrated above also exists in primary and secondary education. Statistics from the Federal Ministry of Education shows that 46% of those enrolled in primary schools in 2008 were girls. Though this proportion seems high at a glance, it should be noted

that Nigeria has more children of primary school age who are not in education (1.5 million children as at 2009) 53% of which are girls (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Research by (AAWORD, 2006) showed that the education of boys is prioritised in comparison to that of girls in most Nigerian homes (in Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). A large section (70%) of participants in their research indicated that in a time of economic hardship they would prioritise the education of their male child. They also found that female children are withdrawn from education to raise money for the education of the male child in families experiencing financial hardship.

Since democratisation (1999), the income gap between men and women in Nigeria has widened, see Table 4 (Oyelere, 2007). World Bank (2009) suggests that reasons for this income disparity include, lack of access to productive assets, education related issues, and reproductive roles. Okpara (2004) asserts that this income inequality is due to workplace gender discrimination.

Table 4: Mean gender income disparity: comparing 1998/1999 and 2004/2005

Monthly Income	Pre-1999	Post-1999	Difference
Male	N102.13 (N242.69)	N142.64 (N283.63)	N40.51
Female	N71.98 (N254.59)	N89.49 (N231.75)	N17.51
Difference in difference	-N30.14	-N53.14	-N23.00

Source: Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria.

Women earn less than men with equivalent educational levels and, in some cases, men with lower educational levels earn more than women educated to higher levels. According to Gender in Nigeria Report (2012)

'It is women with a tertiary education who have benefited the most from democratisation. Although at this level the gender pay gap has reduced, women still earn 20% less than men (N190 compared to N241). Returns to primary and secondary

education for women are relatively much lower when compared with male earnings, both before and after democratisation. Since democratisation, women educated to primary level still earn little more than half what their male counterparts earn (N85 versus N142); and at this level income growth for women has been a third lower than growth for men (2.69 versus 3.62)' (p. 15).

Section 42 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity but does not define discrimination and uses the male pronoun to refer to both genders. This approach to gender neutrality indicates its insensitivity particularly women, indirectly excluding women and seems to corroborate gender stereotypes (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). The persistence of gender inequality in Nigeria has led to action to pursue a National Gender Policy since 2006 with the goal of building:

'a just society devoid of discrimination, harnesses the full potentials of all social groups regardless of sex or circumstance, promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, and protect the health, social, economic and political well being of all citizens in order to achieve equitable rapid economic growth; evolve an evidence based planning and governance system where human, social, financial and technological resources are efficiently and effectively deployed for sustainable development'(National Gender Report, 2006).

However, a report by Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, (2008) argues that this policy has made little or no progress concerning gender equality in Nigeria. According to the report:

'Nigeria still falls short of the desired result of giving males and females equal opportunities and equal access to opportunities to advance socially, economically and politically. Evidence abounds of several forms of gender-based discrimination in gender relations in Nigeria. Gender-based division of labour, disparities between male and female access to power and resources, and gender bias in rights and entitlements remain pervasive in Nigeria' (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008 p. 2).

Although Imo and Anambara states of Nigeria have Gender Equality Laws that have jurisdiction within the said states, Nigeria has no National Gender Equality Law (ibid). The principle of 'indigeneity' also raises challenges for women regarding employment opportunities available to them. This is because in cases when a woman marries a man from a different state of origin, there is a high likelihood that she moves to his state where she will

be excluded from opportunities because she is not considered to be an indigene of that state (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). She also faces such exclusion in her natal state because she is deemed to have acquired her husband's indigenship through marriage (ibid). Notwithstanding, the Constitution is silent on salient issues such as whether it is possible to acquire indigenship of another state and if so, on what grounds this would be conferred. Therefore, women who find themselves in this situation face a higher level of deprivation and discrimination (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012).

A regional study of 1608 Nigerians (women 687 and men 896) from the six geo-political zones conducted by Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) (2006 in Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008) paints a vivid picture of postcolonial perceptions about women' and men's identities. Their research questions were centred on issues of gender equality. 22% of research participants indicated that men and women are equal within the family (i.e. relationship between men and women within the framework of the family), 37% indicated that men are superior to women, 41% indicated that men and women are unequal, and 0.5% indicated that women are superior to men. 61% of participants indicated that they would rather vote a male over a female candidate in an election while 32.3% indicated that they would vote for a woman. One respondent in their research emphatically stated:

'He is the head as a man', 'They are more capable/competent,' Men are more responsible than women', 'I am not in support of women to be the president,' 'A man is created to rule a woman'.

When asked if it is necessary to balance the power differentials between men and women in Nigeria, 51% of respondents said yes, 43% declined. When asked how they would like for this power differential to be changed, 21.2% indicated that more power should be given to men; 43% indicated that more power should be given to women; 31% indicated that they wanted equality; 2.8% indicated that they wanted things to remain as they were. These

statistics show the nature of gender inequality and perceptions of inequality by many Nigerians. It seems to suggest a widespread acceptance, even by women, of the notion that women are subservient to men. This is widely believed to be an indigenous cultural practice such that attempts to protest this gendered positioning, or move away from it, may attract accusations of being westernised. As illustrated by the interview of Chimamanda Adichie, these perceptions are strongly held and believed to be the culture of the Nigerian people. The afore-described beliefs often determine women's experience of the workplace.

Nigerian women do not represent a homogeneous group. The high level of ethnic diversity that characterises the country influences the experience of women both in organisations and the wider society. Gender relations in Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, are not static but continually evolving as the country develops (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Culturally, men are permitted to hinder their wives from taking up employment; women are denied access to land and inheritance and single women are denied access to jobs because of the belief that if they become financially independent, no man will marry them (Olarinmoye, 2013). Religious and traditional beliefs about gender roles such as female circumcision and marrying of under-aged girls in parts of Nigeria increase the subjugation of women (Dadirep, 1995). Domestic expectations such as being responsible for the success of the marriage, child rearing, and home-care responsibilities put women in a certain category that is difficult to break away from (Olufemi, 1993). Okeke-Ihejirika (2004) argues that though education has afforded women the opportunities to pursue careers, social perceptions of gender role stereotypes continue to constrain women from entering and advancing in the workplace.

Women experience multiple forms of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. According to Bakari & Leach (2008), sexual harassment of women in the Northern part of Nigeria can be explained by its acceptance and tolerance in the society where males are of the belief that they have the right to demand sexual privileges. Also, there seems to be some form

of unwritten codes of practice among men who reinforce the subordination of women in the workplace. ActionAid (2011) reports that there are restricted areas where women are not allowed to enter. Women from certain ethnic groups are not represented in various aspects of the economy. For instance, there are very few Hausa women working in the education sector (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). There are statutory, customary and religious laws in Nigeria that tolerate violence against women (ActionAid, 2011). For example, under the Sharia Law, a rape incident must have a witness for such cases to be prosecuted, and this puts women in a difficult position (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). The Sharia Law also prosecutes only women in cases of adultery with the penalty of being stoned to death, and though both men and women can be found guilty of fornication in the Sharia courts, women are whipped while men are imprisoned (Olarinmoye, 2013). Research by ActionAid (2011) shows that a surprisingly large sector of the population views violence against women as normal. For some ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria, it is socially acceptable for a man to beat his wife in an attempt to 'correct' her (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). Also, the definition of rape excludes marital rape in penal legislation in both the North and the South. Thus, the pluralistic judicial system in Nigeria generally fosters the subordination of women. Only three states in the South and one state in the North have passed laws to protect women from violence while only six states in the South have passed laws against female genital mutilation (Mahdi, 2011).

Cultural variations in Nigeria imply a variation in the nature of discrimination in different regions of the country (Awe, 1992). These differences are portrayed in Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye's (1999) analysis of women's decision-making authority in Nigeria. Their research data from five ethnic groups (Hausa, Kanuri, Yoruba, Ibo and Ijaw) shows that culture, a component of ethnicity, plays a significant role in women's experiences. Their research shows that Hausa and Kanuri ethnic groups practice a system of diverging

inheritance; the Yoruba and Ibo practice a strict patrilineal system of inheritance whereby property is passed down only to male relatives; the Ijaw on the other hand, practice a matrilineal system of inheritance. While the Hausa and Kanuri seclude women, restrict the education and employment of females outside the home, the Yoruba, Ibo and Ijaw ethnic groups do the opposite as they educate female children and support the paid employment of women outside the home. Also, in Kanuri, Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba ethnic groups it is the sole right of the man to divorce his wife if she did not please him or was barren, but in the Ijaw ethnic group, women can divorce their husbands and maintain ownership of property. These variations in cultural practices between ethnic groups render validity to the study of the intersections between gender and ethnicity in organisations in Nigeria by showing how Nigerian women's ethnicity colour their lived experience.

Though there has been some level of documentation of gender inequality in employment, government and social life in Nigeria (e.g. Olufemi, 1993; Bolarin, 1995), the issues faced by ethnic minority women in organisations have been largely ignored. This does not imply its non-existence. For instance, in Ituma & Simpson's (2009) study of the mobility of IT professionals in Nigeria, a female interviewee commented on her perception of the implications of being a woman and an ethnic minority. In her words:

'I have been in this job for six years. I want to move to another company but no way . . . you see my case is complex because apart from being a woman I do not come from the main ethnic group. I am from Edo⁵ and most of these companies are owned by Yorubas'... (Ituma & Simpson, 2009, p. 744.)

Her interview also revealed that she had been exempt from influential networks in the organisation where she worked as a result of being placed in these two categories. Therefore, the intersection of gender and ethnicity is relevant to her lived experience in the workplace.

⁵ An ethnic minority group in Nigeria

My research will explore the workplace lived experience of Ijaw women in the Nigerian civil service, with particular attention to the significance of gender and ethnicity.

Nkomo (1992) suggests that a productive analysis of ethnicity, as a means of understanding the nature of organisations, requires proper understanding of ethnicity within its political and historical context:

‘Power-conflict approaches to race and ethnicity emphasize issues of economic power, inequalities in access to material resources and labour markets, and historical development of racism’ (ibid. p. 501).

In line with this approach to the study of ethnicity and the preceding historical contextualization of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria, it is my argument here that ethnic and gender inequalities in Nigeria are shaped largely by the country’s colonial history. According to Wallman & Ra (1978),

‘Ethnic relations can only “happen” where two sets of people encounter each other and have some reason to distinguish each other’ (p. 5).

In creating ethnic majorities and minorities, ethnicity was employed in Africa similar to how race is used in Europe and America to foster the division of ethnic groups to aid European domination. The assignment of ethnic majority/minority status and its use as the basis for privilege, opportunities and power hindered and continues to hinder affirmative interaction between these ethnic groups. The application of divide and rule tactic to families which resulted in the empowerment of men and simultaneous disempowerment of women institutionalized gender inequality in a way that is still pervasive in contemporary Nigeria. The problem of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria is not a function of cultural paucities or atomistic individuals but is largely a reflection of resentment at the institutional inequalities espoused by the machination of gender and ethnicities. This discussion of postcolonial ethnic and gendered identities in Nigeria reveals gendered and ethnicised substructures, that are

largely a product of colonialism, and that create, legitimize and reproduce inequalities in Nigeria.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an examination of ethnicity and women's identities through pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs. It was argued that gendered and ethnicised substructures were imposed and then formed the framework upon which the state of Nigeria was instituted. The next section discusses the theoretical framework that was adopted for this research.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis, as well as a detailed examination of the workplace, and the lived experiences of ethnic minority women in light of the frameworks highlighted in chapter 1. The context of this thesis acknowledges that organisational and societal structures, cultures can be discriminatory towards ethnic minority women. However, these women also develop agencies and strategies for achieving success in organisations that also shape their workplace lived experience. The chapter discusses structure, culture, agency, intersectionality and social identity theory as a theoretical framework. They form the lenses through which identity, race, ethnicity and their conflation; ethnic and gender identity developments; inequality regimes; strategies that ethnic minority women adopt for success in organisations are clarified.

3.1 Structures, Culture and Agency

What or who shapes the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority women in the Nigerian Civil Service: organisational policies and the social categories they belong to?; the actions or inactions that they take in the workplace?; or perhaps both? In examining the above questions, one may conceptualise ethnic minority women as free agents whose workplace lived experiences are determined by how they conduct themselves. Or attribute their experience wholly to the social structures within their workplace environment. Questions such as these are at the crux of debates between humanists and structuralists in attempting to understand the human experience. The primacy of structure or agency in shaping human behaviour has been a much-contested issue in social theory.

The humanist side of the debate gives prominence to the role of human agents in shaping the social world. In buttressing this viewpoint, Crossley (2005) states:

'We are what we make ourselves by way of our actions ... our actions take shape in conditions of absolute freedom' (p. 122)

The structuralist view, on the other hand, posits that social structures such as political systems, religion, class, gender and education, always determine the behaviour of human beings, who have no control over them. (Voss, 1977). Both perspectives of the social world, give priority to one aspect of society, i.e. agency over structure in humanism, or structure over agency in structuralism. However, Giddens (1984), Archer (1995) and Berger & Lukman (1966) argue that structure and agency are interconnected, rather than independent aspects of social life as espoused by humanism and structuralism. Giddens (1984) rejects the analytical distinction between structure and agency. He argues that proponents of structural determinants of society ignore the role of human agency in producing and reproducing social structures. Individual actions create social structures and forces that may serve as constraints which other persons in the context have to grapple with (ibid). Notwithstanding, understanding the nature of their relationship has also been the subject of much debate, as Archer (2010) states:

'The fundamental problem of linking human agency and social structure stalks through the history of sociological theory. Basically, it concerns how to develop an adequate theoretical account, which deals simultaneously with men [sic] constituting society and the social formation of human agency' (Archer 2010 p. 225).

In a similar view to Giddens (1984), Berger & Luckman (1966) posit that there is an ongoing dialectic between structure and agency. This is such that individuals are formed by society, which is in turn created by individuals. In this regard, Giddens (1984) argues for the duality of structure:

'Society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do' (in Giddens & Pierson, 1998 p. 77).

Giddens & Pierson (1998), suggest that agency is a variation of structure. Structures are socially constructed and therefore have no validity outside human compliance. Through a reflexive human agency, individuals change social structures by defying established modes of human behaviour. The essence of Giddens (1984) structuration theory is that it shows that structure and agency have equal importance and significance in any given human experience. His arguments reveal the complex interrelations between social structures and human action. However, Archer (1995) is sceptical about Giddens (1984) conflation of structure and agency, with a view that his conceptualisation of agency is rather reductionist. She proposes a morphogenetic approach to structure and agency, which capitalises on the process of change by analysing the 'timescale through which they emerge, intertwine and redefine one another' (Archer, 1995 p. 76). It is Archer's (1995) focus on the potential for change that makes her approach particularly attractive as a framework for this thesis. It enables an historically specific analysis of the development of privilege and oppression in the Nigerian civil service, and makes possible a picture of how these processes are either sustained or transformed:

'Morphogenesis' is also a process, referring to the complex interchanges that produce change in a system's given form, structure or state (morphostasis being the reverse)' (Archer, 2010 p. 228).

The morphogenetic approach espouses that structure predates transformative agency, which in turn produces structural elaboration (ibid). However, these processes occur over a given period of time. Structures may be resistant to change due to 'psychologically supported' by individuals or embody the protected interest of the powerful. Agency as exercised by different actors may accelerate, impede, or thwart structural transformation. However, effective agency leads to structural elaboration that creates new social prospects (Archer, 2010).

Introducing culture as a component of the theoretical framework of this study, Archer (1996) suggests that culture presents an aspect of social life that is distinct from structure and agency. She acknowledges its potential to interweave with social structures and human agency. However, she maintains that structure, culture and agency should be approached as analytically distinct in order to avoid the reductionist tendencies of conflating any two of the three spheres of social life. Culture is a very important aspect of social life because of its ability to distinguish the experiences of individuals in the same social category. Ferdman (1999) argues that there is no such thing as just a man or a woman without reference to culture. Hall (1993) sees culture as a complex phenomenon that is crucial to individuals' sense of identity. Cultural differentiation may be based on gender, class ethnicity, language, religion and dress.

'Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories ... they are subjected to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power ... identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall, 1993 p. 394).

Therefore, adopting Archer's (1995, 1996, 2010) approach to understanding the lived experiences of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women clarifies the role of structural and cultural constraints in social interactions and how social exchanges transform or reproduce cultures and structures. Thus, this study gives equal importance to structure, culture and agency in an attempt to paint a broader picture of women's workplace lived experience. Ijaw women are conceptualised as social actors who have to grapple with structural and cultural constraints both within and outside their organisation. Thus, they develop strategies for overcoming perceived constraints in organisations. Kamenou (2002) describes strategies as:

'The process by which individuals perceive, and deal with, opportunities and constraints with regard to their career; making career plans and working through alternatives in order to achieve their goals' (p. 21).

This definition will be adopted for this thesis. However, their workplace experience is not conceptualised in isolation of their broader life experiences. Structural and cultural phenomena that affect ethnic minority women's workplace lived experience but transcend organisational boundaries are encompassed in this thesis. The next section discusses issues of identity.

3.2 The Question of Identity

The concept of identity covers a broad range of things even beyond the scope of humanity. Various bodies of research from different fields of study such as psychology, political science, sociology and ethnic studies, to mention a few, have widely considered the concept of identity. However they all seem to provide a different answer to the question 'what is identity?' These differences are due to the different theoretical, meta-theoretical, levels of analysis and research traditions of the various academic fields (Schwartz et al, 2011). For instance, much of social-psychological research on social identity focuses on the role of group identity processes in social interactions and has its roots in the work of Tajfel and Turner (1986).

Identity is not something that is fixed, rather; it is the process of 'being or becoming' (Jenkins, 1996 p. 4). As opposed to seeing identity as 'natural', the discursive paradigm views identity as a 'process that is never completed' (Hall, 1996 p. 1.). It is developed based on the perception of shared characteristics or common origin with a group, person or ideology and feeling of solidarity and loyalty established on this foundation (Hall, 1996). Therefore, it cannot be deemed innate but socially constructed in the course of initial and successive socialisation and ongoing social interactions during which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout life (Jenkins, 1996). Although an individual

actively acquires identities, such identities are primarily the result of social interactions and products of society.

'Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption' (Hall, 1996 p. 2).

Therefore, a person's identity cannot be ascertained unless they are validated by significant others (ibid.). Jenkins (1996) refers to this as the 'internal-external dialectic of identification'. The internal-external dialectic suggests the perception of others, as well as social, material and physical limitations, restrict a person's freedom to take up an identity position (Woodward, 2000). Jenkins (1996) opines that an identity discourse should not be constrained to just the individual but also the corporate and institutional orders. The individual level comprises embodied persons and their cognitive processes. Identity within this order refers to aspects of self-definition that distinguishes one person from another while highlighting similarities between that individual and others to whom he or she is or would like to be connected (Erickson, 1964 in Gioia, 1998). Jenkins (1996) argues that individual and collective identities cannot be treated as entirely distinct from each other but they are similar and in fact occupy the same space in some regards. Moreover, Jenkins (1996) argues, the main difference between the two is that while individual identity accentuates difference, a collective identity accentuates similarity. Therefore, this analysis of identity in relation to Ijaw women will go beyond the individual level to include group, organisational and societal levels.

Individual identity cannot be determined in the absence of socialisation (Jenkins, 1996). It has its roots in selfhood, which is formed and developed in the course of continuous social interaction within which individuals characterise and redefine themselves and others all through life. An individual's self-definition continually interrelates with the definition of that person which is offered by others. The formation of individual identity has its origins in early

socialisation when what Jenkins (1996) referred to as ‘primary identities’ are formed. Gender and ethnicity are particularly salient and robust identities and are resilient to change once formed. As a result, they form a viable point of departure for understanding other identities. Jenkins (1996) holds that individuals discover structures for categorising themselves and others regarding ethnicity from infancy and therefore, ‘*ethnicity, when it matters to people, really matters*’ (p. 65).

Ethnic identity is a person’s commitment and sense of belonging to a section of society with whom he/she shares ‘*descent-based attributes*’ (Chandra, 2006 p. 400); affirmative appraisal of the group; acquaintance with and interest in the group and; participation in group traditions and activities (Phinney, 1996). This identification is developed through an ongoing process of socialisation with family as well as immediate and wider community. Ethnic identity is developed through shared religion, language, geography and culture of individuals affiliated through propinquity, resilient allegiance and kinship (Torres, 1996 in Chavez & Guido DiBrito, 1999). Having discussed the concept of identity, this chapter will proceed to examine issues of Race and Ethnicity, with the goal of distinguishing both concepts.

3.3 Race and Ethnicity: Biology or Social Construction?

Ethnicity as a concept has been subject to much debate around its meaning and formation. Due to the bulk of explanations of ethnicity espoused by scholars, these conceptualisations have been categorised into two main groups Primordialists (Geertz, 1973; Van den Berghe, 1987; Van Evera, 2001) and Instrumentalists (Hutchinson and Smith 1996; Barth, 1984; Banton, 1983) (Yang, 2000). The primordial theory was popular before the 1970s; it contends that ethnicity is hereditary, based on kinship and ancestral ties (Geertz, 1973). From this perspective, ethnic ties are inherent features of every individual’s existence and are tenacious owing to their foundation in biological relationships (Van den Berghe, 1987). This view of

ethnicity has been criticized for: being too general to convey the essence of ethnicity; its inability to explain the shifting of ethnic boundaries and varying importance of ethnicity to different individuals and social contexts; ignoring political and social influence on ethnic group formation and tenacity; and ignoring the cultural construction and historical development in ethnicity and ethnic affiliations (Jones, 1997). Instrumentalists, on the other hand, posit that:

“Ethnicity is socially constructed, and people have the ability to cut and mix from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to form their own individual or group identities” (Hutchinson and Smith 1996, p.9).

Instrumentalist theory emphasises the significance of ethnicity in gaining political and economic advantages (Banton, 1983). Varying perspectives exist within this school of thought. For instance, Barth (1964) posits that ethnicity is fluid and individuals choose how to live out and whether to adopt or discard ethnic affiliations based on the political and economic gains associated with their choice, leading to ethnic group transformation over time. Cohen (1974) on his part claims that collective action by members of an ethnic group in pursuing common political and economic interests cause ethnic groups to develop structure, boundaries and ideology. This explanation for ethnicity focuses on action taken by ethnic groups or members in specific situations such as protecting economic and political interests while neglecting the cultural and physiological dimensions of ethnicity (Jones, 1997). It therefore blurs the line between ethnic groups and other collective interest groups such as class and race (Jones, 1997). Scholars have attempted to bridge the gap between primordial and instrumentalist theories by pointing out different domains of ethnicity where each theory is applicable. According to Laitin (1998), culture is two-faced, possessing both the static nature of primordialism and the flexibility of instrumentalism. Horowitz (1985) contends that the foundation of ethnicity is not limited to ancestral ties, but it has many aspects that are pliable. Debates on the definition of ethnicity are ongoing and too cumbersome to be fully

addressed here. Thus, for the purpose of this research, Fenton's (1999) description of ethnicity as social categorisations that are emergent within relationships, which are distinguished and maintained through ancestry, culture and language are used. Although race is not a subject matter in this thesis, the broad discussion of race is a matter of pertinence, due to its conflation with ethnicity.

The concept of race has been contested from the onset of its use. According to Banton (1998) the work of Linnaeus, a scientist in the 18th century, was the genesis of the idea of race. In the first phase of the development of racial theories, 'race' was regarded as a term for depicting the physical differences found in humans but had no analytical value. The development of evolution theories and unequal development marked the second phase of the elaboration of the concept of race, which was much of the 19th and 20th centuries (Banton, 1998). In this phase, scientists began proposing explanations for racial differences and the view that differences in race could be attributed to biological inheritance, and physical causes became popular. The concept of race depicted a hierarchical classification with 'white' Europeans at the top and 'black' Africans at the bottom (Banton, 2001). Such classifications were mostly based on physical attributes such as facial features, hair texture, skin colour and physical stature (Fenton, 1999).

The third phase was marked by a rejection of the biological explanation and a rejection of race 'as an analytical term in sociological theory and conceptualisation' (Fenton, 1999 p. 4). Race came to be regarded as a hazardous fabrication and a tragedy for racialised persons, and racial categorisation seen as valueless (Montague, 1997). Fenton (1999) provides three reasons for the rejection of the idea of race. First, maintaining racial boundaries proved impossible as the variations that exist within races turned out to be even more than the differences between races that formed the bases of their differentiation. Secondly, in the years when the biological explanation of 'race' was prevalent, it was assumed that racial difference

elucidated other differences that existed between the so called ‘races’ but it came to be acknowledged that cultural differences and historical events provided a more satisfactory explanation. Thirdly, the idea behind ‘race’ was used to justify the subordination and oppression of ‘races’ perceived to be inconsequential and disposable. Robinson & Alex-Hart (2016) argue that race is polymorphous. And refers to:

‘Distinctions made between peoples of different phenotypical characteristics and on the basis of power and subjugation which results in discrimination and which is rationalised as a result of deep-rooted convictions and fears’ (p. 5).

Nonetheless, the discourse of race persists despite the debunking of the idea behind the term. According to Montague (1997), this could be due to the lack of another word to replace it. However, Fenton (1999) argues that it remains persistent in social and academic discourse as a result of ‘racialisation’. He described racialisation as

‘a set of powerful ideas and beliefs about race and also a matching set of ideas with the differential social incorporation of groups commonly perceived as racially different’ (p.4).

Although race may be regarded by some as immutable, (Proudfoot & Nkomo, 2006) it ‘is an idea that should be explicitly and consistently confined to the dustbin of analytically useless terms’ (Miles, 1989 p.72). However, in academic discourse, the ideas of race and ethnicity have existed alongside each other and have been used together often (Fenton, 1999). The next section discusses the various ways that race has been conflated in the study of gender and ethnicity.

3.4 Conflation of Race and Ethnicity

This section develops an argument for a clear distinction to be made between race and ethnicity. The terms ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are commonly used in daily description and conversation as well as press reports, constitutions and even census reports (Fenton, 1999). The frequent conflation of race and ethnicity makes it difficult to create concrete distinctions

between both terms. According to Fenton (1999), the now discredited theories of human classification linked to race tend to imply that the term 'race' has been typically used when referring to differences in physical appearance. The term ethnic, on the other hand, has principally been used to depict cultural differences such as language, ancestry and regional origin (Fenton, 1999). Notwithstanding, there are instances when both terms have not been used in consistence with this explanation.

Definitions of race are often laced with attributes typically associated with ethnicity. For instance Acker (2006) defines race as 'socially defined differences based on physical characteristics, culture, and historical domination and oppression, justified by entrenched beliefs' (p. 444). By attributing culture, a key component of ethnicity (Ferdman, 1999), to race, Acker (2006) assumes that all persons associated with a specific racial category will have a shared culture. Gordon (2007) states that:

'Culture is the product of ethnic identification. It is group-specific and has nothing at all to do with skin colour' (p. 70).

In light of the above quote, Acker's (2006) definition may be regarded as reductionist because it assumes that all Blacks, for instance, have a shared culture due to the similarities in their phenotypical features. Race theories have also been applied to ethnicity. For instance, ethnic identity theory is used to explain how racial identities are developed (Helms & Piper, 1994). Theories of racio-ethnic identity have also been advanced for the particular racio-ethnic groups such as Helms' (1990) model for the development of the identity of Whites and Cross (1991) model of black identity development (Proudford & Nkomo, 2006). Cox (1993) put forward the term 'racioethnicity' to depict the view that groups can be regarded as both ethnic and racial. He referred to it as:

'Racial and/or ethnically distinctive within the same nationality group' (p. 6).

Other scholars argue that ethnicity should displace the idea of race due to recent evidence that race has no biological heritage (Proudfoot & Nkomo, 2006). The debate on the distinctiveness of race and ethnicity in no way affects their relevance in the daily experience of individuals, and both have been used to foster principles of suppression and even earthly cleansing (Jenkins, 1996). Fenton (1999) argues that:

'The term 'ethnic' has a much greater claim to analytical usefulness in sociology because it is not hampered by a history of connotations with discredited science and malevolent practice in the way the term 'race' is' (p. 4).

He further argues that though the concept of 'race' has been rejected as an analytical term, the idea of racial differences has been incorporated in the social order, which is evident in societies today. The term race is associated historically with error and ideas that back racialised slavery, colonialism and oppression in a way the term ethnicity is not (Fenton, 1999). This view of the difference between race and ethnicity is no longer the case as the term ethnicity is also associated with genocides, ethnic cleansing and oppression. For instance, the Bosnian war of 1992-1995 was sparked up by the desire for ethnic group domination. Bosnian Serbs were bent on 'cleansing' the country of non-Serbs (Campbell, 1998). Another example is the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, which was ignited by the aspiration for privileges and opportunities by the minority ethnic group (Hutus) (BBC News, 2011). While the idea of race forms a basis for conceptualising inter-group relations, ethnicity provides the framework for understanding relationships within groups (Bohpal & Rowley, 2005). Ethnicity provides a deeper understanding of the differences within people groups who may be classified as the same race (Cashmore, 1994). Proof of the importance of the concepts of race and ethnicity can be seen in ethnic and racial wars the world over. There is hardly any section of society or part of the world where distinctions are not made among people on the basis of race or ethnicity (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Nkomo's study of race in organisations provides a rigorous analysis of the origins of ethnicity studies and its implication for management research. According to her, theories of ethnicity arose from the realisation that race is not a biological attribute but an idea that is socially constructed. The development of ethnicity theories began with the study of the shared behaviours and encounters of Europeans who migrated to the US. One product of this was Assimilation Theory (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964). Park (1950) introduced the idea of assimilation as the final phase of a race-relations cycle. He proposed that this cycle plays out in a sequence of 'contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation', which he viewed as '*apparently progressive and irreversible*' (p. 138). Assimilation is defined as:

'A process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other individuals and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life' (Park & Burges 1969 p. 735).

Though this description does not seem to entail the expurgation of all traces of ethnic heritages as assimilation theory came to propose, it portrays assimilation as a process of socialisation that ushers ethnic minorities into the American way of life. It was considered to be the soundest method of counteracting ethnocentrism and racism (Nkomo, 1992). Assimilation theory as proposed by Park (1950) was centred on European migration to America. It was later extended to include the experiences of African-Americans (Nkomo, 1992). It was assumed that Assimilation would apply to African-Americans the way it applied to European immigrants (ibid.). This assumption obscured the distinct elements of the experience of racial minorities that were hauled to America. The predictions of assimilation theorists are yet to become a reality in America where decades after the proposition of this theory, racialised groups are still ostracised from mainstream American society (Nkomo, 1992). This ostracisation is evident not only in the treatment of racialized groups but also in the maintenance of group names that identify them with their place of origin such as; African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Caribbean-Americans, Latino-Americans, etc. The

tenets of assimilation have also not materialised in Britain were ethnic minority groups are referred to as Asian British, Black British, etc. Notwithstanding the glaring limited applicability of this theory, it has formed the basis of much research and theory development on race and ethnicity (including; Social Identity and Social Categorisation theories (Tajfel, 1969); Social Attribution theory (Hewston, 1989); Contact Hypothesis (Wilder, 1986). This ethnic based paradigm was also used as a basis for nation building in Nigeria (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010).

Assimilation was arguably practised in the West African region of what is now known as Nigeria. The expectation was that the tenets of the theory, i.e. Assimilation, would naturally occur for the different ethnic groups in Nigeria similarly to the way it occurred for different European nationals in the USA (ibid.). The exception here being Nigeria, an all-black state, would not have any concerns about racialization similarly to the concerns that occurred in the USA with the post-slavery African Americans (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010). Like with racialised groups in America and ethnic minorities in Britain, the Eurocentric notion of Assimilation has failed to foster the integration of ethnic groups in Nigeria (ibid.). Evidence for this is seen in the hostile reaction of Nigerians to being referred to, by other Nigerians, as a member of an ethnic group other than his or her own. This behaviour re-asserts the importance of ethnicity as a research area. The same argument used in America on race was being used in post-1960 Nigeria about ethnic assimilation. The difference is ethnic assimilation had little chance of developing in Nigeria. This is because Nigerians are Nigerians in their country (Notwithstanding, they were independent peoples before they were Nigerians) irrespective of their ethnicity, and it is incumbent on institutions in Nigeria to recognise different ethnicities in the make-up of the country, which was administratively developed within a Eurocentric context (Ukiwo, 2005). The inapplicability of Assimilation Theory in American society gave rise to new ethnicity theories, which sought to explain the prevalence of ethnic and racial

stratification in the society (Nkomo, 1992). These explanations came in two forms. First, the biological explanation was re-asserted, claiming that racism and discrimination between racial and ethnic groups are human nature (Gordon, 1978). And as such, ethnocentrism and racism may always come in to play when different groups interact. Secondly, the socio-psychological explanation, which argues that racial/ethnic group stratification stems from the dependency of the minority by majority groups or on inappropriate behaviour of dominant group members towards the minority (Thompson, 1989). The common theme between these two explanations is that they focus on individual factors while ignoring the historical contexts of inter-group relations. Nkomo (1992) proffers that much of organisational management research on race has been based on the tenets of Assimilation and Cultural Pluralism, therefore, have been ‘narrowly focused, ahistorical and decontextualized’ (p. 197).

3.5 Ethnic Identity Development

Models of ethnic identity development provide explanations of the process through which individuals belonging to an ethnic group comprehend and interpret their ethnicity. Individuals vary in the extent to which they regard their ethnic groups to be of significance to them and in how associate themselves with their ethnic group (Phinney, 1996). Individuals are likely to feel humiliation or detachment from their ascribed ethnic group if positive ethnic group attributes are not visible or existing to counter negative stereotypes (Chavez & Guido, 1999). The significance of ethnicity to individuals varies according to the context of that person. For instance, a dominant group member may not be conscious of the privilege associated with their ethnicity and therefore may not take their ethnicity to be of significance until they experience discrimination (Acker, 2006). Goodman (2010) argues that exploring a privileged identity can be particularly challenging. According to her, the belief that ‘I’m just normal’ and the denial that *differences, make a difference* can challenge the exploration of one’s privileged identities. She states:

'When I ask students to name the social identity with which they most identify, they rarely choose a dominant identity (sometimes with the exception of identifying as male). This may be because people who are part of a privileged identity seldom have to think about their privileged identities: they are usually surrounded by people just like themselves and therefore see themselves as 'just normal'. Because dominant cultural, societal norms are based on values and characteristics that they hold, they (and the dominant society) often construe people from oppressed or underrepresented groups as the ones who are 'different' 'When people are part of the norm, they find it easier to believe that social identities do not really matter. Therefore, they feel little need to examine how social identities impact their own and others' lives' (p. 10).

Like other identity structures, ethnic identity is not stagnant but evolves over time and context. However, it has important implications for how individuals live, relate with those from other categories, and their perception of wider society (Phinney, 1996).

Phinney (1996) offered a model of ethnic identity development based on conceptual exploration of the phenomenon. She proposes that at childhood, a person's ethnic identity is rooted in the behaviours of parents, communities or society and remains unexamined until he/she gets to the exploration phase. An experience of crisis usually triggers the exploration phase. In this phase of ethnic identity development, people submerge themselves in the culture and history of their group through which they develop a more secure sense of their ethnic identity (Phinney, 1996). Although Phinney (1996) used the term 'stages' in her analysis, she acknowledges that the term is used for convenience. The proposed model does not imply a strict sequential progression as not all individuals experience this. Also, individuals may return to earlier stages of their ethnic identity development to re-examine aspects of their identity (Phinney, 1996).

The initial ethnic identity status is typically applied in childhood or early adolescence when individuals do not play an active role in determining their ethnicity but accept the ethnicity based attributes presented by their family and community. When an ethnic group is portrayed in a strong positive light, a child is more likely to identify positively with the group despite

the absence of personal examination of their own ethnicity. On the other hand, negative ethnic group stereotypes and pictures may also be internalised. This can lead to a range of feelings about their ethnicity from between positive, negative and even mixed feelings (Phinney, 1996). This initial awareness is largely based on family and community socialisation. According to Helms, (1990 in Phinney, 1996) in this phase, minority group members are likely to reject their own ethnic identity for White majority culture. However, Phinney (1996) argues that White preference cannot be generalised as all minority group members may not experience it. Also, based on Phinney's (1996) suggestion that early socialisation can lead to positive, negative or mixed feelings about one's identity, further empirical enquiry needs to be done to ascertain whether this is significant in a minority's preference for White majority culture.

The second status involves the cultivation of deep interest about one's ethnic group. Here, an individual begins exploring their ethnicity and ethnic identity (Phinney, 1996). This is often occasioned by socialisation with people from other backgrounds and acquaintance with discrimination, which in turn, triggers keen interest in one's own traditions, history and their group's societal status (ibid.):

'At this time, ethnicity is assumed to be highly salient, and attitudes towards one's group highly positive, even ethnocentric' (Phinney, 1996 p. 147).

However, evidence supports gradual increase rather than sudden jolt into intense ethnic identification due to crisis (Quintana, 2007). Many individuals attain this status at adolescence as they gradually increase in their identification and exploration of their ethnicity (Quintana, 2007). This is supported by longitudinal studies that are based largely on Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) instrumentation (e.g. French et al., 2006). These studies show that ethnic identity exploration is on the increase between ages ten and fourteen but begins to decline afterwards (Quintana, 2007). In the case of

members of minority groups, growing consciousness of discrimination is frequently accompanied by negative feelings directed at the majority group. Review of racial identity development research by Quintana (2007) shows that both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies provide support for discrimination as a trigger for ethnic identity development (e.g. Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Pahl & Way, 2006). According to him, this evidence is compelling because most studies used Phinney's (1992) MEIM instrument, which does not contain any item dedicated to ethnic prejudice, bias or discrimination.

The final ethnic identity status described by Phinney (1996) involves gaining an accurate but positive and assertive identification with one's group. Here, an individual is more open to other groups and shows anger towards the majority group, though this does not necessarily imply that identity is salient for such an individual or that they have positive personal relationships with members of other groups as these may vary from person to person. This phase results in two groups of people; those who support minority/majority cooperation to achieve shared objectives and those who are in direct opposition to such collaboration and believe that to achieve equality, minorities need to be self-sufficient (Phinney, 1996). According to Quintana (2007), ethnic identity achievement is associated with development and adjustment when the experience of discrimination is minimal (see table 5).

Table 5: Stages of Minority Group Ethnic Identity Development

Stage	Relationship to Own Group	Relationship to Other Group
Unexamined ethnic identity (diffusion or foreclosure; pre-encounter)	Positive, negative, neutral, depending on socialisation (in family, community)	Positive, negative or neutral, depending on socialisation. Possible White identification.
Moratorium or exploration (immersion/emersion; resistance)	High involvement; high salience; typically positive attitudes but possible swing of mood.	Increased awareness of racism; possible anger toward Whites and empathy for other minorities.

Achieved ethnic identity (Internalization)	Secure sense of group membership; realistic appraisal of own group; salience may be high or low	Can vary from acceptance and positive involvement (integration) to preference for separation as a rational approach to discrimination.
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Source: Phinney, J. (1996)

Phinney's (1996) model of ethnic identity development is useful for understanding ethnic identity process and identifying real triggers particularly for moving from an unexamined status to exploration and ethnic identification. However, further research needs to be done to determine what triggers a sense of ethnic identity achievement and what can trigger movement from one identity status to another. Also questionable is whether Phinney's (1996) model of ethnic identity development can be generalised across different ecological and sociocultural contexts. Phinney's (1996) model of ethnic identity development was constructed based on the sociocultural context of the USA where race and racialization have consequences for socialisation. In sociocultural contexts of countries like Nigeria, where race is of little sociological significance while ethnicity is the most salient identity structure recognised by people (Lewis & Braton, 2000), Phinney's (1996) model of ethnic identity development needs to be tested. Though Phinney (1996) used ethnic identity to refer to racial identity, both terms have different historical bases. The term race is associated with the 'idea of inescapable difference and inequality', propagated by racial theories, which proposed a hierarchical existence of humanity with White 'Caucasian' at the pinnacle and Black 'Negroid' at the base (Fenton, 1999 p. 5). Though such racial theories have been discarded, the term race is still of sociological significance in sociocultural contexts like the United States and the UK due to racialisation (Fenton, 1999). Adichie (2013), had this to say in response to being asked the difference between an inter-racial relationship in America and an inter-cultural relationship in Nigeria (a highly ethnically-diverse society):

'But it's a different thing, though; it's a different thing, and this is why when I talk about race, what I mean ... Maybe we should change the terminology and talk about

skin colour because by race I don't mean ethnicity ... Sometimes people conflate race and ethnicity. Nigeria is very diverse but not racially diverse, I mean not skin colour diverse. We're ethnically diverse and that has its own challenges but in some ways its quite different from race' (Channel 4 Interview, 2013).

In Nigeria, individuals may not need an experience of discrimination to become aware of their ethnic identity or to submerge themselves into their culture. Nigeria being a collectivistic society meaning that Nigerians tend to define themselves in terms of 'we' and not 'I' (Hofstede, 2001). This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to ethnic group members, be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group (ibid.).

'I am because we are and, since we are, therefore, I am' is an African philosophical position articulated by Mbiti (1969). It depicts the principle of Ubuntu, which amongst other meanings, denotes that a person finds expression and meaning through his/her relationship with others. Nigerians mostly view themselves in terms of their ethnicity and uphold ethnic group loyalty (Lewis & Bratton, 2000). It may be implausible that Nigerians will question their blackness or ethnic identity in the way an African-American will question his/her blackness. The principle of Ubuntu is upheld in Nigeria through economic, emotional and social support provided among extended family members (Das, 1993). Owujuba & Marks (2015) argue that children's upbringing in Nigerian cultures is jointly shared within the kinship networks and people tend to live in communal settings. Banki & Ismail (2015) found that family owned businesses in Nigeria predominantly employed members of their immediate and extended families. Nigerians tend to be firm in their beliefs and traditions about their ethnicity (Lewis & Bratton 2000). The principle of ubuntu describes collectivism as stated by Hofstede (2001) in his research of cultural dimensions. Although Hofstede's (2001) work has been criticised for being outdated (Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006) and

stereotypical (McSweeney, 2000), his view of cultural practices in Nigeria as embodying a tightly woven framework in which people view themselves in terms of their group identity is ubuntu i.e. *I am because we are and therefore I am*, is collectivism.

Therefore, it is unlikely that an experience of discrimination will trigger ethnic identity exploration. Nigerians will maintain their ethnic identity no matter the size or minority status of their ethnic group. It is unlikely that ethnic minority Nigerian will adopt the identity of a majority ethnic group within proximity. Being an Ijaw woman, I always take the time to explain my ethnic identity to those who confuse my ethnic identity with that of the Igbo. This is not an uncommon occurrence in Nigeria. The socio-historical and cultural disparities between Nigerians in Nigeria and Blacks in America may lead to differences in ethnic identity development in the different contexts. Therefore, a model of ethnic relations that specifically examines ethnicity in Nigeria and other societies outside of Eurocentric views of ethnic identity need to be developed.

Inter-ethnic relations in countries like Nigeria are founded on social categorisations (Ayoade, 1986), which are in turn grounded in distinct decent-based attributes, a possible product of which is ethnocentrism. One might argue that both racism and ethnocentrism produce the same or similar psychological impact (Pahl & Way, 2006 in Quintana, 2007). Especially, when the concept of race has no salient importance in countries like Nigeria where every individual is of the same 'race' but of very distinct ethnic origin. While this makes race inconsequential, ethnicity brings powerful outcomes concerning status, economic benefits and political opportunities in the case of Nigerians. Therefore, ethnicity has validity in Nigeria in the same way race has validity in Western countries. Especially in terms of status, economic benefits, and political opportunities; hence the need for this and further research. In Nigeria, for instance, the scramble for power has resulted in inter-ethnic conflicts such as the Biafran war of 1967, Ijaw/Itsekiri crisis of 1997, and the Okrika/Elemo crisis of 2006 to

mention a few. Therefore conflict may be significant in regards to ethnic identity in Nigerian organisations. However, this needs empirical exploration.

3.6 Gender Identity Development

Gender is central to the organisation of practices and institutions in Western culture and society (Oyewumi, 1997). Gender has a profound influence on a person from when they are born, having the propensity to determine the way they are treated regarding, for example; the name of a child, the way their parents/guardians dress them, and how others interpret their behaviour (Bussey, 2011). Prior to the late 1970s, it was easy to distinguish between sex and gender, while sex was thought to be the biological aspects of being male or female (chromosomes, anatomy, and genitalia) gender was thought of as an achieved status, constructed through cultural, social and psychological means (West & Zimmerman, 1987). However, it can be difficult to differentiate between what is learned and what is biological and which of these influence different behaviours (Blakemore et al., 2009). This way of theorising sex and gender has changed considerably in recent years (Richardson, 2008). In contemporary discourse, both terms have been used to refer to the same things; examples are gender differences in behaviour, sex differences in behaviour, gender roles and sex roles (Blakemore et al., 2009).

