Exploring identity processes in the work setting

of a developing country through the lenses

# of social identity and post-colonialism

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Kaanakia Konya, certify that the thesis entitled "Exploring identity processes in the work setting of a developing country through the lenses of social identity and post-colonialism" I have presented for examination for the Degree of PhD of Brunel University, West London is solely my own work. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. I declare that this authorization does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe the rights of any third party.

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Abstract

The concept of understanding one's origin or existence spans across almost every sphere of social science; despite its popularity, there is still a lack of research exploring identity in the work setting of developing countries. This thesis aims to contribute to understanding identity processes of workers in developing countries through the lenses of social identity and post-colonialism. The rationale for using these areas lies in the perceived nature of identity processes for people in developing countries by taking into account historical and cultural influences; for social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the "prototype" and "cohesion, solidarity and harmony" and for post-colonialism (Sen, 2006; Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009), "power", the "dialectics of the colonized mind" and "social formations". This thesis takes a socio-psychological approach, which is based on a qualitative research method; in particular, 47 in-depth interviews with professionals from the oil and gas sector of Nigeria form a key aspect of the research method.

Findings reveal that social identity theory can be used to interpret the propensity of Nigerians to identify with groups. The thesis finds that social identity captures the importance attached to group identification through an understanding of the drivers and benefits of harmonyto the self-concept in the chosen context. However the thesis also finds that social identity but does not cater for other integral aspects of identity processes, such as power and identity struggle.The thesis finds that by addressing the perception of perpetuated colonialism produced by the persistent domination of foreign workers in senior roles and their interaction with indigenous workers, post-colonial theory adequately covers issues of power and struggle. In summary, the thesis finds that the integration of social identity theory and post-colonial theory facilitates a more holistic interpretation of identity processes in regions like Nigeria. Hence this thesis contributes to the literature on identity processes in the work setting of a developing country.

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Chapter One

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Identity construction in developing countries is an area that has attracted increased interest from various spheres. The multi-faceted nature of issues emergent from a developing country's socio-economic environment, which include extreme diversity regarding status, ethnicity and culture, the dialectics associated with the post-colonial era and the dynamics of modern society represent important areas of contribution to identity processes. Indeed, the western, liquidity modern context (Bauman, 2000) is characterized by absences: the loss of traditional sources of authority, such as family, union, or religion, foundations that used to provide individuals with a collective sense of belonging around commonly taken for granted bases of identification (Collinson, 2003). Several transient bases of identification that blur old dualisms such as capital and labour, man and woman, married or single now occupy the absent spaces. Culturally tribal fashionable codes of speaking, dressing, playing, and so forth, mostly grounded in consumption rather than production, increasingly provide experiences of belonging. In such a fragmented context, constructing a distinctive identity becomes a constantly shifting project (Knights & Willmott, 1989; Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 1996). Consequently, individuals tend now to problematize identity through projects of the self more likely undertaken at an individual or group level rather than as part of an organized collective process that is automatically reproduced.

Slowly, management research on western societies has been coming to terms with liquid modernity (Clegg and Baumeler, 2010) however to what extent can the same be said about contemporary developing countries? What changes are taking place in developing countries that affect identity construction? Considering the diversity of identity related issues that can be derived from the developing country context, how can they be better articulated and understood both independently and interdependently? This study aims to draw lessons from existing identity research on developed countries to answer questions of identity concerning how identity can be interpreted in the Nigerian work environment. Identity construction in the work environment of the developing economy context is an area that is stillunder researched, which highlights the novelty of this study. To this end, two areas have been selected to represent key areas of identity construction in the developing country context; these include "social

identity" and "post-colonialism". Through the lenses of these two areas, this study aims to explore the process of identity construction with particular consideration to key sub concepts for each area: for social identity through the operation of the 'group prototype' and 'cohesion, solidarity and harmony'. By de-constructing the multi-layered factors that capture the importance of the prototype and harmony to group identification, this review hopes to set the tone for the study's attempt at understanding the peculiar identity processes of Nigerian workers. In recognition of the historical roots of socialisation in the chosen region, a look at the dialectics of post-colonialism aims to provide insight into what impact, the colonial era may have on how Nigerians perceive themselves in the workplace. The transition of Nigerian workers negotiating a post-colonial era to engagement with a modern world also has important implications for the identity processes of Nigerian professionals. Aside from personal observation, modern norms also appear to have captured the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria so it is useful to explore how social identification and post-colonialism shape the identities of Nigerian workers. As a context for illustration, the oil and gas industry in Nigeria has been selected. In the midst of the global economy, with considerations to post-colonialism and the perceived identity processes peculiar to such a region (social identity), Nigeria represents a country with arguably one of the most debated identities in the developing world (Adesina, 2012). Furthermore the oil and gas industry represents one of the most prominent sectors in the world and has particular standing in regions like Nigeria where output accounts for a significant proportion of gross domestic product (GDP). The extreme diversity and historical ambiguity that characterizes key identity processes in Nigeria makes it a worthwhile choice for understanding what sort of factors contribute to identity construction in developing countries. The aim of this study is to embark on a socio-psychological exploration into identity processes in the workplace.

The inclusion of social identity is inspired by the notion that Nigerians generally attach significance to identifying with groups (Olu-Olu, 2014; Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Osaghae, 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009; Ugwuebu, 2011). This notion is further reinforced by personal lived experiences in Nigeria. As a result, one of the aims of this study is to find out to what extent social identity theory can be used to explain/interpret identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace.Post-colonialism represents the historical dimension of the chosen context. Exploring identity processes in a developing

country context can only benefit from the consideration of processes associated with post-colonialism that still influence the way people in such regions identify themselves. In considering the influence of post-colonialism on identity processes, considerations will be given to related phenomena such as westernization, thereby assessing how western developments are facilitating changes in identity processes that affect people in developing countries.

In summary, this study considers how social identity and post-colonialism inform current interpretations of identity construction in a developing country context. Whereas social identity may be interpreted more specifically as a type of identity construction, post-colonialism provides an exploration into a period of time or perspective. The two areas have been selected for this study because of their perceived relevance to understanding how individuals identify themselves in the chosen region. This study's interest in these areas is nonetheless limited to how they affect Nigerians in the workplace based on individual perceptions, observations and lived experiences. The hope is that this thesis will in some way facilitate a more holistic overview of what it means to be a Nigerian in the workplace and potentially lay foundation for new conceptualisations that are more illustrative of the complexities of people who emanate from regions with a trichotomy of a colonial past, an ever active indigenous culture and a modern environment.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

The increasing elimination of space and time in the world we live in has highlighted the importance of understanding each other for a wide spectrum of areas (e.g. sociology, anthropology, psychology, management). The idea of the workplace or setting as a global space now has significant implications for identity processes. The combination of factors that make people from different regions similar and those factors that make them different fuels the complexity of efforts into cross-cultural studies. In light of global integration, developing economies continue to offer a considerable degree of scope for foreign direct investment. Investment and trade with developing countries will always benefit from an updated understanding of how the past, present and future is influencing identity processes in such regions. Consistent with most existing management literature, identity research in developing countries continues to lag behind that carried out in western or developed countries. Extreme ethnic diversity, a

colonial past and a prominent global status characterize Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria represents an illustrative developing country context that offers to provide meaningful contributions to understanding what factors are peculiar to the identity processes of people in such regions. Knowledge on how people identify themselves in the developing country context will be beneficial to groups ranging from academia, to strategic management and public policy.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of this study are derived from the research questions listed below:-

1. To what extent can social identity theory be used to interpret/explain the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace?

    a. How can the prototype, and cohesion, solidarity and harmony be used to interpret the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace?

2. To what extent does post-colonialism, inform the identity of Nigerian workers in the chosen sector and region?

    a. How can "power", "dialectics of the colonized mind" and "social formations" be used to interpret the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

3. What kind of relationship can be drawn between social identity and post-colonialism in the context of identity construction in the chosen sector and region?

The above research questions directed the focus of the primary and secondary research carried out in this study.

1.4 OUTLINE OF THESIS

The thesis is organized as follows: chapter one outlines the broad focus of enquiry, the aim of the thesis, justification of focus, research questions and the outline of the thesis.

Chapter two explores a review of existing literature in identity. This chapter will review contemporary efforts to explore social identities in the developed economy context.

Particular focus will be put on social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1982) in light of the notion that people in the chosen context are said to have a propensity for group identification.

Chapter three explores a review of existing literature in post-colonialism (e.g. Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009; Sen, 2006; Banerjee, 2006). This chapter will review background on the colonial and immediate post-colonial period that followed independence. Post-colonial theory will then be reviewed with considerations to key debates.

Chapter four provides a breakdown of the methodology, method and research philosophy adopted for this study. An explanation of the qualitative methodology and the interview method will be explained with further detail on the practical steps taken to improve the efficiency of the data collection process. This chapter will also provide contextual background on the industry and region chosen for this study (i.e. the oil and gas industry of Nigeria).

Chapter five explains the data analysis process, relaying the results and discussing the themes that emerged from primary research targeted at social identity.This study recognizes the importance of capturing the participant's 'voices' so this chapter will include extracts from the interviews to provide direct illustrations of issues being discussed.

Chapter six relays the results from the primary research that was targeted at post-colonialism. This chapter will also include extracts from the interviews to provide direct illustrations of issues being discussed.

Finally, chapter seven will comprise of the discussion to consolidate the thoughts and ideas derived from the discussion of themes in chapters five and six. The aim of this discussion will be to focus on the central issues that emerged from the themes that provide the most contribution to identity processes in the chosen context. This will be followed by the theoretical and empirical contribution of this study, limitations to study and implications for future research.

Chapter Two

Identity: Theoretical Approaches and Frameworks

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The use of social identity in this study is inspired by the notion that Nigerians have a propensity to identify with groups while post-colonialism represents an important socio-economic phase that is most relevant to Nigeria (Olu-Olu, 2014; Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Osaghae, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Mizuno &Okazawa, 2009; Meagher, 2010; Ugwuebu, 2011). Through these lenses, this study aims to explore the process of identity construction in the work setting of a developing country. This chapter reviews the existing body of identity literature with consideration to empirical studies on identity in the organization and a discussion of this study's area of interest being social identity. This chapter reflects on the nature of existing research on identity construction in the workplace to draw lessons that may be useful to the peculiar context under examination in this study. Social identity theory is explored through the operation of the group prototype (i.e. the group member that embodies either the typical or ideal attributes of a group) and the principles of cohesion, solidarity and harmony in the context of the chosen region. By de-constructing the multi-layered factors that capture the importance of the prototype (i.e. the group member that embodies either the typical or ideal attributes of a group) and cohesion, solidarity and harmony to group identification, this review seeks to set the tone for the study's attempt at understanding the peculiar identity processes of Nigerian workers.

The following section will recall the main research questions that direct this study. Each of the research questions will again be considered in the relevant theoretical discussions so that the review of existing literature focuses on the respective research question. The next section will look at trends in identity research and identity work within management. The following section will then look at social identity, which represents the elected aspect of identity research deemed to be most relevant to the Nigerian context. Sub-concepts will be highlighted and described so as to facilitate a more pragmatic interpretation of identity research in the chosen context.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can social identity theory be used to interpret/explain the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

    a. How can "the prototype" and "cohesion, solidarity and harmony" be used to interpret the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

2. To what extent does post-colonialism, inform the identity of Nigerian workers in the chosen sector and region?

    b. How can "power", "dialectics of the colonized mind" and "social formations" be used to interpret the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

3. What kind of relationship can be drawn between social identity and post-colonialism and in the context of identity construction in the chosen sector and region?

The above research questions directed the focus of the primary and secondary research carried out in this study.

2.3 TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY IDENTITY RESEARCH

The trends in contemporary identity research illustrate the direction of research and to some degree the importance attached to different forms of identity. This section takes a brief look at some of the broad layers of identity research by describing and comparing them; also aiming to provide a snapshot of some of the discussion points. By recognising and discussing some of the key themes of identity research, this section aims to reveal some discoveries that have implications for the research of this study. Notably, identity themes are addressed on a plethora of levels: organisational, professional, social and individual. Sometimes these are linked, as when organisational or (other) social identities are seen to fuel the identities of individuals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Elsbach, 1999; Humphreys & Brown, 2002).

Fig. 2.1 Broad Layers of Identity Research

Individual

Group

Professional

Organisational

Figure 2.1 illustrates some of the broad layers of identity work in most management and psychology research. Considerable research views group, organisational and professional identities as theoretically and methodologically similar however, recent studies suggest that these identities are generically different (Lammers, Atouba, Carlson, 2013). Beginning with the first layer, identity speaks of individual existence and the factors that govern the decision making, behaviour and attitudes that are embodied in the self-concept; such factors include sources as diverse as upbringing, race, gender, ethnicity or culture and group membership. Fundamentally, this study suggests that two important characteristics of individual identity research are as follows: (i.) being the smallest unit of identity construction, it is foundational as it facilitates the development of all other forms of identity construction; (ii) it is highly concentrated and so tends to be overlooked by identity research that focuses on phenomenon that requires aggregated research (e.g. organisational, industry or national).

The second layer is of particular interest to this study as research in identity has become more aware of the significance of group identification in determining not just the identity processes of employees but also in organisational policy implementation, which favours groupings over individuals as targets. Of course social identity theory, which essentially addresses group identification will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter as the ideas of the key proponents (e.g. Mead & Thomas, 1934, Tajfel & Turner, 1978,1979, 1986; Turner, 1982; Brewer, 1991; Hogg et al., 1995) will be discussed. This form of identity refers to the propensity that people have to identify themselves through groups. As will become apparent, social identity can be linked to

every other layer of identity noted above (i.e. individual, professional and organisational).

The third layer refers to the identity that individuals draw from their profession. Professions and occupations are rooted in specialised activities and the knowledge that accompanies those activities, which transcend the work groups and organisations where the activities are performed (Lammers & Garcia, 2009). While affiliation with others may attach a person to a work group or an organisation, attachment to an occupation arises from repeated activities, skill building, and in the case of professionalised occupations, and intensive and exclusive socialisation processes. It has been accepted that profession may be seen as an alternative to organisation rather than another organisation to which individuals are attached (cf. Heaton & Taylor, 2002). Professional identity can be linked to social identity in the sense that people of a similar profession, sometimes irrespective of organisation may group together. It is not uncommon to see people of similar professions in an organisation socialising based on shared work experiences because they can relate to what is required of them on a daily basis. One factor to however consider is that although social identity is not just about roles or professionals but actually individuals, the same cannot be said about professional identity, which mainly concerns profession. When an individual identifies with his/her profession, their personal attributes are relegated to the background allowing their professional training and skill- set to be the focal point.

The fourth layer refers to a form of identity, which is arguably the most prominent in management research, organisational identity. This form of identity simply pertains to how an organisation is perceived. With many advances in research, the organisational identity can be interpreted from a variety of perspectives: for example internally by its employees or management and externally by third party groups.

The four layers described here represent the different levels through which identity has been researched in the workplace. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, identity in the workplace of developing economies is somewhat under researchedwhich emphasizes the novelty of this study. In exploring somewhat uncharted territory, it is however useful to reflect on some of the numerous studies on identity in the workplace

within developed economies, allowing for lessons to be drawn or new discoveries to be made wherever possible.

2.3.1 Identity Studies in Developed Economies

In developed economies, there have been strong claims that understanding identity in organisations facilitates better management of people and processes (Brown, 2014). One stream of sociological thought suggests that rising interest in identity is symptomatic of societal changes that have dismantled traditional structures and intensified existential anxieties, leading to increased pressures on individuals to construct 'liquid modern' selves (Bauman, 2000). Dominant streams of identity research in organisations are associated with factors like 'social cognition' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Haslam, 2004; Hogg and Terry, 2000), symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969), post structuralism and power (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Hall, 1996) and the psychoanalytic work of Lacan (Driver, 2009; Harding, 2007) and Freud (Gabriel, 2000; Petriglieri and Stein, 2012). Identity scholars of different types often deal with a range of issues that have become synonymous with identity theory. These include the extent to which identities are chosen or ascribed, stable or dynamic, coherent or fragmented and motivated by desires for positive meaning and authenticity.

The increased popularity of identity research has given rise to the interest in understanding how identities are formed, in particular the agency that actors exercise in their conduct of what is described as 'identity work' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996 cited in Brown, 2014). According to Brown (2014), the most widely cited definition of identity work, is that formulated by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003, p.1165) who suggest that 'identity work refers to people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness'. There have been multiple attempts to specify 'generic' processes of identity work, though there is little consensus on these, including 'claiming', 'affirming', 'accepting', 'complying', 'resisting', 'separating', 'joining', 'defining', 'limiting', 'bounding', 'stabilising', 'sensemaking', 'restructuring', and to differentiate between work that is 'active' and 'passive' and that which is 'conscious' and 'sub-conscious' (Petriglieri, 2011).

At the level of the individual, the types of identities that people work on have consequences for their everyday decision-making in organisations (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) and their careers (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). Identity work is key to the debates regarding how identities should be theorized and researched. The debate surrounding how identities should be theorized centres around the following perspectives: (i) chosen by or ascribed to individuals; (ii) generally stable, evolutionally adaptive or fluid; (iii) unified and coherent or fragmented and possibly contradictory; (iv) motivated (or not) by a need for positive meaning; and (v) framed (or not) by a desire for authenticity. It is rare for these perspectives to be considered collectively as strands of the same set of debates about identities in and around organisations however as Brown (2014) affirms, such a step facilitates a 'richer' appreciation of the multiplicity of debates in the field. Next, some of the key paradigms of identity will be summarized and introduced under the following headings: 'structure and agency', 'stability and fluidity', 'coherence and fragmentation' and 'positive and negative identities'.

Structure and agency

This refers to the fact that identities are said to arise in a continuing dialectic and are best described as 'improvised' or 'crafted' through identity work processes that are sometimes calculative and pragmatic, often emotionally charged and generally social. There has been considerable attention on whether identities are chosen by resourceful and autonomous beings or ascribed to individuals by historical forces and institutional structures (Howard, 2000; Jenkins, 1996; Webb, 2006 cited by Brown, 2014). Organizational members may accommodate the identities on offer to them, but also modify and redefine them, distance themselves from them through irony, humour and cynicism or contest them (Fleming and Spicer, 2003 cited by Brown, 2014). According to Brown (2014), to a large extent people do not unconsciously accept cultures imposed upon them nor do they willingly choose unconstrained the contexts in which their identity work takes place or the influences that shape their preferred self-concepts. Empirical studies of employees in developed economies who are engaged in identity work, often in demanding circumstances, mirror theoretical agency/structure debates.

Stability and Fluidity

The debate regarding stability and fluidity is one of the most central to the area of identity. This debate has roots in the eras of structuralism and post-structuralism. The prevailing argument by social psychologists for identity in organisations is that people need a 'relatively stable and secure' understanding of their self-concept in order to function effectively (Ashforth and Reiner, 1999, p. 417 cited by Brown, 2014). However there has been increasing acceptance of the suggestion that while self-concepts may demonstrate continuity, there is also scope for flexibility provided by a more amiable 'working self-concept', which is said to permit dynamic responses to variable situations. (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Markus and Wurf, 1987 cited by Brown, 2014). For some social psychologists, selves are constructed from a relatively stable set of meanings, which change only gradually, but identities (work, role, professional, ethnic) can be acquired, lost, switched or modified much more quickly in line with changes in contexts. It is assumed that fundamental change in self-concept is generally regarded as possible, but an evolutionary process that occurs gradually through negotiated adaptation, such as in the case of career transitions (Pratt et al. 2006 cited by Brown, 2014).

Coherence and Fragmentation

The idea that identities are either coherent or fragmented is a contradiction that is also central to the identity debate. Similar to discussions regarding stability and fluidity, coherence and fragmentation can also be traced back to the structuralism versus post-structuralism debate. Admittedly people in organisations have a tendency to talk about their identities/selves as coherent entities, and traditionally mainstream Western thinking and some streams of social psychology have highlighted the coherence of individual identities. (Ybema et al. 2009 cited by Brown, 2014). From this perspective, identity work is undertaken in pursuit of coherent identities, where 'coherent' refers variously to individuals' sense of their own continuity over time, clarity in awareness of the connections between their multiple identities, a sense of completeness or wholeness, and embrace of the essentially integrated nature of their selves. According to Brown (2014), those focused on identity narratives are more likely to highlight that identity-stories must logically fit together: for example by rationally integrating protagonists, actions, motives, scenes and plots (Ricoeur, 1984 cited by Brown, 2014). The argument in support of coherence is indeed compelling as it accommodates for a degree of order

when evaluating identity processes and their implications. Nonetheless even some theorists who accept that to some degree identities are fragmented, have a tendency to maintain that usually 'successful' identity work operates to increase coherence (Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003, p. 1187) and that faced with competing demands, people are motivated to reduce identity contradictions and inconsistencies (Down and Reveley, 2009; Taylor, 2005).

The argument of fragmentation emphasizes that identities are rarely fully coherent or integrated (Nkomo and Cox, 1998) but rather incorporate ambiguity or what Beech (2008) describes as 'meaning giving tensions': these include self-doubt, insecurity, fragility, and inconsistency which after all are, aspects of the human condition (Roseneil and Seymour, 1999; Sarup, 1996). Indeed for some, the terms 'identity' and 'self' are unhelpfully suggestive of coherence that our actual disjointed identities do not exhibit (Lawler, 2008, p. 145). Others have commented on how hybrid (Lok, 2010), hypocritical (Brunsson, 1989) and antagonistic (Clarke et al. 2009) identities may in fact be long term solutions that enable people to cope effectively with ambiguous and inconsistent demands. Empirical research on developing economies has shown that while scholars who focus on people's lives and specifically work-related narratives may note the diverse discourses on which their respondents draw, they tend generally to emphasise the intrinsic biographical coherence of the identity stories on, which individuals work (Lieblich and Josselson, 1997; Reedy, 2009 cited by Brown, 2014). Lutgen-Sandvik (2008, p. 114) in commenting on an analysis of how people respond to workplace bullying concludes that 'humans seek existential, self-narrative constancy in the face of competing discourses and paradoxical experiences'. Other studies of aero engineers (Clarke et al. 2009), academics (Knights and Clarke 2014; Learmonth and Humphreys, 2012) and architects (Brown et al. 2010) have surfaced and analysed the dislocated, tensional nature of identities and accompanying identity work and helped to shift attention toward a more complex and unstable view on identity construction.

Some theorists have acknowledged the rise of a dominant stream of research, which highlights that our identities stories are often challenged, denied or ignored by others (Gabriel, 2000; Roberts, 2005), and that people in organisations mostly author a plurality of diverse and even contradictory identities (Humphreys and Brown, 2002a). It is on the basis of such developments that some theorists have concluded that identity

studies in developed economies have moved progressively towards an understanding of identity work as leading to ambiguous and disjointed identities that incorporate both seemingly orderly formations and deeply rooted contradictions (Brown, 2014).

Positive and negative identities

The desire for positive meaning to be ascribed to identity is indeed rational and can be linked to any discussion of identity that considers the importance of one's self-esteem in and around the work environment. In this study, the debate concerning positive and negative identities is deemed particularly relevant due to the contextual characteristics of the developing economy, which include factors that may either facilitate harmony or tension within identity processes. Such factors include intense ethnic and racial identities, status driven norms and post-colonial dialectics. In considering positive and negative identities, there will be some reflections on social identity principles (note that social identity theory refers to theorisations of people's propensity to identify with groups; this will be discussed much more extensively later in the chapter). Multiple identities, status and respect will also be considered to provide better understanding of positive and negative identities.

Postive meanings are commonly defined as those that are valuable, good or beneficial (Dutton et al. 2010), promote favourable self-views and are associated with characteristics such as competence, resilience and transcendence (Kreiner and Sheep, 2009). This is said to be true even in the case of those who engage in 'dirty work', work that is perceived as degrading to those performing it (Hughes, 1951 cited by Brown, 2014), and who recognize this fact. Theorists of social identity, a theory which will be discussed further in this chapter, maintain that those members of tainted groups unable to leave such jobs often engage in identity work to change others' perceptions of them, reject negative assessments and/or insist on using criteria for self-evaluation that flatter them (Hogg, 2003; Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In effect, the establishment of a protective ideology and the use of behavioural and cognitive defence tactics such as humour and ambivalence, stigmatized workers are able to reframe, refocus understandings of their selves and thus secure positive meanings (Breakwell, 1986; Kreiner, Ashforth, and Sluss, 2006 cited by Brown, 2014). Conversely, for others the idea that people in organisations work only on achieving or preserving positive identities is a professional blind spot in the identity work literature. As Learmonth and Humphreys (2011, p. 425)

assert, dirty work is infact 'experienced by most people, in large measure as degrading and exploitative'. One aspect of this argument is that individualistic values such as 'the success ethic' (Luckmann and Berger, 1964) and the achievement principle (Offe, 1976) are considered highly threatening by many workers. For professionals consumed by increasingly competitive work situations and low status manual workers seeking validation in the face of debilitating self-doubt, insecurities about the self are an omnipresent and sometimes all-consuming aspect of their identity work (Collinson, 2003; Sennett and Cobb, 1977).

The concept of multiple identities is another central element of identity theory. It is assumed that individuals have many identities, which are activated one at a time in relevant domains. For example, one's professional identity may be activated while at work and one's parent identity may be activated at home. In the contextof multiple identification, theensuing relationship between coactivated identities may be positive or negative (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Having positive relationships between coactivated identities is important because it can lead to beneficial outcomes for individuals such as enrichment through the generation of positive emotion (Rothbard, 2001) however negative relationship between coactived identities results in 'identity struggle'. In essence, a positive coactivation is experienced when identities are complementary or synergistic with one another. A negative coactivation is experienced as 'conflict' or 'struggle' that is when identities are in tension with one another. Struggle in identity literature arises when more than one identity is activated at the same time (i.e. coactivation).When consideration is given to the existence of multiple identities, the importance of understanding 'coactivation' (i.e. the activation of more than one identity at a time) may also be acknowledged. Although conflict between identities has been extensively studied (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), positive relationships between identities have been less investigated. Rothbard & Ramarajan (2009) argue that factors such as status, respect and temporal control that allow for greater control over whether and when identities are coactivated, as well as factors such as cognitive routines for managing multiple identities simultaneously, can lead individuals to experience greater compatibility between multiple coactivated identities. Recent work has defined status as the respect, deference and influence individuals have in the eyes of others (Anderson, John, Keltner & Kring, 2001; Anderson, Srivastava,

Beer, Spataro & Chatman, 2006; Berger, Cohen & Zelditch, 1972; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Ridgeway & Walker, 1995 cited by Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009).

From a multiple identity perspective, status is deemed to be an important factor to consider because it is assumed that higher status individuals often have more flexibility with fulfilling identity and role expectations than lower status individuals (Ridgeway, 1982). For example, a higher status person such as a senior manager or expatriate in the context of the oil and gas industry may be more able to respond to a telephone call about a sick family member (and experience these two identities as compatible) than a junior member of staff who may experience such a telephone call as representing a choice between his or her work and family identities. Thus, it is argued that higher status individuals may have the ability to act and behave in ways that create greater identity compatibility because they have more idiosyncrasy credits that allow for their behavior to be interpreted more positively by others (Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). This freedom from fear about the negative interpretation of boundary crossovers may allow higher status individuals more positive or compatible experiences of coactivated identities.

Respect and identity have also been closely linked. An individual's identity is often said to be an internalized reflection of the approval and recognition that is gained from others (Mead, 1934). Individuals feel respected when they perceive they are being treated with care for their identity and positive self-regard (Ramarajan, Barsade & Burack, 2008). Respect for one's identities is important in part because individuals have a powerful desire to have their self views verified by others (Polzer, Milton & Swann, 2000 & 2002 cited by Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). In contrast, when individuals feel disrespected, it can cause a person's self-concept to collapse. Status and respect are also closely related, as the definition of status indicates. Indeed some theorists have argued that respect for a person is often communicated as one's status within one's group and enhances one's group identity (de Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Smith & Tyler, 1997; Tyler, 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2001). Like status, it is argued that respect may also increase one's control or perceived control over the situation, increasing compatibility between identities. However, respect is said to differ from status in that an organisation may instill a culture of respect that applies broadly regardless of status distinctions (Phillips, Rothbard & Dumas, in press). Such a culture of respect could

make up for the lack of control individuals feel in low-status positions. Conversely an organization, which instills status driven norms may facilitate a culture that apportions respect based on the status (i.e. grade) of each employee. Such a culture of status driven norms would encourage distinctions in identity processes that cut across employee grading lines (i.e. there would be clear distinctions between senior and junior staff).

Moreover, although respect is a reflected appraisal based on others' responses to an individual, feeling respected may increase one's sense of control over one's identity (i.e. who one is or can be) in a given situation. Specifically, in terms of identities, research shows that respect for an individual's identities is important and influences their desire to be part of a group (Barretto and Ellemers, 2002; Tyler & Blader, 2001). For example, Barretto and Ellemers (2002) conducted an experiment in which they showed that if an individual chose a particular group identity (i.e. categorized him/herself in a certain group) and this choice of identity was respected, she would also be more likely to identify witih an additional group that she had not chosen, when compared with an individual whose choice of identity was disrespected. From Barretto and Ellemer's (2002) example, Rothbard and Ramarajan (2009) argue that it is likely respecting individuals' important identities not only may have acted as an indicator of status but also perhaps increased individuals' feelings of control over "who they were" in a given setting, whereas disrespecting important identities diminished their sense of control.

Further to the discussion based on the paradigms of stability and fluidity, coherence and fragmentation and positive and negative identities, key outcomes that have emerged from empirical studies on identity processes in the work place of developed economies include 'context', 'processes', 'temporality', 'sensemaking', 'costs' and 'limitations and dangers' (Brown, 2014). Next, the concepts of 'context', 'costs' and 'sensemaking' will be considered briefly for further insight into aspects of the literature on developed economies that are deemed integral to theorisations of identity but also potentially relevant to the developing economy context.

Context

Studies on organisations as 'identity workspaces' (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010) and 'meaning arenas' (Westenholz, 2006) indicate that different organizational contexts vary in the scope, resources and encouragement they offer people as they fashion their

identities. Yet many theorists feel that research is wholly ignorant regarding whether, for example, consonant identity work topics or strategies are drawn on and shared generally by members of similar-type organisations, e.g. the oil and gas industry which is the industry context chosen for this thesis. It will be useful to discover how the context of the oil and gas industry in Nigeria informs the data of this study.

Sensemaking

This concept refers to the idea of the individual being a sense maker who is continuously undergoing re-definition of his or her identity to acquire the most optimal identity for the immediate context and time. Weick's (1995) primary interest and that of the broader sensemaking community has been with the sense that people make of their external worlds rather than themselves. There has been some research that regards identity work as a form of sensemaking. For example, research on organizational identification, which explores the extent to which members define themselves in terms of notionally organizational traits as products of sensemaking processes (Pratt, 2000 cited by Brown, 2014). Although the idea of sensemaking has emerged from empirical studies on developed economies, it is arguably a universal consideration, which is fundamental to any individual in any part of the globe.

Costs

It is the view of some scholars (e.g. Brown, 2014) that many explorations of identity work in organisations have tended to represent it as necessary, utilitarian, desirable or pleasurable, without considering its potential dis-benefits. While the self is often conceived as a form of compromise between preferred and imputed designations (Snow and Anderson, 1987), one must ask what happens when individuals' subjective identity work clashes with others' ascriptions of identities to them? Across identity literature, divergent understandings of who we and others are is not unusual and has important implications for self-esteem, work relationships and processes associated with change, leadership and organizational outcomes. The issue of struggle is indeed descriptive of these scenarios. When identity work is undertaken only because 'it is sanctioned by social rituals and the identities one works on are those authorized by the organization, what is left for the individual? (Brown, 2014). Studies of identity regulation in corporate settings within developed economies illustrate that coerced employees tend to respond not with blind compliance but sophisticated practices of irony, skepticism,

cynicism and humour (Fleming and Spicer, 2003). The question for studies of identity is what are the individual and collective identity work processes that underpin these responses and what are the immediate and longer-term consequences for well-being associated with them?

In reviewing some of the highlights of identity studies in developed economies, key paradigms, trends and phenomena have been revealed. Although the outcomes of such studies are rooted in the developed economy context, some of these outcomes may be reproduced in the context of the developing economy with the possibility for fresh insight into identity underscored by the peculiarity of people who live and work in spaces that are synonymous with factors like intense ethnicity and racial hierarchies, status driven norms and post-colonial dialectics. Next, the concept of social identity will be introduced in the context of existing literature based on developed economies and this study's attempt to understand the identity processes of people who work in developing economies.

2.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the use of social identity theory here is in response to the notion by several scholars that Nigerians attach significance to identifying with groups (Olu-Olu, 2014; Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Osaghae, 2006; Lewis, 2006, Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009; Meagher, 2010; Ugwuebu, 2011). Now the aspects of identity theory, which have facilitated the development of social identity theory, will be discussed with recognition given to the main proponents.

Psychology defines identity as a cognitive construct of the self, which is essentially relational and self-referential. The typical psychological concept of the self as a collection of personality traits primarily focuses on the individual. In organisational studies, this singular focus on the individual has been frequently at odds with the observed behaviour of individuals in groups. Hence the concept of the social self emerged and was elaborated to explain observed differences in behaviour between the individual as a person (personal identity) and the individual as a member of a group (social identity) (Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Turner and Onorato, 1999).

The link between the individual and the group starts with the idea of the self as a bounded cognitive schema, i.e. a sort of implicit identity (Korte 2007). This cognitive schema is a structure of complex, rich, affectively charged, interrelated concepts about the self. This schema contains core concepts and peripheral concepts of the self. Core concepts allow an individual to adapt to various situations. The core concepts of the self constrain the individual by selectively interpreting and processing information, thereby preserving a more enduring personal identity. The 'core' concept of the self "embodies personal history, relates the individual to social situations, shapes cognition, and anchors a range of goals, motives and needs" (Turner and Onorato, 1999). Surrounding the core are peripheral concepts of the self that are more fluid allowing the individual to adapt to various social situations and adopt various roles and group identities; these are considered one's social identities (Korte, 2007).

At this juncture, certain concepts that will be used frequently while introducing social identity theory will be defined.

- The "prototype" refers to an individual who embodies the typical attributes of a group (Bartel & Wiesenfeld, 2013)

- "Saliency" refers to the tendency of a particular aspect (sub-identity) of one's identity to become more prominent in a particular context and

- "Multiple identities" refer to the different aspects of an individual's identity that manifest from one context to another through the process of saliency (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Social psychology developed a broad notion of groups as interrelated entities ranging in size from interpersonal dyads to multiple groups in larger collectives. Based on the context of the situation, dyads can give way to larger groups, which can coalesce into organisations, causing the organisation to become the salient group in relation to other organisations. Organisations may also collect into a distinct industry group among other industries, and so on. Generally, the relevant group for a particular social identity depends on the salience of that group in any situation. Therefore, one may variously perceive his or her membership as part of a workgroup, organisation, profession,

industry, nation, society, race, or human being. Social psychologists believe that how people think about themselves and others depends on the focal group level and heavily influences their behaviour and performance (Kanfer, 1990; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Pratt, 2003). Now let us take a look at how social identity theory emerged. Figure 2.2 has been designed for this study to represent some key milestones in the development of social identity theory.

Fig. 2.2 Social Identity Theory Time line

1934 & 1937: Mead & Thomas (Discovery of the 'self 'is in the context of a group, i.e. society. The self is a bounded cognitive schema made up of interrelated concepts of the self)

1972: Tajfel (an individual derives emotional value from knowing he/she is part of a group)

1979: Tajfel & Turner (beliefs about how groups relate [e.g. status] can influence the way that individuals or groups pursue positive social identity).

1982: Turner (Further emphasis on Self-Concept within Social Identity Theory)

1988: Hogg & Abrams (Intergroup, Self-Conceptual and Motivational emphases integrated into Social Identity theory)

1988: Turner (Social Identity theory extended to include Self Categorisation and Social Categorisation)

2004: Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe (Extended the emotional component of Social Identity to include "importance, attachment, social embeddedness, behavioural involvement, and content and meaning).

According to Ailon-Souday & Kunda (2003), the concept of social identity dates as far back as the 1930s. Mead (1934) and Thomas (1937) are said to have initiated some of the earliest research on the social construction of identity. The process of communication and interpretation that occurs among people and within each individual

facilitates understanding of one's relationship to a social group. For example, in "Mind, Self and Society", Mead (1934), a major American social philosopher and co-founder of pragmatism, suggests that people learn first about their existence in the society and only then develop individual consciousness. Although Mead (1934) and Thomas (1937) are associated with the earliest discussions of social identity, contemporary scholars unanimously accredit the conceptualisation of social identity theory to Henri Tajfel (1978, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and John Turner (1975, 1982, 1984). Initially, the following statement by Tajfel became the cornerstone of the social identity concept:-

> "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups
>   together with some emotional and value significance to him of this
>   group membership"
>
> (1972:292)

Turner (1975) stressed that social identity rests on intergroup social comparisons that seek to confirm or to establish ingroup favouring evaluative distinctiveness between ingroup and outgroup, motivated by an underlying need for self-esteem. Tajfel's (1979) development of social identity theory was said to have focussed on specifying how beliefs about the nature of relations between groups (status, stability, permeability, legitimacy) can influence the way that individuals or groups pursue positive social identity. Tajfel (1981) retained this emphasis in his renowned statement of social identity theory, when he defined it as:

> "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his
>   knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together
>   with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."
>
> (1981:255)

The emphasis on social identity as part of the self-concept was explored more fully by Tajfel (1982) to describe three components that are needed for an individual to achieve social identification:

- First is the awareness of one's membership in a group; one must recognise that one perceives, defines or recognises oneself as a member of a distinct group (Mackie, 1986).

- Second is evaluation, which is the recognition that this awareness of group membership is related to value connotations such as the group's representative attributes, typical behaviours, or norms, which differentiate the in-group from an out-group (Mackie, 1986).

- Thirdly is the affect or emotional significance, which is the emotional investment one obtains from the awareness of group membership and evaluations.

Social identity theory (SIT) proposes that when these components are realised, an individual moves away from "feeling and thinking like a distinct individual, to feeling and thinking like a representative of a social group" (Lembke and Wilson, 1998: 931). Hogg and Abrams (1988) then followed on with a comprehensive coverage of relevant research as intergroup, self-conceptual, and motivational emphases were effectively integrated. Simultaneously, Turner et al. (1982) extended social identity theory through the development of self-categorization theory, which specified in detail how social categorization produces prototype-based depersonalization of self and others and, thus generates social identity phenomena. Fiske and Taylor (1991) describe two components of social cognition (e.g. causal attributions, schemas, and self-identities) and the other is the process of cognition (attention, memory, and inference). Recognising these dual components of cognition, Henri Tajfel (1982) articulated the elements of a theory of social identity in the 1970s.

Therefore although Mead & Thomas discussed the tendency of an individual to discover himself in the context of socialisation, Tajfel (1978) had particular interest in establishing the most basic motive behind the need for social identification. Tajfel & Turner (1978, 1979) took interest in the fulfilment that an individual derived from being part of a group and how this motivated an individual's decision to be part of a group. Therefore Tajfel (1978) started with the individual's desire for fulfilment, which is followed by the individual's decision to categorise himself (self-categorisation). Once the individual has categorised himself, he then chooses to join a social grouping by internalising the values and attributes of the group to form his social identity. In other words, the values or attributes of the group have to be compatible with the category he has put himself in so as to derive the fulfilment he so craves. Tajfel & Turner (1979) proposed that there are three cognitive processes relevant to a person

being part of an in-group, or of an out-group. Such group membership being dependent upon circumstances, possibly associable with the appearance of prejudice and discrimination related to such perceived group membership. The three processes are as follows:

- Self and Social Categorisation: The process of deciding which group you or "another person(s)" belongs to. At its most basic and non-involved level "any group will do" and no necessity is seen for conflict between groups.

- Social Identification: The processes by which you or "another person or persons" identify with an in-group more overtly. The norms and attitudes of other members within that group being seen as compatible with your own or worthy of emulation by yourself, or as compatible with those of "another person or persons" or seen as being by open to emulation by "another person or persons".

- Social Comparison: Your own self-concept or the social concept of "another person or persons" becomes closely interlocked with perceptions of group membership. Self-esteem, or the estimate of "another person or persons" is enhanced or detracted from by perceptions of how in-groups and out-groups are held to behave or are held to be able to perform or to rate in society.

Figure 2.3 has been adopted from www.age-of-sage.org to show the SIT process.

Fig. 2.3The Social Identity Process
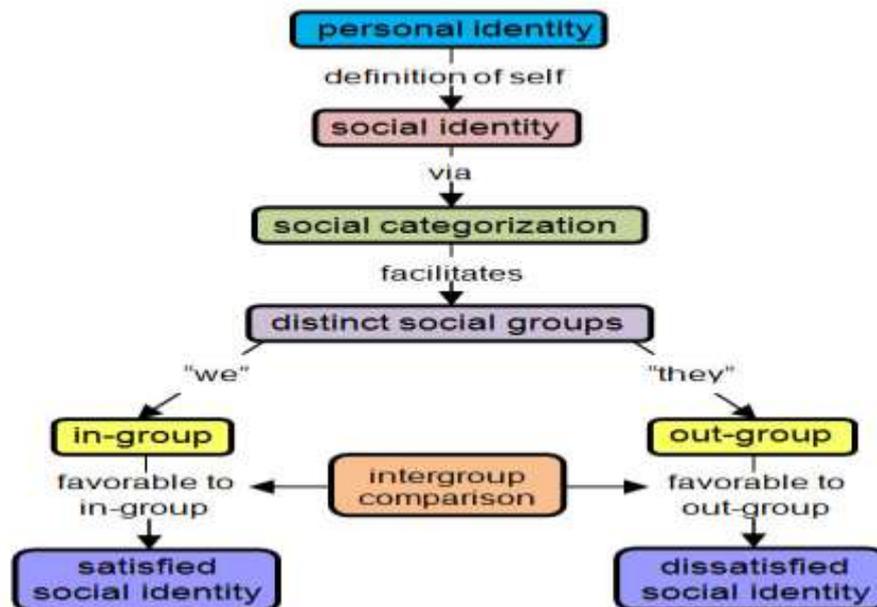
Using figure 2.3 to explain the social identity theory, the process starts with the individual who initially seeks to define himself. The individual chooses to do this by attaining a social identity because of a belief that this outcome would acquire him value and significance (Tajfel, 1979). To establish a social identity, he categorises himself (self/social categorisation), which then enables him to choose which groups would make a good fit for his category. From this point, there are always two sides for every decision: to either be part of the ingroup ("we") or part of the out-group ("they"). Here his decision is primarily based on his fit with the values or attributes of the group (whether actual fit or aspirational fit) and social comparisons between groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The desired outcome is that his choice to be part of the ingroup ("favourable to in-group") of a particular group will afford him a satisfied social identity. This outcome is possible because he has chosen to be part of a group that he perceives to have a higher status than the out-group(s). On the other hand, if he finds himself in the out-group, then his predicament will lead to a dissatisfied social identity. Although the above description has been based on the assumption that his group identification and subsequent social identity is the result of his own choices, the process applies in a similar way regardless of whether he has a choice or not. For example in the case of workgroups within the organisations included in this study's sample, in many cases an employee may have little choice in the workgroup that he is assigned to.

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For the participants of this study's sample, their distribution to specific workgroups are of course informed by their disciplines or skill set but ultimately determined by the employer. Therefore although an individual takes the decision to apply to the organisation and accept their offer of employment, he may have minimal input in where he is assigned to work and the corresponding work experiences that he may encounter. It is his experiences influenced by the contextual discourse that will affect how he manages his social identities (both those imposed upon him and those he has chosen to adopt). Although social identity is primarily about people, a high degree of social identification in the workplace is generated by the formal groupings established by the organisation. It will be useful to check for this assumption with the data of this study.

Although not clearly addressed in existing literature, social identification is distinguishable from internalization (Hogg & Turner, 1987 et al.). Note that whereas identification refers to self in terms of social categories (I am), internalization refers to the incorporation of values, attitudes, and so forth within the self as guiding principles (for e.g. I believe). Ashforth and Mael (1989) point out that although certain values and attitudes typically are associated with members of a given social category, acceptance of the category as a definition of self does not necessarily mean acceptance of those values and attitudes. An individual may define herself in terms of the organization she works for, yet she can disagree with the prevailing values, strategy, system of authority, and so on (Mintzberg 1983 et al.). Before the core sub-concepts of "the prototype", "saliency" and "cohesion, solidarity & harmony" are explored, the next few sections will provide further insight into the various facets of theory that have contributed to the evolution of social identity theory. Self-categorisation and social categorisation have been described as the first stage of social identification. As may be noticed from this review, although social identity theory may have initially emerged with a limited number of perspectives or interpretations, over time this has changed with social identification taking a much more multi-dimensional stance.

Notably there have been a number of detailed investigations into social identity and/or self categorisation (e.g. Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to Hogg & Terry (2000) self-categorization theory evolves from Tajfel's and Turner's earlier ideas on social identity. In effect self-categorization is viewed as a development of social identity theory, or rather that component of an

extended social identity theory of the relationship between self-concept and group behaviour that details the social cognitive processes that generate social identity effects (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & McGarty, 1990; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Furthermore, Hogg & Terry (2000) view self-categorization as a significant and powerful new conceptual component of an extended social identity theory. Admittedly, the self-categorization component of social identity theory has been very influential in more developments over the last two decades within social psychology (e.g. Abrams & Hogg, 1999; Oakes et al., 1994) but it has interestingly attracted minimal attention in organizational psychology (Pratt, in press). The next section takes a closer look at both types of categorization and the role they play in the social identification process.

2.4.1 Self-Categorization and Social Categorization

Categorisations partition the world into comprehensible units by accentuating ingroup similarities and outgroup differences (ingroup refers to individuals who are group members and outgroup refers to individuals outside a particular group). The ubiquity of categorisation in society and the dependence of individuals on groups to function continually reinforce the importance of group membership and its consequences (Korte, 2007).