Over the years, three main theoretical perspectives have emerged to explicate gender development. Cognitive developmental theory emphasises the thinking process, which children engage in as they attempt to understand and grasp their gender identity (Ruble et al., 2006). Stereotypic notions of gender are developed from early childhood through what is heard and seen in the surrounding environment (Kohlberg, 1966). Once an individual develops that ability to label theirs' and others' gender, they begin to behave in ways consistent with that conception. According to Kohlberg (1966) the thought *'I am a boy.*

Therefore, I want to do boy things (and to gain approval for doing them) is rewarding' (p. 89) precedes a child's pursuit of behaviour that is consistent with their self-conception. The mutual interplay of this self-conception and behaviour leads to the achievement of gender constancy, which Kohlberg (1966) defines as the belief that one's gender is linked to biological features and therefore immutable. He goes on to propose that gender constancy comprises three levels of gender understanding in a progressive order. Basic gender identity (ability to label one's and other's gender), gender stability (recognition that one's gender does not change despite growth), gender consistency (recognition of gender as immutable) respectively. Gender consistency typically happens between the ages of 6 and 7. The stage a child is in determines how he/she interprets information about gender and children only start actively interpreting gender information when they reach gender constancy (Kohlberg, 1969). Despite the popularity of Kohlberg's theory, empirical evidence has shown that children behave in ways congruent with their gender long before they reach gender constancy (Bussey & Bandura, 1984; 1992; Lobel & Menachri, 1993).

Gender schema theory was developed as an alternative view to cognitive developmental theory. Bem (1981) developed this theory, which defines schemas as anticipatory structures used to evaluate and remember incoming information about a situation, object or person. Gender schema theory suggests that children do not need to attain gender constancy to engage actively in gender processing, but that gender schema development begins once they can label themselves and others as male and female (Martin & Halverson, 1981). The schema is formed through interacting with the environment and increases to comprise knowledge of 'scripts' about gender-related behaviour, social features, activities, interest and personality (ibid.). Upon developing this schema, the child begins to ignore or reject activities or objects that are not in line with this gender schema. This approach to gender has made significant contributions to the understanding of how thinking about gender changes over time.

However, it does not specify the process by which gender features that constitute the knowledge of the schema are abstracted (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Also, it is not clear whether gender labelling is causally linked with gender-related behaviour, or other factors such as cognitive abilities and socialisation play a role in determining gender-related behaviour (ibid.). Cognitive approaches to gender development allow room for biological explanations, which view gender as an immutable aspect of human nature.

Biologically oriented theoretical perspectives view gender role and identity as a product of a biological process (Gorski et al., 1978, Dabbs et al., 1995). According to this perspective, women act differently to men due to the difference in the functionality of their brains, which results from hormonal and chromosomal differences (Dabbs et al., 1995). Men and women produce different sex hormones, (testosterone for men and testosterone for women) which cause their brains to develop differently, leading to distinguished behaviours between them (ibid.). However, studies that show the relationship of chromosomal and hormonal differences in gendered behaviour neither establish causality, nor simple correlation between them (e.g. Beatty, 1992, Williams & Meck, 1991). Most of these studies were conducted on animals (Craig et al., 2004). Where it might be possible to generalise such findings to humans, such studies do not consider the role of learning and culture in shaping gendered behaviour.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) argue that early social learning theories do not take cognisance of the multiplicity and complexity of factors that influence gender development. Social Cognitive Theory emphasises the role of children's experiences in their social behaviour and highlights the active role that children play in the learning process. Gendered stereotypes are learned from these gendered experiences, the media and education leading to the development and transformation of gender identity over time (Bussey, 2011). Through the Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Bussey & Bandura (1999) argue that gender identity is

not something that is achieved at one point in time but is an interplay of affective, cognitive, biological and socio-structural influences on-going process over the course of life. This view of gender is taken to examine Ijaw women's workplace lived experience. The next section discusses how gender and ethnicity interact in the lives of ethnic minority women.

3.7 Intersectionality as a theoretical framework

The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw (1991) to depict the multiplicity of ways in which gender interacts with race to affect the social well-being of black women. However, the concept was gradually developed over the late 20th century into the 21st century in black feminist thought when it was observed that the interests of black women were neither represented in either the women's or the black movement (Gopaldas, 2013). This body of work revealed that though the lives of black women were impacted by their race and gender, the intermingling of both social identity structures in shaping their experience was not addressed by racial or gender theories (Browne & Misra, 2003). Collins (1999) argues that both gender and race are socially constructed categories that are conjointly constituted to create and reinforce a hierarchical social order. According to her, the interweaving of race and gender creates a matrix of domination whereby individuals can concurrently encounter privilege and oppression as a result of possessing both social identities. Therefore, one facet of an individual's social identity cannot be examined independently as a contributor to any given social situation.

Scholars have disagreed on the nature of intersectionality (Weber, 2001; Collins, 1999; Reynolds, 2001; Glazer, 1991). While some believe that there are circumstances when economic interests override interests based on race, ethnicity or gender; others believe that these social identity categories always have an interwoven effect of individuals' experience (Browne & Misra, 2003). According to Weber (2001) race, ethnicity and gender are social

identity structures that intersect in all circumstances and because of their mutually constituting and intricate attributes; no one of these structures can overshadow the other.

They are:

'Interrelated Systems at the macro-institutional level—they are created, maintained, and transformed simultaneously and in relation to one another. Therefore, they cannot be understood independently of one another.' (Weber 2001, p. 104)

Ransford (1980) contends that the disadvantages experienced by individuals will increase as their ranking in the social order decreases leading to a situation whereby those at the lowest position will have the fewest opportunities, and therefore the most disadvantages. Individuals with the highest social ranking will experience more privileges, power and opportunities in the society. He termed this 'the multiple jeopardy – multiple advantage hypothesis'. Sidanius & Pratto (2001) critiques this proposition because men of colour pose the highest level of threat to white men and as such are more likely to face the most oppression. However, only a limited body of literature supports their argument; here there is a need for further research.

On the other hand, some scholars who view the intersection of race, ethnicity and gender as contingent argue that there are specific conditions where these social structures interact together and there are other conditions where they do not (Glass, 1999). According to Kilbourne et al., (1994) an individual can experience gender stratification differently depending on their race and race stratification differently depending on their gender. Gender stratification is evident in occupational gender segregation as well as devaluation of jobs dominated by women while race and ethnic stratification are conspicuous in race and ethnic residential segregation, occupational segregation and unequal access to opportunities (Altonji & Black, 1999). In sum, it is argued here that although race and gender stratification may be related, it is experienced differently based on the race, ethnicity and gender of an individual.

Currently, there is ample empirical evidence of the nature of intersectionality in workplaces in the United Kingdom and the United States. Also, much of the current intersectional research available is based on results about White and Black men and women, with little or no attention given to ethnic groups within those broad racial categories (See Kamenou et al., 2013; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2010; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006). More so, in developing countries such as Nigeria, this area of literature is yet to be explored (Nyambegera, 2002). It is pertinent that empirical studies are conducted in order to shed light on the dynamics of intersectionality in organisations in Nigeria. This is because though knowledge gained from research in the United Kingdom and America can serve as a basis for research in Nigeria, such findings cannot be transferred to Nigeria due to historical and societal differences. The next section deals with discusses identities become salient in-group setting.

3.8 Social Identity Theory

‘Social Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities. It is the systematic establishment and signification between individuals, between collectivities and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships, of similarities and difference’ (Jenkins, 1996, p. 4).

The complexity of understanding of why individuals do the things they do can be minimised by understanding who they perceive themselves to be. Individuals possess multiple selves in accordance with as many groups as they engage with and these identities can be derived personally, socially and contextually (Jenkins, 2014). Similarity and difference underpins how a person identifies himself/herself and others; how others identify him/her as well as themselves; and how they interact in the process of social identification (ibid). These processes result in social identification. Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that:

‘a social category (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, sports team, ethnic group) into which one falls and to which one feels one belongs to, provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category - a self-definition that is a part of the self-concept’ (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995 p. 259).

The ideas buttressed by Social Identity Theory (SIT) are based on Tajfel's (1970) original studies. Tajfel's (1970) studies were aimed at identifying the minimal circumstances under which members of a group (ingroup members) will be biased against another group (outgroup) while favouring the ingroup. Findings from these empirical studies indicate that ingroup members favoured the ingroup in order to maximise their advantage over the outgroup even though the basis for group formation could be something as trivial as their preference between two famous abstract painters, 'Klee and Kandisky' (See Tajfel, 1970). Thus individuals categorisation of themselves provides more incentive for ingroup favouritism than the motive for group formation.

SIT is based on the premise that social identity is mainly a derivative of group membership (Brown, 2000). It attempts to explain group behaviour and membership with the aim of comprehending how individuals interpret themselves and others in the social order (Hogg et al., 1995). According to SIT, this occurs in a two way process, whereby individuals identify with the norms, values and beliefs of a group causing them to adapt more or less to the group prototype while the group adapts more or less to its members in a continuous evolving process (Fiske & Taylor, 1991):

'A prototype is a subjective representation of the defining attributes (e.g. beliefs, attitudes, behaviours) of a social category, which is actively constructed from relevant social information in the immediate or more enduring interactive context' (in Hogg et al., 1995 p. 261).

Individuals are categorised or categorise themselves and others into ingroups and outgroups thereby heightening the perceived resemblance of each person to the prototype of the group they each belong to. Self-categorization implies that individuals adopt the group prototype as their dominant identity pushing their own individual identity into the background (Korte, 2007). Individuals willingly modify their beliefs, norms and values to fit with the

ingroup/outgroup prototype and may even adopt group identity that deviates from their own (Turner & Onorato, 1999). This is:

'a process of depersonalization ... this produces, for instance, normative behaviour, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, positive ingroup attitudes and cohesion, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective behaviour, shared norms and mutual influence (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123).

According to Hogg & Terry (2000) depersonalization is a modification in an individual's self-perception and the grounds upon which they view others. This does not suggest a negative implication in the sense of dehumanisation or de-individualization, but a neutral depiction of the propensity for individuals to soften personal qualities while adopting group traits (Korte, 2007; Hogg & Terry, 2000). It is the attainment of supplementary identity, not a loss of individual identity (Korte, 2007).

Individuals identify with a group for reasons of significance, sense of pride, stability, and attachment. Social identity can also inspire inter-group competition for position, control, supremacy and economic edge (Korte, 2007). Individuals are conscious of their membership in different social categories and membership to each group prescribes what that individual should feel, think and how they should act depending on its salience per context (Hogg et al., 1995). Therefore, when a particular social identity becomes relevant for self-adjustment, the way a person views him/herself and the way such a person behaves becomes *'ingroup stereotypical and normative'* and the way one perceives members of a salient outgroup within that specific context becomes *'outgroup stereotypical'*, and behaviour between the groups *'acquires competitive and discriminatory properties to varying degrees depending on the nature of relations between the groups'* (Hogg et al., 1995 p. 260). Having discussed gender and ethnic identity as well as how these identities affect group behaviour, the next section will examine how inequalities emanating from these identities happen in work organisations.

3.9 Inequality Regimes in Organisations

'All organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations'

(Acker, 2006, p. 443)

Acker (1990) argues that organisational theorists and feminist scholars tend to portray organisations as gender neutral. According to her, significant contributions have been made to the study of women and gender in organisations. Especially in terms of illuminating: the role of gender and masculine hegemony in organisations (Kanter, 1977); exclusionary, segregation and discriminatory experiences of women in organisations (Ressner (1986) and; the masculine tenets of bureaucracy (Ferguson, 1986). However, these feminist analyses tend to treat gender inequality as an occurrence that is independent of the organisational structure thereby assuming organisations to be gender neutral and asexual. Acker (1990) suggests that the construction of jobs and positions as abstract categories, devoid of a human body renders invisible *'a gendered substructure in which men's bodies fill the abstract jobs'* (p.152). However, such processes form the basis for women's subordination and exclusion from organisations. As a result, she states that if the transformative agenda of feminism is to be realised, a theoretical strategy that offers avenues for critically examining the gendered structure of organisations needs to be developed. In 2006, Acker answered her call for a theoretical strategy by introducing the concept of inequality regimes.

However, inequality regimes do not cater to only gender inequalities; they provide a basis for conceptualising the gender, race and class inequalities as mutually reproduced in organisational processes (Acker, 2006). Inequality regimes provides a useful framework for intersectional investigations, because it offers a theoretical strategy for understanding examining workplace inequalities that also illuminates the organisational structures and

processes that shape and sustain inequalities. Healy et al., (2011) argue that Acker's (2006) inequality regimes as an explanatory tool reveals the depth, breath and relationship between inequalities that ethnic minority women experience in public sector organisations. Although Acker (2006) deals more specifically with race rather than ethnicity, she states that ethnicity can also be a basis for inequality regimes in organisations. Moreover, as has been previously argued in examining the conflation of race and ethnicity, ethnicity works in Nigeria the way race works in racialised societies to create inequalities⁶. Organisations differ in the extent to which they create and sustain inequalities, as well as their level of severity (Acker, 2006). Inequality regimes in organisations may also be mutable and dynamic, in relation to the environmental context of the organisation (ibid). She states that inequality regimes are:

'The systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes, workplace decisions, such as how to organize work, opportunities for promotion and interesting work, security in employment and benefits, pay and other monetary rewards, respect and pleasures in work and work relations' (Acker, 2006, p. 443).

By this, it is implied that inequality permeates all levels of organisations. She delineates six mutually constitutive elements of inequality regimes:

The bases of inequality; the shape and degree of inequality; organizing processes that create and recreate inequalities; the invisibility of inequalities; the legitimacy of inequalities; and the controls that prevent protest against inequalities (Acker, 2006 p. 444).

3.9.1 The Bases of Inequality

Acker (2006) states that class, gender, and race are enduring bases of inequality although inequalities may also emanate from other social categories. Employment and wage practices breed class inequalities. This is such that hierarchical positions in large organisations are a reflection of societal class structures. In organisations where managerial positions are mostly occupied by men and junior level roles by women; gender may be integrated into class inequalities. Notwithstanding, the increasing spread of women across organizational

⁶ The process through which this happens in Nigeria is explored later in chapter 2.

hierarchies implies that class and gender inequalities are no longer synonymous even though gendered assumptions still have class implications (ibid). Acker (2006) suggests that race is always present in organisations, applying this view to Nigeria, an all black nation, it is implausible to adopt race as an analytical category in this study. In discussing the previous discussion of the conflation of race and ethnicity, it was argued that ethnicity functions in Nigeria to create inequalities, similar to the way race functions in racialised societies. Therefore in this context, ethnicity operates as a basis of inequality in a way that unsettles racial identification. Class is not explicitly considered in this thesis, class inequalities that are implicit in gender and ethnic inequalities are acknowledged. In this regard, other axes of inequality that emanate through the research process will also be highlighted.

3.9.2 The shape and degree of inequality

The shape and degree of inequality vary across organizations and national contexts. The most popular inequalities in organisations include wage gap and occupational and job segregation between genders, racial and ethnic groups (Acker, 2012). Despite the reduction in the level of segregation and wage gap, these inequalities are still widespread and significant (ibid). Public sector organisations with steep hierarchies tend to be dominated by white males, while ethnic minority women in such organisations are likely to experience a glass ceiling (Kirton & Greene, 2016). Clegg & Bailey (2008) examination of 2006 UK labour force statistics shows that ethnic minority men have a higher representation in top levels of the labour market in comparison to ethnic minority women.

Astin's (1984) needs based sociopsychological model may be useful for understanding ethnic minority women's career choices. She explains that both social and psychological factors affect individuals' job choice although expressed in different ways by men and women. Individuals are motivated by the need to survive, the need to do something satisfactory and pleasurable, and the need to positively impact society. Ethnic minority women may be

attracted to jobs that they find pleasurable, accessible, and jobs that they perceive themselves to be capable of performing. However, these desires may be mediated by sex role and ethnic stereotypes and resulting inequalities in the labour market. Ethnic minority women may internalize stereotypes and conform to them. However, opportunity structures in the labour market also affect the career choices of ethnic minority women. Thus, gender and ethnic based stereotypes and opportunity structures may work together to limit ethnic minority women's choices in the labour market.

Greenhaus et al., (1990) found that ethnic minority women managers in the UK indicated that they had reached a plateau in their career and felt that, in comparison to their white colleagues, they had limited career prospects and workplace appreciation. Thomas (2009) investigated the similarities between plateaued and non-plateaued black ethnic minority women managers in America; they found that both groups experienced limited visibility assignments, exposure to top management, strong mentoring relationships and opportunities for upward mobility.

Ethnic minority women also experience job and occupational segregation. Concerning occupational segregation, they tend to be concentrated in unpopular branches of their profession and usually experience inferior training (Davidson, 1997). More so, they tend to experience job ghettoisation in the sense that they are usually congregated in particular jobs with restricted career progression opportunities (Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006). Davidson (1997) found that black women were '*ghettoised into black jobs*' (p. 85). Acker (2009) argues that the notion that job and occupational segregation are on the decline is a façade. She posits that organisations have carried out differentiations and reconfigurations to accommodate women and ethnic minorities into white male organisations. The US has made significant progress towards gender equality in management positions. However, women managers are crowded in jobs outside of core business areas with fewer responsibilities and less pay

compared to their male counterparts (Acker, 2009). Brynin & Guveli (2012) suggest that occupational segregation offers a possible explanation for ethnic wage gap in the UK. White men are likely to be paid more than women and ethnic minorities (Acker, 2009).

3.9.3 Organising processes that produce inequality

Acker (2012) argues that gendered substructures are the fundamental bedrock of mainstream organisations. To her, the fact of organizational substructures:

'Points to often-invisible processes in the ordinary lives of organizations in which gendered assumptions about women and men, femininity and masculinity, are embedded and reproduced, and gender inequalities perpetuated' (p. 215).

Work is organised under the image of the ideal male, who typically has minimal familial responsibilities in comparison to women who generally have child care and domestic responsibilities (ibid). Thus, men are able to work long hours when necessary for career progression while women may be stuck in part time or lower level jobs due to juggling work and familial responsibilities, which may also result in lower pay and status occupations (Acker, 2009).

Family friendly policies offer men and women the opportunity to balance workplace with familial responsibilities. However, they tend to provide temporary solutions and are usually unavailable to lower level employees (Acker, 2009). Incongruence between paid work and unpaid familial responsibilities may serve to stall the pace of women's career progression, especially during child rearing years (ibid). Therefore it has been argued that women engage in 'satisficing'. By satisficing, it is meant that women adjust their career pursuits to fulfil their responsibilities in the home (Corby & Stanworth, 2009). Women work flexible hours in order to create a balance between family and workplace responsibilities. However, they are conscious that *'reduced hours, and senior roles are seen as incompatible'* (Cobby & Stanworth, 2009 p. 162). Mothers with young children often experience stigmatisation and

marginalisation. They may also be labelled as uncommitted and therefore lose out on career progression opportunities (Stone, 2006 in Acker, 2009). As a result, women's utilisation of family friendly policies in the workplace may serve to reinforce gender inequalities by conforming to the male model of organisations (ibid). Acker (2009) notes that her description of gendered substructures could be extended, using an intersectional approach to include, for instance, ethnic substructures, which are also essential elements in the creation and sustenance of inequalities. The same organisational processes result in inclusion and exclusions on the bases of gender, ethnicity and other social categories (Acker, 2012). While racial subtexts in the US can be traced to slavery, genocide and expansion wars (ibid), colonialism plays a significant role in the underlying assumptions about ethnicity in Nigeria (Blanton et al., 2001). The drastic reconfiguration of pre-colonial interstate relations for the economic benefit of Britain resulted in new systems of ethnic stratification that are vulnerable to intensified inter-ethnic competition (ibid).

2.9.3.1 Recruitment and Hiring

Assumptions about ethnic, racial and gender identities may form the basis of employment practices. In this regard, the competence judgements that are made in recruitment and selection processes are often sites of inequality reproduction. The gender and race of existing jobholders usually play a significant role in determining 'competence' (Acker, 2006). She makes a distinction between the *'gendered organisation of work and the gender and racial characteristics of the ideal worker'* (p. 449). Jobs are gender stereotyped such that women are regarded as ideal for some, and men are seen as ideal for others. Employers seek out ethnic minority women and immigrant women to perform certain types of jobs, especially when they are of the view that these women will accept instructions and low wages (Acker, 2006). Nepotism is also pervasive in organisations (Jones, 2012) and prevents ethnic minorities from entering into, and progressing in organisations. Simon et al., (1966) define nepotism as *'the*

bestowal of patronage by reason of relationship regardless of merit' (in Jones, 2012 p. 2). Gender and racial inequalities are maintained by hiring through social networks. Employment legislation that requires open advertisements and standardised recruitment practices has opened up spaces for ethnic minority women to enter into organisations in the UK and US (Acker, 2006). However, recruitment processes are still open to bias because they are often dependent on the judgement of the employer (ibid). Ghavami & Peplau (2012) found that gender and ethnic stereotypes are often ranked according to social hierarchies with white men at the top of the hierarchy. This white male preference may influence recruitment and selection decisions that they are more competent for the job (Acker, 2006). Tomaskovic-Devey & Skaggs (2002) suggest that gender and racial job segregation are profound in organisations. Tomaskovic-Devey (1993) argues that this segregation has explanatory potential for wage gap. Kanter (1977) argues that women are usually underrepresented in organisations. She suggests that women who make up less than 15% of employees in their organisation may experience increased visibility and be regarded as representatives of their gender. She referred to such women as tokens, but also acknowledged that ethnic minorities may also be tokens in their organisations. She found that tokens tend to internalise perceptions that they are representative of their social identity group and therefore feel the need to project a positive image.

The image of the successful manager is stereotypically male (Acker, 2009). She argues that masculine stereotyped prerequisites for success in management have been recorded for over 30 years and are still persistent (ibid). In a comparison of findings from Japan and the UK, Schein et al., (1996) found that sex role stereotypes influence individuals', especially men's, perceptions of the characteristics of a successful manager. Ghavami & Peplau, (2012) argue that social hierarchies in America *'are created and maintained by legitimizing myths that include stereotypes, attitudes, and values that provide justification for current social*

inequalities' (p. 114). Their research '*consistently demonstrates that Black and White men, not women, are perceived as the prototypes of their race*' (p. 123). This justification of inequalities, create barriers to women's progression into senior management positions in public sector organisations (Acker, 2009). Fearfull & Kamenou (2006) suggest that stereotypes placed on ethnic minority women give them extra concerns at work:

'Their capabilities and commitment to work are often questioned within organisations and society ... Stereotypes forms a significant constraint on the ethnic minorities' positions and opportunities in organisations' (p. 156).

2.9.3.2 Informal interactions while 'doing the work.'

Gender, racial and ethnic inequalities are reproduced in workplace interactions (Acker, 2006). There is limited documentation of the intersection of gender and ethnicity in informal workplace processes and interactions (ibid). Men and women in organisations interact with each other based on assumptions about the gender and ethnicity of those they interact with. Such assumptions are assigned to different bodily features (Acker, 2006). Appropriate behaviour is determined by culture, history and personal preferences of those interacting together (ibid). Acker (2006) argues that:

Managers may expect a certain ... respect for authority that varies with the race and gender of the subordinate; subordinates may assume that their positions require deference and respect but also find these demands demeaning or oppressive' (p. 451).

This may be the case in Nigeria due to pervasive notions of patriarchy and cultural practices that demand lower employees to defer to managers. Ovadje & Ankomah (2001) argue that cultural values in Nigeria shape perceptions of power and authority in organisations particularly in relation to respect for seniors and the role that women play. Respect for seniors/seniority is a crucial part of most Nigerian cultures (ibid). It is a taboo to refer to an older person by their name; one must accord them an appropriate title as a sign of respect. Old age is regarded as synonymous with experience and wisdom. This is such that during decision making, younger persons are expected to defer to those older (Ovadje & Ankomah,

2001). There also appears to be a widespread belief that women are inferior to men⁷. These arguments and cultural behaviours are supported by Hofstede (2001) with his suggestion of a general tolerance of inequality in Nigeria. His support of the view that cultural values in Nigeria denote that hierarchies are accepted in organisations in that everyone knows their place; subordinates expect to be guided by higher-level employees whose authority is hardly ever in question. This implies that male managers may be given a lot of respect in Nigerian organisations to the detriment of female and other subordinate workers. More so, the ethnicity of the male manager may have implications for his workplace decisions. However, cultural perceptions about age and seniority may mediate managers' authority. Seniority is of crucial importance to most Nigerian cultures (Okehie-Offoha & Sadiku, 1995). In this regard, individual assumptions about appropriate workplace behaviour may involve respect for older workers. Owoyemi, et. al. (2011) found age diversity to be significant for workplace behaviour workplace interactions in Nigerian organisations. Ageism may have negative implications for younger workers, especially those in managerial positions as older workers may undermine their authority.

Furthermore, workplace interactions may be permeated by what might be termed 'benevolent sexism'. Jost & Kay (2005) argue that men may offer women protective restrictions in the workplace that, although seeming favourable, serves to justify inequalities. Moya et al., (2007) suggest that protective paternalism may lead women to accept restrictions. Such restrictions could have negative outcomes for career progression, especially when women are given less challenging tasks due to gender stereotypes. Pierce (1995) found that female lawyers were given supportive roles while male lawyers were made partners (in Acker, 2006). Ethnic minority women face more complex forms of inequalities in comparison to white women (Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006); and, racial and gender discrimination is often

⁷ See discussion of postcolonial perceptions of women and men's identities in chapter 2.3.4

subtle and implied in workplace interactions (Acker, 2009).

3.9.4 The invisibility of inequalities

Acker (2009) states that the visibility of inequalities refers to the level of awareness of inequalities, and this varies across organisations. The lack of awareness of inequalities can be deliberate or involuntary. However, privileged groups may be unaware of their privilege (ibid). Individuals in dominant groups such as men and majority groups tend to believe that inequalities exist in places other than their environment (Acker, 2006). However, certain inequalities may be more visible than others. For instance, gender inequality may be difficult to detect. One reason may be that gender inequalities are *so fleeting or so minor* that they are hard to detect (p. 452). Another reason may be that individuals are socialized to believe that gender inequalities are normative and therefore may be unconscious of gender inequalities in their environment or see them as unproblematic. Racial inequalities, on the other hand, are *'usually evident, visible, but segregated, denied and avoided'* (Acker, 2006 p. 452). Bell & Nkomo (2003) found that while black women managers reported experiences of racist abuse, white managers undermined them, claiming that such outbursts were not intended to be harmful.

3.9.5 The legitimacy of inequalities

While some organisations take deliberate measures to minimize inequalities, other organisations, especially bureaucracies, legitimize inequalities by their very nature. Although the legitimacy of inequalities has been undermined through feminist and civil rights movements in the UK and US, countries that are still in the developmental stage such as Nigeria, operate policies that formally legitimate inequalities⁸. Employment and diversity initiatives have served to minimize blatant discrimination on the basis of gender and

⁸ Policies that legitimate gender and ethnic inequalities are discussed in examining gender and ethnic identities in postcolonial Nigeria in Chapter 2.

ethnicity. However, Healy et al. (2011) argue that there is a gap between rhetoric and practice when it comes to equal opportunities policies in organisations. This gap creates room for more subtle expressions of inequality that may be more difficult to detect. Moreover, beliefs in biological explanations of gender and ethnic differences, regarding women's abilities and racial/ethnic inferiority operate to legitimate inequalities (Acker, 2006). Having discussed the processes that facilitate inequalities in organisations; the next section will discuss the various strategies that women and ethnic minorities adopt in organisations.

3.10 Ethnic Minority Women's Career Strategies in Organisations

Healy et al., (2011) suggest that often, ethnic minority women are active agents who shape their work environment through activism. Colgan & Ledwith (1996) suggest that women's consciousness and activism in organisations vary, based on the total of their experiences, the gendered substructures of their organisations and how they perceive these (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). The degree to which women accept, conform to, or challenge is largely dependent on their consciousness of inequalities; the barriers to their career; their perception of organizational politics and the strategy that they are willing to adopt (ibid).

Kenny & Brinner (2013) provide insights into factors that influence ethnic minority persons' workplace strategies. Their analysis of the workplace experience of graduate employees from British Caribbean backgrounds indicates that ethnic minorities tend to adopt workplace strategies in relation to the salience of their ethnic identity at work. They found that ethnic identity salience at work was experienced through ethnic assignation and ethnic identification. Kenny & Briner (2013) found that participants experienced ethnic assignation in work situations were they felt that colleagues and managers acted towards them primarily on the basis of their ethnic identity, rather than their professional identity. Kenny & Brinner (2013) describe ethnic identification as individuals' awareness and sense of belonging to their

ethnic and cultural heritage. They suggest that ethnic assignation is often due to feelings of similarity and connectedness with members of their ingroup. Thus individuals tend to vary in how they perceive that their gender or ethnicity is significant in a given context. Bradley (2016) identifies three levels of social identity that may reveal the degree to which individuals are conscious of gender and ethnic politics in their organization. According to her, passive identities are a product of individuals' lived relationships with others, but they do not form the basis of their interactions. Individuals take such identities for granted until events occur that bring them to the fore. Individuals are more conscious of active identities and may make decisions based on them. Active identification usually occurs in response to the actions of others (Bradley, 2016). Politicized identities, on the other hand, are identities that individuals are constantly defining themselves by and form the basis of decisions and actions (Bradley, 2016). Political actions often give rise to politicized identities, which in turn form the basis for group action. Women's activism may give rise to the elaboration of organizational structures (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). Based on the preceding discussion about factors that influence women and ethnic minorities' activism in the workplace, this section will proceed to examine the literature on ethnic minority women's workplace strategies.

Women that display a minimal awareness of gender politics in their organization may be regarded as having passive gender identities. Colgan & Ledwith (1996) refer to these women as traditional women because they consent to women's gendered place in society and work organisations. Traditional women tend to accept and concede to dominant male cultures. They usually act in line with the general expectations of gendered work structures and therefore do not confront workplace inequalities. Colgan & Ledwith (1996) state that traditional women in their research wished to blend in with the organization even when doing so was unfavorable. Individuals who adopt this stance towards gender inequality tend to believe in the legitimacy of gender inequalities and the fairness of patriarchal structures.

Acker (2009) argues that individuals tend to be more aware of racial inequalities even though they may avoid dealing with it. Due to the visibility of issues of race and ethnicity, in comparison to gender inequalities, individuals may adopt different strategies for dealing with both types of inequalities. For instance, studies that examine ethnic minority women's strategies (e.g. Kamenou, 2002; Fearfull & Kamenou 2006; Tomlinson et. al., 2012; Healy et al., 2011) report that ethnic minority women display awareness and consciousness of racial inequalities and develop strategies for combating perceived inequality in the workplace. Therefore, it may be unlikely that individuals will adopt a traditional stance towards ethnic and racial inequalities in the workplace.

However, Tomlinson et al. (2012) observe that ethnic minority women may develop coping strategies to manage inequalities. Baccus & Holley (2005) state that black women depend on spirituality as a resource for coping with stressful workplace situations. Spirituality served as a source of guidance, strength and inner peace and a basis for reassessing experiences of inequality in the workplace. Bowen-Reid & Harell (2002) argue that spirituality plays an important part in the lives of black persons of African descent and therefore provides a viable model for understanding how blacks cope with racism. They examined the effects of spirituality on health as a protective mechanism against racism in 155 undergraduates. Defining spirituality as a *'divine expression and belief in a higher power that governs ones existence, acknowledging the connection between human life and the Creator'* (p. 21), they found that respondents' belief in a divine intervention serves as a stress-reducing coping mechanism. Individuals who were more spiritual in nature, were more likely to pray, meditate and trust in their faith in God to cope with racist or adverse situations. Bowen-Reid & Harell (2002) conclude that *spirituality serves as an effective coping mechanism and source of resiliency in the lives of black people* (p. 33). For instance, Babatunde's (2013) found that bank managers in Nigeria consider their spirituality to be a driving force for their conduct of

ethical banking practices. Similar examples are also found among African Diasporas. For instance, African Americans during the civil rights movement. Morris (1984) describes how they coped with oppression and racism using their spirituality:

It was the church more than any other institution that provided escape from the harsh realities associated with domination. Inside the walls, blacks were temporarily free to forget oppression while singing, listening, praying and shouting (p. 4).

Martin Luther's letter from a Birmingham jail also expresses his dependence on spirituality during the Civil Rights movement. He stated that being considered an extremist was no bother to him because Jesus, alongside other biblical characters were considered to be extremist and further declared that God was his help (Gotlieb, 2003). Holder et al., (2015) found spirituality to be central to black women's strategies for dealing with racial micro-aggression in the workplace. It provided them with a framework for interpreting negative experiences and afforded them a sense of empowerment, clarity and a basis for forgiving perpetrators. Bowen-Reid & Harell (2002) argue that in order to develop a viable model that aids an understanding of the adverse effect of racism, one must of necessity, incorporate an African worldview and culture, within which spirituality plays a significant role. Based on this argument, this thesis argues that spirituality has theoretical validity as a strategy for coping with discrimination and workplace inequality.

Moving along the trajectory of awareness, ethnic minority women who are aware of gender and ethnic inequalities in their organisations may adopt a variety of strategies based on their level of awareness. Women and ethnic minorities tend to have concerns about conforming to negative stereotypes about their gender and ethnicity in the workplace (Steele & Arnold, 1995). Individuals may experience stereotype threat when ingroup members are underrepresented ingroup settings (Kray & Shirako, 2009). The consciousness of the possibility of being judged based on negative social identity stereotypes can lead to a variety of responses. Block et al., (2011) develop a framework for understanding women and ethnic

minorities' response to stereotype threat. They suggest that individuals may respond to fend off the stereotype, may be discouraged by the stereotype or demonstrate resilience to stereotype.

3.10.1 Fending off the Stereotype

Fending off the stereotype includes engaging in actions geared at conforming to the dominant group culture of the organisation. In a bid to get ahead in their career, women may mute their womanhood, due to the perception that acting female in the workplace will lead to difficulties (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). These women may emphasize their professional identities, which may indeed be a covert way to ascribing to the masculine characteristics associated with their job role (ibid). Ledwith & Hansen (2013) argue that women in male dominated professions and leadership positions may take on masculine characteristics to fit into organisations. However, such women tend to lose support from other women in their organisation. This is because stereotypes associated with the 'right' leader are masculine, and when women strive for such positions, other women no longer recognize them to be women (Ledwith & Hansen, 2013). Powell et al., (2009) found women in engineering careers to adopt coping mechanisms in order to gain male acceptance. Strategies they adopt include: *'acting like one of the boys, accepting gender discrimination, achieving reputation, seeing the advantages over the disadvantages and adopting 'anti-woman' approach'* (p. 411). These coping strategies by women serve to undervalue their womanhood and reproduced the gender culture of masculine careers (Powell et al., 2009). Catalyst (2007) argues that individuals take stereotypically male behaviours such as competition and assertiveness to be prerequisite for good leadership positions and male dominated organisations. However, women experience a double bind because stereotypes associated with being masculine and those associated with being feminine are mutually exclusive. And therefore women who behave in ways that are inconsistent with their gender may experience social rejection, while those who do not may

experience stunted career progression (ibid). Ethnic minorities try to fit into organisations by adopting the social and cultural mores of the social group that is associated with positive stereotypes within a given context (Block et al., 2011). For instance, they may act to mask their ethnicity by learning and utilizing the language, attitudes and customs of *'positively regarded identity groups'* (ibid p. 577). Goffman's (1970) suggests that in social situations, individuals hide aspects of their identity that may be associated with negative stereotypes and assumptions; while simultaneously wearing masks to conceal negatively attributed aspects of the self, in order to influence the ideas of other about who they are. He suggests that identities are performed through masks, scripts and costumes. Goffman (1970) selective masking may fend off negative experiences in social situations. In reviewing Goffman's (1970) views, Crossley (1995) states that *'embodied action drawing from a stock of social techniques or skills is oriented to and articulated within an embodied world (so that) the active body and the social world as a stage of action are completely interdependent'* (p. 147). In this regard, individuals mask identities based on personal perceptions of how others may view and react to them. Thomas (1993) observed that Black professionals in the US imitate behaviours of their White managers in order to achieve engender workplace acceptance (in Block et al., 2011). This may lead to temporary workplace benefits, but these are short term and can be stressful, leading to negative consequences in the long run (ibid).

Another strategy associated with fending off the stereotype is overcompensating and putting in extra effort to meet workplace targets (Block et al., 2011). Ethnic minority women report that they have to work twice as hard to offset negative workplace stereotypes (Bell & Nkomo, 2003). Tomlinson et al., (2012) found that ethnic minority lawyers choose to present themselves in ways that conform to Western sociocultural norms in order to get ahead in the work place. Ethnic minorities feel the need to prove themselves in organisations by

performing well above the average workplace expectation, to counteract negative stereotypes associated with their group (Block et al., 2011).

3.10.2 Discouraged by the Stereotype

While some women and ethnic minorities may work hard to fend off stereotypes, others may be discouraged by the stereotype (Block et al., 2011). Discouragement stems from the realization that working hard and blending have a minimal effect on people's underlying assumptions about others. Psychological or behavioural withdrawal may be viewed as a viable means of dealing with negative stereotypes (ibid). Psychological withdrawal involves showing a lack of commitment and motivation towards work activities, while behavioural withdrawal may involve leaving the organization altogether (Block et al., 2011). Women and ethnic minorities tend to have higher rates of turnover compare to White counterparts in organisations (ibid). However, Acker (2009) argues that subtle and recurring encounters of devaluation, exclusion and indifference may result in women abandoning plans for career progression within an organisation. Tomlinson et al. (2012) report that BME legal professionals considered withdrawing from their organization and even exiting the legal profession as a whole due to negative experiences associated with their gender and ethnicity. Peleman (2003) found that ethnic minority women might seek out spaces that are not controlled and dominated by men and majority groups. Participants of their research reported that they actively seek out spaces that are controlled by ingroup members because they experienced more freedom to experience and be themselves in such settings. Such negotiation strategies may also be adopted towards workplace experience of discrimination in a variety of ways. Tomlinson et al., (2012) observed that Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women lawyers might choose to exit their organization to set up their own legal practice. Alternatively, ethnic minorities and women may also relocate to work in cities were they find that members of their social identity group are accepted.

3.10.3 Resilient to the Stereotype

Resilience to the Stereotype is the third model of response described by Block et al. (2011). This strategy involves the ability to look past negative stereotypes towards promoting development (ibid). Individuals that take on this strategy are conscious that they cannot change the perception that others have about them, and so they focus their energies on changing their workplace environment to make it more inclusive of members of their ingroup. As a result, ethnic minorities and women may confront and challenge negative stereotypes attributed to them by educating dominant outgroup members about negative stereotypes and its implications for workplace behaviour (ibid). Individuals may also directly challenge gendered and racialised or ethnicised organizational structures and practices. Being resilient to the stereotype may also include engaging in collective action with other ingroup members towards improving workplace contexts. Acker (2009) suggests that feminists and ethnic minorities have made significant impact in reducing forms of discrimination in the workplace through collective action. Collective action may involve creating women's networks or ethnic ingroup networks that provide support for and advocate their cause together. Social support may take the form of mentoring and serving as role models for younger employees (Kamenou 2004). Tomlinson et al. (2012) found that legal professionals that adopted this strategy typically had experiences of structural inequality in the past but had garnered enough power and status in their organization to challenge them.

3.11 Conclusion

The theoretical framework of structure, culture, agency, intersectionality and social identity theory that is provided in this chapter lays the foundation for understanding ethnic and gender inequalities in this thesis. Archer's (2010) view of structure, culture and agency were adopted, in order to argue that although they are analytically distinctive facets of individuals' lived experiences, in practice; they are mutually constitutive and difficult to distinguish. In

doing so, Ijaw women are framed as social actors that play a role in determining their lived experience of the Nigerian civil service in spite of the structural and cultural constraints that they are confronted with. In line with this view, an intersectional theoretical perspective is used with the aim of highlighting the various ways that gender and ethnicity intersect. The thesis argues that by applying intersectional sensibility to this examination, otherwise invisible and deeper forms of oppression become apparent, providing the foundation for a more rigorous investigation. This highlights the need for a strategic decision about the dimensions of identity to be included in this thesis, as analysing all identities would be implausible and counterproductive. The historical and contemporary sociocultural analysis provided in chapters 1 and 2 draws out the salience of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria and not only provides a basis for both identities' being the primary concern of this thesis but also highlights emerging identities.

Inequality regimes was used as a tool for painting a vivid picture of the specific ways in which gender and ethnic inequalities are created and sustained in a mutually constitutive way in organisations. While intersectionality provides the perspective, inequality regimes provide tangible aspects of organisational processes that create and sustain intersecting inequalities. It plays a significant role in this thesis in that it enables concrete descriptions of the Nigerian civil service, how patterns of gender and ethnic inequalities are reproduced and why equality policies adopted by the civil service are ineffective as is demonstrated in the thesis through the lived experience of Ijaw women. Bearing in mind that one goal of this thesis is to provide an analysis that is neither lopsided nor essentialist, social identity theory is utilised as part of the theoretical framework. Having provided a historically specific examination of gender and ethnic identity development in Nigeria in chapter 2, social identity theory provides the avenue for individual and group level insights to gender and ethnic inequality in the workplace. In this regard, it enables an effective analysis of Ijaw women's sense of who they are as a

product of their membership to the feminine gender and to the Ijaw ethnic group. Therefore the theoretical framework provided for this thesis acknowledges the mutually constitutive relationships between structure, culture and agency on the one hand, and gendered and ethnicised experiences, on the other, yet it emphasizes the importance of their analytical distinction. It also provides a historically specific, yet individual level examination of Ijaw women's lived experience of the Nigerian civil service. The theoretical framework utilised is deemed as effective because much of the research on the social categories of gender and ethnicity in organisations have been carried out in the US and United Kingdom (Cox, 1993; Kenny & Briner, 2007; Kamenou, 2004; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006). More specifically, there is a dearth of research on this subject with respect to organisations in Nigeria (Nyambegera, 2002). Although theories and models produced from the US and the United Kingdom is valuable, the applicability of such models in the context of Nigeria is questionable, this due to the differentiated position⁹ of ethnic and gender relations in Nigeria. The influence of contextual factors on how individuals live out their ethnic identity cannot be over emphasized (Kenny & Briner, 2007). The context and histories of ethnic minorities and women in Nigeria and countries of the West are very different; therefore models developed in one context may be not applicable to another (with specific regards to Nigeria), due to country specific cultural, historical, demographic, social and legal differences (Song, 2004).

This chapter also engaged with ideas that are significant for understanding ethnic minority women's workplace experience such as identity, ethnicity, race, racialisation and the conflation of race and ethnicity with a goal of distinguishing both concepts. In so doing, the argument was made that the conflation of race and ethnicity problematizes studies of gender and ethnicity. Ethnic and gender identity development and ethnic minority women's activism

⁹ See Mustapha's (2006) arguments around ethnicity in Nigeria (Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Nigeria).

in organisations were also examined by looking at the strategies that they adopt towards achieving success in organisations.

This thesis is aimed at examining workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian civil service using the context and theoretical framework provided in chapters 2 and 3 respectively. In answering the following research questions:

- How do ethnic minority (Ijaw) women identify themselves in the workplace?
- How do they perceive their gender and ethnicity to be of significance in their workplace lived experience?
- What is the nature of discrimination experienced by ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the workplace?
- What strategies do they use in combating perceived discrimination?

This thesis aims to contribute to the development of intersectionality theory by applying the concept of inequality regimes to the analysis of gender and ethnicity in an ex-colony - Nigeria. The next section discusses the methodology and methods that were utilised for achieving this.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

‘How is it possible to decolonise (social) research in/on the non-western developing countries to ensure that the people’s human condition is not constructed through Western hegemony and ideology?’

- Patience Elabor-Idemudia (2002 p. 231).

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods used in investigating the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian Civil Service and how the methodology used forms the basis of data collection, analysis, and the means for interpretation. It also discusses how participants were recruited for this research, ethical issues, reliability, and validity of the research methods.

Western pedagogy in knowledge production and theoretical perspectives has dominated academic and research practice. Although non-western contexts are viewed and represented in Eurocentric pedagogy, Oyewumi (1997) argues that these representations are most often interpreted within a Eurocentric frame of reference. According to her, the result of this is a conflation of the social world of Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric contexts. In this regard, even though Nigerian women have been the subjects of some academic research, the framework for such research is generated from Western social order and conditions (ibid). The objective is to develop a research framework that is sensitive to the social world and experiences of Nigerian (Ijaw) women. To achieve this, the target population is made the centre of gravity of this research. Presently, there is a dearth of research on ethnic minority women in management and organisational literature in Nigeria. To the best of the

researcher's knowledge, the lived experience of Ijaw women in organisations in Nigeria has until now been unexplored. The following sections will outline the research methodology and how it serves as a guide for data collection and analysis in exploring how the ethnicity of Ijaw women is of significance in their lived experience of the Nigerian Civil Service.

4.1 History of models of research

4.1.1 Positivist Approach

Positivism has dominated much of traditional research in the social sciences. According to Hirshheim (1985):

'Positivism has a long and rich historical tradition. It is so embedded in our society that knowledge claims not grounded in positivist thought are simply dismissed as ascientific and therefore invalid' (p.33).

Cox (1993) supports this view with his examination of mainstream journals in organisational behaviour that found a bias for a positivist approach to research. This approach presupposes that reality is fixed, universal laws and all phenomena can be explained by the observation and manipulation of these laws (Healy & Perry, 2000). Positivist approaches to research provide an abundance of data that can reveal the prevalence and distribution of phenomena. The empirical evidence that positivism provides is also valuable for uncovering unequal treatment and discrimination of ethnic minorities (Mohdood et al., 1997). Positivism is aimed at objectively observing phenomena to produce 'truth' about it. However, feminist researchers argue that what positivists refer to as objective reflects the dominant group's perspective of knowledge and that the objective assumption of the positivist researcher is impossible because truth cannot be discovered apart from the context of the knower (Stanley and Wise, 1993). This leads Scheurich (1997) to argue that positivistic epistemology is a product of the *'social history and culture of the dominant race ... it reflects and reinforces that social history and that social group, and this has negative results for the people of*

colour in general and scholars of colour in particular (p. 141). The latter statement, therefore, questions the suitability of positivism for illuminating the subjectivities and meanings of ethnic minority research populations. It also questions the ability of positivism to increase one's knowledge about the lived experiences of women and ethnic minority groups.

Furthermore, positivism ignores the role of imperialism and colonialism in the construction of knowledge (Chilisa, 2012). Imperialism created the sense of the West and the *Other* that forms a basis for the hegemony of Western research paradigms. Spivak (1985) devised the term '*Othering*' to depict the process through which Western Knowledge portrays itself as the norm and other ways of knowing as inferior (in Ashcroft et al., 2000). Positivism's presupposition that reality is fixed through universal laws reinforces the idea of Western knowledge as the norm. The result of this is that societies are categorised and classified into dualistic opposites of coloniser/colonised, developed/developing or first world/third world (Chilisa, 2012). The upshot of the opposing ideologies of *Othering* and sameness is that knowledge systems and perspectives of minority populations and the historically colonised are repressed and ostracised (ibid.). Similarly, colonialism involved European claims to the discovery of Africa's natural resources and the renaming of those resources. This was a strategy for dismissing indigenous ways of knowing as immaterial and creating disconnect between them, i.e. what they know and how they know them (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). Based on this, Chilisa (2012) argues that the use of positivist research epistemologies on historically oppressed populations can perpetuate scientific colonialism due to its claims of producing generalizable laws, theories, and concepts that continue to dictate how ex-colonies can be researched and documented.

Based on the above insights, the intention is to implement an Ijaw-centred framework to the research. In doing so, it creates a contextual interpretation and understanding of gendered meanings and gendered experiences of Ijaw women is created, as opposed to imposing

Western generated explanations of the experience of Ijaw women in the Nigerian civil service, as this will lead to serious misconceptions. Research is a cultural practice, and its value lies in its alignment with the ideas and beliefs espoused by the local culture (Wulff, 2010). Therefore, an Ijaw-centred framework may furnish an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the lived experiences of Ijaw women. This approach is valuable for revealing forms of human relations that are not brought to light when precisely positivist epistemology of research is used.

4.2 Phenomenology

The concept of phenomenology was developed by Husserl (1931) in the early 1900s to argue that the world can be understood through individuals' perspectives and explanations of experiences (Gearing, 2004). It is an attempt to bring to the fore, how individuals understand themselves and perceive their existence, apart from prescribed ideas and worldviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Phenomenological research accentuates an intersection of the mental, physical and emotional world of individuals, where they process their experiences (Norlyk & Harder, 2010). It is aimed at creating a framework that merges similar aspects of an experience to generate a narrative that reproduces essential and shared aspects of that experience (Norlyk & Harder, 2010). Phenomenology, in its strictest sense, is a description rather than an analysis of lived experiences (Laverty, 2003).

Phenomenology offers a viable framework for examining the lives of minority peoples because of the holistic manner in which it encapsulates their experiences in a way that is capable of reflecting their beliefs, norms and values (Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005). Phenomenology as a research method, aims to grasp contextualised meaning of phenomena in specific locations (ibid). Minority peoples, as that terminology suggests, have different experiences and worldviews that may be incomprehensible to majority peoples through

mainstream theoretical framework. Therefore, the culturally constructed meanings that are to be captured through the use of phenomenological methods will aid the understanding and interpretation of Ijaw women's workplace experience of the Nigerian civil service. Phenomenology is crucial for studying and understanding the everyday experience of women and ethnic minorities both within organisations and in the wider society (Garko, 1999). In his study of problems faced in researching race and ethnicity in organisations, Cox (1993) noted the limits of traditional research methods in sufficiently capturing the dynamics of ethnic and racial differences while developing theoretical underpinnings from which insight can be gained. Creegan et al., (2003) also noted that traditional research methods are inadequate in aiding the understanding of discrimination in organisations, because they have a limited ability to reveal intricacies of discrimination, such as employees' perceptions of equality policies. Phenomenology meets the demand of illuminating the intricacies of ethnic, gender and other forms of discrimination due to its accommodation of thick description (Ponterotto, 2006). It involves collecting deep information and perceptions about the target population through inductive, qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews with the aim of charting their lived experiences. Specifically, phenomenology studies experience from the perspectives of social groupings, including ethnic minorities and other discriminated against peoples.

4.2.1 Hermeneutic phenomenology

The term Hermeneutics originates from the Greek word *hermenuin*, which means *to interpret* (Odman, 1988). In Greek mythology, the Greek god Hermes, interpreter and messenger of other gods in ancient Greece was believed to be responsible for relaying messages from the gods to humans in a way that they could understand. Hermeneutics became the term used to describe how sacred texts with obscure meanings were managed in scholarship (Walsh, 1996). In contemporary thought, hermeneutics is understood as a philosophy and method of

interpretation. It is based on the belief that man's existence in the realm of *being* is unavoidably hermeneutical (van Manen, 1990). Therefore, the hermeneutic phenomenological process involves drawing out and interpreting the meaning and purpose of phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutics has significant implications for research, in particular, researching into the lived experiences of people in specific contexts. Having adopted this perspective, research into the lived experiences of ethnic minority women in organisations will be less concerned with positivistic notions of 'validity' and 'bracketing'¹⁰ preconceived notions and, more engrossed with using preconceived notions to infer meaning from their phenomena in effective ways.

To understand the experiences of Ijaw women in the Nigerian civil service, and to provide a narrative of how their gender and ethnicity are perceived to be of significance in their workplace lived experience, it was necessary for me to listen to their stories. During interviews, she was open and attentive to these women's stories and encouraged them to share their lived experiences. Participants' perceptions and views about gender and ethnicity were given priority over theories and generalisations of ethnicity and gender in organisations. Participants' lived experience comprises episodes and happenings that occurred in the course of their work in the Nigerian civil service. Particularly:

'The thoughts, feelings, decisions or choices might have been prompted by these events. And anything that presents itself in the consciousness of the respondents, whether the object is real or imagined, empirically measured, or subjectively felt' (van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutic phenomenology examines and explores narratives in order to draw out the meaning of a phenomenon. This extraction is achieved by highlighting themes that present themselves from the data in order to fully grasp the nature of phenomena. Hermeneutics

¹⁰ Bracketing is used here to mean: a 'scientific process in which a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon' (Gearing, 2004 p. 1430).

presents an opportunity to engage in a reflective interpretation of the data that enables the researcher to move beyond merely description, to analysing data (Moustakas, 1994). Through this, the researcher illuminates the underlying context of experiences, and in so doing, creates a deeper understanding of things that are not immediately apparent (ibid).

4.3 Emic Considerations

In conducting organizational research, scholars have assumed similarity of human nature across societies before differences are found (Janssens et al., n.d.). This is arguably the presumption of Nigerian scholars who embrace Eurocentric theories and concepts to study phenomena in Nigeria. Specifically, it has been assumed that Eurocentric theories, concepts and models should be applicable to Nigeria. This adoption of Eurocentric models aids the nurturing of exchanges between Eurocentric and Afrocentric research and academic practice. However, there is need to acknowledge and highlight culture specific differences between Nigeria and the West. Buckley et al. (2014) proffer that *'culture specific elements are so compelling, that they overwhelm the universal'* (p. 308). Conducting research that brings out context-specific features of phenomenon is essential for achieving more sufficient and meaningful results (ibid). The aim is to conduct an indigenous research that is context-specific, leading *'to novel insights and produces contextualized knowledge, making potential contributions to global knowledge at the same time'* (Mao et al., 2012 p. 1144). Therefore my research will uncover context-specific features of the perceptions and lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian civil service as well as those features that are widespread and shared. To achieve this, an emic approach will be utilized.

Pike (1954) coined the term emic, a derivative of 'phonemic', to mean an approach that focuses on cultural distinctions that are meaningful to members of a given society. It emphasizes the expression of a phenomenon within a specific socio-cultural context and from

the perspective of actors (Morris et al., 1999). *'Emic accounts describe thoughts and actions primarily in terms of the actors' self-understanding-terms that are often culturally and historically bound'* (ibid p. 782). For instance, one central construct my thesis is *'indigene-settler distinction'¹¹*, whereas studies of intersectionality in organisations in Britain will not consider this construct. Flew (1979) subscribes to this view in his proposition that the meaning of a verbal expression may vary with regard to different contexts; especially, when such an expression is used for technical concepts. The problem of ambiguity may arise when the language used by actors is not adequately examined. Wittgenstein (1953) argues that grammatical investigations can:

'Shed light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused among other things, by certain analogies between forms of expression in different regions of language' (p. 109).

The assumption of the emic approach that no one appropriate view is a valuable premise for considering the views and perceptions of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women. This position allows for a nuanced interpretation of the responses of research participants. In this regard, an emic approach engenders in-depth descriptions of the idiosyncratic meaning attributed to being an ethnic minority woman in the Nigerian civil service. The use of this key concept is essential for this thesis because of its ability to reveal the meaning that Ijaw women attach to their gender and ethnicity from their own cultural perspective. Furthermore, if this research is to meet with the basic tenet of hermeneutic phenomenology, it must, of necessity, highlight the context-specific features of research participants.

Another phenomenological approach that is of relevance in analysing and understanding the workplace lived experiences of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women is transcendental phenomenology. Based on the principles identified by Husserl (1931), it is largely descriptive and makes use of *epoche* in an attempt to approach the phenomena from a fresh point of

¹¹ See Sayne, A. (2012). *Rethinking Nigeria's Indigene-Settler Conflicts*.

view, hence the name transcendental (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Moustakas (1994) developed Husserl's ideas by proposing a systematic procedure for the transcendental phenomenological approach that balances the subjective and objective views of knowledge. According to this approach, the researcher sets aside all prejudgments and preconceptions and allows the research text to speak for itself, leading to new understandings (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (1931) refers to the act of setting aside presuppositions, preconceptions, biases and prejudice about the phenomena under study as *epoche*. This approach entails that all standards of science are dropped and the phenomena are approached with an openness allowing the data to guide the researcher to new knowledge and understandings (Moustakas, 1994).

However, transcendental phenomenology is not without its shortcomings. Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell (2004) note that *epoche* in its pure form is difficult to attain as it does not appear to be possible that a researcher will set aside the totality of his/her personal experiences, preconceptions and biases about the phenomenon to single-mindedly uphold the experiences of participants in the research process. This limitation is minimised through the application of reflexivity, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

4.4 Ethical Conduct of the Research

I am committed to conducting an ethical investigation in line with the standards set by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the UREC before the commencement of fieldwork (see appendix 1). According to the American Academy of Management (AoM) Code of Ethical Conduct, researchers need to assess whether any part of their research will cause harm to its participants and to take precautions to prevent such harm where possible (Bryman & Bell, 2007). To the best of my knowledge there was no foreseeable harm to participants associated

with this research. Also, no respondent reported any negative effects as a result of participation in this research. The aim was to conduct an ethical investigation in line with these standards. To achieve this, the purpose and nature of the research was fully explained to potential participants through the use of information sheets that detail the purpose and process of the research and a verbal explanation (see appendix 3). Written consent was obtained from participants before data collection began (see appendix 2). Participant confidentiality was upheld and maintained by anonymising the data at the point of collection. In line with a hermeneutic phenomenological framework, I ensured that participants were able to define their role in the research process within reasonable limits by offering them the opportunity to ask questions. Also, agreements to participate in the research were not binding hence participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. No participant withdrew from the research.

4.5 Selecting Research Participants

Pilot semi-structured interviews were conducted with three employees at a Rivers State civil service organisation for the purpose of establishing clarity, advice about the structure, and identifying any issues that interviewees may find important, but that were not already included in the interview guide. They commented that the questions were easy to answer and gave some adjustment recommendations, which were taken into consideration.

The selection of participants for this research was made based on the epistemological position this research subscribes to. Hence, the positivistic method of randomly selecting the 'right' number of participants in order to achieve generalizability was not adopted. Phenomenology does not give room for empirical generalisation (van Manen, 1990). Therefore a non-random sampling method in the form of convenience sampling was used with the aim of strategically selecting participants that fit with the purpose of this research. The researcher desired to

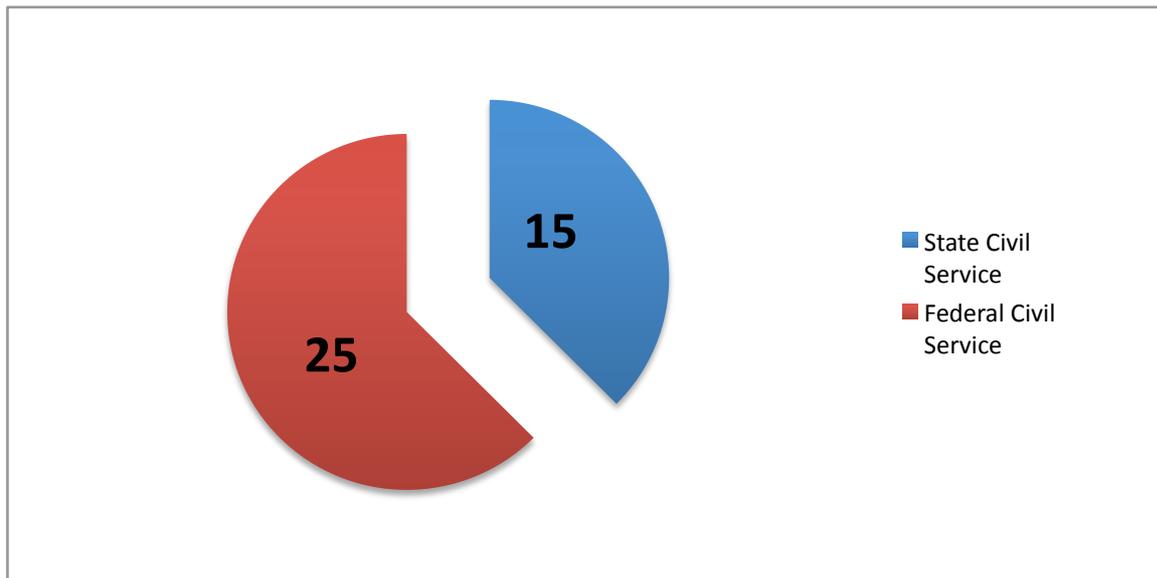
reach as many states within the Federation as possible in order to attain a fairly balanced collection of participants, with regard to representation of Ijaw women working in the civil service in all the states of Nigeria. However, this was not feasible owing to the socio-political environment of Nigeria at the time of the research and the economic implications. Boko Haram insurgency and the Ebola outbreak in Nigeria at the time of the research constrained the researcher to certain parts of the country. More so, the target population for this research, that is Ijaw women have largely settled in Rivers State and Bayelsa State, which are located in the Southern part of Nigeria. Participants located in these areas were easily accessible to the researcher who is also a member of the Ijaw ethnic group in Nigeria (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

This research is aimed at critically examining the significance of gender and ethnicity in Ijaw women's lived experience of the Nigerian civil service. This made it mandatory for the researcher to ensure that participants were women, members of Ijaw ethnic group and current employees or retirees of the Nigerian civil service. These criteria formed the basis for including/excluding potential participants; hence the sample universe was defined. The aim was to achieve a sample size sufficiently small enough to allow room for a rich contextual understanding of the workplace lived experiences of respondents. This in line with the purpose of the research, which is to give voice to, what is arguably, a marginalised population. The sample for this research was generated using the snowball-sampling method (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This involved taking recommendations from participants about other Ijaw women working in the Nigerian civil service. Initial data collection was done in Rivers State, located in the Southern part of Nigeria. The researcher began the search here because Rivers State is regarded to be indigenous to a large population of Ijaws.

Twelve interviews were initially conducted which I transcribed verbatim into text. Nine of

these participants worked with Rivers State Civil Service (RSCS), the remaining three respondents worked in the Federal Civil Service (FCS). Two of the three respondents working in FCS live and work in states with a high population of Ijaws (Rivers and Bayelsa States) while the third respondent lives and works in Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory). Digital recordings from the interviews were stored on the recording device and were repeatedly listened to and interview text was read in order to identify ideas from the data that encapsulate the specific element of respondents' stories. From this initial data collection process, the researcher was able to delineate three categories of respondents. It was observed that respondents working in RSCS were less conscious of gender and ethnic inequalities than those working in the FCS. While the respondent working in FCS Abuja seemed to have the highest level of consciousness of gender and ethnic inequalities in her organisation. Strauss & Corbin (1998) suggest that concurrent analysis of the data enables the researcher to make relevant decisions about whether further data collection and/or sourcing data from new locations is likely to aid the research process by contributing to theory development (this is expatiated in the analysis section). This finding led the researcher to purposively seek new participants from FCS and those working in states, where the Ijaw ethnic group is regarded as minority, in order to assemble a more heterogeneous sample population. I attempted to achieve this by recruiting participants from Lagos state but this was met with limited success, as I was able to locate only one participant that fit the research criteria despite repeated efforts to increase this number through snowball sampling. Instead, the researcher kept being referred, by interviewees, back to Rivers and Bayelsa States because of the dense population of Ijaws located in these states. Based on the foregoing, I went back to Rivers State where a further thirteen respondents were identified and interviewed from both RSCS and FCS (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Participants from State and Federal civil service.



Here, the researcher was attentive to areas of the research that had not been fully explored in previous interviews such as respondents' views of equality and diversity strategies used in the civil service. The preliminary findings also led the researcher to seek out participants from Bayelsa State and Abuja where five and nine participants were recruited respectively. In the final analysis, 40 Ijaw women participated in the research from the Education, Health, Administrative, Finance, Communication, Environment, Sports, Labour, and Agriculture & Water Resources sectors of the Nigerian Civil Service (see Table 6). In summary, twenty-two respondents were recruited from Rivers State; eleven respondents from Abuja; six respondents from Bayelsa and one respondent from Lagos (see table 7). Through the use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques imply that the sample is unlikely to be representative of all Ijaw women working in the civil service, (Bryman & Bell, 2011) it is regarded as suitable for this piece of research. This is because this research is not aimed at providing generalizable knowledge but an in-depth contextual understanding of the lived experience of Ijaw women in Nigerian civil service.

Table 6: Sectors of the civil service from which participants were recruited.

Civil Service Ministry	Number of Interviewees
Health	15
Education	9
Communication	5
Finance	4
Environment	3
Sports	1
Administration	1
Labour	1
Agriculture and Water Resources	1
Total	40

Table 7: States where participants were located.

State	Number of Employees
Rivers State	22
Abuja (Federal Capital Territory)	11
Bayelsa State	6
Lagos State	1
Total	40

4.6 Interviewing research participants

The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with all 40 participants of this research. Data was collected between August 2014 and January 2015. All interviews were conducted in English. Creswell (2007) portrays qualitative interviews as the principal means

of data collection in phenomenological research, apt for capturing the lived experience of phenomena. Van Manen (1990) states that reflective accounts of participants are particularly useful for delineating the construction of phenomenological descriptions of their experience. Interviews offer participants the opportunity to talk about their work to non-stakeholders in ways that they otherwise may not be opportune to (King, 2004 in Atewologun et al., 2015). Particularly with ethnicity, being regarded as the most salient identity in Nigeria (Lewis & Bratton, 2000), conversations about the subject is regarded as sensitive. An interview schedule was used although responses were probed for clarification and to draw out meanings that were not immediately apparent (see appendix 4). Interviewees experience in the civil service ranged from 4 months to 38 years (see table 8). Most of the interviews were conducted in participants' offices, however, in some cases the participants preferred to be interviewed outside of their office environment. In such cases, interviews were either conducted in the home of the participant or in a neutral environment. Interviews lasted between 15 minutes and 1 hour 30 minutes.

Table 8: Years of experience in the civil service

Years of Experience	Number of Employees
Less than 1 year -10 years	21
11-20 years	3
21-30 years	8
31-40 years	8

4.7 Reflexivity: Locating the Self

Consciously situating oneself as a researcher is an essential aspect of an indigenous research framework. Reflexivity is required in order to implement successfully the core values of an

indigenous research project (Russell-Mundine, 2012). More particularly, the researcher's role in using power and in choosing what aspect of knowledge should be privileged or discarded needs to be acknowledged and probed (ibid). Tomkins & Eatough (2010) posits that reflexivity is a significant part of human and social science research. They define it as *'the intertwining of personal experience, intersubjective dynamics and discursive repertoires within a particular research setting'* (p. 166). Reflexivity draws from the feminist critique of the positivist concept of objectivity in research and feminist argument on the salience of standpoint and *'situated knowledge'* (Hughes, 2013, p. 2). It recognizes that existing knowledge cannot be separate from the researcher and therefore attempts to elucidate how the standpoint and perspectives of the researcher affect knowledge (Hughes, 2013). Reflexivity is significant in hermeneutic phenomenological research conducted within an indigenous framework because of its ability to rouse the researcher to presuppositions and biases, enabling him or her to manage them *'in an a priori and self-conscious fashion'* (Shaw, 2010, p. 238).

'Reflexivity can be understood as a confessional account of methodology ... it has the potential to be a valuable tool to:

- *examine the impact of the position, perspective and presence of the researcher*
- *promote rich insight through examining the personal responses and interpersonal dynamics*
- *open up unconscious motivations and implicit biases in the researcher's approach*
- *empower others by opening up more radical consciousness*
- *evaluate the research process, method and outcomes*
- *Enable public scrutiny of the integrity of the research through offering a methodological log of research decisions.*

(Finlay, 2002 p. 224)

Being a reflexive researcher gives room for stakeholders in the research to know who the researcher is and the point of view from which s/he approaches the research, thereby establishing trust (ibid). In situating oneself as a researcher, it is important to acknowledge personal growth as one of the products of research. This research project has been a remarkable learning experience for me in terms of prompting the exploration of questions

such as *who am I* firstly as a Nigerian, an Ijaw woman and as an immigrant. Interest in this research topic was prompted by my masters dissertation which was on the recruitment and selection process used in organisations in Nigeria. In the course of the research, it became evident that ethnicity played a significant role in determining who was recruited into companies, and this triggered a personal interest in understanding how individual's perceived their ethnicity to be of significance in their workplace lived experience. According to Minkler and Wallerstein (2003) research is strengthened when the researcher is a member of the target population. Being a woman and a member of the Ijaw ethnic group in Nigeria, I decided to base my research on this two identity categories. In the course of the fieldwork, I was continuously exploring how my interactions with the research participants and research data influenced and changed my pre-existing knowledge and beliefs, to create a fresh understanding of the lived experience of Ijaw women in the Nigerian Civil Service.

One major pitfall noted about reflexivity is that the voice of the reflexive researcher may overshadow that of the participants. Particularly when researchers are introspective in their reflection (Finlay, 2002). More so, providing an extensive recount of inter-subjective experiences may serve as a distraction from the phenomenon under investigation. However, this is mitigated by engaging in critical analysis of the impact of self on the research process (ibid). Reflexivity is '*neither an opportunity to wallow in subjectivity nor permission to engage in legitimised emoting*' (Finlay, 1998 p. 455). I am conscious that self-reflection should be limited to its relevance to the purpose of the research and the phenomenon under investigation (Gough, 2003).

In his research of the problems with research by organizational scholars on issues of race and ethnicity, Cox (1990) noted that scholars of race and ethnicity were concerned that specializing in research on racioethnic issues

poses risks different from those associated with most other topics. Specifically, they were concerned that work on racioethnic issues is often stigmatized by whites' (p. 128).

In fact, one black woman who was conducting research on racioethnic issues was told '*Surely you must have other interests'* after she discussed her research interests at a job interview (ibid p. 128). This is similar to some experiences I had in the course of this research. A case in point was when I discussed my research interest with another member of a majority ethnic group who is resident in the UK, and he responded 'why would you want to research this topic?' As in the case of the black woman encountered by Cox (1990), this question could have meant that in his view, the subject of my research is too narrow, not focused on a suitable topic or both. The message I got from this was that there are more significant ethnic groups to be concerned about than the Ijaws.

Another case in point was when I told someone that my research was to do with the experience of ethnic minority women in the workplace. He quickly went on to inform me that he had warned his wife to stay away from such women's groups. I told him I am not a group, just one person conducting research on women. He responded by letting me know his view that women got what they deserved because they do not have the capacity to work as hard as men owing to their marital responsibilities. In other instances, I was referred to as a *feminist*, which by the way is seen as a derogatory term in the Nigerian context. I was told that even if I am feminist, I do not have to rub it in people's faces. I should be quiet about it as this is *unattractive*. As a result of these reactions to the concerns of this research study, it appeared to me that issues of ethnic and gender inequality in Nigeria have the potential to illicit unfavourable emotional reactions and psychological discomfort. As such, I began to view these as emotionally hot topics.

However, sharing the same gender and ethnicity with respondents proved advantageous in the course of the fieldwork. It helped to generate confidence and trust in the relationship between the researcher and participants. It also aided the researcher in establishing rapport with participants early in the interviews, affording access to their thoughts and social world. Moreover, being an Ijaw woman, born and bred in Nigeria provided the researcher greater access to the social world of respondents without the need to ask continually for elucidation. However, this could also be disadvantageous as it carries the assumption that both the researcher and participants ascribe similar meanings to decisions, jargon, behaviours and words (Minichiello et al., 1995). The researcher sought to uphold Hermeneutic alertness as described by van Manen (1997). This involved reflecting on meanings of encounters during the interview process, rather than taking interpretation and presumptions at face value. Hermeneutic phenomenology allows the researcher to use experience common to the researcher and participants to conduct a structural examination *'of what is most common, most familiar and most self-evident to the researcher'* (van Manen 1997 in Sloan & Bowe, 2014). The aim is to furnish an evocative account of the experiences, behaviours and actions of participants as closely as possible to how they play out in their lifeworld.

Although I began the fieldwork with the notion that shared ethnic and gender identity will offer me an 'insider' status, I was made aware of my somewhat *hybridised* position when a respondent made it clear to me that she initially reluctant to give me an audience because of my association with a UK University. She was of the view that Nigerians have been portrayed in a negative light in the past and was concerned that my aim for this research was to tarnish the image of citizens further. I took the time to clarify the purpose of the research to her, and she stated that the only reason she consented to the interview was because of the relationship we had established prior to the interview. Thus, I was like an *outsider within*, located in the border space between being an ethnic minority (Ijaw) woman and a UK-based

academic (considered by many to be a rather privileged position). The implication of this is that I had to prove my trustworthiness in order to gain the confidence of participants. This was facilitated by building rapport with participants and also through the use of a snowball sampling method.

4.8 Considering an Intersectional Approach

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw (1989) to depict the differentiated social position of black women as mutually constituted by their race and gender. This concept has become a viable tool for Black feminist scholars who argue that their lived experiences are neither represented in mainstream feminist movements or black movements. Intersectionality has become a widely accepted theoretical framework for studying multiple strands of oppression as mutually constituted and multiplicative, rather than a product of independent structures of disadvantage (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Despite widespread theoretical formulations of intersectionality, developing a methodological framework for studying intersections has proved challenging (Hillisburg, 2013). McCall (2005) argues that one reason for this is the complexity of social relations that are embedded at intersectional locations. The result of this is a dearth in literature on intersectional methodology. Intersectionality researchers have often times learnt to conduct intersectional research through trial and error. What follows is an articulation of how an intersectional approach is developed and used for this research.

McCall's (2005) review of approaches to intersectional studies delineates three major ways social categories have been managed. The 'anticategorical approach' is deconstructive and completely does away with existing categories. The argument by anticategorical researchers is that identity categories are socially constructed and to categorize human interaction is to simplify a highly complex phenomenon. Therefore the aim of anticategorical researchers is to

deconstruct established categories (ibid.). This approach espouses the fluidity of identity but can lead to serious methodological problems, one of which is how researchers are to identify the social group under investigation. More so, McCall (2005) argues that it is almost impracticable to invalidate the deliberate use of identity categories for political purposes. The ‘intercategorical approach’, which is at the far end of the continuum, espouses the use of categories in studying social phenomena (McCall, 2005). Precisely, this approach compares all dimensions within each social category. It recognizes the analytical usefulness of social categories but portrays them as static, rather than fluid dimensions of identity. Therefore, while it accounts for between-group differences at intersectional locations, it is silent about the structures and interactions that produce the categories and subsequent social inequality (Chandler, 2015). The third approach discussed by McCall (2005), the ‘intracategorical approach’, which presents a middle ground between both extremes. This approach to social locations examines:

‘Social locations at the intersection of single dimensions of multiple categories, rather than at the intersections of the full range of dimensions of a full range of categories. In other words, rather than compare white women with black women (as with the intercategorical approach) the strategy is to focus on the specificity of the case of the black woman’ (p. 1781).

It uses existing social categories because of their analytical validity but recognizes that they are interactional and therefore fluid. This approach provides a viable means for answering my research questions, which are primarily concerned with the significance of gender and ethnicity in the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women.

Another methodological concern for intersectional researchers is how to determine the axes of inequality to explore in a research project. Gender, class, ‘race’, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, nationality, are all viewed as social constructs on the basis of which people experience inequality (Bradley, 2016). A key argument of intersectionality is that none of the afore-listed dimensions operate in isolation and therefore, it is possible that individuals may

experience stigmatization on all dimensions. However, all dimensions of difference might not be active at the same time (ibid). More so, it is a near impossible task to simultaneously consider all lines of difference in one research project. Therefore it is incumbent on the researcher to make strategic decisions about what lines of difference to examine. In making this decision (Chandler, 2015) suggests that social scientists should be guided by the need to allow the voice of marginalized to be groups heard. Thus analysts may choose to leave it to the research subjects to determine the dimensions of identity that are significant to them; or administer '*theoretically defined lines of analysis*' (p. 4). The axes of inequality the researcher chose to study were based on theoretically determined lines of analysis as well as the political salience of categories in the context of Nigeria.

Gender and ethnicity are theoretically determined as primary identities (Jenkins, 1996). Jenkins (2008) argues that gender is seen to be naturalized in early childhood socialization and integrated into the individual sense of self, while a consideration of the local context is important for determining whether ethnicity should be considered a primary identity (in Jenkins, 2014). According to Lewis & Bratton (2000), ethnicity is the most salient identity in Nigeria. More so, Nigerians tend to view themselves in primordial terms (Falola & Oyeniyi, 2015):

'For many Nigerians, they are first citizens of their ethnic group before being a citizen of a region, then a nation' (p. 176).

The perception of ethnicity in primordial terms implies that it is considered to be an extension of kinship, tribal ties and common heritage bonded by language, shared ancestry and physical affinity and/or religion (Min & Kim, 1999). Given the primordial sense of ethnicity and the strong sense of ethnic attachment amongst most Nigerians, it may be argued that ethnicity is a primary identity. Although gender and ethnic identities are not regarded as static, they are however, viewed as resistant to change (Jenkins, 2014). *'Thus they provide a template for all*

subsequent identities' (p. 72). With regard to choosing the specific ethnic group to examine, the researcher was of the view that that lumping all ethnic minority women to form a unitary category in a research project can result in an attempt at essentialising the meaning of gender and ethnicity for all research participants. This might lead to a simultaneous process of both revealing and concealing the voice of subjectivities within this 'all-encompassing group'. Ukeje & Adebwani (2008) argue that the Ijaw ethnic group occupies a 'dualised' position in Nigeria. Although it is regarded as a minority ethnic group, it is viewed as a dominant ethnic group due to being the 4th largest ethnic group in Nigeria.

Furthermore, in comparison to other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Ijaw ethnic group has had better representation in federal governmental institutions (ibid). As a result of this, Ukeje & Adebwani (2008) consider the marginal position of the Ijaw ethnic group as fluid. However, the increasing militarization of Ijaw nationalist movements and the fact they seem to imply that many Ijaws consider their ethnic group to be a minority, and therefore marginalized¹². More so, the Ijaw ethnic group is located largely in the oil rich Niger Delta, giving it more bargaining power with the Nigerian government, compared to other ethnic minority groups. In 2002, hundreds of unarmed Ijaw women seized four oil terminals in the Niger Delta region of the country, in a bid to protest their inability to access employment and social amenities (BBC, 2002). Ijaw nationalists, to ensure that their voice is heard, have used similar tactics in the past. Therefore an examination of the numerical, political and economic disposition of the Ijaw ethnic group in Nigeria leads the researcher to consider it as a politically salient minority ethnic group. It is based on the foregoing that Ijaw women were chosen as the subject of this research.

¹² See Ukeje & Adebwani (2008) for an account of Ijaw nationalist movements and a detailed history of its increasing militarization.

Furthermore, being an Ijaw woman, I could more easily gain access and trust from research participants; the advantages and disadvantages of this are further elaborated in the section on reflexivity. The relative stability and salience of gender and ethnicity simplifies theorization at their intersectional location, '*offering a prototype for developing more nuanced and sophisticated perspectives on intersectionality* (Atewologun et al., 2015 p. 6). It is hoped that this examination of Ijaw women's lived experience will offer a prototype for exploring more complex subjectivities from an African-centered perspective.

Nevertheless, Hillisburg (2013) emphasizes the importance of conceptualizing social categories as fluid. The 'mutual shaping' paradigm of intersectionality posits that inequality dimensions are intrinsically linked and therefore cannot be separated within concrete social relationships (Holvino, 2008; Hancock, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2006). However, Bradley (2016) argues that they can be separated for analytical purposes:

Indeed this is a necessary strategy if we are to develop a coherent sociological account of stratification [segmentation] and inequality (p. 36).

Hillisburg (2013) emphasizes the importance of approaching analytical categories as '*continuously in flux*' (p. 8). It is possible to draw from different social locations to increase the awareness of how marginalization operates while simultaneously problematizing static conceptualizations, thus acknowledging that unitary dimensions of identity do not equate with uniformity of lived experiences (Hancock, 2007).

The categories 'gender' and 'ethnicity' are employed in this research, during the interview process however, I observed emerging identities within the predefined categories such as indigeneship, language and marital status. These were given due attention in the analysis of the findings from this research. In this regard, it is my view that gender and ethnicity may be the subject of change and negotiation, rather than experienced in a fixed way. This position is affirmed by arguments that black feminist scholars have made against the essentialisation of

any one identity category (Crenshaw, (1989); Collins, 1990). During the interviews and analytical process, I avoided the assumption that ethnicity and gender are experienced in a fixed way but acknowledged that they may be the subject of negotiation and change. This position required me to actively look out for fluctuating ethnic and gendered experiences. Bradley (2016) argues that although identity categories and relationships are constantly in flux, they become stable and consistent over time, making them a tenacious basis for social inequalities. The emphasis on lived experiences, meanings, developing an Ijaw centred framework and an intersectional framework is also in keeping with a phenomenological approach.

The next section discusses the methods used for data analysis.

4.9 Data Analysis

The analysis of the findings was carried out in line with the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenological doctrines. This is such that data analysis was informed by the six stages of heuristic inquiry as espoused by Moustakas (1990, see Table 9). He described the heuristic method of inquiry as a systematic and dedicated way of gaining an in-depth understanding of human experience (ibid). It necessitates self-immersion into the phenomenon being studied by the researcher, keeping the scientist as a human being and present all through the inquiry. Heuristic research begins with the question for which an answer is being sought (Moustakas, 1990). In the case of this research, the question involves the exploration of the meaning and significance of gender and ethnicity for Ijaw women in the Nigerian civil service. Providing an answer requires a continuous process of '*self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery*' and an acceptance of knowledge as a product of direct human experience (Schneider et al., 2001 p. 263). The belief that knowledge can be discovered and illuminated through self-search creates a setting that allows the research question and process to flow out of the researcher's inner consciousness

and inspiration. The intrinsic immersion of the researcher in the research process is an important element of the heuristic method of inquiry and also what differentiates it from other phenomenological approaches.

In addition to Moustakas' (1990) description of heuristic inquiry, I also learnt from the experience of other researchers with expertise in hermeneutic phenomenology. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher constantly measured her pre-research ideas about gender and ethnic inequalities in the civil service against the responses of participants. By doing this, I was able to attend to any biases resulting from personal encounters and the literature. Interpretations were grounded in the data by constantly going back to the original transcripts to ensure that deductions remain faithful to the accounts of respondents. Lincoln & Guba (2000) suggest that this preserves authenticity. Throughout the research process, I maintained dialogue with supervisors and this provided a means for authenticating my interpretations of the findings. For instance the predominant argument in the intersectionality literature that social inequality categories are inextricably linked (Hancock, 2007) led to the assumption that respondents would refer to themselves in terms of the sum of their intersecting identities. However, this presumption was challenged by the way most respondents addressed their gender and ethnic identities independently. This was particularly exemplified in the way respondents answered the question: Do you feel accepted as an Ijaw woman in your organisation? In answering this question, thirty-eight out of forty respondents made reference to only their ethnicity with no mention of gender. The two respondents who referred to both gender and ethnicity discussed them as independent identities. This trend continued throughout the interview processes with one identity dimension becoming more salient than the other at different points in the accounts of respondents. This is similar to findings from Atowologun et al., (2015) examination of Asian women and Black women and men's intersectional identity work. They state that despite their non-additive research design,

respondents did not always think of their identity in terms of intersecting. Most often, respondents prioritised ethnicity over gender, rarely acknowledging gender inequalities. Occasionally however, both were referred to simultaneously¹³.

The seven phases summarised in table 9 (below) capture the process used in exploring interview data for this thesis. These phases include initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication, culmination of the research in a creative synthesis and validation of the heuristic inquiry. The intention is to identify the meaning of the phenomenon and what it looks like, and to make it visible through direct accounts of individuals who have first-hand experience of the phenomenon (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985).

Table 9: Phases of Heuristic Inquiry

Phase	Activity	Description
1	Initial Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Interviews
2	Immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcription of audiotape interviews into texts. • Repeatedly going over interview texts to delineate meanings.
3	Incubation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying sentences and phrases that capture the essence of respondents' stories. • These were highlighted on Microsoft Word.
4	Illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferring data from word to Atlas.ti • Developing respondents' ideas into codes. • Creation of subthemes by linking similar codes together.
5	Explication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising subthemes into themes. • Continuous development of themes.
6	Synthesis and Theme Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking themes and subthemes to the literature. • Creative synthesis of core themes and components into a thesis.
7	Integration and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes critiqued by researcher, supervisors and researchers outside of the research process.

¹³ See analysis in chapter 6 for a more elaborate discussion of this.

	Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing final analysis of the research findings
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Source: Moustakas (1990)

4.9.1 Phase 1: Initial Engagement

The initial engagement stage began during the development of the research questions that inform this thesis. The research question evolved from ‘what approach to ethnic diversity exists in the Federal civil service of Nigeria’ to ‘how do ethnic minority (Ijaw) women perceive their ethnicity to be of significance in their workplace lived experience?’ The change was enabled through a process with self-engagement towards gaining an understanding of the significance of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria’s civil service. Heuristics aims to delineate the lived experience that, as much as possible, represents the experience of research participants (Moustakas, 1990). This was achieved through the use of audiotaped in-depth semi-structured interviews, whereby participants were given as much time as they required to share their experiences and perceptions of those experiences.

4.9.2 Phase 2: Immersion into the data

I transcribed recorded interviews and created a file for each participant. Interview texts were repeatedly read, and audiotapes listened to over and over again in order to capture the essence of participants’ stories, which would, in turn, facilitate the coding process. I approached the data with openness to uncovering meaning and completely immersed in the data with the aim of gaining understanding through a process of self-reflection, self-dialogues, and periods of silence centred around the information obtained from interviews. Discussions between my supervisors and me served as a means of reflecting on and developing initial ideas and interpretation of the data. Supervisors also served as critics and sounding boards, providing alternative views, valuable insight, and thoroughness in the analysis of the findings. Ideas generated during supervisory sessions were documented and aided further data analysis.

4.9.3 Phase 3: Incubation

The incubation phase follows immersion. Here, *‘the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question’* to focus on the ideas, stories and experiences shared by respondents (Moustakas, 1990 p. 28). These are referred to as first order constructs (Schutz, 1962). The aim is to identify verbatim expressions of respondents capture the essence of their stories but are specifically related to their gendered and ethnicised experiences in the workplace. This involved exploring the meaning of words and how they relate to each other. First order constructs served as a guide and gave direction for further data analysis. Here, Wittgenstein’s (2009) concept of language games aided understanding, interpreting and reflecting on first order constructs. He posits that individuals employ a variety of techniques during conversations that are the product of their sociocultural and historical background. This is such that conversations in all contexts follow a set of unsaid and implicitly observed conventions that are embedded in and somewhat defined within cultures. Therefore, the meaning of concepts may differ across speech communities because language can only be understood by investigating the context of its use, rather than its logical structure. Tilghman (2009) states:

What is probably the single most important thing we have learned from Wittgenstein is that an expression can be understood only when it plays a role in a language-game and that our language is intelligible only when seen against the background of human activities and forms of life (p.).

First order constructs were identified manually using Microsoft word with the researcher frequently checking and comparing research texts for comprehensiveness and aptness of constructs.

4.9.4 Phase 4: Illumination

The fourth phase is what Moustakas (1990) called illumination. Although this phase ensues at an unspecified point in the project, at this time, clear themes and descriptions of the

phenomenon begin to materialise. This phase involves making a connection between first order constructs with theories of workplace gender and ethnic inequality as well as intersectionality. In doing this, the researcher was careful to maintain the subjectivity of the data by grounding theoretical elucidations in the views and perceptions of respondents. Data was transferred from Microsoft word to Atlas.ti and coded using second order constructs. During this stage, research supervisors offered feedback, critiquing the application of codes and pinpointing overlap and duplication of second order constructs. Similarities and differences were identified between second order constructs for each participant and used as a basis for developing sub-themes and themes in order to answer the research questions. The result of this phase is that the nature of the phenomenon under investigation becomes visible, in this regard, the nature of the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in Nigeria's civil service.

4.9.5 Phase 5: Explication

Phases one to four resulted in the development of themes from the data texts. In this phase of the research, themes were further explicated, and the relationships between themes and subthemes were explicated by studying the data over again. In so doing, different levels of meaning contained in the data were explored by going back and forth between the data and the literature. Here, themes were clearly defined, and elements that make up each theme were clearly delineated (van Manen, 1997). A detailed picture of the central themes in the experience of respondents was developed and a composite narrative characterising core meanings of gender and ethnicity in the Nigerian civil service.

4.9.6 Phase 6: Creative Synthesis

Themes and subthemes were further contextualised within the literature to aid further theoretical development. Themes, subthemes, and their interrelationships were crafted

together to reconstruct the workplace lived experience of respondents in order to underscore the main findings from the data. In this regard, the creative synthesis presents the essential components of the workplace lived experiences of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in Nigeria's civil service. Research supervisors gave feedback on the quality of interpretations, and key themes were presented at a Human Resource Research Seminar at the University of East London. This created an avenue for dialogue about the research findings and the feedback that was offered encouraged the researcher to be reflexive about interpretations that emanate during the writing process. Through this, the researcher was able to refine explanations and arguments further in the presentation of themes.

4.9.7 Phase 7: Integration and validation

The final phase, which is a validation of the research, involves receiving feedback from participants and others. A summary of the findings from this research was sent to participants. The aim was to find out whether the findings were an accurate depiction of their perceptions about their experience in the civil service as discussed in the interviews. Three responses were received, one respondent stated:

'I believe that it [the research findings] captured vividly, the existing situation we have in the Nigerian Civil Service as regards gender discrimination and ethnicity.'