Based on personal experiences and both primary and secondary research on Nigerian norms, the importance of group oriented behaviour and various forms of categorisation is evident, especially when the various aspects of ethnicity, culture, language and status are considered. The idea that an individual finds a 'home' in a group is seen to be an outcome of the categorisation process; this implies that an individual first has to be categorised before he can be grouped. There was a consensus amongst the participants of this study's sample regarding how Nigerians initiate their social identity processes through categorisations. This is one of the reasons why the self-categorisation process has been described as the first stage of social identification. Therefore understanding the process of categorisation is important to any study of identity construction at both the individual and social level in regions like Nigeria. Sometimes self and social are used interchangeably as a prefix to categorisation in this context, however the most legitimate use of each relates to slightly different interpretations. Self-categorization theory specifies the operation of the social categorization process as the cognitive basis of group behaviour. Social categorisation refers to how the external environment

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perceives and classifies the individual. Social categorization of self and others into ingroup and outgroup accentuates the perceived similarity of what is called "the target" to the relevant ingroup or outgroup prototype (cognitive representation of features that symbolise and promote attributes of the group). Targets are no longer represented as unique individuals but rather, as embodiments of the relevant prototype, a process of depersonalization. Hogg & Terry (2000) suggest that identity related constructs and processes have the potential to inform our understanding of organisational behaviour. Combined with multilevel approaches to organisational research, the use of both individual-level and group-level constructs in models of organisational phenomena could mark the beginning of a new phase of research in organisational behaviour. According to Hogg, the social identity perspective acknowledges the significance of work-related identities to people's sense of self thereby contributing to people's understanding of organisational attitudes and behaviour. This was achieved through drawing on the important relationship between such identities and the person's sense of self. Hogg & Terry (2000) stress that such a perspective should improve explanation and understanding of intergroup relations both within and between organisations. Figure 2.4 has been designed for this study to represent the relationship between the social identity, self-categorisation and social categorisation;

Fig. 2.4 Social Identity and Categorisation
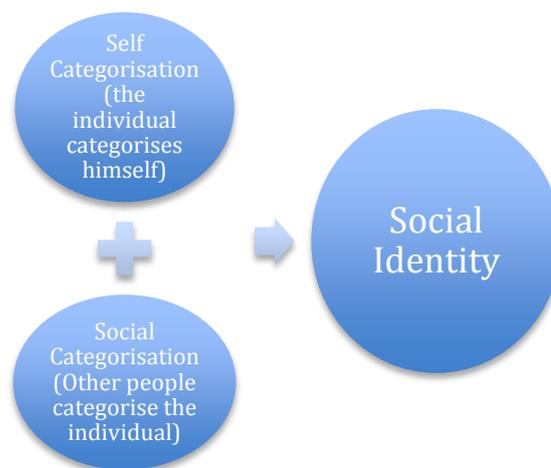
According to social identity theory (SIT), people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership, religious affiliation,

gender, and age cohort (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). This was evident from the primary research of this study. The categories are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the members (Turner, 1985). Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest that social classification serves two main functions: First, it cognitively segments and orders the social environment, providing the individual with a systematic means of defining others. In this context, a person is assigned the prototypical characteristics of the category to which he or she is classified. Secondly, social classification enables the individual to locate or define him or herself in the social environment. According to SIT, the self-concept comprises of a personal identity encompassing distinctive characteristics (e.g. bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests) and a social identity encompassing salient group classifications. Social identification, therefore, is considered to be the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate. For example, a woman may define herself in terms of the groups with which she classifies herself (I am a Nigerian; I am African, I am a woman). Furthermore she perceives herself to be a representative member of the group(s), and she perceives the fate of the group(s) to be her own. As such, social identification provides a partial answer to the question, Who am I? (Turner, 1982). The definition of others in this context is considered to be relational and comparative. For instance, the category of young is meaningful only in relation to the category of old. Stereotyping, ethnocentrism, positive ingroup attitudes and cohesion, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective behaviour, shared norms, and mutual influence are all meant to be outcomes of group phenomena.

Reasons for self-categorization as described by Hogg & Terry (2000) include self-enhancement and uncertainty reduction motivations. Again this was evident from the primary research of this study as participants both directly and indirectly expressed that by identifying with a group, they were able to eliminate some insecurities about working in what they perceived to be a very diverse and sometimes intensely competitive environment. For the participants, identifying with a group regardless of whether it was a formal group set up by the organisation's operational structure or an informal group initiated by various employee categories, fostered a more positive sense of their self concept. According to social identity theory, social identity and intergroup behaviour are guided by the pursuit of positive social identity, through positive intergroup distinctiveness, which in turn is motivated by the need for positive self-

esteem (The self-esteem hypothesis, e.g. Hogg & Mullin, 1999; Long & Spears, 1997; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). Self-categorization theory's focus on the categorization process hints at an additional (perhaps more fundamental), epistemic, motivation for social identity, which later was described as the uncertainty reduction hypothesis (Hogg & Abrams, 1993b; Hogg & Mullin, 1999).

Fig.2.5 Key Drivers of the Social Identity Process
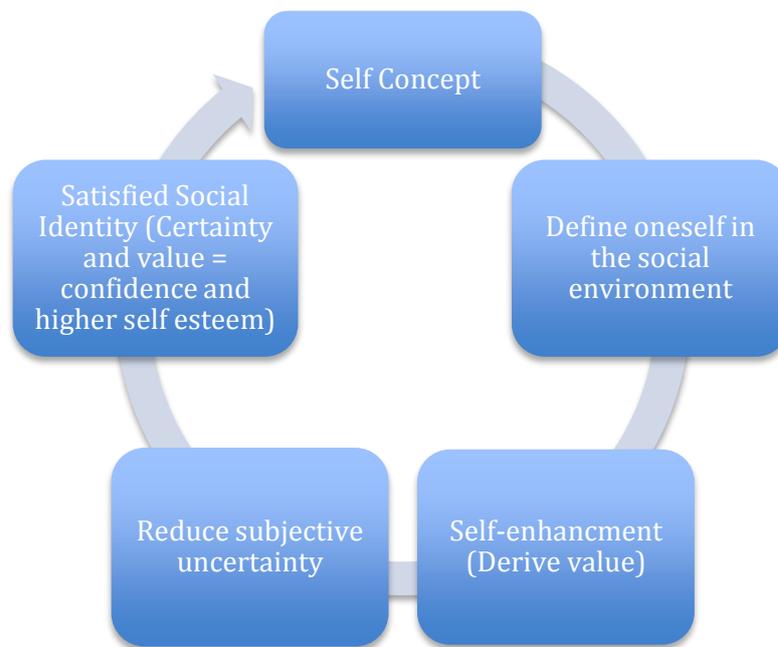
Figure 2.5 has been designed for this study to illustrate what motivates an individual to pursue a social identity and how this is achieved. This illustration combines the ideas of leading proponents of SIT [e.g. Mead (1934), Thomas (1937), Tajfel & Turner (1979), Ashforth & Mael (1989), Brewer (1991) and Hogg & Terry (2000)]. In addition to being motivated by self-enhancement, social identity processes are also said to be motivated by a need to reduce subjective uncertainty about one's perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours and, ultimately one's self-concept and place within the social world. Understandably certainty is said to render confidence. Self-categorization reduces uncertainty by transforming self-conception and assimilating self to a prototype that describes and prescribes perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours.

2.5 CORE CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

These next few sections take a look at three of the concepts, which form the very structure of social identity theory. Although social identity theory has evolved to include numerous sub-concepts (such as the prototype; cohesion, solidarity and harmony, negative and positive outliers etc.) the idea of a group prototype, saliency and cohesion, solidarity and harmony have been highlighted for the purpose of this study. The concept of the group prototype provides a more in-depth understanding of not just what inspires an individual to adopt a social identity but also what motivates an individual to maintain it. Figure 2.6 has been designed for this study to illustrate the three core concepts that have been selected to describe social identity theory in this review.

Fig. 2.6 Core Concepts of Social Identity Theory
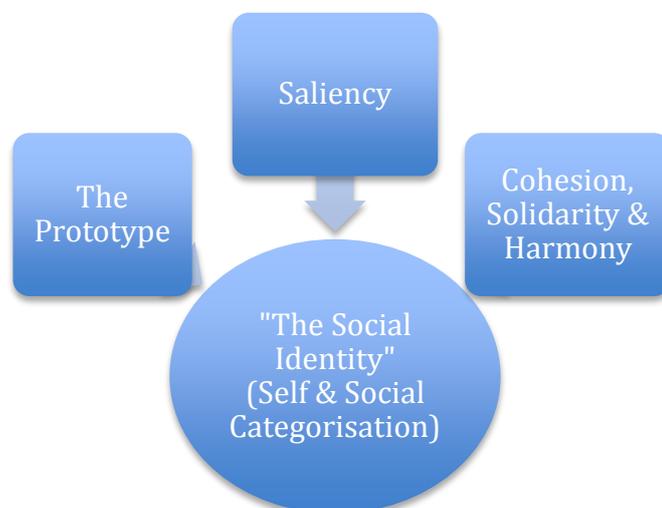
2.5.1 Saliency

The "salience" of social identity is one of the central features of identity theory, social identity theory and self-categorization within it. Hogg & Terry (2000) describe saliency as the responsiveness of social identity to immediate social contexts. The cognitive system, governed by uncertainty reduction and self-enhancement motives, matches social categories to properties of the social context and brings into active use (i.e. makes salient) that category rendering the social context and one's place within it subjectively most meaningful. More to the point, there is said to be an interaction between category accessibility and category fit so that people draw on accessible

categories and investigate how well they fit the social field. The category that best fits the field becomes salient in that context (e.g. Oakes & Turner, 1990).

According to Hogg & Terry (2000), categories can be accessible because they are valued, important, and often engaged aspects of the self-concept (i.e. chronic accessibility) and/or because they are perceptually salient (i.e. situational accessibility). Categories fit the social field because they account for situationally relevant similarities and differences among people (i.e. structural fit) and/or because category specifications account for context specific behaviours (i.e. normative fit). Once fully activated (as opposed to just tested) on the basis of optimal fit, category specifications organize themselves as contextually relevant prototypes and are used as a basis for the perceptual accentuation of intragroup similarities and intergroup differences, thereby maximising separateness and clarity. The prototype is another core sub-concept of social identity theory and will be explored further in a following section. Self-categorisation in terms of the activated ingroup category then depersonalises behaviour in terms of the ingroup prototype. Interestingly, scholars of social identity argue that salience is not a mechanical product of accessibility and fit (Hogg & Mullin, 1999). For instance although saliency appears to be a natural almost unconscious process, people are not content to have their identity determined by the social cognitive context. Instead it is argued that people say and do things to try to change the parameters so that a subjectively more meaningful and self-favouring identity becomes salient.

2.5.2 Cohesion, Solidarity and Harmony

The concept of social identity is largely based on a foundation of cohesion, solidarity and harmony. The presence of such themes facilitates the strength of group identification and the benefits to an individual being part of the in-group. Although social identity relates to the coming together of people with different personalities, characters or qualities, the rationale behind social identity suggests the decision by all individual members to embrace certain common values or central tendencies, which bind them together. The process of harmonising each member to fit one social identity takes into account individual differences but focuses on the prioritisation of central group tendencies or ideals taking precedents over individual habits for the sake of the group's existence. If a clear prototype inspires every member to not only join the ingroup but also remain part of the ingroup, cohesion, solidarity and harmony are an

expression of the group members' decision to respond favourably to the group prototype and the group's overall status and ideals. The principles of cohesion, solidarity and harmony are logical and were evident from the responses of the sample. In the struggle for power, dominant groups strive to maintain the status quo while minority groups seek positive identification on attributes differing from the dominant group. According to social identity theory, the desire for certainty and positive self-evaluation are primary motivations for the tendency of a group to exaggerate the similarities among its members (ingroup) and to exaggerate its differences from other groups (outgroups) (Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Hogg and Grieve, 1999). Ingroup members often stereotype outgroups in negative or derogatory ways intended to enhance the status of ingroup members. Stereotyping, prejudice, and conflict are important consequences of social identity and self-categorisation (Tajfel, 1982, Turner et al., 1987).

2.5.3 The Prototype

The attributes that determine the ideal or typical member of a group are deemed to represent the prototype of that group. The question of whether the prototype refers to the typical or ideal member depends on whether you are considering the perspective of an ingroup or outgroup member. For example to an ingroup member, the prototype is largely what inspires him to identify with a group while to an outgroup member the prototype is what he deems typical of a group (of which he is not a member, i.e. not an ingroup member). The concept of the prototype emerges as the most important element of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1982; Hogg & Terry, 1995, 2000). Its meaning and implications for group identification to a large extent form the key referent for anyone who wants to understand social identity theory. This section aims to provide an in-depth description of the group prototype, with due consideration to its role in group identification and the diverse challenges faced in executing that role. With the knowledge of the prototype being so important to social identity theory, this particular concept was important for primary and secondary research in this study. Based on existing social identity theory, the idea of prototypicality would be applicable to a setting for one to conclude that social identity theory is suited to that setting. Openness to the influence of prototypicality is therefore part of a study that seeks to explore how well social identity theory can be used to explain the identity processes of particular groups.

Earlier in the chapter, the origins of social identity were accredited to Mead (1934) and Thomas (1937). According to Mead, children start understanding norms, rules and relationships of the social world through play and games. As their experiences with different social settings grow, they develop "the generalised other", or a prototype of social norms and behaviours in a particular community or situation. Mead differentiates between "me" and "I". While "me" represents the accumulated knowledge of the generalised other, "I" refers to one's individuality. Therefore, one's individual consciousness stems from and is shaped through one's social experience.

Self-categorisation theory's focus on prototypes facilitates certain important conceptual developments in social identity theory, which have direct implications for organisational contexts. Researchers observed individuals readily altering their personal behaviour to adopt group norms and values, while striving for consensus within the group identity is one of the key insights of social identity theory for understanding the distinct behaviour and interrelations of groups. This transition from individual identity to group identity tends to "depersonalise" the individual in favour of becoming a group member (Korte, 2007). Depersonalization refers to an alteration in self-conceptualization and the basis of perception of others; it is not meant to have the negative connotations of such terms as deindividuation or dehumanization (cf., Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995). According to SIT, depersonalisation is a neutral description of the tendency of the individual to downplay personal attributes in favour of acquiring group attributes. Socialisation of the individual into a group provides the individual with the values and emotional attributes of group membership (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Social identity theory suggests that it is not a loss of personal identity but rather the acquisition of an additional identity. The power of social identity varies, but research has found that it is generally more powerful than individual identity (Hogg and McGarty, 1990). Hence, the general tendency of people is to go along with the group to which they identify, especially when the group is salient.

As mentioned earlier, those attributes that describe the ideal identity of the group become the prototype or parameters of the group. A key referent for the social self is therefore the group's prototype. Hogg & Terry (2000) suggest that a core benefit of the prototype is furnishing moral support and consensual validation for one's self-concept and attendant cognitions and behaviours. It is the prototype that actually reduces

uncertainty. Therefore, uncertainty reduction is better achieved by prototypes that are simple, clear, highly focussed, and consensual; furthermore describing groups that have pronounced entitativity (this referring to a group's ability to define itself as a coherent entity that is distinct from other groups). (Campbell, 1958; Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996; Hamilton, Sherman & Lickel, 1998; Sherman, Hamilton, & Lewis, 1999) are very cohesive (Hogg, 1992, 1993) and provide a powerful social identity.Figure 2.7illustrates central themes and features of the prototype:

Fig. 2.7 Key Dimensions of the Prototype
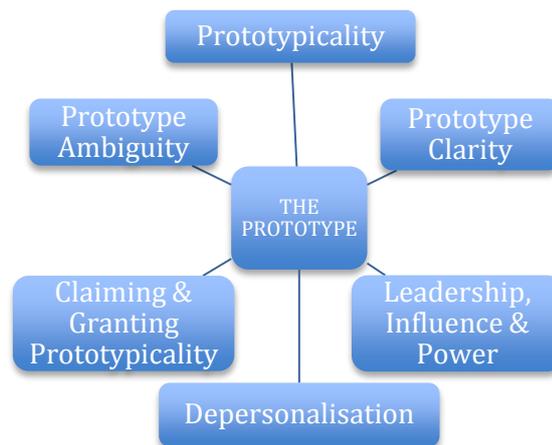
With consideration to those factors, which have already been mentioned or discussed and those yet to be adequately defined, all six attributes will be explained here, together with two important features of group identification (group status and entitativity):

- *Prototypicality* refers to the tendency of an individual(s) to embody attributes of the group prototype.

- *Prototype Ambiguity* refers to the difficulty that may be faced due to contextual shifts and other forms of instability when group members try to articulate and establish a clear prototype.

- *Prototype Clarity* is effectively the opposite of prototype ambiguity. This is achieved when a clear prototype is established. High prototype clarity paves the way for higher group cohesion because group members can familiarise

themselves with what attributes to adopt to support the group strength. This was evident from the participants of this study's sample.

- *Claiming & Granting* prototypiciality refers to the process of group members claiming the position of the prototype and the acceptance (granting) of this outcome by other group members. This was evident from the participants of this study's sample. Although the participants talked about the competitiveness of the industry, they also confirmed that there was little resistance once a clear prototype was established. Rather everyone sought to emulate those prototypical qualities so as to derive the same fulfillment from group membership. Therefore claiming and granting prototypicality were observed to be commonplace within group membership.

- *Leadership, Influence and Power* refers to the dimensions that centre around the prototype as well as group dominance. In the context of social identity, the two scenarios that attempt to address leadership, influence and power are (i) a group's capacity to exercise influence or power through its dominance (i.e. group status) over other groups and (ii) the influence embodied in the prototype on the identity processes of other members (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Although there was clearly a power dynamic in group identification, this was better addressed by issues relating to post-colonialism than just social identity. This reinforcing the benefit of bringing these two theories together in this study.

- *Depersonalisation* refers to the process of an individual relegating aspects of his own personal identity (depersonalise) to prioritise and internalise attributes of the group prototype.

- *Entitativity* refers to the desire to be part of a group that is distinctive. It was clear from the findings that the participants of this study's sample felt it was important to be part of a group that was cohesive and thus distinctive. This applied even in cases where their group had a lower status than other groups. In such cases, participants expressed that it was just important to identify with a group as it helped eliminate feelings of uncertainty or insecurity.

- *Group status* refers to the desire to be part of a group that has prestige or value and compares favourably against other groups. This factor describes the purpose

of social comparison as interpreted by Tajfel & Turner (1979) in their vision of social identity theory. As mentioned earlier, an attempt can be made to draw on a power dynamic in group status however it fails to capture the substance of this dynamic as well as post-colonialism in the workplace which will be addressed in a chapter four.

Social identity theory states that individuals come to identify with a group (social identity) based on the prototype of the group; although the interaction of the individual and the group is reciprocal, causing the individual, more or less, to conform to the group's prototype, and at the same time the group, more or less, to conform to its members. It is described as a dynamic, reciprocal, and evolving process (Korte, 2007). When group membership is salient, cognition is aligned with prototypicality. Therefore, within groups people are able to distinguish among themselves and others in terms of how well they match the prototype. Hogg (1996) describes this as an intragroup prototypicality gradient; some people are perceived to be closer to the prototype than others. This facilitates the further evaluation of social identity-based intragroup processes, such as cohesion and social attraction, deviance and overachievement, leadership and intragroup structural differentiation.

Prototype Ambiguity

The process of identifying the prototype of a particular group is also another matter entirely as the idea of singling out that person that embodies those integral attributes of a group is not always straightforward. Due to the fact that group prototypes are based on who is in the group, how the group performs its work, and which other groups are used for social comparison purposes, they may change dramatically as work contexts evolve (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, McGarty, 1994). Group members coping with organisational changes or shifts in the external environment may find their prototypes particularly unstable. "Prototype ambiguity" is used to describe the shared perception among group members that the attributes, and actions that define and describe the typical member may tend to be unclear(Bartel, Wiesenfeld, 2013).

According to social identity theory, prototype ambiguity is highly problematic for the group and it's members if left unresolved. An example of prototype ambiguity can be illustrated in the case of industries, which have undergone dramatic technological

advancement, thereby changing the foundational nature of how people do their work. For example, in the case of the engineering or oil & gas industry used for this study, the sector could be seen to have undergone tremendous change through technology through the years altering the perception of what type of person was considered to work in such industries. The corporate or as it is often described, commercial divisions, represent an increasing proportion of most oil companies as they look to compete not just by drilling the most amount of oil but by producing and selling the most amount of products at the most profitable prices (Akpan, 2010). This change in the industry has in effect changed the very perception of what type of person works in the oil industry today compared to twenty or thirty years ago. This study does not involve an indepth investigation of the contextual environment of the oil and gas industry (both in terms of work processes and organisational culture) so the data gathered would be inadequate to make a meaningful assessment of prototype ambiguity/clarity. Therefore by focusing on the identity processes of individuals, the influence of prevailing discourse(s) and the surrounding socio-economic environment, prototype ambiguity did not emerge from the data. The participants demonstrated a reasonable degree of clarity when it came to discussing prototypicality.

Prototypes can take different forms. Social identity perspectives have emphasized group prototypes based on central tendencies, i.e. attributes that members actually share and that are most common among members(Turner et al. 1987; Turner et al 1994), but some attention has now shifted to how ideals (i.e. attributes beneficial to group goals and that members ideally should possess) also provide a basis for defining the group (Hogg, 1992; Hogg & Terry, 2000). This distinction is consistent with research in cognitive psychology distinguishing between central tendencies and ideals as two different drivers of typicality. Prototypes based on central tendencies include characteristics that group members actually share. Such prototypes describe the average group member as, for example the way that research minded and methodical may describe members of the legal department of any organisation (including the industry under focus for this study). In contrast, prototypes based on ideals offer an extreme or exaggerated representation of those characteristics that define, describe, and differentiate the group. Such prototypes therefore describe the exceptional, perhaps hypothetical member, for example the way that climate-friendly and idealistic might

describe an exceptional set of oil industry professionals in the upstream division (i.e. oil drilling).

Prototypicality refers to the degree to which an individual matches the set of attributes atrongly associated with the group (Turner et al, 1987). The more a person deviates from these attributes, the less prototypical and more of a "deviant" he or she is considered to be by others. Individuals become aware of the group prototype when they assume a particular group identity and notice and react to differences in how prototypical they and others are (Haslam, Oakes, McGarty, Turner & Onorato, 1995). Ultimately, prototypicality is a primary basis for judging individual members "respect" within the group and that is how much the group includes and values them (Hogg et al, 1995: Turner, 1991; and also see De Cremer & Tyler, 2005 and Tyler & Blader, 2002). Members who are highly prototypical are more respected because they better represent the group's essential features. With the context region of this study in mind, "respect" tends to be an important aspect of social interaction.Considering that prototypicality is not determined by age but by how well an individual embodies the ideal attributes of a group, then there is scope for even a young employee to demand respect from older peers.

In other words, discussions around the prototype are often linked with aspects of leadership either formally or informally as the idea of an individual personifying the prototype suggests the concentration of certain traits, behaviours or attributes that are considered the ideal representation of a particular group. Such concentration of values or behaviours within an individual presents questions such as whether the prototype is likely to be a formal or informal leader of a group or whether the blueprint for prototypicality can inform the process of effective leadership identification. In other words, does a prototype make for an effective or influential leader? Or do prototypes tend to be leaders? As insightful as these questions may be for understanding leadership in such contexts, leadership is not a primary focus in this study as the chosen sample does not centre around managerial styles or personalities. However the importance of leadership and its relevance in discussions surrounding prototypicality in a country like Nigeria cannot be overlooked. Consequently, it is logical to expect that this study may illustrate some level of consciousness relating to leadership based on the importance

that Nigerians place on people of authority. Right from the early stages of life, authority is consciously promoted as an integral part of Nigerian life.

2.6 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Notably, studies on social identity theory in the workplace have been based on the developed economy context. The usefulness of social identity theory has largely been acknowledged in studies relating to organizational behavior, human resource management and training. Many scholars have embraced the idea that group identity is a strong premise for maximizing the potential of employees. This is one of the reasons why social identity theory has increased in popularity in management research. So far in this chapter, reference has already been made to studies which explored the role of group identities in developing positive and negative identities. A recent illustration of social identity's prominence in understanding identity processes in organisations can be cited in the work of Escartin, Ulrich, Zapf, Schluter and van Dick (2013) who proposed that workplace bullying can be understood as a product of social identities at work. In their multi-organisational study, Escartin et al. (2013), highlight the implications of bullying for the individual and the organization at large. Exposure to bullying has been linked to lower social competences and self esteem victims (Lind, Glaso, Pallesen & Einarsen, 2009 cited by Escartin et al. 2013). With particular consideration to the issue of self-esteem, one of social identity's fundamental assumptions is that people derive a significant portion of their self-esteem not only on their individual characteristics but also on their memberships in social groups. People are therefore motivated to establish and maintain a positive social identity, that is, to perceive a group to which they belong as comparatively positive in the context of other groups to which they do not belong. As a result, it is argued that they will be more motivated to act in terms of group interests. Such group-oriented behavior should become more likely, the more strongly group members identify with the group. Thus a considerable number of studies have demonstrated relationships between group and organizational identification and positive organizational outcomes such as performance, cooperation, extrarole behavior, and job satisfaction (e.g. Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008; Haslam, 2004).

In recent years, there has been growing interest in understanding the contributions of social identity to health and well-being in work and organizational contexts (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes & Haslam, 2009; Haslam & van Dick, 2011). Organisational

identification is positively associated with health and well being (e.g. Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Weckin, & Moltzen, 2006 cited by Escartin et al. 2013) presumably because "social support is more likely to be given, received and interpreted in the spirit in which it is intended to the extent that those who are in a position to provide and receive that support perceive themselves to share a sense of social identity" (Haslam et al., 2009, p. 11). Escartin et al. (2013) propose that identification may be related to bullying in similar ways as it is related to other work stressors.

First identification might positively influence the primary appraisal of stressors in the sense of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). For instance, it is suggested that high identifiers might perceive criticism from colleagues or supervisors as less ego-threatening or they might not complain about an unmanageable workload because they experience such work as consistent with their social identity (Escartin et al. 2013). Second, identification might positively influence secondary appraisal (i.e. the assessment of coping options; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Assuming that a worker actually faces an unmanageable workload (which could be an instance of work-related bullying), identification might help him or her to cope with the situation by asking for and receiving social support from colleagues. Consequently, it is expected that the workload will not be experienced as unmanageable and the worker will not report being bullied. Along these lines, Haslam and van Dick (2011) describe how social identity works to alter subjective appraisals in the context of stressors: "[Employees] talk to their peers and come to shared understandings about the meaning and significance of their experiences. And it is on this basis that they come to see the air as 'stale' or 'fresh', the work demands as 'unreasonable' or 'reasonable' and their manager as a 'bully' or buddy" (p. 339). The above interpretations of social identity theory emphasise the benefits to ingroup members of strong group identification in the event of bullying. There is however an alternative interpretation of strong group identification which has also been explored recently that emphasizes the risks to ingroup members becoming bullied in the event that they are considered deviant (Ramsay et al., 2011). These authors have proposed that bullying is more likely to occur, the stronger a workgroup's identity, which is in contrast to the work of Escartin et al. (2013). Nonetheless, Escartin et al. (2013) do find common ground with Ramsay et al.'s (2011) findings in that the latter's rationale is similar to the one underlying the well-known "black-sheep" effect (e.g. Abrams, Marques, Bown & Henson, 2000). This rationale

proposes norm deviations are more strongly punished in the case of ingroup members compared with outgroup members. As a result Escartin et al. (2013) suggest that it is plausible to assume that such punishments (i.e., negative acts) may be more severe, the stronger the workgroup's identity. However it is noted that for bullying to occur in response to norm deviations, norm deviations need to exist in the first place. Only then can a workgroup identity intensify bullying.The above studies represent some recent efforts to explore social identity in developed economy contexts. Although the results of such studies were the outcomes of identity processes within developed economy contexts, it is definitely reasonable to draw lessons for this study's attempt at exploring the developing economy context. For example, with social identity being used to interpret the propensity of people in such regions to identify with groups, the costs and benefits of such identity processes may draw parallels with the results discussed above. In particular, with the presence of intense ethnic and racial hierarchies, status driven norms and post-colonial dialectics, an issue like bullying may be worth investigation.

2.7 LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

There is undoubtedly widespread debate about the concept of identity. A meaningful exploration into identity construction based on principles borne from social identification has to acknowledge any theoretical limitations that may or may not affect the applicability of the theory on the chosen sample. The lack of identity studies in the work-settings of countries like Nigeria emphasises the importance of limitations both conceptually and operationally. Korte's (2007) summary of the three most common controversies refer to the following: what is it?, where is it located?, and why is it important? However three separate limitations have been identified in the context of this study; these will be considered next.

i.) Firstly although social identity theory accommodates multiplicity, the significance of this scenario is hardly addressed in social identity literature (Hogg & Terry, 2000, Terry et al. 1999). Take for instance the possibility that an individual identifies with different groups, thereby possessing multiple social identities, how many social identities would be considered too much? How many social identities would result in severe struggle? Although struggle is an integral aspect of identity literature, it is somewhat overlooked in social identity

literature. Therefore it may be argued that social identity theory does not address the consequences of multiplicity and struggle.

ii.) Following on from this concern of multiplicity and struggle, to what extent would multiplicity facilitate extreme degrees of depersonalisation? If an individual in seeking to satisfy particular needs, identifies with several groups, does he risk relegating his own personal identity that he starts to lose himself in the process? How is balance achieved? What is the likely consequence of an individual seeking prototypicality in too many groups or in groups, which possess extreme attributes? If an individual is to mitigate against such risks, he will have to operate by a peculiar code that ensures group identification does not over-extend his social identification processes so that he benefits from the cohesion, harmony and solidarity of his groupings while protecting himself from excessive social identity struggles.

iii.) Although power is a dimension which is explored in the context of group influence on individuals' attitudes and behaviours, the use or misuse of power is not adequately addressed. Furthermore, for regions like Nigeria, which comprise of a strong power dynamic within identity processes, social identity theory is arguably under-equipped to address this dynamic. The prototype is presented as the centrepiece of social identity theory, and there are even concerns that high prototypicality may affect good leadership, but little is said to address the possible threat of a prototype abusing his influence or power. It would be assumed that if a prototype no longer aligned with the prosperity of the group and possibly posed as a threat to entitativity or status, that prototype would be dismissed and a new one generated but there is little to address such issues in social identity theory. For the most part, power in the context of social identity or group identification is discussed in terms of group strength or influence on individuals.

Group status can be seen as an example of group strength influencing individual identities; ingroup members are more likely to submit to the values and attributes of a group that possesses high group status. This also puts pressure on outgroup members to either join or risk being marginalised. There is however a

limited amount of literature exploring how the power of groupings may be used or misused in organisational behaviour and management.Gaudelli (2001) explains that power is often gained by the construction of groups (e.g., cultures) where previously the discourse to name a group as such did not exist. Fiereman (1990) argued that ethnic boundaries in Tanzania are not "authentic" as those in power often claim, but largely fictional. When the diversity of individuals is incorporated under broader cultural headings, discourse is somehow submerged into what appears to be a broad, homogenous category that is, in metaphorical terms, a carefully constructed system created by those who stand to benefit from its operation (Gaudelli, 2001). However there is limited research exploring the use of power through group identification in the work-setting of African or developing countries at large.

Identity has become a popular lens to view organisation phenomena (Korte, 2007). The versatility of the concept as a lens to examine social phenomena is considered to be both its strength and weakness. One disadvantage is that researchers, theorists, scholars, and practitioners extend the concept beyond its relevance and explanatory power. Using these terms and concepts too broadly only confuses the quest to understand identity and risks marginalising an important concept with contradictory explanations (Pratt, 2003). There seems to be little debate about the existence of a socially influenced identity.

2.8 KEY DEBATES

As can be seen from this review, the subject of identity comprises a wealth of conceptual ideas and interpretations. This makes the area of identity both an interesting and ambiguous area to understand. Identity was chosen for this thesis because it is foundational to who people are and so the best way to know why people think and act the way they do. With the numerous concepts and terms that have been explored in this review, it may be difficult to reduce the curiousity elicited by this area to a key number of areas but for the purpose of this study, those of most significance include:-

- How can social identity theory cater for multiplicity so that cohesion, solidarity and harmony are not overwhelmed by identity struggle? Furthermore how well is identity struggle addressed by social identity theory?

- In light of the strength or influence of group identification, how well is power addressed by social identity theory? If the prototype is meant to have a great deal of influence within the group, how may power be expressed or used in that context?

- What are the potential consequences of social identity extremes, (such as intergroup conflict and dominant group identities) on workers' emotions (this applies to both ingroup and outgroup members)?

It is hoped that by focussing on these key debates this study will be able to explore the prospect of social identity theory explaining identity processes in such regions and industries.

2.9 SUMMARY

As was declared in my justification of this study, the theory of social identity was elected as a primary focus due to the notion that Nigerians attach significance to identifying with groups (Olu-Olu, 2014; Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Osaghae, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa; Meagher, 2010; Ugwuebu, 2011). The aim of reviewing existing identity literature is to derive a useful insight into what theory has to say on the subject of identity construction universally. It is only with a sound understanding of the developments in existing literature that the research question relating to this area can be effectively answered.

From the review of existing social identity research, it is established that social identity theory represents another evolutionary step in the process of answering the fundamental question of "Who I am?" The idea that an individual formulates an identity by associating with groups is easy to comprehend when you consider that the measure of a 'sense of belonging' has had a strong relationship with one's 'self-esteem' in widespread organisational psychology literature for many years (Abrams & Hogg, 1988, 1990; Hogg & Mullin, 1999; Long & Spears, 1997; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). Furthermore, the assumption that an individual chooses groups both consciously and unconsciously to identify with sounds logical, especially if the process of choice can be managed with clear boundaries for each group identity. The concept of multiple identities is well known to identity theory and represents an acceptance of multiplicity that is borne from the difficulty in isolating one singular, finite identity for each

individual. Identity literature therefore has come to endorse the prospect that individual identification processes inevitably involves a number of different aspects to each individual's self-concept.However the issue of struggle borne out of multiplicity is somewhat overlooked by social identity theory. Furthermore, the issue of power is not sufficiently captured by social identity theory. Even though struggle and power are two factors that characterize the social landscape of a region like Nigeria. The entire premise behind using social identity theory for this study is to find out how well the model explainsthe identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. For example, considering the prevailing discourse of the chosen context, how well can sub-concepts like the prototype and cohesion, solidarity and harmony be used to understand the identity processes of Nigerians? As I mentioned in the justification for this study in the introductory chapter, there is a shortage of meaningful research into such identification processes for regions like Nigeria. The key sub-concepts of social identification processes (e.g. the prototype and cohesion, solidarity and harmony) provide a useful background to assess any themes, issues or factors that emerged in this study. As will become more apparent during the course of this study, the chosen context of Nigeria and the specific industry investigated fosters a platform for revealing interpretations of identity processes that span across the two areas elected for this study (social identity and postcolonialism). Firstly Nigeria represents a region that elicits a strong propensity for group identification, secondly the historical background of Nigeria is linked with colonialism and finally the chosen industry and workplace is a multi-cultural environment that includes professional hierarchies that are aligned with racial hierarchies reminiscent of colonialism.

The next chapter introduces the concept of post-colonialism in the context of theory and as a period of time and perspective. The area of post-colonialism contributes to this study by providing anoutlook on how people perceive themselves based on the backdrop of historical colonial influences, which has to be acknowledged for any complete evaluation of identity processes in the chosen region.

Chapter Three

Post-Colonialism: Theoretical approaches and Frameworks

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In acknowledgment of the extensive literature that has been produced in this area over many decades of research in disciplines ranging from sociology and political economy to psychology and management, this review will comprise of a variety of perspectives and interpretations (e.g. Ekeh 1975; Sen, 2006; Osaghae 2006; Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012; Mizuno & Okazawa 2009; Christopher 2003; Oyeshile 2004); all of which have helped shape the concept of post-colonialism. As already mentioned earlier, the inclusion of post-colonialism in this study was important for a number of reasons.

Firstly, to reflect on the historical roots of the people being evaluated, Nigeria like many other African countries experienced colonialism and since 1960 has been navigating its way through a post-colonial era and the onset of globalisation so to make any meaningful attempt to understand how people identify themselves, it only makes sense to consider any historical dynamics that have helped shape the psyche of the people. Interestingly in recent times, there has been a lack of literature on the contribution that colonialism or the post-colonial era has made to the identities of people who emanate from previously colonised territories (e.g. Gouws 2012); it would almost appear that literature as a reflection of the times has moved on from the dialectics of colonialism to the dynamics of the modern world. However considering the significance of the events that took place in the build up to colonialism, during colonialism and the era of post-colonialism and independence, it would seem very presumptuous to nullify or overlook the impact of such significant periods on how people perceive themselves, how they relate with others, how they think others perceive them and ultimately what influences their identity processes. It is hoped that the inclusion of post-colonialism in this study will provide fresh literature on identity in management research that reconsiders the role that this phenomenon may play in the work-settings of organisations. Secondly, although postcolonialism has been researched expansively, by several scholars there is a considerable lack of material regarding its influence on identity processes in the workplace. Thirdly, the association of social identification theory and post-colonial theory has been under researched. In this study,

the union of social identity theory and post-colonial theory aims to generate a new insight into how pertinent but diverse dimensions of people's historical past and present day experiences can be articulated for the benefit of a new generation of readers and scholars.

This chapter begins with a look at some core concepts of post-colonialism that have been selected for this study; these include "the historical dimension", "the contextual background" and "the dialectics of the colonised mind" (The diagram on the next page is a representation of these core concepts). The next section considers the historical background by reviewing the perceived impact of colonialism on previously colonised countries like that of the context region for this study, Nigeria. Although there is a broad perspective of issues that characterise the build up to colonialism and the impact of colonialism, most of such issues are abstract and apply to a range of socio-economic issues. To make sure that a review of colonialism is focussed on the aspects of colonialism and post-colonialism that relate most to identity processes, only areas that have been deemed relevant will be discussed here. That said it is important to have some understanding of the key issues that led to the period of colonialism and subsequently post-colonialism. Before we can understand the post era, it is helpful to have a grasp of the era itself. A reasonable understanding of the colonial era will facilitate a much better appreciation of the post-colonial era and in effect the different interpretations and manifestations of post-colonialism.

Bearing in mind, this study focuses on the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace; the essence of this chapter is to garner enough substance to make logical interpretations of likely influences on individual identity processes. Group identification as a theme is inevitable within post-colonialism as a considerable degree of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times is characterised by the dynamic between groups aligned across ethnic and racial hierarchies. On the other hand, while the underlying theme of social identity is harmony within groups, that of post-colonialism is quite the opposite with a focus on conflict between groups and dialectics affecting group members. Before delving into what led to colonialism, in the context of this study, our interest in post-colonialism centres mainly on the impact of the colonial era on the identity processes of Nigerian workers. In particular the negotiations that take place between ethnicity, culture, colonial ideals and existing socio-economic

conditions; all of which contribute to the complex development of social identity in a developing nation with consequential outcomes for socialisation in the workplace. However, most literature relating to pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times reflect not just on a single African country like Nigeria but on the whole of Africa, therefore this chapter will review such literature with particular consideration to the Nigerian experience. Figure 3.1 has been designed to capture the core concepts of post-colonialism.

Fig. 3.1 Core Concepts of Post-Colonialism
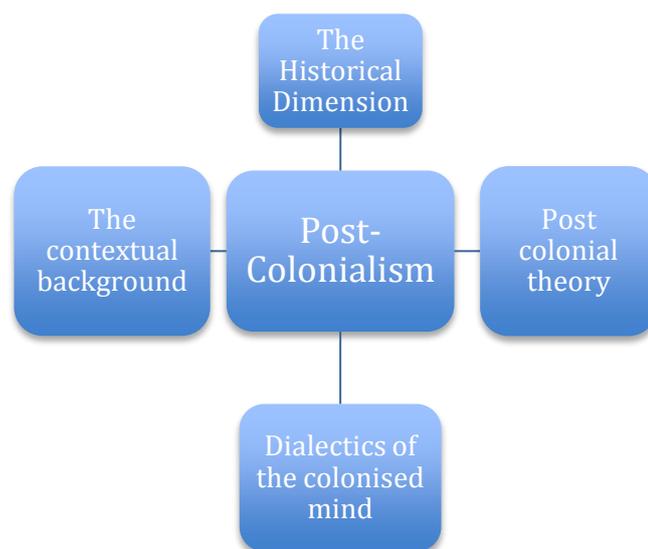
3.2 THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION

Deng (1997) argues that the modern African state is the product of Europe, not Africa and he suggests that an attempt at this late date to return to ancestral identities and resources as bases for building the modern African nation would risk the collapse of many countries. However, to disregard ethnic realities would be "to build on loose sand, also a high-risk exercise". Fundamentally, Deng (1997) asks whether it is possible to consolidate the framework of the modern Nigerian state while giving recognition and maximum utility to the component elements of ethnicities, cultures, and aspirations for self-determination? The answer to such a question would potentially reveal the role that strong ethnic identification plays in the identity processes of Nigerians.Colonialism has been described as the direct and overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power (for example, the direct and

overall domination of Nigeria by Britain between 1900-1960) (Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012). The first objective of colonialism was political domination. The second objective was to make possible the exploitation of the colonised country. References to colonialism in Africa tend to centre around events that took place between 1800-1960s. It is often described as a phenomenon, which was a by-product of imperialism.

Colonialism began as a result of changes in the mode of production in Europe (for example the industrial revolution). The industrial revolution led to a new process of production, which replaced the earlier slave-based economy. The industrial revolution was characterised by a number of developments: the problem of how to lubricate machineries, the slave trade and slavery had by this time fulfilled their basic function of providing the primitive capital. Consequently the quest for the investment of the accumulated capital and the need for raw materials led to the colonization of Africa. Discussions of colonialism centre around the oppressive motives of the colonisers and the predicament of the colonised. The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of post-colonialism so as to understand how identity processes are being influenced in the colonial workspace of countries like Nigeria. The next section will provide a brief review of the impact of colonialism on previously colonised countries with particular emphasis on matters that have been selected for the sole purpose understanding how identity processes have been influenced by this phenomenon.

3.2.1 The impact of strategies employed by European powers to colonise Africa

A number of methods are used to describe how Africans were forced to submit to colonialism; these include the use of conquest, forced labour, taxation, and monetization of the economy and payment of low wages. The purpose of these strategies was to acquire control of African resources for the benefit of the coloniser regions.The impact of the strategies employed by the colonisers to colonise Africa is an area that has attracted vigorous debate over the years (e.g. Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012; Osaghae 2006; Ekeh 1975). This section aims to capture some of the key consequences on the socio-economic environment but with particular emphasis on social formations and interactions within the colonised states. This focus should provide an opportunity to draw linkages with the consequences for identity processes of people from colonised states like the context region of this study, Nigeria. Not surprising, it has been suggested that the impact of colonialism in Africa was the under-development of

African territories in different ways. The impact of colonialism has been characterised by factors such as the disarticulation of African education, the African economy, African produced goods, Africa's transport system, premature integration of the African economy into international trade, the disarticulation in the provision of Africa's social amenities and class conflict as consequence of class institutionalisation. At this point, only two of these will be discussed: disarticulation of African education and issues relating to class conflict. The reason for this is the relevance of these issues to the identity processes of Nigerians. The type of education that a person is exposed to or the way that person is educated is arguably a key determinant of a person's identity, furthermore class structures instigate inevitable implications for social identification processes.

Disarticulation of African education

There is a common view suggesting that colonialism brought about western education and hence western civilisation to the "shores of Africa", which by implication is a positive contribution towards African development. Such an argument does appear true on the surface but when considered further, a hollowness of colonial education, has been revealed by scholars over the years (Ocheni et al 2012). For example, it is noted that the colonial education was not rooted in African culture and therefore could not foster any meaningful development within the African environment because it had no organic linkage. Furthermore, colonial education was essentially literary; it had no technological base and therefore antithetical to real or industrial development. The poor technological base of most of the present day African states, which as been responsible for their underdevelopment, stems from their poor foundation of education laid down by the colonialists. Colonial education essentially aimed at training clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors etc., which would help them in the exploitation of the Africa's rich resources. Colonial education did not aim at industrialisation of African territories or at stimulating technological development within the African environment (Osaghae, 2006). Colonial education brought about distortion and disarticulation in African indigenous pattern of education, which was rooted in African technology. Before fully embracing colonial education, Africans were good technologists advancing at their own rates with the resources within their environment. For example, Africans were good sculptors, carvers, cloth weavers, miners, blacksmiths etc. They were able to provide and satisfy the technological need of the various African societies. Effectively, the

introduction of colonial education made Africans to abandon their indigenous technological skills and education in preference to one, which mainly emphasises reading and writing. It is concluded that this was the foundation for the current poor technological base of African states, which has perpetuated their underdevelopment. Aside from hindering technological advance in Africa, colonial education changed the very perception that Africans had of themselves. Africans started to validate themselves based on the amount of colonial education they had acquired as opposed to the depth of their knowledge in indigenous culture and customs. Industrialisation meant that African culture lost value in commerce as one had to receive colonial education to earn a living. This disarticulation of African education is undoubtedly evident in Nigeria as despite the intense degree of ethnicity and signs of indigenous culture in the environment, the same education that was introduced by colonialism drives the economy. The primary research in this study revealed that Nigerians have embraced colonial education even though they express concerns about the demise of their culture. Most of the participants talked about colonial education as if it is now their own education. The reality of their culture(s) demise only became a talking point when challenged about the origin of educational and commercial institutions that they now embrace. Most of the participants expressed a degree of helpless about the subject but there was a concerted effort to make the most out of the situation (i.e. use colonial education to improve their circumstances).

Class conflict as a consequence of class institutionalisation

Another important impact of colonialism in Africa was the emergence and institutionalisation of classes and class struggle in the socio-economic and political life of people. These classes include "comprador bourgeoisie", "petty bourgeoisie", "proletariat" and "the peasant" (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The African petty bourgeoisie served as the medium through which the colonialists exploited and siphoned the economy of African countries. There was said to be a lot of harmony of interest between the African petty bourgeoisie and the European comprador bourgeoisie. This was why during the period of political independence it was the African bourgeois that were handed the mantle of leadership. The African petty bourgeois maintained the same relationship with the erstwhile colonial masters and this is why they run the economy and political administration of their states in the same manner as the colonialists did. Most of the African leaders or petty bourgeois maintain strong links

with their erstwhile colonial masters. The African petty bourgeoisie maintained the long exploitation of the proletariat and the peasant classes. It was evident from the particpants of this study's sample that informal ethnic hierarchies existed in the workplace, sometimes in multinational organisations. According to the participants, most of these hierarchies are aligned with the hierarchies propagated by colonialism. Furthermore, there were also racial hierarchies which participants also felt were reminiscent of colonialism. Even though the organisations originated from a foreign land and participants considered the rationale behind the owners wanting to maintain control by keeping "their own at the top" (i.e. their own nationals), this rationale did little to displace feelings of inferiority amongst the participants.In light of such racial hierarchies, participants described how Nigerians clamoured to be part of an "influential group or class of employees" who gained respect from foreign workers (i.e. foreign senior staff also known as expatriates). Even though they differ in identity construction, can parallels be drawn between the class of employees and the African petty bourgeoisie of the colonial era?Participants spoke of how being a member of the influential group meant earning the capacity to sometimes influence the decisions of expatriate staff. Interestingly even though there was a consensus amongst the participants regarding their frustrations and sometimes outright disdain towards working for "the white man", there was even greater frustration when they were asked about the prospect of working for a Nigerian boss.

Ironically, most of the participants complained that Nigerians are very class-conscious and extremely "bossy" so even though they had frustrations about working for a "white boss", they felt the prospect of working for their own would be no better. Assuming the Nigerians who take up senior roles communicate better with foreign staff than the average Nigerian employee, does this reinforce parallels between this group of Nigerians and the African petty bourgeoisie? According to the participants, these concerns did not stop the persistent sentiment amongst Nigerians to be given the opportunity to hold senior roles. The next section takes a brief look at relevant strands of colonial theory.

3.3 POST-COLONIAL THEORY

Having reviewed some key aspects of the narrative behind colonialism, this section provides a review of some of the literature that can be found in theorisations of this

phenomenon.Although there is still a limited amount of literature on post-colonial theory relating to work experiences or identity processes in post-colonial spaces, the area has begun to gather momentum. The last twenty years has witnessed the publication of a host of postcolonial theoretic writings on management and organisations, including research articles in journals (e.g. Ulus, 2014; Banerjee and Prasad, 2008; Long and Mills, 2008; Banerjee, 2000; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006), and in edited volumes (Prasad, 2003a).

Post-colonial theory seeks to critique and evaluate the complex and multifaceted dynamics of modern western colonialism and to develop an in-depth understanding of the "ongoing significance of the colonial encounter of people's lives both in the west and the non-west" (Prasad, 2003b, p. 5). Probably the most important feature of colonialism is the impact it has had on the identity processes and socio-economic environments of previously colonised countries and its ongoing continuation in variety of ways, as neo-colonialism (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). The prefix "post" posits time-space assumptions that tend to homogenise different histories and normalise inter-cultural differences. In light of the diversity of colonial experiences across different regions, using the prefix "post" has attracted a fair amount of criticism (Shohat, 1992). The use of the word "post" suggests that colonialism is over which based on the official dissolution of colonial administrations may seem factually accurate. The ambiguity emerges when a closer look is taken at the philosophy of colonialism and this is where questions arise regarding its end or perpetuation. One of the objectives of this study is to find out whether Nigerians in the workplace feel that elements of colonialism still persist in their work experiences. This means that even though there may not be a legitimate system of colonisation in place anymore, there may be norms or organisational structures, which are reminiscent of colonialism. Such factors would in effect make Nigerians feel emotions that they may associate with the oppressive state of their ancestors. Such a perception of colonialism is of course subtle and very much subjective, as what one Nigerian may find oppressive may not tally with what another finds to be colonial. Nonetheless, the presence of factors in the workspace that awaken feelings or thoughts of colonialism are the sort of factors this study aims to uncover and explore.

In addition to emphasising the perpetuation of colonialism, the post-colonial perspective produces new insight into colonialism. For example, in contrast to the earlier western scholarly approaches that are mainly known for adopting eurocentric perspectives in the course of mostly examining political and/or economic aspects of western colonialism and neo-colonialism, postcolonial theory is committed to critiquing eurocentrism and addresses not only political and economic issues, but also cultural, psychological, philosophical, epistemological and similar aspects of (neo) colonialism. In other words, post colonialism has been viewed as providing a more holistic critique and deconstruction of the key practices and discourses of (neo-) colonialism. Post-colonial theory is said to have gained recognition within western scholarly circles as a significant perspective with the publication of Said's (1978) orientalism. In what has been described as a highly influential study of that time, Said (1978) is said to have addressed the western discourse of orientalism relating primarily to the Middle East and Islam, and made the case that western colonial domination took place with the construction across a range of activities including specialised scholarship, general thought, as well as institutionalised practices of administration, education, journalism, diplomacy among others of an elaborate hierarchy of binary oppositions positing a fundamental "ontological and epistemological distinction" (p. 2) between the occident and the orient.

Such a structure of hierarchical binaries (e.g. civilised/savage, developed/undeveloped, modern/archaic, nation/tribe, scientific/superstitious etc.) in which the occident was coupled with privileged terms like "civilised" and "modern" while the orient was linked with terms like "archaic" or "superstitious" that denoted inferiority served to produce a representation of the orient, or indeed even the entire non-western world, as something ontologically inferior to the west, and hence needing firm western supervision, guidance and assistance for becoming fully civilised, and developed/modern. According to Banerjee and Prasad (2008), the objective of ideological discourse of orientalism was to justify modern western colonialism as a "moral" and "redemptive" project intended to help the non-western peoples who were supposedly lagging behind in the process of global industrialisation. Interestingly, these hierarchical binaries also became important for the identities of western individuals. Beyond Said's (1978) contributions, post-colonial theory, is also known to have been shaped by other key scholars (e.g. Nandy, 1983; Bhabba, 1994). Bhabba (1994) is known for theorising

issues of colonial ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry while Nandy (1983) is known for investigating the psychology of colonialism. Propelled by the intellectual efforts of these and other scholars, the body of postcolonial theory has reportedly made significant strides over the last several years, now spanning across a diverse range of areas including feminism (Lewis and Mills, 2003), history and historiography (Chakrabarty, 2000), nationalism (Bhabba, 1990; Chatterjee, 1986), philosophy and epistemology (Mignolo, 2000; Mudimbe, 1988), race issues (Gilroy, 2000), science (Nandy, 1983); sustainable development (Banerjee, 2003); indigenous issues (Banerjee, 2000; Banerjee and Linstead, 2004), globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Pieterse, 2004) and a variety of themes in management and organisation studies (Banerjee, 2001; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Prasad, 2003a).Such a broad coverage is one of the reasons why the body of post-colonial theory has attracted a considerable degree of debate and external heterogeneity (Banerjee, Prasad, 2008).

According to theorists, the heterogeneity is exaggerated because of the wide array of linkages brought about by the numerous ways in which different facets of post-colonial theory relate with other critical perspectives like Marxism, post-structuralism and deconstruction. The internal debates that arise from such diversity, not surprisingly results in tensions within post-colonialism. The development of post-colonial theory is also explained by a study of literary theory and post-colonialism. Post-colonialism is often seen as an approach for critically analysing the discourse(s) of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The meaning of the term discourse here can be retraced to the similar interpretation used in chapter three when identity was discussed; discourses here refer to ways of establishing knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge relations between them (Weedon, 1987). Weedon's definition of knowledge refers to both scholarly and non-scholarly knowledge, and relating to all spheres of life including intellectual, cultural, economic, political, religious, social, ethicomoral, aesthetic and so forth. Therefore the use of "discourse" in post-colonial theory serves to emphasise theintellectual, social, cultural, political, economic and other similar processes and structures that form a well articulated collection of complex ideas that seeks to (re)produce and perpetuate colonialism through neo-colonialism.The area of post-colonial theory is indeed vast, stretching across several concepts, perspectives and

disciplines which makes for very interesting insights into historical and contemporary discussions of humanity, however for the purpose of this study, the ambiguity of post-colonialism can distract from the most relevant aspects of the theory that relate to identity processes. Therefore at this point, the focus turns to a brief summary of key debates within the area to provide a holistic overview of what theorists have deliberated over thereby giving scope for this study to be positioned appropriately.

3.3.1 Key Debates

I.) How appropriate is the prefix "post" in the word "post-colonialism"?

The term "post-colonial", despite gaining currency in Western academic thought in recent years, is mired in much theoretical and political ambiguity (Shohat, 1992). The prefix "post" is said to indicate the passing of an era, an era of colonial domination that ended with the emergence of newly independent nations in Asia, Africa, and South America. Interestingly however, several scholars have questioned this assumption and, in querying the postcolonial condition and doubted its political agency (e.g. Shohat, 1992).

2.) Is it appropriate to homogenize colonial experiences?

One of the comprehensive criticisms levelled against post-colonialism is the danger of what is described as 'careless homogenizing of experiences'. These experiences are that of white settler colonies, such as Australia and Canada; of the Latin American continent, whose independence battles were fought in the 19th century; and countries such as India, Nigeria, or Algeria that emerged from very different colonial encounters in the post – world war II era (Hall 1996). Inspite of such criticism, Hall does provide some justification for the concept in embodying the shift in global relations which marks the "uneven" transition from the age of Empires to the post-independence and post-decolonisation moment (Hall, 1996).

3.) Is there a difference between "post-colonialism", "post-colonial studies", "post-coloniality" and "post-colonial theory"?

Rattansi (1997) proposes a distinction between "post-coloniality" to designate a set of historical epochs and "post-colonialism" or "post-colonialist studies" to refer to a particular form of intellectual inquiry that has as its central defining theme the mutually constitutive role played by colonizer and colonized in shaping the identities of both the

dominant power and those at the receiving end of imperial and colonial influence. Within the field of post-colonial studies itself, Moore-Gilbert et al. (2013) points to the divide between "post-colonial criticism", which has much earlier antecedents in the writings of those involved in anti-colonial struggles, and "post-colonial theory", which distinguishes itself from the former by the incorporation of methodological paradigms derived from contemporary European cultural theories into discussions of colonial systems of representation and cultural production. Whatever the various interpretations of the term, Hall claims that post-colonial"marks a critical interruption into that grand whole historiographical narrative which, in liberal historiography and weberian historical sociology, as much asin the dominant traditions of Western Marxism, gave this global dimension a subordinate presence in a story that could essentially be told from its European parameters (Hall, 1996).

4.) Is there a post-colonial discourse?

According to Olaniyan (1993), some of the many questions relating to post-colonialism include: "is there a post-colonial discourse?, what are the conditions of possibility?, How does it revive, challenge or even rewrite colonial discourse?, is post-colonial discourse a unified field or is it marked by multiple and contradictory articulations?, is there a practice of post-coloniality in cultural studies and the exegeses of texts?" All such questions capture some of the ambiguity associated with post-colonialism and its various interpretations.Rather than attempt to trace the origins of "post-colonialism" as a concept, it is probably more appropriate to refer to this school of thought as one that attempts to thematize and problematize issues arising from colonial relations (Shohat, 1992). Banerjee (2000) highlights the consensus amongst several scholars that postcolonial theory is problematic for various reasons. It is accused of isolating and dislocating the problems caused by colonialism and placing them in some past era, with the assumption that colonialism as a historical reality has somehow ended (Said, 1978). Traces of colonialism in present "postcolonial" histories of new nation states often are obliterated or retraced in economic terms of progress and development. It seems to distance itself somehow from neo-colonialism by persuasive assertions of "giving priority to the lost, silenced, dispossessed other" without speaking of its complicity in contemporary power relations (Shohat, 1992). Thus, as Said (1978) points out, it absolves itself of any claims for present consequences of the damages caused by colonisation.

Western representations of time have always been central on constructing self and other differences, and the time-space assumptions of the prefix post are no different in that they homogenize different histories and normalise intercultural differences. This normalisation process displaces political differences between postcolonial cultures to their temporal distance from European colonialism. Banerjee (2000) identifies two problems with this temporal distance assumption: First, it obscures the continuing unevenness of power relations between colonizer and colonized in the present by pre-specifying the path the former colonies must take to "development", "progress", and "modernity", which of course continues the same uneven transfer of resources from the south to the north, this time using the economic machine instead of the military machine. Secondly, in what Banerjee describes as its celebratory rhetoric, "post"-colonialism obscures historical, cultural and political differences between different countries by providing a fictitious "common past" that all post-colonials are supposed to share their contact with Europe. Thus, this temporal vector, an imperial power such as the United States can qualify as being "post-colonial". Similarly, Argentina and Hong Kong, despite their very different past and present histories are both "post-colonial" as are Brazil and Zimbabwe (McClintock, 1994).

Contemporary postcolonial theory is especially problematic in accounting for what has come to be described by several scholars (Banarjee 2000, Shohat 1992, McClintock 1994) as "anti-colonialist" struggles, such as the struggles of the peoples of the Fourth World to negotiate with and survive colonial conditions in countries such as "post-colonial" Australia, where Aboriginal peoples are consistently denied their rights. According to Banerjee (2000), the "politics of domination" in the case of indigenous peoples all over the world are shaped by discourses of nation states (whether First, Second or Third World) or of globalisation under the guise of transnational capitalism (Shohat, 1992). McClintock (1994) refers to the emergence of corporate giants like Coca Cola, Chase Corporation and Mobil as "confetti triumphalism" predicated on the erasure of the histories of indigenous peoples.

Despite its focus on non-Western spaces and locations, post-colonialism is rooted in Anglo-American academy and is a "discursive practice in the specific context of the western academy" (Pugliese, 1995). Pugliese points out that critiques of post-colonialism by postcolonial scholars are not necessarily conducted from external

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positions of privilege but rather are implicated in the same cultural and institutional processes that are being critiqued. Within this discursive space, Pugliese doubts the possibility of developing a "disappropriate practice" in postcolonial theory because these practices "inscribe themselves on embodied subjects and …(re)produce the regulatory and disciplinary order of (neo)colonial regimes". Pugliese's stance on the inability of postcolonial theory to produce an emancipatory reinscription of practices appears to be different from Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity; the creation of a space that overcomes the separation of coloniser and colonised, a space that permits the negotiation of antagonistic situations, often a space to situate present day struggles. It is significant that the geopolitical contexts, where such emancipatory reinscriptions are taking place, are defined mainly by, North American and European theorisations of postcolonialism. The position of indigenous peoples in contemporary postcolonial theory continues to be unspeakable and invisible. As Perera and Pugliese (1998) have pointed out, these theories have very little relevance (and could in fact prove quite problematic) in accounting for ongoing struggles of indigenous people in Australia, Canada and the United States. In these societies, where multiculturalism is celebrated, there is often a conflation of indigenous rights with other minority issues, with little acknowledgement that the agendas of these groups are quite different and often incompatible. This issue has also been acknowledged in organisational behaviour as societal factors are inevitable instigators of workplace behaviour. Banerjee (2000) stresses the danger in subsuming indigenous identity into a hybrid settler identity and masking colonial relations in the present.

5. *Where does post-colonialism stand on the issue of gender?*

The feminist debate is also present in post-colonial literature as some scholars (e.g. Moulette, 2007) suggest that post-colonialism and feminism are closely related because they share a mutual goal of challenging forms of exclusion. Moulette's (2007) analysis supports the argument that Hofstede's (1998) masculine/feminine dimension contributes to reproducing a collective and prejudiced understanding of both culture and gender. Moulette (2007) focuses on showing that Hofstede's masculine/feminine dimension unveils a distinct perception of gender differences, even though women's voices were kept silent in his survey. Furthermore, Moulette (2007) suggests that colonialism is a profound indicator of perception between western and non-western people. The concern with the way representation influences the constitution of

subjectivities is also one of the reasons why feminism is of crucial interest to the post-colonial discourse. For instance, while the cultural (colonial) discourse has been used to distinguish the world in mainly two parts, the west and the non-west, gender has traditionally been distinguished in two distinct social categories; the feminine and the masculine. Moulette (2007) stresses that the dichotomy masculinity/femininity was also present in the colonizer's mindset, where the occident was said to represent male characteristics such as rational thinking, activeness, and innovation while the orient represented female characteristics such as passivity, backwardness and superstition.

According to Moulette (2007), the legacy of colonialism is still obvious and perhaps most apparent in westerners negative feelings about "others" manifested in expressions such as " I do not like them because of the way they treat women" (often referring to Arabs or Muslims). Similar to the cultural discourse, the traditional gender discourse is perceived as essentialistic (Collison and Hearn, 1996), and constituted as homogenous group identities on the bases of social and anthological universals. Just as inhabitants in a country are assumed to be bound together by the notion of "sameness" so too is the nature of traditional gender discourse. Hofstede's (1998) interpretation of masculinity and femininity in society also contributes to the debate on gender and post-colonialism. Hofstede (1998) describes the features that supposedly constitute masculine and feminine societies. Bearing in mind the influences of culture and colonialism on gender, the idea of universalising gender in its entirety may seem naïve but nonetheless certain similarities may be apparent across cultures at the very least on the premise of biology. Of course how gender informs identity cannot be understated even more so when colonialism is taken into account.

Pio (2007) describes the concept of "Imperial Imprimatur". Imprimatur is from the Latin imprimere to imprint or in press. It generally refers to the official approval or sanction given by ecclesiastical authorities to print or approve a book/printed matter, before it goes into the public domain and is used by the Catholic Church. Recently it has broadened to include a symbolic sense of "official" approval. Imperial refers to the rmpire, in this case the legacy of British colonialism. Hence, imperial imprimatur as a metaphor represents the need for the official stamp of approval in order to access work. Pio (2007) uses the concept of Imperial Imprimatur to describe the mindset of colonialism in her study of ethnic minority women in New Zealand. In the context of

Nigeria, the presence of an obvious colonial administration no longer exists however the culture is greatly influenced by the west so there is justification to explore how Nigerians process the perpetuated influence of the west on their daily working lives. Furthermore, Pio (2007) commented that migrants in New Zealand self-identified with their ethnicity which certainly can be related to the mindset of Nigerians. Similar to Moulette (2007), Pio acknowledges the challenge placed on women of ethnic minority as she seeks to negotiate her identity. Inevitably such negotiations have significant implications for the workplace.

Essed (1996) affirms the need to reclaim the values of gender, racial and cultural diversity; and the need to form transnational political coalitions for equality and justice. Essed (1996) argues that the assertion that cultural intolerance, and not racism is at the core of social problems re-inforces a cultural determinist notion of difference and hides the fact that multicultural policy is little more than a means of managing and marginalising difference and preserving the status quo.

6. Where does the matter of "space" stand in the context of post-colonialism?
The concept of space also contributes to the concepts of identity and post-colonialism. The spatial perspective proposes that the distinctiveness of societies, nations and cultures is based upon a seemingly unproblematic division of space, on the fact that they occupy "naturally" discontinuous spaces. The premise of dis-continuity forms the starting point from which to theorize contact, conflict, and contradiction between cultures and societies. For example, the representation of the world as a collection of "countries", as in most world maps, sees it as an inherently fragmented space, divided by different colors into diverse national societies, each "rooted" in its proper place (Malkki). It is also taken for granted that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society that the terms "society" and "culture" are routinely simply appended to the names of nation-states, as when a tourist visits India to understand "Indian culture" and "Indian society", Thailand to experience "Thai culture and in the case of this study, Nigeria to sample "Nigerian culture".

Space itself is said to act as a "neutral grid" on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organisation are inscribed. It is in this way that space functions as a central organising principle in the social sciences at the same time that it disappears

from analytical purview. Gupta (1992) describes certain problems with the interrelation between space, place and culture, one of which is the question of coloniality. To which places do the hybrid cultures of post-coloniality belong? Naturally, it is plausible to ask whether the colonial encounter creates a "new culture" in both the colonized and the colonizing country or whether it negates the notion that nations and cultures are "isomorphic"? For instance while it is claimed that the primeval community was formed out of an interconnected space, colonialism represented the displacement of one form of interconnection by another. Gupta (1992) meticulously stresses that by always foregrounding the spatial distribution of hierarchical power relations, a better understanding of the process by which a space establishes a distinctive identity as a place is achieved. Further scholars of anthropological theory (Clifford, 1988; Said 1978) discuss the mobility of identity in light of space and post-colonialism. According to Said (1978), more people in the world are living in a condition of homelessness. Such mobility may not be relevant for the configuration of identity in Nigeria but it highlights the influence of post-colonialism across racial and ethnic borders. The spread of a broad-minded acceptance of what is described as "cosmopolitanism" is also a contemporary concept in post-colonial literature. This referring to a highly multicultural society superseding any significance linked to identity and space. Such multiculturalism is associated with England today based on the migration of people from all over the globe. Intense multiculturalism also applies to the nation of Nigeria but in a very different context, more tied to indigenous ethnicity than race. In this context, cosmopolitanism does not include ethnic multiculturalism. Even though because of the presence of racial and ethnic diversity, there are states within Nigeria, which may be considered to be more cosmopolitan than others (e.g. Lagos state).

Basch et al. (1994) refer to 'transnationalism' as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. These processes are described as transnationalism to emphasize the high volume of migrants today who build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships (familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political) that span borders are referred to as 'transmigrants'. Transnationalism may be linked very closely to colonialism with the view that an individual acculturates the values of his/her former colonial master (host country). In this context, transnationalism can be linked to how Nigeria

inexplicably assumes some of the values of former colonial oppressors. The next section takes a brief look at the dialectics of the colonized mind.

3.4 THE DIALECTICS OF THE COLONISED MIND

The "dialectics of the colonised mind" is characterised by the contradictions, conflict and struggle that an individual has to contend with while negotiating his identity in a post-colonial era. In the context of this study, the question is whether Nigerians are subject to any identity struggles from their mental perceptions of work symbols, norms, structures or experiences. This study accommodates the likelihood that Nigerians may be subject to these dialectics but not even conscious of it. For this aspect of analysis, the onus is on the researcher to ascertain what elements of their (participants) views, or reproduced social realities reflect perceptions of a colonised mind, which they may not even be aware of. Of course the subjectivity of any study especially with such interpretations has to be acknowledged. As mentioned earlier, the class structures discovered from the feedback of the participants facilitated dialectics. For example, when constructing their social realities, participants talked about how many Nigerians in their workspace still see themselves through the "eyes of the white man" so always have an inferiority complex which fuels an extremely submissive identity.

Furthermore, the fact that participants expressed frustration with working for "foreigners" was exacerbated by the fact that they disliked working for "their own" even more. This forced them to accept their fate as subordinates of foreign staff even though the experience fuelled some of their insecurities. According to the participants, these insecurities are reminiscent of colonialism.The dialectics of colonialism is an aspect of colonial and post-colonial literature that has attracted much debate over the years as scholars and theorists grapple with the ambiguity of individual existence in the era of post-colonialism and independence of previously colonised states (e.g. Ryan & Worth, 2010; Osaghae, 2006). While many scholars have explored post-colonialism extensively and tackled a lot of the issues that address the dialectics of the colonized mind, Sen's (2006) interpretation of the "African identity" singles out the debate surrounding this particular area; therefore while considering worthy contributions from scholars in this area, this study borrows largely from his perspective at this point. For the purpose of this study, dialectics of the colonised mind looks at two perspectives:

(i)   How people who emanate from colonised territories may struggle with the process of self-determination without an overemphasis on the role of the coloniser. In other words, a Nigerian may only be able to identify himself based on how white people perceive him or may just be very conscious of how the white man perceives him/her. This is precisely what acclaimed Indian scholar Amartya Sen in his book *Identity and Violence* (2006) calls "the dialectics of a colonized mind" (p. 88). From this standpoint, in the absence of whites, a colonized black mind cannot imagine its existence; it derives its self-image from a mirror held up by whites. In other words, such a mind is incapable of grasping the completeness of its being outside the mental universe constructed by white people.

(ii)   How the struggle to rediscover identities in a highly competitive and diverse environment may lead people to restore or simply maintain social structures, which were attributed to the colonial era. An example can be cited, in how it appears that the class structure, which still exists in Nigeria across ethnic and economic lines, is largely attributed to the strategies of the colonizers during their administration.

Both of these perspectives were evident from the results of the data collected for this study. According to Sen (2006) the regressive nature of the "colonized mind" facilitates confusion and unrest amongst members of society as people with that mindset refuse to accept ideals that are viewed as western even though they are proven. Further to what Sen (2006) describes as the "dialectics of the colonized mind" is the deduction of a reactive self-perception, which essentially cultivates an anti western perspective on political and socio-economic ideals. Sen (2006) expresses that such a view has had far reaching consequences culminating in the phenomenon of terrorism.

To some extent identity or sense of belonging is based on shared history and a sense of affiliation. Identity can be both inclusive and also exclusive. This of course can be related to the ideas of the 'ingroup' and the 'outgroup' in social identity theory. Sen (2006) argues that it is often the singular emphasis on one aspect of plural identity that breeds violence. For example Sen (2006) explains that a Hutu labourer from Kigali may be pressured to see himself only as a Hutu and incited to kill the Tutsis, and yet he is

not only a Hutu, but also a Kigalian, a Rwandan, an African, a labourer and a human being. Sen (2006) argues for recognition of plural and diverse identities which all individuals have and reemphasises the role of reason and choice so that an individual can decide his identity. The central argument of Sen's (2006) book is that conflicts (ethnic, cultural, social) are sustained by the illusion of a singular identity that appears preordained to the subject. The imposition of singular identity leads to the "miniaturization of people". (Sen, 2006: p.185).

Sen (2006) discusses identity in connection with civilisation, religion and culture, and in the context of history, globalisation and individual freedom. The arguments presented are convincing and persuasively presented, and deserve consideration by anyone interested and concerned with the current state of civil society. To discuss some key dimensions of the dialectic debate, the next two sections will look at choice and culture as they represent important aspects of the colonized mind's struggle. "Choice" will focus on the debate around multiple affiliations versus singular affiliations and "culture" will address the issue of the individual not being able to negotiate his or her identity without relating to the colonizers.

Identity and Choice

Sen (2006) endorses the concept of multiple identities; his basic thesis suggests that each identity brings a richness and warmth to our lives as well as constraints and freedoms. Attributes such as nationality, race, religion, community, and class, to name a few, form the basis for choosing how we construct identity in a particular context and at a particular point in time. While highlighting individual freedom to choose our identities, Sen (2006) also points to the priorities and pressures that limit this freedom and influence our choice. Challenges may also arise in convincing the world to see us in the same way as we see ourselves, particularly as civil society today tends to privilege religious identity over the political and social. He argues against the economists' reductionism of human beings as self-interested individuals and proposes that instead people need and want to be identified by their connection to a group or groups; this thinking of course is consistent with social identity theory.

Sen (2006) challenges Samuel Huntington's thesis in *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* for categorising human beings by civilisation rather than as individuals with plural identities. The problem with this theory is that it reduces

engagement to an 'all or nothing' contest (p. 182). Sen (2006) deprecates this singular-affiliation type of reductionism because it gives human beings a one-dimensional identity, or connection to only a single group. Besides, the impression often conveyed by such theories, some of which are intellectually crude and conceptually simplistic, is that they do not create a confrontation but rather discover it. In an environment of public ignorance, it can be argued that these become potent yet acceptable political tools that provide a convenient way of crafting public policy and interacting with the increasingly complex world around us; but it is a dangerous path to take. Not only has it generated violence and strife around the world, it is also undeniably inaccurate as the idea of social realities suggest that most individuals have plural identities that are often in contrast to each other. Sen (2006) warns that 'cultivated theory can bolster uncomplicated bigotry' (p. 44), and points to the crude classifications along civilizational lines such as describing India as a Hindu civilisation. He also argues against 'reliance on civilizational partitioning' (p. 57) because its methodology and historicity are flawed.

In short, Sen (2006) concludes that singular identity is an illusion and those who foster violence promote and exploit it by ignoring all affiliations that might allow for other identities to exist, and by redefining one's 'sole' identity in a more belligerent form. Such an interpretation is certainly applicable in the case of Nigeria as the perception that people have of their existence and identity in intensely diverse environments largely determines how much harmony or conflict they will experience inwardly or outwardly. Some of the expatriate participants interviewed for this study expressed that ethnic identification was noticeably stronger than national identification amongst Nigerians. Sen's (2006) arguments echoes the interpretations of other scholars (e.g. Ekeh, 1975, 1980; Osaghae, 2006; Ekanola, 2006) who attribute conflict in African states like Nigeria to the choice of individuals to strongly identify with ethnic groups, overlooking a more holistic perception of themselves that accommodates their other identities (such as identities based on gender, personal interests, profession, nationality or simply humanity).

Identity and Culture

Sen (2006) discusses the significance of the earlier role of many non-western countries as colonies of European powers and concludes that 'the colonized mind is parasitically

obsessed with the extraneous relation with the colonial powers' (p. 89). One consequence of this mentality is ignorance of the global origins of democracy and freedom and the non-Western foundations of science and mathematics. Another is that spiritual superiority, which in current-speak implies religious fundamentalism, is rooted in the East. Yet a further intellectual trap is the habit of defining oneself as 'the other', the non-Westerner, in terms of how one is different from Western people as in Singapore's glorification of 'Asian values' (see p. 93). Unfortunately, this non-Western positioning often conflates with an anti-Western stance that can be equally important for national pride, as it is in terrorist recruitment. Sen (2006) points out that it is also significant in the dialectics of the colonized mind and cites as example, South Africa's rejection of anti-AIDS strategies due to the 'mistrust of science that has traditionally been controlled by white people' (p. 92). The challenge is to dismantle the colonized mindset for which the West is central on the one hand, while on the other to end the nexus between erstwhile colonizers and the politics and economies of former colonies that manifests itself in control and interference. Sen (2006) suggests that the difficulties of achieving this are exacerbated by singular-affiliations and solitary identities and priorities that, if predicated on religious beliefs or ethnic loyalties, often promote religious fundamentalism and ethnic conflict.

In some ways, while this study captures the peculiarities of identity processes in regions of Nigeria, it also aims to demistify the influence of matters like extreme ethnic diversity, ethnic and racial hierarchies and religion on identity processes in such regions. In comparison to western culture, the perception of African culture by western theorists is ambiguous and so a deconstruction of identity processes in such regions can only serve to enhance better understanding in cross-cultural studies. While culture is important, it is not crucial to the identity of an individual or a group or even a country because its influence is modulated by a host of other factors such as gender, race, class, organizational culture and politics. Secondly, 'cultures' more correctly reflect the inherent heterogeneity that exists within any given culture and the dynamism that transforms it from time to time. No culture can be deemed 'insular', least of all in this age of social networking.

Sen (2006) presents two, basically distinct, approaches to multiculturalism. One celebrates diversity as a value in itself promoting isolation of any group or individual in

society and a singular-affiliation view of human beings. The other celebrates reason and freedom to choose above cultural diversity encouraging interaction, and viewing people as multi-identitied.

The issue of class struggles is one way in which people from colonised states find themselves experiencing colonial institutions even after colonialism and independence have since passed. As Sen (2006) again reminds us,it cannot make sense to see oneself primarily as someone who (or whose ancestors) have been misrepresented, or treated badly, by colonialism, no matter how true that identification may be. (op. cit.). Basically he suggests that the more black people define themselves on the basis of the wrongs committed by whites against them, the more they prolong confusion in respect of their true identity. This sums up the problem; many black people confuse the necessity to keep the memory of colonialism and apartheid alive with the search for a truly African self-identity. By so doing, they are unable to define themselves without reference to whites, and they therefore become guilty of tainting the purity of African identity with occidental blemishes.Drawing on the notion of "dialectics" as used by Sen (2006), this study seeks to explore how post-colonialism may influence the identity of Nigerian workers and how they see themselves in the workplace. In other words, how does a colonial past influence the way Nigerians see themselves in the workplace? Are there feelings of resentment or acceptance amongst Nigerians? What identity processes can be attributed to the colonial era? Are Nigerian workers conscious of such processes? As will be disclosed in the results and contribution chapters, this study shows that even in this age and time Nigerians in the workplace still embody identity struggles that Sen (2006) talks about.

3.5 THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The contextual background is a component of post-colonialism, which refers to the features of the surrounding socio-economic environment that are peculiar to the chosen region of study, Nigeria. The aim of this section is to capture some of the central issues of post-colonial discourse relating to Nigeria. This discourse relates largely to issues of equal opportunity for career progression and the process of making organisations in the region more reflective of the context, otherwise coined as "Africanisation". Although this study does not pursue the statistical representation of races, or ethnicities in the sample companies, this review of the contextual background will include some

illustrations produced by existing literature to emphasise the predicament that Nigerians faced in the workspace during the early periods of independence (i.e. early post-colonialism). Exploring these themes provides an opportunity to uncover issues, which have implications for identity processes in the contemporary Nigerian context.

3.5.1 Africanisation of Nigeria

Nigeria provides an interesting case study for any exploration into post-colonialism because it marks the beginning of decolonization in sub-saharan Africa. Hence, Nigeria was one of the first African countries to face issues of inter-racial succession in the public and private sectors. Post-apartheid South Africa, in contrast, is among the last states in Africa and the world to undergo the difficult transition from a deeply unequal racial order to a postcolonial state. Moreover, Nigeria represents a clear illustration of extreme ethnic diversity and the problems associated with related conflict. In South Africa the relationship among different ethnic or racial groups such as whites (English- and Afrikaans-speaking), coloureds, Asians, and blacks is reminiscent of the ethnic divisions in Nigeria (Iheduru, 2004, p. 22).

3.5.2 Early Post-Colonialism in the Nigerian workplace

Nigeria was colonized by the British at the end of the ninenteenth century, although coastal colonies existed in the country from the middle of the century, and trading links in legitimate commodities, as well as slaves, stretched back even further. For most of the nineteenth century Europeans and African elites collaborated in trade and administration but by the end of the century, this began to change. As European nations scrambled for African territories, Britain subdued previously independent African kingdoms and less centralized village-based societies, displacing local trading networks with their own firms and transportation infrastructure. Yet, until the early twentieth century, it was still common to see West Africans serving in responsible posts in administration and merchant houses (Olusanya, 1975).

After the second world war, the colonial civil service, as well as private companies, found it difficult to obtain enough white recruits to staff their West African operations, which opened up opportunities for locals again (Decker, 2013). Political and economic upheaval in Nigeria led the government to accede to demands for greater self-determination and colonial reform; by the early 1950s this accelerated to become a

movement for full-blown decolonization. Nigeria secured independence as a federation in 1960. The economic fortunes of Nigeria, buoyed by the commodities boom of the 1950s, declined in the early 1960s, but then diverged when petroleum reserves were discovered in Eastern Nigeria. Nigeria's traditional commodities were displaced by the enormous wealth that oil receipts brought from the late 1960s. Subsequently, political patronage became practically the only way to become wealthy. In addition to experiencing a succession of military coups, interrupted by failing democracies, Nigeria experienced intense inter- ethnic rivalry leading to a civil war from 1967 to 1970. Resource conflicts continued to define the country's politics, and in the 1980s and 1990s one of Africa's richest and most powerful states declined as a result of ruthless 1990s one of Africa's richest and most powerful states declined as a result of ruthless military rulers. The country was returned to a flawed democracy in the late 1990s by the former military governor, Olusegun Obasanjo, who was succeeded by Umaru Yar'Adua, who passed away allowing for the emergence of his vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, as the new and still current president of the federal republic.

Nigeria experimented from the late 1960s onwards with legislation to promote indigenization, which forced foreign companies to incorporate locally and to sell equity to local interests.Nigeria retained a significant expatriate presence until the 1980s, which was a source of local irritation. Although the expatriate presence is said to be much lower in 2014 than pre 1980, there is still a noticeable presence in the most dominant industry (the oil and gas industry) of the country. The participants from this study's sample emphasised that discussions around local content legislation in the oil and gas industry was commonplace amongst Nigerians as they expressed frustration about the low representation of Nigerians in senior roles but did nothing about it.

Early corporate Nigeria, post-colonialism centres around the activity of four firms that were significant in their sectors and the wider economy at the time: the merchant house United Africa Company (UAC), a subsidiary of Unilever, and the overseas bank Barclays Bank DCO, provide rich and detailed archival resources for this period. Patchier but still informative are two smaller archives, those of the Bank of West Africa and John Holt & Company, a trading company focusing exclusively on West Africa (Decker, 2013). All of these companies were British, had a long established presence in Nigeria, and employed large numbers of locals under mostly expatriate management.

These five British companies dominated the private sector until the arrival of the international petroleum firms in Nigeria in the late 1960s and 1970s. Outside the petroleum sector the British firms' major competitors were French, US, and German, but they mostly built a significant presence only in the 1960s. Moreover, in the first few years new foreign investors frequently negotiated better conditions than existing investors, and thus did not become subject to the same pressures until later. The three largest companies mark the boundaries of how quickly or slowly major firms Africanized their management. UAC embarked on a comprehensive Africanization programme earlier than the other firms, and was followed by the two British banks, Barclays Bank DCO and Bank of West Africa.

Overall, progress towards Africanization in the private sector was slower than in the civil service. While the latter was under direct political control, the first independent Nigerian governments only rarely used legal means to coerce foreign companies. Formal conversations between politicians and businessmen, public naming and shaming, and trade union pressure were far more common, but governments also limited immigration quotas for expatriates, even denying new applications completely at times (e.g. in the 1970s). As mentioned earlier, Nigerian legislation regarding the presence of expatriates in the oil and gas industry influences the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace (Decker, 2010). According to the participants of this study's sample, there is still a great deal of frustration amongst Nigerians regarding the dominance of expatriates in senior positions. Most of the participants attributed this to the company's desire to maintain control as they strongly felt there were capable Nigerians to secure these positions but never given the opportunity. This frustration was only compounded by the fact that nobody took steps to initiate change for fear of alienation and loss of their employment. The participants explained that the high rate of unemployment and job insecurity in indigenously owned companies caused Nigerians to accept the conditions of foreign multinationals so as to protect their employment.

3.5.3 External Pressure for Compliance

Initially the africanisation of firms' operations was largely deemed to be an attempt to appease external stakeholders, such as the new nationalist parties or the colonial administration, which determined the terms of decolonization. Many high-ranking, prominent appointments were of a political and not a managerial nature. One obstacle

was that the directors of Western companies found it difficult to trust their non-European staff. Trust was very low in colonial societies, as Europeans and Africans avoided each other socially and found each other's manners and behaviour unpredictable (Granovetter, 1992).

Promotions and window-dressing.

Appointing Nigerian directors from outside the companies became a popular, if controversial, practice around the time of independence. The expatriate management hoped that local directors would fulfill similar functions to non- executive directors: providing commercial and political intelligence and access to their network of contacts, while at the same time keeping clear of trying to influence managerial decisions. They effectively sought to gain social capital through local directors, while maintaining publicly that they were prepared to advance Nigerians within their organization.

In the early 1960s, for example, Barclays Bank DCO made an effort to create local boards to which non-executive Nigerian directors were appointed. This occurred first in Nigeria in 1961, shortly after independence, underlining its political motivation. Management was careful to represent all three major ethnic groups (corresponding to the country's administrative regions): Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. This distribution of dominant ethnicity was increased after the civil war between 1967 and 1970. Only one director had a commercial background. While they generally received good publicity for this move, some politicians criticized it as window-dressing (Decker, 2010).

While Barclays had hoped to use their African directors for political and commercial intelligence, the bank only succeeded in its primary intention improving its local image and that only to an extent. Marshalling the potential of the resources that would arise from linking social networks across the racial divide was not yet possible. The extent to which some of the early Nigerian managers were similarly just 'figure- heads', like the non-executive directors, is less clear. The process of promoting and developing capable Nigerian managers was fraught with difficulties, and hampered by a hostile environment. In UAC, which had the most rapid Africanization programme of the private sector companies, Africanization at first meant 'adding on' Africans to the existing European managers. There are two different explanations for this: extensive training programmes for local staff required more expatriates; or jobs were fragmented by the promotion of expatriates ahead of Africans in order to supervise them. The

controversy surrounding expatriates is very much integral to the study of post-colonialism in this study, most of the sample organisations used in primary research are multi-nationals which comprise of the expatriate-indigenous employee dynamic. This study recognizes that this relationship may be the most elaborate possibility for exploring intense emotions associated with the dynamics of colonialism in the workplace.

Vicious circle of underperformance

The attitudes of European managers are important for Africanization, because their assessment of the trustworthiness and ability of incumbents determined their prospects for promotion. These attitudes changed only very slowly. Frederic Seebohm, director of Barclays Bank DCO, commented in 1954 that 'it is very difficult for a European to assess the character and ability of an African'. By 1960, however, Seebohm's attitude showed a stronger class bias: 'The top-class Nigerians are good company and much more interesting than most of the British that one meets abroad' (Seebohm, 1960). Frederick Pedler (1965) of the UAC agreed: "The ministers you meet and the senior civil servants are people of impressive quality." This, I think, has been a comment offered by other people who have come back from Nigeria. By the early 1960s therefore the social and cultural distance that was constantly being constructed within British companies was no longer upheld with regard to the emerging African elites. Political empowerment made African politicians and officials acceptable partners much earlier than African-Americans in the USA. However, it was only later that the same occurred with attitudes towards senior Nigerian managers and businessmen. The British general manager of Dunlop in Nigeria, John Smith, was quoted in 1976 as saying that: 'At the top, Nigerian managers are quite outstanding', but he continued that 'the country lacked depth of management' (Oviogbodu, 1976). These attitudes were obviously affected by the changing political landscape in West Africa. Colonial withdrawal gave Africans access to the top positions in the government and economy. While this opened up opportunities for the previously excluded, this was no social revolution. These positions were often taken by already existing elites, whose ability to break into top posts had been curtailed by the previous regime. The process of Africanization thus increased the stratification of society as Nigerians rose into leading positions, not only drawing level with, but also outranking Europeans for the first time in the twentieth century. The greater social proximity of elites opened up an avenue for

cooperation. This explains why expatriates changed their attitudes towards local elites, but continued to distance themselves from Nigerian employees and indeed the majority of the population. As the alignment of race and class was broken down, class gained increasing significance.

This social and cultural distance towards Nigerian staff had a significant impact on opportunities for staff development and advancement. Managerial papers from the five companies studied indicate a vicious circle, based on the low expectations that British managers had of Nigerian staff performance, withdrawing responsibilities from new postings, and undermining them. The circle was fuelled further by the insecure position of Nigerian managers (see Burawoy, 1972, pp. 52, 99). Management perceived it as risky when they were forced to extend their trust to virtual 'unknowns', because the potential opportunities for malfeasance increase with the level of trust placed in an individual (Granovetter, 1992). Hence the lack of knowledge and understanding coupled with fear of incompetence or bad intentions created conditions which made it harder for new managers to perform well, and exacerbated an atmosphere of general insecurity and mistrust.

Therefore, although blatant discrimination in recruitment was removed during decolonization, it did not mean that Nigerians had the same access to support networks and gatekeepers, who provided some informal training and preparation, screened potential applicants, and determined promotion within the firm. Without necessarily being aware of it, foreign companies had not really opened their internal professional networks for development and promotion to most Nigerian employees, as the significant gatekeepers in the firms still found it difficult to identify 'potential' or 'character' in recruits whom they perceived as fundamentally different from themselves. The result was a 'glass ceiling', albeit one that shifted upward over time (Decker, 2013).Expatriate managers' lack of awareness of these issues was reflected in the language of debates over individuals' shortcomings, which often referred to problems of ability or 'character' (Decker, 2013).White managers did not realize that this was indicative of a failure to internally develop Nigerians with managerial potential. Despite differences among companies in the progress of Nigerians, they shared an understanding about the limits of African advancement within the business community.

Another problem was high levels of 'staff wastage', as many recruits left in order to take up better positions in terms of salary, professional development, or opportunities for promotion. The West African countries only began to build a higher education system in the 1950s and had a relatively low share of population formally schooled; the literacy rate for Nigeria in the 1950s was between 10 and 20 per cent (Decker 2013). South Africa, where spending on education was clearly skewed in favour of whites, has also experienced intense competition for suitable managers, like Nigeria (Decker, 2010). With both the private and the public sectors competing for a limited pool of skilled labour, in conjunction with white emigration, staffing became a bottleneck, threatening the successful implementation of these policies. At the same time, the logic of supply and demand meant that salaries for managers were rising, especially when compared to poorly trained and unskilled labour. Even as recruitment was strongly determined by the existing class structure in Nigeria, it also served to reinforce stratification by lifting the educated elite towards expatriate standards of income.

Cultural Pluralism

The irony of countries like Nigeria is that although on the surface, there appears to be one singular "Black African race", there is actual a high degree of cultural pluralism which manifest in the form of several strongly identifiable ethnicities. Nigeria comprises of over four hundred ethnic groups with over five hundred dialects (Olukoju, 1997, p. 12-13). The three dominant ethno-linguistic entities are: the Igbo in the south-east, the Yoruba in the south-west, and the Hausa-Fulani in the north, however the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, Tiv, Kanuri, Edo, Nupe, Ibibio and Ijaw groups account for almost 80 per cent of the population (Aito, 2008). The cultural pluralist perspective can be related to the intensely multicultural nature of the Nigerian society as individuals learn to live and work with people from distinct ethnic backgrounds. Among other factors, this study draws upon strong ethnic identification as a consequence of post-colonialism and the results reveal how ethnicity affects identity processes in the workplace. From another viewpoint, cultural pluralism could be used to describe the co-existence of western and Nigerian values in one individual (i.e. a hybrid). From the results of this study, both viewpoints represent evidence of how post-colonialism is influencing identity processes in the workplace.

3.5.4 Where is this study positioned in the literature?

Having considered the historical dimension, the contextual background and dominant theorisations of post-colonialism, this section will articulate the proposed contribution of this study to the area of post-colonial workspaces and identity processes:

Primary Research Question: *"To what extent does post-colonialism inform or influence identity processes in the work-setting of a developing economy?"*

To address this question, we must reveal the truth behind identity processes of workers in such a context:

i.)   To what extent do the social formations, which were attributed to the colonial era, influence identity processes in the workplace? (e.g. ethnic hierarchies, manifestations of status and race based structures)

As was mentioned much earlier in the chapter, the study ultimately aims to integratethe theories of social identity and post-colonialism to facilitate a better understanding of identity processes in the work-setting of a developing economy.

Fig. 3.2Research Template
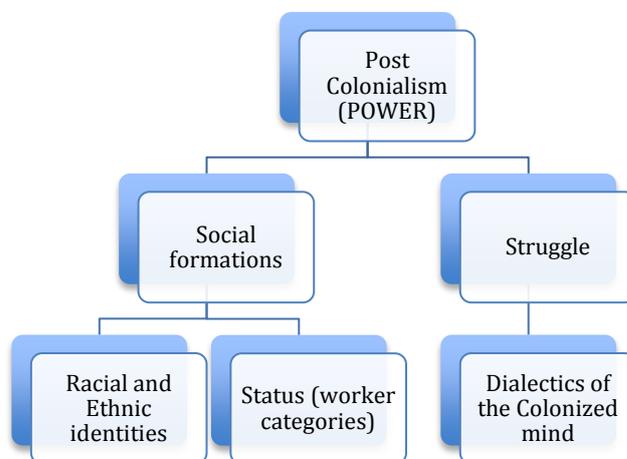
Figure 3.2 represents the factors that have been derived from the reviewed literature for the primary research of this study. To explore post-colonialism in the context of this

study, power is the central theme. The two sub factors are "social formations" that currently exist in Nigeria that are attributed to the colonial era (i.e. this relates to the status structures along racial, ethnic identities) and "struggle", which captures the dialectics of the colonized mind. "Power" as the principle theme cuts across both social formations and struggle. Based on the knowledge gathered from the literature and personal experience in Nigeria, it is intended that the selected factors will enable this study to establish meaningful interpretations of how post-colonialism informs identity processes from the data.

Integrating Social Identity and Post-colonialism

Having reviewed the existing literature in social identity and post-colonialism, this section considers a preliminary framework for integrating both areas. As mentioned earlier, the value of interlocking social identity and post-colonialism is to establish better insight into the identity processes in the work-setting of a developing economy.