Validation was also gained by sharing key themes in the workplace lived experience of respondents about their gender and ethnicity, and how these dimensions intersect at the Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SESWA) Conference in March of 2016 for comment (see Table 9). Students and academics of gender, ethnic and intersectionality studies attended the SESWA conference. The aim was to check for a match of findings between conclusions from this research with that of others, in order to facilitate a resonance. Similar experiences of discrimination in the working lives of ethnic minority women were discussed, with race and ethnicity being prominent shapers of this. Another key area of

resonance that was highlighted in conference discussions was black women's reliance on spirituality for solving workplace problems. Respondents in this research engaged in similar practices, and this will be expatiated in the discussion of strategies used by respondents for combating perceived workplace discrimination in chapter 8.

4.10 Attending to Quality

Adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological framework, which is subjective, for this research implies a difficulty in the application of traditional positivist ideas of reliability and validity. This prompts questions about how the reliability and validity of research that is qualitative in nature can be ascertained. The inability to demonstrate measures taken by a researcher to ensure the reliability and validity of a piece of research can make that research lose credibility (Silverman, 2000). Bryman and Bell (2011) suggests that alternative terms need to be applied when doing research that is not statistically measurable as the term validity implies. Notwithstanding, measurement is not of significance to this type of research. Chilisa (2012) suggests a different definition of validity for researching ex-colonies. According to her, postcolonial indigenous views of validity espouse concepts such as fairness, voice, self-reflexivity and positionality or standpoint judgements.

Fairness is based on the principle that to omit the views of anyone involved in the research process is to marginalise or silence them. Therefore, this implies that the researcher enables the '*views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voices*' of respondents are obvious in the research texts (Chilisa, 2012 p. 171). The concept of voice is somewhat related to fairness. It refers to facilitating the researcher's voice to be heard through the text and allowing respondents:

'To speak for themselves either in text form or through plays, forums, town meetings or other oral performance oriented media communications forms designed by participants themselves' (Guba & Lincoln, 2005 in Chilisa, 2012 p. 173).

The concept of thick description, introduced by Ryle (1971), will be applied to the lived experience of Ijaw women. According to Ryle (1971), a narrative of human behaviour and events should reflect and correspond to the meaning of that phenomenon as held by participants. Thus terms and concepts used and regarded by the researched as appropriate will be used. Thick description allows for the views and interpretations of all participants to be visible in the research notwithstanding their different perspectives, perceptions, and interpretations. The use of thick description provides the framework for adequately translating the thoughts of the researched, and therefore is suitable for examining the significance of ethnicity for Ijaw women. The use of thick description is particularly significant for this thesis due to its detraction and avoidance of imposing ideas, theories and concepts on the researched but allowing participants to actively participate in and be heard in the research. The idea is to create an in-depth and contextual understanding of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian civil service. This approach is buttressed by Becker's (1996) assertion that:

“if we don't find out from people what meaning they are actually giving to things, we will still talk about those meanings. In that case, we will, of necessity, invent them, reasoning that the people we are writing about must have meant this or that, or they would not have done things they did. But it is inevitably epistemologically dangerous to guess at what could be observed directly. The danger is that we will guess wrong, that what looks reasonable to us will not be what looked reasonable to them. This happens all the time, largely because we are not those people and do not live in their circumstances’ (Becker, 1996, p. 58).

Thick description according to Geertz (1973) is a method for exploring and uncovering meanings entrenched in the dialogue and actions of participants. He argues that only through a detailed description of the context of the phenomenon can the depth of its meanings be grasped. To achieve this, interview transcripts are made ‘thick’ with underlying interpretations and significance relevant to the description. Therefore, this thesis seeks ‘to transform thin particularity into thick particularity’ (Jennings, 1987 as cited in Fischer, 2003

p. 151). Thick description allows the researcher to set the phenomena in specific contexts where they occur (in this case, the Nigerian civil service); detail the social meanings and significance of ethnicity for Ijaw women in Nigeria's civil service; and use a textual narrative to elucidate the actions and perceptions of ethnic Ijaws women in a way that the reader experiences a consciousness of verisimilitude while reading the accounts of the researcher. The intention is to create an understanding bringing together different levels of what it means to be an ethnic minority woman working in a Nigerian organisation. Thick description goes beyond outlining 'facts' to revealing '*the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals*' (Denzin 1989 p. 83). This was achieved through the use of rich description and where possible, the use of participants responses in verbatim. Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest that describing the themes, research settings and participants of a research establishes the credibility of a piece of research. Chilisa (2012) argues that the postcolonial indigenous researcher, should of necessity, critically reflect on him/herself '*as knower, redeemer, coloniser and transformative healer*'¹⁴ (p. 174). In this regard, my views are made evident in this thesis through self-reflexivity'.

Positionality or standpoint judgements are other concepts that resonate with Chilisa's (2012) argument of validity in researching postcolonial societies. The argument here is that '*what counts as knowledge is tied to the interests and perceived purposes of knowledge of different interest groups*' (Chilisa p. 173). Standpoint theory argues that in societies where the structure is shaped by hierarchically organised social stratifications such as ethnicity, race, gender, class and other social inequalities, those at the top of the hierarchy of such stratifications set the tone on how people view themselves and the world around them (Harding, 1993). This is such that consciously or unconsciously, some tangible forms of human relations are rendered invisible. Also, including the experience of those at the bottom

¹⁴ See section 4.7: Reflexivity: Locating the self.

of the social hierarchy provides a more balanced perspective of human relations and the natural world order (Harding, 1993).

According to Hill Collins (1990) propagating an accurate view of women and ensuring their inclusion in mainstream knowledge entails that women's concrete experiences are made the basis and point of departure for research. This standpoint renders the nature of human relationships invisible when studied from the perspective of the '*ruling gender*' (Maynard, 1994, p. 19). However, the idea that seeing the world from women's perspective provides an objective view of social reality has been criticised for proposing an essentialist notion of woman's life (Heckman, 1997). She contends that the answer to this matter is found in rejecting the notion of universal knowledge for '*a conception of all knowledge as situated and discursive*' (p. 357). She argues that starting research from the standpoint of any group of women presents a necessarily incomplete view because women's experiences are not universal. She proposes that Weber's '*concept of the ideal type*' provides the most appropriate epistemological basis for studying women. The ideal type implies that there is no picture of reality but benchmarks that can be compared to reality. The ideal type does not reveal unanimous truth but the significance and meaning of social reality. However, Berger & Luckmann, (1966) insist that the relationship between humans and society is dialectical in nature, and therefore, recognition of its dialectical nature is essential to facilitate an understanding of society '*in terms that are adequate to its empirical reality*' (p. 4). All human knowledge is partial and in this case, situated in the standpoint of the ethnic minority (Ijaw) women. Applying an intersectional sensibility to the analysis of the data enabled me situate the data. This process involved paying attention to emergent identities that were apparent to the researcher but which may not have been visible to the respondent. This does not imply that any one identity is prioritised over the other; rather, the aim is to generate a context-specific understanding of respondents' lived experiences, recognising that the

dominance of any identity dimension may vary in relation to time and space.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to *'the degree to which a measure of a concept is stable'* (Bryman & Bell, 2011 p. 718). LeCompte & Goetz (1982 in Bryman & Bell, 2011) discuss reliability in terms of external and internal reliability. By external reliability, they mean the extent to which a study can be imitated. Internal reliability refers to the consistency between the observations of the research team when the research involves more than one observer. However, there is recognition that applying positivistic concepts of validity and reliability to a qualitative research framework is not desirable. Bringing a social context to halt and the conditions of the initial study in order to replicate it in the sense in which the term is used is not consistent with the methodological and philosophical framework of this research. Therefore, reliability measures were chosen as appropriate to this research. My research supervisors consistently reviewed the research data and entire research process. They constantly challenged my assumptions and questioned my ideas, methods and interpretations, while providing feedback. Moreover, an Annual Monitoring Review regulated by the school served as an ongoing audit of the research process in its entirety.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of the research paradigm; methodology and methods utilised in exploring and analysing the significance of ethnicity in the perception and lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian civil service. This study adopts a phenomenological paradigm because of the researcher's desire to conduct research that will allow for the voices of ethnic minority women to be heard and for their context to be illuminated. This paradigm was integrated with Eurocentric research methods to form a suitable framework for achieving the aims of this thesis. In doing so, this study will utilise hermeneutic phenomenology, intersectional methodology, thick description, standpoint

judgements, self-reflexivity and the use of heuristics for analysing the data. The next chapter examines the Nigerian civil service, highlighting organisational processes, equality strategies, and issues of gender and ethnicity.

CHAPTER 5

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the Nigerian Civil Service in this thesis. The civil service of Nigeria is central to effective governance of the country (Mou, 2015). Rogger & Rasul (2015) argue that effective civil service organisations are significant for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and inequality. This chapter begins by providing a brief history and structure of the civil service, within which it highlights gender and ethnicity issues in the development of the civil service. This discussion is necessary because although it has been argued that public sector organisations have better-developed policies and legal duties that should foster equal opportunities (Healy et al., 2011), on the other hand, public sector organisations have also been cited as avenues where inequalities are legitimated (ibid). This chapter will also provide demographic data about the civil service workforce and equality strategies that have been adopted by the civil service.

5.1 History and Structure of the Nigerian Civil Service

The civil service is the apparatus through which the government implements its policies and decisions (Marshall & Murtala, 2015). It consists of a group of individuals employed in a civil capacity and non-political or judicial by the Federal and State governments for the purpose of formulating and implementing governmental policies (Ipinlaiye, 2001). Section 318, subsection 1 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria describes the civil service as:

'Service of the Federation (state) in a civil capacity, staff of the office of the president, (governor), the vice president, (deputy governor), a ministry or department of the

federation (state), assigned with the responsibility for any business of the government of the federation (state).

The British colonial government established the foundation for the Nigerian civil service in 1862 when it declared an interest in the Port and Island of Lagos under the title of the settlement of Lagos. The civil service was to facilitate the formal establishment of colonial rule in Nigeria and the expropriation of her resources (Ohcsf.gov.ng, n.d). Positions such as Governor, Chief Magistrate, Colonial Secretary and senior military officer, private secretary to the Governor, auditor, chief clerk, and collector of customs, judge and registrar were established (ibid). By 1906, the British had extended colonial authority to most of region today known as Nigeria and began to create instruments for enforcing its authority and managing the colony such as departments of judiciary, police, prisons, a department of public works, department of customs, ports and telegraph, marine and mines (Ohcsf.gov.ng, n.d). Sir Hugh Clifford, a colonial governor of Nigeria, put in place the framework for the present-day structure of the Nigerian civil service in 1921 when he established a central Secretariat in Lagos (ibid).

In 1939 similar Secretariats were established for the three broad groups of Provinces administered from Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna. The 1940s and 1950s marked the beginning of pressures for Reforms in the Nigerian Political and Civil Service Structure. Since 1945 various panels have been set up by various governments to study and make recommendations for the reforming of the Civil Service. Prominent amongst these were the Tudoe Davies Commission of 1945; the Harragin Commission of 1946; the Gorsuch Commission of 1954; the Mbanefo Commission of 1959; the Margan Commission of 1963; the Adebo Commission of 1971 and the Udoji Commission of 1972-74. The outcome of the reports of the various panels impacted on the structure of the service and the remuneration and productivity of the Civil Servant.

It is important to note that the civil service under the British colonial regime was neither gender nor ethnicity neutral. With the redefinition of family that installed ‘*new notions of housewifery*’ (Hansen, 1992 p. 5 in Manuh & Esi, 2013 p. 108) women were largely excluded from colonial politics and the economy (Manuh & Esi, 2013). Although they were not excluded from education, the educational system was gendered (as indicated in chapter 2.2). In this regard, while men were afforded training that prepared them for employment in the civil service, women were educated towards taking their positions as housewives (ibid). In so doing, the notion that men are to be breadwinners and women are to focus on taking care of the home in order to allow men the flexibility to work outside of the home became institutionalised. The colonial civil service offered men opportunities to work in white and blue-collar jobs (Manuh & Esi, 2013). There were very few women in the colonial civil service, in instances where they gained entry, their job opportunities and opportunities for progression were grossly limited in comparison to those of the men (Manuh & Esi, 2013). The gender inequity and biases that propagated in the colonial civil service are still existent in postcolonial Nigerian civil service. Colonial policies regarding men’s breadwinner status are still implemented in the Nigerian civil service. For instance, the current tax regime assumes men to be breadwinners that bear all the financial responsibilities of the family and women to be housewives (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). This implies that single-parent women, and women who have to take care of their family financially, for whatever reason, pay heavier taxes than men (ibid). Omar & Ogenyi’s (2004) examination of women managers in Nigerian civil service organisations reveal that gender assumptions and stereotypes served as barriers to women’s career progression in the civil service. Okafor et al., (2011) found that women managers tend to have low career aspirations due to pressure to conform to stereotypical gender-appropriate activities. Thus women tend to make career decisions that are congruent with societal expectations of their gender. Similar to the way

men were empowered to the detriment of women, the colonial government also empowered some ethnic groups to the detriment of others as a part of its divide and rule strategy (See chapter 2.2). Members of the Yoruba ethnic group were exposed to education and colonial civil service employment (Appiah & Gates, 1999). However, the colonial government took deliberate action to prevent the Hausa-Fulani's from accessing education (Mustapha, 2007). This resulted in the educational gap between the North and the Southern part of Nigeria that precipitates the Federal Character Principle (ibid). After Nigeria was given independence, the Yorubas continued to dominate the civil service, although more spaces became open for other minority groups (Mou, 2015). However, ethnic minority groups continue to scramble for positions in the Nigerian civil service.

After independence, the civil service was expanded to meet the needs of the Nigerian state. It was split between the federal and state civil services. The former is saddled with the responsibility to support the development and implementation of federal government programmes and policies (Mou, 2015), while the latter supports state governments in the same way (ibid). Both civil services are divided into ministerial and extra-ministerial departments.

5.2 Demographics

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2014), there are challenges to accessing statistical data in Nigeria. The low rate of literacy in Nigeria implies that there is a lack of understanding of the purpose of data collection and emission. This has led to poor record keeping, inadequate funding and lack of trust between users and producers (Abioye, 2011). More so, heavy reliance on manual technologies for assembling and managing administrative statistics has led to slow and very inefficient data collection processes (Kale, 2013). According to NBS (2014), the FCS employs approximately 50,400 staff in a variety of cadres

ranging from clerical/secretarial to ministerial positions. Of these employees, approximately 16,341 are women and 34,059 are men. The state civil service on the other hand employs approximately 138,543 staff, with 55,873 women and 82,670 men (NBS, 2014). On close examination of the data, it was discovered that 15 out of the 36 states of Nigeria did not provide any data about their civil service to NBS. With regard to the FCS, out of the 43 ministries that were listed, 19 of them did not provide any data regarding their employees. Therefore, the figures provided by NBS can only be used as an estimation of men and women employed by the Nigerian Civil Service.

Going by the data provided by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, one can easily note a gender imbalance amongst civil service employees. Women make up approximately 32% of Federal civil service employees and approximately 40% of employees in the state civil service organisations that they were able to access. The gender imbalance may be traced to the educational inequality instituted by colonisers. Without access to education, women will inevitably experience difficulties accessing employment in the civil service. Even where they do, such employment opportunities are likely to be limited to low-level positions. This view is supported by that of the Gender in Nigeria Report, (2012) which also estimates that women's poor access to education is responsible for their lack of employment and low-level positions in the civil service. However, the report does not acknowledge the colonial heritage of this inequality as it attributes women's disadvantage solely to gender cultural practices.

Another interesting aspect of the data is the 25% increase in women's employment between the state and the federal civil service. This difference may be glossed over by the idea that the 36 state civil services of Nigeria are likely to have more employees than the federal civil service and therefore will inevitably employ more women. However, ethnicity may also play a role in the higher number of female employees in state civil service organisations compared to the federal civil service. The reason is because, with the practice of indigeneity, state civil

service organisations are likely to restrict employment to indigenes of their state (Ovadge & Ankomah 2001). Where non-indigenes are employed, it is either on contract terms or they are not allowed to progress past mid management (ibid). Bearing in mind that indigeneship status is conferred based on the same parameters associated with ethnicity, it may be the case that state indigenes support their women to enter and progress in civil service organisations for the development of their ethnic group. The Federal civil service on the other hand, is more highly ethnically fragmented (Rogger & Rasul, 2015) and as such gender inequality is more likely to have an ethnic undertone in these organisations.

Another issue plaguing the implementation of the FCP is the lack of data on the population distribution of ethnic groups. Information about ethnic affiliation is not included in the Nigerian Census (see National Population Commission, Nigeria, 2014). In 1963, Nigerian citizens were classified according to ethnic identity in the population census but this practice was put aside due to it being viewed as a sensitive issue that might exacerbate ethnic profiling (bbc.co.uk, 2006). This is ironic because on the one hand, Nigeria has policies such as the Federal Character Principle and 'Indigeniety', which were supposedly instituted to foster ethnic representation and the preservation of opportunities and privileges for ethnic groups respectively, but on the other hand refuses to find out the population distribution of these ethnic groups. Information that is significant for the development of such policies to suit the needs of the populace. It is the aim of the Nigerian government to include ethnicity in the 2016 census. According to the Chairman of the National Population Commission (NPC), Odimegwu:

'If you don't describe Nigerians in relation to ethnicity and religion and other parameters, then you are not describing them because we are proud of ethnicity and religion even if that is at a low level ... the decision to include religion and ethnicity in the census will help government to better plan' (World Bulletin, 2013 p. 1).

Despite the reasons offered by the government for not collecting data about ethnicity or

developing policies that specifically deal with the issue, it may also be argued that this is part of a deliberate attempt by the ethnic majority groups holding more power to maintain the power status quo in the country. Going by Lewis & Bratton (2000) and Rogger & Rasul's (2015) arguments that ethnicity is the most salient social identity amongst Nigerians implies that Nigerians are likely to make decisions based on their ethnic affiliations. However, the government's refusal to collect empirical data about this information that can guide policy development towards the management of ethnicity in the country and in civil service organisations seems paradoxical. The Federal Character Principle and Indigeneity implicitly propagate ethnic inequalities. Moreover, the official use of the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages and tutelage of these languages in schools propagate ethnic majority influence. While the government is dedicated to the erasure of ethnicity from its policies, political aspirants rely on ethnic affiliates for election into power. As a result of the foregoing, it is argued here that the policies of the government are duplicitous and build on the foundations of inequality laid by the British colonial government.

Ethnicity is the most important factor influencing human resource management in Nigeria (Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001). Hofstede's (2001) model of Nigeria's cultural classification has proven to be useful for understanding the cultural dynamics of ethnicity within Nigerian organisations. The ubuntu cultural practices within Nigeria is synonymous with the collectivistic (Hofstede, 2001) society where individuals are closely committed on a long-term basis to both close and even very distant relations. Ingroup members tend to take responsibility for each other and loyalty supersedes policies and procedures are akin to the terms used in Hofstede's (2001) analysis. In Nigeria, in-group memberships are important considerations in employment, promotion and management decisions (Nyambegera, 2002). As a result, entire departments within the civil service may be made up of only one or two ethnic groups (Kamoche, 2000). For instance, a department in the Nigerian civil service may

easily assume the ethnic identity of the head of the department to the extent that communication in the office is done in his or her local dialect instead of English, which is the *lingua franca* (Olugbile, 1997). In this regard, employees who do not speak and understand the language of the majority group in a department may experience workplace exclusion and barriers to organisational entry. This can lead to ethnically homogeneous departments in the civil service, which, nevertheless, fail to be representative of their constituency. McPherson et al. (2001) suggest that individuals tend to be attracted to those similar to them in terms of ethnicity, race, and gender, this is because of perceived similarities in worldviews and interests making it easier to create a bond. Goodman & Svyantek, (1999) argue that individuals fit in more easily within organisations when they are amongst people with whom they share similar values. Ethnically homogeneous departments avail employees with a supportive environment and psychological security that can increase performance that otherwise would be slowed due to stress (Bhopal, 2000). It also fosters loyalty and high level of commitment to Nigerian organisations (Ovadge & Ankomah, 2001). Dawes et al., (1990) proposes that:

'Social identity or solidarity can be established and consequently enhance cooperative responding in the absence of any expectation of future reciprocity, current reward or punishment, or even reputational consequences among other group members' (p. 99).

Identifying with a group may increase a person's perception of similarity to and liking of other group members (Brewer & Brown, 1998), cause him/her to place group interests above his/her personal interest (Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001), and elicit a desire to improve the wellbeing of the group as a unit (Batson et al., 1995). Thus, employees may consider the success of the organisation as their own success and as such work hard towards achieving this. However, it can be argued that such a relationship is not as clear-cut as it is made out to be. Lee & Reade (2015) suggest that:

'The ethnicity-related baggage that employees bring to their workplace has been found to influence the way they view and interact with both ingroup and outgroup members within the organisation as suggested by social identity theory, resulting in homophilous patterns of interaction' (p. 11).

This may lead to ethnic tension and conflict within organisations (ibid). Thus, individuals are likely to form exclusive groups on the basis of ethnicity in the workplace (Lee & Reade, 2015). There are many factors, apart from psychological security, that can affect employee performance.

Proponents of ethnic diversity in organisations assert that diversity fosters creativity and ultimately better performance as opposed to ethnically homogeneous organisations (Cox, 2001). Limiting ethnic diversity deprives organisations a wide pool of talent from which to select and retain competent personnel (Obi, 2001). Stahl et al's (2009) meta-analytical findings based on 108 studies indicate that teams that are culturally diverse and composed of individuals with varied experiences, perceptions, mental capacities, work approaches lead to the creativity within teams. Members of such teams are more likely to evaluate ideas and come up with new ones long after homogeneous teams have reached their capacity. Scholars have also discussed the influence of ethnicity on promotion and performance management in Nigerian organisations (e.g. Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001). A glass ceiling exists for ethnic minority employees as opposed to ethnic majority employees in Nigerian organisations (ibid). It is a common practice for kith and kin of managers within organisations to be singled out for promotion instead of ethnic minority employees (Richardson, 2000). Although ethnic ties account for this, Richardson (2000) argue that some individuals are of the view that employees with similar ethnic affiliations can be trusted more than individuals from different ethnic affiliates. This may be due to the loyalty that ethnicity engenders amongst Nigerians.

5.3 Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service

Nigeria is yet to develop a comprehensive legal framework to protect the rights of civil service employees (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). Current regulations aimed at providing employees with equal opportunities are weak (ibid). Equality legislation can be found in different policy documents, and those that are of relevance to issues of gender and ethnicity will be discussed here. Section 17 (3) of the 1999 Constitution states that equal pay should be *'given for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or any ground whatsoever; the evolution and promotion of family life is encouraged.'* The phrase 'equal work' is leaves room for questions about how this will be measured. The second clause quoted above states that the civil service espouses family friendly policies. However, the issue of gender inequality in tax regime implies that gender inequalities may also be promoted in a bid to 'promote family life'. The National Gender Policy, which was approved in 2006, aims to achieve workplace equality on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, disability, religion, age and marital status in public sector organisations by 2015 (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). The extent to which these aims have been achieved is questionable.

A personal examination of the Labour Act of Nigeria (1971) (a document that guides employment and employment relations in Nigeria) shows minimal consideration for equal opportunities with regard to gender and ethnicity. Although the Labour Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity, it restricts women's working hours to daylight hours and their employment to industries that are not regarded as masculine. In this regard, it promotes a gendered division of labour and controls women's earning capacity. This Labour Act (1971) does not cover contemporary employment issues in Nigeria therefore needs to be reviewed and updated (Oserogho & Associates, 2010).

The Federal Civil Service is viewed as superior to State Civil Service (SCS) because it offers employees higher remuneration in comparison to state civil services (Adamolekun, 1985). Especially, when top ranking civil servants were given powers for the allocation of resources in a way that SCS employees were not (ibid.). This situation gave rise to the struggle for representation by ethnic groups who believed that they would be allocated more resources if a member of their group was represented in the FCS (Mustapha, 2006). This struggle for power and position eventually spread through the Civil Service (Both FCS and SCS) (ibid.).

The Federal Character Principle (FCP) was aimed at solving this problem of representation by introducing an ethnic quota system to all governmental bodies including the civil service, executive, legislative and judicial arms of the government. A Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established in 1994 to implement and monitor the FCP (Mustapha, 2007). The FCC established the FCP within the Federal Civil Service as:

'Indigenes of any State shall not constitute less than 2.5% or more than 3% of the total positions available including junior staff at Head Office' (Mustapha, 2007 p. 10).

This provision does not deal directly with the issue of ethnicity although it is designed to manage ethnic representation in federal civil service organisations. The fact that the definition of indigeneship is synonymous with ethnicity makes this policy look viable on the surface because ethnic groups within each state are likely to have opportunities for representation. However, the domination of twenty-two of the thirty-six states by Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, and Yoruba ethnic groups implies that they are likely to maintain ethnic majority power in the federal civil service (see chapter 2, figures 2 and 3). Adamolekun et al. (1991) contend that the government has not set out a clear strategy for achieving a fair representation of ethnic groups that takes cognisance of the significant difference in population distribution between states of the Federation. According to Adamolekun &

Kincaid (1991), the FCP emphasises ethnic barriers in Nigeria and serves as a breach of individual rights while inhibiting performance. The FCP has created a situation whereby state of origin is given more regard than expertise in the selection process. Mustapha (2006) argues that the FCP is structured in such a way that competence and efficiency are sacrificed on the altar of representation. He insists that the FCP must spell out measures for improving and maintaining performance in the civil service while upholding fair representation and; every ethnic group and state needs to invest in developing the skills needed for competent performance in the civil service.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an outline of the nature of the civil service in Nigeria and examination of gender and ethnic identities within the context. It showed that inequality regimes in the larger society permeate the civil service. Demographic data was also analysed to highlight gender and ethnic inequalities and an assessment of equality strategies was provided. The following chapter will provide an analysis of the findings from the data collection process outlined in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

ISSUES OF ORGANISATIONAL CHOICE AND POSITION

6.0 Introduction

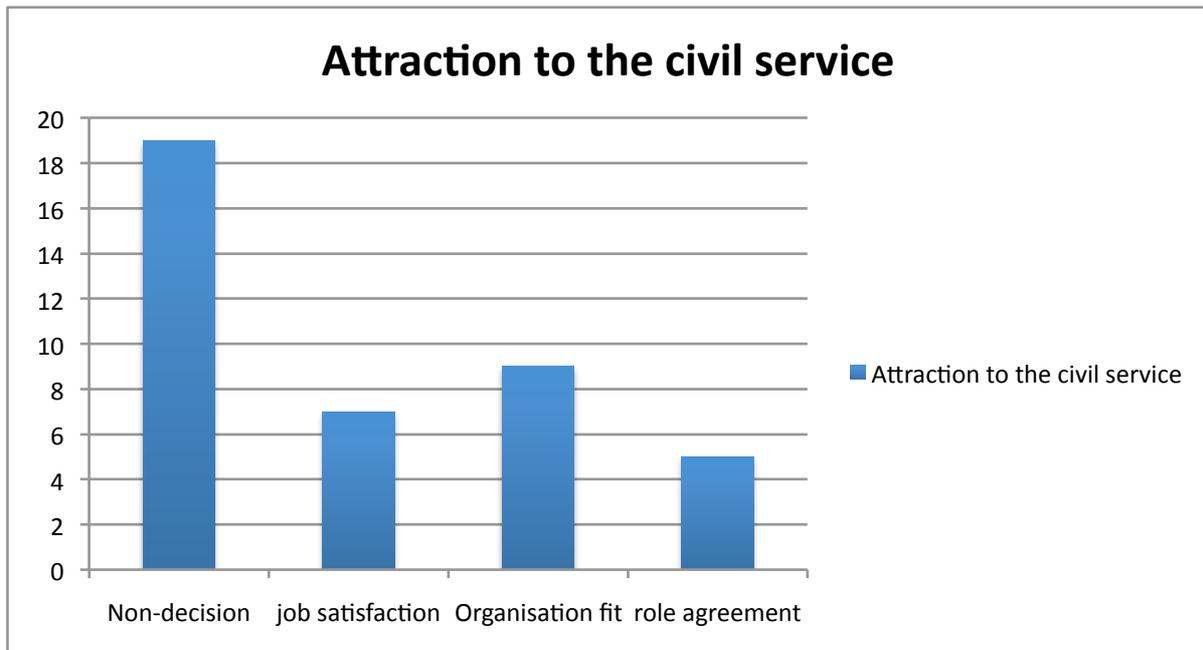
Following the previous chapter on the Nigerian civil service, the thesis goes on to analyze the primary data gathered through in-depth interviews. This first chapter of the data analysis centers on respondents' choice of the civil service and how they perceive that they are positioned in the civil service. More specifically, it examines their views and perceptions with regard to the factors that inform their choice of the Nigerian civil service and whether they consider themselves to be majority or minority in their organization, with particular attention to the significance of gender and ethnicity in their responses.

6.1 Attraction to the civil service

40 Ijaw women employees and retirees of the Nigerian civil service participated in this research (see tables 6 & 7 in chapter 4). Here, respondents disclose reasons why they chose to enter into the civil service. The Nigerian economy experienced continuous growth in the last decade, with an average of 5.91 percent GDP in 2005 (Tradingeconomics.com, 2016). However, this economic growth has not been accompanied by a significant reduction in unemployment rates in the country (Onwioduokit, 2008). This is because '*economic growth has not attained a threshold to stimulate adequate investment and enhance the employment generation capacity*' (p. 64). This coupled with expanding population implies that the country has not been able to create the level of labour demand required to harness her human resources. This has led to an unemployment epidemic that cuts across educational attainment, age group and geographical locations (Gbosi, 1996). As at 2007, 38.7 percent of Nigeria's

female population was in employment, with 65.7 percent of male employment (Barungi et al., 2015). It is within this context that respondents discuss their choice to work in the civil service.

Figure 6: Attraction to the Civil Service



A majority (19) of respondents indicated that their joining the civil service was not a deliberate act but due to prevailing circumstances at the time of graduation (See figure 6 above). These respondents did not seem to acknowledge their employment to the civil service as a deliberate choice. Reasons cited included: smooth transition from education to civil service employment and labour market forces of unemployment resulting in many failed attempts in securing a job:

I didn't choose to; I attended my OND [Ordinary National Diploma] at RSUST [Rivers State University of Science & Technology] and when you finish the ministry would train you. [...]. When you finish you are employed automatically (RSCS, 26 years).

Is it not job? Is it not job opportunity? (FCS, 6 months)

Actually, I did not choose it, I've been applying and applying and applying, and this one came up. It also gives me time to do other things (FCS, 1 year).

Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) suggest that career decisions are made within horizons for action. By this, they refer to ways in which habitus (i.e. the sociocultural context of an individual) and labour market opportunity interrelate to influence individual perceptions of what is appropriate and available. Thus for this group of respondents, working in the civil service was a 'non-decision' in the sense that the disequilibrium between labour supply and demand effectively removed the possibility of choice. Thus for these respondents, their choice to work in the civil service was rather opportunistic. Bauer et al's. (1998) examination of the significance of perceived marketability, i.e. individuals' perception of alternative opportunities for employment, in job and/or organisational attraction, revealed that individuals with fewer perceived alternatives are likely to find attractive, and settle for, what is available. For instance, one respondent commented that due to financial difficulties in her family, she had to skip going to university and get a job in order to support the family. At the time of the interview, she had spent 32 years in the civil service and was to retire as a chief clerical officer. Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) 'horizons for action' provide a viable basis for understanding this respondent's career choices. While the civil service was seen as her only option for economic survival, her habitus (family background in this case) meant that she maintained one career path throughout her time in the service, omitting to explore other opportunities for career progression.

Other respondents indicated that for them, there was some level of intentionality in their employment in the civil service. The civil service was attractive due to the opportunities it provided for career progression and job security. Considering the nature of the economy and difficulties in the labour market, respondents found this to be an invaluable asset:

Joining the civil service is the best place where you can build your career, and I am getting experience that I couldn't get where I was, and I am on a different level. Also, there is more job security compared to where I was. And you don't get as much pressure as the banking system. So I made my decision to resign and come here (FCS, 2 years)

The job is secured, unlike the private sector where they will just wake up one day and tell you it's time to go. But the civil service is a secure service. Even if you get into trouble, there is a process and a procedure before you can be sacked. It's also a career job, that is, you spend a lot of years so you are training on what you are doing. I teach so even if I don't have a grasp of my subject, over time I should be able to build a career out of it. It's pensionable and it gives me time. The work hours are quite short compare to private service (FCS, 7 years).

Other reasons given for the attractiveness of the civil service were related to women's familial roles and expectations. Respondents found it easy to enter into the civil service and it was dubbed the best workplace for women because it was perceived as having gender-friendly policies and organisational structure:

By virtue of my profession, when I graduated from medical school it was easy to just go into the civil service. I could say as a woman I found it easier to cope because it would have been more difficult to raise my family in the private sector. That would have been more demanding, and I would not be able to get enough time off (RSCS, 26 years).

If I have another opportunity, I would become a civil servant because I have time. In fact you are encouraged to study further, if you don't do so, it is because you do not want to. So you have the encouragement though you might not have the incentive. So you can become anything that you want to be. You have time to take care of the house, you close early, [and] there is understanding. In fact the civil service is the best place for any woman who wants to have time for her family and herself. The civil service is better for us (RSCS, 27 years).

Chapman et al., (2005) suggest that women may be more attracted to jobs and organisations with characteristics that reduce conflict with familial responsibilities. This may be more significant in traditional societies like postcolonial Nigeria, women are likely to choose jobs and careers that have the least potential to facilitate or exacerbate role conflict. Job role attractiveness was also cited as a reason for choosing to work in the civil service:

I chose to be in the civil service because of the interest I have in agriculture because I feel that in our country we are suffering in the midst of plenty. We have got a lot, but we do not know how to harness what we have. And I feel I should be part of those who do what they can to make a difference (FCS, 18 years).

An important observation in respondents' discussion of their choice to work in the civil service is that, although they demonstrated an awareness of ethnic inequalities in the labour market, they seemed to find it difficult to articulate how their ethnicity or perceived ethnic inequality affect their entry into the civil service. The reason for this may be that governmental policies and practices that influence civil service recruitment and selection decisions, such as the FCP and indigenisation, are silent on ethnicity while promoting state indigeneship as a yardstick for recruitment and selection. The indigenisation policy practiced by 33, out of the 36 states of Nigeria, implies that non-indigenes of states are secluded from jobs, educational and other privileges and opportunities. This practice has an ethnic undertone because there are states in Nigeria, such as Imo, Ekiti, and Borno, to mention a few, that are dominated by one ethnic group. Thus, ethnic inequalities are rendered invisible through state indigeneship practices. The narrative below clearly demonstrates this:

I think I said it before, in Rivers State civil service they do not employ non-indigenes, but the present governor has employed some non-indigenes in the state civil service as teachers. The non-indigenes were very happy to be employed. Even though we were not happy about that because in their own state – and most of them are Igbos - they won't employ you. I remember when I was seeking for admission, I went to Abia state; I wrote the entrance exam [but] between them, they kept speaking their language, and they refused to admit me (RSCS, 14 years).

The above respondent provides evidence that indigeneship practices are a source of discrimination, but her perceptions are also a clear indication of how indigeneship discrimination conflates with ethnic discrimination. Other respondents spoke of difficulties in attempting to enter into civil service organisations outside their state of origin (i.e. states where they are regarded as non-indigenes). Although this did not deter them from civil service jobs, it contributed to them seeking for civil service jobs within their state of origin:

[Being an Ijaw woman] actually had an impact in my getting the job because I would say it was easier getting the job here in Bayelsa [her state of origin] than going out to sort for house job. [Other places I applied to] they gave only indigenes, in one state, people were so many and they didn't do an interview as such they just brought out a list of people (FCS, 1 year).

One reason why respondents still sought civil service jobs despite the difficulties is the small number of employment alternatives in the country. Considering the disequilibrium between labour supply and demand, and limited development of industries in Nigeria, the civil service has become a very attractive place to work, especially due to the job security and stability which it offers. Notwithstanding, respondents demonstrated that perceived injustice, with regard to ethnic inequalities that are submerged in indigeneship practices, implied that they made a deliberate choice to work in the civil service of their state of origin, without considering alternative demographics. Chapman & Ployhart (2001) suggest that individuals who are members of groups with a history of discrimination may be more perceptive of injustice. Chapman et al., (2005) propose that minority persons may be more guarded and display strong reactions to injustice due to the prominence of historical ethnocentrism.

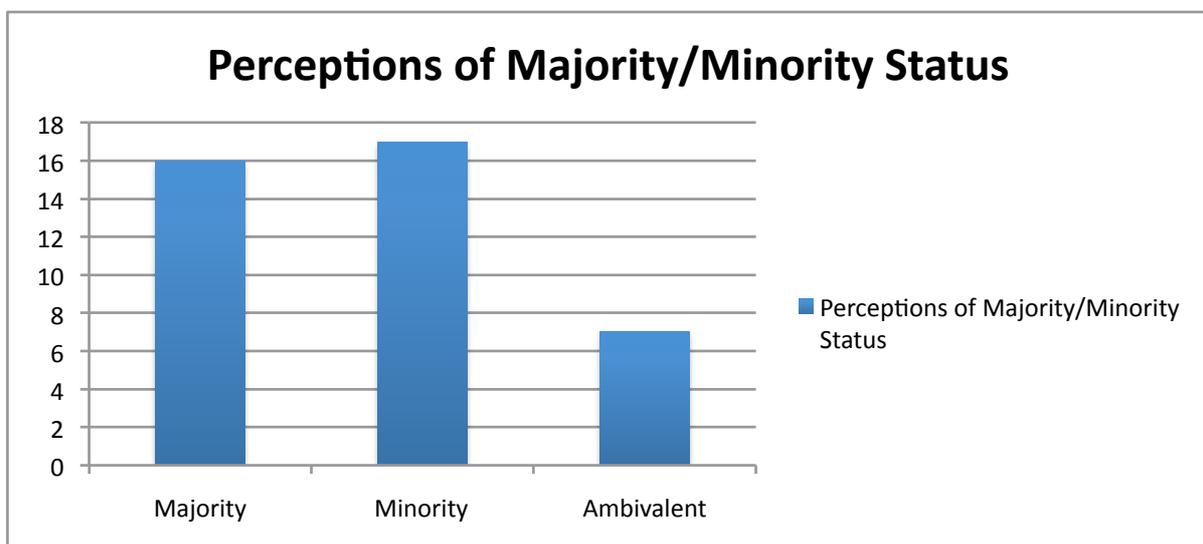
6.2 Perceptions of majority/minority status

This section discusses respondents' views and perspectives with regards to their majority/minority status as Ijaw women in their organisations. However, a majority of the respondents answered this question in relation to their ethnicity, making no comment about the role of gender in their position in the organisation. That ethnicity is regarded as the most salient identity in Nigeria, (Lewis and Bratton, 2000), is an important consideration. This is because although the Ijaw ethnic group is regarded as a minority in Nigeria, that has engaged in both peaceful and radical ethno-nationalistic movements due to discontentment with the implications of their minority status (Ukeje & Adebani, 2008), some respondents in this research consider themselves to be ethnic majority while others were ambivalent with regard to their position.

Most respondents appeared to be unaware of the role that their gender played in their workplace experience and often viewed their gender and ethnicity as independent rather than

intersecting components of inequality. An examination of the views expressed by respondents seems to imply shifting positions of power in relation to numerical advantage and organisational leadership. As shown in figure 7 below, seventeen respondents believed themselves to be part of the minority, sixteen considered themselves to be majorities and seven respondents expressed ambivalence. The reasons provided by respondents as to their chosen description are discussed below.

Figure 7: Perceptions of Majority/Minority Status in NCS



Respondents working in their state of origin, tended to identify as ethnic majority in their organisation. One respondent who was an employee of her state civil service indicated that being an indigene of the state as an Ijaw woman was a privilege that facilitated her getting the job, another respondent stated that being an indigene of the state made her feel loved and accepted in the organisation:

Yes, [I am majority], because this state is mainly Ijaws. [...] I noticed it was a privilege. I did not have to contend or contest my tribe (RSCS, 27 years).

I've not had any problem with anybody because I am an Ijaw woman especially here that is an Ijaw dominated area. I have not been in any place where anybody would want to discriminate me. In fact, I am loved and regarded because I am an Ijaw woman (RSCS, 27 years).

However, another respondent who was employed at the federal level of the civil service

indicated that although the Ijaws are numerically smaller than the Ibos¹⁵ in her organisation, she identified as majority because the organisation is located in her state of origin and only indigenes of the state were ever appointed to head the organisation:

This is Rivers State; this is an Ijaw state. An average Ijaw man is proud, so since it's our state, we are kind of the majority. We have more of those from the eastern part of Nigeria, but it is our state. So somehow we are still the majority kind of because in this state our principals are always from the Ijaw area. But because of the quota system in the civil service they always try to balance it. But in this school for many years, the principals have been Ijaw. So if the head is from Ijaw, then we are majority (FCS, 7 years).

All the seventeen respondents who identified as minority were employees of FCS.

You never forget where you come from [...] I always remember, or I never forgot that I'm a minority and that I come from Rivers State, never once and that I am an Ijaw (FCS, 32 years).

Among respondents that expressed ambivalence with regard to their majority/minority status in their organisation, reasons for this include; organisational change due to change in leadership which reduced the significance of ethnicity while laying emphasis on performance for workplace progression:

It used to have significance a while back [there was] a lot of politics in the system [...] but recently it doesn't even exist anymore. For some strange reason, that political dichotomy seems to have fizzled out. The focus has moved more into performance and excellence: You do well, and you get an appointment. Leadership in the past 7 to 8 years has not been along the lines of tribe. It is clear that it has been along the lines of performance, and this is the time where a lot of people who would never have thought about coming into leadership are given the opportunity (RSCS, 26 years).

Respondents working in their state of origin did not seem to recognise their privilege even if they were conscious that being an indigene of the state put them at advantage over non-indigenes in the organisation:

Is there any majority-minority divide on any grounds? There may be more men but ethnicity, no. When they employ, it is firstly based on you being a Rivers indigene not on your gender. You are given preference as a Rivers indigene (RSCS, 17 months).

¹⁵ The Ibo ethnic group is one of the three majority ethnic groups in Nigeria.

For the above respondent, she recognised gender inequality in her organisation but seemed unaware of ethnic inequalities. Acker (2006) suggests that the visibility of inequalities tend to vary based on the position of individuals. ‘*Men and ethnic majorities tend not to see their privilege and may be of the view that inequality does not exist in their environment*’ (ibid p. 452). Another respondent was ambivalent because she believed that she identified as both majority and minority, depending on whether she was working at Federal or State level of the civil service. She worked at state and federal levels of the government but noticed a shift in power, privilege, and opportunities. When working at state level of the civil service, (her state of origin) she occupied a powerful position, but at the federal level, she experienced difficulties that reinforced her position as minority:

I feel like I’m part of the majority when I’m in my state because I’m my own boss. So I don’t necessarily have someone I answer to, I have people answer to me. But at the [Federal level], that’s when I feel like I am part of the minority. Irrespective of the fact that the president is from the same ethnicity as I am, it’s still [hiss] very difficult (FCS, 2 years).

However, the above response also indicates that her position may also be impacted upon by her status in the organisation.

6.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to understand why Ijaw women participants were attracted to the civil service and how they perceive that they are positioned in their organisation. Labour market forces played a significant role in the choice of the civil service with a majority of respondents settling for the civil service, due to its availability. Job security, clear career path, job satisfaction and familial and Job role congruity were also cited as factors that made the civil service an employer of choice. However, the role of ethnicity in respondents’ choice of the civil service was rendered invisible by state indigeneship practices.

State indigeneship was also implicated in respondents’ perceptions of how they are positioned in the civil service. Although the Ijaw ethnic group is regarded as minority in

Nigeria, a greater part of the respondent population identified as majority in their organisation. The reason given for this is that such respondents work within their state of origin where they are given priority in state civil service employment and career progression.

The next chapter provides the findings based on the workplace lived experience of respondents.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS

PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY – THE EMERGENCE OF NEW IDENTITIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE WORKPLACE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF IJAW WOMEN

7.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the workplace lived experience of respondents by examining the perceived effects of gender and ethnicity on their working lives and career aspirations. In doing so, emergent identities such as indigeneship, marital status, age, language and their intersections with gender and ethnicity in the stories of respondents are highlighted and discussed. Respondents' perceptions of the role of language diversity in shaping their workplace lived experience, awareness of equality and diversity policies and respondents' views of practical implementation of these policies are also discussed. Some recurrent themes in their accounts include: organizational support and access to career progression; the effects of ethnocentric gender stereotypes; language and ethnicity as intersecting sources of privilege and disadvantage; and equality policies as a source of inequality. Acker's (2006) inequality regimes provide an effective analytical approach for expounding on these themes in a way that highlights how inequalities are created and sustained in organisations. Healy et al., (2011) argue that Acker's (2006) approach is useful for understanding inequalities in public sector organisations such as those involved in this research. In line with this perspective, findings from this study will focus on four elements: a) The organizing processes that produce inequalities i.e. how processes put in place by organisations in order to achieve their goals, double as sources of gender, ethnic and other inequalities; b) the visibility of inequalities, in particular the degree to which employees and

other organizational stakeholders are conscious of inequalities; c) the legitimacy of inequalities depicts practices within organisations that legitimize inequalities. The preceding three components of Acker's (2006) inequality regimes are discussed as mutually reinforcing processes that produce inequalities in the Nigerian Civil Service.