Fig. 3.3 Showing linkages between SIT and PCT
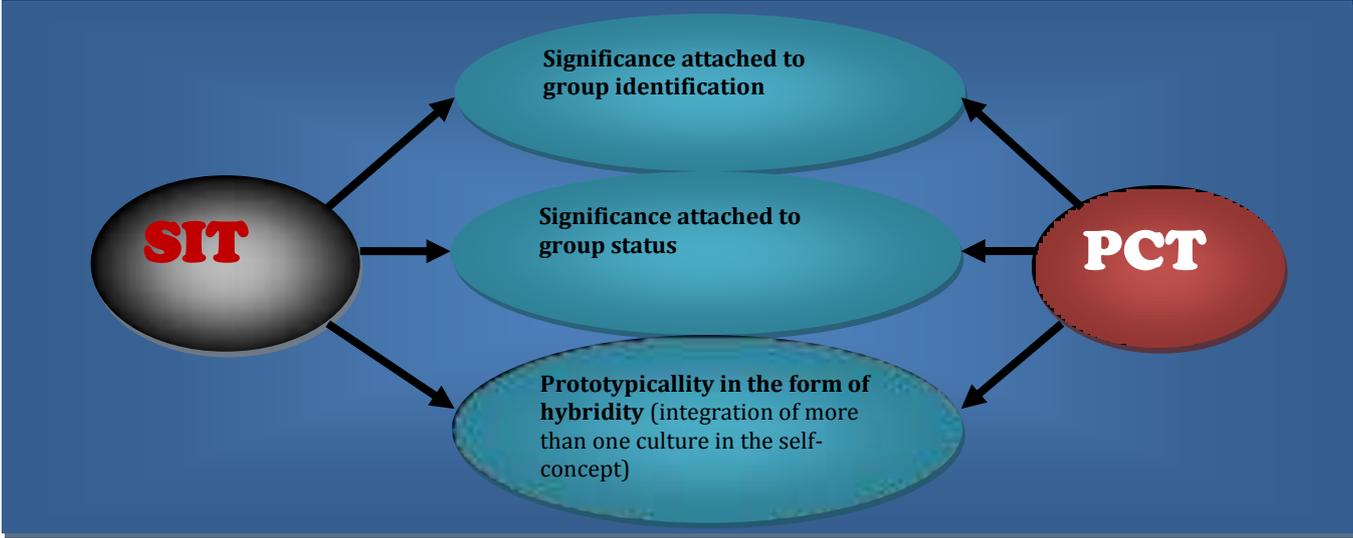
Keys

■ SIT
■ PCT
■ Linkages between theories

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Fig. 3.4 Showing contrast between SIT and PCT

SIT		PCT
Struggle is somewhat overlooked (e.g. in the context of multiple social identities).		**Struggle** is associated with the devalued identity and intergroup conflict.
Power is largely overlooked (e.g. in the potential influence of group status or the prototype)		**Power** cuts across every key aspect of post colonialism.
For group identification, **harmony** is integral because of emphasis on the benefits derived from group membership and group survival (e.g. uncertainty reduction).		For group identification, **harmony** is somewhat overlooked because of emphasis on intergroup conflict (e.g. racial/ethnic groups).

Keys

■ SIT
■ PCT
■ Contrast between theories

Both areas have been integrated by identifying themes that either establish common ground or emphasise disparities. As the first step to integrating social identity and post-colonialism, figures 3.3 and 3.4 represent the linkages and contrast drawn between both areas. Figure 3.3 shows that certain factors are considered to draw similarities between social identity and post-colonialism. The first of these factors is 'a significance attached to group identification'. Although social identity theory highlights the propensity to identify with groups, post-colonialism is also very much characterized by groupings that are mainly based on ethnic and racial identities. Secondly, the significance attached to group status is also common to social identity and post-colonialism. For social identity, group status refers to the characteristic nature of a group that determines how the group compares to another group. Therefore the desirable outcome for an individual is to adopt a social identity, which compares favourably with another group. The individual who has made such a choice would be considered to have a 'satisified social identity' because his/her group has a higher status. (Hogg & Turner, 1987). Although

group status is not discussed as explicitly in post-colonialism as it is in social identity, the theme of group status is very much evident in post-colonialism because of the tension between groups and the emphasis on group comparison. Post-colonialism comprises of intense group identification, which is entirely based on how groups compare and which groups are considered superior. As chapter three has illustrated, in post-colonialism the substance of the debate surrounding groups and status is fuelled largely by racial and ethnic identities. The third established linkage between social identity and post-colonialism integrates a concept from each area.

From chapter two, the literature review has explained how important prototypicality is to group identification. Hybridity has been used to describe the integration of more than one influence or culture in an individual's self-concept (e.g. western and indigenous norms). In the process of considering how social identity and post-colonialism inform identity processes in existing literature, this study identifies a common ground between both sub-concepts. Bearing in mind that prototypicality represents a model that captures either the central tendencies or ideal attributes of a group and hybridity represents a model of identity construction in the post-colonial era, it is logical to consider hybridity as an interpretation of prototypicality in a context characterized by colonial roots. Figure 3.3 provides an illustration of the three themes discussed here and how they represent viable linkages between social identity and post-colonialism.

On the subject of contrasts, both social identity and post-colonialism address certain factors in charasteristically different ways. Three areas have been identified as 'points of contrast' for both areas, these include 'struggle', 'power', and 'harmony'. These areas have been singled out from the existing literature of both areas because of their perceived relevance to the particular context of this study (i.e. Nigeria). On the issue of 'struggle' social identity appears relatively passive in addressing this predicament. Struggle in the context of social identification refers to tensions that arise when an individual has to decide which social identities to adopt or activate and which ones to relegate in any particular situation. Although there are mild considerations of struggle in social identity theory, the significance and implications of struggle are somewhat overlooked (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Conversely, in the context of post-colonialism, struggle is integral to the issues surrounding the dialectics of the colonized mind and intergroup conflict. Therefore on matters relating to struggle, post-colonialism represents a more adequate medium to interpret identity construction than social

identity. On the issue of 'power', social identity theory is also relatively passive. Although social identity recognizes the potency of group status and the prototype, there is little emphasis on the operation of power in both contexts. For example, social identity recognizes that a higher group status implies a more influencial group identity, which consequently affects identity processes of in-group and out-group members. This influence can be interpreted as power however social identity largely overlooks the use or misuse of such power and the extremities that identity processes may be exposed to. On the other hand, the power dimension is epitomized by post-colonialism. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, power cuts across every aspect of post-colonialism. For both struggle and social formations, power is dominant and is mainly traced to group identity processes drawn from racial identities. Although post-colonialism emerges to be more dominant in interpreting struggle and power, harmony is a factor that is best interpreted by social identity.

As mentioned earlier, social identity was selected for this study because of the propensity of Nigerians to attach significance to group identification. As explained in chapter two, group strength and group survival is largely predicated on cohesion, solidarity and harmony. In the midst of manifestations characterized by struggle and power, harmony is the most essential ingredient for group identification to persevere. Although post-colonialism also attaches significance to group identification, there is a pre-occupation with struggle and power and the operation of harmony is somewhat overlooked. The linkages and points of contrast represent how this study interlocks the theoretical frameworks of social identity and post-colonialism.

3.6 SUMMARY

On the face of it, colonialism may no longer appear palpable in a country like Nigeria led primarily by indigenes however the impact of old orders cannot be overlooked. Nigeria originally existed as a diverse collection of contrasting tribes, dialects and people but has evolved to become an English-speaking nation where colonialism not only facilitates communication but also informs complex identity processes. The aim of this chapter is to capture the substance of post-colonialism that affects identity processes in a region like Nigeria. Although issues like employment legislation or racial equality are not the focus of this study, the impact of such factors on identity processes has to be acknowledged to understand the prevailing discourse amongst

Nigerians in the workplace. In the end, the impact of post-colonialism on Nigerians is the discussion that fosters answers to how people's identities may be affected. Notably the impact of post-colonialism is largely centred on socio-economic consequences which are remotely linked to identity processes, henceforth why only selected areas of interest have been highlighted as it was established these would be of most use in evaluating the identity processes of the chosen sample.Existing post-colonial theory was instrumental in carrying out the primary research as information gathered from the participants re-affirmed theorists' view points on the perpetuation of colonialism through the subtle replication of colonial dynamics and the dialectics of the colonized mind. The integration of social identity and post-colonialism is deemed important to establish meaningful insight into the identity processes within a work-setting of a developing economy. The framework comprising of linkages and points of contrast between the two elected areas of this study form a basis for how the results of this study will be evaluated.

Chapter Four
Research Methodology

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this chapter is to situate the research within a recognized research methodology and to describe the research method adopted in the study. Before providing a format for this section, it is useful to recall the purpose of this study and the questions designed towards that constructive end. As stated in earlier chapters, the purpose of this study is to explore the identity processes in the work-setting within the extractive industry of a developing country through the lens of social identity, post-colonialism and globalisation. The key research questions central to this study are focused on how these three areas inform identity construction in the context of a work setting within the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. The justification for this study is described, drawing on the notion of several authors that the Nigerian context is characterized by a significance attached to group identification (e.g. Okolo, 2014; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Sen, 2006; Osaghae 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa 2009; Christopher 2003; Oyeshile 2004; Ekeh, 1975) and my own personal interests and history. Next this chapter recalls the research questions that direct this thesis. An introduction to the research methodology and research method adopted for this study follows thereafter. The research methodology is qualitative using social constructionism and the method is interviewing. In doing so, the challenges and limitations of implementing these will also be addressed. This chapter then considers the ontological and epistemological position of the key conceptual models in this study and how that characterizes the overall study's format. Finally the steps taken to execute the data analysis to derive meaningful results will be explained.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can social identity theory be used to interpret/explain the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace?

    a   How can the prototype, saliency and cohesion, solidarity and harmony be used to interpret the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

2. To what extent does post-colonialism, inform the identity of Nigerians in the chosen sector and region?

3. To what extent does globalisation inform the identity of Nigerians in the chosen sector and region?

4. What kind of relationship can be drawn between social identity, post-colonialism and globalisation in the context of identity construction in the chosen sector and region?

4.3 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

My interest in exploring identity construction was initiated by a fascination with the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. Having been exposed to life in an African society in my earlier years and now a western society in my graduate and post-graduate years, the formation of identities intrigues me greatly. On further consideration, I came to acknowledge the importance of the socio-cultural and socio-economic environment in identity processes. The evolutionary nature of developing economies suggests that the impact of the environment on identification is dominant. Several authors have found that the Nigerian context is characterized by a significance attached to group identification (e.g. Okolo, 2014; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Sen, 2006; Osaghae 1998, 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa 2009; Christopher 2003; Oyeshile 2004; Ekeh, 1975, 1980). In Okolo's (2014) recent paper on "Managing Minority Problems in Nigeria: The Case of the Ethnic Minorities of the Niger Delta", he talks about the origins of what has come to be described as ethnic nationalism. This refers to the notion that indigenes identify more with their ethnicity than their nation state, thereby resulting in stronger ethnic identities than national identities. Okolo's (2014) paper is reminiscent of previous studies discussing groupings in Nigeria that are primarily centred around ethnicity; his reference to three dominant tribes as "three big brothers" and the power that is abused through ethnic hierarchies is not uncommon in existing literature. In discussing the consequences of ethnic tribes being "strewn" across various states and local government areas, Osaghae (2006) not only contributes to the discourse of groupings in Nigeria but also emphasizes significance attached to them.

Undoubtedly, most literature regarding identification in Nigeria centres around social identities based on ethnicity in political and socio-cultural and socio-economic spheres

however social identities in the workplace are somewhat under-researched. Furthermore, the integration of social identity, post-colonialism and globalization to provide a better understanding of identity processes in such regions also appears to be somewhat neglected. In this study my justification for exploring the identity processes in a workplace in Nigeria is based on the gap of relevant knowledge that exists in such regions. The adopted concepts of social identity, post-colonialism and globalisation emerged from my own reflections on the perceived identification processes in Nigerian work-settings and the themes tackled by scholars in existing literature (e.g Ulus, 2014).

4.4 METHODOLOGY

As mentioned earlier, the methodology for this study is qualitative using social constructionism. The decision to adopt a qualitative methodology using social constructionism is borne out of the type of primary research required for this type of study. This study adopts a socio-psychological approach to exploring identity processes. It is important for this study to gather narratives from the participant's point of view, which means allowing them to construct their social realities in what is best described as "life-story accounts". The narratives provided by the participants are vital to facilitating a reasonable degree of authenticity in the research and a qualitative methodology using social constructionism meant that the data collection process was able to capture the feelings, thoughts and interpretations of the participants regarding experiences and observations in the workplace that help shape identities. Next, this chapter will take a look at the qualitative research methodology.

4.4.1 Qualitative

Undoubtedly, qualitative methods have a long history and tradition within business and management research, and have a well-established pedigree. For example, early ethnographies of managerial work have led to considerable insights into managerial experience and practice (e.g. Mintzberg, 1973). Qualitative methods have permeated all aspects of the management research field, ranging from the "softer" areas such as organisational analysis to the traditionally more quantitative areas of finance and accounting. A wide variety of authors have highlighted the considerable contribution that qualitative research can make to the field, suggesting that research utilising qualitative techniques can provide rich insights into the issues that interest both management practitioners and researchers (e.g. Boje, 2001; Crompton and Jones, 1988;

Reason and Rowan, 1981). Inspite of plaudits from a variety of writers, it seems that research reporting qualitative data is still not as prevalent within the field as that which emanates from traditional positivist approaches, where the emphasis is upon the quantification of data. For this study, an exploration into identity processes by interpreting the social realities created from the discourse of the sample is one that requires a textured analysis as opposed to a quantified one. The components of "complexity", "context" and "persona" are useful templates for what may be described as broad justifications for using a qualitative research methodology (Gummesson, 2000).

Complexity

First of all, whereas reality can contain any amount of variables and interrelations, theory in many economics and management areas shuns complexity. Grounded in a qualitative approach, this study embraces the complexity of a data collection process that comprises of interviewees reproducing their own social realities, transcribing lengthy text, organizing such text and finally discussing a derived understanding with meaningful results (conclusions).

Context

All work contexts offer different outlooks, which facilitate the manifestation of different perceptions of one reality. The same outcome is indeed anticipated from the findings of my study of Nigerian workers, as regardless of the measures implemented to reduce variability in the sample, there are still sufficient factors available to ensure a variety of outlooks on the same work context. Bearing in mind the degree of diversity in culture and class in Nigeria, insight into such variability is expected to provide better understanding of how Nigerians perceive their work experiences and how those experiences help shape their identities.

Persona

The human and social properties of the people we study add to the complexity and context, going beyond the objective and predictable (Gummesson, 2000). The concept of persona applicable in this study is that used by Gummesson (2000) to represent human aspects, individual personalities, collective consciousness, roles, and research environment. In the practice of management, data and their relationships are incomplete,

and decisions in all functions, levels of an organisation and external relationships from top management to specialists, workers, suppliers, customers and others are based on a mix of fact and judgment calls. These imperfections multiply as researcher data in turn are an incomplete subset of an incomplete original data set, and researchers, too, must make interpretations and judgment calls. Within this reality it is easy to see that researcher persona will have a decisive say in both the design and outcome of this study. Summarising this discussion on persona, assuming that the exclusion of subjectivity from science is the same as the exclusion of the personalities, of scientists, their personal motives and social behaviour, we may realise that science battles with self-imposed and unrealistic inhibitions. In the end, all research is assumed to be interpretive, and all interpretation is a combination of the systematic and objective as well as the intuitive, emotional and subjective (Gummesson, 2000). Next, this chapter will look at the second component of this research methodology, social constructionism.

4.4.2 Social Constructionism

Undoubtedly, the school of qualitative research amasses a plethora of alternate research techniques. As history has corrected the balance between the relevance of quantitative and qualitative research in areas such as business and management there is an increasing representation of qualitative studies, especially in studies that focus on "opening the black box" of organizational processes, the "how", "who" and "why" of individual and collective organized action as it unfolds over time in context. There will therefore be a noticeable cross-over between "interpretivism"and "realism"in this study. Essentially the strongest justification for using the interpretivism approach is to discover what Remenyi (1998) call 'the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them.' Based on the nature of the context region in this study and the concepts being explored, such a combination has been adopted to facilitate the authenticity of the knowledge gathered from data.

Realism is based on the belief that a reality exists that is independent of human thoughts and beliefs (Saunders et al. 2003). In the social sciences and in the study of business and management this can be seen as indicating that there are large-scale social forces and processes that affect people's interpretations and behaviours without them necessarily being aware of the existence of such influences. Social objects or phenomena that are deemed external to, or independent of, individuals will therefore

affect the way in which these people perceive their world, whether they are aware of these forces or not. However, while it is accepted that realism does share some similarities with positivism, for example related to the external, objective nature of some macro aspects of society, it also recognises that people themselves are not objects to be studied in the style of natural science. From this perspective, realism, as applied to the study of human subjects, is said to recognise the importance of understanding people's socially constructed interpretations and meanings, or subjective reality, within the context of seeking to understand broader social forces, structures or processes that influence, and perhaps constrain, the nature of people's views and behaviours. Social constructionism follows from the interpretivist position that it is necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating people's actions in order to be able to understand these. Key propagators of this ideology include K.J and M. M. Gergen, Shotter (1984,1986), Foucault (1972), and Burr (1995) to name a few. Social constructionism is said to view reality as socially constructed. Therefore it is argued that people may place different interpretations on the situations in which they find themselves. The fluidity of social constructionism suggests that there is no single feature, which could be used to describe its existence. Instead researchers often loosely base the social constructionist perspective on the following precepts:

i.)   A critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge: social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken for granted ways of understanding the world (including ourselves). It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world. It is therefore in opposition to what are referred to as positivism and empiricism in traditional science – the assumptions that the nature of the world can be revealed by observation, and that what exists is what we perceive to exist. This means that no assumptions can be made about how Nigerians identify with groups or form their own identities in the workplace. Bearing in mind the degree of diversity in Nigerian life and the potential implications for people's working lives, I chose the social constructionist perspective for the fluidity that it avails to analysing identity construction.

ii.)   Historical and Cultural Specificity: The ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. Whether one understands the world in terms of men and women, pop music and classical music, urban life and rural life, past and future, etc. depends upon where and when in the world one lives (Burr, 1995). This suggests that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods of history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better (in terms of being any nearer the truth) than other ways (Burr, 1995). Naturally this precept fits in well with the argument that Nigeria presents a unique environment with peculiar people who are best understood from observing and evaluating contextual social processes from their point of view.

iii.)   Knowledge is sustained by social processes: If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them; it is therefore through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore social interaction of all kinds, and particularly language, is of great interest to social constructionists; in the context of this study, the 'goings-on' between Nigerians in the course of their everyday lives at work are seen as the practices during which their shared versions of knowledge are constructed. Therefore what is regarded as 'truth' (which of course varies historically and cross-culturally), i.e. our current accepted ways of understanding the world, is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other.

iv.)   Knowledge and social action go together: These 'negotiated' understandings could take a wide variety of different forms, and we can therefore talk of numerous possible 'social constructions' of the world. But each different

construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings. Burr (1995) illustrates this with an example of how drinking has changed from being considered a crime to a sickness or addiction. 'Alcoholics' are therefore not seen as totally responsible for their behaviour, since they are the victims of a kind of addiction. The social action appropriate to understanding drunkenness in this way would be to offer medical and psychological treatment, not imprisonment. Descriptions or constructions of the world therefore sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others.

The qualitative research methodology of this study is characterized by the peculiarity of social constructionism, which has been embraced by researchers who share the view that certain conditions appear not as pre-existent or objective but rather as constructed through various social processes (e.g. Jordan, 2006; Berger, 1996). According to Anderson (1987) 'the purpose of qualitative research is to explain social action in everyday life and if explanation is contextually bound, then clearly the ordinary and everyday must be the context of the qualitative inquiry into the work experiences of the participants in this study. The researcher has to be there. Social construction theorists consider how individuals develop internal and subjective meanings for people, objects and events of their experienced 'realities' (for example Mead, 1934).

Cooley (1922) writes that people relate to each other not on the basis of objective features as they are deemed to exist in reality but rather through the impressions that they create of each other that result from communication and interaction (as cited in DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). These impressions allow the creation of 'personal ideas", a set of imagined attributes and a projection of interpretations of their actual personae. Cooley (1922) was convinced that these personal ideas, the counterparts of actual people in our minds allowed the participants to engage in social interaction with people who are unfamiliar or situations that are new. They allow researchers and research candidates to predict the behaviour of a single person and project to the behaviour of others who seem to be similar to them. At times, these predications can be tied to experiences with people sharing demographic profiles, for example ethnicity, gender or class. Contemporary scholars such as Denzin (2000), Coffey (1999) have called for a greater accounting of the ways in which meaning is created in the space between people who are engaged in interaction. According to Mead, we construct

conceptions of self in part based on how others view us and we learn to anticipate what others will regard as socially acceptable behaviour. The next section will situate the qualitative social constructionist research methodology adopted for this study within the realms of ontology and epistemology.

4.5 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Ontology is the nature of reality (Hudson and Ozanne 1988) and the epistemology can be defined as the relationship between the researcher and the reality (Carson et al. 2001) or how this reality can be known. Here both the positivist and the interpretivist perspectives are considered in the context of ontology and epistemology to illustrate what led to this study adopting an interpretivist approach.

Positivism

According to the positivist ontology there is a single, external and objective reality to any research question regardless of the researcher's belief (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). Thus, the positivist researchers take a controlled and structural approach in conducting research by initially identifying a research topic, constructing appropriate research questions and hypotheses and by adopting a suitable research methodology.

They also attempt to remain detached from the participants of the research by creating distance between themselves and the participants. Especially, this is an important step in remaining emotionally neutral to make clear distinctions between reason and feeling as well as between science and personal experience. Positivists also claim it is important to clearly distinguish between fact and value judgment. As positivist researchers they seek objectivity and use consistently rational and logical approaches to research (Hudson and Ozanne 1988).

The goal of positivist research is to make time and context free generalizations and they believe this is possible because human actions can be explained as a result of real causes that precede their behaviours (Hudson et al. 1988). For example, from a positivist standpoint, because of the notion that the Nigerian context is characterized by a significance attached the groups as well as any evidence derived from the researcher's lived experiences, the assumption could be made that the exact same reality exists in the workplace prior to embarking on primary research. The positivist approach would

not accommodate the possibility of multiple realities formed from subjective experiences but rather would focus more on the checking the intensity of social identification and the types of social identification that exist in the workplace. In such a scenario, a positivist standpoint would ignore the possibility that social identity may not be reflective of identity processes in the workplace. Furthermore, if there were other forms of identification (such as individualistic) evident in the workplace, a positivist approach would not discover this and neither would it identify the factors that contribute to that type of identification. These are precisely the reasons why the research methodology for this study adopts an interpretivist approach, which embraces the multiplicity and variability of social processes and outcomes for identity construction. This chosen approach (interpretivist) is discussed next.

Interpretivism

The qualitative social constructionist research methodology adopted by this study is situated in an interpretivist approach for a number of reasons that are geared towards accommodating the unpredictability and complexity of subjective social realities. In the course of primary research, any two participants working in the same environment with similar socio-cultural and socio-economic stimuli can still interpret experiences differently thereby creating different social realities. To embark on a qualitative social constructionist research methodology that restricts the ability of the participants to tell their story or forces the researcher to always take narratives on face-value, the prospect of capturing the authenticity of the data as well as any underlying meanings may be weakened. Interpretivists believe that the reality is relative and multiple. According to this tradition there can be more than one reality and more than a single structured way of accessing such realities. It was vital for the research methodology of this study to preserve the texture of data collected and subsequent analysis by accommodating the possibility of multiple realities. The knowledge generated from the interpretivist approach of this study is perceived through socially constructed and subjective interpretations (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). Since interpretivist research knowledge is expected to generate from value-laden socially constructed interpretations, researchers follow more personal and flexible research structures than in the positivist paradigms. Their research approaches have to be more receptive to meanings in human interaction and capable of making sense of what is perceived as multiple realities.Interpretivist researchers enter the field with some sort of prior insight about the research topic but

assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality. During the data collection stage, the researcher and his interviewees (participants) are interdependent and mutually interactive with each other and construct a collaborative account of perceived reality. The researcher remains open to new ideas throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of his interviewees. This perspective of ontology is certainly more consistent with my research as the nature of reality, in this case the identification processes of Nigerians in the workplace is a complex area which requires an open approach dismissing any over-reliance on prior knowledge or opinion. The use of such an emergent approach is also consistent with the interpretivist belief of human ability to adapt and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context bound social realities (Hudson and Ozanne 1988).

The goal of this interpretivist research is to understand and interpret identity processes rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects. For an interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Hudson and Ozanne 1988); all principles which meet some key demands of this study.

Although epistemology and ontology both have a clear interest in knowledge or rather reality, epistemology is more interested in the process of deriving knowledge or understanding a reality. Construed one way, epistemology aims to understand general and ubiquitous elements of human inquiry such as perceptual knowledge or inductive inference. Undoubtedly there are elements of ontology and epistemology in the key concepts of my study as the exploration of a supposed reality, the possibility of different interpretations of that reality and the process through which such a reality is constructed are all relevant to the substance of this study's outcome. If this study is considered in the context of ontologym it takes an interpretivist approach. This means that the research methodology takes into account that any knowledge of the context region is insufficient making the contribution of the participants crucial to establishing a more original account of reality. Although to some extent, the research methodology of this study can be positioned within the interpretivist perspective of ontology, this study more closely embodies the essence of epistemology. In the context of epistemology, this study's qualitative social constructionist research methodology is

hinged not only on how reality is constructed but also on the relationship between the researcher and that reality. Due to the importance of participants constructing their social experiences in the workplace and in effect those social constructions being interpreted by the researcher, the relationship between the researcher and the realities created by the participants is central to the research methodology. Furthermore the relationship between the researcher and the social reality of the chosen research method (interviews) is also important to this methodology. In other words, the way narratives are interpreted by the researcher is just as important as the way the narratives are formed mentally and created by the participants in the first place. Of course the concept of reflexivity follows on from this when consideration is given to the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher; reflexivity will be discussed later in this chapter. Nonetheless, in this context, reflexivity refers to the way the participant responds to the researcher and the way the researcher responds to the participant. By adopting an interpretivist approach, this study is able to capture how the researcher interprets the social reality created by the participants. Next the chosen research method for this study is discussed.

4.6 METHOD

The purpose of this study is to derive meaning from the social realities presented by employees in four oil and gas industry firms in Nigeria; to capture the substance of the candidates' social realities carved from their work experiences, the research interview method was adopted.

4.6.1 Primary Data Collection

The primary aspect of the data collection in this study is characterized by a qualitative social constructionist research methodology. Based on the type of data sought after in this study, the interview was identified to be the most adequate method.

Interviewing

The research interview, one of the most important qualitative data collection methods, has been widely used in conducting field studies and ethnographic research. Given the wide application of interviews in research, there has been an extensive literature on the interview method focusing on a range of topics and issues, including different types of interviews (McCracken, 1988), strengths and limitations of the method, and various

techniques and general advice in conducting "effective" interviews (Kvale, 2007). Although there is a stream of research offering many benefits for qualitative researchers, this study also recognizes the danger of simplifying and idealizing the interview situation based on the assumption that the participants are competent and moral truth tellers "acting in the service of science and producing the data needed to reveal" their experiences (feelings, values) and/or the facts of the organization under study (Alvesson, 2003, p. 14).

The use of social constructionism as part of the research methodology allows the participants to construct the social realities derived from their work experiences and workspace. Despite growing pressure to encourage new ways of thinking about research methodology, it is only in the last twenty years that interview methodologists begun to realize that " we cannot lift the results of interviewing out of the contexts in which they were gathered and claim them as objective data with no strings attached" (Fontana and Frey, 1998, p. 663). Qu and Dumay (2011) emphasise that the benefit of the research interview "lies in its unique ability to uncover the private and sometimes incommunicable social world of the interviewee, to gain insight into alternative assumptions and ways of seeing" (p. 255) so to some extent, it was essential to encourage a relaxed interview, which on the surface feels like a conversation to the participant. However, to address the risk of the interviews being mere conversations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), in comparison to everyday conversations, which usually place the participants on equal footing, the research interviews for this study may be characterized by an asymmetry of power in which the researcher is in charge of questioning a more or less voluntary and sometimes naïve participant (Qu and Dumay, 2011). This is so because even though the participant is aware that they are part of an academic research interview, it is important that during the course of the interview, the participants' focus moves away from the formality of the process to the benefits of being allowed to tell their stories to an attentive audience. In addition to this dimension of power is also the factor of reflexivity (this simply refers to the influence the researcher has on the participant's responses). Drawing on Alvesson's (2003) re-conceptualisation of the interview method from the neopositivist, romanticist and localist perspectives, with parallels in the three broad categories of interview methods being structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, this study adopts the

localist perspective which is deemed to be served through the semi-structured (social construction of situated accounts) interview style (Qu and Dumay, 2011).

The localist approach to interviewing can be realized in multiple ways because of its potential to explore complex issues from different theoretical perspectives. For example, Alvesson (2003, p.17) identifies conversation or discourse analysis as types of localism.Denzen and Lincoln (1998) support the view of the research interview as conversation, considering it to be the art of questioning and listening. With this in mind, despite concerns of the triviality of interviews being casual conversations, they can be understood as conversation because it is the principal means of knowledge transfer in the post-modern/post-structuralist world. The concept of knowledge as a mirror of reality is replaced by how social actors interpret and negotiate meaning, a process characterized as the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Through the interviews, I seek to understand central themes in the working life of the participants in qualitative, open accounts of specific experiences from the subject's perspective. The goal is to remain open to new and unforeseen phenomenon rather than impose ready-made frameworks or categories. Although the interview is executed like a conversation, it focuses on particular concepts. From this perspective it was hoped that the research interview would be an enriching experience for interviewees, who through dyadic interplay with me (the interviewer), obtain new insights into their life world and the research focus (Kvale, 1996).There are many established forms of interview methods utilized to gather insights into a variety of phenomenon, such as focus group and in-depth individual interviewing (Gubruim and Holstein, 2001). The family of qualitative interviews comprises ways of questioning that "differ in the degree of emphasis on culture, in the choice of arena or boundaries of the study, and in the specific forms of information that are sought" (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 19). In essence the interview method is the art of questioning and interpreting the answers.

Individual Interviews

Due to the goal of deriving the social realities from the personal perspective of the interviewees, the inclusion of other participants by way of focus groups risked being a disruption to the freedom and honesty that is being sought after from the interviewees. Considering that this study looks to understand the identities of individuals in the

context of social identification, post-colonialism and globalization, it was decided that individual interviews would be best suited to allow the interviewees to speak freely about their work experiences or view points on matters pertaining to this study without any concerns that the simultaneous presence of other interviewees may restrict that freedom. It was paramount for the content of this interview that the interviewees felt they were in a one on one conversation they are comfortable with. Although the matters being discussed may not necessarily have been sensitive to company and individual confidentiality, it required the interviewees to express themselves in ways they are probably not accustomed to doing on a daily basis. For example, for an interviewee who felt strongly about how his fellow colleagues perceived him, it may be uncomfortable to disclose concerns on how post-colonialism or dominant groupings affect him without risking the identity he would prefer to portray to his colleagues. In this context, the hope was that I represented an anonymous medium who provided them with the freedom to express their views with minimal fear of them being judged.

Semi-Structured interviews

To gather feedback from the interviewees on their views and work experiences in such a manner that allows the subject matter to be explored in that context meant that there had to be a balance between a free-flowing discussion that is guided by a series of broad concepts. This helps direct the conversations toward the topics and issues of interest to this study. This is simply done by introducing a concept and initially asking the interviewee for their first impression so that their level of understanding could be established. From their interpretation, it is much easier to ascertain how best to illustrate what the study would like to know from them in the context of the concept they have just been introduced to. Generally interview guides vary from highly scripted to relatively loose. However, the guides all serve the same purpose, which is to ensure the same thematic approach is applied during the interview.

In this study, the interview style is relatively loose as there were questions aimed at the concepts but the questions were adapted during the course of the interview to maintain the tempo of a free-flowing conversation. In other words, there is no strict order of questioning; sometimes an interviewee's response may encourage discussing a particular concept before another and that might change for the next candidate. The idea is to ensure that the questions and responds flow as naturally as possible while

maximizing the texture of the responses from the interviewees when they had more to say on a concept. This is one of the reasons why the semi-structured interview enjoys its popularity because it is flexible, accessible and intelligible and more important, capable of disclosing important and often hidden facets of human and organizational behaviour. This style of interviewing has been deemed the most effective and convenient means of gathering information (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Because it has its basis in human conversation, it allows for modifications to the style, pace and ordering or questions to evoke the fullest responses in their own terms and in the way that they think and use language. Particularly in a study like this, it facilitates an understanding of the way the interviewees perceive the social world under study.

Underlying the semi-structured interview is the assumption that the questions must be comprehensible to the interviewee while, at the same time, the interviewer must respond sensitively to differences in the way the interviewees understand the world (Qu and Dumay, 2011). In this study, semi-structured interviews are used to emphasize the need to approach the world from the interviewee's perspective. Thus, both interviewer and interviewee participate in the interview, producing questions and answers through a discourse of complex interpersonal talk.

The use of scheduled and unscheduled probes is used in the interviews to draw out more complete narratives from the interviewees, drilling down a particular topic. For example, a scheduled probe requires the interviewee to elaborate on a stimulating or surprising answer just made; in this study, effort is made to follow up immediately with a standard question, such as "please tell me more about that [….]" when the interviewee suddenly discloses an area of personal conviction or personal interest. Because the requirement of the study is to probe and follow up on questions, semi-structured interviews are able to produce different responses contingent to the traits of the interviewing style. In other words, different interviewers will evoke different responses from the same interviewee given the way questions are asked and probed. This is entirely different from the structured interview, which assumes that the same objective truth will be told no matter who conducts the interview so long as the right questions and the same structure are followed. Therefore by adopting the Alvesson's (2003) localist perspective, the interview process is not considered a neutral tool to evoke rational responses with objective truths but rather a situated event in which I

create the reality of the interview situation. As expected, conducting any type of academic interview requires considerable preparation and planning before, during and after the interviews with regards to the way the questions are asked and interpreted. The next section looks at some basic steps taken to ensure that this study derived maximum value from the interviews.

Interview Preparation

1. Mock interviews: I had two mock interviews with friends in order to improve the interview schedule in terms of content.

2. Ethics: Brunel Business School's ethics approval procedure was followed accordingly and submission was made online. Consent was acquired from the superiors of all the interviewees, this was not only important for ethical reasons but also because majority of the interviews took place in the workplace. The superiors were briefed on what the interviewees were being interviewed about and for what purpose. However consent forms were not required for the interviewees as their names/identities were not required for this study. Although the interviews required personal perspectives on work experiences, it was not concerned with the company practice or issues pertaining to the ethics of company values. Furthermore the identities of the respective companies were not required for this study. In summary, this study is interested in phenomena forged from individual perceptions and work experiences and not organizational policy or practice.

3. Participants briefed: Prior to the interviews, each participant was briefed on what was required of them. This was important because the participants were prepared thereby facilitating productive interviews.

4. Time-keeping: Due to the nature of information needed to construct the social realities of the interviewee's work experiences, sufficient time had to be allocated. On average the interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes. The length of the interviews was crucial to the research for two main reasons: (i) to allow the interviewees scope to provide sincere, uninhibited constructions of their social realities (ii) to fully exploit the depth of the interviews due to the restriction on the sample size.

5. Convenient location: The participants' input towards their most convenient interview location was important to ensure their optimal comfort. The more comfortable they were, the more productive the interviews turned out.

6. Interview equipment: Due to the duration of the interviews, it was important that spare batteries for the recorder were on hand before each interview, especially on days when several interviews were conducted back to back.

7. Questions: It was always important to keep a list of guiding questions visible before and during every interview to ensure that the conversational emphasis of the interview style did not compromise the content. With interviews, that encourage the participants to construct their social realities, it is important to encourage free-flowing expression so that the responses do not feel or sound scripted. The participants felt that they were just having a conversation so this encouraged them to spontaneously disclose their true feelings on a matter or a candid account of an event. This process would have been hindered if the participants felt they were being interrogated. The key objective here was for the participant to disclose what they really thought or what really happened than to provide modified interpretations, which they feel are more appropriate for the identity they wish to portray. This objective is not of course an exact science as there is always an element of the participant providing their desired response rather than their sincere response. Furthermore the issue of reflexivity is inevitable with my presence. Nonetheless, one of the main objectives of a conversational style of interviewing that encourages the interviewees to be uninhibited when constructing their social realities, is to down-play the discourse of an interview situation and to enhance the discourse of a natural conversation. With this in mind, the participant's social construction must also be skillfully guided to ensure that they keep their mind on the subject matter being explored. A sample of some of the questions are as follows:

Q. 2.1 Do you agree with the notion that Nigerians attach importance to identifying with groups?

Probe:

Reasons for yes or no answer

Workplace

Q.2.2 Give me examples of the types of groups you notice in the workplace

Probe:

Formal

Informal

Q2.3 Give me examples of group attributes

Probe:

Member traits, qualities or characteristics

Q.2.4 What comes to mind, when I say the word prototype?

Probe:

General perception

In the context of groupings in the workplace give an example of someone you can call a prototype and why (colleague, superior, yourself)

Challenges

Not surprisingly, there were a number of challenges in executing the interviews, which all had to be managed to ensure minimal disruption to the data collection process. These challenges undoubtedly made me more accountable to the entire data collection and analysis process as the implications of executing such intensely qualitative research had to be confronted. The main challenges could be summarised as follows:

1. Time-keeping: Due to the busy schedules of professionals in the chosen context (i.e. the oil and gas sector of Nigeria), securing convenient times for 60-90min interview was difficult. Prospective interviewees were helpful to volunteer but initially reluctant to commit to dates and times due to the length of the

interviews. Furthermore, it was important that the interviews were done when the interviewees were as relaxed as possible, which meant aligning with their schedules.

2. Research engagement: the issue of time also contributed to this challenge. Even though the data collection process was designed to encourage maximum involvement from each candidate as they provided their own interpretations of work experiences, there was an inevitable challenge in keeping the candidates engaged throughout the duration of the rather length discussions. This being compounded with the distraction that other work related obligations presented. Taking into consideration, the regional context of the study, a strong survivalist mentality is propagated which means that tasks linked to earning an individual money are largely prioritized over all other well-intentioned activities during a working day. In other words, although the participants were gracious in their participation, the interviews were not a priority to them. This meant that the interviews had to be executed in a stimulating manner throughout to keep the participants' attention.

3. Interview Content: Maintaining candidate understanding of the relevant theories was another challenge. Bearing in mind, the theories adopted for this study (e.g. the prototype, saliency, entitativity, group status etc.) are largely foreign to the daily discourse of the candidates work experiences, it was vital to ensure that they had a reasonable comprehension of these theories in precisely the right context so as to facilitate more meaningful discussions.

4. Reflexivity: The free-flowing nature of the interviews allowed for a high probability of participation and an inevitable tendency of the participants' reflections to be influenced by how they perceive or feel about the researcher's overall disposition and the interview setting. This meant it was important to manage the way the interview was conducted so that the participant felt comfortable giving candid responses or even asking questions where they did not understand what was required of them on a particular topic. As mentioned earlier, this is the reason why I had to be conscious not to allow my perception

of certain aspects of the oil industry influence my interpretation of participants' disclosures.

5. Interview Location: Due to the difficulty in securing quiet spaces for every Interview, the interviews had to overcome possible restrictions that can emerge when interviewees feel their utterances are being overheard by other members of staff. Such a challenge varied from one candidate to another as some felt more comfortable discussing their identity processes in the office environment than others. The one prevailing theme was the saliency of their professional identity in the work setting (recall that saliency in this context simply means that the professional part of their individual identity was most pronounced because they were in the workplace).

6. Customised interviews: Adapting the interviews to the personality, age and cultural disposition of the candidates undoubtedly presented a further challenge. For example some candidates were particularly strong personalities, while others displayed western influences and some more indigenously rooted.

7. Sample size: Due to the time required for the interviews and limited resources for this study, there was restriction on the sample size. All 47 interviews were carried out across two cities in Nigeria (Lagos city, Lagos state and Port-Harcourt city, Rivers state). Nonetheless the focus of this study is on in-depth analysis; one of the primary benefits of a modest sample size is the increased capacity to re-listen and re-read length interviews which can then be deconstructed, examined and interpreted to a degree which may not have been feasible with a larger sample size. The substance of the data was vital to this study and that was made possible with over forty hours of interviews. This approach of in-depth analysis makes room for marginalized voices in non-western contexts, and supports the study of lived emotional experiences in post-colonial spaces (Ulus, 2014).

Contextual Background

Nigeria is located within the Sub-Sahara African region with a total land area of 923,768.64 sq. km, and shares borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Cameroon in the East, Niger and Chad in the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. With a population of about 160 million people, Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and ranks among the top ten in the world with oil and natural gas endowments. According to the Oil and Gas Journal (OGJ), at the end of 2011, Nigeria is estimated to have a proven oil reserve of 37.2 billion barrels and a proven natural gas reserve to 180 trillion cubic feet. Out of the thirty-six constituent states, nine states situated in the Niger Delta region of the country produces the onshore oil and gas, while the source of the country's offshore productions is from wells in the Bight of Bonny, Bight of Benin and the Gulf of Guinea.

Since independence, the oil and gas industry has occupied a large proportion of the discourse surrounding the Nigerian economy and the identification processes of Nigerians with their nation state. Discussions regarding the economy and national development are characterised by concerns about an over-dependence on the oil and gas industry and the abuse of revenue from the sector. Factors relating to unemployment and job insecurity in the economy are some of the reasons why the oil and gas industry is a particularly attractive industry for working Nigerians. The oil and gas industry is known for the presence of multinational organisations characterized by western policies that are geared towards achieving employee's job security and satisfaction. The attraction of the oil and gas industry results in a high demand for jobs in that sector.

Local content has become a significant issue for the oil and gas industry and contributes to the prevailing discourse of the sector. The efforts of the Nigerian government imply increased pressure on operators to justify the utilization of 'non' local resources (i.e. foreign staff). Reportedly there has been some degree of progress in this respect. A report by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board, an enforcement and implementation body fo the local content law states that engineering in the oil and gas industry is now done ninety percent in country, fabrication of all the field development facilities now has fifty percent of the tonnage done in Nigeria (Pwc 2014 report). However, the consensus amongst experts is that there is scope for improvement

in manufacturing which is supposedly where the knowledge and technology resides (Pwc 2014 report).

There are also concerns about the implementation of the requirements of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act (NOGICDA) on asset ownership for subsidiaries of non-resident companies and other indigenous companies. It does not seem that there is funding capacity in the industry to drive the acquisition of some of the extremely expensive equipment in use in the Industry.The quality of projects executed by local service contractors in line with provisions of the (NOGICDA) does not raise major concern among operators. There appears to be a general consensus on the need to increase in-country capacity notwithstanding the higher cost associated with locally executed projects. There are however concerns about human capital deficit due to non-availability of world class manpower locally. Operators hope to overcome this through continuous investment in attracting, retaining and training the right people as well as long term commitment in building local capacity in key technical skills through support extended to relevant educational establishments.

The discussion surrounding the role of expatriates and the indigenous staff is also a prominent debate in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. Recent reports (e.g. africanoutlookonline.com) have indicated that a typical oil and gas executive in Nigeria earns nearly half a million dollars a year, amounting to the highest financial benefit for working abroad over salary levels in Britain. Furthermore, it is evaluated that expatriates are often the preferred choice to manage the overseas operations because they serve as important link between the parent company and subsidiairies. Also it is argued thatexpatriates bring to the subsidiaries expertise, which are mostly lacking in the local environment (Ikwuagwu, 2012 cited on www.dundee.ac.uk). Furthermore, the expatriates can be trusted by headquarters to more likely act in the company's interest, and are reckoned to ensure control and coordination of the subsidiaries by promoting corporate principles and procedure. However, as this traditional way of managing overseas operations continues, there is growing concern by the companies and academics on the prohibitive cost of selecting, training, sending and maintaining expatriates and their families. There are also continuous cases of expatriation failures, which cause both direct and indirect costs. Interestingly these are not as a result of technical or managerial incompetence, but owing to the difficulties in adjusting to the

unique local systems, different from the parent country's national systems where they mostly come from. A great deal of the adjustment to Nigerian context is captured in the identity processes of both expatriates and indigenous workers.

These are further reasons why this industry features prominently in the discourse of the average working Nigerian. It is for such reasons that the oil and gas industry was selected for this study. Exploring the identity processes in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria will facilitate a better understanding of identity construction in one of the most prominent private sectors of Nigeria and arguably the developing world. Moreover, due to the integration of diverse racial and ethnic identities and western norms, suchintense identity processes result in a peculiar environment for working Nigerians.

The Niger Delta is the main centre of oil production activity and therefore the centre of Nigeria's economy, accounting for more than 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and more than 80 percent of government revenue (CBN 1981). The major oil companies operating in the Niger Delta are summarized in "Table 4.1" taken from Akpan's (2010) exploratory study into kidnapping in Nigeria's Niger Delta:

Table 4.1 MAIN PLAYERS IN NIGERIA'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Consortium	Shareholders	Joint Venture Operator	Production barrels per day (2003 estimates)	Production estimates
Shell Petroleum Development company of Nigeria Ltd.	NNPC Nigeria (55%), Shell (Dutch, British, 30%), Elf (France, 10%)	Shell	950,000	42.20%
Mobil Producing Nigeria Ltd.	NNPC Nigeria (58%), Mobil USA, 42%)	Mobil	500,000	21.20%
Chevron Nigeria Ltd.	NNPC Nigeria (58%), Chevron (USA, 42%)	Chevron	485,000	18.60%
Nigeria Agip Oil Company	NNPC Nigeria (60%) Agip (Italy, 20%) Philips (USA, 20%)	Agip	150,000	7.5%
Elf Petroleum Ltd.	NNPC Nigeria (60%) Elf (France, 40%)	Elf	145,000	6.10%
Texaco Overseas (Nigeria) Petroleum Company	NNPC Nigeria (60%) Texaco Nigeria (20%) Chevron (USA, 20%)	Texaco	55,000	2.70%
Other producers	Ashland (USA) Deminex (Germany) Pan Ocean (Switzerland) British Gas (British) Sun Oil (USA) Conoco (USA) BP (British) Statoil (Norway) Conoil (Nigeria) Dubri oil (Nigeria)	Various	35,000	1.70%
Total			2,320,000	100%

(Akpan N., 2010)

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Petroleum was discovered by Shell-BP in 1956, following half a century of exploration. Oil production became important in the 1960s, but the Biafra conflict and the civil war between 1967 and 1970 delayed further expansion. The main reservoirs are located in and around the Niger Delta, in both on-shore mangroves and shallow off-shore basins, and since 1990 exploration has increasingly moved to deep, offshore areas. Unclear boundary demarcations in the Niger Delta have caused disputes relating to several strategic areas. Wunder (2003) observed that Cameroon and Nigeria both claim zones on and off the Bakassi Peninsula and ownership of the Zafiro oil field is disputed with Equatorial Guinea. Shell continues to be the most important company, but it has been joined by a series of other multinationals over the years. Despite being the richest geopolitical region in terms of natural resource endowment, Akpan and Akpabio (2003) observed that the Niger Delta's potential for sustainable development remains unfulfilled, and is now threatened by environmental devastation and worsening economic conditions.

The tension in the Niger Delta, particularly Rivers state has resulted in oil companies withdrawing their oil operations from Nigeria. This is reportedly a consequence of the fight against resource exploitation resulting in violence and kidnapping (Akpan, 2010). Over the last few decades, there have been numerous reports of oil damaging the sea water, swamp areas and soil of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria resulting in the elimination of all types of sea life (particularly fish) and the contamination of crops thereby impinging on the survival of indigenes from these areas. This is an issue particularly familiar because the author originated from one of these tribes (i.e. the ogoni tribe). The tension reportedly escalated, in the mid-nineties (1991-1995), when prominent leaders of the ogoni community, were eliminated by militant groups who were in favour of violent resolution (Obi, 1997). The principal leader of the resistance, Ken Saro-Wiwa was globally recognised for his campaign with the United Nations on behalf of the ogoni community. The Nigerian government eventually executed Ken Saro-Wiwa for allegations of inciting the ogoni community to engage in "terrorist-like" behaviour". The killings of the leaders and persistence of oil exploration resulting in exploitation of resources resulted in a civil war in that part of Nigeria which lingered on until 2009 when the Nigerian government headed by the late President Umaru Yar' Adua implemented an amnesty with the militant forces. Umaru Yar'Adua offered an unconditional pardon and cash payments to rebels who agreed to surrender their arms

and assemble at screening centres over a sixty-day period. The government targeted up to ten thousand militants whose attacks in the six Niger Delta states had cost the country a third of its oil production at that time resulted in some restoration of peace but this evidently did little to restore confidence in security. This lack of confidence is what has resulted in the withdrawal of oil exploration by a number of companies in the last four years.

Sample

To aid this research, the way the sample was determined was an integral part of the data collection process. Here are some of the key factors that were considered when arriving at a suitable sample.

- Age: The "age" factor required consideration for a number of reasons. Firstly, the subject matter was definitely relevant as the inclusion of post-colonialism meant that there was a high probability for opinions to be influenced by generational factors if I did not control the age limit. For example asking questions relating to perceptions of colonialism or its effects on daily work experiences is likely to get a markedly different response if targeted at 27 year old than if targeted at a 50 year old. This was based on the assumption that the older employees may be more sensitive to issues of colonialism, which meant their life history would likely play a part in their perceptions. Furthermore the focus of this study was to find out how post-colonialism was affecting a particular segment of the working population (those who may be considered most involved in the discourse of globalization and all related phenomena (e.g. social networking etc.). This is not to dismiss the value in having a breadth of opinion but it was important to avoid extremes. The maximum age for interviewees was therefore pitched at 42 years which meant all the candidates were born from 1970 onwards which is a good decade after Nigeria's independence in 1960). This allowed the interviews to gather a healthy variety of perspectives when you considered that many of the candidates were in their mid-20s without including interviewees who may have had first hand experiences with colonialism.

- Interviewee calibre: The calibre of interviewee was important as the subject matter being discussed required a certain degree of intellectual competence and curiousity,

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which cannot be expected from every worker in the chosen industry. Of course there was no way of telling how the participants would respond to the questions until the interviews commenced but effort was made to seek out candidates who had been recognized for their work by their peers or seniors. There was also a good mix of candidates with varying backgrounds which influences the way each participant views their experiences working in Nigeria; thereby adding to the richness of the social realities created in the interviews. 42% of the interviewees had a foreign degree. 26% had lived in an industrialised country for at least 5 years. 50% had acquired either an MSc/MA/MBA. All of the interviewees who were permanent employees had either received a better than average or exceptional grading on their performance review. This however did not apply to contract staff that did not receive an internal performance review but rather an annual consideration for contract renewal. The prospects of the contract staff were determined by contract renewal; every year a contract staff was granted a renewal that was deemed to be an affirmation of their performance in the previous year. 6% of the sample was senior foreign staff. 4% of the sample was non-English speaking senior staff while 2% of the sample was English speaking.

- Sex: Gender is not a primary focus for this study so there was no elaborate strategy to include a certain proportion of men to women. The only consideration was to ensure that both sexes were represented as it was recognized that even though gender was not a planned area of attention for identification, the data collection process had to accommodate for the possibility that it could emerge as a product of social constructionism.

- Employee grading: The grading of the interviewees was also important due to the need for candid constructions. It was decided that including senior level management would restrict the sort of material this study was looking to gather. This was based on the assumption that senior level management would probably provide conservative responses to the questions due to their status as representatives and leaders in the organization. Even though the candidates were assured that their names would not be disclosed in the study, it was decided that senior members of staff would have quite different set of identity processes, which are informed by the influence and responsibility they have the workplace. This is not to discount the

value that can be gained from including employees from extreme gradings but for this study, the decision was taken to minimize the disparity in perspectives that would be influenced by employee grade. Quite simply at the risk of being stereotypical, to avoid having tame interviews with diplomatic responses, senior management were not approached for interviews.

Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics of the participants according to occupational groups.

Occupational Group	Senior Manager	Process Engineer	Process Manager	Commercial Negotiator	Planning/ Customs/ Health & Safety	HR Manager	Lawyer	Total	%
Age									
24-33		28	1	2	1	1	6	39	83
34-42	3	2	1	0	0	1	1	8	17
Sex									
Male	3	16	1	2	1	3	1	27	57
Female		7	1	0	8	0	4	20	43
Children									
0		4	0	2	0	1	3	10	21
1	1	8	0	0	8	2	1	20	43
2	2	10	1	0	1	0	0	14	30
3		0	1	0	0	1	1	3	6
Marital Status									
Married	3	17	2	1	9	4	3	39	83
Cohabitation		1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Not married		4	0	1	0	0	2	7	15
Staff Type									
Contract Staff		10	0	0	0	0	0	10	21
Permanent Staff	3	12	2	2	9	4	5	37	79
Staff Origin									
Foreign Staff	3							3	6
Indigenous Staff		22	2	2	9	4	5	44	94
Total =	3	22	2	2	9	4	5	47	100

Table 4.2 illustrates the breakdown of the sample based on occupational groupings with considerations to age, sex, children, marital status and staff type. From the demographic characteristics, the figures show that a high percentage of the participants were in the following categories: "permanent staff" and aged "24-33", with a slightly more modest

but noticeable advantage to "males". With regards to age, the strategy of interviewing participants with no first hand experience of colonialism and a higher propensity for global norms (e.g. social media, social networking etc.), the distribution is satisfactory. Sex was not a primary focus but it was important to have both sexes represented in the study. Bearing in mind the nature of the context industry, it was expected that there would most likely be a higher percentage of male participants as the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is still populated by a clear majority of men. This reality is of course influenced largely by how the type of work involved in the industry which stereotypically may be considered masculine. This perception of the industry is mildly illustrated by the fact that a higher percentage of female participants (i.e. 60%) are not process engineers but rather administrative staff (e.g. planning, health and safety and lawyers).There was a higher percentage of participants with children than those without. There was a strong advantage to the number of married participants compared to those not married with only one who cohabited. The marginal representation of cohabitation was not a surprise as from lived experience in the Nigerian context, even with the assimilation of modern norms and secular lifestyle; cohabitation is still not culturally acceptable amongst many Nigerians. The idea that generally dominates social discourse tends to be co-habitation should only happen after marriage. This feeds into a strong stereo-type of the Nigerian who is deemed eligible for a certain social status. The data revealed that being married is integral to acquiring status in the Nigerian society and can sometimes affect how formal institutions (i.e. both private and public employers) perceive a prospective Nigerian. This was illustrated by the fact that the participants claimed that most of the senior Nigerian staff were married with children.

Table 4.3 Ethnic distribution based on occupational groups

Occupational Group	Senior Manager	Process Engineer	Process Manager	Commercial Negotiator	Planning/ Customs/ Health & Safety	HR Manager	Lawyer	Total	%
Ethnicity									
Yoruba		16	1	1	0	0	2	20	43
Hausa		1	0	0	1	0	0	2	4
Igbo		3	0	1	7	2	0	13	28
Efik		0	0	0	0	1	1	2	4
Ikwerre		0	1	0	1	1	1	4	9
Ogoni		2	0	0	0	0	1	3	6
Foreign	3							3	6
Total =		22	2	2	9	4	5	47	100

The table above illustrates the ethnic distribution of the participants based on occupational groups. From the table, four of the main ethnic groups in Nigeria are represented (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo & Efik). The ethnicity with the largest percentage is the Yoruba (45%), which reinforces stereotypes of this tribe constituting a large proportion of educated Nigerians who supposedly were amongst the first tribes to respond well to western education (e.g. Oyeshile 2004; Ekeh, 1975). Inspite of the restrictions on this sample's size, this sample does benefit from wealth of diversity with all 4 of the main tribes represented and a total of 6 tribes across the sample. Considering that ethnicity is a strong form of identification in Nigeria, there is a high tendency for people's experiences to be influenced by ethnic identification. By having such a broad spread of ethnic representation, this study was able to capture a variety of social constructions that may be influenced by ethnicity in the workplace.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is only possible once the data has been successfully collected, arranged in an accessible manner. Based on the nature of the data anticipated from interviews, thematic style of analysis was adopted.

4.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is described as being a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Daly et al. (1997) define the method as a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon. Essentially the process involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the data. In consideration of the qualitative data collected for this study, a meaningful understanding of any noticeable issues, factors or phenomena that emerged was best achieved by identifying and analyzing themes therefore thematic analysis was adopted. Braun & Clarke's review of the thematic analytic method is best summarised by a collection of identified merits. Flexibility across many forms of qualitative research is highlighted as being a core benefit to the application of a thematic approach (Holloway and Todres, 2003).

According to Braun & Clarke (2006) qualitative analytic methods can be split into two schools of thought: the first consisting of concepts that emanate from a particular theoretical or epistemological position. For some of these such as conversation analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis, there is relatively limited variability in how the method is applied within that framework. Therefore one fundamental recipe guides analysis in this respect. For others of these such as grounded theory, discourse analysis or narrative analysis there are different manifestations of the method from within the broad theoretical framework. Secondly there are methods that are essentially independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Although often implicitly categorised as a realist/experiential method, thematic analysis is actually argued to be squarely in the second school of thought, which is also deemed to be consistent with essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology. Through what is undoubtedly perceived theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides this study with a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially offer a rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data collected. Braun & Clarke (2006) aim to strike a balance between demarcating

thematic analysis clearly and ensuring flexibility in relation to how it is used, so that it does not become limited and constrained which naturally contradicts one of the key components of this approach.   As already acknowledged thematic analysis is widely used but there is no clear agreement relating to the fundamental essence or any specific mechanics of the approach. Thematic analysis has been seen as a very poorly 'branded'method, in that it does not appear to exist as a 'named'analysis in the same way that other methods do (e.g. narrative analysis, grounded theory).

Admittedly in this sense it is often not explicitly declared as the method of analysis even though there is a prevalent consensus amongst literary analysts to the fact that a lot of analysis is essentially thematic but is either described as other processes (such as discourse analysis or even content analysis, Braun & Clarke, 2006) or not identified as any established method at all (for example, data were 'subjected to qualitative analysis for commonly recurring themes'). Braun & Clarke (2006) point out that it is in fact not uncommon to read of themes emerging' from the data (although this issue is not limited to thematic analysis). Prior to reviewing the integral steps of the thematic approach, Braun & Clarke (2006) emphasise the importance of establishing what exactly qualifies as a theme:

> "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set."(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82)

An important question to address in terms of coding is: what counts as a pattern/theme, or what 'size' does a theme need to be? This is a question of prevalence in terms both of space within each data item and of prevalence across the entire data set. In what Braun & Clarke (2006) describe as an ideal scenario, there will be a number of instances of the theme across the data set, but more instances do not necessarily mean the theme itself is more crucial. As this is qualitative analysis, Braun & Clarke (2006) declare that there is 'no hard-and-fast' answer to the question of what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme. According to Braun & Clarke, it is not the case that if it was present in 50 per cent of one's data items, it would be a theme but if it was present only in 47 per cent, then it would not qualify as a theme. Nor is it the case that a theme is only something that

many data items give considerable attention to, rather than a sentence or two. A theme might be given considerable space in some data items, and little or none in others, or it might appear in relatively little of the data set. This study draws from the principles of Braun & Clarke (2006) as there was no particular percentage of occurrences that constituted a theme and ultimately I am responsible for judging what constitutes a theme for understanding

The coding process for this study involved recognising an important moment and encoding it (seeing it as something) prior to a process of interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). According to Boyatzis (1998) a "good code" is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998:1). Therefore in this study, a good code was understood to be 'words of the participant' which illustrated a viewpoint or social construction on one or both of the phenomena being explored (i.e. Social Identity or Post-Colonialism). Encoding the information organizes the data to identify and develop themes from them. Boyatzis (1998) defined a theme as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998:161).

Further to the inductive approach of Boyatzis (1998), a template approach was adopted in the analysis of the sample's text in this study, as outlined by Crabtree and Miller (1999). This involved a template in the form of codes to be applied as a means of organising text for subsequent interpretation. When using a template, a researcher defines the template before commencing an in-depth analysis of the data. The template is sometimes is based on the research question and the theoretical framework alone however in this case the template was based on a combination of the theoretical base and a preliminary scanning of the text. This way every effort was made to establish an assessment of the text based on the theoretical framework. Following data collection from 47 participants, I transcribed the interviews providing a useful opportunity to familiarise oneself with the data thereby facilitating a much more effective analytical process. Analysis was in fact executed manually simply through reading and re-reading the text, encoding the data, making assessments of emergent themes and finalising interpretations of all noticeable implications for the research question and theoretical framework. Schutz's (2012) social phenomenology is a descriptive and interpretive theory of social action that explores subjective experience within the taken for granted,

"commonsense" world of daily life of individuals. Schutz's (2012) theory emphasizes the spatial and temporal aspects of experience and social relationships. Social phenomenology takes the view that people living in the world of daily life are able to ascribe meaning to a situation and then make judgments. Therefore it was the subjective meaning of experience, which was the topic for interpretation in their study. Lessons were certainly drawn from their study for the purpose of my analysis of the data collected for this study. Lessons of subjective realities and experience formalised through social constructionism and analysed using themes (thematic analysis).

Interestingly, Schutz (2012) views safeguarding the subjective point of view as of paramount importance if the world of social reality was not to be replaced by a fictional, non-existent world constructed by the researcher. To this end, Schutz (2012) formulated a method for studying social action involving two senses of *verstehen* (interpretive understanding). The first order is the process by which people make sense of or interpret the phenomena of the everyday world. The second order of understanding involves generating "ideal-types" through which to interpret and describe the phenomenon under investigation. In Fereday & Muir-Cochrane's study, the method of analysis used the data-driven inductive approach of Boyatzis (1998) and the deductive a priori template of codes approach outlined by Crabtree and Miller (1999) to reach the second level of interpretive understanding.Schutz (2012) decided that his methodology of first and second-order constructs needed to be grounded in the subjective meaning of human action. The research process of this study draws from the principles of three postulates suggested by Schutz (2012).

- The postulate of logical consistency: The researcher must establish the highest degree of clarity of the conceptual framework and method applied, and these must follow the principles of formal logic.

- The postulate of subjective interpretation: The model must be grounded in the subjective meaning the action had for the "actor".

- The postulate of adequacy: There must be consistency between the researcher's constructs and typifications and those found in common-sense experience. The model must be recognisable and understood by the "actors".

Schutz (2012) was mindful of the "natural" versus "social" science debate in relation to "valid" methods of research. Although this debate is now thought to be redundant (Crotty, 1998), interpretive research still requires a trail of evidence throughout the research process to demonstrate credibility or trustworthiness (Koch, 1994).

Schutz's (2012) first postulate of logical consistency is similar to the description by Horsfall, Byrne-Armstrong, and Higgs (2001) of rigor in qualitative research, which involves in-depth planning, careful attention to the phenomenon under study, and productive, useful results. Descriptions of theoretical rigor involve sound reasoning and argument and a choice of methods appropriate to the research problem (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). This study adopts a step-by-step process of analysis drawing from the lessons of Schultz's (2012) conclusions. To demonstrate transparency of this study's research, the overarching themes are derived by familiarization with the initial participant data while transcribing, which was consolidated by re-reading the material several times and linking the emergent themes adequately with the phenomena of this study.

Schutz's (2012) second postulate of subjective interpretation is in line with preserving the participants' subjective point of view and acknowledging the context within which the phenomenon was studied (Horsfall et al., 2001; Leininger 1994 as cited in Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Consistent with interpretive rigor this study demonstrates where necessary how interpretations of the data have been achieved and illustrations to findings with quotations from, or access to, the raw data has been provided (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The participants' reflections, conveyed in their own words, reinforce the face validity and credibility of the research (Patton, 2002). This study adopted these steps to preserve the integrity of the data. In this study, the process of data analysis outlined demonstrates how overarching themes are supported by excerpts from the raw data to ensure that data interpretation remains directly linked to the words of the participants. The tedium of transcribing lengthy interviews, which were not always entirely audible and re-reading them had to be overcome to ensure that the substance and integrity of the data was preserved for this study. Care was taken to capture even

the smallest details of the interviews regardless of how insignificant they may have seemed at the time (e.g. pauses or laughter by the interviewee). All this was particularly important because as an exploratory study with limited resources, the sample size is very modest so it was particularly important for the content of the sample to be safeguarded as significant oversights would compromise the prospects of any meaningful analysis and results.

Similar to Fereday & Muir-Cochrane's study, my study on social identity and post-colonialism was limited in this capacity due to the exclusion of follow-up focus groups. Therefore the relevance of use of this postulate is indeed limited in my research but as stated earlier this does create a valid opportunity for further research. Emphasis in this study is on the individual perspectives on the existence or absence of social identity and post-colonialism in a developing economy.As explained earlier the stages of data coding proposed by Boyatzis (1998) were adopted for the body of this research. The stages were effectively implemented in the following order; Stage 1 (Developing the code manual), Stage 2 (Testing the reliability of the code), Stage 3 (Summarising data and identifying initial themes), Stage 4 (Applying templates of coding and additional coding), Stage 5 (Connecting the codes and identifying themes), Stage 6 (Corroborating and legitimating coded themes).

Six Phases of Braun & Clarke, (2006) thematic analysis adapted for this study are as follows; in accordance with Braun & Clarke (2006) principles, this study does not assume these phases are linear where one cannot proceed to the next phase without completing the prior phase (correctly); rather it is based on a recursive process.

1. *Familiarisation with the data:* Essentially the process of transcribing the data ensured that I immersed myself in the data as it was often necessary to listen to the interviews several times in stages to capture all the details of the recordings. Furthermore reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations consolidated intimacy with the data.

2.*Coding:*Also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2013, for thorough comparison), this involves generating pithy labels

for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis.

Table 4.4 Coding Template

THEORY	EMERGENT THEME	PREFIX CODE
Social Identity	*Cultural Norms: Individual Identity versus Social Identity, informal network trap, national grouping culture, "a Nigerian thing", fresher (rookie) treatment*	*S.I.*
	General Workplace Identification: personal fulfillment, groups in the workplace, corporate culture, groupings based on industry, from ethnicity to goal oriented networks, driven by achievement, globalized networking	
	Employee Functionality: skills, qualifications versus experience, professional identification,	
	Ethnicity: language, ethnicity in the workplace	
	Saliency	
	Class	
	Prototype	
Post Colonialism	*Foreign Nationals and Foreign Transfer*	*P.C*
	Discourse: dependency theory; relevance in the workplace; identity struggle; perception of multinational company practices; noticeable colonial behaviour; colonial, class, regional and ethnic issues; attitude to work, dialectics of the colonized mind, hybridity,	
Globalisation	*Modernity: identity struggle, communication, lagging behind, the end of group identification or its evolution?, globalization versus social identity, interdependence and income equality, interpretation*	*G*
	Westernisation	

Table 4.3 represents a code manual containing the emergent themes from the data and the relevant theory and codes.The choice of a code manual for a study is important because it serves as a data management tool for organising segments of similar or related text to assist in interpretation (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The use of a template is deemed to provide a clear trail of evidence for the credibility of the study. Table 4.3 contains the emergent themes that were assigned sub-themes to provide more specificity to the matters that were discussed in the extracts. Those sub-themes are listed in the theme column under the broader theme heading (e.g. for social identity theory, the theme of ethnicity had sub-themes of language and ethnicity in the workplace). The prefix codes are tied with theory and numbered according to how

many times extracts from the conversations could be tied to the theory (e.g. in each interview every time a theme was identified and linked to Social Identity, the coding would generated as follows S.I.1, S.I.2, S.I.3); furthermore when themes appeared more than once, roman numbers when they included (e.g. S.I.i, S.I.ii, S.I.iii). Initially there were attempts to set the codes up so they were consistent throughout the sample but due to the way the themes emerged independently with each interview, it turned out to be more efficient to set the codes up independently for each interview. The codes are independently set up for each interview, therefore any reference to an extract in the data analysis chapter will not only include the code but the chapter as well. This was done to make it easy to trace extracts from discussions that are used in the discussion (analysis chapter).

3. *Searching for themes:* Finding themes in the data was essential to making the data accessible for analysis or interpretation.In recognition of how to conduct thematic analysis, the themes were not just waiting in the data for discovery but rather had to be constructed. "If codes are the bricks and tiles in a brick-and-tile house, then themes are the walls and roof panels" (Braun V. & Clarke V., 2013: 121).Collating all the coded data relevant to each theme completed this phase.

4. *Reviewing themes:* In this study, the themes were checked to ensure that they worked in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data set. It was important to reflect on whether the themes told a convincing and compelling story about the data, and begin to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes.

5. *Defining and naming themes:* Requires the researcher to conduct and write a detailed analysis of each theme (the researcher should ask 'What story does this theme tell?' and 'How does this theme fit into the overall story about the data?'), identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.

6. *Writing-up:* Once the themes and relevant codes had been developed, writing up allowed the study to produce a narrative on what the themes revealed about the data and chosen theories (phenomena) being studied.

At this stage, the previous stages were closely scrutinized to ensure that the clustered themes were representative of the initial data analysis and assigned codes. The interaction of text, codes and themes in this study involved several iterations before the analysis proceeded to an interpretive phase in which the units were connected into an explanatory framework consistent with the text. Themes were then further clustered and were assigned succinct phrases to describe the meaning that underpinned the theme.

4.7.2 Reflexivity

My research process has been of a reflexive nature and as illustrated by Barry et al. (1999) building on the work of Steier (1991) 'reflexivity emphasizes an awareness of the researchers' own presence in the research process. This is applicable if the consensus is that 'as researchers, we create worlds through the questions that we ask coupled with what we and others regard as reasonable responses to our questions'. We as researchers construct that which we claim to "find". As pointed out by Barry et al. (1999) the goal of reflexivity is to improve the quality of the research, and they further emphasise that by critical reflection, examination and exploration of the research process from different positions, we use our reflexivity to move outward to achieve an expansion of understanding. Barry et al. (1999) has the view that usually reflexivity in the literature is discussed as an individual activity, and the suggested methods for attaining a reflexive stance include keeping reflexive diaries, writing ourselves into field notes, recording analytical and methodological decisions in memos, and being reflexive about every decision we make.

Reflexivity has received a mixed review by audiences, a consensus does exist, which suggests that reflexivity questions the threads of philosophical and methodological certainty implicit in the goal of mainstream social science to provide an absolute view of the world. Reflexive scholars suggest that all forms of inquiry are paradigmatically circumscribed (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Chia, 1996), and therefore truth claims, assumptions about reality and the ways in which we generate accurate theories should be challenged to reveal the inherent instability of knowledge.

My specific engagement with the concept of reflexivity highlights unconscious possibilities for self-interpretations and unconscious motives for privileging certain interpretations over others. Exploring in depth our own responses as researchers

encourages us to consider anxieties and desires, not just those whom we are studying, but also our own (Ulus, 2014). Furthermore, it challenges us to consider those anxieties and desires that may not have been conscious at the time of the interview, and which we may be tempted to disregard thereafter (see for example Gabriel, 2000; Nandy, 1983; Bhabha, 1994 on the centrality of the unconscious for analyzing emotions like desire in the postcolonial context). Therefore, we can ask, how does a specific interpretation address our own anxieties and desires?

Having reflected on my own emotional investment as the researcher in this study, although similar to all the participants also being of African descent and conscious of ethnicity, I have had to consider how my gender, accent and educational background may have influenced both the disclosures made by the participants and my interpretation of those disclosures. Knowing that I was interviewing professionals in an industry that had attracted a great deal of controversy in the surroundings of my own ethnic group (i.e. the ogoni community), I had anxieties about allowing my emotions towards aspects of the industry influence the way I interpreted participants' disclosures. The discourse of organizational identity is embodied in the norms and organizational policies experienced by Nigerians and it is this discourse that may be related to issues of corporate social responsibility however that was not the focus of this study. Even though themes around organizational structure emerged during the interviews with implications for the two key areas (i.e. social identity and postcolonialism), organizational policy was not addressed in this study. A further consideration for my African heritage and black racial identity was the fact that racial identities would be salient when post-colonialism was being discussed. Although being of the same race and originating nationality (i.e. Nigerian) as the pariticipants eliminated any awkwardness when discussing symptoms of racial identification, I was conscious of not actively influencing the intensity of their feelings towards white colleagues because they felt I was one of them. The essence of this study was to capture the substance of relevant phenomenon in the context of the three elected areas and authenticity was important for that process but from an ethical point of view, I was aware of the controversy that can be associated with issues of race in the workplace. It was important to facilitate sincere constructions of the participants' social realities without inciting Nigerians against white colleagues. This meant being mindful of my contributions particularly when the participants were raising sensitive matters.

Ultimately, it was important to keep the research focused on the meanings derived from the subjective social constructions of the participants in the workplace.

During this research, it was vital to present 'the interviewees' view of the world, as they experience it. Inevitably, as the researcher of this study, what I present is my interpretation of their interpretation; hence I am aware of my subjective role in the research process. To this effect, I have made every effort to include extracts from the data (e.g. quotes) to make sure I present the interviewees' actual voices, and to present the reader with a sufficient amount of material in the thesis for them to be able to make their own interpretations. Throughout the research process, I was overwhelmed by the kindness, openness and trust of the interviewees in the study. As expected, finding willing participants was time-consuming not because it was difficult to find adequate candidates but because of their demanding schedules. Although I only managed to secure a very small sample size, my experience of the research process has been of a positive nature. I have worked very hard to identify candidates who were not just of the right calibre but showed a propensity to explore new ideas.

In flying across to Nigeria and then across two of the commercial 'hubs' of the country, I have met a range of obstacles but I have also been fortunate to receive a great deal of friendliness, support and cooperation from all the participants who have made the research process a very rewarding experience. The initial process of contacting the interviewees was a very daunting process. I have been fortunate to receive support from friends who have returned to Nigeria following study in the United Kingdom. These relationships offered me access to informal networks across various companies in the oil and gas sector. However due to the extremely high level of unemployment in Nigeria, there is a high degree of competition for good jobs which results in very high expectations placed on employees by their employers. These circumstances feed into a dominant survivalist mentality that can be perceived not just in the workplace but also in the wider socio-economic environment. Therefore I had to overcome the challenge of gaining the attention of interviewees who were not just willing to offer me their time for a lengthy interview but also would be allowed to by their superiors. Coordinating these interviews to ensure that they had minimal disruption to the interviewee's workload as well as the atmosphere surrounding their colleagues meant working around their workgroup processes and weekly schedules. The support of the interviewees for

this research process was invaluable. There was an occasion when we had booked a room, which was required for an emergency work meeting. With the option of re-scheduling for the following day, the interviewee (a human resource manager) waited with me in the lobby for the meeting to finish so that we could fulfill the task of getting the interview done that day. The interviewees' views, interpretations and social constructions essentially provided me with an insight into the different types of underlying realities that can exist in a seemingly standard workplace. My reflexive approach also allows me to take into account social interaction and discussions I have with others related to my work. This includes conversations with family, friends and colleagues as I see this as valuable in building a broader perspective of views on the subject matter of this study.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research methodology of this study. The justification and interest for the subject matter is described, building on the notion of several authors (e.g. Okolo, 2014; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Sen, 2006; Osaghae 2006; Mizuno & Okazawa 2009; Oyeshile 2004; Ekeh, 1975), my own lived experiences across two civilisations and interactions with working Nigerians. My personal curiousity in the identity processes of people working in developing nations motivated my choice of this topic. The research methodology discussed in this chapter describes how the research was carried out to achieve better understanding of the subject matter.

Chapter Five
Results: Social Identity

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As was explained in the methodology chapter, the use of social identity theory emanates from the notion that Nigerians have a propensity to identify with groups of various forms, ranging from family and ethnicity to religion, profession and political affiliation (Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). Furthermore this was reinforced by my perception of the identity processes of Nigerians formed through lived experiences. The key theoretical question in this context is how does social identity influence or inform the identification process of Nigerian workers in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. Therefore all the related questions under the heading of social identity were geared towards deriving feedback and ultimately an impression of the influence that social identity has on how the sample candidates identify themselves. Themes that were labeled under social identity theory emerged either during questions relating to social identity or indirectly through the course of candidates depicting their own realities. The themes identified will follow in the next section.

5.1.1 Themes

Employee Functionality

Employee functionality is a theme that resulted from the questions that were asked regarding the professional role played by the participants. In the context of this analysis, the focus is more on the specific function of the employee and not just their profession, for example how employees use their assigned roles/functions to facilitate social identification. This line of questioning gave the participants an opportunity to project various aspects of their professional identity, which of course was very salient at the time because majority of the interviews were conducted in their work environments. Extracts from a number of participants illustrates the degree to which they knew what was expected of them and in some cases the advantages and disadvantages of their job roles. Consistent with the nature of this study, even general questions regarding group identification ended up generating responses that demonstrated employee functionality; interview 1 illustrates this early in the discussion. Bearing in mind, the format for the interviews was initiated by the profiling of each candidate, in most cases employee

functionality featured rather early in the discussion. This theme provided an understanding of the level of saliency that can be associated with the professional identity of the candidates. Through this theme, the importance and benefits of group identification are emphasised. The workgroup/team structure present in the organisations of the sample provides a good illustration of how employee functionality facilitates social identification; participant 1 illustrates this early on in his interview:

> **Interviewee:** "There are a lot of benefits you get from working as a group. Uhm working as a group enables you to uhm be clear where you are efficient....you review your work with your line manager and your peers and say this is what I want to prevent and they can help you even remodel it or even advise you to look at it from the manager's eyes and then see what can be done and when you go on you may not have as many problems again, uhm..reviewing. So working as a group gives you the ability to not only assess yourself but also to tap from others." (S.I.1ii)

From the above extract, we see that even though it is primarily the organisational structure that requires participant 1 to work closely with others, he responds well to it and demonstrates a high degree of saliency towards his workgroup social identity. Strong social identification through workgroups is also emphasised by participant 3 when he confirms the importance of social identification in his workspace and explains how working in "cabins" encourages them to identify with those in their groups:

> **Interviewee:** "it is a large organization with many goals so the company processes are very structured. From my understanding, the goals of the organization are channeled into smaller units, that is workgroups or departments and in those workgroups the employees are very much interdependent in their functions…it makes logical sense for them to put us in cabins based on the interdependent nature of our respective functions…in each cabin we pretty much depend on each other to have a productive day because our roles are interlinked. This way by putting us in a workgroup and then in a cabin, it should hopefully spark some synergy between us…...It makes for a much nicer working day if we all get along because of how close we are to each other. I

think that we make more of an effort to get along than we probably would have if we did not physically work so closely to each other." (S.I. 1iii)

From the above extract, participant 3 suggests that the workspaces are organized based on the organisation's strategy to achieve goals through distribution of labour that hinges on teamwork. According to participant 3, the workgroups are housed in cabins to facilitate synergy between the members. The nature of the cabin as a workspace encourages employees to identify more strongly with their fellow workgroup members and this identification process is mainly fuelled by the respective functions that they perform. Participant 3 does however also allude to the benefits of good relationships facilitating better work experiences. To find out how much being a Nigerian influences the propensity for group identification in his workspace, participant 3 is asked how much of it is to do with being Nigerian and he emphasises that group identification is completely an outcome of the company structure, culture and being professional and not about where you are from. Nonetheless, he does insist that strong culture of group identification further enhances such identity processes in their organisation. The Nigerian culture is further discussed under the theme of employee functionality when participant 4 talks about her work style. Participant 4 is a team process manager and explains that she chooses to do a lot of her work later in the day when there is less activity, which indirectly makes team members stay back out of respect and loyalty. According to participant 4, in both formal and informal environments Nigerians have a tendency to be respectful and loyal especially if these attributes will facilitate their progress or survival in a situation. According to participant 4, because respect and loyalty are highly valued in the Nigerian context, her surbordinates may feel pressured to stay behind to work late with her. In this scenario by staying late voluntarily, they are demonstrating respect and loyalty. From lived experience in the United Kingdom, such a scenario is certainly plausible especially in environments that are highly competitive however participant 4 stressed that demonstrating such qualities in the Nigerian work context is not just tied to work norms but also intense cultural norms which compel people to adopt social identities. The following extract illustrates this:

Interviewee: "In general Nigerians value relationships and so we have a natural tendency to identify with groups…..Nigerians value respect and loyalty so it is important for us to demonstrate these qualities as much as possible. It improves

your chances of being protected if backed against a wall and furthermore it improves your chances of career progression. For example, even if you may not like a particular boss, you must do your best to get along with him by demonstrating respect and loyalty to him in anyway you can. The worst thing a Nigerian can do is to just do what he or she feels like…for those who work with me and choose to work late with me even though I have not asked them to, I feel that through their respective functions, they are trying to demonstrate loyalty and respect to me and the identity of the workgroup …." (S.I.xi)

In the above extract, participant 4 stresses the importance of group identification to Nigerians. Her reference to subordinates staying late to work with her illustrates how Nigerians express their social identities through the functions that they perform in the workplace. According to participant 4, their desire to identify with her and the social identity of their workgroup motivates them to carry on performing their respective functions beyond the official end to the working day. The drive for stronger identification with the workgroup is even more highlighted by her indication that Nigerians do not favour a long working day. The following extract illustrates this:

Interviewee: "Nigerians are definitely ambitious but without coming across wrong, I believe that Nigerians are more driven to working smart than working hard. The Nigerian man or woman wants to climb up the ladder without having to work 100 hours a week….don't get me wrong, there are Nigerians who have a strong tendency to be workaholics but in general we like life too much to give ourselves fully to a job unless we feel it is particularly important that we do so, for example if it pays extremely well….that's why when I see my workgroup colleagues staying back to work late with me, I know that for the most part they would rather be home with their families, but that desire to identify with me or the workgroup somehow takes priority at that time….ofcourse there is the influence you might say that I have on them but they are not obliged to stay and furthermore there is a reason why pretty much the whole team stays…..no one wants to be left out….(S.I.1xii)

From the above extract, participant 4 interprets the action by her colleagues to work late with her as an act of solidarity. She insists that Nigerians are typically not prone to

working long hours but rather the drive to identify with their workgroup facilitates the decision to stay behind with her when she works late. The social reality depicted by participant 4 suggests that by performing their assigned functions, employees feel that they identify more intimately with the social identity of their workgroup. The emphasis on loyalty and respect indicates the significance attached to such attributes. From her explanation, group identification is an expression of one's loyalty and respect for others and one's assigned function is the vehicle for such identity processes. The benefits for these attributes are illustrated with references to career progression and job security.

In stark contrast, participant 2 recognises the benefits of working with others but does not demonstrate the same enthusiasm for working with others as participants 1, 3 and 4. Participant 2 establishes that her involvement with others is entirely professional and not much fulfillment is derived from this workgroup identification. Participant 2 indicates that her indifference towards workgroup identification has more to do with her personality and the nature of her workspace. Participant 2 has her own office and most of her colleagues have their own offices so the intimacy of a cabin or open plan workspace was absent. She does however admit that the separate workspaces reinforces the importance that she and her colleagues place on their respective functions because in quite a few cases that is the only way they identify with each other. The following extract illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:**"….we don't see each other every minute because those I work most closely with have their own offices. We kind of all know our roles and we identify with each other by performing our respective roles. When we are working in our independent offices, we strive to do quality work that will compliment the efforts of our colleagues and because there is a lot less chit-chat between us than you may have amongst the Engineers in their cabins or the more junior staff in their open plan offices, you find that respective functions pretty much define how well we identify with others in the team. When we each perform our tasks well, we are more confident about having meetings and more importantly facing senior management. As part of the company structure, senior staff require us to provide reports that include material from me and my colleagues so I guess when we all meet a deadline, there is a sense of satisfaction because we can not only face each other with pride but also the ogas at the top! (S.I.1iv)

Recall that the term 'oga' is a colloquial status induced term thatoriginates from the Nigerian context. 'Oga' is used to describe a person of a higher status. In this context, 'oga' is the male reference while 'madam' is the female reference. In this case 'ogas' refers to the senior management team that oversees the work of participant 2 and her colleagues. From the data, the workspaces are influenced by their departmental structures, as participant 1 is a process engineer while participant 2 works in the legal department. Although participant 2 emphasised how her designated function was the foundational basis for how well she identified with her team, there did appear to be a much stronger sense of social identification with workgroups and colleagues amongst the process engineers, health and safety officers, and customs (shipping) coordinators which illustrates that to some degree the workspace influences employee identity processes. However from the feedback provided by groups like the process engineers and the legal team, it appeared that the process engineers also had more of continuous synergy because of their interconnected work processes. The legal team would work intensely together for a period but then retreat into their respective cubicles or offices to do their work until another meeting was scheduled while for the process engineers, performing their respective functions sometimes required hourly interaction. Participant 5 also highlights the importance of group identification in the Nigerian work context and how this is manifests through workgroups:

> **Interviewee:** "It is impossible for Nigerians to live in isolation....we hate uncertainty…we need to be part of something and the same applies in the workplace….yes we are required to work in teams and these teams are all connected in one way or the other but Nigerians love their cliques or groups as you say so even though this is a multinational and there are strong demands on one's professionalism, those Nigerian quirks are always there. You cannot decide to be a robot and not at least sometimes go out of your way to show some friendship, loyalty or care for another person….this applies to both your boss and your colleagues….colleagues do not like people who become the boss's pet and think they are better than everybody else…..on the other hand it is important to show some degree of allegiance to your boss…it makes your life a lot easier....you need friends…you never know what tomorrow holds." (S.I.2ii)

In the above extract, participant 5 acknowledges the professional requirement placed on Nigerians in his workspace to work in teams and perform specific functions but he also stresses the importance of certain qualities in the Nigerian work context (e.g. friendship and loyalty). His emphasis on such qualities appears to relate to enhancing one's experiences in the workplace. Moreover his reference to "being part of something" indicates that Nigerians have a desire to feel included. In this context, it would appear that the professional requirement to work in teams caters to the desire of Nigerians to be a part of something. From this perspective the value placed on their respective function within their team/workgroup influences the fulfillment they can derive from a good performance.Moreso, his reference to friendship and loyalty suggest that Nigerians in his workspace desire to be valued for not just the function they perform but also their personal qualities. When asked where the desire for inclusion comes from or why a quality like loyalty is so important to Nigerians, this was his response:

> **Interviewee:** "I'm not sure…its just how we are….when you think about it, I think it has to do with our roots….we are very ethnic, infact too ethnic…there are too many tribes in Nigeria….on top of that…we are still developing so the sort of systems or institutions you may have in a developed country like the US cannot be found here. Because of that we have to depend on each other….alot of things are unstable so everybody is both helping somebody else or seeking help from somebody else….its a chain that is part of the way we live. With all the instability, you want to be certain about who you can identify with…who you can rely on…. Those in power or influence expect respect or regard from those underneath….although it may be more subtle and less intense in a multinational like this…compared to say an indigenous business or say public institutions, it is still very much present….the same way the typical Nigerian identifies strongly with informal groups outside the workplace by engaging in various activities, is the same way that they identify with formal groups in the workplace through the roles that they perform in their respective workgroups….. (S.I.3i)

In the above extract, participant 5 suggests that the significance attached to group identification is attached to the historical and socio-economic dimensions of Nigeria. He stresses the environment forces a high degree of interdependency which encourages

people to relate with others either in the capacity of giving or receiving assistance. For participant 5, the desire to identify with groups by Nigerians is facilitated by engaging in certain activities.In the work place such activities primarily pertain to performing their assigned functions. Participant 6 also offers a useful illustration in the context of employee functionality and the Nigerian context:

> **Interviewee:** "This company emphasizes teamwork a lot and besides working in the same office spaces, our jobs tend to be linked a lot so you are constantly interacting with people from your workgroup….. I think that irrespective of Nigeria, this work environment encourages group identification through the functions that we perform….when your team has completed a task and everybody has played their part…it is a good feeling and we try to stand by each other when we come under scrutiny. I must admit though, the added importance that Nigerians attach to being part of something probably makes the team ethic much stronger." (S.I.1vii)

From the above extract, participant 6 suggests that the very work structure that surrounds her work experiences fosters group identification but then admits that the importance Nigerians attach to group identification serves to further intensify the desire for social identification processes in this context.The quality of competitiveness is highlighted by participant 6 as she carries on from the previous extract to describe how the emphasis on group identification tends to be a manifestation of the desire for inclusion but also the desire to be part of success. In this case success is dependent on workgroup members performing their respective functions adequately:

> **Interviewee:** "Nigerians generally are bold and competitive and they want to feel they are part of something successful so you find that once a team has goals, there is a lot of expectation for everyone to play their role and get along with each other. Anyone who is awkward and does not want to flow with the way things are done….well finds it difficult….if you are such a person, its probably best you leave because Nigerians are not people you want to coexist with in the workplace if there isn't some level of mutual respect or camaraderie…(S.I.1vii)

The data also revealed that beyond the significance attached to group identification, similar importance is placed on job titles and roles. According to a number of participants, Nigerians attach significance to the roles that they perform because it is largely through their roles that they are afforded value within their respective workgroups. In this context, the more important a Nigerian feels his/her role is to the success of his workgroup, the more he/she is likely to identify with the workgroup because of the potential reward of praise and respect from workgroup peers or leaders. Participant 36 provided a useful illustration:

> **Interviewee:** "Nigerians definitely want to be part of something…they want to be part of a company that is respected and they want to be part of a workgroup that is respected. Within the workgroups, everyone has a role to play and everyone wants to believe that their role is important…the more important you think your role is the more you will probably identify with the workgroup and ofcourse the company…..Nigerians also want to show off a bit so a role that allows them to demonstrate their skills is always preferred to a role that is taken for granted….this way you can feel that the workgroup needs you….even when you hear a Nigerian complain about workload, you find out that half the time, they probably crave it because it is proof of how much they are valued. (S.I.2.iii)

In the above extract, participant 36 talks about the importance Nigerians attach to group identification and how such identity processes are affected by the perceived role of the individual within the group in question. From the extract, participant 36 explains that the more important a Nigerian feels his/her role is to the success of the group, the more they are likely to identify with the respective workgroup. Such principles are not uncommon to management studies as existing literature points to the relationship between organizational identity and the perceived importance of an employee's contribution to organizational success. On this basis, the contribution of participant 36 appears quite logical. However when asked about what informs these identity processes, participant 36 re-emphasises the importance of Nigerian norms:

> **Interviewee:** "I think any professional working for a large organisation wants to feel important no matter what part of the world you workin…..but what I can

say about Nigerians is that they are big on status…they want to believe that the function assigned to them is key to the success of their workgroup or better still their employer, this gives them a much needed buzz….through the role that they perform, they are able to simultaneously express their individual brilliance and commitment to something…in an environment where your role does most of the talking for you….how well you do your job is key to earning respect and feeling you are part of the in-group" (S.I.3iv)

From the above extract, participant 36 makes a further effort to attribute the tendencies for group identification to Nigerian identity processes. There are familiar references to 'being a part of….' and 'status' driving Nigerians to express themselves through the functions that they perform in the work place. Participant 27 also provides useful insight into the origins of these identity processes:

Interviewee: "From my experience, this quality goes beyond the workplace….I'm not sure if it has to do with pre-colonial or colonial times but it definitely goes back a long way because these tendencies have been discussed not only by my generation but my parent's generation and to my knowledge.....my parents' parents generation. You may say it is an African trait but from the way Nigerians are perceived by other Africans, I would say that the way we identify ourselves is probably the most intense…. We come in so many different shapes and sizes.....haha…I mean so many tribes…so many dialects....and so many people….everyone wants to belong…everybody wants to be noticed and everybody wants to be part of something. In the work context, this self-worth is developed through the job you do and how this job integrates you into a group" (S.I.4iv)

There were numerous references to group identification in the context of work groups and the functions that employees performed in the chosen context of this study; the few extracts presented in this section aim to illustrate the relationship between employee functionality and group identification. The data revealed that the significance that Nigerians attached to group identification enhanced such identity processes in the context of employee functionality. Moreover, this section aims to sample how group identification manifests in the context of the roles and teams that the participants

perform in. The most dominant groupings were facilitated through work processes (i.e. generated through the professional requirement to work with each other in teams or workgroups) so it was important to consider how group identification was expressed through employee functionality. In summary, the underlying theme of employee functionality illustrates that Nigerians use the functions that they perform in the workplace to identify with groups thereby informing their social identities.

General Workplace Group Identification

Continuing on from the theme of employee functionality, this section considers other types of group identification that were not attributed to workgroups or employee functionality. Participant 31 explained that Nigerians in and outside of the workplace tend to derive value from group identification:

> **Interview**: "Whether you're at work or outside of work, Nigerians tend to enjoy the company of others….they don't just do it for fun, it is quite typical for a Nigerian to derive purpose from identifying with groups…that way they feel they are living for something beyond their immediate goals…I think they feel uneasy when they are in isolation because they think they're kind of in limbo" (S.I.3ii)

From the above extract, participant 31 highlights the discomfort that Nigerians feel when they are in isolation and the purpose they derive from group identification. Parallels can be drawn here with the concept of existential anxieties. The general trend of group identification in the workplace provides a useful insight into the various types of groupings that were derived from the data collection process. The types of groupings that were described by different participants centred around age, gender, educational background, achievement, global e-networking, goal-oriented, profession (skill set), personal fulfillment, corporate culture, workgroup connectivity, the union, teamwork, corporate identity, work-life balance, sports interests and even political discussion. This wide spectrum of groupings was provided by different participants and presents a useful insight into group identification processes of the 6 companies that formed the sample.Gender is an area that generates a great deal of interest from scholars all over the world and has even gained momentum from studies on developing countries (e.g. Munthana, Lewis & Jawad, 2013; Mordi, Simpson, Singh & Okafor, 2010) however to

avoid distraction from the core focus of this study, gender is not consciously explored in the interviews.According to several participants (e.g. participants 27, 29, 38, 39, 40, 42 and 44), the "age"of employees not only influenced groupings in itself but also influenced other forms of group identification such as status and ethnicity. Participant 38 indicated that it was normal to see older employees associating with each other.