7.1 Organizing Processes that Produce Inequality

Healy et al. (2011) delineate six key components of organizing processes within organisations that foster inequality based on Acker's (2006) inequality regimes. These include; *'the requirements of the work associated with human resource management (HRM); recruitment and selection, training, promotion, wage setting and the informal interactions that occur while 'doing work''* (ibid p. 471). Within this thesis, the discussion of these processes will focus on recruitment and selection; promotion and training practices; and informal interactions 'while doing the work' as participants of this research emphasized these.

7.1.1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection processes play a significant role in shaping inequality regimes in organisations (Acker, 2006). Ethnicity is regarded as a legitimate basis for recruitment and selection in the NCS. Its legitimacy is facilitated by the FCP and practice of indigenization. The practice of indigenization implies that indigenes of a state are given priority and sometimes have the exclusive right to privileges and opportunities in the state. See a respondent's comment on page 164 (RSCS, 14 years). The respondent's account seems to portray feelings of animosity towards the employment of non-indigenes in her state because she had been discriminated against in seeking educational opportunities in another state. This was a common thread amongst respondents. A retiree who was formerly employed in the FCS recounted how she went the extra mile to incorporate a language test in the recruitment

and selection process of her organization, in order to determine whether prospective employees who claimed that they had the 'right' ethnicity for the job were honest about their ethnic origin:

When we were trying to employ people ... I found that a few people, would come and claim that they are from Rivers State when they are not. I tried to have people who could speak Ijaw, Ikwere [as part of the recruitment team], I can speak Kalabari, Okrika, and Kalabari. So if [anyone claims to be] from Bonny I ask [them] what is your compound? Who do you know? Speak the language to me. Just to confirm that you are from Bonny. So when people from other groups come who are from Rivers State or Bayelsa come, I got people to interview them. I know I was able to get one or two people who were not Rivers but who were claiming to be Rivers because they knew we were underrepresented. And the opportunity is higher if you say you are from Rivers than if you say you are from Ibo. People would try to claim that they are Ijaw or that they are from Rivers or Bayelsa just to give themselves better opportunity of entering the service or getting a job (FCS, 32 years).

In order to meet the requirements of the FCP, federal government institutions require applicants to provide a certificate of identification as a means of monitoring its compliance with the FCP. However, the above respondent points out that despite the provisions of the FCP, certain states remain underrepresented in the FCS. One reason for this according to her is the issuance of forged identification certificates, which makes the recruitment process more cumbersome as they have to employ unconventional recruitment measures in order to ensure that underrepresented states are recruited in her organization. This raises the question of the visibility of ethnicity in Nigeria. It points to the idea that ethnicity cannot always be determined by visual body markers unlike race, which is a penultimate visible identity (Alcoff, 2006). As a result, the representation of one's ethnicity can be manipulated by acquiring a certificate of indigeneship to a state, which they feel would increase their chances of getting employed. In this regard, a marker of identity such as language is used as a means of assessing the credibility of one's certificate. However, this strategy is vulnerable to deeper levels of discrimination. While the above respondent seems to have a good level of awareness of the language and culture of members of the Ijaw ethnic group such that might enable her to assess the credibility of prospective employees who claim to be from that region, she does not

have the same level of awareness with regard to other ethnic groups and regions of Nigeria. Therefore, her ethnicity at least partially defines the suitability of applicants. These findings are similar to those of Stewart & Perlow (2001) on the role of applicant race in employment discrimination. They found that employers with Black bias were more likely to hire black applicants for lower status jobs than their white counterparts. This leads to the argument that although ethnicity is arguably invisible in the Nigerian context and does not carry the same legacy as race, policies such as the FCP increases the salience of ethnicity, giving rise to tangible forms of ethnocentrism and *othering* on the basis of ethnicity.

In the following case, another respondent who was on the receiving end of the ‘language test’ argued that it was a discriminatory practice through which ethnic majorities established and maintained control in FCS organisations. This resulted in the rejection of her deployment to a federal government college:

I entered the office and greeted her in English and the first thing, she asked was whether I am Igbo in her local dialect. I said to her that I don't understand. At least since I greeted her, she should first respond to my greeting before asking to know where I am from. She refused to answer me; she kept repeating herself, and I refused to answer her. She then said: 'Oh, this school does not belong to you, you have to go, and you have to go' all in Igbo dialect. When she said this, I left her office. I went back the next day, and she continued. As I entered, she started again: 'are you not the one I asked yesterday? Please, this place is not meant for you, you have to go back to Abuja and seek another posting'. I replied and said 'madam what does that mean? This is the school I was posted to'. She said I have told you, go to Abuja and seek for another posting. I thought she was joking. I came out of the office, and another lady from Calabar went in, she did the same thing to her. The third person that went in was able to identify herself as an Igbo person because we were going according to a queue. She gave that person an acceptance letter and rejected the lady from Calabar and I. I went to Abuja to make a complaint. They asked me, do you still want the school? I said No; I don't want to go back there. Because of what happened when I went there so I did not want the school again (FCS, 13 years).

The above narrative depicts the use of language as a means of excluding ethnic outgroup members from the organization. There was a perception among interviewees that, although the FCP is a good policy that had the potential to open up opportunities for minority persons in the country, there are serious deficiencies in its implementations:

When we were recruited, I was the only Ijaw person who was invited [for the recruitment exercise]. And in fact even after my interview and screening, somebody tried to remove my name and put a Hausa person. [The ethnic groups selected were] just Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, one Urhobo person, and myself. How many tribes do we have in Nigeria? This organization spans over the 36 states of Nigeria including the FCT Apart from the lady in Delta state [the person from Urhobo], all the people working under her are Igbo. Are they saying that in the whole of her state they couldn't get indigenes of that state? ... Or in Akwa Ibom state they couldn't get people from that state? Out of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, only 5 ethnic groups are represented in my organization (FCS, 2 years).

The above respondent also argued that ethnic inequality in her organisation is maintained through nepotism:

There are so many instances I've found competent candidates for a position, but they would say they have their candidates. Someone would send you a list of people that they are candidates for the job, and you find out that those people don't even have the necessary qualifications ... A recruitment exercise took place recently, and coordinators were not even informed about it. We were informed after they had given out employment letters. We later found out that most people employed were either this senator's younger brother or that House of Rep's sister. 5 of them were sent to my state, and they didn't have any idea. Most of them were not even graduates, and you begin to question: why was this person employed and how does this person hope to contribute to what is already being done? They don't have the skills; they don't have nothing. So in civil service it happens, it's who you know, it's not based on your qualifications (FCS, 2 years).

The FCP requires open advertising for positions, however information about opportunities and recruitment processes are often withheld. Respondents believe that this is a means through which the dominance of majority ethnic groups is sustained in civil service organisations:

We don't have people being exposed to information about employment Even on these online websites where you find openings, if you try to apply you find out that it's a cold trail if you don't know somebody in there, you don't even have the opportunity to write the exam in order to get to the interview stage (FCS, 2 years).

The above narratives indicate that ethnicity and state of origin may play a more significant role than competence in the recruitment of civil servants. This perspective features in the arguments of those that oppose the FCP. Mustapha (2007) argues that the FCP is

counterproductive in that, while it has achieved some measure of success with regard to creating an ethnically diverse civil service, it also undermines the principle of meritocracy in the recruitment of bureaucrats. This can have serious implications for productivity. Adamolekun & Kincaid (1991) suggest that it encourages elite manipulation and further strengthens group boundaries. Such elite manipulation, as discussed by the above respondent, can also have hidden implications for gender inequalities in the civil service. An absence of the use of standardized gender-and-race-neutral recruitment processes implies that selection is largely based on the discretion/prerogative of existing jobholders that occupy powerful positions. The gender and ethnicity of such individuals can result in decisions that ethnic majority men are more suited to the job than others. At other times, it can also result in the association of job roles with gender. According to Collinson & Hearn (1994) practices of masculinity are prevalent in organisations. In this regard, men identify each other and collaborate towards consolidating power amongst them, while distinguishing themselves from women. This is evident in patterns of job segregation discussed by respondents:

They were looking for a male nurse ... and I said: why can't you employ me? They said no that they need a male nurse. The males they are [employing] they are making it ... I mean, they are really enjoying it. My experience would have been different: I would have earned more money Male nurses have more opportunities to work in companies (RSCS, 14 years).

7.1.2 Promotion and Training practices

Promotion practices form some of the organizing processes that produce inequality in organisations. Fearfull & Kamenou (2006) argue that ethnic minority women experience barriers to career progression in British organisations. Respondents in this research spoke about experiencing blatant discrimination in their attempts to climb the organizational ladder. They argued that they were provided with unequal opportunities for advancement in comparison to their ethnic majority colleagues:

What is due us, they will not give us. Our rights they will not give us. Even when we pass promotional interviews, they will say there is no space to slot our names in the next level. But there is always space for their [kinship network] names. There is always position for their own people but those of us we do not have anything (FCS, 13 years).

Reasons behind respondents' lack of progression reflect an ethnicised order in their organisations. A researcher who had been in her current position for eleven years without promotion recognized that this was a problem relating to not just her ethnicity, but specifically because of her state of origin:

It's unfortunate in a country like this there are people who do what we call 'man know man' [nepotism]. And I know it happens everywhere in the world, not just this country. Unfortunately for me, my heads have been Igbo people who have a grudge for the Rivers man. And I happen to come from Rivers state. They are still bitter from the civil war and so do not want any Rivers man to progress (FCS, 18 years).

The same respondent explained that restricted access to training and career development opportunities was a means through which her prospects for promotion were blocked:

My department has not deemed it fit to send me on training both within and outside the country. I've been on training only once, and it was due to a conflict between my former head of department and the institute's executive director [...]. I got admission to study for my PhD twice and both times my boss stopped me from going. On both occasions, I had paid my fees and was about to take my first semester exams when I was made to stop. They accused me of choosing a field of research that will enable me to gain employment in an oil company. [...] I was forced to work on research to do with aquaculture and fisheries, which wasn't actually my interest (FCS Lagos, 18 years).

In a similar vein, another respondent who worked across the state and federal civil service indicated that she did not feel accepted in her organization because she was the only Ijaw person employed at the Federal level of her organisation, and this had negative implications for her workplace lived experience. She argued that, although the FCP was a good policy, there were problems with its implementation being that there were only 2 minority persons employed at the federal level of the organization. While she received good recognition and opportunities for her performance at the state level (which is also her state of origin), she had never received recognition or promotion at the federal level:

I've gotten awards for the best turn out in the whole of the country. I know so many promotions that have not come to me at the federal level because I am Ijaw. At the state level, I've had so many opportunities and recommendations to partner with other interventions and agencies both within and outside my organization, but not at the federal level. So it is not that I am not competent, I am actually the best in the whole nation. But yet I have not been promoted because I'm Ijaw. One of my entitlements is that I should be going for training abroad every three months. I've never gone for one and I've been there for two years, but most of my colleagues from other states have gone for training abroad because they are either Igbo or Yoruba or Hausa (FCS, 2 years).

Fearfull & Kamenou (2006) suggest that organisations have the responsibility to question the lack of ethnic representation in senior management positions in order to provide an accurate assessment of equality policies, with the aim of offering effective equality initiatives. Paying lip service to equality policies is harmful in relation to the level of organizational commitment and respect that ethnic minority women feel.

7.1.3 Informal workplace interactions 'while doing the work.'

Ethnic and gender inequalities in workplace interactions take different shapes and can affect all employees. Such interactions are often mutually reinforced and can intersect with other social categories (Acker, 2006). The NCS is a highly complex multilingual organization, comprising a variety of ethnicities, cultures, and languages embodied in employees. My data revealed social categorization based on ethnic and language affiliations, which facilitated discriminatory intergroup behaviour:

Something happened last year; we had problems with our salary. My colleagues have my number, whenever there is trouble, and they are not there I call them to tell them what is happening, but my colleagues got information that this salary issue was being sorted out, and they refused to call me. I was not in school that period, and I wasn't visiting because of an issue, so they went ahead and sorted themselves out, not minding me. Till today, they haven't paid me that salary. So this is what I'm saying, they want to please themselves and leave you out of it Even if something good is coming in they would not say it. So if I were a part of them I would have a different experience. But that would not make me leave the job (FCS Rivers State, 13 years).

In their assessment of the effects of social categorization on intergroup behaviour, Tajfel et al., (1971) found that participants demonstrated discriminatory behaviour in favour of their

‘ingroup’ even where the cost of working towards a common good for all groups was minimal. Participants sought to achieve optimal benefits for their group and the maximum difference between the ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup’ even at the cost of individual gains. Tajfel (1970) findings depict the experience of the above respondent; her colleagues were willing to preserve ingroup interests at the expense of their workplace interrelationship. Individuals’ working for the benefit of their ingroup rather than the common good of the organization was a common theme in the stories of respondents. Social categorization on the basis of common language also played a crucial part in fostering organizational inequalities.

Although English Language is established as the common corporate language of civil service organisations, findings suggest this English language standardization ignores power dynamics of language choice in such a multilingual establishment. Many civil servants speak indigenous languages in the workplace both during formal and informal conversations. This is such that respondents perceived language to operate as a resource, a barrier and as playing a role in the power dynamics of the organization. It appeared that the more languages one could speak, the more advantage they had in the organisation:

English is our language of communication. But if I met people that I know I can speak with, I speak Ibo, Kalabari, Ibani, and a bit of Yoruba (FCS, 32 years).

If I go to Bayelsa, they won't take me. The only time they don't discriminate is when you can speak their language. They discriminate like the Yorubas; you go to Yoruba land and you say 'ekabo' (a greeting in Yoruba language) you are ok. You go to Hausa land, and you say 'Sanu' (Greeting in Hausa language) And if they ask you what is your name, and you say 'Aisha' You don't have any problem (RSCS, 27 years).

Language is also important. Even within offices I may see somebody that is from my ethnic group, but because I cannot really speak my language I do not get as much advantage as I would have if I could speak my language ... [for instance] We go into an office to complain about our salaries, which were not paid in full. And the person that speaks the same language as the officer is the one that is receiving all the responses, so we all have to ask that person to please include our names since they are from the same place. I know that the person amongst us that speaks the same

language as the person we are going to make complaints to, has an advantage over us (FCS Rivers State, 4 years).

The above respondent viewed language skills as an unofficially used resource that put others at an advantage over her in gaining access to entitlements in her organization. Thus, she felt disempowered because of the inability to speak her local dialect and the language of the majority. For her, being skillful in her local dialect was a distinguishing factor between her workplace experience and that of ethnic ingroup members who are proficient in the language. Vraara, et al., (2005) refer to this as the episodic power of language. According to them, language skills provide individuals with access to powerful social networks in organisations. Conversely, those that lack skill in the more highly valued language are likely to experience exclusion were those languages become significant in daily workplace interactions. Respondents also perceived that indigenous languages were used as a means of hoarding organizational information and therefore found it objectionable. They argued that it resulted in suspicion and disunity in workgroups:

We have different languages [and it] often forms a barrier. Although we are the same tribe, our languages are different and that brings problem among us. Those that speak the same language often group themselves together, and that causes division, and this affects productivity. Most times, work groups are created along language lines for the sake of unity. This also causes ill feelings among those that are not included in those groups (RSCS, 34 years).

By creating work groups along language lines, it appears that the management further strengthens dividing lines between employees in the organization. Such practices may have negative implications for the building of a strong corporate culture. Piekkari et al., (2005) argues that the use of language in organisations has implications for communication, control and corporation. English as a common corporate language in NCS should ideally serve to strengthen the organisational culture, enhance access to information and facilitate decision-making processes. However, due to the multilingual characteristic of civil servants, the use of indigenous languages in the workplace undermines the benefits of having a corporate

common language. The resultant distrust and feelings of disenfranchisement among employees may lead to constraints in organizational progression and overall performance. Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) submits that individuals with a measure of competence in the common corporate language of an organization are likely to experience ease in career progression and opportunities for development. However, this is not the case with the Nigerian Civil Service as reported by respondents. A lack of firm implementation of the language policy implies that, those who are not skilled in the language of the majority ethnic group, are likely to be excluded from important decision-making processes. The following narrative supports the aforementioned view:

It affects my job because there are some things you need explanations to, but they are not giving you. Instead they are giving your superior and if that one is ok with it that ends the issue. You don't get any explanation and you can't ask. It's like me and you speaking the same language and then a junior officer in the committee, all you need to do is take notes. And the matter was resolved; you don't know how it was resolved. Or they tell you what they want you to know (FCS, 4 years).

Thomas (2009) argues that an ineffective language policy can inhibit knowledge transfer in organisations. Language is often used as a tool for constructing and maintaining hierarchical power structures. Language plays an important role in the power dynamics of the civil service and workplace performance of employees. Respondents also identified language as a useful tool for reaching members of the local population that are not skilled in English language. For instance, a doctor commented that speaking the local dialect of patients with poor English Language skills enabled her to get sufficient information with which to provide an accurate diagnosis. A Health care worker stated that having knowledge of the local dialect enabled her to identify with the local community when delivering projects to them and they were pleased to have someone who could speak and understand the dialect. Thomas (2009) proffers that organisations need to take the language and culture of local communities into consideration in developing a language policy. Developing a language policy that specifies the various

contexts within which specific languages can be used may offer greater strategic and competitive edge.

Respondents perceived that they were not given due recognition for their workplace achievements. A health care worker stated that her experience was such that rather than receive acknowledgement and reward during appraisals, ethnic majority colleagues were given credit for her work and she was asked to tone down her performance appraisal a number of times so as not to reveal her achievements. Thus her workplace expectations were lowered in comparison to others:

I've had instances where sometimes they would ask me questions like: Oh can you edit your state report when you send it to us so it doesn't seem like others are not working? I've had issues with the project director where she would say things like Oh 'I appreciate your report but if you will just remove certain things: If you are able to achieve 100% of your work plan for a month just put 60%, just so in variation to other people you don't seem as if you're doing too much (FCS, 2 years).

She found that she was excluded from informal networks in the organization and was not given the necessary organizational support needed for success in her job role and towards career progression. This was such that interactions with her managers were strictly on a formal basis and her request for resources and funding were often times neglected. There was a sense that deliberate effort was made to remove her from employment leading to personal frustration and even burn out:

I can count how many times they have tried to get me out of that position. One time, they tried to sabotage my programme by providing vendors with conflicting information [...] most of the vendors called me to confirm the details and that was the saving grace I had. There are other instances where people would forge my signature on certain documents. Working in the civil service has taught me to think fast [...] In everything you always find yourself having to argue twice as hard [...] Its very easy to get frustrated I know so many times I've been burnt out I've been frustrated because it's like, the more I try to do the right thing by doing my job just doing my job I find that people try to box me and put me in a position where others question my integrity (FCS, 2 years).

Ethnicised workplace interactions were also impacted upon by ageism. The above respondent also stated that she was overlooked during formal meetings because she is relatively young in comparison to her colleagues:

Nobody wants to hear what your views are or your opinions or your inputs ... you know majorly what I experience is discrimination because of my age. I feel that if I were older, even if I am Ijaw, people would give me the opportunity to air my views. There's another minority lady [who is] always given an opportunity to speak. I have two things working against me; I have that I am Ijaw and that I am very young (FCS, 2 years).

The above respondent argues that her credibility and competence as a manager is questioned because of ethnicity and age. She is expected to be silent and take orders during decision-making, rather than be an active contributor to the process. This implies that ageism in Nigerian organisations may also be gendered being that Nigeria is a male-dominated society.

Equality policies provide opportunities for women to enter into organisations, however, exerting their authority when they attain senior management positions can be challenging due to cultural beliefs that women are inferior to men. In traditional meetings of most cultures, women are not allowed to attend, or where they are in attendance, they are not allowed to speak except where it is a meeting for women. Although the above respondent demonstrates a lack of consciousness of the role of gender inequality in her workplace experience, it is suggested that her gender is an important part of her experience. In many Nigerian cultures, seniority is given precedence over gender differences. For instance, Oyewumi (1997) argues that gender is not an organizing principle of Yoruba society; rather, seniority (i.e. chronological age difference) is the basis upon which society is ordered. Therefore, older ethnic minority women may have a different workplace lived experience in comparison to younger minority women. This may explain why the above respondent's colleague who is also an ethnic minority woman was allowed to speak during meetings were she was silenced.

This cultural practice renders gender invisible; particularly younger women, even though the younger woman may occupy a more senior position than the older woman.

The perception of gender differences in the quality of work is an important part of the organizing processes that perpetuate inequality. Roles were given a gender undertone such that women were given mundane office tasks while their male counterparts were given roles that afforded them more exposure. Williams et al., (2012) argue that *'family metaphors can disadvantage women who work on teams by encouraging a gendered division of labour'* (p. 265). However, another interpretation could be that employers are being paternalistic, one respondent stated:

My [male] colleague is usually sent out for outdoors matters. And I'm sitting here not going outdoors. [...] My colleague who is also an accountant is usually sent out. For example to the ministry, to meet the governing body, to exchange correspondence, collect cheques; submit a statement of account and all of that. But I am not allowed to do that. Except when he is not available then I can step in and do that. I think it's because he is a man and I am a woman. So they think if the lift in the secretariat is spoilt or there is no elevator, he should be able to climb and I may not be able to do that. Or maybe they don't want to put me through that stress (RSCS, 3 years).

However, the protective paternalism and idealization suggestion in this narrative by the respondent reflects a pattern of benevolent sexism. For the above respondent and other respondents in this research, there appears to be unconsciousness (Gordon, 2007) and invisibility (Acker, 2006) of gender inequality in their experience. This is such that while she seems to be discontent with *sitting* in her office, she goes on to justify the reasons why she is not given the same opportunities as her male counterparts, without recognising that the privilege given to her male counterpart is being denied to her. In the same way, that the powerful do not recognise their privileges, the powerless may also not recognise their disadvantage is a product of the privilege of the majority (McIntosh, 1988 in Acker, 2006). Glick and Fiske (1997) argue that benevolent sexism serves to maintain and justify traditional gender roles and patriarchy. King et al., (2010) found that women were given less

challenging tasks than their male counterparts although women communicated interest in such work roles. They argue that gender based stereotypes limit women's exposure to exigent assignments and may be a significant factor in the poor representation of women in senior management positions.

Respondents also highlighted the role of ethnocentric sexual stereotypes of the Ijaw woman in maintaining inequalities in their organisations. Notions of a hyper-sexualized Ijaw woman with slack sexual boundaries pervaded interactions with colleagues and co-workers. Respondents found themselves having to work towards countering such stereotypes by adopting personal boundaries that served as a protection from unwanted sexual advances. One respondent stated that she had experienced sexual harassment from a male superior who also went on to pick on her for fear that she would report the incident. Respondents who had attained management position perceived that colleagues and customers assumed that they had progressed by rendering sexual favours to men in senior management:

In fact, the worst I ever had was from another woman who said she was looking for the general behind me (FCS, 32 years).

In making the above statement to the respondent, the speaker made an assumption that she had attained her position by rendering sexual favours and seemed curious to know who was responsible for putting her in that position. In doing so, the speaker totally ignored the skill, competence and expertise of the respondent, accruing her position and achievements to her sexuality. Loue (2009) suggests that the role of ethnocentric sexual stereotypes in perceptions about the conduct and intents of ethnic minority women needs to be further explored, but it was beyond the remit of my thesis.

7.2 The Visibility of Ethnic Inequalities

Acker (2006) describes this as the degree to which employees are aware of inequalities in their organization. This may vary across organisations and a lack of awareness may be unintentional or deliberately facilitated by management. She describes how visibility patterns may vary across types of inequalities in organisations. Organisational processes that produce racial inequality are '*usually evident, visible, but segregated, denied and avoided*' (Acker, 2006 p. 452) while gender inequality tends to be difficult to detect. This next section discusses two types of awareness discovered in my data: general awareness of inequalities and the awareness of equality and diversity policies.

7.2.1 Awareness of Inequalities

There was a general awareness of ethnic inequalities among respondents working in states where they are regarded as ethnic minority and those who work in the Federal Civil Service. This may be because such individuals generally worked in a more ethnically diverse environment. This was such that respondents who had not experienced overt discrimination pointed out that there were subtle reminders of being regarded as the *other*:

No, it's usually not open. It's an indirect thing. It's not open like they are trying to say you're not from my place, but it's in doing little things that you realize that there's actually like a gang up. So it's there, but you have to see through the lines (FCS, 2 years 6 months).

There was a general tendency that respondents working in the civil service of their state of origin were not conscious of ethnic inequalities in their organization although they acknowledge ethnicity as a source of discrimination in the civil service as a whole. The data reflects Acker's (2006) view that '*visibility varies with the position of the beholder*' (p. 452). One respondent described how her husband who works in a different department of the same organisation had a greater sense of ethnic inequality than she did:

I've not noticed it myself but it might be my personality. Sometimes I want to think the best of people. But my husband has said that in his department, there is this tribal undertone. It maybe because in my department there are more Ijaws, in his own department he is more like the minority (FCS, 4 years).

The above response provides a viable example of the difference in perceptions of inequality between ethnic majority and minority members. Majority group individuals tend to see inequality as existing in places other than their environment (Acker, 2006). In two organizational studies, Acker (2006) observed that generally speaking, persons of colour were more likely than their white counterparts to see racism as a source of concern in the organization. Employees working in a more diverse office seemed more aware of racism. While ethnic inequality was visible, it was difficult to detect gender inequality in the accounts of respondents. The researcher observed that there is a disappearance of gendered organizational processes in the accounts of interviewees. Respondents were quicker to point out measures that the civil service put in place to create a gender inclusive organisation, than to acknowledge gender inequality. I observed that gender inequality was covered in layers of ethnocentrism, gender cultural practices and benevolent sexism (see discussion in section 7.1.3), making it difficult to detect. However, respondents were more reflexively aware of gender inequality when it was a product of their interactions with members of other ethnic groups:

The northerners [Hausas] have a view of women; they don't even understand what women are doing in the service. The men are supposed to work and the women remain at home. So they tend to treat the women in such a manner. [...] There's this man, he would just sit down and call you by your first name: [Mimicking him] 'Come! Do this!' I'm like excuse me I'm not your wife or your girlfriend. You can't just order me around and he's just like 2 levels ahead of me so it's not so serious that you just push me around. I said no, you don't do that, I don't owe you any personal favours, so you don't send me on personal errands. [...] After that we had a funny relationship but we later worked it out and the sending stopped [...] they are fond of it and he looked for someone else to pick on and kept doing it (FCS, 4 years).

Although Nigeria is generally a male dominated society, gender inequality varies in relation to the gender cultural practices of each ethnic group. The culture of most Hausa societies

clearly identifies the male as superior and in control of women's affairs while Ijaw women are afforded relatively more liberty in their culture (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebayo, 1999). Hence, the above respondent was openly intolerant of her male colleague's demeanour towards her. The same respondent had indicated earlier in the interview that ethnic divisions were rife in her organization and this was perpetuated through language. She also stated that she generally favoured ethnic ingroup members (Tajfel, 1978), hence it may be possible to argue here that the respondent was more intolerant of her colleague's sexist outbursts because of his ethnic outgroup membership (ibid).

7.2.2 Awareness of Equality and Diversity Policies

There was a general lack of awareness of equality policies in the civil service among respondents. Only 25 percent (ten) of respondents indicated that they are aware of equal opportunities policies espoused by their organization and the civil service as a whole. Formal and stated equality policies cited include; equality of pay among persons of the same job level, the FCP, and access to opportunities in organisations. Respondents articulated the changing nature of Nigerian culture and society with regard to gender equality. They noted that more spaces had opened up for women and ethnic minorities in the civil service in President Goodluck Jonathan's administration (period of 2010 - 2015). A lecturer noted that her university has made major changes towards gender equality since her employment:

When I was employed, women were not given leave allowance. Only men were entitled to accommodation, some women even lied that their husbands were dead just to get these things. But now everybody is on the same level. If you are qualified for leave allowance and Housing, you are able to get it regardless of your gender (FCS, 34 years).

Another respondent argued that although she was not aware of equal opportunity policies in her organization, there appeared to be a level playing field. But this did not stop her from feeling marginalized due to her ethnic minority status:

Any opportunity that is open, people are allowed to go for it. There's really no segregation so to speak but because we are minority we feel like we are being sidelined. In principle there is no segregation of any sort. I'm sure they have policies on things like that that's why we have a level playing field for everybody (FCS, 1 year).

The above narrative demonstrates the absence of highly sophisticated and creative policies to tackle gender, ethnic and cultural diversity as well as their intersections. It seemed that equality policies tackled a measure of blatant discrimination, but did not solve the problem of everyday, subtle discrimination. Problems in the development of the FCP and a gap between policy and practice make it largely counterproductive¹⁶. The general lack of awareness of equality policies seems to indicate that powerful stakeholders in the civil service do not champion them. Healy et al. (2011) argue that such a scenario undermines the legitimacy of equality strategies, which are in turn produced at different organizational strata.

7.3 The Legitimacy of Inequalities

Acker (2006) argues that economic and political conditions of a given environment are significant for determining the legitimacy of inequalities. She cites the civil rights and feminist movements of the United States as key contributors to the illegitimacy of gender and race inequalities through warranting equality legislation. This affected organisations, which in turn began to espouse equality and diversity policies and practices. Healy et al. (2011) reports a similar trend in the UK where all organisations are compelled to embrace gender, ethnic and other diversities. The result is that the legitimacy of inequalities has been minimized. Albeit organisations tend to vary in how they perceive the legitimacy of inequalities. For instance, bureaucratic organisations by their very nature tend to legitimize inequalities.

However, the Nigerian context depicts a different reality, ethnic and cultural diversity serves to impede the effectiveness of equality laws. As part of a Federation, each state has the right

¹⁶ See section on 'legitimacy of inequalities' for a more detailed analysis of the Federal Character Principle (FCP).

to institute laws deemed fit for its continued existence, although laws that clash with federal law can be contested in a federal court (genderindex.org 2016). However, Nigeria also practices a tripartite system, which legitimizes religious, civil and customary laws, making the legal system cumbersome. For instance, although Sections 15(2) and 42 of the 1999 Constitution disallow gender discrimination, customary and religious laws continue to restrict women's rights (ibid). In the mid-2000s, the national parliament deliberated bills to extenuate gender based violence, gender discrimination, and related matters but these bills are yet to be passed (genderindex.org, 2016). Customary Laws vary across the country (largely based on ethnicity) but most customary laws tend to legitimize gender inequality. For instance, under customary law, underage women (below the age of 18) are allowed to marry; men have sole parental authority, right to child custody and sole headship over the household (ibid). There are no Federal Laws targeted at specifically addressing key equality issues such as FGM, domestic violence and sexual harassment (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report, 2008). More so, although there are no national or state quotas that promote women's participation in politics, the Goodluck Jonathan administration met the 30 percent target for women's participation in power structures and decision-making by appointing female ambassadors and members of national parliament. However, this percentage seems to be on the decline under President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 - present) with fewer women appointed into federal decision-making positions (Nagarajan, 2015). One respondent argued against the use of quotas for women in Nigeria on the premise that it has the potential to promote employment and election of poorly skilled women in favour of highly skilled men:

When we were doing the 88/89 Constitution and some people ... brought up the bill, they wanted women to be given 30% of appointments. A lady from the south, a journalist - First sentence: 'I stand to oppose the motion'. She said women should prove themselves and I believe in that. Prove yourself and nobody will discriminate against you (FCS, 32 years).

However, it was interesting to note that the same respondent seemed more accepting of the quota system in relation to state representation in federal government institutions:

It's good to give everybody equal opportunity. But in doing that you must also ensure that the people you are bringing in are competent people otherwise, you will see that you are shooting yourself in the foot. You bring people who are not competent and qualified, and then you reduce the standard I would say. And to me, it hasn't really worked in Nigeria. I remember I was the first secretary they appointed for the federal character commission, and we all had high hopes we expected much, but I don't think it has really worked (FCS, 32 years).

The above respondent's views seem to demonstrate that she operates from a traditionalist perspective of women, and which legitimises gender inequalities in Nigeria. Murray (2014) argues that such arguments against quotas validate the view that women's workplace performance should be assessed on the bases of stereotypes of masculinity and masculine organisations. She proposes that curbing overrepresentation through the use of ceiling quotas for men will promote meritocracy, foster symbolic representation of both genders and provide the impetus for improving recruitment and selection in the civil service. The same respondent argues that in the course of her work, she has demonstrated her workplace competence:

I do remember when I was in the national assembly, somebody came to my office, a very highly placed person from the south east geopolitical zone [Ibo] and said to me that he wonders how a lady from my state got to this position, and I told him off ... I know some of them think just because I am a woman not because of where I came from, that how can I be heading this office. And I used to tell them that, you can't say I'm not qualified, you cannot say I'm not educated, you cannot say I'm not hardworking, you cannot say I'm not competent. So if you cannot say any of those about me irrespective of where I come from or my gender, then you have nothing to say (FCS, 32 years).

The indigenization policy of states in Nigeria is another example of a contradiction between state and federal law. Section 15 (1-4) of the 1999 constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of one's state of origin, ethnic or linguistic association while enforcing active propagation of national integration. It states:

'The state shall secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the federation and foster a feeling of belonging and involvement among the various peoples of the federation' (in Editor, 2015 p. 1).

However, as already seen, states in the Federation have indigenization policies that provide indigeneship certificates to its citizens, which are in turn used as a basis for gaining employment into governmental parastatals, opportunities and privileges within the state (Nigerianwatch.com, 2014). Non-indigenes are excluded from decision-making positions and political power structures. Furthermore, where they are employed in the civil service of a state, it is usually on contractual terms and they encounter a brick ceiling that prevents them from gaining access to top management positions (Editor, 2015). This was the case of a nurse who worked outside of her state for 6 years:

I was working in Bayelsa in the year 2000. In fact, I was being promoted, even though I'm not [an indigene] from Bayelsa. My appointment was [on a] contract [basis] appointment. I said, ah! These people don't want to make me permanent staff, what is my fate? I needed job security so that one day they would not rise up to say they have terminated your [my] appointment. So I had to move back to Rivers state to start afresh (RSCS, 14 years).

The nurse's narrative reveals that although she shares the same ethnicity with the majority of the indigenes in Bayelsa State, her non-indigene status put her at a disadvantage. Here, ethnicity intersects with indigeneship to promote unequal access to workplace benefits. One respondent was of the view that indigenization is counterproductive for the state civil service due to a shortage of skills:

For this state, I feel it would be [have] negative [consequences]. In my village we have only 50 graduates. And the population of my village is about 11000 [...] so if you have to introduce indigenization to the state especially as we have a lot of untapped natural resources, you find that if they do that, the state will suffer (FCS, 2 years 6 months).

Only three out of the 36 Nigerian states are open to non-indigenes. Lagos was the first to remove the distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes, followed by Sokoto in 2014 (Nigeriannewswatch, 2014) and Kaduna state abolished the use of certificates of indigeneship

in 2015 (Editor, 2015). However, some respondents see the indigenization policy as a safety net from blatant discrimination in the civil service as well as fostering a sense of belonging:

It would be ideal that I can live and work anywhere and be treated equally. Unfortunately, we as Ijaw people we don't enjoy that benefit so why should these people work for us. It's not like this is the ideal for me but I have seen that over time you do not gain anything from working outside your state, so why are you there? (FCS, 2 years 6 months)

It makes the people have a sense of belonging, and it develops the area whether we like it or not (RSCS, 27 years).

The researcher observed that it was difficult to locate civil servants of the Ijaw ethnic group outside their state of origin. The majority of the Ijaw ethnic group population have Bayelsa and Rivers States as their state of origin and 80 percent of research participants were recruited from both states. Despite the researcher's attempts to diversify the research population, only 2.2 percent (1) participant was recruited from Lagos state and 27.5 percent (11) of the participants from Abuja (the capital city). Reasons for this may include the fear of discrimination and lack of job security as discussed by the public relations manager. According to Human Rights Watch (2006) a governmental official of Plateau state of Nigeria stated that the policy of indigenization was ideal because it provides opportunities for indigenes that are likely to be discriminated against in other states. This seems to imply that the policy creates a vicious circle whereby the practice of indigeneship protects citizens in their state of origin, but the same practice ensures that they are discriminated against outside of their state. One result of this may be the tendency towards spatial segregation across cities in Nigeria. Van Kempen & Ozuekren (1998) describe spatial segregation as an overrepresentation of members of a group in one area and their underrepresentation in others in relation to their share of the population across the city, in the case of Nigeria, as a whole.

It may be argued that spatial segregation is institutionalized through governmental policies such as indigenization, that to some degree, force indigenes of a particular state to stay there.

In Nigeria, the aim of this practice was to preserve the heritage of ethnic groups, however, it has increasingly become obtrusive. This is such that respondents who were indigenes of the state where their organisation is located, were less likely to state that they had experienced discrimination, than non-indigene respondents (i.e. those who were working outside of their state of origin). An understanding of the causes of residential segregation across cities in Nigeria is particularly useful for identifying ways to diminish them, especially because of the attending socioeconomic ramifications. However, exploring this in further depth is beyond the scope of this research.

The policy and practice of indigeneship is further complicated by a lack of definition of the word in the Nigerian constitution despite its frequent use leaving governmental officials the leeway to grant or deny indigeneship status or benefits as they deem fit. A lecturer described how she lost her indigeneship rights after she got married:

I was more accepted as an Ijaw woman initially until I got married and my husband is not Ijaw. It is my husband not being Ijaw that is the problem because then you are seen as wearing two ethnic caps and the level of acceptance is a little bit different. Ehm if you were not aggressive you could be treated as 'a non-indigene' in which case you are not given opportunities. [...] There was a limited scholarship available in 2005 [...] they took my name off the list because my husband is not from Rivers State and took another lady who is not from Rivers State but whose husband is from Rivers State and replaced my name with hers. It was the most ridiculous thing I had ever heard about. It's like you are from the state but you are treated like you are not from here. It's like you've lost your birthright (RSCS, 26 years).

The above narrative seems to imply that one's marital status can further complicate their situation. It is a common tradition in Nigeria that a woman is regarded as losing her ethnicity at marriage and as such is regarded as a member of her husband's ethnic group. However, this becomes ambiguous when applied to the practice of indigeneship due to the lack of clear definition and proper guidelines in the constitution. Thus rendering women who engage in inter-ethnic or inter-state marriages becoming more likely to be at disadvantage. For instance, another respondent discussed the cases of personal acquaintance that were stripped of their

appointment at the federal level because their husbands has ancestral roots in the states they were to represent, but they did not:

I know 3 women who were denied appointments into permanent secretary positions; one in particular is from Adamawa, married into Plateau and was claiming Plateau all through her record until it was time for her interview for perm sec. The Plateau people protested that she was not from Plateau and so they didn't interview her (FCS, 38 years).

In the scenario painted above, in line with traditional practice, the woman adopted her husband's ethnic group at marriage and was employed to the federal civil service on the basis of her husband's ethnicity. However, this was not a problem until she began to climb the organizational ladder to more senior positions. Such scenarios leave the fate of married women at the hand of state government officials. The same respondent cited the case of another married woman who changed her state of origin to that of her husband upon employment to the federal civil service. However in this woman's case, she was not denied access to top positions:

Another woman who is from Edo was married to Benue and had been claiming Benue, and she just crossed over to service and changed her state of origin to Edo and has taken over the perm sec slot ... So I think for now let us maintain the status quo of 'your state of origin as your state of birth.' I think it's safer and it's better even for women. Because you see when you go and claim Abia [state], the Abia woman is going to fight you because she also wants the slot. If you join the service as [a] Rivers [indigene], you have to maintain your Rivers status. (FCS, 38 years).

As implied by the quote above, each state has a quota for federal government representation and they tend to guard these positions. Principles for the quota system are defined in the Federal Character Principle and its implementation is dependent on the use of certificates of indigeneity. Local government officials allot certificates of indigeneity to members of their local government area on the grounds that one's ancestral origins can be traced to that region. According to Human Rights Watch (2006), such assumptions are problematic as there is no evidence of proper documentation of ancestry. Notwithstanding, these certificates form the basis for employment and appointments into federal government institutions as well as access

to education. The Federal Character Principle (FCP), which is a quota system that was put in place as a means of ensuring that the diversity of Nigeria's populace is represented in all spheres of government depends on these certificate of indigeneship for its implementation. These practices continue to legitimize the inequalities experienced by women and minority persons. The federal government institutions compel candidates to present a certificate of indigeneship to enable them to provide evidence of compliance with the FCP's requirement of interethnic and interregional diversity representation (humanrightswatch.org, 2006). Participants in support of the quota system argued that it was the only means through which minorities could access federal government offices:

If you make it based on merit you will find that some ethnic groups will be marginalized but if you make it on a quota basis you are more likely to get representation from all ethnic groups (FCS Abuja, 1 year 11 months).

The federal character has been the only way spaces have been opened up for Rivers and minority people (FCS, 38 years).

However, a librarian argued that the FCP is a source of discrimination in the civil service. She was refused employment at a federal government institution because she was not a member of the 'right' state:

I went for an interview to be a librarian at a federal university. After asking me the interview questions they then went to ask me about my ethnicity. I told them I was from Rivers State. The interviewer asked me if I'm sure I want to identify as an Ijaw woman, I said yes. This is the way I have been identifying since despite being married even if I have the freedom to decide on which ethnic group to identify with so I cannot just change it now. It was after the interview they said that I did well but that because I chose to stick with my Ijaw ethnicity they could not give me the job. They were looking for someone from another state not Rivers to fill that position. So I did not get that job. I wasn't desperate about it but if I was really interested in that job it was discrimination. If I had merited the job then I should get the job and my ethnicity should not be the determining factor (RSCS, 27 years).

The above narrative seems to indicate the mutability of ethnicity in Nigeria. Unlike race that is premised on visibility, ethnic differences in Nigeria are often times invisible, making it possible for individuals to switch from one ethnic identity to another by obtaining certificates

of indigeneship. It has been reported that individuals are able to obtain falsified certificates of indigeneship through corrupt local government officials (humanrightswatch.org, 2006). In the same vein, a married woman can legally obtain a certificate of indigeneship from another state on the basis of her marriage into that state. It appears that the librarian was penalized for refusing to change her state of origin to that of her husband. Deshpande & Yadav (2006) argue that problems in the design of quota systems make them ineffective. Lack of clear guidelines for indigeneship is a major problem facing the implementation of the FCP in Nigeria. Deshpande & Yadav (2006) recommend that an evidence based approach that relies on empirical data about the nature of socioeconomic disadvantage for developing a quota system that is sensitive to multiple sources of inequality. Healy et al., (2011) suggest that the legitimacy of equality policies lies in the effectiveness of their implementation. Adopting intersectional sensibility in the creation and implementation of quotas would contribute to its effectiveness.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the perceived effects of gender and ethnicity on the lived experience and career aspirations of respondents using Acker's (2006) inequality regimes. In doing so, emergent identities such as language, age, and indigeneship became significant. The ideas and constituting elements of inequality regimes provides a viable basis for highlighting the intricacies of inequalities in organisations (Healy et al., 2011). Although these elements have been isolated for analytical purposes, they are mutually reinforcing and occur in a cyclical rather than linear way, often times intersecting in a mutually constitutive way. Inequalities in the recruitment and selection practices generally stem from nepotism (Jones, 2012) and ingroup favouritism (Tajfel 1978). The data reveals an ethnicised organization of work that is facilitated by the FCP and indigenization policies. Lack of transparency and standardized recruitment and selection methods increase the potential for gender and ethnic bias. This is

such that selection decisions are largely made on the basis of ethnicity and indigeneship, to the detriment of merit and competence.

Promotion and training practices seem to be influenced by blatant discrimination, with respondents describing deliberate and successful attempts of the majority ethnic group members to prevent their upward mobility in the organization. Such attempts include; lack of training, lack of recognition and undervaluing of workplace achievements, and calculated acts of sabotage.

Informal workplace interactions while doing the work are shaped by frictions with regard to language and inter-ethnic rivalry and competition. This is such that respondents' language skills are both a resource and a hazard (Robinson, UP) to workplace acceptance, inclusion and performance. The intersection of language and ethnicity served to distinguish the experience of Ijaw women (respondents). This is such that respondents who cannot speak their language perceived that they were at a disadvantage even when dealing with members of their own ethnic ingroup. Ageism and gender discrimination, which are embedded in the cultural practices of most Nigerian ethnic groups served to put young respondents at a disadvantage, although cultural practices and ambivalent sexism contributes towards respondents' general lack of awareness of gender inequalities. Ethnocentric gender stereotype of the Ijaw woman as hypersexual was a source of vulnerability to sexual harassment and undermining of respondents' achievements.