> **Interviewee:**"Age is definitely a factor in Nigeria and although society here is a lot more modern now, people still give age that regard so if you're speaking to someone older than you, it should be different to when you are speaking to your age mate and junior. And this applies even though the person is your junior professionally. I mean don't get me wrong, it does not mean younger senior staff do not chastise older junior staff…its just that most times, younger staff try to show that little bit of acknowledgement that they are aware of their seniority in age.Its seen as the honourable thing to do around here." (S.I.1vii)

Furthermore, it was indicated that in the case of status related behaviour derived from professional hierarchies or socio-economic backgrounds, age tended to reinforce the intensity of such groupings. For example, if a manager was considerably older than a junior staff member then there was more likely to be a distance between them in their daily interactions and associations. In addition, several participants suggested that ethnic identification was stronger among older employees as the younger generation of employees was less interested in those types of groupings. Participant 35 captures this in the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "Ethnicity is noticeable here but more so with the older crew….they definitely have more of a tendency to bond with others using ethnic languages. I mean as long you can speak your language, you will speak it given the chance whether you are young or old but I notice that whenever I hear a full blown conversation in a native dialect, it tends to be the older ones…I guess they understandably have a stronger bond with their ethnic roots." (S.I.xiii)

There was certainly a noticeable desire by the younger employees (for example 25 to 35) to associate more with modern trends and less with indigenous ones. Such a desire can easily be linked to the prevalence of globalisation (i.e. modernity) and norms (e.g.

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virtual communication, social networking etc.) that are more aligned with that phenomenon.Employees' grouping with each other because of where they went to school, with particular emphasis on whether it was abroad or within the country wasanother form of general workplace group identification. Such groupings had implications for attitudes towards different socio-economic norms, including ethnicity or family as most participants suggested that if an employee had studied abroad or achieved a higher level of education (i.e. post-graduate), he or she was more likely to favour the attributes of a nuclear family compared with those trained in Nigeria who tended to be more accepting of the extended family and informal networks. Similar assumptions were made towards ethnicity, as foreign trained employees were less likely to identify with ethnicity than Nigerian trained ones.

Achievement and goal oriented groupings were also highlighted as employees were said to also identify with people who had either achieved similar milestones in their professional or academic careers or were working towards specific quantifiable goals (such as promotions, accreditations etc.). Such identification is completely rational as it could be argued that successful goal oriented behaviour is best reinforced when surrounded by people with similar goals or mind-sets. Similar deductions can be made for factors like personal fulfillment and work-life balance as employees who prioritise such factors may have a tendency to associate with one another so as to preserve their ideals. This is consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1982), which proposes that people identify with groups for a variety of benefits, such as enhancing one's self-esteem, preserving one's values etc. In other words, an individual may choose to identify with others because he/she feels that relationship(s) will benefit them in some way.Corporate culture and corporate identity can definitely be interpreted differently but may sometimes demand similar identity processes. According to participants 28, 29, 31 and 35, the corporate culture of the employer tended to encourage certain identity processes amongst employees that translated into different groupings. For example, the duration of service with an employer notably influenced the attitude of certain participants towards the corporate identity of their employer. Furthermore, certain employees tended to be more visibly accepting of their employee's corporate identity. Such deductions only come from the discourse in certain interviews and the free-willed promotion of the corporate image by certain participants.

As observed from the interviews, the corporate culture related more to corporate norms. For example, the corporate norms of certain firms were affected by whether ethnicity was a noticeable or even dominant theme in the workplace. With employers where ethnicity was suggested to be prevalent, the attitudes of employees were more conscious of that reality. This was different from cases where the impression left by participants suggested that the employer had successfully established dominant western norms; in those cases even though ethnicity may have been a theme, employees appeared to be less conscious of it.Workgroup connectivity referred to the groupings that emanated from the need for teams (workgroups) to work with each other. For example if a particular work-group was required to work with another workgroup on a frequent basis then groupings along workgroup connectivity manifested. Such groupings were emphasized by most of theparticipants as the nature of the work environment requires some level of continuity amongst different groups towards the achievement of collective goals. In some cases workgroup connectivity was derived from the proximity of the individual locations of each workgroup and the ease of interaction between the groups.Teamwork was a general type of grouping that every participant referred to because it appeared most of the roles were highly interdependent so it was impossible for the member of one group to succeed on his own. Due to the nature of the company and the industry, the mechanics of each employee's role largely depended on that of another. Working as a team and references to a team ethos was very common throughout the data collection process. Participant 43 also highlighted the relevance of "the union" in group identification, as the importance of such a body in the working lives of employees meant it was impossible for group identification to exist without some gravitation towards this grouping.

> **Interviewee:** "The Union is pretty important for the workers....those who understand procedure, take comfort from identifying with the union….its the best way for issues affecting usto be resolved through formal channels. If you want to take up management yourself on an issue…you're definitely wasting your time and quite frankly putting your job at risk but if you air your concerns with the union, sometimes they can investigate to see if there are any others with similar issues. Whether you have an issue with management, an expatriate or just the aspects of company policy, problems never really get taken seriously

unless a problem is said to affect a number of employees and the union tends to be the best….like entity to deal with those problems". (S.I.4i)

The sports interests, political discussions and other informal pursuits also constituted another type of grouping that was cited by most of the participants. A number of participants presented examples of groupings in work canteens during lunchtime. Participant 1 referred to a table in the canteen as the "people's parliament" to illustrate the process behind such a grouping (this group was said to comprise of Nigerians with strong interests in discussing politics).Consistent with Bauman (2001a), the idea of Nigerian workers identifying as groups in the workplace was attributed mainly to groupings that did not rest on individual achievement or interest. For instance, ethnic groupings, racial groupings, employee category (i.e. permanent staff or contract staff) represented some of the strongest informal groupings in the workplace. These three types of groupings will be discussed later in this thesis; employee category will be discussed later in this chapter under the heading 'status' while ethnic groupings and racial groupings will be discussed in chapter 6 because of their relevance to post-colonialism. In summary general workplace identification captures the wide variety of groupings that were revealed by the data. Group identification facilitating social identities was a notable theme in the data. Membership in the strongest groupings was not based on "interest" or "personal achievement" (e.g. workgroups) while membership in most of the informal groupings was less intense and highly variable.

Prototype

The prototype is integral to social identity theory. Based on the definition adopted for this study, the prototype refers to that individual that embodies attributes or qualities that are perceived as being typical or ideal in any particular group (Tajfel & Turner, 1982; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Of course the perception of any typical attributes may vary from one person to another so in line with social constructionism, the concept of the prototype is best assumed as fluid and open to interpretation. For instance the legal department who stressed the importance of qualities like "being disciplined" and "being organised" or carrying out the "necessary due diligence". This is reflected in social identity theory as it is acknowledged that a prototype that embodies the central tendencies of a group as opposed to the ideal attributes of a group may be considered the stereotype of that group (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Without being specific to any one

individual, participant 8 describes employees who adopt practices that are consistent with the employer's standards on matters like health and safety. In the case of participant 4 discussed earlier, the response of her team members to work late because she is working late implies that she may embody a degree of prototypicality as she does not claim to force anyone to stay behind, they just do. Therefore their response to her indicates that her behaviour is indirectly influencing that of others, the same way the prototype influences members of a group as stipulated by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1982; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Interestingly, participant 9 proposes that there are two types of prototypes (one based on group identification and the other based on ethnic identification or class), he suggests that the former is a positive one because it embodies a sense of empathy for others and the latter is negative because it embodies prejudice and discrimination. The following extract from participant 9 illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "If we are talking about prototypes, I think there are two types…one is based on identifying with groups and the other is based more on competition and status. The one that is based on groups likes to ensure that people are not left out….Nigerians generally value group identification so in this sense the positive prototype enjoys the company of others, recognizes the importance of feeling included and does his or her best to make sure that others are also included. On the other hand, the negative prototype comes from the greedy or competitive or highly cliqy Nigerian who either because of ethnicity or status always wants to stay one step ahead of others irrespective or how it will affect the fate of others. I'm sure you know that ethnicity is an important part of being a Nigerian and that is both a good thing and a bad thing…it is good because through ethnicity Nigerians are able to bond closely with others through language and other shared experiences however it is bad because it also causes a lot of conflict between groups because each ethnic group is competing for their own interests….." (S.I.2iii)

From the above extract, participant 9 provides his own interpretation of prototypicality in a negative and positive sense. From his perspective, the tendency for Nigerians to facilitate inclusion or competition represented two extremes of prototypicality:

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> **Interviewee:** "…..this competitive spirit is quite typical of Nigerians as they always want to be in a higher class than others. The desire to have more money and more influence definitely represents the negative prototype. For me both of these prototypes exist in the Nigerian workplace." (S.I.2iv)

According to participant 9, in the Nigerian work context the prototypical Nigerian that prioritises group identification and inclusion is positive while the prototypical Nigerian that prioritises competition and status is negative. In the context of these forms of prototypicality, the positive prototype can be interpreted as that which constitutes the ideal attributes of the group. On the other hand, the negative prototype in the above illustration can be interpreted to constitute the central tendencies of the group (recall that under social identity theory, the prototype is typically based on either the ideal attributes or central tendencies of the group in question). The following extract from participant 12 provides another illustration of the prototype:

> **Interviewee:** "I think the prototype in my office has to be the person that is able to show the right amount of respect, loyalty and honour to the right people while always maintaining excellence in their work." (S.I.3i)

From the above extract, participant 12 places emphasis on demonstrating 'respect', 'loyalty' and 'honour' while maintaining excellence in one's work. This interpretation of the prototype appears to be positive. In other words this type of prototype could be interpreted as that which constitutes the ideal attributes of the group. In a minority of cases, participants were initially not so keen on the idea of a prototype but in the process of sharing characteristics of their particular employee functions or work experiences ended up providing concise illustrations of prototypicality. For example, participant 10 who works in the legal department of his employer initially appears to discount the existence of a prototype in his workgroup but then proceeds to describe attributes of his own work group that suggest a template for the existence of a prototype:

> **Interviewee:** "I mean....what they expect from the lawyers is that you execute transactions efficiently, you're risk averse. They would typically see us as risk averse"(S.I.6b)

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Participant 10 explains that the risk averse prototype that has been established for lawyers is not just down to any generic impression of their profession but rather due to how their professional habits compare with those of the operations department. Participant 11 also leans towards the presence of prototypes within his workplace when he describes how Nigerian workers take opportunities to express their ethnic origins through clothing despite the obviously prevalent western influences that form part of the discourse of everyday life in Nigeria:

> **Interviewee:** "…I mean we have dress down Fridays and because we work for a multinational and there are no strong obligations to identify with your ethnic group, I guess I would have thought Nigerians would take the opportunity to wear whatever cool outfits they want to wear but what you find is that a lot of Nigerians end up wearing native indigenous attire….especially the older employees. Put it this way, it does look like Nigerians take any chance they get to wear some kind of jazzed up native wear. I guess it's now cool to wear native." (S.I. 5i)

From participant 11's illustrations of the prototype, it is evident that his perception of prototypes is based on ethnic groupings, which may also be interpreted as stereo-types of each ethnic group. The data revealed that the strongest groupings were not based on individual achievement (e.g. workgroups, employee staff, contract staff, non-white English speaking foreign staff, English speaking foreign staff). The prototypes of such groupings were largely based on the central tendencies of the respective groups. For example the employee staffwere deemed to have a "sense of entitlement" and consciously embraced the organizational identity in the presence of both ingroup and outgroup members.

Although it was the consensus amongst most of the participants that employees complain from time to time about different aspects of their work experiences, the data revealed that the prototypical employee rarely spoke graphically about his employer's shortcomings. This was supposedly not necessarily because they did not have anything bad to say but rather they realized that to fit in and ultimately keep one's job, one had

to resist the temptation to "bash your employer" too frequently. Participant 36 captured this in the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "Unfortunately there are things I disagree with in this company but I don't think it is smart to be seen bashing your employer…things travel fast and before you know it, you can have a bullseye on your head." (S.I.3xi)

In the above extract, participant 36 emphasises the importance of exercising discretion and diplomacy when dealing with grievances one may have with the employer. Participants 33 described how she wanted to be part of the "influential group". The influential group was highlighted by a number of participants as being those who over a period of time had earned respect, which enabled them to influence senior management and particularly expatriates. Those deemed to be "influential" were said to be a very small fraction of the employees in the workplace. Participant 33 describes the "influential group" in the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "…its not an official group but once you've worked here for a while you kind of know who the members are…though a lot of us recognize such people as 'influential', not all of us may refer to them as a group. For me I definitely want to be part of the influential group. Ofcourse it does not happen over night but the better you get at your job, the more respect you earn from senior management and the better you become at getting what you want…not every Nigerian national can persuade an expatriate to consider their ideas let alone implement them….once you crack it a few times, expatriates and senior managers start to give you a bit more respect" (S.I.3ix)

This group was informal and comprised of individuals who either through excellence, personality, determination or arguably a combination of all these qualities, had managed to gain the respect of foreign staff. For these participants, members of the influential group were prototypes amongst the Nigerian employees because they had managed to overcome the barriers of racial prejudice and in some cases penetrated the informal circles of the white foreign elite staff. According to these participants such prototypes did not exist in every workgroup. Some workgroups did not have any staff,

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they would consider "influential" so such prototypes were not common. These prototypes resisted any cries of self-pity or discrimination by empowering themselves.

Participant 33 emphasised how such prototypes did not "feel sorry for themselves" and never gave into the "cry of prejudice" but rather recognized that some of the prejudice is the fault of Nigerians who had demonstrated poor levels of responsibility and competency in their roles.

> **Interviewee:** "it's so easy to just blame it on the white man or blame it on prejudice but there are certain people, who refuse to feel sorry for themselves and just don't give into the cry of prejudice. Instead they dust themselves off and think of what they can learn from the experience, what they could have done differently. Once you have developed excellence in your performance to the point where your record cannot be ignored by senior management, it is up to you to build on that recognition and gain more respect. The white man has successfully infilterated our space and influenced our behavior, our culture and how we do things because they sold it to us and we bought it. It's up to us to sell our culture and norms to them and not complain about being dominated. I know a lot of people have different feelings to what I am saying but I just don't buy into being the victim and quite frankly I don't think those who are influential do either." (S.I.3xiii)

Participant 33 explained that poor performance does not win respect but rather excellence does. Even though participant 33 accepted that prejudice exists, he claimed that most of it was present because Nigerians allowed it to be so. When asked about his own career, he was sincere in saying that he was not where he wanted to be but believed that he would get there in time. He claimed that becoming part of the influential group did not happen overnight but rather took years of excellent service in impacting not only your workgroup and relevant project team members but more importantly foreign superiors. Participant 33 stressed that most Nigerians in his work environment did not belong to the "influential group" but it was important to recognize that it exists so that you do not get into a "rut". Participant 33 did not only talk about work ethic and professionalism he also talked about the importance of personality and character. For example he explained that Nigerians just buy into foreign cultures and

influences and fail to sell the Nigerian culture to foreign staff. Participant 33 highlighted that Nigerians have to be pro-active about engaging foreigners into their culture to enhance the prospects of spreading the influence of their culture outside their ethnic group or nationality. Participant 33 said it was by embracing the strengths of one's culture and impacting people from other cultures that Nigerians can preserve their culture in the midst of globalization. Participant 33 stressed that the reason why so many Nigerians see globalization as "westernization" or "neo-colonialism" and not an "integration of cultures" is because they are not pro-active about engaging others into their culture.

Outside the formal groupings, another prototype that was highlighted referred to the ability to network across various groups. For instance, participant 41 emphasized the emergence of a new type of prototype which was less concerned with the intimacy of individual groupings but understood that the modern world requires being able to "mix and engage with all sorts of people":

> **Interviewee:**"…Nigerians love to socialize and take a lot of comfort from being associated with a group…I mean its cosy but in this day and age and definitely in the sort of industry we work in where you are just one small piece in a big machine, more and more people are not concerned about identifying with particular groups but rather with building relationships with people across as many groups as possible. You will definitely get on better in this company if you adopt that approach and I think people are catching onto that fact….it probably is the new prototype." (S.I. 3xiv)

A number of participants like participant 41 stressed that success in their work environments was not possible by focusing much of one's energy on identifying with colleagues you work with regularly but rather ensuring that you are always building bridges with new contacts because you never know when you may be called to work on a new project or re-assigned to another team. Participant 44 illustrated this in the following extract:

> **Interviewee**: "…yeah you can stay in your little cliques…based on ethnicity or school or whatever….. but it may cost you….it's a much better bet to just get

along with colleagues, make a good impression…do your homework…..understand the processes well enough to know which departments or workgroups your own workgroup is more likely to deal with . You'll understand the value of making a good impression with colleagues in other workgroups when you are suddenly called to work on a project, which requires the cooperation of somebody else. This does not just apply to nationals, there is a lot of value in getting known and friendly with foreign staff….they're the big dawgs (excuse me!) Now ofcourse they may do their job regardless of whether they like you or not….but a lot of the time if you have warmed yourself to them or someone they know closely they're more enthusiastic about assisting you…. it's the difference between exceeding the expectations of your boss by demonstrating high degrees of time efficiency and product and toiling over a task and getting stress from your boss over not completing it yet….relationship building helps…if you check it, those who have struggled with their careers in this company have not invested enough time into building the right relationships…." (S.I.4ix)

Participants like 41 and 44 emphasized that many Nigerians who have struggled with career progression have not adapted to change well and become complacent with their identity processes. Participant 37 explained that when Nigerians are pre-occupied with ethnic identification in their workplace it serves as a distraction and restricts their growth. The "social or career networker" was one of the prototypes highlighted in the data.

In summary, the prototypes that emerged from the data are consistent with social identity theory. The most notable prototypes that emerged are those that emerged from formal groupings (e.g. the employee staff) and informal groupings (e.g. the "influential group member" and "social or career networker"). The prototypes of the formal groupings were largely based on the central tendencies of the group while the prototypes of the informal groupings were largely based on the ideal attributes of the group. Drawn from the central tendencies of the group, the prototype of the formal groupings consisted of employees who epitomized different group identities. For example, the prototypical employee was described as having a sense of entitlement borne out of the perceived sense of accomplishment he/she has derived from getting

their job. The data revealed that this sense of accomplishment was borne out of the scarcity of jobs in the Nigerian economy and the value placed on jobs within the oil and gas industry. Furthermore, the sense of accomplishment was also derived from the perceived treatment that employees received from their employers. Even though there were tensions relating to prejudice along racial identities, in general Nigerian employees spoke positively about the way their employers treated them, their financial benefits and the sense of belonging they had developed while working for their employer. The data revealed that the prototypical Nigerian employee was proud to work in the oil and gas industry, enjoyed the prestige attached to working in the sector and thus made an effort to limit complaints relating to his work experiences. The prototypical Nigerian employee identified strongly with his employer's organizational identity and this went beyond the work environment. For example, the prototypical Nigerian employee maximized every opportunity to celebrate the prestige of working with a particular employer in the oil and gas industry when attending social functions. The prototypical white expatriate staff did not socialize or identify much with non-white staff but rather were always observed to be in the company of staff from a similar origin (e.g. an Italian expatriate was always in the company of other Italian staff). Although there were a few exceptions, in large part the prototypical white expatriate originated from a non-English speaking region. Such expatriates engaged in speaking their native language frequently even in the presence of Nigerian employees. The act of speaking their native language was perceived to be a deliberate medium for exclusion. The prototypical white expatriate staff demonstrated superiority over Nigerian employees. The perceived sense of superiority in white staff facilitated tensions between white and black staff. These tensions will of course be discussed more comprehensively when post-colonialism is explored in chapter six.

Drawn from the ideal attributes of the group, the prototypical Nigerian employee who had managed to any degree penetrate the decision making of white staff was described as 'the influencer'. The Nigerian employee who was described as being an influencer or a member of the influential group, embodied protoypicality that was based on aspirational or ideal qualities. Such a prototype was used to describe an employee who was positive, pro-active and refused to be a victim of prejudice. Such a prototype was said to have earned the respect of his/her superiors (i.e. white expatriates) through excellent service, an engaging personality and an overall commitment to their work

function and employer. Beyond 'the influencer', the 'social networker' embodied unconventional qualities which prioritized fruitful relationships over strong social identities. The social networker was described as being focused on building relationships that would assist him/her in achieving goals over deriving comfort and security from strong group identities. The social networker appeared to be re-defining the way Nigerians have been accustomed to building relationships. The social networker was more focused on his/her personal goals and not the group's goals so such a prototype was more likely to identify with a variety of groups which were felt to contribute towards his/her goals. This of course is a deviation from the traditional sense of group identification which suggests that the prototypical group member prioritises the fate of the group over his/her own. In the traditional sense of social identification, the prototype seeks a sense of security, camaraderie and fulfillment by submitting to the identity of a group. Although there is usually an effort to identify with a group that aligns with aspects of an individual's self-concept, there is a commitment to sacrificing one's fate for the fate of the group if necessary. Ultimately such identity processes are aimed at deriving the benefits that come from being part of a group. From the perspective of the social networker, the prototypical Nigerian employee first identifies his/her own goals then identifies with groups that align with these goals. Although there is a commitment to identifying with relevant groups as much as possible, priority is placed on the individual's goals for his/her self-concept as opposed to the group's fate. In other words, the social networker will only identify with a group only as far as that group will contribute meaningfully to his/her personal goals. These interpretations of prototypicality provided insight into different forms of prototypicality and its evolution in the context of social identification processes in the Nigerian work context.

Cultural Norms

The norms of the socio-economic environment were certainly topical throughout the data collection process as all the participants were very conscious of various identity processes, which they attributed to Nigerians.One of these norms related to 'respect'. From the data, respect was valued by Nigerians within and outside of the work context. There were a number of ways that respect was demonstrated in the work environment. For example, participant 4 refers to how Nigerian employees make a point to address their senior colleagues to reflect the way respect is shown to senior workers:

Interviewee: "I think it has to do with where we work. Nigerians are very...we're very respectful or we're very cultural and in that aspect we tend to...it's a multi-cultural company so its ok to call my boss by name but I dare not go to a certain boss's office and call him by name just because he's Nigerian!...and that's just the way it is. So I think it's more cultural and more uhm....than the actual profession than the fact that.....because he's my boss I feel I should have that respect but I don't think it would be the same if they worked in say Houston"(S.I.1iv)

Although the prototype (recall that prototype refers to the individual that embodies either the central tendencies or ideal attributes of a group) is not being discussed with participant 4 at this point, her reference to respect suggests that prototypicality includes being respectful. The subject of family in the context of the chosen socio-economic region is one that generates a great deal of complexity as all the participants admitted to the dominance of an extensive external family network amongst most Nigerians. Interestingly not all the participants identified with such a framework as western influences appeared to be more active with participants that had lived or studied abroad. For example this was illustrated by participant 42:

Interviewee: "When I think of family, I think of my wife, children and possibly their grandparents. These people are family to me. That is not to say that my wife and I do not have siblings, cousins, aunties or uncles but they are seen as more of an extended family. Initially when I think of family, I think of my nuclear family….now I will admit although more Nigerians are beginning to have similar views, it is still a very un-Nigerian way of thinking…..the typical Nigerian employee has people are not blood-related who are strongly considered as family….in my case it is simple and it makes my life a whole lot easier."

For participants who identified with the nuclear family framework, the implications for family life were largely limited to achieving an optimal work-life balance. However with those participants who had either spent majority of their lives in Nigeria or more importantly attended undergraduate and post-graduate studies in Nigeria, their own reality of family was more consistent with the consensual ideals supposedly held by

most Nigerians. Participant 25 highlights the impact of extended family on his work experiences:

> **Interviewee:** "For me it is impossible to earn a living and just think of my wife and kids, I am constantly reminded by extended family of their needs and they come up at the most unexpected times....sometimes I will get a text in the middle of my working day regarding a relative that has been arrested or taken to hospital and they expect me to drop everything at work and solve the problem...it is very difficult at times but it is part of being a Nigerian." (S.I. 4ii)

In the above extract, participant 25 captures the challenges faced by being engaged in a wider family network. A family framework that includes the nuclear family (i.e. father, mother and children), the first line of external family, which may include the families of the siblings of both parents (i.e. uncles, aunties and 1st cousins), the grandparents as well as other unconventional family members who were more distant and in some cases not blood related.

The implications for a much wider family network appeared to be both positive and negative depending on individual realities. For example some participants spoke of the moral support and inspiration derived from having a larger family while others spoke more about the demands on personal time, emotional capacity and finance. The former is captured in the following extract from participant 16:

> **Interviewee:** "You will never know the value of a wider family or informal networks until you are in trouble and find that there are several people you can call upon for assistance." (S.I. 3i)

Family as a grouping was definitely salient in the workplace as the informal culture of communication meant that colleagues were comfortable with sharing details of each other's family lives, particularly if that person was someone they identified with."The Nigerian way" or the "A Nigerian thing" are examples of the sort of descriptions that either the participant consciously used or the researcher used to describe different attributes that were portrayed as being characteristic of a Nigerian person's identity. The impact of any prominent cultural norms in the working lives of the candidates was

again influenced by their individual backgrounds. As may be expected, cultural norms appeared to be more salient in the lives of those who had either lived or studied in Nigeria. In addition to perspectives on family, age and class emerged as relevant drivers of any perceived social identities. According to some candidates, older employees tended to interact more with one another as their views tended to be more rooted in historical perspectives on the Nigerian way of life. Furthermore, the subject of respect from the young to the old was also described for everyday working life. Addressing senior members of staff as "sir" for older male employees (pronounced "sa") and "ma" or "madam" for older female employees was said to be consistent with the attitude towards age in the country. Interestingly direct references by a younger employee to older Nigerian employees by their first or even surnames (e.g. Mr Ayedeji) was said to present a risk of disrespect.With regards to status, there was an emphasis on workplace hierarchies as all the participants stressed that Nigerians are very "class-conscious" which affects the identity processes of hierarchies. For example senior staff interact mostly with colleagues of a similar grade. To reiterate, although there were references to class in the data, the actual interpretation of class in the context of this study is 'status'. It was more status-driven norms and not class structures that informed the social identification processes that developed along hierarchies (e.g. work, race, ethnic).

From the feedback of the participants, the identity processes of employees were inevitably influenced by the prevailing norms of the socio-economic environment however certain companies appeared to have rooted their company culture in western ideals more than others. Participant 15 highlighted the impact of western ideals on family dynamics:

> **Interviewee:** "The nature of working here does not allow you to really indulge in informal networks because they keep you very busy, you just about have time to spend with your nuclear family…you're more concerned with adapting to your surroundings and even if you are born and bred in Nigeria, a lot of your colleagues may have lived and studied abroad so are not caught up with the Nigerian thing and you find that it sometimes influences your thinking especially because you spend a lot of time in the office that breeds foreign culture….you find that those who take their careers seriously tend to have

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limited contact with informal networks….I don't mean you don't help people but it becomes less of a priority because you just don't get the time…" (S.I.2ii)

From the above extract, participant 15 describes how working for his employer tends to influence one's thinking towards extended family and informal networks. The more western the company culture appeared to be the more diluted the influence of any Nigerian cultural norms in that work-setting. For example out of the 6 multinational companies that produced participants, at least one was portrayed by participants as being defiantly western inspite of the imposing norms of the surrounding environment. The data revealed that this particular company included English-speaking foreign staff that generally had more interaction with Nigerian staff than the realities portrayed by those working with non-English speaking staff in other companies. An illustration was cited in the minimal use of ethnic languages in the workplace regardless of whether official or unofficial matters were being discussed. The most dominant groupings were facilitated through the work processes (i.e. generated through the professional requirement to work with each other in teams or workgroups). As illustrated in earlier sections other less prominentexamples of social identity included employees with similar educational backgrounds and religious groupings.   The idea of group identification particularly in the context of ethnicity did appear to be more salient in the one indigenous company represented in the sample as participant 14 admitted the influence of ethnicity on the representation of the workforce. Although this employee distribution caused the participant concern, he admitted to not complaining for fear of controversy or losing his job. He emphasized that vices like nepotism (in this context, nepotism refers to the abuse of influence to recruit preferred candidates from one's family) or tribalism (in this context, tribalism refers the abuse of influence to recruit preferred candidates from one's tribe) were commonplace in Nigerian owned businesses. Extreme ethnic diversity and the impact of colonialism resulting in exacerbated ethnic conflict were reasons provided for these vices. As discussed in chapter three, such reasons are consistent with scholars of colonialism in Nigeria.

In summary, the saliency of Nigerian cultural norms was highlighted by the data in most of the companies however the intensity of the company culture played a considerable role in influencing the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. Here 'intensity' is used to describe the extent to which employees are conscious of the

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culture. The intensity of the surrounding culture comprised of interplay between the Nigerian culture and the culture of the employer's originating country. The data revealed employers that originated from English speaking countries tended to embody more 'intense' cultures in the workplace. This was in part to do with the level of integration facilitated by eliminating language barriers. Above all, the norm of 'respectful communication' appeared to be the most consistent aspect of group identification discourse where both personal and professional fulfillment was suggested to have the highest prospect for success. This ofcourse differed from one culture to another. Emphasis was placed on being proactive to understand the culture of the person one is trying to communicate with so optimize communication and preserve positive identity processes.

Status

The issue of status appeared to be very much part of the realities depicted by the participants. All of the participants in one way or another subscribed to the notion that Nigerians are "class-conscious". Upon evaluation of what they meant by class-conscious, it was less to do with "class" in the strict sense of the word but rather "status". To recall from chapter 2 on identity, the definition of status adopted for this study refers to the respect, deference and influence individuals have in the eyes of others (e.g. Anderson, Srivastave, Beer, Spataro & Chatman, 2006). As a result, even though the participant's voices presented in this section make reference to "class", these references actually relate to "status". Participant 39 highlights the importance of status to Nigerians in the following extract:

> **Interview:** "Nigerians enjoy being on top….they love being in power. I know many Nigerians complain about not being allowed to secure senior jobs but when they do, they are very bossy!....they must let you know they are on top….they are very class-conscious!" (S.I.2iii)

The concept of status was suggested to manifest in different aspects of working life. There were many illustrations of status however three that emerged as the most dominant related to foreign versus local/indigenous employees, the employee versus contractor scenarios and senior staff versus junior staff. In the context of the multinational companies that represented the backdrop for this study, the presence of

foreign employees, more commonly known as "expats" and their interactions with local employees facilitates a significant part of the status discussion in the chosen work context. Although most participants attested to open relations with all employees and an all inclusive company culture, there was clearly a recognition that foreign employees were different to local or indigenous employees and that interaction between the two was never as fluid as might be seen within the individual groups. Participant 26 talks about a perceived level of segregation in the workplace along racial identities:

> **Interviewee**: "Even if we are meant to be colleagues working on the same project, the whites stick with the whites and the blacks stick with the blacks and the Indians stick with the Indians…and it is all about status, the whites see themselves as better than the Indians and the blacks while the Indians see themselves as better than the blacks….the blacks are at the bottom" (S.I.3iii)

In the above extract, participant 26 illustrates that status is based on racial identities. Participant 28 also highlighted the strength of racial identities in the workplace which he claimed was born out of status driven norms:

> **Interviewee**: "there is a clear difference….outside of professional interaction or the odd bit of cordial discussion, you don't see any prolonged interaction or groupings between blacks and whites.You will rarely see blacks and whites hanging out together casually or bonding….it is not just a skin thing…..Nigerian nationals see whites as having a superior status. They are seen as a higher class of employee and in my view the whites don't discourage it…." (S.I.7ii)

Participant 27 goes as far as suggesting that the status driven norms do not end with the foreign staff-indigenous staff dynamic:

> **Interviewee:** "you see class everywhere….even though all the Indians who work here are expatriates, the whites have little regard for them …." (S.I.4iii)

From the above extract, participant 27 claims that status and prejudice also exists within the expatriates along racial identities (note that all 'expatriates' are senior staff).

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Furthermore because the foreign workers are meant to facilitate the infusion of superior ideas, advanced technology and leadership, they were always perceived as superior by local employees. Ironically even though this perception of foreign staff appeared to be prevalent in all the multinational organisations included in this study, the reality was not so definitive. A number of Nigerian participants stressed that a noticeable proportion of foreign staff were brought into their work environment with much less expertise than some Nigerians. Participant 29 explained this scenario in the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "on the face of it, the whites are meant to be more skilled so that when they come, they can train us up and then return. This is the idea that is pushed by the company's vision and is the official line taken by senior management but the truth is that a noticeable number…. not most of them but a noticeable number of foreign staff come here without the skills. They get trained by Nigerian nationals, then return to the home country and come back to supervise the very same Nigerians who had trained them up….this white above blacks situation has more to them being of a higher status than blacks and less to do with their competencies" (S.I. 6iii)

Inevitably, the dynamic between foreign workers and local workers can also be linked to more historical theories, which provide perspective on the impact of colonial times. Such related issues will be explored in chapter 6 when post-colonialism will be addressed. Nonetheless, there was a clear suggestion from the data that status driven norms were fuelled by hierarchies built on racial identities. With respect to the employee – contractor scenario, it was made clear by a number of participants how contractors were perceived as inferior to employees even when they performed similar roles. Again participant 7 was quite expressive on this theme:

> **Interviewee:** "...there is a dividing line. You have the contract staff on one side. You have the employees on one side…what I'm saying is that it's not there is no relationship between these two…but there's an unwritten dividing line between these sets of people."(S.I.2ii)

Participant 7 implies that she is of the opinion that the status issue translated through the employee-contractor scenario is more of a Nigerian characteristic. It appears that from the narrative of participant 7, the employee and contract staff social identities are relatively strong ones in the workplace. The issue of status does of course cross over social identity theory and post-colonialism because of the notion that status driven norms borne from class-structures attributed to the colonial era is part of the impact that colonialism has on regions like Nigeria (Ekeh, 1975, Ekanola, 2006). A sense of belongingness could be attributed to the attitude of employees who as part of their package received a number of additional benefits that facilitate feelings of empowerment or entitlement. This is consistent with the principles of Tajfel & Turner (1979). The sentiment of contract staff on the other hand was a stark contrast; the few participants who were contract staff described how the systems within the company facilitated a 'superior-inferior' dynamic for employees and contract staff respectively. In one of the companies used for the study, participants 7 made references to the different entrances into the company for each group. The entrance for employees was said to facilitate convenience and a sense of inclusion while the entrance for contract staff was said to treat them as outsiders. A contract staff spoke of having to walk through a check-point with detectors on her way back from lunch while the other party who happened to be an employee enjoyed an easy re-entry into the company premises. An extract from participant 7's interview provides a useful illustration:

> **Interviewee**: "We have two parking lots (ok)…two spaces for parking lots, one for the employees, one for the contract staff…it shouldn't be so yeah… it shouldn't be so! And up to a few months ago…where the Mobil house is situated, we have a gate that ehm contract staff pass through and we have another gate that employees pass through. So the gate that the contract staff pass through security checks are done on you even though you work here every day. The gate, the employees pass through they just walk through. So if you're coming in with a friend for instance (right) say you are an employee and I'm a contract staff and we're coming from lunch or somewhere…coming into the building. We want to get to the same place…the employee walks through unchecked and then after I have gone through my own security check, we meet again and we continue…."(S.I.2iv)

It was evident from participant 7's response that the structure, which was set up to favour the employees arose intense emotions of exclusion in her. Though she did not blame the issue of exclusion on just the organisational structure but more on the attitude of the 'African man':

> **Interviewee:** "Uhm, let's say the average black man, the average African man like ehm…like others…I mean like others to be subservient to them."(S.I.2iii)

Although not explicit, the reference to African man as opposed to African woman may have some significance here because these are the views of a woman. Some degree of gender prejudice could be implied in this description suggesting that participant 7 may have also been expressing frustration towards the overwhelming influence of "men" in her work experiences. Although this is not the point she is trying to put across, the possibility that gender may also be an underlying issue cannot be dismissed. This is consistent with the notion that emotions are often irrational and may sometimes have unconscious dimensions (Fotaki, 2006). Another useful illustration of the employee-contract staff dynamic is provided by participant 9, who stresses that from the feedback of those who work in the western division of the employer (e.g. the headquarters in Houston), the demarcation between the categories of contract staff and employee was not evident making this particular status driven norm more peculiar to the Nigerian context. The following extract was taken from the interview with participant 9:

> **Interviewee:** "….a number of my colleagues in Houston have confirmed that there are no such structures over there. Even though they have contract staff and permanent staff, there are no obvious systems in place to give overwhelming day to day privileges to employees, privileges that are not related to benefit packages but rather their day to day working lives…as far as I am aware the categories are not so obvious over there….I strongly believe it is a Nigerian thing…..Nigerians just can't help themselves. (S.I.8iii)

Participant 9 also highlights the issue of class, which was illustrated by participant 7. Several other participants attribute the issue of status to the context region, Nigeria. There was a clear effort to discount any suggestion that the status dimension may manifest in other global divisions of the organisation (e.g. the headquarters in Houston).

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Participant 14 makes it clear that the status issue in the form of the employee-contract staff scenario is an "ongoing issue" which emphasises his expressed disdain towards the matter. Participant 14 also covers the issue of having separate entrances:

> **Interviewee:** " I just don't understand this separate entrance thing but who am I to complain…it just seems very unnecessary…whether we are contract staff or employee staff we all work together and to a large extent have similar expectations placed upon us in the workplace so the fact that the organization feels it is ok for them to be relaxed about employee staff but edgy about contract staff so much so that contract staff have to be stopped and searched everytime they re-enter the premises is beyond me….but let's call a spade a spade….its very typical of how things are done here in Nigeria….once categories are established and one category has any privileges over another, there is always every effort to emphasize that the category with greater privileges is of a superior class." (S.I.9i)

He stresses that the class-consciousness problem is not restricted to the workplace but he finds it hard to explain. Participants 7, 9, 14, 23 and 43were contract staff, which explained their intense frustration with the matter. In addition, there were extreme illustrations where a participant suggested that employees displayed a sense of entitlement over their contract staff counterparts around different aspects of the work environment (e.g. the canteen). Participant 23 highlighted this:

> **Interviewee:** "…employees feel kind of special….possibly proud about the privilege of working here….they feel they have more rights than contract staff…and the truth is they do but sometimes it gets to their heads!" (S.I.5iii)

There were also examples cited of employees sometimes socialising amongst themselves and indirectly excluding contract staff. Participant 43 illustrated this in the following extract:

> **Interviewee**: "employees generally don't mix much with contract staff….even though we may work with each other in our workgroups when we are in the cabins, once we are called to meetings or we're in informal places like the

canteen, employees tend to stick with each other. I don't see this separation coming much from the contract staff but more from the employees. I mean contract staff generally are quite happy to mix with everybody…we want to integrate as much as possible but employees feel they have cracked it…they are part of the inner-circle….whatever that means. Some of us contract staff have been here much longer than some employee staff but if you see the way employee staff carry on…its as if they're the ones that have been here longer". (S.I. 8ix)

Most employee staff acted indifferently to the plight of contract staff, although those that commented on the contract staff felt they had a tendency to 'feel sorry for themselves'. Participant 22 illustrated this perspective in the following extract:

Interviewee: "I am aware that contract staff feel they are not fairly treated because they do not get the same benefits as us employees…I'm not sure what to say but its just the way things are…I do feel though that contract staff have a tendency to overdo it a bit…feeling sorry for themselves….at least they have work! (S.I.2viii)

The indifference of the employee staff to the predicament of contract staff in some ways appeared to fuel the frustration of the contract staff as they felt the employee staff were insensitive to their circumstances.In the context of the restricted sample for this study, the sentiment of any participant(s) however strong has to be put into perspective as the sample size is not large enough to come to considerable conclusions regarding the suggested extremes however there was evidently a discourse around feelings of belongingness and exclusion which emanated from issues like the employee and contract staff scenario which indicated strong social identification processes that embody aspects of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Terry, 2000). The feedback from the participants who spoke most freely about this subject was that the scenario fed into the status driven norms of everyday Nigerians; an issue which will also be explored under the heading of post-colonialism due to the notion that such identity processes are attributable to the colonial era. For the sake of variety, another example of how the status driven norms manifested in the social realities created by the participants was that of "foreign trained" employees and "Nigerian trained" employees.

It was evident from the narrative of some of the participants that the experiences of employees who were trained abroad or in Nigeria differed somewhat.Participant 12 illustrates how her foreign educational background affected her work experiences. There is no intense emotion expressed by participant 12 but she does imply that based on her own experiences, Nigerian trained employees are treated differently to foreign trained employees.

> **Interviewee:** " I do feel that foreign trained employees are treated differently to Nigerian trained employees. It's not a day to day thing…..you kind of notice it with the distribution of certain tasks. Although this is a professional environment, there are some things about the Nigerian context which cross over in the workspace. For example people who are privileged, who have studied or lived abroad are grouped into a category called 'ajebo'…It's a well known nickname given to privileged Nigerians…You find that the way foreign trained Nigerians are sometimes treated in the workplace is reflective of this ajebo syndrome.….something like dealing with a police issue is usually given to staff that management deem to be streetwise and savvy in dealing with locals. On the other hand, you find that foreign trained staff tend to be tasked with work that involves more international interaction, probably where they feel our exposure is highlighted as a strength….for example a foreign trained employee is likely to have a foreign accent which is a useful tool when talking to people abroad." (S.I.9ix)

In spite of this disparity, participant 12 does rationalise her experiences by suggesting that the difference in experiences may have something to do with compatibility and maximising the strengths of different employees. She does this by suggesting that her foreign accent would not serve her well if she had to negotiate with low-grade labourers on the oil-rigs however in the context of court, presumably her accent would be an advantage. Participant 38 also highlighted differences in the identity processes of foreign trained and Nigerian trained employees. According to participant 38, being foreign trained tended to affect the way one related with foreign staff. This is illustrated in this extract from participant 38:

Interviewee: "Sometimes because you have lived and studied abroad your exposure helps you get on better with foreign staff…they feel they can relate with you on a different level to those employees who have lived in Nigeria all their lives…sometimes it's different….for whatever reason the foreign staff can be defensive towards foreign trained staff….I think its more of a territorial thing….they think because of you're exposure and education, they may soon gun for their job or ….you just might not worship them like others do…. (S.I.3iii)

Whether the categories of Nigerian trained and foreign trained employees are a reflection of the status driven norms of Nigerians in the workplace, or an illustration of stereotypes or prototypes, there is scope to consider these categories as types of social identity in the workplace.In summary, the data reveals that status is a theme and the reasons for this are largely attributed to racial identities, worker categories and hierarchies. Although status is evident in the identity processes of non-Nigerians, the data reveals that Nigerians have a tendency to be status-oriented; the reason for this is attributed to the pursuit of authority and influence. According to the data, Nigerians have a strong propensity to attach significance to group identification, they also place a high premium on status, which allows them to express their identities in the context of status driven norms. The theme of "status"is characteristized by many Nigerians as class-consciousness.

5.2 SUMMARY

In summary, the data revealed that Nigerians attach significance to group identification for a variety of reasons. The themes of employee functionality, the prototype, cultural norms and status emerged as the most dominant from the results. The extracts provided in this chapter served to reinforce the authenticity of these themes in this study's findings. As mentioned earlier, these results and those to follow in chapter 6 on post-colonialism will be discussed in chapter 7.

Chapter 6
Results: Post Colonialism

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of the data collection process, information gathered on post-colonialism was aimed at understanding the effect of the colonial and post-colonial era on the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. Primarily the objective of this sectionis to find out how post-colonialism informs identity construction for Nigerians in the workplace. Again the themes derived from the data were established entirely from my personal interpretation of the text.

6.2 POST COLONIALISM

Considerations to the importance of colonial times on the identification processes of Nigerians in the workplace is only a logical step towards a holistic overview of how Nigerians, act, behave or ultimately identify themselves because of the region's colonial history. Such a consideration is arguably essential regardless of any discourse re-affirming independence or socio-economic enhancement. The questions in this section are therefore geared towards understanding how Nigerians feel about colonialism in the workplace and how they view themselves in comparison to their foreign colleagues (expatriates). This line of questioning and the outcome of related discussions is aimed to not only provide some insight into colonial discourse in their working realities but also 'self' and 'social' identification processes in the chosen region. Consistent with feedback on social identity, the responses on post-colonialism were also mixed and understandably influenced by factors like age and individual background however there was some rather surprising feedback on the colonial discourse of employees. In line with thematic analysis the feedback has been organised under the following themes: "foreign nationals and knowledge transfer", "identity struggle", "post-colonial discourse", "ethnicity", and "westernization".