A majority of respondents were unaware of equality policies in their organisations and those who were aware had difficulties in articulating them. The FCP was cited as an equality policy though respondents were quick to point out the gap between policy and practice. Apart from problems with its implementation, it appears that its focus on recruitment implies a dearth in its goal of equal opportunities in the Federal Civil Service.

Inequalities are legitimized through a multiplication of legal frameworks that often times contradict themselves. Customary and religious laws tend to legitimize the subordination of women while state policies of indigenization formalize the discrimination of non-indigenes. However, Federal laws outlaw discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity or state of origin. These contradictions create a dilemma for respondents who marry across states as their opportunities for employment and progression in the civil service are negatively affected. The FCP was instituted to foster ethnic diversity and inclusion in federal government institutions while indigenization is aimed at preserving the heritage of each ethnic group and region. However, these policies contradict each other, as it seems implausible that inclusion can be incorporated while exclusion is institutionalized. This is seen through respondents' feeling of animosity towards other ethnic groups and states because of their experience of exclusion in trying to gain access to education, employment and career progression in those states. Respondents also expressed fears that they would have no opportunities in the federal government if the FCP were not put in place. However, accounts by respondents also indicate that the FCP is rendered ineffective through a lack of standardized procedures for its implementation. Corrupt practices in the issuance of certificates of indigeneship imply that tests of language are used as part of recruitment processes, leaving room for bias. Persons without certificates of indigeneship as a result of marriage or migration are also subject to blatant discrimination in all sectors of the civil service. The next chapter will discuss the strategies adopted by respondents for combating perceived discrimination.

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS

STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO OVERCOME PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR WORKING LIVES

8.0 Introduction

In a bid to understand the workplace experience of Ijaw women in the Nigerian Civil Service (NCS), it is imperative to draw attention to the mechanisms and processes that shape and maintain organizational relations. This chapter discusses the ways in which Ijaw women assess their position and roles in NCS; how they manage ethnic and gender politics and develop strategies for personal progression. Here, the agency of participants is explored as contingent upon their position ascribed by gender, ethnicity and their intersections. There is a dearth of research on ethnic minority women in Nigeria, examining the way they interact with structural enablers and the constraints they experience, in order to facilitate career progression in the civil service. Although the influence of gender and ethnicity cannot be separated in tangible social interactions, they are separated here for analytical purposes. This is because significant differences were observed in respondents' perceptions of ethnic politics in comparison to gender politics in their organisations. Bradley (2016) argues that this approach is necessary for creating '*a coherent sociological account of stratification and inequality...each dimension can be seen as...having a difference existential location*' (p. 36). While ethnicity is relevant for expatiating territorial relationships between groups, gender represents concrete interactions between men and women (ibid).

There are contentions and various articulations about the relationship between structure and agency. Giddens (1984) argues that structure and agency are fundamentally linked thereby allegedly conflating both processes. However, Archer (1996) who is critical of this position contends for analytical distinction between structure and agency. According to her, both processes are dynamic and their interaction precipitates the transformation or reproduction of structures. She conceptualizes individuals as free agents with varying degrees of awareness of structural contexts, constraints and opportunities. Tomlinson et al., (2012) support this position in their exploration of the career strategies of 70 white women and BME legal practitioners. For participants in their research, structures were mostly external forces, which participants had to confront and overcome. Furthermore, Fearfull and Kamenou's (2006) examination of career opportunities and experiences of ethnic minority women showed that participants did not only recognize the need to develop strategies but employed both internal strategies such as self-confidence and external strategies such as downplaying their cultural identity with clear objectives of fitting into the organizational culture, as a means of furthering their career aspirations.

In my research, respondents perceived that workplace structural constraints resulting from ethnic inequalities were more salient than gender related constraints. However, the subject of gender inequality seemed invisible and respondents were not always aware of inequality impacting on their lives through gender, i.e. they seemed to lack an awareness of gender inequalities taking place¹⁷. This section is structured in such a way that reflects this perception of respondents and how they have described their agencies, first discussing agency in relation to ethnic inequalities, and then moving on to gender agency. The interpretation of each strategy in the Ijaw language will also be added, because they are the primary focus of this study. The thesis now goes on to examine respondents' action in relation ethnic agency.

¹⁷ See chapter 7.2.1 in relation to comments made by respondents.

8.1 Workplace Activism Targeted at Perceived Ethnic Discrimination

The Ijaw People's League was created in 1941 with the primary aim of fighting for autonomy for the Ijaws in Nigeria (Ukeje & Adebani, 2008). Ijaw nationalists such as Harold Dappa-Biriye and Isaac Adaka Boro engaged in dialogue with successive governments stating the desire for greater autonomy, environmental sustainability, resource control, socioeconomic opportunities and the preservation of their cultural heritage, but were dissatisfied with the response (Ukeje and Adebani, 2008). Successive Ijaw nationalist movements such as Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) outwardly expressed dissatisfaction at perceived ethnic prejudice, socioeconomic deprivation, neglect and political marginalization owing to their positioning as a minority ethnic group (Courson, 2009). This led to an increasing assertiveness and radicalization expressed through the use of ethnic militia led by Ijaw men (ibid). However, in 2002, Nigeria witnessed a change in the nature of Ijaw nationalism. Hundreds of unarmed Ijaw women seized four oil terminals in the Niger Delta region of the country (BBC, 2002). According to the BBC, this presents a significant manifestation of women's resistance to perceived disadvantage in Nigeria since independence. It is against this backdrop that the agency of participants of this research is critically examined and analysed.

Respondents developed a range of strategies to respond to and manage the challenges they faced. Having examined the data, a full spectrum of strategies was identified ranging from '*Awaiting Divine Intervention*' (ADI) to '*Reforming*':

- **Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI):** This refers to a reliance on spirituality as a means for coping with discrimination. It involves praying and trusting in one's faith in God as a means for overcoming adverse situations;
- **Exiting:** Typifies leaving the organization altogether;
- **Masking:** Involves acquiring the social characteristics that indicate compliance with the dominant culture;
- **Performing:** Refers to finding ways to overcome one's differentiated position by enhancing workplace performance;
- **Negotiating:** Also referred to as, Ijawsism, depicts a deliberate and strategic effort towards choosing civil service jobs perceived as less susceptible to ethnocentrism, as

well as creating a network of ethnic ingroup members (Tajfel 1970) as a buffer for workplace ethnocentrism;

- **Reforming:** This refers to calculated attempts at changing the civil service status quo in favour of the Ijaws.

Respondents adopted strategies as they saw fit and this is shaped by their identity i.e. how they see themselves and perceive their ethnic identity to be of significance to them. Respondents with less salient ethnic identification were more likely to be awaiting divine intervention, adopting masking strategies or exiting the organisation, while respondents with a more overt ethnic identity were more likely to be Negotiators, Positioners, Reformers. These strategies characterize increasing awareness of ethnic identity. Moreover, strategies were adopted in a cyclical rather than linear way. This is such that respondents move from one position on the trajectory to another and this was not mutually exclusive. These six strategies (see figure 8) are discussed in the following section, beginning with strategies associated with minimal ethnic identification, which centre on awaiting divine intervention, masking, or altogether exiting the organisation.

Figure 8: Strategies used in combating perceived ethnic discrimination



8.1.1 Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI) (Tamuno Ibiteme som)

Four respondents relied on spirituality as a coping mechanism for dealing with ethnocentrism in the workplace. These respondents believed that through divine intervention, they are able to overcome structural constraints and reach for career success. Max Weber in 1930 proposed that there is a relationship between spirituality, wealth accumulation and economic success, which he attributed to be a sign of God’s grace (in Izak, 2009). One respondent stated that she received help from God that enabled her deal with adverse situations in the workplace:

If you are spiritual [laughs] God gives you information ... my belief, my strength has always come from God. And you go into communication with God and God protects the weak so I always get protection from such things (FCS, 32 years).

A teacher reported that when friends enquire as to why she remains in her organization in the face of ethnocentrism, she often responds: *'It is the grace of God that has kept me here'* (FCS, 13 years). Respondents adopted Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI) similar to the way spirituality was adopted for coping with racism and oppression during the civil rights movement in America. For the teacher, the civil service provides a viable means for achieving a balance between work and family life and therefore these benefits, of which include; short working hours, long maternity leave with pay and long holidays, outweigh the costs of ethnocentrism.

Crompton & Harris (1998) refer to this as 'satisficing', whereby women make sacrifices to create a balance between their family commitments and work life. By doing so, they strive towards achieving success in both familial and employability goals, maximizing neither. They argue that *'women's employment behaviour is a reflection of the way in which women actively construct their work-life biographies in terms of their historically available opportunities and constraints'* (p. 119). In the case of my respondent, her Ijaw colleagues have suggested on some occasions for them to collaborate towards developing a plan to counter the constraints they experience, but she refrained from this because of her spirituality. According to Chand & Koul (2012), some studies propose that judgment and decision-making can be significantly influenced by spirituality, in that a reference framed on the basis of a connection with a higher power is likely to be a source of guidance and inspire ethical and critical decision-making in individuals. The above respondent further stated that exiting the organization like some of her Ijaw colleagues had done was not an option because of her workplace benefits, particularly with regard to her family life. She made a choice to combine employment with family life and is concerned that adopting a radicalized approach such as

exiting the organization might have negative implications on her work-life balance. Therefore, her commitment to her prevent her from exerting herself in her strategy for workplace progress in the face of ethnic discrimination. Here, it is worth noting how she navigates the intersection of her gender and ethnic identities in choosing her strategy. In this regard, it would appear that her gender identity and spirituality are foremost influencers of her choices. However, this is different from an administrator who argued that not having access to influential networks is a factor in her strategy:

Maybe if I had Ijaw people up there [in powerful positions], I would have moved faster perhaps. But I still see it as God's will and I don't think I am under privileged. It will only be the way God wills it. [...]. But having a strong faith in God I still think I have not lost anything (FCS, 32 years).

She notes the significance of ethnicity for receiving organizational support and career progression, but points out that her lack of access to these cause her to rely on God for support:

There is an advantage if you are from the majority and you have good character. Some people say ah! She is our sister. You can get things more than someone that might be as good but does not have that kind of extra support. You understand [...] but like I said my belief, my strength has always come from God. And you go into communication with God and God protects the weak so I always get protection from such things (FSC, 32 years).

Her response indicates that for her, there are two options for improving her workplace experience: belonging to powerful networks, and divine intervention. Her ethnic identity serves as a barrier for accessing influential networks, and therefore she resorts to divine intervention. Max Weber (1930) argues that there is a relationship between an individual's religious beliefs and social actions (in Izak, 2009). Spirituality can impact both behaviour and performance of people in their personal and organizational lives (Salarzahi et al., 2011). In Chand & Koul (2012), examination of consequences of workplace spirituality through a survey of 100 managers, they found that spirituality helped workers cope with stress in the

workplace. This is similar to the women in this research who drew strength from their spirituality in coping with workplace ethnocentrism.

8.1.2 Exiters (Toru Soa Asoari)

A small subsection of respondents exited their organization or moved locations in an attempt to find more suitable working conditions. Respondents within this category were largely early career civil servants who left their organisation when it became apparent that their current role could not be reconciled with their career aspirations. A teacher reflected on a mass exit of Ijaws from her organization:

They posted me to another school in another state where I worked. It was there [...] I met this other group of people, the 54 Ijaw persons. The principal there was also not nice to us. The civil service practice is that you are on probation for 3 months, you are not paid and after the probation period they pay you the backlog and keep paying you monthly from then on. They paid our salaries into the school account but the principal refused to release the salary to us. She kept the money in the account to yield interest for her. She kept us without payment for 11 months and this was frustrating. Many people left as a result of this and so out of the 54 persons transferred to the school we were only 16 persons left (FCS, 13 years).

The above narrative is indicative that ethnic penalties with regard to pay dispersion persist in her organization. Pay inequalities between women and ethnic minorities on the one hand and men and ethnic majorities on the other, has been documented in racialised economies (Carlsson & Rooth, 2015; Modood & Khattab, 2015). This is such that pay disparity is not a function of expertise or skill, rather, a reflection of ethnic and gender stratifications in society. While pay equality is enforced across gender and ethnicity in the NCS, the above respondent argues that pay inequality in her organization is as a result of legally and morally corrupt practices of those in top management. Johnson & Powell (1994) proposed that pay differentials lead to resentment from those at the bottom of the distribution. This creates a situation whereby employees are not motivated, ultimately leading to an increase in the rate of turnover. The above respondent argues that Ijaws were constrained to leave the

organisation due to growing dissatisfaction with the realities of ethnic stratification in the organization. However, another respondent stated that she made a decision to move from one organization in the civil service to another because she found herself in the middle of an ethnic rivalry between the majority ethnic groups in her organization at the early stages of her career:

Everything was going on well but the head of the national institute of medical research, which was a Yoruba man and his deputy, who was an Ibo man, was having issues. So by the time I got in there the place was polarized between the Yoruba and the Ibos. And as a minority I actually couldn't afford to take any sides and the new director that was an Ibo man expected me to take sides with him. But I think he adopted a strategy that was wrong and so I could not be on his side. I was having the challenge of this Ibo guy who thought [that] as somebody from the east [who] spoke Ibo then I should fall automatically behind him but I didn't so I had to leave. [...] He wasn't giving me approvals; he was just making things difficult for me. I started thinking of alternatives (FCS, 38 years).

Interestingly, the same respondent spoke of her confidence in her ethnic identity later in her career and how she openly disapproved discrimination:

Of course, [I offer] no apologies, I force it on you. Everybody knows who I am. I am proud of it. Actually nobody discriminates on ethnic grounds in the civil service except [when/if] you are incompetent. In fact I won't even allow it to tell you the truth (FCS, 38 years).

It appears that the ethnic identity of the above respondent became increasingly salient with her experience of ethnic assignation. Kenny & Briner (2013) argue that individuals who are primarily regarded in terms of their ethnicity are likely to experience increased awareness of their ethnic identity in the workplace. They explained that ethnic assignation is such that individuals are perceived solely on the basis of their ethnic identity, having been stripped of other work-related identities. In this case however, the respondent felt that she was being defined by one contextually irrelevant facet of herself, rather than elements that were more relevant to her work such as her performance. The discomfort that came with the experience of ethnic assignation was due to her manager, being a member of the majority ethnic group,

wanting to exert undue influence on her workplace decisions. His perception of entitlement to her support stems from the fact that the Ibo ethnic group occupies a hegemonic status in the Eastern part of Nigeria, with the Ijaw ethnic group occupying a minority status¹⁸. Although the respondent indicates that her response to the experience of ethnic assignation was to exit the organization to another branch of the civil service, it can be seen that she became more assertive of her ethnic identity as she progressed in the civil service. Her experience was markedly different from a nurse who also changed locations within the civil service due to discrimination:

Even if they were promoting me I knew that it was going to stand still at a point. I even wanted to study further but they refused, they said no. Meanwhile their people were going to school. I met my director and said I would like to further my studies but she said no I couldn't because I am a contract staff. Meanwhile my mates were going to study and doing better than me so I decided I needed to leave there, or else I would remain stagnant (RSCS, 14 years).

The nurse is of the view that her ethnic identity was the most significant determining factor in her workplace progression. Kenny & Briner (2013) found that individuals who experienced ethnic assignation at work had 'a sense of being pushed into just that single ethnicity related category' and this heightened the salience of their ethnic identity (p. 732). The nurse felt that she was denied opportunities for career growth on the basis of her ethnic identity and state of origin, which in her view should not be relevant considerations for determining her progress.

So I had to move back [to my state] to start afresh I started working [in my state] in 2006. [...] So I said, well let me further my education. I had to go back to school to study public health. Within these two years that I decided to go back to school, that was when I got two promotions (RSCS, 14 years).

Here, the machination of indigenization can be seen in her career experience and choices. Her initial place of work was located in a state dominated by the Ijaw ethnic group but this was no guarantee of acceptance because she is not an indigene of that state. As a result of this, she experienced career stagnation, which in turn precipitated her exit. Therefore she moved from

¹⁸ See chapter 3.2 for discussion of regionalization in Nigeria.

being an exitor to a negotiator, seeking out an ethnically safe space for achieving her career goals.

8.1.3 Masking (Akatiari)

Four out of the forty respondents in this study adopted masking strategies. This involves the adopting of social characteristics that indicate compliance with the dominant culture. This strategy is particularly relevant to new entrants to the Federal Civil Service (FCS) – all of which had less than eight years' experience. In their discussion of co-cultural theory, Cohen & Avanzino (2010) proffer that one interactional outcome for marginalized peoples is that they may try to 'fit in' to what is perceived as acceptable in a given context. This strategy is preoccupied with adapting to majority culture while eradicating cultural differences (ibid). The idea here is that marginalized groups must conform to dominant society in order to gain acceptance and fully partake therein. This seemed to be in operation in respondents who adopted this strategy. Another administrator commented that she had never had a personal experience of ethnic discrimination because she does not display ethnic specific features of the Ijaws. She stated:

'I don't think I have [experienced discrimination] because, frankly, until you ask, you don't know where I am from' (FCS, 4 years).

According to her, the minimizing of displays of culturally marked practices of the Ijaw ethnic group reduces the chances of ethnocentrism (See Goffman's (1963) Stigmas). However, she has experienced individual level resistance to her attempts at fitting in through what she perceived as deliberate exclusion through the use of Language. According to Prassud & Mills (1997), resistance to acculturation has important implications for the multicultural workplace because it raises issues of style, identity and cultural preservation in organisations:

[When my colleagues speak a language I don't understand] I keep quiet and wait for them to finish [...] it affects my job (FCS, 4 years)

English language was institutionalized in Nigeria as a means of fostering assimilation in governmental institutions¹⁹. However, this has proved difficult owing mostly to cultural plurality and multilingual nature of the population. Coopman (2003) and Coleman & DePaulo (1991) found that problematic communicative interactions between dominant and marginalized groups had negative implications for workplace assimilation. Nigeria comprises of about 500 languages, with most Nigerians refusing to integrate linguistically as seen in the experience of the administrator. In her account, it is also seen that her response is influenced by the prevailing culture. She did nothing because she felt powerless to act, on the basis of her position as a junior cadre employee. Her reaction is supported by Hofstede (1985) classification that Nigeria is a country with high power-distance. This means that Nigerians view hierarchical order as acceptable, this is such that everybody is assigned a position that does not need to be justified. Organisational hierarchy mirrors inherent inequalities, centralization is prevalent, subordinates expect to be instructed and the model manager is a *benevolent autocrat* (ibid). Power et al., (2013) argue that there are cultural differences in the acceptability of discrimination in the workplace. Cultures with a high power-distance believe that those in higher positions are entitled to greater rewards, and may permit higher-ranking employees to bully their subordinates. In a survey of 14 countries, Nigeria was found to have greater tolerance for bullying. While the administrator's strategy was mainly targeted at minimizing her ethnic identity, another respondent occupying a monitoring role made deliberate efforts to adopt socially acceptable and cultural characteristics of the dominant group in her workplace:

When I was in the private sector, because you are in marketing there's a way you can dress, you need to look very sharp and all. Not because where I work presently doesn't allow us to dress that way, but because I am surrounded with people that are not of the same religion with me, I tend to be very conservative in my dressing (FCS, 1 year).

¹⁹ See chapter 3.2 & 3.3 for discussion of assimilation in Nigeria.

The above narrative indicates that assimilation is a strategy she has adopted before. While working in the private sector, she found it easy to assimilate to organizational expectations with regard to her professional identity. However, in the civil service, she notes that her desire to assimilate was in relation to her ethnic identity and not her profession. She argues that this is a product of the increased salience of her ethnic identity upon entry to the civil service.

I don't think the Ijaw people are people that are very particular about themselves; oh this is an Ijaw man let me be with him let us be close and be friends. I personally was not even like that. I can count the number of Ijaw friends I have. In university I had only one Ijaw friend and my best friend was not Ijaw and it didn't really matter. But getting into the civil service you discover that you cannot function like that. Somehow you have to be with your people. That's just how it works because you cannot; not associate with your people and think you would make headway. You need to be with your people. Fine you might be friends with the majority groups and all that, but when push comes to shove it's your people that have your back (FSC, 1 year).

She argued that the ethnic politics encountered in the civil service brought her ethnic identity to the fore. Kenny & Briner (2013) found that ethnic minorities experienced increased awareness of their ethnicity when certain circumstances in their workplace led them to experience amplified affinity with their ethnic group, thereby increasing the salience of their ethnic identity. They referred to this as ethnic identification. This is such that minority persons felt a pull towards their ethnic group. Such was the experience of this respondent whose ethnic identity became salient, taking over from her professional identity with her move from the private to the public sector. The result of this is that she re-focused her assimilation strategies to engineer ethnic rather than professional similarity:

Because of the people you are around, you may be looked upon as being [pause] I don't know [the word] what to use now, but I know you understand, so because of that you tend to just play down. You don't dress as much as you would like to. You tend to be conservative. [...] Northerners, you know Northerners like to cover up a lot, wear long skirt and all that so when you are around them, if you don't [cover up] there's a way they look at you ... So for that we the minorities are affected. If we were a lot more non-northerners in the midst of them, it won't have been the same way (FCS, 1 year).

She is of the view that she would be seen as lacking in grace and moral conduct if her dressing was different to that of the majority. Therefore, she felt that she needed to have the appearance of sharing the same moral principles as the majority in order to gain acceptance. This process of selective acculturation is discussed by Keefe & Padilla (1987) who view it as the adoption by an ethnic group, of traits of the majority group that positively correlates with socioeconomic advancement while retaining core aspects of ethnic/cultural identity. Archer (2011) argued that for young BME professionals, ‘acting white’ is important, given that looking ‘too ethnic’ is often regarded as ‘unrefined’ (p. 147). Unlike the administrator previously discussed, she was not concerned about changing her identity, but rendering it invisible with a goal to masking ethnic-based differences. In this regard, she also recognized the usefulness of linguistic adaptation to her assimilation strategy as shown below:

And then they speak Hausa a lot. It used to be very annoying before but anyway what would you do? [...]. I just decided to see how I [could] learn [the language], so I can communicate with them (FCS, 1 year).

In addition to assimilation strategies, the above respondent also indicated that she had what she called a ‘brotherhood’ with other Ijaws in her organisation, and this gave her a sense of acceptance. This tactic of negotiating space will be expatiated later. It appears that with the increasing salience of her ethnic identity, the more she progresses towards radicalization in her strategies for overcoming ethnocentrism and achieving success.

8.1.4 Performers (Inyo Sua-bem)

45 percent (18) of the respondents were concerned about the reputation of Ijaws, making this one of the most popular strategies adopted in this study. Ethnic minorities have had to work harder to fend off stereotypes about their capability (Block et. al, 2011). Roberson et al., (2003) argue that being in the demographic minority in an organization can increase one’s sensitivity to ‘stereotype threat.’ They argue that an experience of stereotype threat can increase an individual’s effort on a task, in a bid to establish that the stereotype does not

apply to them. Strategies such as improving job performance, in order to be seen as perfect and portray an image that cannot be faulted. A lecturer spoke of having to prove her value and effectiveness as a protection against ethnocentrism:

I think because I am from a minority group I go the extra mile. I try harder so that nobody would be able to pull me down to discriminate. Like if I need 10 publications to move from one level to the other. I make sure that I have up to 15 publications so that if you try to pull me down even if you remove some of my publications, I'm still able to get through. But if I do only ten they may be able to hold me down. So I go the extra mile so that they will not have any cause (26 years, FCS).

The above narrative indicates that working harder was seen as a means for achieving career progression. This seems to imply that falling short of perfection in her workplace performance makes her easy target for discrimination. Through workplace performance, she could get members of the dominant group to respond to her on the basis of her performance rather than her ethnic identity. Therefore by going the 'extra mile,' she draws attention away from her ethnicity to her performance. Similar findings have been reported in the United Kingdom and the United States. For instance, Bhopal & Jackson (2013) found that black and minority ethnic academics in the UK felt the need to outperform their white counterparts in order to meet promotion requirements. Davidson (1997) also highlighted that ethnic minorities felt a constant pressure to sell themselves. In the US, Bell & Nkomo (2003) argue that black women worked towards high performance in order to display a hermetic image. Such performance pressures are common amongst tokens (Kanter, 1977). A librarian viewed herself as an ethnic token:

Some of us have to stick out our necks to say we can work hard; we are there [...]. We have to show that whatever impression you have against the Ijaw woman is not true. Here where I'm working, we are just two Ijaw people in the library of 39 employees and if the two [of us] are well tutored and certified nobody would discriminate against them (RSCS, 27 years).

The librarian who is at the peak of her career seems to make it a personal goal to change the general impression of Ijaw women. She believes that ethnocentrism can be eradicated

through personal enhancement and by acquiring relevant certification. Kanter (1977) described individuals representing less than 15 percent of their organizational context as tokens. According to her, this can lead to enhanced visibility, such that tokens view themselves as ‘symbols of how-women-can-do, stand-ins for all women’ (p. 207). Although Kanter’s (1977) study associated tokenism with negative experiences, the respondent in this research did not report any personal negative experience in her workplace despite self-identifying as a token. She argued that there was in fact, neither gender nor ethnic discrimination in her organization.

There is some evidence that tokens do not always experience attending difficulties. Hammond & Mahoney (1983) found that preserving role differentiation is positively related with female co-workers feeling solidarity towards their male colleagues. Similarly, Fuegen & Biernat (2002) found that women were auspiciously and accurately rated for their contributions in decision-making tasks. King et al. (2010) highlight the importance of contextual factors such as the psychological climate of a given situation in explaining differences in the experiences of tokens. They imply that individual perception of procedures, structures, norms and events in their workplace can affect their experience (ibid). The librarian identified herself as both ethnic and gender majority. She argued that her ethnic majority status stems from working in a state where the Ijaw ethnic group is regarded as majority and of which she is an indigene. Hagher (2002) argues that indigeneship is constitutionally a basis for access to public resources in the form of jobs, education, appointments, and privileges in Nigeria²⁰. This may have important implications for perception of discrimination in organisations. Here, there is also an intersection in her agentic

²⁰ See Hagher, I. (2002). *Beyond Hate and Violence: Understanding the Tiv Struggle for Citizenship Rights and Social Justice in Nigeria*, Ibadan Caltop Publications for a comprehensive discussion on indigeneship and its implication for access to opportunities in states of Nigeria.

strategy as it is noted that her self-identification as a token is both ethnic and gender related. Respondents also indicated that closing the educational attainment gap between Ijaw women and members of other ethnic minority group is important for achieving career success. A doctor argued:

You know they [Ijaw women] really need to embrace education and teach their children that the primary thing now [is that] if you must succeed in society you must be able to compete. A well-educated woman would have good job that would empower her financially, and before your voice can be heard you need to have good education, and be balanced financially. Even in the homes, we need to do that and that was what was lacking before (FCS, 27 years).

The above narrative recognizes the low level of education attainment among Ijaw women and its implications for their socioeconomic status. According to her, reasons for this include; sex role restrictions and early marriage:

If you look at our Ijaw women from the past, the men put them down so much and left them with the jobs. So you see an Ijaw woman struggling to feed herself, feed her children, and educate them. So the problems are too many. And most of these problems they have, is because they entered into marriage when they were not supposed to enter without good education their parents gave them out (FCS, 27 years).

It has been argued that structural inequalities have important implications for ethnic minority women's access to education. Vasquez's (1982) study of Mexican American women's participation in higher education revealed that barriers faced include: low socioeconomic status, gender-based role differentiation, and traditional admission requirements, which hinder access for women who have the ability to be successful. ActionAid (2011) argues that the educational system in Nigeria is fraught with gender inequity:

'Girls drop out of school at an early age due to the cost of education and the perception that many schools are not friendly or safe places for adolescent girls, particularly those from poorer families' (p. 33).

They further suggest that girls are easy target for sexual violence in schools and therefore some parents prevent them from going to school because it is thought to be an unsafe place for the female child. They also identified gender cultural beliefs in gender education inequity.

The cultural belief that the male child carries on the name of the family implies that fathers tend to train their male children at the expense of the girl child. This is especially when the funds are limited and a choice needs to be made about who should be educated. However, this is not limited to the Ijaw ethnic group as it applies to other ethnic groups in Nigeria. Reasons for this need to be researched and elaborated upon. The preceding analysis brings to the fore how class intersects with gender (Acker, 2006) to be of significance in the low educational attainment of Ijaw women.

8.1.5 Negotiators (Ijawism) (Iyaminapu dam u bem)

These participants purposively chose jobs within civil service locations where the possibility of experiencing discrimination was minimized, or created support groups within their organization to protect each other from discrimination. This strategy is referred to here as Ijawism. Studies have shown that people can negotiate the subjugation they encounter. For instance, Peleman (2003) found that in Belgium, Moroccan women created temporary ethnic spaces by seeking out leisure spaces that were managed by women of similar ethnic identity, with the aim of escaping restrictions and achieving freedom of religious and cultural expression. Sharaievska et al. (2010) argued that ethnic minorities negotiated discrimination by changing the time and place of their activities and by avoiding contact with native populations. Unlike masking, which was adopted by only 10 percent of the research population, 52.5 percent (21) of the respondents were likely to negotiate their way through perceived discriminatory constraints within the civil service, making it the most popular strategy. Negotiators in RSCS adopted this strategy by making a conscious decision to work in their state of origin. This is because of the belief that there is security in numbers and the policy of indigenization, which implies that Nigerians are more likely to experience

favourable treatment when they live, and work within their state of origin. A doctor argued that the fear of discrimination was enough to constrain her career choices:

To be truthful, I feel I will be discriminated against if I am in the minority in the state civil service [...] in any place where you are a minority whether you like it or not you feel disenfranchised. You feel looked over and sometimes you may really get looked over (RSCS, 27 years).

The above narrative indicates that her ethnicity and state of origin are significant factors in her workplace experience. Another respondent who is a teacher commented that the fear of discrimination in Ijaws is so strong that they rather work in a branch of the civil service of their state of origin, where they earn less, than work outside of their state. The reason given for this is the indigenisation policy that fiercely preserves the prospects and opportunities in each state for members of the state. Based on her response, it becomes clear that the Ijaws are consciously negotiating where they choose to work by avoiding jobs where they are likely to experience exclusion on the basis of their ethnic identity. This creates a scenario of high ethnic geographical concentration, which is largely the case in most states of Nigeria. Galandini (2013) argues that ethnic concentration is likely to have negative implications for inclusion in the socioeconomic and political mainstream. Some respondents also indicated that the choice to live and work in their state of origin also included considerations for their gender-based role as wives and mothers:

In the federal civil service that is where you would get women being discriminated against because of their ethnicity. But in the federal civil service you would not get Ijaw women like that. They are not many. They are afraid to venture, they are afraid to leave their locality and take up the federal civil service because they do not want to leave their habitat. For instance when the federal university of technology came on board and the vice chancellor invited me to come and be the librarian there, I said no. I cannot go because of family ties and things like that (RSCS, 27 years).

The above respondent notes the importance of her family life in determining her career choices. Her gender and ethnic identities function as mutually reinforcing processes that position her in the choices she makes with regard to her career. Atewologun et al. (2015)

highlight how individuals navigate through different elements of their identity to predict and make sense of their experiences. They argue that power positions are understood within the context of multiple identities that serve to expand or restrict the options available to individuals in a given context. Aina (1998) argues that patriarchal structures are still largely upheld in Nigeria, which gives rise to gender-based role differentiation. Such role differentiations have significant implications for the decisions women make with regard to working outside the home. Notwithstanding, the above response seems to suggest that her ethnicity is of greater significance than her gender identity in the decision making process. Other negotiators who were bold enough to take up civil service jobs in FCS or outside of their state of origin indicated that homophilous social networks based on ethnicity was a source of confidence and a means of promoting their workplace interests:

Yes, I have some people from my region so with those ones we have a brotherhood sort of. I am closer to those people from the same region so it's made things a lot easier. You know they consider you as their sister [...] we try to identify with each other and exchange contact. Just try to keep in touch so that if there's anything we can do for each other, we can help each other (FCS, 1 year).

Pugh et al. (2008) argue that societal contexts can have significant implications for workplace employee behaviour. For instance societal ethnic stratification can result in ethnic-based homophilous social networks in the workplace. Lee & Reade (2015) suggest that individuals who are exposed to societal ethnic conflicts are likely to experience an increased salience in their ethnic identity; this is such that their perception of ethnic differences in the workplace is honed. Negotiators felt a pull towards their ethnic heritage, mostly precipitated by the nature of ethnic relations in the socioeconomic mainstram of Nigeria. Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides that individuals tend to engage in social categorization as a way of increasing self-esteem through membership of a group of similar others (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). An application of SIT here would imply that ethnic-based homophily behaviour in NCS is a result of ethnic stratification in Nigeria (being a highly ethnically fractionalized society

[Rogger & Rasul, 2015]). Lewis and Bratton (2000) argue that ethnicity is the most salient identity in Nigeria, such that national identity does not hold any automatic privilege over ethnicity. Inter-ethnic perceptions and interactions in the workplace are influenced by the ethnicity related information employees absorb in the wider society (Brief et al. 2005). Individuals who perceive that a group of their colleagues engage in ethnically inspired homophily behaviour are likely to withdraw their resources from those group of people and invest it towards the benefit of ethnic ingroup members. A doctor discussed deliberate efforts to achieve a power balance between ethnic ingroup and outgroup members in her organization through the exchange of work related resources:

For me as an Ijaw woman, because we were not much initially we were marginalized, more or less. So we have this drive to close the gap between our own ethnicity and the major ethnic groups. So that has really motivated us. We work hard to bring up the younger people. To tell them, look this place is ours and we have to occupy it. So we help them grow. And we are also fighting because we want to reach the peak. Its only when we are at the peak that we would be able to help our people and also to influence certain decisions that were being made that are not favourable to us before. We can only influence it when we are at the peak. [...] If you want to make so much impact, you have to fight for majority of you to be at the decision making level. I think that is our cry - no, that is our goal (FCS, 32 years).

The above respondent believes that she has attained a good level of power and influence in the organization to be able to support other Ijaw women towards achieving career success. Kanmenou (2006) argues that access to powerful networks and an influential mentor is critical for workplace success. The benefits of such networks as stated by respondents include; friendship, social support, access to organizational information and resources, career guidance and direction, and sponsorship:

They [ethnic ingroup members] are nicer to you. They are willing to show you the ropes, advise you on what you should and shouldn't do and all that so it's made things a bit easier. And you know that there's someone that has your back so if there's any challenge you can always go to them and ask what to do and they can advise you properly (FCS, 1 year).

Ibarra (1993) submits that ethnic-based homophilous social networks may be in direct contest with instrument access. He explains that members of homophilous social networks that comprise of individuals, who are not influential or fail to progress as outgroup counterparts, sacrifice instrumental benefits in the workplace. Therefore ethnic minority women may either choose to maintain equilibrium in their social network or pursue links with more powerful social networks as a function of their career demands. However, negotiators who adopted this strategy were of the view that the power structure of the civil service began to tilt in favour of the Ijaws with the election of an Ijaw president in 2010. Kanter (1977) proposes ethnic minority women will experience more security in identity-based networks as group members attain power and influence in the workplace. A deputy manager reflected on the impact of having him (an ethnic in-group member) at the helm of affairs of the nation:

One thing I noticed when I got employed in the federal civil service [pause] I noticed that there weren't a lot of us in the federal service. Unlike the other ethnic groups so we are not really represented. But when Goodluck became president he also noticed this and a lot of people were encouraged to seek employment in the Federal Civil Service. [...] Because when I got employed we were just about 4 Ijaws in the top management [...] nobody in middle management, and there was no junior officer. But when I got employed and since then you could say that Goodluck had a bit of an influence because people started coming in. Right now [pause] we are about 20 (FCS, 4 years).

Such informal networks have also been instrumental in securing jobs for Ijaw women in the civil service. A laboratory scientist recounted that her employment to the state civil service was largely based on her ethnicity: *'I went into that system because an Ijaw man was there who knew me and wanted me to be employed'*. She seemed to imply that internal politics, i.e. who one is related to in the organization and what networks and links one has may be more important than one's actual qualification. She had mixed feelings about this practice. She acknowledged the importance of qualifications and competency in gaining entry and promotion in the civil service but was concerned that, if these were the only yardsticks applied, Ijaws would not have opportunities within the civil service due to their minority

status in the country. She argued that Ijaws in top management positions in the civil service and in the country had an obligation to favour ethnic in-group members in managerial decisions regarding recruitment, training and promotions. Nigeria being a collectivistic society (Hofstede, 1980) implies that culturally, Nigerians feel responsible for ingroup members. He argues that *'employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms (like a family link), hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's ingroup, management is the management of groups'* (p.1). Therefore cultural obligations to protect ethnic-ingroup members might give room to nepotism in NCS. Chaudhry (2014) argue that employees who are in-group members of superiors can experience ease of entry into organizations, as well as take priority in receiving workplace benefits and opportunities for career progression. Similar findings have also been reported in Western societies at the micro level (organisations). Collins (1998) argues that white ethnic groupings preserve their status continuously through nepotistic practices that also contribute to the exclusion of Blacks and other ethnic minorities from lucrative domains. According to her, *'racial discrimination in education, employment, and housing historically reflected White working-class understandings of these social locations as "private property" to be disposed of as inherited wealth'* (p. 74). Chaudhry (2014) found that persistent nepotism serves as a barrier to recruitment and fosters racism. SIT submits that a simultaneous process of connection with similar persons and exclusion is engineered when similar persons come together (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This is such that ingroup members experience enhanced connectivity while outgroup members are excluded. Some negotiators echoed this in their view that they felt excluded from social networks of majority ethnic groups. Ibarra (1995) argues that this situation compromises workplace cohesion because different ethnic groups are likely to form subgroups, thereby reducing the opportunity for collaboration across ethnic boundaries. This scenario is counterproductive for harnessing the benefits of workplace diversity in NCS.

8.1.6 Reformers (Dimabo)

While the majority of respondents negotiated their way through structural and cultural constraints in the workplace, a minority of respondents took deliberate intentional steps to change the status quo. This strategy is relevant to both FCS and SCS employees, although more so for FCS employees who make up 90 percent of the 10 respondents adopting this strategy. This strategy is different to other strategies in that unlike other strategies, which sought to do better and improve within the structural provisions of the system, Reformers had a goal to reconstruct the status quo, showing indifference to rules. Respondents spoke of reformative efforts at the individual level, organizational and national levels. On an individual level, respondents reported attempts to stop workplace exclusion engineered through the use of native languages by the majority. While masking strategies with regard to language involved learning the language, reformers challenged this by outrightly confronting speakers or making fun of them, thereby making it clear that their actions were unacceptable:

I make fun of them, I'm used to it [colleagues speaking their native dialect] and I call them cowards because if they don't want me to know what they are talking about then they are afraid of me. That's what I tell them. Sometimes I would ask them, we are three here, why do you choose to speak your language? I would force them. I say, 'speak English' (FCS, 18 years).

Cockburn (1991) argued that individualistic efforts to create change can subject one to burn out and expose change agents to hostility in the workplace. The respondent above indicated that her strategy exposed her to hostility from her colleagues who are members of the majority ethnic group in her organization. She explained that openly challenging ethnic politics in her organization attracted a backlash, which manifested in stagnation in career progression. For 8 years in the organization, she did not receive her promotion despite having the necessary competence for climbing the organizational ladder.

Reformers were mostly respondents who had experience of the structural inequalities in the civil service and had attained enough status to challenge these. However, there was one respondent who, despite having less than three years' experience, expressed confidence in her ability to reform the system. This stemmed from her confidence and optimism that the then president of Nigeria, being a member of the Ijaw ethnic group, would improve the lot of Ijaws in the civil service. Therefore she was of the view that if she could highlight the challenges of being ethnic minority in the civil service to him, he would make the necessary changes. She discussed her plans of creating an internal network of Ijaw civil servants who would serve as a pressure group to influence the president towards creating policies that would improve the experience of minorities in the civil service. Her network of Ijaws would discuss the following:

How to look out for our own people, when it's time for promotion, when it's time for employment, when they are being maltreated, when they are being marginalized, those kinds of things or when they are being indicted for things they haven't done. Things like that, those are the things we hope to address. And the truth is that we believe that if we have those kinds of ties, if our president is going to come back as president we should be able to form a coalition that can go to him if we feel so strongly about an injustice that's been done to us (FCS, 1 year 6 months).

According to her, the salience of her ethnic identification was heightened upon entry to the civil service due to coming in contact with ethnic politics. She developed a consciousness of ethnic politics in the civil service and became radicalized in her strategies for change. As a result, she saw herself as a change agent for improving the experience of Ijaws in her organization:

I have a non-official relationship with my fellow Ijaw people, but I have an official relationship with everybody in my office. The unofficial relationship is that as Ijaw people we should know ourselves, we should look out for each other. For instance ... [someone] brought me in [helped me get this job]. How I protect her is that I make sure that I do my work and make sure that I keep a good name. So if my Ijaw people are keeping a good name, doing the proper things, then I should be able to look out for them and even when they have faulted, and they are trying to do the right thing I should be able to look out for them (FCS, 1 years 6 months).

However, another respondent highlighted that for some Ijaws, the struggle transcends organisations to a national movement for equal opportunities. She discussed the transformative impact of what she termed ‘*the militancy of the Ijaws*’:

Though in the 60s and 70s the Graham Douglas’s²¹ were at the top [of the civil service] but after that, once they were replaced by the big tribes, no one ever thought that minorities had rights. And if you notice minorities have had to fight. It was the militancy of the minorities - in fact just the Ijaws - not all the minorities that have put Jonathan as president, so we have had to fight for spaces to be opened to us. [...] I hope he would open up more spaces for us to fill so that by the time he leaves we would have people at certain places that would continue to open places within the service for Ijaw people to fill (FCS, 38 years).

Haven discussed the agencies of respondents with regard to their ethnicity, the next section will deal with how participants of this research dealt with workplace constraints in relation to their gender identity.

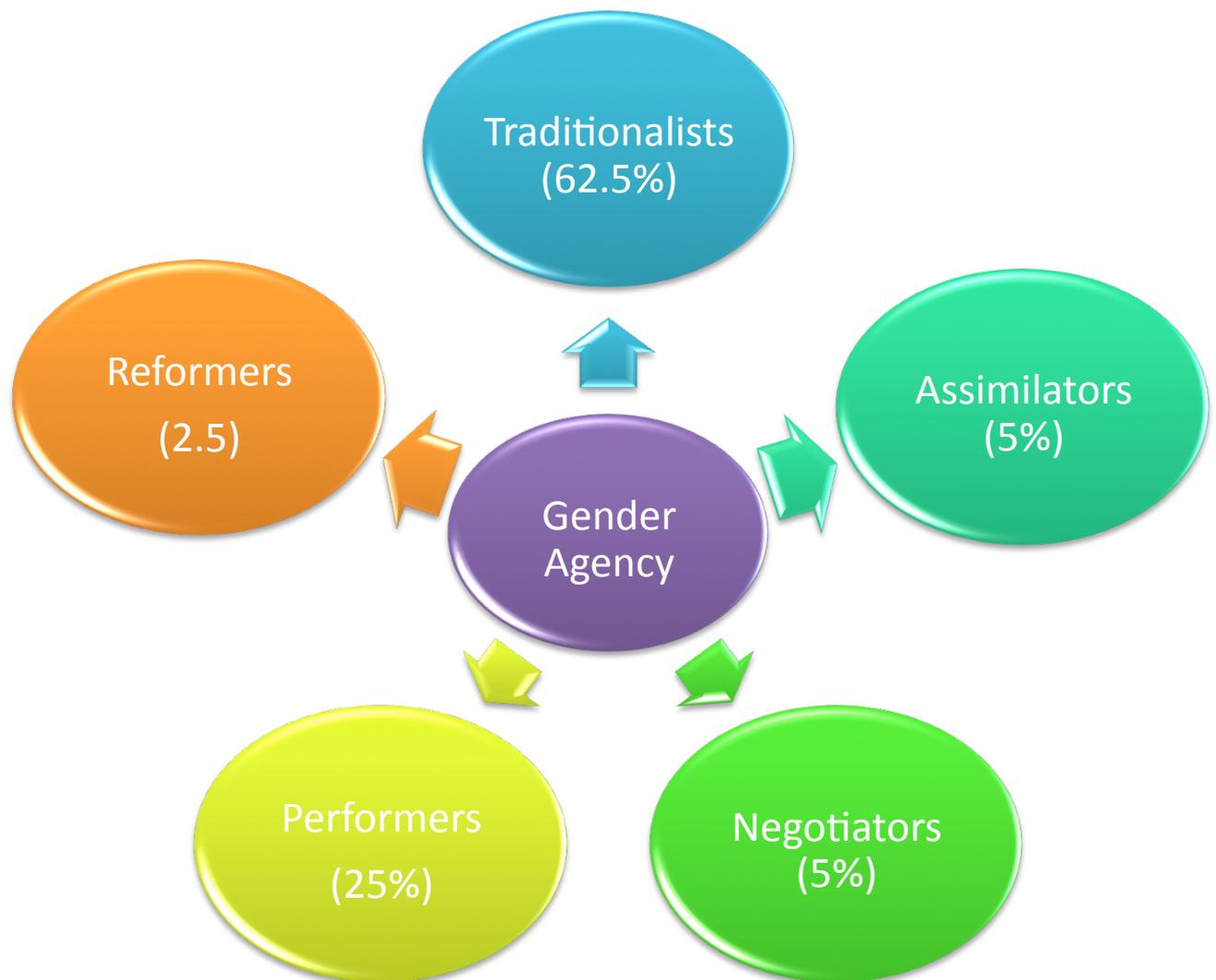
8.2 Workplace Activism Targeted at Perceived Gender Discrimination

The previous section predominantly engaged in the agency of participants with regard to their perception of ethnic inequality. The discussion below deals with strategies adopted by respondents in order to progress in NCS. Differences were noted in the way respondents managed their ethnic identity compared to their gender identity. For instance strategies such as Awaiting Divine Intervention and Exiting the organization were not adopted with regard to gender agency. Also, majority of respondents were accepting of their gendered place in the organization and as such did not adopt any agency with regard to the expression of their gender identity in the workplace. These women are referred to here as traditionalists (Smith & Self, 1981). Traditionalists are entrenched in their gender cultural identities and therefore do not display gender agency in their organisations. On the other hand, assimilators displayed a rather nuanced agency, attempting to fit into the masculine culture of their organisations. However, unlike masking, gender assimilation was not as a result of increasing salience of

²¹ A statesman from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

gender identity in the organization. It may be argued that gender socialization in the home and society accounts for this. West & Zimmerman (1987) argue that interactional validation of the distinctions between men and women bestows upon these distinctions ‘*a sense of naturalness and rightness*’ (p. 147). For instance, many parents in Nigeria argue that they will rather send their sons than their daughters to school because sons will ensure continuity of the family name (Okpukpara, n.d.) and gender role differentiations are imbibed in the home through delegation of house chores. This interactional process can result in the internalisation of women’s gender identity in family and society, such that they do not question the way gender politics in organisations as this is a reflection of what the respondents are familiar with. Therefore it is argued that while respondents experience an increasing salience of their ethnic identity due to ethnic assignation or identification in the workplace, gender roles and differentiations are clarified and largely accepted in the family, society and workplace. More so, being that Nigeria operates within a national culture that largely accepts hierarchical ordering of society and unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, 1980); individuals are less likely to question the foregoing characterisation of gender. Being that organisations are a reflection of society, high level of acceptance of women’s gendered place in society will also mean high tolerance in organisations, with particular reference to the civil service. The result of this activism on gender is that a majority of the women in this research are not sensitive to gender inequalities and discrimination in their organisations. Women who were conscious of gender politics in their organisations were more agentic, although this is a minority of the research population. Two women adopted negotiation strategies; ten performers were also identified. While positioners and negotiators worked towards achieving success within the system, the one reformer identified was concerned with changing the status quo to facilitate the creation of a more gender inclusive organization (see figure 9 below).

Figure 9: Strategies used in combating perceived gender inequality.



8.2.1 Traditionalists (*Imema yana orubo*)

An overwhelming majority of (25) respondents did not adopt any strategy towards gender discrimination in their organisations. These women were strategic in their choice of a career with the civil service because they felt it was supportive of women and espoused gender and family friendly policies. They were emphatic in their belief that gender discrimination does not exist in their organisations. They argued that the civil service espouses policies that accommodate the demands of wifhood and motherhood, which in turn allows them to thrive

in work and family. Policies discussed by participants include; equal pay and promotion requirements for male and female employees, as well as gender sensitivity:

I don't think they [women] experience much different from men. Even though there are certain tasks that would be given to you and you would be excused from such a thing because you are female or the fact that you are running a home or things like that. Or especially if you're expecting they would want to excuse you from so many things. Apart from that they don't expect anything less from you (RSCS, 6 years).

These women were happy with their experience in the civil service as it relates to their gender. Leidner & Kayworth (2006) argue that national culture plays a significant role in the behaviour of individuals. Uppalury & Racherla (2014) argues that cultural differences mediate women's agency. This argument is supported by findings from Adya's (2008) comparative analysis of South Asian and American female professionals in which differences in culture are cited as one reason why American women in the study were more likely than South Asian women, to cite gender discrimination and stereotyping as a part of their workplace experience. According to her, lower perception of gender-based negative workplace behaviours amongst South Asian women in the research can be somewhat explained by a national culture of high power distance (Adya, 2008). Thus, an understanding of Nigerian culture can enable a deeper understanding of Ijaw women's agency. According to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, Nigeria scores extremely high (80) on power distance implying that a hierarchical power structure is embraced as part of the social structure. People tend to believe that status is an attribute of fate or bestowed by an external authority, rather than a product of individual efforts. The result is that structural gender inequality experienced by women in larger society may create positive perceptions of gender in NCS. Another explanation from a cultural perspective that could be offered here is based on the tenets of collectivism.

Nigeria is classed as a collectivistic society according to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions. This implies that Nigerians tend to view themselves in terms of 'we' rather than

'I'. This is an African centred worldview that is captured in the expression 'I am, because we are'. This is an expression of people's commitment and loyalty towards one another. Within this cultural framework, no distinction is made between personal and collective goals, and where such distinctions are made, collective goals are usually placed above personal ones (Kashima & Kashima 1998). More so, collectivist cultures tend to espouse gender role differentiation such that the primary task of women is to care for the family whereas that of men is to secure the means of livelihood. A doctor cited role differentiation as the reason why men are dominant in her organization. She indicated that male dominance in her organisation was a function of earlier exposure to education, rather than gender discrimination in her organization:

Well yes the male gender dominates. I don't think it's by choice but from time men were sent to school earlier and occupied white-collar jobs while the females are home keepers, they are homemakers (RSCS, 26 years).

The scenario discussed above paints a vivid picture of how African indigenous cultures diffused with Eurocentric influences through colonialism. Although most African societies have practiced communal living for a long time, the infusion of Eurocentric notions of gender through colonialism meant that both cultures are practised side by side. As noted in the discussion of postcolonial Nigeria in the literature review, many Nigerians take these hybridised cultural practices to be indigenous; as a result, they are strongly held on to. Women in this category did not seem to interpret role differentiation as a negative experience. Although they expressed that this gender order is undergoing a process of change, they seem happy to adhere to it and did not view the responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood as a hindrance to success. Rather, they are of the view that the civil service provides a good work environment for managing family responsibilities while working towards their career goals:

People want to work in a place where they can have time for their families. [...] If I have another opportunity I would become a civil servant again because I have time. In fact you are encouraged to study further, if you don't do it is because you do not want to. So you have the encouragement though you might not have the incentive. So you can become anything that you want to be. You have time to take care of the house, you close early, [and] there is understanding. In fact the civil service is the best place for any woman who wants to have time for her family and herself. The civil service is better for us (RSCS, 28 years).

The above respondent tends to put her family needs and responsibilities above hers. Moreover that she is happy to work in an organisation to the extent that it remained compatible with the fulfillment of her familial responsibilities. These women also argued that they did not mind the delay they experienced in career growth in their early years of motherhood. They were of the view that this was only a minor setback and they would continue progressing after this phase:

When I had my last child I was [pause] I did not have a house-help. So, many times I'm always with this baby. [...] That thing affected me but I didn't mind it because I have to take care of my child. So those things do affect us as female staff. But when they are grown up you are now free, nothing is holding you. So you can flow along with the male staff (RSCS, 32 years).

It seems that the above respondent does not take her career as priority over motherhood. Therefore she was willing to tolerate a short-term career setback, as this was a means of fulfilling her desires with regard to her family. Ayda (2008) argues that women in cultures that score high in long-term orientation are more likely to endure short-term challenges for greater long term returns.

8.2.2 Assimilators (*Aduma ngam wa bie to bara*)

The two respondents who assimilated with the dominant male culture demonstrated conformity with the gendered nature of their organization although they varied in acceptance of what it meant to be male or female in the organisation. For instance, when asked whether she had experienced gender discrimination, a doctor commented that: '*They treat us all like men*' (FCS, 32 years). Her response indicates a broad acceptance of a dominant male culture

in her organization. This is different from those who adopted this strategy with regard to their ethnicity. Those who adopted masking strategy on the other hand, expressed dissatisfaction with the position of their ethnic group within the organization but adopted masking strategies as a means of achieving success. Although the doctor argues that there is no discrimination on the basis of gender in her organization, it can also be assumed here that because she is treated like a man in her organization, she will have to act like a man in order to gain acceptance. Acker (2006) proposed that inequality regimes are shaped by standardized workplace practices that are perfectly suited to the traditional male role in the family. This is such that work organisations are largely organized and patterned according to the needs and requirements of the male gender whose primary task is to secure a livelihood. Because women have more responsibilities than men on the home front, this gendered organization of work serves as a facilitator for gender inequalities in the workplace. One product of this according to Acker (2006) is a lopsided representation of men and women in organizational hierarchies. Participants of this study also noted an unequal distribution of men and women in NCS but did not seem to acknowledge this as a form of inequality. When asked the reasons why men dominate her organization, a respondent had this to say:

'Maybe more men applied for the job or maybe there are more male doctors, I don't know' (RSCS, 17 months).

The above narrative indicates a broad acceptance of women's gendered place in the organization. This activism by respondents denotes a high level of openness and compliance with the masculine culture (Colgan & Ledwith, 1996). Furthermore, Colgan & Ledwith (1996) argue that one consequence of this activism is the confinement of women's agency to what is usually expected within patriarchal cultures and structures. This activism is such that the respondents (women) make no attempt to challenge the norm. One healthcare manager described the perception of women and gendered expectations in her organization:

I think [my organization employs more men] because they feel women aren't as proactive as men are and women have a lot of issues: commitment, family etc. Men don't have so many things tying them down. They are much more objective, or much more logical, that's what society would have us believe. It's a societal ideology. Not necessarily a fact, I don't like to believe that that's a fact. [...] For the kind of jobs that we do especially when it comes to strategizing, budget planning and the kinds of secrets that are revealed in the course of your job. I think, they think men are much more trustworthy, women are more easily influenced; women are easily compromised than men (FCS, 2 years).

The above response indicates a disagreement with the gender stereotypes and gendered nature of the organization. However, it did not necessarily imply lack of conformity as the respondent goes on to explain that her coping strategy is training herself in skills generally regarded as masculine, as she believed that masculinity was necessary for achieving success in the workplace:

The only instance where women are hired is because women are very different from other women. They have a tinge of masculinity. They are much more or they've trained themselves over years or based on the experiences they've had and have trained their sense of reasoning to be much more objective, proactive, and logical and all that (FCS, 2 years).

Her discussion of the competencies sought in the hiring process indicates that gender is a significant factor in the hiring process. Acker (2006) suggests that images of suitable gendered bodies influence hiring. According to her, the perfect employee for many jobs is a woman who is perceived by employers to be malleable. The recent upsurge in the number of women in organisations in Nigeria, resulting from increased access to education, does not necessarily imply gender-neutral recruitment processes. Ethnic majority men are still regarded as more competent and suited to the job than others (ibid). The response of the health care manager also denotes an implicit devaluation of her femaleness. Her comment that one has to display masculine traits in order to be employed seems to imply that she made deliberate attempts to fit into the maleness of the organizational culture. She explained that having an educational background in engineering and having worked as an engineer before changing careers enabled her to develop the necessary competencies to excel in her current

organization. Powell et al., (2009) argues that female engineers may become habituated to male dominated environments through technical hobbies and the exposure they endure during education. In this regard, the respondents (women) share preoccupations and ambitions that are characterised masculine while simultaneously undermining behaviours associated with femaleness. This activism is a way of not identifying with one's own gender with a goal to achieving workplace success (ibid).

Furthermore, the healthcare manager also indicated that her agentic strategies were not limited to her gender. She discussed ways through which she neutralized the effect of gender-ethnic stereotypes on her experience of the organization. She argued that stereotypes emanating from her ethnic-gender identity influenced the way clients treated and responded to her and therefore she had to step away from her identity as an Ijaw woman to demonstrate a professional identity in order to achieve desired results:

Ijaw politicians and appointed government functionaries are used to [Ijaw] women being much more [pause] forthcoming [informal], you know. I try as much as possible to be professional [...]. I must have a particular reason to see you; there must be a purpose for the meeting if not I don't have anything to discuss with you (FCS, 2 years).

She went on to discuss how clients and colleagues automatically assumed that she obtained her job through rendering sexual favours to superiors and generally expected her to compromise the standards of the organization. Block et al., (2011) propose that ethnic minorities and women try to show that the stereotypes associated with their social identity does not apply to them by demonstrating that they are not typical members of their social identity groups. Here, it may be argued that the healthcare manager's experience is influenced by a mutual shaping of her gender and ethnicity and will more likely be different from the experience of Ijaw men and ethnic majority women in her organization. In Chandler's (2015) terms, this denotes an ethnicised expression of gender discrimination. This

is further elaborated in the discussion of intersectional locations in the lived experience of respondents.

8.2.3 Performers (*Inyo Sua-bem*)

The ten respondents who were performers on the basis of their gender were similar to those who adopted this strategy as an ethnic agency. Performers expressed dissatisfaction at women's gendered place in the organization, which they attributed to lack of drive and determination on the part of women:

Being a woman makes you work harder to prove yourself. [...] I probably have that feeling that women are not as hard working as men. They tend to shy away from administrative roles or taking on a lot of responsibilities like men. People feel that you're a woman so you're going to slack off your job and you're not going to meet target so you have to work harder even though it might not be true (RSCS, 17 months).

Although the above respondent recognized that gender stereotypes might be a limitation to women in her organization, she argues that discrimination does not exist in the civil service. In doing so, she minimizes the role of discrimination in the experience of women in her organization, attributing the challenges they face to their inadequacies. Block et al. (2011) submits that fending off stereotypes is usually accompanied by internal attributions. Individuals tend to attribute negative outcomes to stereotypes because they feel powerless when they perceive discrimination to be uncontrollable and pervasive. It is perhaps easier to blame oneself in order to hang on to a semblance of control over performance. Therefore, women and ethnic minorities believe that they need to work harder to demonstrate that a negative stereotype is not true of all members of the social group and does not apply to them in particular. Kanter (1977) argues that ethnic minority women's actions in organisations can often be taken as representative of their social group. This is such that they may be viewed, or even view themselves more as a social category than as an individual in workplace settings. As a result, they may feel performance pressures to have their workplace accomplishments

noticed. Creegan et al., (2003) also observe this pattern in their examination of employee perceptions of race equality policies with respondents feeling the need to work twice as hard in order to gain the same measure of success as their majority counterparts. Respondents also discussed the role of female role models in driving her workplace performance:

The executive secretary is a woman and people have learnt to respect her. If the woman at the top was not the successful person she has been and hard working too it would have rubbed off on us. But since she's very responsible and hardworking I think it helps (RSCS, 17 months).

Colgan & Tomlinson (1996) also discuss the importance of mentoring in the career success of their respondents. According to them, women in senior management provide important role models for younger women in their organisation and some went the extra mile to create a more women friendly atmosphere in their organisations. Mentors also provided an important source of inspiration, guidance, support and enablers for climbing the organizational ladder (ibid):

Our VC is an impartial person ... and she is interested in women development: the dean of Science is a woman, I am here, and there are also many female HODs'. She did not put them there because they are women but because of their productivity and reliability. The woman is very gender friendly (RSCS, 27 years).

However, a lecturer who cited the influence of negative gender stereotypes on women's experience in organisations argued that she did not feel the need to prove herself:

I have worked with men so I do not feel the gender inferiority that a lot of women feel. The issue of gender is that it's not just about the men. Men have a natural inclination to go for anything; some women and a larger proportion of women have an inclination to say 'that is for the men so don't get involved'. [...] On this campus women tend to accept the fact that the men should do it so when you come forward, which I do a lot, they don't support you. Women need to step forward to take up positions [...] if there is a contest and they say they want 10 people to do a job I would put my name down. I could be the only lady there and I already know that I am not expecting my votes from the ladies (RSCS, 26 years).

The above respondent seems to have a clear sense of herself as a woman who is not bound by gender stereotypes. In doing so, she demonstrates resilience to the stereotype by redefining her own criteria for success, rather than acting based on the general expectations of women.

Her strategy is similar to that reported by Colgan & Tomlinson (1996) of women in book publishing. Respondents in their research argued that to achieve organisational success, women needed to '*play the men's game*' (p. 69). Another important observation from the above respondent's vignette is that the women in her organisation seem to work against the career progression of other women in the organisation. This pattern is portrayed in arguments about the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' (Stains et al., 1974) whereby female employees are more likely to express negative judgements about the career drive, leadership skills and assertiveness of their female colleagues. Neegard et al., (2008) found that women in top management positions were more likely to portray gender-stereotypical views than their male counterparts. However, another respondent directly challenged negative stereotypes associated with her social identity groups²². Block et al., (2011) argue that individuals who experience stereotype threat may dispute the harmful stereotypes through their relations with others. Her response is indicative that she was able to gain respect and recognition because of her competence and this was her defense against discrimination.

8.2.4 Negotiators (*Aso Iyaminapu da mu bem*)

The two negotiators who were identified in this study demonstrated an awareness of gender stereotypes in their organization and their agency was geared towards countering gender stereotypes. This is different to negotiation within ethnic agency whereby negotiators were driven by a consciousness of ethnic discrimination in their organization. Also, unlike ethnic agency, this was one of the least adopted strategies with regard to gender. Negotiators here were not concerned with creating safe spaces for women but rather working with other women towards improving their career prospects and achieving success both within and outside of the civil service. One negotiator discussed the networking opportunities she had in the women's wing of her professional association and how this served as a source of

²² See quote (32 years, FCS) on page 190 in relation to comments made by a respondent.

inspiration for striving towards her own workplace goals. Colgan & Tomlinson (1996) argue that women's associations provided a basis for networking, campaigning for change and an important access to job opportunities for women. However, they also submit that while many women welcomed the prospect of networking with other women, some expressed antipathy towards the idea. Reasons cited include: feeling '*threatened, not feminist enough or preferred to be with both men and women*' (p. 72). Many respondents of this research also seemed uninterested in women's associations. They indicated that there were women's associations in their organization but they were not a part of them because they were too busy with their work to be involved. In comparison with ethnic agency, it appears that respondents were more likely to identify with others on the basis of their ethnicity than gender:

[I'm not a part of the women's association in my organisation because] *I'm too busy doing my work (RSCS, 26 years).*

Although respondents explained their intents and plans to set up ethnic associations, they expressed apathy towards gender associations. The manager that spoke of starting up an ethnic association that will discuss challenges faced by the Ijaw ethnic group and seek the help of the president for redress was quick to explain that associations are not allowed in her organization when she was asked about gender associations:

*There's nothing like that but even if there was I wouldn't even join because I don't think the women are even focused. If I see civil society groups that are focused, have targets that would enhance acceptance of women, such things yes I will join. But if the women in this organisation decide to form an association, I would not join. I must also tell you that you cannot **openly** form associations (FCS, 2 years 6 months).*

Although the above respondent argued that she had experienced gender discrimination in her organisation, she argued that the only time she had such an experience was in her interaction with a man from the Hausa ethnic group. This ethnic group is associated with unequal gender cultural practices; therefore it may be argued that the respondent saw that experience more as a cultural issue that is peculiar to one ethnic group than a general issue of gender. She seemed

willing to pioneer an ethnic association, even where it is against the rules of her organization, but does not feel strongly enough about gender inequality to participate in women's movements in the organization. Pugh et al., (2008) argue that the relationships between groups of people in society can affect relationships and perceptions of those relationships in the workplace (in Lee & Reade, 2015). Therefore while a societal context characterized by ethnic stratification is likely to produce ethnically homophilious groups in organisations, a societal context where women's gendered place is perceived as 'natural' is likely to produce organisations where generally speaking, women do not confront gender inequalities and therefore are not interested in associations or gender-based informal networks that espouse the opposition of the status quo. Wolff (1977) highlights the ways through which women's organisational position is parallel to broader social life. In this regard, women may find themselves having to conform, rather than challenge the beliefs and stereotypes of the majority (Kanter, 1977). Although respondents indicated that they were not a part of women's associations in their organization, they explained that women's associations were geared towards helping women achieve work-life balance by providing day-cares and other services that generally support women to be able to focus on their jobs and also procuring solutions to women's issues in larger society. None of the women's associations discussed by participants looked into gender imbalance or inequalities in the workplace.

The second respondent who adopted this strategy discussed how she organized female heads of department in her organization to work together towards negating the gender stereotypes that suggests that all-women teams do not work in harmony. Being the head of the organization, this was a driving force for her to ensure that they all worked together in peace towards achieving organizational success:

And the first thing I got to know is that because we are all women and there is this stereotype that women don't work together, they were expecting us to have a lot of fights. But being a gender aware person I made sure we worked well together and

harmoniously. And they are still my friends till today. And really when I decided I was going to build up the image of the ministry and made sure that we had adequate funding (FCS, 38 years).

Block et al. (2011) suggest that contextual factors such as skewed demographics and a pressure to buy into pronounced notions of gender can create the conditions for ‘stereotype threat’ (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Individuals become conscious that the negative stereotypes they face are not peculiar to them and therefore they link up with other members of their social identity group to change the context. They inspire collective action towards creating a more inclusive environment for members of their identity group. This is in line with the strategy adopted by the above respondent. However, her goal was to challenge the stereotypes by proving that women can achieve success when they work together. Ely (1995) found that women working in organisations with many women occupying senior positions were more likely to experience a common gender as a positive basis for identification, less likely to report competitiveness between women and more likely to find support in their relationships with other women. The above respondent’s strategy proved successful as she argued that they were able to improve the standard of the ministry during her time as head. It may also be argued that she became more assertive and reformative in her strategies as she progressed in her career. Block et al., (2011) propose that individuals who have effectively surmounted barriers may be more likely to respond by attempting to improve treatment of their identity group in the organisation. Her reformative strategies will be further discussed below.

8.2.5 Reformers (Dimabo)

One gender-based reformer was identified in this study. Like ethnic-based reformers, they employed both individualistic and collective strategies with the aim of creating gender inclusive organisations. However, unlike ethnic-based reformer strategies, there was no indication that the adoption of this strategy was due to an increasing salience of gender

identity. The respondent who adopted this strategy argued that she never had a personal experience of gender discrimination in the civil service but seemed to have a deep personal commitment against overt discrimination in the civil service:

There has been no overt discrimination that I am aware of that I would not fight. I would fight it wherever I would. I'm just a very gender aware person (FCS, 38 years).

Therefore it may be argued that being a reformer is more associated with previous success in overcoming obstacles in the civil service. Although the above respondent did not specify the basis of her gender awareness, it may be argued that it stems from a consciousness of women's gendered place in society. Ledwith & Colgan (1996) proposed that a women-aware position involves a recognition and dissatisfaction with the barriers women face and a commitment to further their position in management. The reformer identified here was confident that she had developed sufficient competence and skill to be successful in her organisation, such that she could make significant impact towards the benefit of women. This respondent who had officially retired from the service continued to press for equality reforms as a contract employee. Her efforts were geared towards strategically challenging organizational rules and structures:

I was in a committee that reviewed the public service rules. I had been fighting for an increase in the number of weeks for maternity leave and it was finally extended from 12 to 16 weeks. In civil service a lot of the provisions have removed overt discrimination. It used to be that maternity leave was expected to be for women who were married but the first female permanent secretary removed that provision in the civil service rules. Before it was 6 weeks before and six weeks after but now how you manage that is just based on what works for you. You can decide to have it at a stretch (FCS, 38 years).

She indicated that her efforts span beyond the federal civil service to state civil service organisations, as well as other forms of inequalities in the civil service:

Now we are even talking about creating an equal opportunities commission. Not only ... gender but [also] other criteria [such as] disability, everybody must be given equal chance. Not just principles of states [Federal government organisations] but even within the states, you must also give women opportunities. That is also what we are

fighting with respect to politics. That this 35% of appointing positions, they should also give us spaces within elective offices so that there would be more women in the national and state assemblies. That has not happened but we are still pushing it (FCS, 38 years).

However, she decided to take a back seat in her gender activism because she believed that ethnic majority women were more likely to reap the benefits of the gender struggle than ethnic minority women, even though they were not actively involved in the campaign. This is further discussed in the intersectional analysis provided in the next chapter.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with examining how respondents assess their role and manage ethnic and gender politics in their organisations. It was determined that respondents perceived their gender identity as having a distinct influence on their workplace lived experience in comparison to their ethnic identity and therefore developed different strategies to combat perceived gender and ethnic discrimination. Strategies developed for combating perceived ethnic discrimination include; Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI), exiting the organisation, masking, performing, negotiating and reforming the system. A large majority of respondents were identified as traditionalists who did not perceive gender discrimination to be a factor in their workplace experience. However, respondents who demonstrated consciousness of gender discrimination adopted strategies such as assimilating, performing, negotiating and reforming the system. While activism targeted at ethnic discrimination were adopted in a cyclical, rather than linear way, respondents seemed inclined to stick to one strategy when dealing with perceived gender discrimination. It was determined that the level of awareness of gender discrimination in their organisations, was a key explanatory factor for the differences in respondents' strategies. Although respondents' stories revealed areas of intersections between their ethnic and gender identities, on a general note, they tend to see both identities as independent rather than intersecting. These issues are elaborated upon in the

intersectional analysis of respondents' workplace agencies that is provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 9

EXPLORING GENDER AND ETHNIC INTERSECTIONS IN THE STRATEGIES OF IJAW WOMEN

9.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed strategies adopted by respondents in managing ethnic and gender politics in the civil service, highlighting the points of intersections in their strategies. This chapter is concerned with critically interrogating how inequalities at the intersection of gender, ethnic and other relevant identities influence the strategies adopted by respondents. Ethnic politics was managed using strategies including; Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI), assimilation, positioning, negotiation, reforming or altogether exiting the system. These strategies were adopted in a cyclical rather than linear way. It was noted that respondents' ethnic identity was significant for the strategies they chose to adopt. However, strategies such as ADI, masking, and exiting the system were not adopted for dealing with gender politics in organisations. With regard to gender, a full spectrum of strategies was identified, ranging from traditionalists to reforming the system. Respondents who were more radical in their approach appeared to have spent more time in the service and to be more advance in terms of their career in the civil service; however, these respondents did not demonstrate an increasing salience in their gender identity. One reason for this could be that the institutionalization and implementation of the Federal Character Principle and policy of Indigenisation imply that ethnicity is associated with the distribution of resources. On the other hand, there is no legal framework that directly links gender with the distribution of resources. A look into culture in post-independent Nigeria may offer another viable explanation for the differences between ethnic and gender agencies for respondents of this research. Gender cultural practices that are maintained through customary and religious laws, as well as the traditional views about

gender imply that gender inequality is more likely to be perceived as legitimate in a way that ethnicity is not. The implications of these are that: none of the respondents in this research seemed to question their gender-based familial roles and responsibilities; workplace choices were centered on its compatibility with gender-based responsibilities in the home, and broad acceptance of women's gendered place. This is such that even women-aware strategies are aimed at providing structures that accommodate the familial responsibilities of women. Therefore it is argued that gender cultural practices transcend organizational boundaries. Although these practices are somewhat similar across ethnic groups in Nigeria, they are particularly associated with the Ijaw ethnic group. Ijaw women in this study seemed to desire the best of both worlds, i.e. to maintain their position as wives and mothers while pursuing fulfilling careers. However, it also seemed that being a wife and mother (where applicable) was of greater priority. This is different from how respondents interpret and respond to ethnic inequalities. However, an understanding of this is important for an intersectional analysis of the findings.

Radical ethnicity-centred strategies sought to combat the status quo, while gender-based strategies in its most radical form aimed at preserving the familial responsibilities of women while creating opportunities for them to progress in the civil service. Family centeredness in the gender activism of respondents spanning from traditionalists to reformers is a feature that distinguishes their agency from that of Western feminism. Africana womanism as proposed by Hudson-Weems (1993) provides a plausible explanation for gender activism of respondents in this research. The preservation of family is the centre of gravity from which respondents' gender agency emanates. While such decisions might be similar to the agencies of women in Western contexts, the cultural interpretation and expression of family may be different across contexts. The individualistic culture of the West arguably makes it easy for women to view their gender identity in isolation of other identities, thereby construing

themselves as independent agents. However, collectivism in African societies implies that the female identity is fundamentally linked to the family. Dove (2003) put this aptly in her argument that:

Both the woman and the man work together in all areas of social organization. The woman is revered in her role as the mother who is the bringer of life, the conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors, the bearer of culture and the centre of social organization' (p. 168).

In this regard, the relationship between men and women is viewed as complementary rather than competitive or adversarial; therefore the Africana womanist fights racism alongside the Africana man (Hudson-Weems, 1993). While racism does not have analytical value for the Nigerian context, ethnicity works like race to facilitate the oppression of minority persons. And as seen in the strategies adopted by respondents for combating ethnic politics in organisations, they worked alongside men with the goal of improving their workplace lived experience. The activism of respondents *is family-centred rather than female-centred and focuses on race [ethnic] empowerment before gendered empowerment* (Hudson-Weems, 1993 p. 45). Feminism does not adequately capture this reality or provide a means for its transformation (Mazama, 2003).

'Feminism is fundamentally a European phenomenon and therefore loaded with European metaphysical principles, such as conflictual relationship between genders whereas men are seen as the primary enemies of women (p. 27).

It is on the basis of the above analysis of the meaning of gender and gender activism in an African-centred perspective that an intersectional examination of the data is provided.

The concept of intersectionality is a product of black feminist scholars' attempts to articulate the significance of their social positioning on their lived experience (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Coined by Crenshaw (1991) to describe how race and gender work together to determine black women's experience of privilege and oppression, intersectionality theorists argue that to examine race, gender or any other social identity as independent experiences of identity is

to obscure the voice of marginalized groups. Notwithstanding, the question of how to operationalise the interaction of dimensions of inequality still looms for intersectionality researchers. Yuval-Davis (2006) argue that different axes of oppression are interconnected, hence no one experiences subjugation solely on the basis of either their gender or ethnicity. In line with this position, Choo & Ferree (2010) argue that the relationship between intersecting lines of oppression are never hierarchical. However, Crenshaw's (1989) assertion that black women's lived experience can both be similar to and different from that of white women and black men leads, Chandler (2015) to call for the need to pay attention to the possibility of

'A range of different situations ... that sometimes there is no need to consider multiple dimensions at all. Sometimes racism might just be racism. At other times, an additive approach is sufficient and in yet others, 'mutual constitution' (or at least mutual shaping) operate' (p. 3).

Findings from my research support Chandler's (2015) position. A majority of the respondents argued that while their ethnic minority status had a significant impact on their workplace lived experience of the civil service; their gender was of little significance. However, a number of scenarios discussed by respondents do indicate points of intersection, although this was not all the time and did not happen in any particular way. For instance, an additive (i.e. viewing her experience as a function of the sum of the effects of being a woman and an ethnic minority person [Dubrow, 2008]) approach is also appropriate for understanding the agency of the reformer who self identifies as gender-aware:

I have kind of downplayed my gender activism. The reason is that after we finish these Hausa women would take over. The first chief justice of the federation is a Hausa woman. The president, court of appeal is a Hausa woman. They don't join us when we are vocal because of their system or religion but after the spaces have been created, they manage to position themselves maybe because they were in the service for so long (FCS, 38 years).

She recognized a glass ceiling applicable to ethnic minority women that did not apply to majority women, which she had not identified prior to the beginning of her gender activism. This case is similar to that of General Motors cited *DeGraffenreid* by Crenshaw (1989) in her

discussion of intersectionality. Although Hausa women tend to have less household decision making authority in comparison to Yoruba, Ibo and Ijaw women due to the high rate of gender inequity in Hausa societies in comparison to other stated societies (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1999). Gender cultural practices of the Hausa ethnic group imply that women's autonomy and decision-making is restricted. The Ijaw ethnic group, on the other hand, practices a matrilineal system, which allows women to be more autonomous. Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye (1999) argue that sociocultural systems in Nigeria vary across ethnic groups. According to them,

'Hausa societies have a more clearly articulated set of norms regarding appropriate behaviours for women and those norms dictate that women should not participate in public life. However, if women in those societies do gain some formal education or access to work, they also gain some household authority, but not as much as they would if they had the same characteristics but were an Ibo or a Yoruba' (p. 421).

They further argue that women in Ibo, Yoruba and Ijaw societies are more likely to have decision-making authority than women in Hausa societies. Historically, Ibo, Yoruba and Ijaw societies afford women more instrumentality and this has consistently increased over the years (ibid). However, they are able to take advantage of the socioeconomic and political position of their husbands to access federal civil service positions more easily than women from less restrictive societies. These sociocultural differences explain the frustration of the reformer. Her culture gives her a free hand to engage in gender activism unlike that of Hausa (ethnic majority) societies where gender systems restrict women's lives. On the surface, it does not seem plausible that women from a restrictive culture (e.g. Hausa) would have more workplace benefits or progression than women from more instrumentalist cultures. It appears that although Hausa men silence their wives in the home (at the micro level), they use their power to secure positions for their wives in organisations (at the macro level) based on the opportunities created through the activism of Ijaw, Ibo and Yoruba women. The reformer

argues that although Hausa women do not engage in the struggle for women's advancement in the Nigerian civil service, they are the first benefactors of the struggle.

The scenario echoes the words of the sojourner truth, which paints a clear distinction between the nature of white and black women's oppression. White middle-class women were treated with delicate attention, while the racialisation of black women exposed them to brutality. Crenshaw (1989) argues that white feminists worked to silence sojourner truth with the aim of protecting their interests. However, the opposite seems to be applicable in the reformer's experience. While black women were silenced in feminist movements, Ijaw (ethnic minority) women seem to be more visible than those of ethnic majority (Hausa) women in the struggle for women's advancement in the Nigerian civil service. Nigeria, being a male dominated society, embodies cultural practices, which dictate that men should have some level of authority over women. However, levels of male domination vary across ethnic groups. Hausa societies have clearly stated guidelines for proper behaviour of women, which minimizes women's participation in public life. However, Hausa women that are formally educated are given more freedom compared to their uneducated, unemployed counterparts (Kritz & Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1999). They are often times aided by their husbands (ethnic majority men) who hold dominant positions in the federal civil service. This is different from Ijaw societies where women have decision-making authority that gives them a level of autonomy over their affairs (ibid). Notwithstanding, they experience difficulties in accessing and progressing in the federal civil service due to pervading ethnic inequalities:

One thing I noticed when I got employed in the federal civil service is that there weren't a lot of us in the federal service. For instance when I was doing my induction they couldn't even find my local government in the system and they suggested I take my husband's local government. That wasn't even in the system and I told them to include my local government so I can do my documentation properly (FCS, 4 years).

It appears that ethnic minority (Ijaw) persons are so few in the federal civil service that there was no official record of some local government areas. Local government identification is a

means through which the indigeneship status of an individual is ascertained. This process is important for fulfilling the requirements of the FCP. The result is that Ethnic minority (Ijaw) women had inevitably spent less time in the federal civil service because they were recruited comparatively recently compared to their ethnic majority (Hausa) women counterparts and therefore less likely to be considered for appointments to senior management positions. Thus, while the reformer's gender activism alongside women from other ethnic groups created opportunities for women to progress in the service, the impact of her ethnicity meant that she was unable to partake in the dividends of her gendered activism. It may be argued that at the micro level, women's role, autonomy, and power are determined by the gender cultural practices of their ethnic group; whereas at the macro level they are determined by the position of their ethnic group vis-à-vis other ethnic groups. This scenario presents a complex picture of intersecting ethnic, gender and cultural identities that can easily go undetected. In addition to the overlapping and interweaving of gender and ethnic identities, the data also reveals a mutual shaping of identities²³.

A health care manager reflected on her experience as shaped by an interlocking expression of her ethnic and gender identities. She had concerns about gendered ethnic stereotyping that may result in her being viewed as *'forthcoming'* with men in the workplace and as such chose to emphasize her professional identity in her relations with superior Ijaw men. Due to the perception that senior Ijaw men attributed ethnic-based gender stereotypes to her and it had the potential to limit the achievement of her workplace goals; she made a deliberate decision to maintain a strictly professional relationship with senior Ijaw men in the workplace. Atewologun et al. (2015) suggest that ethnic minority professional women *'use self and perceiver identities as cues to anticipate others' reactions and modulate their behaviours in response'* (p. 15). They argue that being an ethnic minority professional requires managing

²³ See page 245 (FCS, 38 years) for respondent's quotation.

'personal and social identities that are variously visible, malleable and oppositional in social value' (p. 6). The health care manager's intersectional identity work involved constraining and moderating behaviours with superior Ijaw men. Atewologun et al. (2015) argue that multiple intersecting identities do not always have a negative outcome. Rather, having a range of identity facets to navigate enables individuals *'shift power positions in apparently asymmetric power encounters'* (Atewologun et al. 2015 p. 6). The health care manager's experience is not a summation of her gender and ethnicity as seen in Ijaw women's access to employment; but the product of a mutual constitution (Walby et al. 2012) of both social identities. Her ability to manage oppositional identities (being a female Ijaw manager) is a resource, which she mobilizes for enhancing her career prospects (ibid). This situation is such that her experience cannot be reduced to being Ijaw or a woman but is distinctive because she is an Ijaw woman. Therefore in conducting an intersectional analysis of the data, three categories of respondents are delineated: Traditionalists who argue that their gender is not an axis of oppression; a second group of respondents who view their gender and ethnicity as systems of oppression that act independently of each other. Although these two groups of respondents do not seem to be conscious of gender inequality in their organizations, one could nonetheless argue that their agency is targeted at intersecting inequalities. This is because taking for granted one's traditional role as women imply that they do not question this, and therefore might act accordingly in the struggle against ethnic and other forms of inequality. However, this needs to be further explored. A third group of respondents that recognize an interplay of their ethnic and gender identities in their lived experience of the civil service. The experience of the third group of respondents comprise of both an overlapping and mutual shaping of their social identities.

9.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a more in-depth analysis of respondents' agencies using an intersectional framework. This analysis reveals that cultural practices may play a significant role in whether respondents understand their workplace experience to be intersectional or not and also their agentic strategies. As a result, it is suggested that although respondents appear to be conscious of the significance of gender in their lived experiences of the civil service, their stories reveal a complex intersection of ethnic, gender and cultural identities. The next chapter provides a discussion of the findings analysed in chapters 6.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

10.0 Introduction

Having provided an intersectional examination of the strategies adopted by Ijaw women participants in the previous chapter; this chapter reviews the four research questions delineated in chapter 4, placing them within the context of the findings. It provides a synthesis of the data analysis, existing literature and methodological framework. The contribution of the study, limitations, areas of further research and recommendations for practice are also presented. The research questions concern: how ethnic minority (Ijaw) women identify themselves in the Nigerian Civil Service, the ways that they perceive their gender to be of significance in their workplace lived experience; the nature of discrimination that they experience and the strategies that they use in combating perceived discrimination. Chapter 2 & 5 attended to the macro and micro contexts within which Ijaw women in the Nigerian Civil Service are embedded. A theoretical framework of structure, culture, agency, intersectionality and social identity theory was adopted for this study. This provided a viable basis for understanding how ethnic and gender identities evolved through different epochs in Nigerian history. It is argued that this approach enabled a richer understanding of participating Ijaw women's workplace lived experience. Some themes have emanated from this study, through which this thesis contributes to the body of research on gender, ethnicity and intersectionality in organisations and wider society.

The question of how Ijaw women identify themselves in NCS draws attention to the social-individual dynamics in the construction of their identity at work, how they perceive that they are positioned, and the power dynamics involved in this process. The aim was to examine the

ways in which they perceive that they are positioned either as majority or minority in NCS. Findings from this study reveal firstly that respondents tend to perceive their position in NCS in terms of ethnicity, rather than gender or at the intersections of both. There was a general lack of awareness of gender inequality and a lack of application of intersectional sensibility to their lived experience of NCS. This is consistent with Acker's (2006) argument that gender inequality practices may be overlooked by employees in organisations and therefore are difficult to detect. Although the evidence from black feminists and intersectionality researchers about the experience of ethnic minority women tend to portray black women in America as having a salient consciousness of gender and ethnic discrimination as well as their mutual shaping/constitution (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989). In the UK, fearfull & Kamenou (2006) demonstrate ethnic minority women's consciousness of the need to fit into the image of a western woman, exemplifying an awareness of gendered racial inequalities in the given context. It is argued that the women in this study demonstrated that consciousness to a lesser degree. One reason for this is the embeddedness of gender beliefs in meso socio-cultural and customary practices that render gender inequalities invisible.

The second finding in relation to respondents' perception of their position is in relation to numeric representation. Kanter (1977) emphasizes the role of numerical representation in shaping individuals' workplace lived experiences. Social relations that are shaped by ethnic representation predominantly inform respondents' perceptions about how they are positioned in the civil service. In this regard, most respondents were of the view that their workplace experience will improve with higher representation of ethnic ingroup members in their organisation. This view of respondents is similar to the patterns discussed by Kanter (1977). She argues that *rarity and scarcity* of any social group in an organisation can produce negative workplace outcomes (p. 381).

More so, respondents' perceptions about how they are situated in the civil service is largely informed by socio historical events surrounding colonialism state creation and ethnic identity development in Nigeria²⁴. States were created to destabilize ethnic hegemonies and allegiances with the hope that this would strengthen the federal system of government and oneness among Nigerians (Danmole & Aghalino, 1995). The government took deliberate steps to silence ethnicity, by excluding it from data collection and not taking cognizance of it in developing administrative strategies. In line with this, census data collection does not include ethnicity, and the Federal Character Principle is premised on state indigeneship, rather than ethnicity. However, the salience of ethnicity in the accounts of research participants cannot be overemphasized, it signals disengagement between the stance of the government and, relevant for my thesis, that of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women. Regardless of governmental efforts to render ethnicity invisible, the latter are oriented to ethnicity and ethnic identification. This means that social categorization based on ethnicity (Tajfel, 1970) permeates their lived experience of the civil service and is perceived as largely accounting for privilege and disadvantage, even though the Nigerian government does not regard it as an operative context. Zimmerman (1998) argues that people's perceptions of the salience of an identity is significant and can have important implications.

The practice of indigenization²⁵ by state governments (i.e. regarding the resources of a state as an exclusive right of its indigenes) serves to illuminate finer distinctions, positioning some ethnic minority (Ijaw) women to benefit from the existing hierarchy compared to others. In addition, a by-product of indigenisation practice is that it creates significantly higher numerical representation of indigenes, compared to non-indigenes in some civil service organisations. This is such that ethnic minority women may be privileged in some civil

²⁴ See account of ethnic identity development in Nigeria in chapter 2.

²⁵ An indigene is regarded as someone who can trace his or her ancestral lineage to a given state in Nigeria.