6.2.1 Themes

Foreign nationals and knowledge transfer

Taking into consideration the contextual background of the chosen sample, all of the participants confirmed to having some interaction with foreign workers either in

previous or current roles. The feedback on such interaction understandably varied from one individual to another as their responses not only reflected how they felt about working with foreigners but also how they wanted those feelings to be perceived by the researcher. The importance of reflexivity during the interviews had to be considered throughout the data collection process. Taking into consideration, the 'dialectics of the colonised mind', just as much as there is the possibility that participants would portray themselves according to how "the white man" sees them, there was also the possibility that participants would avoid such portrayals with a deliberate emphasis on presenting themselves as equals; thereby denouncing any notion that they struggle with the perception that the white man has of them. For instance by denouncing any prospect of colonialism in the workplace, it could be perceived as them "getting over it" or "moving on" from what is considered a "blemish" on their identity processes. This is particularly relevant with the globa discourse that emerged during discussions on post-colonialism. Nonetheless, there were clearly illustrations, which indicated that issues of race were still part of the discourse in the workplace. Participant 1 speaks of a dichotomy which he explains with how employee origin is categorised at his employer: the US and UK making up 'the foreigners', Nigerians making up 'the nationals' and all other nationals including Europeans and Asians are classified as 'other nationals'. This description of the US and UK as foreigners and everyone else as either nationals or other nationals he felt was a form of colonialism. According to participant 1, the foreigners always felt that the nationals were not capable enough as he expresses in the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "What you will see is some sort of dominance of the foreigners, especially the US and the British because they classify them as US and British and all other nationals I mean other Europeans, Asians are classified as other nationals. So we have three groups we have foreigners which you could say are the US, British and then we have the nationals and then all other people who are not from this area they are other nationals. You are beginning to see there is a dichotomy... in terms of what I would call some dominance, some form of post-colonialism. The foreigners always feel that we nationals are not capable or are inexperienced or are less technically sound to be able to take up certain positions and that has been endemic where I work because the nationals are not

allowed to take up certain positions you know to be able to even try their hands on it."(P.C.1i)

The injustice of foreign workers monopolising strategic positions was a sentiment summarised by the above participant as there was clearly a frustration conveyed by his response. Following the above extract, participant 1 went on to discuss the prospect of change through policy implementation, which he summarises with considerable disappointment:

> **Interviewee:** "…..But here there is nobody that has ever as a Nigerian become a senior company manager in the place that I work. I mean it is not done...and this is what is beginning to be a problem! And when you complain, the issue of trust, of lack of competence which I think is just a mere colonial mentality because if you can train somebody to take over your position, I see no reason why with 30 years of oil exploration in Nigeria I see no reason why....." (P.C.1ii)

The frustrations with technology transfer was a notable theme during the interviews, therefore the implications for identity construction is considered in the context of this study's objectives (i.e. to find out to what extent post-colonialism informs the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace). Parallels can be drawn between the perceived domination of foreign workers (expats) and the domination of colonial rulers; although foreign workers are not colonisers, they may be perceived as colonisers by indigenous employees. The frustration expressed by participant 1 is an example of the sort of intense emotions expressed by the participants; these emotions can be attributed to injustice or discrimination, both of which are arguably components of colonialism. Such emotions were echoed with a number of other participants; the following extract was taken from participant 29:

> **Interviewee:** "….they do not think we (Nigerian Nationals) are good enough to take up major leadership positions…..I don't know why…because we have very capable people here who can do the work…..there is no transferring going and it is not about competency or capability….it is about control!" (S.I.1iii)

In the above extract, participant 29 emphases the lack of technology transfer and attributes the situation to the "white man")s desire for control. Participant 28 provides a further illustration:

> **Interviewee:** "You cannot air an opinion with senior management and have it taken seriously….they don't think much of us. You are simply here to play a specific role, get paid at the end of the month and keep your job. No matter how frustrated you are, you dare not open your mouth….it's not easy to find a good job in this country and I'm sure they know that" (P.C.1viii)

In the above extract, participant 28 illustrates a frustration with the way Nigerian Nationals are perceived by senior management. The frustration does not end with just the perception of their identity but also the feeling that the foreign employees are also taking advantage of the socio-economic environment by exploiting the economic vulnerability of Nigerian Nationals who have access to a limited number of "good" jobs. Participant 35 also reflects on how the nature of the job market influences his submissiveness at work:

> **Interviewee:** "…..there is no technology transfer going on….they are just passing on the knowledge to themselves….in fact in some cases when there is a bit of transfer, the Nigerian who acquired the knowledge is only used to train a future expatriate who eventually manages him…what sense does that make?....it shows that it has nothing to do with product knowledge or experience….many people are frustrated with things like this but what can you do.....I can't even speak my mind for fear of losing my job…in Nigeria it is difficult to get a job like this…the sad thing is that if I do and something happens to my job, my family at home….that not only includes my wife but also my mother and other extended family will blame me…saying that I acted out of pride…they will not acknowledge that it was principle and not pride that caused me to act." (P.C.2vi)

In the above extract, Participant 35 illustrates how intense emotions of oppression are being experienced by Nigerians in his work environment. The idea that a Nigerian may acquire knowledge, which does not propel him or her into promotion but rathersuch knowledge is used to train a future expatriate who eventually takes up a management

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role to manage that very same Nigerian illustrates how frustration may be instigated in Nigerians. From the extract, Participant 35 also illustrates how the nature of the job market not only influences his reluctance to speak up against perceived injustices in his workplace but also how this influences the attitude of his nuclear and extended family network. Participant 36 also shared a similar perspective:

> **Interviewee:** "The white man is in control....we…the black man works for him…..that's just how it is….if you want a good job…if you want to work in these good companies…you just have to accept that fact and give up any illusions that you will be respected or recognized with time….as long as you work here….you will just frustrate yourself, it is better to just manage how you think…for the sake of your income, your bank account and your family." (P.C.2ii)

Participant 36 emphasises the dominance of the white man and the importance of managing one's expectations. Participant 37 also contributes to the perceived control of foreign staff over Nigerian nationals:

> **Interviewee:** "When you work for a multinational company like this….you must know that even if the company may be based in your country, you are on their turf….so even if there is all this talk of local content law and equal opportunity, you have to work on their own terms….they are on top, it is not about qualification or experience, it is about the colour of your skin and the fact that they own these businesses….but then again even if they own these businesses, if they respected the black man, they would treat us differently so I think it just boils down to the fact that they see us as inferior" (P.C.1iv)

From the above extract, participant 37 attributes the white man's treatment of Nigerian nationals to the way they perceive them and not to the fact that they own and run the organisations. This was also illustrated by participant 38:

> **Interviewee:** "…yes it is people from their native countries that started this company and so you naturally expect them to have the upper hand but what is going on here is not an upper hand, it is total dominance, there is no competition,

they are in control and Nigerians cannot break through….if the organisations are based on equal opportunity then whether they started the organization or not, time should allow other nationals, or rather other races to penetrate into the higher levels but it does not happen." (P.C.1iii)

The views of participants 36, 37 and 38 like a number of others highlight a perceived level of injustice in the surrounding work environment which is attributed to racial prejudice. Racial prejudice emerged as an issue with several of the participants although some were more explicit about its existence than others. While some participants tried to manage the connotations of such words as "racism", others were bold in their interpretations. For example participant 25 tries to avoid the use of the word racism in the following extract:

> **Interview**: "…foreign staff are superior to us…they see themselves as better than us… I don't want to use the word racism….but there is something like that going on here…." (P.C. 7i)

There were however much more graphic illustrations of how the participants felt that foreign staff perceived Nigerian nationals. Participant 30 spoke explicitly about how she felt white staff viewed black/Nigerian staff:

> **Interviewee***:* "The white man in this company still sees the black man as a black monkey….yes, they still see us as black monkeys!" (P.C.2i)

The above extract highlights elements of racism in the work environment of participant 30. The explicit nature of this feedback was exaggerated by the fact that shortly after the statement was made, a white employee walked across the hallway within sight of the interview through a glass window. Although the window was soundproof, the sight of the alleged oppressor heightened the intensity of the interview. For me as the researcher, the conviction of the statement was overwhelming because foreign and Nigerian staff all worked together in the same space. Furthermore the perception of such career opportunities in Nigeria is very positive with strong financial and social benefits so the irony that privileged Nigerians are having such experiences came as quite a surprise.Some participants talked about how their views were completely

disregarded in board meetings and even ridiculed by senior white staff. Participant 26 spoke about how senior white staff had spoken amongst themselves in their native language after she had just expressed her opinion:

> **Interviewee**: "…..you can imagine…we're all sitting around a table in a meeting and I politely disagreed with one of their directives by suggesting an alternative and instead of addressing me directly, they resorted to talking amongst themselves in their language…I was furious because I knew they were talking about me in a rude way and everyone else knew it too but I felt I could not do anything….the look on their faces said it all!" (P.C.5x)

Although she admitted to not understanding the language, she was adamant that their body language indicated they were discussing her with little regard. After continued discussion between the senior white staff, she would receive an abrupt rejection of her suggestion with no explanation and courtesy. The narratives of several participants mirrored such experiences. For example participant 24 talked about how a non-English speaking foreign staff ridiculed her:

> **Interviewee**: "….he did not like the fact that I came up with suggestions whenever we had a meeting so he made up an excuse and took away a task from me and re-assigned it to a fellow Nigerian employee. We both knew why he did it but the fellow employee did not do anything for fear of being bullied as well….I did speak up but I guess I did not want to push my luck…"(P.C.3vii)

From such extracts, bullying of Nigerian nationals by foreign staff can be interpreted as evidence of colonial influences in the workplace. Such an interpretation is fuelled by the fact that Nigerian nationals feel that they are being bullied because of the "colour of their skin". Participant 23 also provided some insight:

> **Interviewee:** "sometimes after a meeting has taken place where I obviously offended one of them by speaking up….if I happen to walk past them when they are in a group of other expatriates, I feel them staring at me when I am not looking in their direction….it's like they are trying to intimidate me but I will not be intimidated….they just want to make me feel uncomfortable….I hear

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them talking amongst themselves…..I don't have to know their language to know they are talking about me in a bad way….moments like that make me reflect on what it must have been like to have lived and worked with the white man in colonial times… (P.C.3i)

From the above extract, participant 23 illustrates how intimidation is facilitated by expatriates when they are in groups and emphasize social identification processes along racial lines. Although there is no factual evidence that the expatriates were indeed talking about participant 23, the feeling of being looked at and the use of their language fuels the sense of exclusion that participant 23 experiences. Furthermore, participant 23 interprets such an act to 'exclude' and 'intimidate' as reminiscent of colonialism. Although participant 23 takes some comfort from her social identification with Nigerian nationals, she does also express frustration with the strength of such identities:

Interviewee: "I mean…I am not alone…many Nigerians feel that technology is not being transferred and incidents like that are happening to many of my colleagues and we take comfort in sharing our experiences when we are together but I am frustrated with how pathetic Nigerians behave…you almost never see Nigerians rallying together to stand up against a white employee…everyone is too scared of losing their jobs….even the union is not used the way it should be used….its one thing to comfort each other but what about fighting for each other!" (P.C.3ii)

Participant 23's frustration is highlighted when she talks about how Nigerians treat foreign staff when a group of Nigerians are together and an expatriate walks past:

Interviewee: "What is even more annoying is that when Nigerians are standing together in a group and a white man walks past, the Nigerians almost always go out of their way to make the expatriate feel welcome…in fact they worship him and call him adoring nicknames….this happens even if they heard that particular expatriate may have recently mistreated one of their colleagues… (P.C.3ix)

The instances of exclusion illustrated by participants 23 and 24 are illustrative of bullying in the work place being attributable to colonialism. Furthermore the perceived strength of 'white social identities' overpowering 'black social identities' is also reminiscent of colonialism.The comparison between these social identities can also be interpreted as 'foreign/expatriate social identities' overpowering 'Nigerian social identities'. As mentioned earlier when tackling research question one, in this context the low group strength of Nigerian staff deprives group members of one of the benefits of group identification which is an enhanced self-esteem (Hogg & Turner, 1987).The 'oppressive emotions' of Nigerian staff are captured in the above extracts. This is the consequence of the 'power' exercised by the foreign staff and the lack of 'will' exercised by the Nigerian staff. This for me (the researcher) was harder to comprehend in this day and age considering the contrast from my own work experiences in the United Kingdom. At the risk of sounding naïve, although racial prejudice may still be evident in the workplace of the UK, my own personal experiences had not exposed me to such explicit prejudice and it was hard to fathom working under such conditions after working amicably with white people throughout my career in the United Kingdom. Some participants were not as graphic but there were numerous illustrations of how Nigerians expressed elements of racial prejudice in their work experiences. Such narratives were overwhelmingly reminiscent of colonialism.

Identity struggle

Notions of struggle are prominent in post-colonialism theory (e.g. through the concept of dialectics of the colonized mind as best captured by Sen, 2006), as they articulate, how colonialism has influenced the mind of the colonised in such a way that their self-concept is preoccupied with how the white man sees or defines them. There were a number of illustrations of how Nigerian employees may struggle with these issues. In patriotic terms, participant 10 speaks of a rather surprising identity struggle, which appears to result in some form of a hybrid individual who is struggling with the dialectics of the colonised mind:

> **Interviewee:**"Well I will say that there is a basic struggle in almost every African that has been colonised...one part that says I can do this...I can do this just as well as any expatriate but there's another part that thinks may be they're better than me and that's why they have to bring them here. I will say that

Nigerians are proud people and they tend to want to do things by themselves but at the same time I tend to hear comments like this country would definitely have been better if it had remained under colonial rule. So in one breath, you hear people saying this country would have been better organised if it was still colonised and in another breath they believe they can do just as well...If I may add, I would find it very difficult to work for a Nigerian owned company or a one man business.....they're not organised, they make decisions on the spur of the moment and there's no organisation." (P.C.4i)

There is reference to foreign workers and possibly a devalued identity that Nigerian workers suffer when talking about the capacity of Nigerians to perform certain roles in comparison to foreigners. The extract above is particularly frank in a possible admission by Nigerian workers to a colonial system being superior and more effective than an indigenous system. Most participants who provided feedback on post-colonialism appeared to share this sentiment. In other words, most participants who had reflections on post-colonial discourse in the workplace agreed that the colonial system delivered better results than the current independent indigenous system. It can be interpreted that such an admission in itself feeds the prospect of a devalued identity as a basis for identity struggle. Such an admission is also a clear display of the power dynamic that is dominant in post-colonial theory. Participant 10 demonstrates further by disclosing her confidence in foreign employers over indigenous ones:

Interviewee: "And sadly I know alot of people who would rather work for a foreign company because they will be fairer etc...I think it's a case of reluctant acceptance. Reluctant because I think we should have gotten it right! I would say for me it's reluctant acceptance and wondering why I should have to do this.....I very much doubt that I would even send an application to a Nigerian owned company, that's because I have a mindset that they would disappoint, not know how to handle employees etc...so I would definitely have to say reluctant acceptance because we've had enough time to catch up...." (P.C.4ii)

Interestingly, this reluctant endorsement of the colonial administration was also shared by those participants who felt bullied by foreign staff. For example participant 23 after

recounting the instance of her being discussed by a group of foreign staff, still admitted that Nigeria should have been colonized for a longer period of time:

> **Interviewee:** "Well, the fact that the whites do not think much of us does not change the fact that Nigeria should probably have been colonized for longer…" (P.C.3x)

When asked how her feelings towards a superior colonial administration translate into her feelings of injustice towards the Nigerian identity, she had this to say:

> **Interviewee:** "…Ofcourse the situation is pathetic in one sense. Yes, like many Nigerians who work here, I feel that there are some Nigerians who can take up senior roles and do them just as well if not better than the foreign staff and yes I feel that the overall perception of blacks by whites is wrong but I also put some of that blame on us. If we had advanced ourselves enough, we would have similar organisations where we could work, we would be in charge of systems that are reliable but that is not the case and that is why in the end we have to put up and shut up…." (P.C.3xii)

The above extract illustrates some of the factors that further fuel the frustration of Nigerians in the chosen work context. According to such feedback the endorsement of the colonial administration as superior to the indigenous administration further fuels the helplessness of Nigerians. Such helplessness facilitates an overwhelming sense of a devalued identity when compared to that of the white man. Struggle appeared to emerge as a result of the devalued identity in a number of ways. From cases like the extract above, the struggle related to the endorsement of the colonial administration when there was evidently a disdain for the way they perceived the treatment of blacks by whites. In other words having to admit that the white man's system is superior to the black man's system undermined their desire for an empowered identity and so instigated frustration amongst the participants. A further illustration was provided by participant 24:

> **Interviewee:** "It is very unfortunate but although the foreign staff look down on us and some of us might be able to do their jobs just as well as they can, the

same cannot be said for running the organization or country....alot more was achieved with our infrastructure in the colonial administration than under the indigenous administrations of the last fifty-something years...that's a fact I try not to think about so I don't get depressed...(BRIEF LAUGHTER BY THE PARTICIPANT).....anyway in the end I need to survive, I need an income so this job serves its purpose...that still does not change the fact that I do not agree with the way the white man oppressed us then and is still overpowering us in situations like these now... (P.C.3xv)

According to several participants, a by-product of this sense of devaluation is Nigerians elevating the status of white employees. Many participants expressed their frustration with the way Nigerians idolize white staff by giving them nicknames like "godfather" and "Capone". Participant 33 lamented over this scenario:

Interviewee: "It's as if they have not seen a white man or something....they are human like us, with imperfections like us....if you somehow managed to secure a job here then you should have some level of confidence that you deserve to be working alongside or above them...but if you keep thinking they are better and keep worshipping them with names like big oga or godfather, how far do you think you will go in an environment like this....what a lot of Nigerians fail to realize is that sucking up to the white man is not going to earn their respect, instead they will probably look down on you more....Nigerians should rise above it and take some pride in their own individual identities. (P.C.2iii)

Many of the participants mirrored the feelings of participant 33 above by suggesting that Nigerians were equally responsible for their ill-treatment by white staff because of the way they "worshipped" them. Participant 22 illustrates this in the following extract:

Interviewee:"....what do you expect when you see Nigerians calling them names like capone....I know of several expatriates who are called capone or godfather by Nigerian employees...if you don't work here, you may think it is playful but we all know what's going on....many Nigerians still think white people are gods...I don't understand it....just because they are different does not mean they are better than you!" (P.C.2i)

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Participant 27 also provided an illustration of how Nigerians idolized foreign staff:

> **Interviewee:** "We can complain about being treated badly but it is the very same Nigerians who idolize the foreign staff and put them on a pedestal…how do you expect them to see us if after the injustices, we still worship the ground that they walk on…I am not saying every Nigerian does this but enough to encourage the white man to keep feeling superior." (P.C.3iv)

Furthermore cases were cited of how Nigerians did not deliver when given the opportunity to excel, which reinforced the negative perception that white employees had of Nigerian employees. The few foreign staff that form part of the sample were asked about how they felt Nigerians generally perceived them and they all admitted that although the communication channels were very professional, there was a certain reverence shown to them. Participants 45 and 46 explained that this had more to do with Nigerians being 'unfamiliar' with people of their culture and race. The following illustration is an extract from participant 45:

> **Interviewee:** "Yes, I notice some distance between us…some Nigerians are not that comfortable coming forward to talk to us but I think that they are just not used to our culture or some of them are not used to working with us…I mean white people….I notice the respect they give us but I guess it's like when anytime you have a boss that you think is not approachable, the way you may see him as being up there while you're down there…. but you see sometimes after we have been here for sometime…like a few years, things kind of relax a bit and they start to socialize with us more freely…the unfortunate thing I have heard is that just when it seems an expatriate is very comfortable with most people, he ends up having to leave. Most of us are only posted to work here for a few years although on a few occasions, they may require you to stay like 5 to 10 years. I mean I definitely try to be open, I have an open door policy unless I am having an important discussion and I try to be friendly with everybody I meet."(P.C.1ii)

Participant 45 explained that the reverence or 'distance' tends to relax after one has worked in the environment for longer. Participant 45 did also admit that many of them (expatriates) tended to leave within a just a few years so never really have the chance to get very familiar with their Nigerian colleagues. Another illustration from participant 46 is as follows:

> **Interviewee:** "I think everybody tries to be professional but there is always going to be some differences when you have people from different backgrounds or races working together. Where I am from I am used to a more relaxed environment but I notice that here even though I think I am still relaxed, Nigerian employees are much more formal with us. I am the boss and most of them don't come up to me freely…I don't know….I don't think it's the look on my face (LAUGHTER)…they don't see people like me around them in their personal lives everyday…at their local store…. so I guess the way they relate with me is always going to be different…I don't know if I will call it fear…I don't think I am scary but may be fear of the unknown..." (P.C.1iii)

From the above extract, similar to participant 45, participant 46 insists that he is relaxed about interacting with Nigerians but attributes the way Nigerians may relate with whites to unfamiliarity and 'fear of the unknown'. From the data, the way Nigerian participants perceived foreign employees influenced how they developed their own self-concepts. The devalued identity that emerged from the way Nigerians perceived themselves and the way Nigerians perceived foreign staff fuelled the struggle to resist negative social identities. As the data suggests, although Nigerian participants expressed a lot of disdain for the way whites treated them, there was also an equally intense frustration with the way they felt Nigerians perceived themselves and the way they idolized foreign staff. The blame Nigerian participants apportioned to themselves was captured best by Participant 33 who not only stressed the failure of Nigerians to deliver when given the opportunity but also the failure of Nigerians to "sell the Nigerian culture" to foreigners.

> **Interviewee:** "Now you must ask yourself why the whites influence us so much..it's because we give them the power to! The white man makes the effort to do his homework to sell his culture to us and engage us so much so that we embrace his culture and neglect ours. Nigerians need to make more of an effort

to sell the Nigerian culture to the whites. If we made our culture more attractive and engaged them the way they have engaged us, you will find that over time they will take up parts of our identity, which will make us more likely to embrace our own indigenous identity more. We cannot keep blaming the white man for everything. We have a duty…Nigerians need to be more proactive about selling the Nigerian culture. Nigerians are too passive and just copy aspects of other cultures and then complain about colonialism. Whose fault is it that we feel colonized? Now I don't think there is anything wrong with copying parts of foreign culture, all I am saying is that we do not have to completely dump our identity in the process…after all there is nothing wrong with living and working in a western work context, being professional but still eating your native food at lunch, speaking your native dialect to people from your ethnic background and keeping those core family values that we cherish so much." (P.C.3v)

Participant 33 strongly felt that Nigerians are only interested in taking from other cultures and not passing onto other cultures.Participant 33 stressed that instead of Nigerians to be proactive about selling the Nigerian culture, they are passive and just "copy" aspects of other cultures. For some participants, these experiences sometimes led to the emergence of hybrid identification processes. The concept of a hybrid refers to the prospect of an individual incorporating more than one socio-cultural influence (Sen, 2006). In reference to this study, this description refers to the prospect of Nigerian workers embodying both indigenous and colonial influences within their core identity processes. From my own research of the Nigerian's identity processes in the workplace, the reason for such an embodiment could be further described as the desire to identify with their core indigenous norms as well as incorporate more western norms. This is facilitated through the norms and structures of their work environment, the post-colonial transition and catalysed by the aspirations and opportunities of a more global community. There were a number of passionate and similarly honest responses from participants regarding the relevance of colonial influences in their identity construction. In light of the history of the chosen region for this study and feedback suggesting the embodiment of multiple identities and influences, the importance of understanding the identification processes for employees cannot be overlooked. An interlock of Nigerian

norms and foreign norms (regardless of whether it is a British, American or Dutch) will understandably result in peculiar identity processes.

Post-colonial discourse

Ultimately the feedback from participants referred to a number of factors ranging from dress sense, language and use of technology to the supposed re-invention of social identity; all of which present a useful insight into how post-colonialism and the discourse of westernisation informs or influences the identity processes of Nigerian workers. This section looks at what characterised post-colonial discourse in the work environment. The core matter of admitting the failings of an indigenous system arguably formed a substantial part of the discourse. Participant 2 re-iterates the sentiment of Participant 10 in the earlier section:

> **Interviewee:** "I think I really only hear about colonialism or colonial times in two contexts if I think about......is when people are discussing the state of Nigeria today and people say well you know the em...the people that fought for our independence you know they would probably roll in their graves because this is not the Nigeria you know they aspired for. So I think when they are discussing colonialism it's not really in the context of what people did to us you know. Its more in the context of liberation and how unfortunate it is that following liberation we are still where we are today you know....or the second context people sometimes say that may be the colonialism should have gone on a little while longer so at least may be we would have had all the infrastructure because people say when you look around alot of the things were put in place wey wey back so may be they ought to have stayed a while longer since they've made such a mess. That's in the context in which I hear about post-colonialism (P.C.1ii)

From the above extract, it is plausible to deduce a degree of frustration with the indigenous standards. Ofcourse such frustration was detected from earlier extracts (for example the illustrations provided by participants 23 and 24). Such a sentiment is relevant to the identity processes of Nigerian workers, particularly those who work in multinationals and are regularly exposed to western standards. Participant 17 emphasised his feelings towards the importance of colonialism and the timing of

independence when he expressed that the colonial masters should have stayed on much longer; the following extract illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "I hate to admit it but the colonial masters should have definitely stayed on much longer….may be till the 80s…I think it would have been better for us in the long run. It's quite pathetic admitting that when you think of what countries like South Africa had to endure but if we are talking about the infrastructure, major institutions, law and order, I think a much later independence would have done us some good." (P.C.4xiii)

Such admissions fuel the sense of a devalued identity. Participant 2 summarizes her view of the Nigerian worker's predicament and stance in the same context by describing work in that space as simply a "means to an end"; however there is yet another admission that foreign systems are superior to indigenous ones. Again, it can be argued that these admissions feed the dialectics of the colonized mind (Sen, 2006). Participant 3 provided some useful feedback on attire and the prospect of any colonial contributions to the perception of a professional attire culture. Participant 3 dismisses any bias towards wearing attire that is representative of his core indigenous roots to work and points to the importance of the culture that the employer wants to reinforce in determining what employees should be asked to wear; the following extract illustrates this:

> **Interviewee**: "I am not that concerned about being able to wear native attire in the workplace, I don't think it is important…I think it is more important that the company makes clear to the employees the sort of identity and that includes clothing they want the employees to adopt, it reducesconfusion or people feeling alienated, if a company says it is ok to wear casual wear on certain days but then frowns on certain native wear, it must be communicated well. Some of our native wear may be considered too indigenous for some work settings but if you don't communicate this with some sensitivity then that's when you run into problems….I understand why some people feel that wearing native wear at work is important to upholding their indigenous identity….What you tend to find is that nothing is said but people just follow the majority…native attires are jazzed up to look western wherever possible…. May be this happens because

the company would rather not talk about it….I guess it might be considered prejudice if they did." (P.C. 2xi)

In the above extract, participant 3 reveals some useful considerations relating to how dressing in the workplace may inform indigenous identities or sometimes conflict with organizational identities. Consistent with participant 3's perspective, all of the Nigerian participants who commented on attire, expressed that employees were allowed to wear whatever they wanted on "casual days". There was no indication by any participant that their employer had highlighted directives, which affected what they could wear on "casual days". It was assumed that people made a judgment based on their own desire to indulge in their indigenous identities and the prevalent norms of their workspace.

Initially Participant 4 denies having any view on post-colonialism but interestingly proceeds to speak of a change in the demeanor of Nigerians in the post-colonial era which suggests transition from a more docile attitude to a much more ambitious mind-set. Participant 4 speaks of the shared frustration of Nigerians with the power (electricity) situation in the country and the lack of knowledge sharing from foreign to indigenous workers. Participant 6 speaks of a more individualistic generation, which he claims is a reflection of change in cultural norms in a post-colonial era. Such a suggestion raises questions of whether there is a contextual shift in social identification processes which can be linked to post-colonialism and globalization (Naz et al., 2011). The perception of a multinational company in the context of post-colonialism also forms part of the emergent discourse during the interviews. Participant 7 describes the Americans as "fun-loving" and suggests that the norms of the originating employer tend to influence how indigenous employees respond to these norms.

> **Interviewee:** "I have worked for a European company and now an American company and I find that the Americans are more fun-loving and relaxed. They're easier to approach and I guess the fact that English is their main language helps as well…I think however that the issue of colonialism is more relevant if your employer originates from the colonizing country…for example if you work for a British or at least European company in Nigeria….I think the effect of colonialism is somewhat reduced if it is say an American organization quite simply because they are not the ones that colonized us." (P.C. 2iii)

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Participant 7 makes an interesting point about colonialism only being relevant if the employer originates from a colonizing country or region. In the context of English speaking foreign staff, particularly American employees, what stood out was the social realities depicted by the Nigerian participants illustrated a stark contrast to the narratives of racial identification resulting in discrimination. From his response, Participant 7 appears to neutralize any significance of colonial discourse in his workplace because his employer does not originate from the colonial territory of the chosen region (i.e. his employer does not reside from Nigeria's colonial ruling region, Britain). From this perspective, participant 7 appears to suggest that the tensions associated with colonialism are absent when the employer originates from a country that is not directly related to colonialism in Nigeria. From the following account, participant 8 goes as far as suggesting that the white employees in his workplace afford black employees respect:

> **Interviewee:** "For me…what I notice is that the blacks and whites get along ok…they're quite open, we talk freely with them….I mean we may not always interact informally but they're fine to work with. Ofcourse there is a history between our races but they're not quite the ones that colonized us......these ones just get on with doing their work and I think they respect us blacks…..they can be quite fun to work with. They may be our superiorsbut they acknowledge us…I notice the attitude of a global community being embraced by both whites and blacks here….it is far from perfect equality but its in the right direction….I for one don't feel threatened by any of them here." (P.C.4ii).

Similar to participant 7, participant 8 works in an organization with English-speaking white employees. The social realities depicted by these participants was certainly in the minority but nonetheless emphasized the positive influence that English speaking employees had on the post-colonial discourse. This perspective suggests Nigerians attach an emotional significance to the country or region that produced the oppressor and not just the colour of the man's skin. This perspective is logical but was however in the minority as most of the participants appeared to characterize the oppressor with references to the "white man" and not the "British or European man". From the responses that talked about the differences between different foreign nationals there

was an emphasis on the benefits of working with English speaking foreign staff over non-English speaking foreign staff. The following extract from participant 20 illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "The colour of our skin separates us and yes even though we work together and some of us may have lived or studied abroad, the majority of us are not very familiar with the white man. Even though the organization tries to promote a cosy atmosphere for everyone, it is obvious there are tensions…you can sense it. I think the language barrier adds to the tension…I previously worked for an organization run by English speaking superiors and now I work for an organization run by non-English speaking superiors and I think the tensions are higher in my current workplace. Our superiors do speak English but you find that when they get emotional, upset or are simply talking to each other they tend to speak their native language which immediately excludes the rest of us…its like when you hear a Nigerian speaking a native dialect that you cannot understand…you feel left out but with the white man…the feeling of exclusion is a lot worse….in fact depending on the context, you can feel extremely oppressed.….because you cannot verify what they are saying and because you do not want to suffer the penalty of being insurbordinate you put up with situations that may belittle you…." (P.C.4iii)

From the above extract, participant 20 explains how the language barrier intensifies feelings of oppression in Nigerians.There were several references to the issue of language when participants relayed experiences reminiscent of colonialism. The following extract from participant 23 provides another illustration:

> **Interviewee:** "I am definitely most frustrated with the fact that they can get away with dogging me out in their language in my very presence….it's bad enough that they look down on us but being able to privately ridicule me in a public forum is very annoying. No matter how much they may look down on us…I know that if their native language was English they would not speak so freely about me in my presence or even in the presence of my colleagues for concerns over how it may be look or sound….I think being able to exclude us

through use of their language adds to the power they have in this workspace."
(P.C.3xii)

In the above extract, participant 23 comments on the oppressive use of language by foreigners and emphasizes on how this contributes to the power dynamic in her workspace. Participant 24 provides another illustration:

Interviewee: "When they talk amongst themselves, they tend to speak in their native language a lot. I know it is their people that started this organization so they can get away with it but sometimes it is very unfair and outright inappropriate….I know they don't like it when Nigerians speak their ethnic dialects in their presence so they should consider this when they get carried away…speaking in their native language has particular significance because they are the ones at the top so any feeling of exclusion that a Nigerian feels is heightened…its another thing that just emphasizes their dominance" (P.C.3xi)

In the above extract, participant 24 points to the presence of a double standard that foreign staff exercise in the context of language. She also explains how the feeling of exclusion is heightened because those using language in this context are superior in official rank. Attachments were made between the use of foreign language and oppressive experiences in several accounts made by participants. Participant 12 provides another of many illustrations:

Interviewee: "you just feel helpless….they talk about things in their language right in front of you and there is nothing you can do about it…often when you stop them to ask what they said, they seem to take offense…it is worst when you sense they are talking about you….that is when you get to realize just how small you really are here. (P.C.4vi)

Such responses highlight the relevance of language in the oppressive emotions experienced by the Nigerian participants and provide insight into how language feeds the power dynamic and a sense of a devalued identity. As illustrated earlier, tensions that were reminiscent of the colonial era appeared to be milder in work contexts that comprised of English speaking foreign nationals. Interestingly although the outcome as

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not as favoured by the participants, there was also evidence that illustrated the benefits of eliminating the language barrier even in contexts that comprised of non-English speaking foreign staff. The following extract from participant 37 illustrated this:

> **Interviewee:** "It makes a big difference if you can speak their language. For obvious reasons, they are forced to curtail what they say in front of you. They cannot freely dog you out when you or others are present….it takes away some of their power." (P.C.2iv)

In the above extract, participant 37 highlights the potency in being able to speak the language of foreign staff. This was also highlighted by a number of other participants. Participant 18 provides another illustration:

> **Interviewee:** "it helps if you can speak their language….they may still say negative things about you when they're angry but they cannot get carried away….whenever I have been in the presence of a colleague that can speak their language, I can sense they feel more empowered and I think it kind of rubs off on me even though I don't understand anything myself. (P.C.5ii)

Such responses are understandable as the elimination of a language barrier can only be expected to facilitate easier communication channels between white employees and black employees. More importantly in the context of scenarios that simulate colonial experiences, the elimination of a languagebarrier may be perceived to neutralize the power dynamic thereby reducing the intensity of oppressive emotions. Unfortunately although a number of participants highlighted the benefit of being able to speak the language of their employer's host nation, I was unable to interview any employee that had such proficiency. It appeared that in all the companies that emanated from non-English speaking nations, the proportion of Nigerian nationals that could speak the language of the originating nation was extremely low. The duration of colonialism was another factor illustrated by the some of the participants. For instance,participant 8 denounces the influence of colonialism on employee identity processes as he stresses that the duration of colonialism in Nigeria was rather limited in comparison to territories like South Africa:

Interviewee*:* "…uhm to be very honest, I share the same opinion on that as the same opinion about uhm ethnicities within this organisation and I can't say much about other organisations. Nigeria wasn't battered with colonialism, you may have a different story if you go to South Africa, or if you go to Kenya or Uganda….I'm sure the story would be different you know. I feel because of the cultural diversity that exists in Nigeria…the impact of Colonialism is quickly forgotten. Ethnicity, culture, you know tribes, language….I think there's just too much of it…you know, there's too much of that…Yeah, for us to feel that we all have one common enemy!"(P.C.1i)

From the above extract, participant 8 appears to emphasize the impact of ethnic diversity on any post-colonial influence. According to his response, the extreme ethnic diversity of Nigerians dilutes any colonial discourse because Nigerians are more pre-occupied with "home-grown" issues and less with "the white man". Participant 8 does provide further insight into the ethnic debate in Nigeria and the 'boisterous' nature he claims characterizes how Nigerians are perceived at home and abroad. The issues of knowledge transfer and equal opportunity for ethnic minorities form part of the discourse theme for participant 9. Interestingly participant 9's most immediate experiences are in an indigenously owned company however his experience spans beyond the confines of his current employer so is able to provide constructive feedback on how Nigerian workers feel about their prospects for progression in relation to knowledge acquisition. Participant 9 relays the frustrations of Nigerians on two fronts: on the one hand with having foreigners who are perceived to be no better than their Nigerian counterparts coming over and continuously occupying superior positions; and on the other hand with the fear that Nigerians have of each other (reference made here to corrupt tendencies of Nigerians if they would be offered the superior positions in place of the foreigners). Of course similar feedback has been provided by a number of participants (e.g. participants 23 and 24) under the "foreign nationals and knowledge transfer" theme. Participant 9's reflections provide further insight into his perception of the knowledge transfer issue and the implications for identity construction. Participant 9 also comments on the sensitivity surrounding relations between nationals and foreigners that emanate from some of the above issues raised:

Interviewee: "What we've done is just get on with it. So if you need some things, you just don't go to him because you're not going to value the advice anyway….so some people may take it to a higher level now….you know not being nice to him but the point is that we know. There are situations where there's been an argument which says you don't know anything and you shouldn't be where you are but just because you are foreign but as part of the controls talking about harassment on the workplace, you don't go and try anything….you don't start shouting at each other in the organisation." (P.C.1ix)

The frustration expressed by these participants is illustrative of an injustice and discrimination that they feel is being imposed upon them. From their narratives, it can be assumed that they feel overwhelmed and over-powered by the system, again illustrating the dominant power dynamic that exists in post-colonial theory. Even with reference to what could be done to resolve the matter, they talk about the distrust amongst Nigerians. The power dynamic synonymous with post-colonialism is very evident through all these narratives as the participants indicate that they are being oppressed and there is nothing they can do about it. The idea that indigenous workers will not be allowed to progress beyond a certain stage is reflective of discrimination that these participants felt exists around them. Parallels can be drawn between this dynamic and the colonial era. Although the participants speak of their disapproval regarding the foreign employee-indigenous employee scenario, not all the blame is awarded to the foreigners. Some of the participants make the point to lay blame on the attitude of indigenous employees. For instance, participant 11 allocates responsibility for Nigeria's socio-economic plight to Nigerians, which neutralizes the prospects for any colonial backlash in the identity processes of employees in a multinational work – setting. In other words, because some of their emotions are focused on their own (Nigerian) failings, this reduces the sentiment carried by Nigerian employees towards foreign employees. The status issue embedded in the employee-contract staff dynamic also formed a significant part of the post-colonial discourse; by participants suggesting that Nigerians are very class-conscious, and attributing this characteristic to hierarchies formed during colonial times, this dynamic can be interpreted as another illustration of how post-colonial influences are still active in the workplace (Ulus, 2014). The emotions expressed by the contract staff participants indicated not only a disapproval of the perceived elitist behaviour of employees but also a helplessness that is reflective of

how lower classes, categories or groups felt over-powered by superior groupings during colonialism. The theme of power, which cuts across the entire discourse of post-colonialism, is also evident here. Participant 12 illustrates how western norms conflict with the indigenous norms of Nigerian workers in multi-national work settings. According to participant 12, 'avoiding eye contact for periods' as a form of respect, especially when communicating with more senior individuals, is a practice enforced by Nigerian norms and conflicts with the western norm of 'keeping eye contact' as a form of respect for the other party. This is an illustration of cultural tensions in the workplace.

According to my sample, the cultural norms of working Nigerians in the oil and gas sector were also part of the discourse on post-colonialism. The theme of cultural norms is indeed broad and ultimately relates to any perceived attitudes, habits or behaviours that can be attributed to a particular way of life or school of thought. Participant 17 described various factors relating to social or cultural norms in the context of post-colonalism and her own working environment. Participant 17 refers to factors such as sexuality and verbal addresses that reflect either familiarity or professionalism in the context of the social norms produced by the surrounding socio-economic environment. For example, participant 17 explained that calling a Nigerian employee (particularly a senior ranked one) by their first name would suggest familiarity and potentially compromise the aspired level of professionalism she and the colleague may want to portray for their working relationship in the work-setting. According to the participant, her own role as a HR employee fundamentally influenced the way she addressed other employees. Furthermore, she described herself as a subordinate, which demonstrated her tendency to accept the reality of serving others and revealed one aspect of her own identification process. Participant 17 did also provide useful insight into her decision making process when addressing employees from different regions (i.e. foreign or Nigerian). She explained that if she was addressing a senior Nigerian staff who liked being called by his first name, she opted to call him by his surname and if he liked being called by his surname then at work he might prefer to be addressed as "sir". The feedback from participant 17 illustrated how certain cultural norms can be negotiated in the work setting.

From the illustrations of different participants, it is evident that perceptions and attitudes relating to post-colonialism produced a variety of conflicting issues which fuel

tensions in the identity processes of Nigerians in the chosen work context. Similar to every section in chapters 5 and 6, the most prominent issues will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

Ethnicity

Every participant confirmed ethnicity to be a dominant theme in the day to day living of Nigerians. Consistent with Margalit and Raz (1990), the participants felt that the attraction of ethnic identification lay in the fact that such membership did not rest on individual achievement. According to the participants, the nature of such membership facilitated a strong sense of belonging. Ethnicity is ofcourse attributed to the existential roots of Nigeria (i.e. pre-colonial times) and very much characterises a large proportion of social identities in the Nigerian context, however from the data ethnicity emerged most prominently as a product of colonialism and so this section considers ethnicity in that context. Participant 1 illustrates the influence of ethnicity through language:

> **Interviewee:** "Yeah, yeah you could get somebody that is coming to discuss official things and it affects all of you and he goes on communicating in his language....may be speaking Yoruba to a Yoruba boy amongst us, speaking Igbo ...speaking Hausa...and you as a bystander you are left out of the loop. They can even discuss things even about you while I am there and I don't understand... so that language has always been an issue. Our official language is English but people go off line discussing official matters....you know and then too you've heard one ethnic group dominating the other group, you have heard promotion; you have heard the way it is being done. Most positions even in companies, succession, promotion they are still although it may be difficult to say whether it is or sometimes...so ethnicity is an issue."(P.C.2iv)

From the extract, we see that participant 1 is not in support of speaking native dialects in the workplace and he stresses the domination of one ethnic group over another and how this may affect the way people are employed or promoted. This is particularly significant because participant 1 works for a multinational. The minority status of participant 1's ethnicity emerges when he explains that it is difficult for him to come across people from the same ethnic group. Although participant 2 had indicated that she is not very social and tends to keep to herself when being questioned about social

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identification, she is more forthcoming when talking about ethnicity and indicates that she has a high propensity to relate informally with people from her ethnicity in the workplace through language. This suggests that for even someone who professes to be more individualistic, ethnicity appears to be a strong driver for group identification. Participant 35 also acknowledges the presence of ethnicity in the workplace and he indicates that ethnicity is integral to how Nigerians communicate and identify themselves although he explains that ethnic behaviours are regulated by a strong atmosphere of professionalism in his workspace. Nonetheless he explains that the way Nigerians embrace ethnicity differentiates them from the west.

Several participants indicated strong identification with their ethnic groups as they speak positively about conversing in local dialects at work. Participant 27 acknowledges some of the intensity of ethnic identification in the workplace but continues to suggest that although harsh jokes are told along ethnic lines and occasionally people may get angry, on balance the consensual reaction is to laugh it off; this further reinforcing his description of Nigerians having a 'thick skin'. Despite acknowledging the presence of ethnicity in the workplace and the jokes that are told about different ethnic groups, participant 27 maintains that on balance the atmosphere of professionalism in the workplace is dominant. This is particularly emphasized because of his extreme minority status in the workplace.The influence of where one studied and spent significant parts of their life on the saliency of their ethnic identification and their perception of ethnicity in the workplace are illustrated by participants 4, 25, 26 and 33 asthey admit to not speaking or understanding their native dialects. For instance, the following extract is from participant 4:

> **Interviewee:** "Definitely where you have spent more of your life will affect how ethnic you are….I spent a great deal of my life outside of Nigeria so although my parents made every effort to expose me to my ethnicity by speaking my language at home and taking me to my rural community from time to time, I don't associate with my ethnicity as much as say Nigerians who are born and bred here. Don't get me wrong I am aware of where I am from but I can't really speak the language that well…" (P.C.2i)

Several participants describe how people who relocated from the west seem to have a more "diluted" ethnic identity. The more diluted ethnic identity indicated by participants is used to illustrate how people are becoming more western even though they acknowledge that ethnicity is still integral. Some of the participants highlighted the dominance of certain tribes (e.g. the Yoruba); participant 9 indicates that he is Igbo but is aware of the dominance of the Yoruba tribe amongst his colleagues. Participants 27, 28, 29, 33, are also Igbo but stress that even though nationally they are part of a dominant ethnic group, the surrounding environment influences the ethnic group that is dominant in their workplace (i.e. the Ikwerre ethnic group because the employer is based in Port-Harcourt, Rivers state). These participants even highlight the advantage Ikwerre employees have in community stakeholder management (this refers to when the employer has to build relationships with the community to ensure that projects are not hindered but supported).

The influence of ethnic representation in the workplace is an issue raised by several participants in the sample. The prevalence of tribes is reminiscent of the class structures attributed to the colonial era. When participant 9 is asked if he has ever felt isolated amongst members of another ethnic group, he confirms that he has but expresses some relief in the fact that he can understand the Yoruba dialect on a basic level. The following extract is from participant 9:

> **Interviewee:** "I guess I have felt like an outsider or isolated if you will….when others have been speaking their native dialect. You definitely feel out of it when you don't understand what is being said they just carry out their conversations without you. Ofcourse it may get even more awkward if that conversation is prolonged with maybe bouts of laughter….I mean you start to wonder what are they laughing about?....I must say though that I feel a bit relieved that I can understand the Yoruba language on a basic level. It gives me that little bit of conversation that I will not be totally excluded if two Yorubas start yapping away….this is especially important because the Yorubas have quite a large representation in this company. (P.C.3i)

Participant 9 goes on to stress how the Yorubas use language as a tool to exclude those who cannot speak or understand the language. The issue of exclusion is nonetheless

emphasised by the use of ethnic dialects.There are a number of other illustrations of how the theme of ethnicity manifests in the workplace but for the sake of volume, these illustrations have been selected to highlight what was revealed during the interviews. There was a strong sense amongst all the participants that ethnicity was a theme that influenced the general societal groupings and interactions of Nigerians. In fact, all the participants felt that Nigerians tended to associate more with their individual tribes than as one cohesive whole. An example was participant 12 who stressed that individuals tended to see themselves as maybe a "Yoruba man" more so than a Nigerian man. Interestingly participants 45, 46 and 47 who were foreign staff all highlighted that Nigerians in the workplace are not unified whenever there are discussions about national heritage or politics. The following extract from participant 47 illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "I find that Nigerians are very much attached to their ethnicities…they feel very strong about their ethnic identities and unfortunately they are divided when it comes to ethnicity….you see this from the way they interact amongst themselves. The topic of ethnicity often comes up and they always end up blaming each other's tribes for one thing or the other." (P.C.1iv)

The foreign staff stressed that they did not understand why Nigerians had a strong tendency to gravitate towards their ethnic identity when certain matters were being discussed. Participant 45 described how he had witnessed at several team-building exercises Nigerians being very antagonistic towards one another based on ethnic identification. Participant 45 explained how Nigerians had a strong tendency to identify more with their ethnicity than their nationality and this he felt was to blame for some of the challenges Nigerians were having in the workplace.

> **Interviewee:** "I don't understand it…..they spend more time identifying with their ethnic groups than they do with their nationality and they are always blaming each other for everything…conversations always find their way back to what happened historically and who is to blame for what…" (P.C.2iii)

Participant 45 explained that Nigerians definitely have a strong propensity for group identification but as a whole are not united so always find it difficult to address matters as a unit.Language was described as the most prominent tool for ethnic identification.

The tendency for employees to familiarise themselves with one another using their ethnic languages was illustrated frequently throughout the data collection process. The need for "belongingness" is easily derived from this process of identification.

Interestingly there were elements of empowerment and inclusion for in-group members (i.e. members of the same ethnic group). This was illustrated as participants talked about how people used their ethnic identity to express status and in some cases influence over others. Parallels can be drawn here between the derived benefits of belongingness and inclusion and Brewer's (1991) model of optimal distinctiveness, which proposes that people want to assimilate with a group but also want to differentiate themselves from other groups. In the case of ethnicity, however the group identification is only available to those from the ethnic majority in the context. Nonetheless being from a certain ethnic group did not automatically result in strong ethnic identification, the individual had to activate his/her ethnic social identity by associating with others from the same ethnic group, typically by speaking the native dialect. Participant 2 illustrated this in the following extract:

> **Interviewee**: "…just because you are from a certain ethnic group does not automatically mean that you will have a strong ethnic identity. It's when you associate with others from your ethnic group mainly by speaking your language that you actually activate that identity I suppose….if not you may be from a certain ethnicity but distance yourself entirely…..(P.C.4ii)

Also consistent with Brewer's (1991) model, for ethnic social identities, the members do not have to personalise their membership but rather define themselves in terms of a distinctive category membership. Baumeister and Leary (1995) also endorse this perspective with their "belongingness hypothesis". As expected while the desire for inclusion was clearly illustrated, it was hard to overlook feelings of exclusion expressed by those who sometimes found themselves to be in the minority. However there was no indication of extreme in-group behaviour, which could potentially result in group polarisation (Turner, 1991). This was largely attributed to the strong western organizational culture and professional atmosphere of the context organisations, which according to participants regulated the influence of ethnicity. There tended to be a

negative relationship between a strong professional identity or employee functionality and ethnicity.