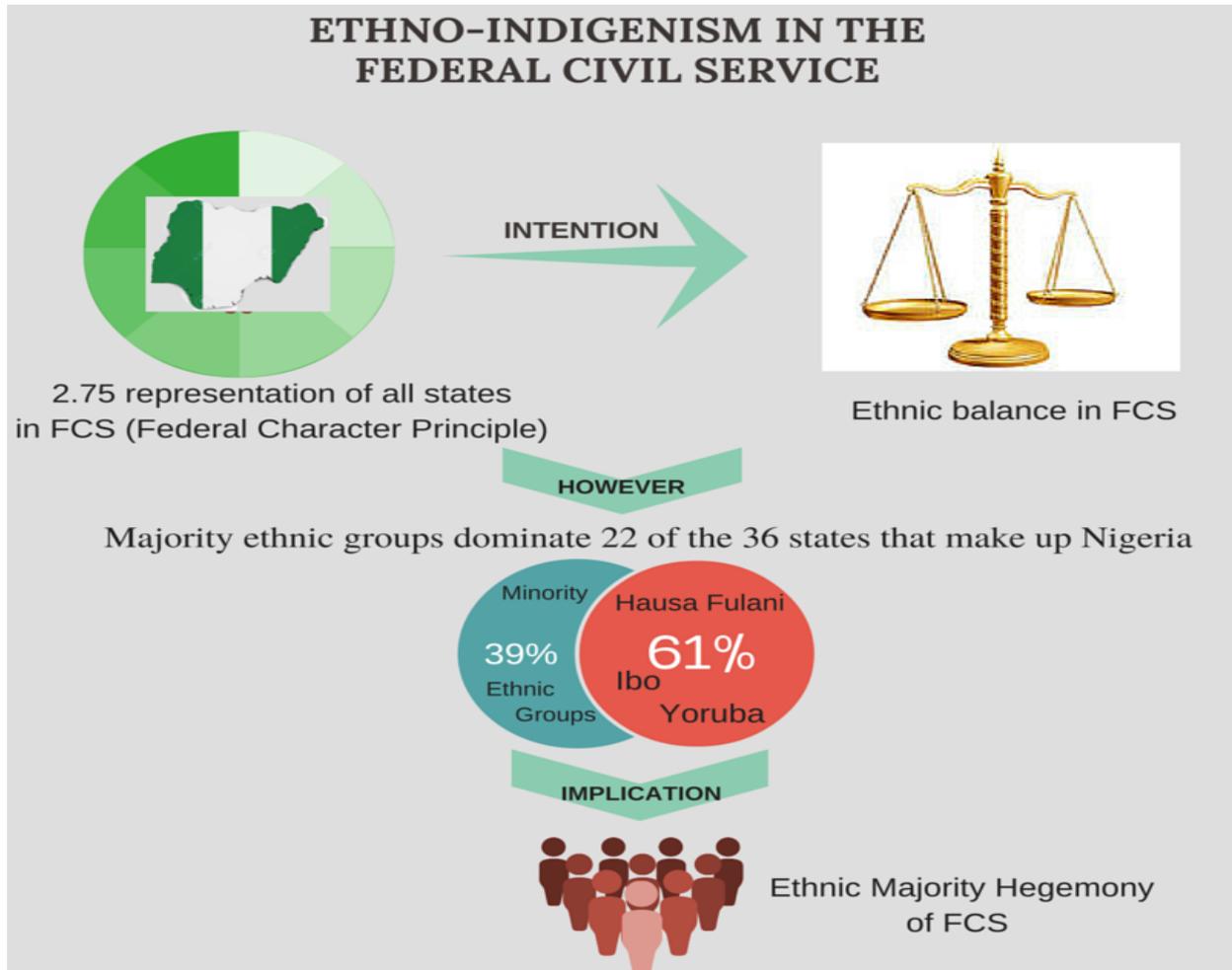
service contexts, (i.e. their state of origin, also micro level²⁶) and disadvantaged in others (i.e. outside of their state of origin and the federal civil service). In some cases however, they may be simultaneously privileged and disadvantaged. The effect is that discrimination on the basis of indigeneship and ethnicity are concurrent processes that further complicate the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women. Earlier research confirms that the interaction of gender and ethnicity does not always produce negative consequences for ethnic minority women (Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006).

Furthermore, in line with the discussion of the Federal Character Principle provided in chapter 2, ethnic majority groups dominate twenty-two of the thirty-six states of Nigeria, implying that its implementation in the civil service inevitably creates and sustains the dominance of ethnic majority groups. Thus this thesis argues that FCP, which is premised on state indigeneship, is a means through which ethnic majority groups maintain the British colonial legacy of divide and rule. Notwithstanding, there was a general consensus among participants of this research that the FCP provides them with access to the civil service and governmental resources. A detailed examination of the data reveals that it successfully prevents cooperation between minority groups thereby sustaining ethnic majority domination. Ethnic majority groups are the greatest beneficiaries of the FCP (See figure 10). Notwithstanding this, the lack of consciousness of this process of domination demonstrated by ethnic minority women participants implies that they are not inclined to challenge the FCP. Thus ethnicity is institutionally undetectable but salient and definitive of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women's experience. The afore-described complex web of inequalities can be referred to as *ethno-indigenism*. This term refers to policies and practices that facilitate differentiated patterns of work and organizational progression which amount to simultaneous exclusion of non-indigenes and ethnic minority persons, leading to an interlocking matrix of

²⁶ Microlevel in this thesis has been used to represent organisations. But in this particular instance, micro level represents states.

privilege and oppression for the same (See figures 10 & 11). As my claim demonstrates, this privilege-disadvantage dialectic can require ethnic minority (Ijaw) women to negotiate power and engage in identity politics in participating NCS organisations.

Figure 10: The Two Faces of Ethno-Indigenism (Federal Civil Service)



By elucidating the dialectic of privilege and oppression that exists within blackness, this research extends the arguments proposed by Collins (1990) in her distinction of Black Feminist Thought as a reconceptualisation of the social relations of dominance and resistance. Collins’ (1990) articulation of a shared experience by black women that can be diverse through other identities such as sexuality, age, class, and religion does not take into consideration ethnic inequalities within race, e.g. blackness. Robinson & Alex-Hart (in press) suggest that women’s identities can be better understood when explored through ethnicity, rather than race. We argue that, for women’s experiences to be fully gleaned, then ‘race’ must

be dumped in the *'bin of analytically useless terms'* (Miles, 1989 as cited in Robinson & Alex-Hart p. 3).

Figure 11: The Two Faces of Ethno-Indigenism (State Civil Service)



My research buttresses the significance of studying women’s experiences through ethnicity by highlighting inequalities between women of the same race (black women) (See figure 11). It also extends intersectionality theory by emphasizing the limitation that using race as an analytical tool, or conflating race with ethnicity when exploring interlocking systems of oppression can place on the understanding of women’s workplace experience.

Another key finding is the existence of gendered substructures (Acker, 2012) in the Nigerian civil service that are produced through organizational and social culture, as well as gendered identities. Definitions and images of what it means to be male and female produce a gendered division of labour, such that Ijaw women (and possibly other ethnic minority women within

the Nigerian civil service) have a distinct experience and exposure on the job compared to their male counterparts. This could have negative implications for expertise and career progression. These organizational practices are grounded in the gender beliefs of Nigerian society (culture), being that this is traditionalist²⁷. Hence, gender-based differentiation of job role is regarded as normative and therefore difficult to detect. Acker (2012 p. 215) argues that gendered substructures are often invisible and recurrent assumptions about '*women and men, femininity and masculinity*' and that '*are embedded and reproduced*' in organizational processes. This invisibility of gender inequality perpetuates its resilience and durability. Gendered substructures form the underlying assumptions and practices that shape the organizational structure of the civil service, leading to androcentricity (Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006). In this regard, by requiring Ijaw women to act like men in order to demonstrate competence, the civil service displays masculine perspectives and ways of doing work as the standard for measuring women's workplace performance. However, marital status was also a distinguishing factor in women's experiences. Apart from married women engaging in satisficing (Dutta & Hussain, 2014), the data also showed instances where an inextricable interlocking of gender, marital status, indigeneship status and ethnicity culminated in negative workplace experience for Ijaw women. This is such that, they encountered exclusion and glass ceiling when married to men from different states of their origin and ethnicities. Such marriages led to a clash between cultural practices, the demands of indigeneity and the desires and expectations of indigenes of the state that these women were married into, as well as their state of origin. The hybridised cultural mandate that a woman change her name and become an indigene and member of her husband's state of origin and ethnicity through marriage, put women in a situation where they are at risk of being stripped of privileges

²⁷ The issue of Nigerian culture vis-à-vis ethnicised cultures within Nigeria were impacted upon by colonialism; therefore the position of gender is shaped by individual ethnic cultures as well as the overarching Nigerian culture.

accrued to being an indigene of their state of origin. Such women may also simultaneously experience exclusion from their husband's state of origin.

Distinctions between indigenes and non-indigenes also brings to bear the significance of language in the workplace lived experience of Ijaw women. Language is a core aspect of ethnicity, and identity and Nigeria is as linguistically diverse as it is ethnically diverse. Therefore an outcome is that the civil service is a hub of linguistic identities. However, the data reveals a lack of sensitivity (although it is natural for people to revert to their local dialects when grouped together) and inadequate attention to the issue of language diversity in the Nigerian civil service. Participants identified language as a salient indicator of ethnic group membership, and hence a means of categorisation. Bucholtz & Hall (2005) suggest that language is an essential element in identity production. The salience of language in an organization can be divisive when power dynamics are incorporated in the way language is used (Hinds et al. 2014). In their study of the significance of language fluency in the social categorization process of global teams, they found that language was used as a tool for power contests in relation to information access and contact with decision makers. These power contests according to Hinds et al. (2014) were a reflection of issues in the larger society, making it difficult for teams to enter into dialogue and internally resolve power-related conflicts. The patterns noted by Hinds et al. (2014) are also replicated in this research. Workplace inter-ethnic rivalries are a mirror image of the power contests and struggles between ethnic groups at the macro (societal) level. In the civil service, dominant ethnic groups use language as a tool for maintaining existing power relations by codifying organisational information and erecting barriers to entry into the civil service. In line with Fairclough's (2001) arguments, findings from this study reveals that language is often used as a tool for domination in participating civil service organisations. The use of language as a means of power contestations is reinforced by recruiters' reliance on language as a means of

verifying applicants' ethnicity and state of origin is open to bias. This points to their general perception of ethnicity and state indigeneship in primordial terms. This situation in itself is problematic because ethnic and state boundaries have been drawn and redrawn during colonial domination and state creation in line with the interest of colonial administrators and majority ethnic groups respectively. Also, inter-state immigration implies that those who move out of their states to settle elsewhere would encounter difficulties in accessing civil service employment. The use of primordial measures can be problematic for Ijaw women who are migrants to other states, more so for those who migrate due to inter-state marriage.

Cultural beliefs about age were also observed to be a trigger for ageism in the civil service. Butler (1969 in Snape & Redman, 2003) used the term ageism to depict prejudices and stereotyping experienced by the elderly resulting from their age. It is no wonder that debates about ageism in organisations in the US and United Kingdom tends to focus on older workers (ibid). Arrowsmith (2003) suggests that stereotypes about age are situated in culture and reproduced through the distribution of responsibilities and opportunities. Therefore, it may be argued that the association of ageism with aging may be due to individualistic cultural beliefs. Individualistic societies tend to view work as a means of attaining individual profit. Hence, employees may be viewed as commodities that can be purchased and used only within a specific timeframe before expiry – expiry being the point where perceived productivity declines (Taylor, 2001). Although Taylor's (2001) argument may lead to the view that older workers are more susceptible to ageism than the young, Evidence from Archer (2008) and Angouri (2012) reveal that ageism may also act against young people in the West. This is such that age is seen as related to experience and expertise. Findings from this research present a similar reality as that proposed by Archer (2008) and Angouri (2012). The attribution of wisdom to age in Nigerian culture, implies that a young employee is expected to be a student of the older, and hence maintain an attitude of humility and respect

during workplace interactions. In this regard, young Ijaw women in management positions encounter difficulties in executing their role. As exemplified by one participant, they may have to adopt unconventional management methods in order to be heard. However, this needs to be further explored.

However, participants noted that the civil service is family friendly. There was the idea that although the civil service still has a way to go in terms of creating a gender equal workforce, significant progress has been made such that much of the overt gender discriminatory practices have been eliminated. My findings reveal that covert forms of gender inequality mostly embedded in culture are widespread. With regard to ethnic inequalities however, equality and diversity policies such as Federal Character Principle and Indigeneity practices, are rife with contradictions and foster division and inequality. Kamenou et al. (2012) used the phrase ‘negative agency’ to depict how employers’ approach to inequality has negative implications for ethnic minority employees. More so, the need for applying intersectional sensibility to the development of equality policies in the civil service was an important finding from my research. Chandler (2015) argues that intersectionality provides a valuable basis for developing policies in public sector organisations. My research extends his argument by highlighting this need specifically with regard to the development of equality and diversity policies. Chandler (2015) suggests that such policies should be contextualised by actively looking and listening to the voices of as many groups as practicable, within a given context. This research also supports findings from other Nigerian-based studies that highlight the ineffectiveness of the Federal Character Principle and the practice of indigeneity in resolving ethnic inequalities in the civil service (e.g. Mustapha, 2007; Mafos, 2015; Ugoh, 2012; Justine et al., 2015). To the best of my knowledge, the significance of these policies for the workplace lived experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian civil service has not been previously researched. However, the findings discussed here regarding

inequality regimes that they encounter in the workplace supports Acker's (2012) argument that assumptions about gender and ethnic identities are implicated in fundamental organisational and societal processes.

The use of Acker's (2006) inequality regimes for examining the nature of discrimination in participating civil service organisations provides an enabling analytical framework for uncovering not only experiences of discrimination, whether or not acknowledged by participants, but also underlying complex processes that create and maintain inequalities in the workplace lived experience of Ijaw women. The evidence suggests that civil service organisations within which participants are located formally legitimate gendered and ethnic inequalities. Although Acker (2006) and Healy et al., (2011) find organizing processes to be critical in the reproduction of inequalities, the evidence in this research suggests that the processes that legitimize inequalities in the civil service are resilient. The legitimacy of ethnic and gender inequalities is fortified by their invisibility to, and general lack of consciousness demonstrated by participants. The result is the creation of equality policies that are ambiguous. Earlier research confirms that the effectiveness of equal opportunities may be undermined due to the gap between rhetoric and reality (Healy et al., 2011; Kamenou et al., 2012). The FCP appears to be a façade, which was intentionally or unintentionally, designed to detract attention from the problem of ethnicity to emphasize state interests. It implicitly protects the interests of ethnic majorities, while appeasing ethnic minorities with the notion that their interests will be represented through state representation. Acker (2006) argues that the beneficiaries of inequality regimes often resist change efforts. However, a number of Ijaw women in my study portray themselves as active agents who have developed strategies to counter perceived structural inequalities.

The data revealed that structures in NCS were not as flexible as Giddens (1984) suggests. Participants felt the need to '*confront and grapple with*' systemic constraints in their

organisations (Archer, 1982 p. 463). The adoption of intersectional sensibility in examining the agencies of participants was useful for revealing more complex forms of inequalities and agencies. However, in the course of the study, it became apparent that participants did not always view their ethnicity and gender as part of an intersecting matrix of oppression. In keeping with the stories of research participants, their agencies in terms of how they confronted and grappled with gender inequality were analyzed distinctly from ethnic inequality. In doing this, the researcher was able to delineate differences in how they perceive their gender and ethnic identities. Based on their agencies, it is argued that ethnic identity was a politicized identity while gender was a rather passive identity (Bradley, 2016). For instance, Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI), Exiting and Masking strategies were adopted towards ethnic but not gender inequalities in the stories of respondents. This may be so because women in general, but specifically Ijaw women respondents, chose the civil service because issues of marriage, pregnancy or child rearing do not need to be masked due to the flexibility and family friendly policies of the civil service. Those who adopted an ADI approach demonstrated personal helplessness towards improving their organizational experience. However, no respondent demonstrated a sense of helplessness towards gender inequality. Wifeness and motherhood was portrayed as a very salient aspect of women's identity. More so, participants argued that the civil service gives room for them to fulfil familial responsibilities through its family friendly policies, with one participant stating that the civil service is the best place for women.

Exiting the organization was also a product of feelings of helplessness; this was such that respondents' sought a way out of the organisation. The absence of ADI and exiting strategies in combating gender inequality may be an indication of a broad subscription to gendered practices in organisations. The majority of respondents identifying as traditionalists also provides evidence for this proposition. Masking strategies on the other hand, was targeted at

managing ethnic identity differences in everyday work interactions. As Goffman (1959) puts it, '*presentations are made to be consistent with expectations of society*' (p. 105). While masking did not involve the denial of respondents' cultural or ethnic heritages, assimilation strategies, which were adopted only in response to gender inequality, involved some level of *denying* the attributes stereotyped as female and a claiming or aspiration towards masculinisation. This pattern may be a reflection of patriarchal gender relations prevalent in Nigerian society (Dogo, 2014). Although this discussion and analysis is based on respondents' stories, further research on exiting and masking strategies may offer helpful insights on whether they may also be gendered.

Performing, negotiating and reforming the system were used to tackle both gender and ethnic inequalities. However, there were differences in the way negotiating strategies were adopted in relation to gender and ethnicity. While gender inequality negotiation among participants was restricted to joining women's organizations where they existed, ethnic inequality negotiation involved deliberate attempts to foster inclusion and acceptance by staying in one's state of origin; creating Ijaw networks; and ingroup favouritism. Ijawism was used to describe negotiation strategies in relation to ethnicity, because of its centering on ethnic ingroup membership. This strategy brings to bear the spatial dimension of the lived experience of ethnicity in the Nigerian Civil Service. The racial demography (ethnic demography in this case) of individuals' social world exposes them to a collective system of inclusion and exclusion (Lipsitz 2007, as cited in Visconti, 2015). He therefore argues that ethnicity and spaces are interwoven. Thus, examining the role of space in Ijawism serves to illuminate how minoritisation is constructed in the civil service. Visconti (2015) argues that ethnic groups often select tangible or symbolic spaces as markers of identification or sources of ethnic appurtenance. In this regard, this thesis is suggesting that indigeneity and its attending privileges impresses upon participating Ijaw women that working in their state of

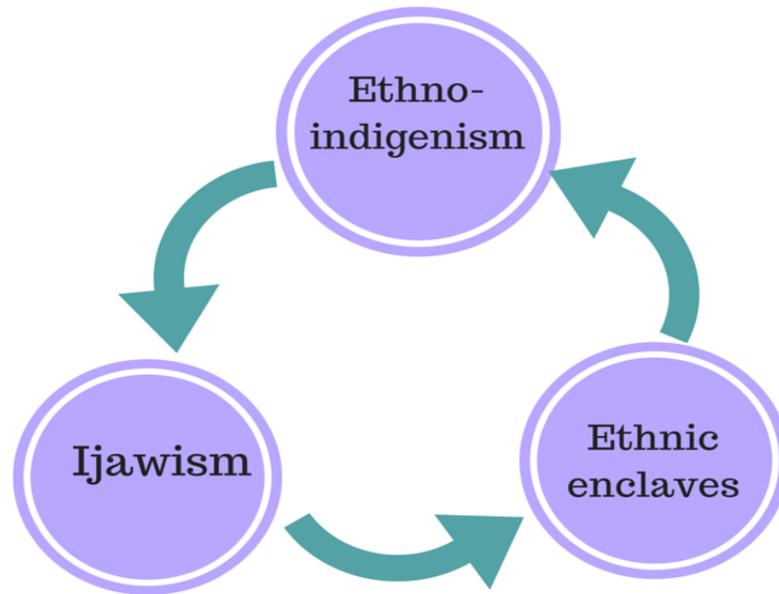
origin is a viable means of escaping *ethno-indigenism* (i.e. the intertwining process of ethnocentrism and non-indigene discrimination). The data reveals that often, physical space inhabited by respondents complies with ethnic majority and indigene privilege. Similar arguments have been put forward with regard to whiteness:

'White privilege literally hides in plain sight (invisible especially to those who enjoy the privilege), a situation is exacerbated by the fact that landscapes are particularly well suited to masking constructions because they appear to be completely natural, God-given and neutral ... How are messages about access, belonging and exclusion manifested in built form?' (Harris, 2007 p. 3-4 in Visconti, 2015).

Apart from negotiating physical space at the macro (state) level, the negotiation of cultural space at the micro (organisational) level through informal Ijaw networks and ingroup favouritism mirrors the power position of Ijaw women; how they perceive other ethnic groups; and preconceptions and stereotyping about '*ethnic otherness*'. As demonstrated in the discussion about ethno-indigenism, FCP and indigeneity practices harm ethnic minorities. However, negotiation strategies (i.e. Ijawism) further reinforce ethnic inequality and segregation, and serve to maintain power imbalance. Archer's (2010) morphogenetic cycle is useful for understanding the complex dialectical interplay between respondents' agency and structural constraints. She argues that changing structural properties requires time. However, structures may be '*psychologically supported by the population*' or attempts at reforming a system may be met with resistance fuelled by structural influences or deliberate attempts of the powerful (p. 240). Individual agency may also be influenced by the awareness of structures; ability to alter it; attitudes towards it and beneficial interest in maintaining it. Using this framework to analyse the role of respondents' agencies in duplicating or elaborating structural constraints, it becomes apparent that only one of the eight strategies by respondents is likely to transform the system. The general lack of consciousness towards gender inequality regimes and psychological support of gender inequalities, through

traditionalists' perceptions of a gendered division of labour as normative, serves to maintain the status quo.

Figure 12: The vicious cycle of Ijawism (Aso Iyaminapu da mu bem)



Conformist strategies such as ADI, exiting, masking, assimilating and performing demonstrate awareness of inequalities but lack the capacity to cause change because they work within structural parameters. Negotiation strategies do not only maintain, but also reproduce inequalities in the system (see figure 12 above). Respondents adopting this strategy succeed in moving to their comfort zone (i.e. state of origin) or creating ethnic enclaves in their organization and therefore are less likely to launch reformist endeavours as they become entangled in the structure. Thus, these strategies are more likely to produce a vicious cycle of ethno-indigenism and gender inequality. Reformers, on the other hand, aim to change the system; although only a small minority of respondents embark on this route, it is the articulation of the issue that may lead to change, rather than the numbers. Having discussed

key research findings and contribution to knowledge, the next section outlines implications of this study.

10.1 Policy and Praxis Implications of this Research

Findings from this study suggest important implications for organizational praxis in the Nigerian Civil Service, with the aim of creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce and to develop an organization that is intentional about developing and applying equal opportunities policies and practices for all employees.

Nigeria, like most pluralist societies, is saddled with the problem of inter-ethnic rivalry and competition. The government embarked on two main strategies – Federal Character Principle and Indigeneity – with the aim of solving the problem of ethnicity, however, both strategies have proved ineffective in participating civil service organisations as evidenced by this research. The evidence suggests that both strategies have intensified rather than contributed to its solution. On the other hand, policies that foster gender equality are grossly inadequate and when they are in place, inadequate in implementation. This section attempts to proffer recommendations, based on research findings that warrant structural transformation that have the capacity to create a more inclusive society and civil service.

A salient finding highlighted in chapter six and the above discussion, is the duplicitous nature of ‘equality’ policies affecting participating civil service organisations. While federal regulations outlaw discrimination on any grounds including ethnicity, gender, and indigeneship, state indigeneship practices promulgate discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and indigeneship while ‘customary’ practices facilitate gender discrimination. The existence of these contradicting norms side by side also creates a complex web of intersecting levels of oppression. These contradictions need to be reconciled in order to create inclusive civil

service organizations. This can be achieved through the eradication of state indigeneship practices, as well as customary norms that foster gender discrimination.

Indigenisation serves as a source of impediment for talent mobility and inclusion. As argued in chapter five, the limited spread of employment opportunities in Nigeria implies that some individuals will migrate from state to state in search of employment, however, indigeneship practice means that migrating individuals are likely to experience frustration in this search. Those who are able to gain employment are likely to experience stunted career progression in state civil service organisations, which may have consequences for employee performance. Therefore, its role in for contemporary organizational development is questionable. With the eradication of this practice, there will be free movement, with mitigated fear of discrimination, of persons across states. Rather than give concessions to state indigenes, the emphasis should be on human capital development, job creation and competition.

State indigeneship practices were developed to preserve the rights of indigenes. However, indigeneship cannot create cultural identities and bridge the ethnic differences that make up Nigeria. A more effective way of achieving a Nigerian identity is through recognising that Nigeria is a combination of numerous ethnic groups with their various cultural identities. However, in order to create a successful Nigerian state, the numerous ethnic groups must agree to pursue a unified Nigerian cultural identity, that does not negate the various ethnic cultural identities. Bearing in mind that culture functions as:

‘The source of ties that bind members of societies through an illusive socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices, competencies, ideas, schemas, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artefacts and modification of the physical environment. These internalised rules create traditions that often go deeper than reason’ (Gordon, 2007 p. 78).

Perhaps through developing a Nigerian cultural identity, Nigerians can then begin to view their national identity as more salient than their various ethnic identities. In this regard, Miller & Yudice (2002) provide an insight into what culture can do for a people:

'Culture gives man [sic] the ability to reflect upon himself. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks un-tryingly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations' (Miller & Yudice, 2002 p.).

State indigeneship practices are not only exclusionary; they also form the basis of the Federal Character Principle. Therefore its abolishment will warrant a modification of the Federal Character Principle. Notwithstanding, this should not be a problem because the FCP is grossly lacking in achieving its aims of ethnic representation and inclusion. Therefore it is suggested that FCP modification be directed towards dealing directly with the problem of ethnic inequality, rather than trying to tackle it through state representation. In this regard, the quota system should be based on ethnicity, rather than state membership. A critical evaluation of current ethnic representation in the civil service needs to be carried out which will then form the basis for developing a quota system that is geared towards the greatest possible good for all stakeholders. The preference for a quota system over affirmative action for underrepresented ethnic groups is due to already existing suspicion and rivalry among ethnic groups in Nigeria.

However, this approach will mean that civil service organisations need to put data collection processes in place that will effectively retrieve and preserve the ethnic and gender profiles of employees. This is a significant issue in Nigeria as the country presently does not collect data about ethnicity during census or employment in civil service organisations. The aim of this approach is, on the face of it, to erase ethnic differences. In spite of this, the persistent exacerbation of ethnic divisions highlights the ineffectiveness of this practice. Evidence of this can be seen in Lewis & Bratton (2000) finding that ethnicity is the most salient identity

in Nigeria, even more salient than national identity. Their findings are further buttressed by my research, with ethnicity being recognized as a politicized identity among respondents. The above discussion of negotiation strategies reveals that the absence of data on ethnicity and the attending absence of policies designed to cater directly to ethnic diversity in the civil service leads to proliferated individual ambitions at promoting the interest of their ethnic groups to the exclusion of others. Ethnicity data collection would enhance the visibility of ethnic inequalities, giving management and both societal and organisational levels the opportunity to tackle the problem directly. More so, data collection and policy development targeted at promoting ethnic equality and diversity will foster trust between ethnic groups and state governments. This is such that indigeneity policies will be increasingly seen as unnecessary which may then result in cooperation between states towards economic development.

The above discussion uncovers the need for an equality and diversity commission that is laden with the responsibility of identifying and addressing relevant forms of inequality in the Nigerian Civil Service. Presently, the Federal Character Commission is responsible for the implementation of the Federal Character Principle. However, issues of ethnicity, gender, and other forms of inequality in the Nigerian Civil Service are not the responsibility of any specific body. More so, intersectional sensibility should be applied to the development of equality policies in order to enhance their effectiveness and inclusivity. It is essential that policies developed by the commission move beyond rhetoric to affect organizational practice.

My empirical findings have suggested that language diversity may also be seen as a source of, and a lever for inequality. This points to the need for a language policy that is clearly articulated and implemented. Developing this language policy may require a definitive piece of research to explore in detail, the power relations associated with linguistic ability in the Nigerian civil service.

Finally, diversity and inclusion training for all members at the organizational level will aide individuals to be more accepting of difference. My findings suggest that practices in organisations are a reflection of society point to the need for such training to be implemented in mainstream education. The inclusion of gender awareness and cultural sensitivity to the educational curriculum at all levels will enhance individuals' understanding and acceptance of difference even before they are employed in civil service organisations. This may also contribute towards quelling ethnic conflicts in society.

10.2 Conclusion

This chapter discussed key findings and contributions of this research to the body of knowledge. Respondents' experiences of discrimination in the civil service were discussed, and their agency was critically examined. Recommendations for policy and practice that is based on the research findings were also proffered. The next chapter provides a critical reflection and conclusion of the thesis.

CHAPTER 11

CRITICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

11.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis provides a critical evaluation of some key decisions made during the research process, recommendations for further research and concluding remarks.

11.1 Critical Assessment and Reflection upon Completion

At the beginning of this research, my interest was in understanding the experience of all ethnic minority women in Nigeria. This started from my limited understanding of ethnic and gender inequalities in the country and my aim was to increase understanding of these phenomena. I shared these interests with one of my supervisors and he asked me to do a more in-depth historical study and review of ethnic and gender relations in Nigeria before coming to a conclusion about where to pitch my study. In this regard, I value highly the input of my supervisors as they questioned and engaged me in critical discussions that had me re-evaluating preconceived notions about the research phenomenon, leading me to approach the existing literature from a more open-minded and critical stance. This not only helped me gain a more contextual understanding of gender and ethnic issues in Nigeria, it helped me realize how limited my understanding of these issues were despite being Nigerian. It also became clear that the Nigerian case is too complex to consider all ethnic minority women in one research project as this might give rise to the pitfall of essentialising their experiences.

Moreover, although I chose to focus on just one ethnic minority group, I recognized the need for applying intersectional sensibility to the study in order to make visible complexities in women's experiences that may not be immediately apparent. This also informed my choice to conduct an African centred piece of research, as it provided a richer explanatory power for the lived realities of the research population than if precisely Eurocentric perspectives were utilised.

I critically reflected on my qualitative research design and the decision to base my research on the civil service. Being that the civil service is usually considered as an equal opportunities employer, it presented a viable case for understanding the meanings of gender and ethnicity in organisations in Nigeria. Initially, I wanted to adopt a mixed method research design as this has the potential to offer deeper insights and opportunities for triangulation. However, I soon realised that a focus on one method will allow for a more in-depth examination. This proved useful as it gave me the opportunity to listen to the stories of women who had not been previously researched in the context of the civil service. Although some women expressed caution on meeting me and hearing about my research agenda, after explaining to them that I had no links with organizational management, they became more at ease in sharing their workplace experience. As a result, the advantage of approaching them directly through snowball sampling, rather than through organizational management became apparent. Giving voice to these women through the interviews was a significant part of this research as they were happy to open up about their challenges in the workplace, which they may or may not feel equipped to out rightly confront as evidenced through their agencies.

It is also critical that I included issues of identity at this point. Being an ethnic minority (Ijaw) woman that was born and raised in Nigeria, I have come to acknowledge how my ideas about

ethnicity, and more especially, gender were framed by this context. I was raised to understand my place as a woman without question. Through my review of the literature, I began to question personal gendered perceptions although I had personal fears of openly discussing my concerns with persons from my community. On engaging with research participants, whom I perceive to have similar traditionalist views of gender to mine, I was quick to assent to their arguments that gender inequality did not factor in their workplace lived experience. In hindsight, I also recognize that another issue, which made me accept claims of gender equality, was my fear of being labelled feminist, which is usually synonymous with uncultured. Therefore I sighed with relief when these traditionalist women told me that although gender inequalities are real, it was happening somewhere else but not in their environment. Previously being labelled by a friend as feminist, I became conscious of the cost of being agentic and there was an internal debate about my capacity and willingness to bear this cost. This initially affected my interpretation of the findings as I demonstrated an unconscious bias in reporting my findings about gender inequality. However, feedback and discussions with my supervisors caused me to take a deeper look at the data and to draw out gendered realities that were mostly invisible. Therefore although acknowledging that a researcher with a different sociocultural background may adopt a different research design and produce different research findings, having presented a detailed account of the research methodology and methods in chapter four, I argue that this research holds validity and presents one reality among many.

Finally, I reflected on my approach to intersectional analysis. Intersectionality has made significant contributions in allowing room for the voices and perspectives of historically marginalised peoples to be heard. In applying this goal to my thesis, I made the research participants (Ijaw women) the centre of this study, examining their histories as a people group and as part of Nigeria, and paying attention to their shifting gender and ethnic

identities. With this consciousness, and bearing in mind that much of the knowledge about gender, ethnicity and intersectionality has been produced in Eurocentric contexts, I made the decision to allow the stories of my research participants guide my intersectional analysis. This resulted in the analytical separation of gender and ethnicity, while also examining the different ways that they intersect with each other, and with other identity categories that emanated from the stories of the research participants. This enabled me to produce rich contextual knowledge about the lived experience of Ijaw women that is based on their worldview.

I address the challenges posed by postcolonialism and feminism in my research by conducting a historical examination of the research population, and by allowing their stories to guide my analysis. Postcolonialism as a body of theory consists of epistemological perspectives deriving from a range of scholarly fields such as anthropology, African American studies, culture studies, women studies, history, philosophy, political science, sociology, etc. Although it is dedicated to recovering the historical and contemporary voices of ex-colonies, it considers numerous approaches to inquiry, for example, feminism, psychoanalysis, post structuralism, etc. As can be seen, postcolonialism is not a unitary theoretical perspective. My writing might be seen as contributing to this body of work, as it does to women's studies, even if I have not chosen explicitly to identify myself with these areas of study in the preceding analysis. This is largely because I see much of such work as addressing either the situation of women in the West, or as devoting too much attention to the relationship between European culture and the Other. I saw my task as shedding light on the African situation, and that of Ijaw women in particular.

Postcolonialism and feminism have common goals to the extent that they both seek to liberate the oppressed i.e. ex-colonies and women respectively. However, the Universalist definition of women in Western feminism has proved incongruent with the lived realities of racialised

and ethnicised minority women in the west and women in other parts of the world, for example Africa (Nigeria). Feminism has made significant contributions to achieving equal opportunities and justice for men and women in the West. However, if it is to make the same progress in ex-colonies and other parts of the world, its ideals of equality must of necessity, be interpreted within their cultural contexts, realities, worldviews, and perspectives. I see my research as contributing to this work.

11.2 Further Research

Further research can be carried out to examine the invisibility of gender and ethnic inequalities in organisations. Below are propositions for future studies:

Comparative study of the experience of gender and ethnicity in Nigeria has the potential to aid the development of more effective equality policies. Such studies could be any of the following: an inter-categorical study of ethnic minority and majority women, ethnic minority men and minority women, ethnic majority men and majority women; an intracategorical study of ethnic majority men of Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa ethnic groups and, ethnic majority women of the three ethnic majority groups. This is rather ambitious to undertake in one research project. However, an understanding of the experiences and agencies of these different groups may support the development of sophisticated and more appropriate equal opportunity policies that cater to marginalised groups at different intersections.

Developing experimental research designs that investigates the viability of best practice suggested in the literature may offer useful insight into developing best practices that are tailored to the sociopolitical and cultural context of Nigerian organisations.

Finally, this research points to the need for researching ethnic inequalities within racial groups. Deeper and salient forms of inequality may be gleaned through researching ethnicities within Whiteness, Blackness and other racial groups. As evidenced in this

research, a racial group comprises different ethnic and cultural backgrounds that can have significant implications for everyday workplace experience. However, the conflation of race and ethnicity by theorists of gender inequalities (Acker, 2012; Atewologun et al., 2015; Fearfull & Kamenou 2006) may silence marginalized ethnic minority voices within racial groups. The next section provides a conclusion to the entire thesis.

11.3 Conclusion

The desire to conduct this study was ignited from personal interest in areas of ethnocentrism, racism and sexism. Being an individual that is socially identified as an ethnic minority woman in all parts of the world, my personal experience of what it means to be regarded as a racial, ethnic and gendered ‘other’ in both distinct and intersecting ways created a fascination in me about social identities and their ability to shape individuals’ lived experiences. Although this research was pursued in a racialised society, I have always had a deep desire to contribute towards the development of my country Nigeria. Being conscious of the significance of ethnicity as a challenge to Nigeria’s development, the goal was to add my attempts towards its resolution, not just to look at ethnicity, but also the problem of gender inequality and the ways that both identities intersect. The use of a qualitative research methodology primarily results from a personal preference for one-to-one interaction, coupled with personal doubts about its usefulness for socially centred and sensitively located research. However, this proved beneficial because it offered the opportunity to facilitate the voices of participants, which are usually marginalized, to be heard. This was an important element, as their stories determined the developmental path of this research. Being attentive to respondents’ voices enabled me to go beyond the primary identities which I set out to study, to see other identities such as language, age and indigeneship that although may not have

been recognized as participants as salient, had significant contributions to their workplace lived experience.

The research set out to answer questions of how Ijaw women identify in the civil service, their perceived significance of their gender and ethnicity in their workplace lived experience, their perceptions of how discrimination happens in the civil service and how they combat structural constraints in the Nigerian civil service. Through the empirical process, it has been determined that unlike race, ethnicity is not always visible, however, markers of ethnicity which are embedded in culture and geographical descent, produce tangible differences in the workplace lived experience of Ijaw, as well as other women. The data indicated that for Ijaw women participants, the civil service is an employer of choice because of its family friendly policies. However, those policies were taken to be synonymous with gender equality initiatives. This reflects traditionalist (i.e. colonial and post-colonial) perceptions of gender by many participants. The opportunity to manage or balance familial with workplace responsibilities was seen as important and the civil service provided them with that leverage. Although labour market forces were also significant in their choice of the civil service, Ijaw women participants experienced barriers to career progression, gender and gender-by-ethnic stereotypes, language discrimination, organizational exclusion and exclusion from powerful informal networks.

The study also revealed disconnect between the government's view of ethnicity and that of participating Ijaw women. In this regard, while ethnicity is a politicised identity for respondents, governmental equality policies affecting participating NCS organisations demonstrate attempts to erase ethnicity. This disconnect renders equality initiatives ineffective and often times counterproductive. State indigeneship practices thus create a dualised experience among Ijaw women, resulting in indigene Ijaw women participants enjoying some level of privilege over their non-indigene counterparts. More so, the Federal

Character Principle reinforces ethnic majority hegemony. The term ethno-indigenism is used to describe the resulting effects of both processes for Ijaw women. The data also revealed that from time to time, ethno-indigenism might be gendered. Although gender was a more passive identity with gender inequalities being invisible to most respondents, participants who had engaged in inter-state marriage encountered ethnic, gendered and indigenship penalties as such women may find themselves living in two worlds. This fact could be seen as leading to an interlocking of identities influencing Ijaw women's workplace lived experiences, although sometimes gendered experiences can be ethnicised and at other times their gender and ethnicity overlap.

The difference between Ijaw women's perceptions of gender, in comparison to ethnic identity influenced how they carry out their activism. They were perceptive of structural constraints and developed strategies geared towards achieving workplace and career goals. These strategies include Awaiting Divine Intervention (ADI) - characterized by doing nothing, while waiting for God to provide a solution; Exit typifies leaving the organisation altogether; Masking involved acquiring the social characteristics that indicate compliance with the dominant culture; Assimilating involved conforming with the dominant culture; Performing among participants is used in this research to describe finding ways to overcome one's differentiated position by enhancing workplace performance; Negotiation (Ijawsism) depicts a deliberate and strategic effort towards choosing civil service jobs perceived as less susceptible to ethnocentrism, as well as creating a network of ethnic ingroup members; while Reforming the system refers to calculated attempts at changing the civil service status quo in favour of the Ijaws. Although the majority of the strategies that Ijaw women adopt result in compliance and reproduction of inequalities, structural influences and deliberate actions of the majority often lead to resistance of change efforts.

This research has elucidated the workplace lived experience of a population, which to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has not been previously researched. By answering specific research questions, this thesis extends the body of knowledge by contributing towards filling this identifiable gap in the literature. Having done this, it acknowledges that this piece of work may be a catalyst for more research in this area, with the aim of developing a richer understanding of the lived experience of gender and ethnicity in Nigerian organisations.

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APPENDIX 1 – Ethics Approval

16 July 2014

Dear Biebele,

Project Title:	‘What’s ethnicity got to do with it?’ The workplace experience of ethnic minority (liaw) women in the Nigerian Civil Service.
Researcher(s):	Biebele Alex-Hart
Principal Investigator:	Dr Gil Robinson

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 28th May 2014**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee’s response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Nigeria	Dr Gill Robinson

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UREC Application Form	2.0	10 June 2014
Participant Information Sheet	2.0	10 June 2014
Consent Form	1.0	13 May 2014
Interview topic guide	1.0	13 May 2014
Recruitment advertisement	1.0	13 May 2014
Request for approval to travel	1.0	13 May 2014

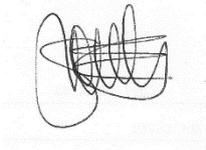
overseas		
Risk assessment	1.0	13 May 2014

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Good Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

Please be aware it is your responsibility to retain this ethics approval letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Fieulleateau
Ethics Integrity Manager
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2 – Participant Consent Form
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants.

‘What’s ethnicity got to do with it?’ The workplace experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian Civil Service

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what it being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. Confidentiality of the information I provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed and that the small sample size of this research may have implications for my anonymity.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant’s Signature

.....

Investigator’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) BIEBELE ALEX-HART

Investigator’s Signature

Date: 10/05/2014

APPENDIX 3 – Participant Information Sheet

University of East London

Docklands Campus

University Research Ethics Committee

This research has received confirmation from the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Catherine Fieulleateau, Ethics Integrity Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
(Telephone: +4420 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk).**

The Principal Investigator

John Chandler

University of East London, Royal Docks Business School
+442082232211

Researcher

Biebele Alex-Hart

University of East London, Royal Docks Business School
+447904414521

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Title

‘What’s ethnicity got to do with it?’ The workplace experience of ethnic minority (Ijaw) women in the Nigerian Civil Service

Project Description

The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of Ijaw women’s ethnicity in their experience of working in the Nigerian Civil Service. To achieve this purpose, this research will attempt to answer the following questions: how do Ijaw women identify themselves in the workplace? Do Ijaw women believe that their ethnicity and gender has any impact on their experience of working in the civil service? What type of discrimination do Ijaw women experience in the workplace, if any, and how do they respond to any such discrimination in the workplace?

Law women who have experience of working in the civil service are welcome to contribute to this research by discussing their experience with the principal researcher in an audiotaped interview lasting from between 15 minutes to 1 hour.

Confidentiality of the Data

Interview data will be gathered on a laptop and transferred to secure University of East London Servers as soon as possible. At the end of the programme, data will be retained for six to ten years after which all electronic and hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

Information collected during the interview process will be coded and direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from the data so that respondents cannot be identified. No record will be retained of how the codes relates to the identifiers. While your identity may be known to the researcher and other participants, your responses will remain anonymous. The confidentiality of the information provided is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions but will remain anonymous). All information collected in the course of this research will be stored in line with University of East London Data Protection Policy.

Location

Interviews will be conducted in an open and non-threatening environment, which is conducive for both the interviewer and participant.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during the interview. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Accepting the offer to participate in this research or choosing to decline will have no impact on your employment.

APPENDIX 4 - Interview Issues Guide

Background Information

1. Job/Role
2. How long working for organisation
3. How long have you been in your current position?
4. Marital Status
5. Children

Roles and Responsibilities as a Civil Servant

6. Tell me about your responsibilities as a civil servant.
7. Why did you choose to become a civil servant?

Perception and Experience of the organisation

8. Do you feel accepted as an Ijaw woman working in the civil service? (why do you think in this way?)
9. Do you consider yourself a part of the majority or minority in the department in which you work? What is the size of the minority? What difference does that make to you? I have read that some departments in the civil service are ethnically homogenous, is this same in your department? (Is there a mixture or one dominant group?)
10. In your view, is there a gender that you see and think may be dominant in the organisation? If yes, why do you think this organisation operates in this way?
11. Apart from English, is there any other language you use to communicate with your colleagues in the workplace? Why do you use this language?
12. Apart from English, is there any other language your colleagues use to communicate in the workplace? Do you understand this language? Please describe for me how you feel when your colleagues speak this language.

Perception of Discrimination in the Civil Service

13. Has being an Ijaw woman had any impact on your career as a civil servant to date?
14. Do you think your experience will be different if you were a man? (If so, how?)

15. Do you think your experience may have been different if you were a member of a majority ethnic group? (If so, how?)
16. Do you believe discrimination exists in the civil service? (How does discrimination happen? Is discrimination by individuals or organizational practices? Is it done openly?)
17. Do you feel that you have ever experienced gender discrimination in the civil service? (If yes, please tell me about it).
18. Have you personally ever experienced discrimination based on your ethnicity in the civil service? (If yes, please tell me about it).
19. Is there women's association/an Ijaw women's association or an Ijaw ethnic group association in your organisation? (If yes: do you take part in the association? If yes why? What is the role of the association? If no: do you think there is need for such associations?)
20. Are you aware of any measures the civil service has in place to ensure that employees have equal opportunities? (If yes, what do you think about it? How did you acquire information about it? Do you feel that there is a necessity for policies on equal opportunities? If so why?)
21. Are you familiar with the idea of 'indigenisation'? (If yes, what do you think about it? If no, explain). Has this impacted you? If so, how?
22. Are you familiar with the Federal Character Principle? (If yes, what do you think about it? If no, explain). Has this policy impacted you? If so, how?

Relationships with colleagues

23. In what ways is your interaction with colleagues who are Ijaw women different from women from other ethnic groups (Do you feel you receive support from them? Do you provide support? Why?)
24. Do you think Ijaws need to do anything differently in order to be successful in the organisation, if so what are your suggestions?
25. What is your perception of how other ethnic groups view Ijaw women interacting together at work?

Perception of Management

26. In your view, are there any differences in the behavior of senior colleagues who are Ijaw, compared to senior colleagues from majority ethnic groups (or minority ethnic group if Ijaw is majority in the organisation)?

27. Describe your relationship with colleagues and managers who are members of Majority ethnic group? (or minority ethnic group if Ijaw is majority in the organisation)(Do you feel you receive support from them? How different is it in relation to other groups that are not of a majority in the organisation?)

28. From your experience, are colleagues and superiors expectations of you as an Ijaw woman different from what they expect Ijaw men? (If yes, what are the differences? How does that make you feel?)

29. From your experience, are colleagues and superiors expectations of you as an Ijaw woman different from ethnic majority women? (or minority women if Ijaw is majority in the organisation)? (If yes, what are the differences? How does that make you feel?)
 - a. Is there anything more about your experience that you feel is important that we may not have touched?

Thank you for your participation.