From the feedback of the participants, when the issue of professionalism emerged in the context of ethnicity most participants felt that the more professional you are the less salient your ethnic identity should be at work. In other words, a very salient ethnic identity was associated with an unprofessional identity. Even though every participant accepted ethnicity to be prevalent in the discourse of Nigerians, some participants deliberately dis-associated themselves with this trend at work. Reference to discussing official matters at work in ethnic languages was common amongst most participants. This potentially exposes an alternative interpretation of Nigerian workers who feel that professionalism at work cannot accommodate for strong ethnic identification, especially due to the issue of extreme diversity and perceived western norms that are embodied in a multinational organisation. There is however another view, which may suggest that participants deliberately dis-associate themselves from ethnic oriented behaviour at work so as to enhance their own perceived impression of what it means to be professional. Such a possibility is consistent with the identification processes that are inevitable during the course of an interview (i.e. although participants may appear to make an effort to depict a sincere version of reality, the platform of an interview always presents the opportunity to project their preferred version of reality).

Ethnic identification did appear to be more salient amongst the ethnic majority (e.g. the Yorubas for organisations based in Lagos and the Igbos and Ikwerres for orgnanisations based in Port-Harcourt) as through strength in numbers they could indulge in the sense of belongingness and empowerment compared with the minority who felt compelled to get along with everybody or risk being excluded or marginalised. According to certain participants (for example participant 15), ethnic identification was noticeably more salient in indigenous companies. The following extract illustrates this from part of participant 15's responses:

> **Interviewee:** "What you see here, you may not see in a multinational. I mean we are all in the oil and gas industry but some things are done very differently here. Ethnicity is part of working life here. The owner employs senior management from his place who then in turn employ people from the same

place which include both family and other distant networks….you will get the occasional person employed from a different tribe but the overwhelming majority will usually be from wherever the owner originates from. Even though in some companies, this kind of thing is considered bad practice, over here it is normal….if you think about it sometimes it can really disturb you but for me it's not my problem, as long as I can get along with my work and earn a decent wage…keep my job….that's what is most important. (P.C.2v)

Furthermore his comments suggested that nepotism was practised to some extent. Interestingly this practice was supposedly accepted by other employees, even those from minority tribes. According to the participants, this however may have more to do with keeping their job as opposed to actually agreeing with such decision-making. The level and background of education was also suggested to play a significant part in employee perceptions towards ethnic identification. For example, a number of participants suggested that employees who studied abroad or who were highly educated tended to detach themselves more from ethnic identification; this included their tolerance and participation in such groupings.

In the context of ethnic social identities, language was a theme for most of the participants and some admitted to occasionally speaking their own dialects within the work environment. There were a number of participants who were adamant they did not speak any dialects in the workplace however they admitted to speaking it outside of the workplace. Furthermore they disclosed that they were aware of other people from their ethnic community and interacted, even though they suggested that such interaction was not influenced by tribe but by the convenience of working in the same company. In summary, there was clearly a divide between those who were relaxed about the use of different dialects in the workplace and those who were staunchly against it. The competing concepts of "belongingness" and "exclusion" were evident in the way language was used. Those who wanted to belong to their ethnic group, spoke their language with the occasional additional motive of exclusion, which satisfies Brewer's (1991) model of optimal distinctiveness.As revealing as some of the factors that drove ethnic identification in the workplace, the most dominant was post-colonialism. In the context of ethnic identification, post-colonialism not only emerged as a point of discussion when interviewing participants from the multi-nationals but also the few that

worked with indigenous companies. For example, participant 16 stressed the significance of the social structure that was established in colonial times and the impact of that structure on the life of working Nigerians:

> **Interviewee:** "...these things still affect us today...and in terms of I mean....obviously during that period there was an ethnic structure which was laid out for Nigerians...the dominant, you have obviously the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo as being the main ethnic groups......then you have all the other ethnic groups...I mean there is over 500 different dialects in Nigeria…There is! I will clearly say, there is a hierarchy now in this system...." (P.C.2i)

From the above extract, participant 16 highlighted the sheer volume of dialects emanating from a large spectrum of ethnic groups and the reality of a hierarchy in the social system. From participant 16's feedback, it would appear that the issue of post-colonialism was even relevant in a situation that was highly indigenous and which excluded in-house ex-patriates; all foreign worker interaction took place when the employer partnered with other oil servicing firms or multi-national operators. It seemed that even an area as indigenous as ethnicity was being linked to the consequences of the post-colonial era. This of course is consistent with the interpretations of many post-colonial theorists that suggest that one of the main consequences of colonialism for Africa is the hierarchies established through ethnicity but has spread to various facets of Nigerian society (Ekeh, 1975; Ekanola, 2006; Mizuno& Okazawa, 2009; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). From participant 16's feedback, it appears these hierarchies were also very evident in the workplace where Nigerians were working amongst themselves. The class structure is a topic that emerged during discussions on social identity; recall that the working interpretation of class structures in the data actually relates to status. The significance and perception of status driven norms is pertinent to how post-colonialism is influencing the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. The idea that the same ethnic hierarchies that existed in colonialism still exist not just in society but in the workplace goes some way to illustrate how post-colonialism is informing people's perceptions of identity (Ulus, 2014). Participant 16 also goes further to stress the impact of ethnicity on recruitment within certain situations which he suggests are not exclusive to indigenously owned companies in the industry but also multi-nationals:

Interviewee: "It's difficult....you cannot rule it out completely! Because most of the time....it's not only....most of the times when there are openings...people still go back and look for people from their own ethnic group who will want to come in....It happens in the industry! Where....especially in indigenous companies...but not only indigenous companies, even in the multinationals where a Nigerian is in charge of employing staff..."(S.I.3iii)

From the above extract, the issue of ethnicity being linked with recruitment is used to emphasize strong ethnic social identities. These social identities are attributed to colonial times. There is therefore a perceived overlap between social identity and post-colonialism here. In the context of post-colonialism, the social identification processes were informed by status driven norms which were illustrated by various un-official but dominant hierarchies in the workplace. The data revealed ethnicity to be one of those hierarchies.

Westernization

The theme of westernization was derived from the suggestion that colonialism may be responsible for the westernization of the identification processes of Nigerian workers. For example, the style of management implemented in the Nigerian work setting is based on western ideas and so too is the academic and professional education made available to employees. Participant 19 provided some useful insight on this theme:

Interviewee: "....those with career interests have made it possible for people to describe themselves as middle class and working class since it is colonisation that led to those beliefs and systems....because it's colonisation that introduced the western style of education, the western style of management....and so to now be an Engineer or a lawyer or an accountant...these are all things that came with colonisation and therefore if those are things which then help define our identity....Well, those you consider to perform well are people who perform well under certain technical criteria not set by our own traditional African norms...." (P.C.2)

From participant 19's perspective, the fact that integral aspects of professional and educational life are embodied in westernization reflects the extent to which western

systems influence how Nigerians perceive or identify themselves. Participant 19's summation highlights the significance of the various statues of professional and organizational life that are rooted in western values and norms being embraced by Nigerians. The decision to embrace these ideas, norms and systems is in itself a reflection of how post-colonialism is informing identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. The question of being western versus being African is a question, which may require consideration but from the narratives of the participants and the reality of not just the work-setting but also the surrounding context, westernization is arguably a contributor to the 'dialectics of the colonised mind'. To emphasise this point, does a Nigerian have to separate himself or herself from westernization and embrace indigenous traits to be freed from a colonized mind? Is such a feat possible? Moreover, considering the degree to which Nigerians appear to be influenced by western ideals and standards, is such a consideration worth making? As mentioned earlier while discussing hybridity, the evidence would suggest that westernization has occupied an integral part of Nigerian identity processes making it somewhat difficult to consider a Nigerian apart from westernization. Such a conclusion reinforces the case to emphasise the degree to which post-colonialism influences Nigerian identity processes. The theme of westernization is probably one of the more obvious ones derived during the course of the interviews and in some ways may be interchangeable with the concept of post-colonialism depending on your perspective.There is a perceived overlap in the theme of westernization and the idea of perpetuated colonialism otherwise referred to as 'neo-colonialism'.An illustration can be cited in the following extract by participant 39 in his description of modern society:

> **Interviewee**: "…has more to do with everybody becoming more western than different cultures coming together….let's face it…we're all becoming more and more western…."(G.2ii)

Participant 39 went on to emphasise that Nigerian culture has become less important in the work environment as people work more closely with foreigners. According to her it was just part of working in a modern world. Following on from how participants used westernization to rationalize the modern world, the theme of westernization highlights the prospects of western domination of identity processes. From the interviews, the consensual viewpoint of a modern world suggested a new set of norms that are largely

influenced or informed by western values or practices. The theme of westernization is therefore relevant to discussions of post-colonialism because of the emphasis on one identity influencing another; in this case the western identity influencing the indigenous Nigerian identity. In the context of this study, the concept of a modern world refers to a way of life or work, which is not so much concerned with influences from any particular socio-economic environment but rather with the requirements of living and working in an integrated environment. Participant 19 provides some useful interpretation of this theme:

> **Interviewee:** "... but the truth is some of it is also to do with being modern and the fact that to survive in a modern world, you've got to have adopted certain modern disciplines and norms and that has nothing to do with whether you're in the workplace or whether you're in Asia or Africa because the norms associated with the modern demands on life...people need instant responses, data is accessible in real time....you know and so on and so forth. So what I'm saying is there's an aspect of ....a child of the indigenous origins, a child of post-colonialism but there's also an aspect that just relates to being a child of modernity!"(P.C.3i)

Participant 19 suggests the adoption of certain values or norms, which may be predominantly western as being more about survival than anything else. The next extract provides further depth to his own interpretation:

> **Interviewee:** "So our interest or our drive to be similar or close to the west is not because of some medieval inter-relation or medieval affiliation with the west, No!....it's because of the modern quest of culture!...it is...you could argue that a measure of modernity is the extent to which you adopt or integrate western culture into your own indigenous culture because so many aspects of today's western culture are inexplicably inter-woven into modernity...so many aspects of the way westerns behave or communicate in today's world....interlink or inter-woven with the...paraphernalia of modernity...email, internet, television, you know...flying...being able to fly on holiday to a different part of the world...just so many things that ....even the appliances have changed and the need to have those is driven a lot by those of the appliances becoming a

standard in the west...Yes...or conversely modernity and the facets of modernity are a very dominant influence on today's global culture.."(G.1iii)

Participant 19 does also admit to the concept of hybridity being an explanation of the combination of indigenous and western values in one individual as he suggests that such a combination is a requirement for Nigerian workers to survive in the modernworld today.

From the viewpoint of participant 43, working in the global world could be interpreted as an evolution of the diverse ways of living and working to adapt to a more inclusive global community where communication and contemporary work practices are not so much informed by individual socio-economic environments but one modern environment. The following extract from participant 43 illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "I think the very way people communicate is changing around the world and it is no different in the Nigerian work context. I think the necessity to fit into the world we live in today is caused Nigerians to just embrace western norms as their very own. I think Nigerians are seeing a lot of western practices more and more as their own. There is less of a struggle to resist western practices and more of an effort to incorporate western habits into our own identity processes. I see my colleagues getting a better view of the global community and they (especially those that want to excel!) want to be a part of it. Even though email, social networks, performance work reviews were invented by the white man, I see more and more that Nigerians are taking these are theirs….and I don't think it is limited to the multinationals. I think it applies although may be to a lesser extent to indigenous companies who aspire to build relationships with IOCs….that is international oil companies. Identities are now evolving and I think that Nigerians are seeing themselves more as global citizens than just citizens of their local space." (P.C.3viii)

Participant 19 does subscribe to the idea that modern values may be largely influenced by western values which is a perspective that feeds into the controversy that suggests modern society is a disguised form of colonialism because although it does not elicit the same "power-induced" pronouncements as colonialism, the outcome is somewhat

similar; the values, norms and systems of a dominant culture effectively supersede the input of other contextual cultures in identity processes. Again, in the above extract the reference to Nigerians taking western norms as their own is another illustration of hybridity. Acculturation is a term used by participant 29 to describe such a process (acculturation refers to the domination of one culture over another):

> **Interviewee:** "Westernisation is just a form of acculturation…that is the western culture is dominating and influencing the Nigerian culture. By influencing our culture, the western culture influences the way we identify ourselves. Whether we say we are being modern or global or whatever, the reality is that we are all becoming more and more western….I know that colonization may be a dirty word to some people but westernization and colonization are not that far apart. (P.C. 4iii)

In the context of this study, this would suggest that by being more modern, the Nigerian is being more western and possibly perpetuating his/her colonization (neo-colonialism). According to some of the participants, such norms are consistent with the requirements of surviving in a less 'fragmented' global environment and more of an 'integrated' global community. In the context of a modern world, group identification primarily focused on two outcomes; first being the decline of group identification or social identity and the emergence of another paradigm of identification processes that focus on the individual and a second outcome which suggested an evolution of group identification and social identity to align with the needs of a changing world. Participant 11 describes the decline of traditional social identity as a change of culture, which is 'less concerned with clusters but more focused on ideology and intellectuality'. The following extract from participant 11 illustrates this:

> **Interviewee:** "I see that the way we relate and identify ourselves is changing….the idea of social identity or groups is not what it used to be…people are less concerned with clusters but more focused on ideology and intellectuality…it's not about grouping with certain people in cliques or what have you but rather its about you getting the job done…This change is now causing Nigerians to seek fulfillment through building the right

relationships…it's a new form of self-determination that is aimed at helping the Nigerian worker excel at what they do." (P.C.4viii)

Participant 11 also describes an example of the change in culture when he talks about Nigerian workers being less concerned with associating in groups but more concerned with getting the job done. He describes the change as a transition from being pre-occupied with being in a group to fulfilling new definitions of self-determination by getting the job done. According to Participant 11, the change in culture that prioritises professional identity is now being integrated into Nigerian culture. This is arguably a symptom of hybridity. Most of the participants disagreed with the idea that larger social networks or groups meant a depersonalization of social identity. Participant 12 surmises the evolution of group identification by suggesting that it is less about physically being with people and more about being able to communicate with them.Participant 15 admits to a number of changes:

> **Interviewee**: "….technology reduces the face to face time that people may have with each other…. I know I am guilty of this particular habit…..a colleague came into town….I found myself sending a message to welcome him to town and then a few fleeting messages followed but we never actually spoke let alone saw each other while he was here…..It sounds harsh when I put it this way but in a way we kind of take each other for granted because we are comforted by the fact that we can always touch base with each other remotely...I guess that's a good and a bad thing…" (P.C.4viii)

From the above extract, participant 15 highlights the impact of easier communication channels on the nature of socialization.Participant 16 placed more emphasis on the importance of social interaction over being professional:

> **Interviewee**: "Ofcourse you are expected to do the job that they are paying you for so naturally you are expected to be professional but in Nigeria I would argue that socializing is just as important if not sometimes more important than being professional.…Nigerians are typically not big fans of impersonal people….if you are good at your work but impersonal, then you will struggle to succeed…." (P.C.5i)

Participant 42 talked about the importance of group identification for a sense of belongingness and stronger prospects for career progression:

> **Interviewee:** "I would say that even in the environment that I work in…things are very much western and we take on a lot of western habits and practices everyday….group identification has always been very important in Nigeria…I mean things like ethnicity, religion and other interests drive us to be social animals…the bottom line though is that people value identifying with groups because they want to feel like they belong…the more they feel they belong…the more confident they feel about progressing with their career and the more they feel they will enjoy their work." (P.C.3iv)

Participant 19 describes a few examples that illustrate the steps employees may take to fulfill different needs for group identification or social identity. From his description, it starts with becoming an employee, which could be interpreted as being part of the first layer of the in-group. Parallels can be drawn here with the feedback from other participants who spoke very candidly about the employee/contract worker scenario. An example of a second layer of group identification is whether you are an active member of your functional group? A third layer of group identification was more to do with specific discipline, for example if you are an Engineer, do you work and socialize with other Engineers?

Culture also featured in the context of the modern world. Participant 29 admits that the union of cultures does not involve an equitable distribution as more of western culture is being included than indigenous Nigerian culture. Participant 13 also expresses dislike for a degree of negativity, which he associates with the influence of western norms on Nigerians; this is illustrated with the following extract:

> **Interviewee:** "Being more western has obviously opened a lot of doors for Nigerians professionally and the more we fit into the global community, the more access that gives people like me which is a good thing but I do feel that western norms have equally had quite a negative impact on the traditional attitudes of Nigerians and may be sometimes our work ethic. It is a good thing

to be efficient but when you are always looking for a short cut, you will definitely run into trouble. I think Nigerians have become a lot more impatient in the work place…sometimes overlooking detail because they want to move onto the next thing….everybody is in a hurry…"(P.C.3iii)

Participant 16 also highlights the need for caution when it comes to matters of culture however most of his illustration relates to the way people address each other in the context of age or professional hierarchy. Please note that the use of the word 'address' here refers to both oral and written communication. For example he explains that his upbringing has conditioned him to refer to his seniors as "sir" and that type of address is still valued in certain professional circles (e.g. working in an indigenously own firm). Participant 16 also admits that the way workers address each other tends to be a lot more relaxed when working in a multi-national company where he suggested that calling a senior by his first name may be acceptable. According to participant 16, this change in communication decorum also applies to inter company interaction (for example an employee at a multi-national communicating with an employee at an indigenous firm).

6.3 SUMMARY

In the context of participants constructing their own social realities within the work-setting, the importance of organizing narratives, thoughts, expressions and descriptions is conditional to an authentic data collection process. This was achieved here by capturing the very 'voices' of the participants.The application of thematic analysis to organize all such variables enabled the study to present rather 'text-heavy' data in a more constructive format.The purpose of chapters five and six was to review as much of the data as possible so as to highlight key issues that will be addressed in the discussion chapter. In these chapters, discussion of the data was kept to a minimum so as to allow for an intimate appreciation of the results without a pre-occupation with drawing hasty conclusions. The decision to organise the results and discussion in separate chapters was to facilitate a more coherent evaluation of this study's findings. The themes of foreign nationals and technology transfer, identity struggle, ethnicity and westernization provided insight into relevant aspects of the post-colonial debate in the context region. Firstly the discussion around foreign nationals and technology transfer illustrated the disappointment of Nigerian professionals with the promise of transferring

knowledge from foreign staff to indigenous staff. This disappointment contributed to the frustration experienced by Nigerian professionals. The fact that Nigerian workers felt they had to accept the non-transfer of technology also contributed to the sense of a devalued identity. Secondly, identity struggle captured the tensions within the identity processes of Nigerian workers. The tensions were symptoms of unrest in the way Nigerians perceived themselves. This perception was fuelled by certain factors: (i) Nigerians felt Foreign staff looked down on them and this resulted in oppressive emotions and (ii) inspite of their desire for equal opportunity Nigerians conceded to the superiority of foreign staff resulting in the overwhelming influence of a devalued identity.

Thirdly, ethnicity captured key aspects of the cultural substance of Nigerian identity processes. Ethnicity in the workplace was mainly expressed through language and highlighted the intimacy attached to the indigenous identity processes of Nigerians. Although ethnicity facilitated a sense of belonging for all those in the in-group (i.e. members of the same ethnic group), ethnicity was mostly characterized by conflict between groups, which also resulted in feelings of exclusion for members of the out-group (i.e. those from the ethnic minority in any given workplace). Ethnic conflict was attributed to the hierarchies established during the colonial era. Finally, the discussion around westernization illustrated the perceived influence of western norms on the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. The westernization of Nigerian identity processes in the workplace was interpreted through two competing contexts that exhibited positive and negative connotations. The first context related to the voluntary integration of western norms into the self-concept of Nigerians in the workplace. This was best described as hybridity (i.e. the integration of two different cultures/influences in the same self-concept) and appeared to exhibit positive connotations. The positivity was derived from the fact that Nigerians in an effort to enhance their identity processes and work experiences decided to welcome western norms as their own. The second context related to the subtle imposition of western norms on the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace. Although oppressive emotions were not highlighted as a consequence of westernization, there was definitely a negative perception regarding the extent to which Nigerians should integrate western norms into their self-concept and the implications of such an outcome. The concept of neo-colonialism was used to describe this context. All four themes were used to

illustrate different dimensions of the post-colonial debate in this study. The following chapter will provide a discussion of the central issues that emerged from the themesreviewed in chapters five and six. This will then be complimented by an effort to provide theoretical and empirical contribution to management literature and an acknowledgment of implications/recommendations for future research in this area.

Chapter Seven
Discussion

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the main body of literature that constitutes both areas selected for this study (social identity and post-colonialism), and the emergent themes from the primary research, this chapter aims to focus on the central points of significance for this study's findings. To organise the factors discovered from primary research, this chapter will begin by identifying the elements of each theory that will be used to draw linkages between them. The objective of drawing linkages is to provide a new holistic insight into identity processes in regions like Nigeria that accounts for the historical, social and modern influences of social identity and post-colonialism. Before drawing this linkage, this chapter will provide a brief recap of key elements of each area that have been used for primary research in this study.

7.2 SELECTED FEATURES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Chapter two provided a discussion of several aspects of social identity theory starting from man's first social discovery (Mead & Thomas, 1934) and established desire for social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), to the idea of group identification (Tolman, 1943) and optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991). The core concepts of social identity that were chosen for review in this study include: "the prototype", and "cohesion, solidarity and harmony"; these concepts constitute the essence of social identity theory. In looking at the study objective, these concepts were chosen for assessment in primary research. Figure 7.1 captures these selected areas:

Fig. 7.1 Selected features of social identity theory

The prototype

Cohesion, Solidarity & Harmony
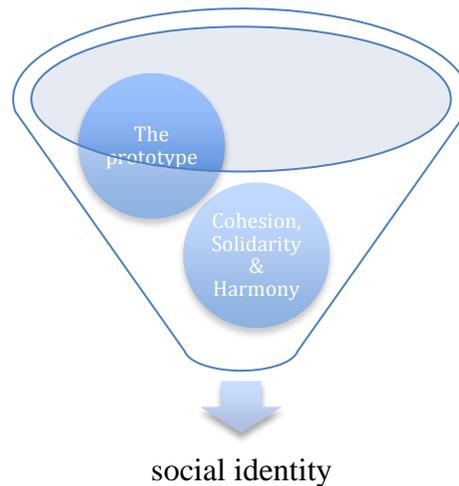
social identity

These two areas have been selected because of their importance to social identity theory. The prototype is foundational to the strength of social identification because the easier it is for group members to articulate the prototype, the easier it is for them to identify with the values or norms that are most central to the group (Hogg & Terry, 2000). On that basis, in the primary research of this study, the aim was to establish whether Nigerians are able to articulate a group prototype that guides their social identification processes. The openness of this study also accommodates for the likelihood that group members may not consciously be able to articulate a prototype, but may indirectly or subconsciously describe the prototype that guides how they socialise and ultimately identify with others in the workspace. Cohesion, solidarity and harmony are very much central to the idea of social identification as these phenomena facilitate the strength or intensity of the group once prototype clarity (i.e. the ability of ingroup members to articulate a clear prototype) is achieved and group status (i.e. how the group compares to other groups) is favourable (Turner, 1982). Therefore if a clear prototype inspires every member to not only join the ingroup but also remain part of the ingroup, cohesion, solidarity and harmony are an expression of the group members' decision to respond favourably to the group prototype and the group's overall status and ideals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1982).

7.3 SELECTED FEATURES OF POST-COLONIAL THEORY

Chapter three provided an insight into the breadth and depth of post-colonialism. Its use in this study is derived from the history of the context region. While there are several informative aspects of the theory that provide an insightful narrative for the context region, the objective of this study is to isolate the most central features of the theory that are relevant to identity processes. As a result, this study focuses on the power dimension and how this manifests through social formations (i.e. ethnic/racial identities and status) and struggle (i.e. dialectics of the colonized mind). Figure 7.2 was designed to provide a recap of these factors.

Fig. 7.2 Selected features of post - colonial theory
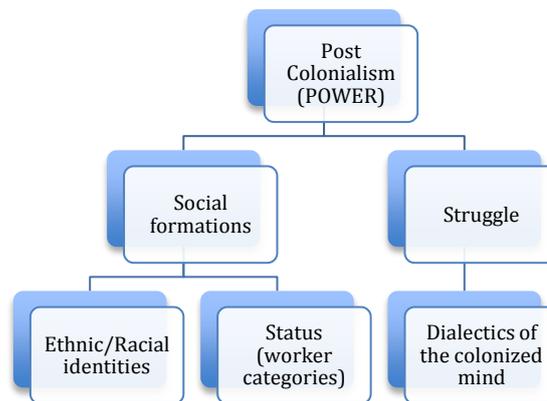
As suggested by prominent scholars of post-colonialism (e.g. Ekeh, 1975; Sen, 2006; Osaghae. 2006; Ocheni & Nwankwo 2012; Mizuno & Okazawa 2009; Oyeshile 2004) and post-colonial theory (e.g. Ulus, 2014; Banerjee and Prasad, 2008; Long and Mills, 2008; Banerjee, 2000), post-colonial discourse in regions like Nigeria has much to do with social formations and struggle but it mainly centres around power. For this reason, power is highlighted in the above diagram to embody the most central characteristic of the post-colonial debate. Power cuts across every aspect of post-colonial theory. Whether culture, values, norms or an actual administration is being considered, the concept of power is fundamental. Post-colonialism essentially refers to the influence of one culture or administration on another and the oppressive state of the colonised. In summary, the 'coloniser' has power over the 'colonised'.

There are power dynamics evident in the Nigerian context. However the concept becomes subtler when brought into the current environment. Power in the current workspace would suggest the presence of an overwhelming influence over identity processes or work experiences. This influence results in emotions that are reflective of colonial times because of a sense of oppression and denied freedom and control. For the purpose of this study, any factor that makes Nigerians develop such emotions or feelings acts as an illustration of this power dynamic. The idea that a modern world represents a more western world is integral to the discourse. The idea of a more western world, elicits thoughts of neo-colonialism or perpetuated colonialism because a world characterised by the dominance of western values or norms draws parallels with the ideology of colonialism (Banerjee, 2000). In other words, if a Nigerian feels that his/her workspace is becoming more western, this increases the probability that he/she may perceive this process to be a domination of his or her own personal indigenous values. Such domination may potentially evoke emotions or thoughts of the power dynamic that favours the external western influence over the oppressive state of the Nigerian identity. If a Nigerian feels his/her own identity is becoming westernised, he/she may consider that to be reminiscent of colonialism.

Social formations and struggle were selected to represent offshoots of the power dynamic embodied in post-colonialism. These particular features have been selected to find out to what extent post-colonialism informs identity processes in the chosen context. There are two types of social formations to explore, each granting the opportunity to draw parallels with the colonial era. Struggle refers to the idea that the mind is in conflict over perceptions of reality and ultimately identity (Sen, 2006). The idea that an individual navigates life experiences with a vision of the future based upon current freedoms (Satre, 1963) and past influences results in a mental struggle. This conflict comprises of various considerations, some more daunting than others. For instance "as a Nigerian am I really free of the white man's influence?" Given the legacy of colonialism, "is the white man still in charge?""If my identity is largely informed by colonial influences, does that suggest a perpetuation of colonialism?""Did colonialism ever end?" The ultimate goal of this chapter is to draw a linkage between social identity theory and post-colonial theory so that a new perspective into identity processes can be made possible for people that emanate from a developing country work context.

7.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Empirical Contribution

The research philosophy of social construction facilitated an approach where interviewees (participants) reproduced their own social realities thereby generating themes that could be analysed for meaning and texture. Having discussed all the themes and reviewed numerous extracts from the interview process, this section aims to address the central issues that emerged by tackling each research question. Recall that the premise of this study is to explore identity construction in the developing economy context using social identity theory and post-colonialism. Each research question is aimed at developing better understanding of the developing economy context.

Research Question One:

To what extent can social identity theory be used to interpret/explain the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace?

a. How can the prototypeand cohesion, solidarity and harmony be used to interpret the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace?

It was evident from the data thatNigerians do have a propensity to attach significance to group identification. The strongestgroupings were those whose membership did not rest on personal achievement (Margalit and Raz, 1990). Such groupings included ethnicity, race, workgroups, employment category (i.e. employee or contract staff). Although the data also revealed that by feeding into the status driven norms of Nigerians, employment hierarchies triggeredgroup identification, the strongest forms of group identification emerged from groups where to a large extent the members did not determine membership. In such cases, members had to accept the group they were assigned to (e.g. membership in the contract staff group was not determined by the members but by the employer during the recruitment process, membership in the foreign staff group was not determined by the members but by the race they were born into and the employer's recruitment process). While there is accommodation in contemporary social identity theory (e.g. Hogg & Terry, 2000) for social identities that are birthed from these types of group memberships, they challenge more traditional perspectives of social identity theory, which emphasise the capacity of an individual to select the groups he/she wants to identify with. While it may be argued that one's fate

to be part of a group that he/she did not choose himself/herself does not mean such an identity will be upheld, it does expose the reality that such membership was not entirely his/her choice (Margalit and Raz, 1990).In other words, a social identity birthed from one's ethnic group may be differentiated from a social identity birthed from senior managers in the customs and shipping department. Although the employer contributes to the formation of both types of social identities by recruiting individuals who would eventually adopt such identities, in many ways the latter of these social identities hingesmore on the actions of the prospective group members (i.e. to be a member of this group, one has to excel at their profession and attain promotion to senior management). This is in total contrast to the former of these social identities, which hinges more on the ethnic culture one inherits from birth. Nonetheless the way social identities manifest does not influence their importance to social identity theory. For instance both types of social identities described here are just as important in contemporary social identity theory.The data revealed that group identification is integral to Nigerian's in the work context of the oil and gas industry. For instance, recall the accounts of participant 4 on page 136/137 and participant 5 on pages 139 and 140. Both participants stressed the importance of group identification to Nigerians in their workplace. The emphasis on group identification to avoid isolation and uncertainty is consistent with the uncertainty reduction hypothesis (Hogg & Abrams, 1993b; Hogg & Mullin, 1999).

The data revealed that ethnicity is a strong form of group identification in the Nigerian context. Even though there were references to a more western environment in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria, majority of the participants emphasized the importance of ethnicity and the value derived from such groupings. As a result ethnicity was a strong driver of harmony and uncertainty reduction for in-group members. Furthermore there was also an emphasis on the importance of informal networks because of the nature of the socio-economic environment. For instance, recall the account of participant 5 on pages 139 and 140. Participant 5 made reference to Nigerians being "too ethnic" but the extent to which Nigerians depend on each other because of the absence of welfare institutions and job opportunities. Again the emphasis on group identification due to socio-economic instability further highlights the importance of uncertainty reduction (e.g. Hogg & Mullin, 1999). The social reality portrayed by participant 5 illustrates

attributes of group identification (i.e. cohesion, solidarity and harmony) that are highlighted by social identity theory (Hogg & Turner, 1987).

In relation to prototype clarity, the data revealed that in some cases the prototypes werebased on qualities that group membersconsidered as either idealistic or typical of groups (e.g. the 'influential' Nigerian staff and the non-English speaking white staff each represented prototypicality based on group member ideals and central tendencies respectively). This is consistent with paradigms of social identity theory, which suggests that prototypicality may be based on either the 'central tendencies' or 'ideal attributes' of group members (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). In the context of the ideal attributes of the group, recall the account of participant 9 on page 149 and participant 12 on page 150. Both participants provided their interpretation of a positive prototype. From their perspective, the positive prototype demonstrated 'loyalty and respect' to fellow colleagues and superiors. The data also revealed an emphasis on discretion when handling grievances, for instance recall the account of participant 36 on page 151 who denounced the action of 'bashing your employer' because of the speed with which information is disseminated in the workplace. Also in the context of ideal attributes, the importance of 'building relationships' emerged from the data. For instance recall the accounts of participants 41 and 44 on pages 154 and 155. However, the most engaging illustration of the prototype was arguably provided by participant 33 who highlighted the importance of Nigerians demonstrating excellence in their work and being proactive to 'sell the Nigerian culture' to foreigners.

In the context of central tendencies, participant 10 provided a practical illustration of what makes workers in the legal department peculiar (see extract on page 150). The central tendencies perspective on prototypicality also provided some negative interpretations. For instance participant 9 on page 149 highlighted that the prototype that is based on ethnicity or class is negative. Based on such an account by participant 9, the interpretation of ethnicity and class here is understood to be characterized by intense ethnic identification which results in Nigerians using language and their bond of ethnicity to exclude outgroup members in discussions and daily experiences in the workplace. According to social identity theory, efforts to strengthen group identification will effectively intensify the exclusion of outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hogg & Terry, 2000). From the data, ethnicity was a strong driver of

harmony amongst in-group members (i.e. members of the same ethnic group) in the workplace. Furthermore, recall that every reference to 'class' by the participants in the data actually relates to 'status' and the idea of status driven norms facilitating intense competition amongst Nigerians. Undoubtedly, status driven norms emerged from the data as a dominant theme for social identification in the chosen work context. For instance the account of participant 39 on page 162 characterises Nigerians as being 'very class-conscious'. A more accurate interpretation of this statement is that Nigerians are 'very status-conscious'. The issues of class or status are synonymous with group identification in regions like Nigeria and very much attributed to the historical roots of such regions, thereby indicating a relationship between social identification and post-colonialism (Oyeshile, 2004; Osaghae, 2006). The accounts of participant 7 on pages 164 and 165 also illustrate the prevalence of status driven norms that manifests in the employee staff and contract staff scenario. Status driven norms are further highlighted by participants 9 and 14 on page 166 when they discount the issue of status driven work experiences for employee staff and contract staff in the foreign context (e.g. Houston, Texas in the United States where their employer is headquartered). Both participants 9 and 14 conclude such status driven experiences to be a reflection of the Nigerian context. There are several references to status driven norms amongst Nigerians and this seemingly not only affects how Nigerians compare themselves to each other but also how they may compare themselves to foreigners. Such comparisons not only inform discussions relating to group identification but also post-colonialism in a region like Nigeria.

In the context of social identity theory, the idea of one Nigerian grouping comparing themselves to another Nigerian grouping is consistent with the principle of social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1985). Furthermore the idea of Nigerians comparing themselves to foreigner is also consistent with social identity theory. In this context, the data revealed that the group status of Nigerians was negative because foreigners were perceived to have a higher status. The data revealed that this higher status resulted in incidents of 'bullying'. The issue of bullying in this context is reminiscent of colonialism so will be discussed further on the second research question of this study. As suggested by social identity theory, this negative status hindered the group strength of Nigerians in the workspace as participants did not appear enthusiastic about identifying with other Nigerians when being compared to foreigners. Even

though, several participants referred to the benefit of being able to share experiences with other Nigerians regarding their encounters with foreigners, most participants took more of an individual stance when being compared to foreigners; recall the account of participant 23 on page 190. This individual stance represented their interpretation of a harsh reality, which suggested that Nigerians did not stand up for each other when tensions arose with foreigners. This enables reflection on recent research discussed in chapter two. Escartin et al. (2013), propose that workplace bullying can be understood as a product of social identities at work. In this case the Nigerian staff social identities appeared to be much weaker than the white staff social identities. The strength of the white staff social identities is what facilitates the bullying described by participants. Furthermore, the choice to active an individual identity in such contexts also appeared to be an attempt to differentiate themselves from other Nigerians who they felt lacked the courage to stand up for themselves or project positive identities to foreigners. The inclination to switch from the social identity as a Nigerian staff to an individual identity was an outcome of the post-colonial discourse which illustrated how instances reminiscent of colonialism adversely affected the propensity of Nigerians to adopt certain social identities (e.g. the Nigerian staff social identity). This scenario will be discussed on the next research question.

The accounts of participant 26 on pages162/163 and participants 27 and 28 on page 163 highlight the segregation experienced by Nigerian workers in relation to their foreign colleagues in the chosen work context. In particular, the account of participant 29 on pages 163/164 stresses the status related benefits afforded to foreign staff that supposedly has little to do with competency and more to do with the colour of their skin. Ofcourse the issue of status manifesting in racial identification processes will be addressed more thoroughly under post-colonialism where racial identification can be best explored and understood.While the idea of typical and ideal attributes are consistent with the characteristics of 'central tendencies' and 'group ideals' of social identity theory, further analysis of the data revealed certain groupings from the interviews and these are articulated briefly in table 7.1. These groupings were not always direct products of the participants' responses but sometimes emerged while they were relaying their views and experiences. This is consistent with social constructionism, which was described in chapter four as contributing to this study's methodology. Recall that through social constructionism, data collection and analysis is

implemented by allowing participants to relay their social realities with their own voices (Burr, 1995). From the data analysis process, there were two key groupings: formal (i.e. workgroups) and informal groups. Beyond this broad classification, lay the following types of groups: see Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Discovered groupings from primary research

Category	Type of Group	Group Attributes	Prototypical qualities
Formal	Workgroups	Membership is based on employees performing their respective duties within a micro-system designed to complement the overall company objective. Members are expected to embrace group identity (e.g. being punctual, working late etc.)	Be social, identify with the leader by emulating his or her identity processes, embrace group norms as much as possible (e.g. when the leader works late, if it can be helped you work late too).
	Employees	Membership is acquired once you are employed as a permanent staff.	Embrace the company culture; be conscious of your entitlements; be proud of position in the company, perform satisfactorily to meet required standards of performance review, fit into your respective workgroups to facilitate synergy with co-workers of different categories (e.g. contract staff)
	Contract staff	Membership is acquired once you are employed temporarily as a contract staff.	Performing satisfactorily so that your contract is renewed; fitting into your respective workgroup to facilitate synergy with co-workers (e.g. employees), this increases chances of a renewed contract; be aware of your limitation to entitlements in order to manage your expectations.
	Foreign staff (expatriates)	Membership is acquired once you are a foreigner employed on expatriate duty.	Provide superior knowledge and expertise; socialise with other expats.
	Indigenous staff	Membership is acquired once you are a permanent employee who is Nigerian.	Embody the idiosyncratic qualities of being a Nigerian (e.g. the culture of respecting authority, being social to colleagues, with particular emphasis on those within your workgroup).
Informal	Employees with foreign education	Membership is acquired once you have studied in a western country.	Exhibit a high degree of professionalism to reflect foreign training. Speak with good English phonetics. Personal family refers to nuclear family and so family responsibilities and relationships focus on the nuclear unit.

		Membership is acquired once you studied in Nigeria.	Apply appropriate Nigerian norms to enhance your personal and group profile. Maximise knowledge and awareness of context surroundings to enhance work experiences. Personal family refers to nuclear and extended family so responsibilities and relationships focus on a much wider network of individuals (including some who may not be blood relatives).
Informal	Employees with local education		
	Religious groups	Membership is based on employees who attended the same church	Socialise with other members both at work and at church, demonstrate religious values in the workplace as much as possible, exhibit pride in beliefs by using expressions of faith in daily conversation (e.g. saying "we thank God")
	Ethnic groups	Membership is based on awareness of and identification with own ethnic group.	Embrace ethnicity both in and outside the workplace; speak ethnic dialect with colleagues from the same group to strengthen bond with other members; enjoy the benefits of belongingness through mediums like language; do not be put off by outgroup members who dislike native dialects being spoken in the workplace; use language to exclude outgroup members when it suits ingroup members
	The Influencial group	Membership is available to Nigerian workers who are able to demonstrate positive prototypical attributes.	Demonstrate loyalty and respect to fellow Nigerian colleagues; through excellent performance and an engaging personality acquire respect from foreign staff; be proactive about selling the Nigerian culture to foreign staff; accommodate necessary aspects of western influences in your self-concept but also retain core indigenous values that are both compatible with the modern world and equally epitomise the positive aspects of your indigenous identity (i.e. become a hybrid); prioritise building fruitful relationships that will add value to your self-concept and work experiences and ambitions (i.e. be an effective social networker)

- Employees
- Contract staff
- Foreign staff (expatriates also known as "expats")
- Indigenous staff
- Employees with foreign higher education
- Employees with local higher education
- Workgroups
- Religious groups (e.g. employees who attended the same church)
- Ethnic groups
- The Influential group

Even though other groups (e.g. sports groups, political interest groups) also emerged from the interviews, the groupings noted above constitute the most established groupings depicted by the participants. From these established groupings, the following emerged to be most prominent: indigenous staff, foreign staff (expatriates), ethnic groups, contract staff, workgroups and the influential groups. The participants provided descriptions of the groups while constructing their social realities. The prototypical features listed are largely from what the research revealed about the groupings that existed in the participants' workspace. As can be seen from the list, the perceived depths of the group varied from one group to another based on how ingroup and outgroup members perceived the group attributes or prototypical qualities. For example, some participants described employees as exhibiting an identity of "entitlement" and "superiority" over the contract staff. Such qualities were interpreted to constitute the group prototype for that particular group. Aside from the negative connotation attached to ethnicity by participant 9 on page 150, ethnic groupings were also used to describe stereotypes of different ethnicities,and these may be used to establish group prototypes (based on central tendencies) for the respective ethnic groupings (e.g. the Yoruba man being domineering) and employees who are enthusiastic about their ethnicity. Based on social identity theory, it is also a medium to facilitate ethnic social identities in the workplace (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Hogg and Abrams, 1988).Although the data revealed that ethnicity fuelled strong group identification, the link that emergedbetween ethnic hierarchies and post-colonialism was more prominent. For this reason, ethnicity will be addressed under post-colonialism. This is yet another illustration of the relationship between social identification and post-colonialism which will be explored

later in this chapter. The prototypes emerged from interpreting the descriptions provided by the participants of different groupings. Intergroup dynamics were evident from the data as certain ingroup members expressed solidarity to their groups and effectively differentiated themselves from outgroup members. This is consistent with the social comparison component of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979). As discussed in chapter three, the dynamics of intergroup behaviour can be used to illustrate how competition and discrimination can be propagated both consciously and unconsciously. An individual may be part of one in-group but then part of the out-group in another context. In the short history of studies of intergroup relations, it has been well proven that competition is not needed to create discrimination between in and out groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to Tajfel (1979), the concept of intergroup behaviour is universal. Furthermore, an important cognitive consequence of this pervasiveness is that the articulation of an individual's social world in terms of its categorisation into groups becomes a guide for his/her conduct in situations to which some criteria of intergroup division can be meaningfully applied. In this context, Tajfel (1979) highlights that 'meaningful' does not necessarily have to be 'rational'. For example, even though the categories of "employee staff" or "contract staff," are predetermined on employment into the company, the choice to actively identify with that category is up to the individual.

A rivalry between the employee staff and contract staff was evident and fuelled by their identity processes. This was further perpetuated by the way they felt their employer perceived them. The participants (e.g. 7 and 11) who were contract staff embodied an identity that was described as "the underdog". The contract staff resented being overlooked, while employees demonstrated an identity that embodied pride and entitlement. The general perception of employees by contract staff was that they were 'proud' (for instance is the account provided by participant 23 on page 168), while the general perception of contract staff by employees was that they tended to exercise a lot of 'self-pity' (for instance is the account provided by participant 22 on page 169). Arguably, the "pride" aspect of the "employee staff" identity was not wholly fuelled by a sense of superiority over their contract staff colleagues, but more by a sense of accomplishment in the context of the wider socio-cultural environment in Nigeria where employees of oil and gas firms are admired and even envied. Furthermore "the self-pity" aspect of the "contract staff" was not wholly fuelled by a sense of self-pity

but a genuine frustration with their work conditions. Not surprisingly, the sense of entitlement, which employees embodied in their workplace identities increased their propensity to embrace the organisational identity much more than their contract staff colleagues. This is an illustration of the positive relationship between group and organizational identification and positive organizational outcomes (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008; Haslam, 2004). The data revealed that the way employees felt their employer perceived them enhanced their desire to identify with the organization ((Mael & Ashforth, 1992). This was in contrast to the way contract staff felt the employer perceived them. Contract staff tended to see their jobs merely as a means to an 'end'. That 'end' comprised of either worthwhile experience which would enable them seek 'permanent' employment elsewhere or just categorizing their 'contract' position as merely a 'better than average' source of income. This applied even though the employment history of a contract worker was considerably higher than that of an employee worker. Some employee participants had been with the organisation less than four years but presented a stronger sense of organisational identity than contract staff participants who had been with the same employer for over four years. The employees were more likely to see their position within their company as a career than their contract staff counterparts. This illustrates how factors like job security, career progression affect the extent to which an individual will identify with an organization (e.g. Riketta, 2005; van Dick, 2004). In addition employee staff appeared to derive more job satisfaction from their positions in the company. This was illustrated by their efforts to portray positive social realities even when discussing less favourable factors (e.g. racial prejudice).This is consistent with the work of Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, Weckin & Moltzen (2006) cited by Escartin et al. (2013) which explains how organizational identity is positively associated with health and wellbeing. Note that all the contract staff expressed the unlikelihood of experiencing a transition from contract staff status to employee staff status. This was said to be the case regardless of employment history with the employer in question. One contract staff lamented that staff had been in the category for over five years.

The consensus amongst contract staff was to manage one's expectations and to make the most of that category. This perspective fosters the survivalist mentality. The result is an underwhelming perception of employment within the socio-cultural environment (i.e. ultimately work is a means to an end, that end is satisfying one's economic needs

and the needs of a wider network ranging from the nuclear family to informal relationships). The constraints that contract staff experienced in their quest to integrate into their work environment illustrate the importance of workers being able to identify with their employer and implications this has for worker commitment and morale. This relates to the feeling of 'oneness' or 'belongingness' that workers have with their employer (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The data revealed that employee staff identified more strongly with the organizational identity than contract staff because of the degree of integration afforded to them. This fuelled the underwhelming perception that contract staff developed through their work experiences.More importantly for the contract staff, such constraints affect the degree to which a worker will identify with the organizational identity. Such a finding is consistent with the work of Perez, Rodriguez del Bosque, (2014) and Lammers, Atouba, Carlson (2013). Some of the participants played down their employee status and described how they identified equally as well with contract staff and employee staff. However others conceded the dichotomy of entitlement the organisational structure afforded them over their contract staff colleagues. Although on the face of it, categorisations may appear to fuel discrimination or friction in an environment, Tajfel (1979) concludes that an undifferentiated social environment makes little sense. Intergroup categorisation is said to be useful for providing social order and this is consistent with the purpose of social identity theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Interestingly, the components of the discourse that guide Nigerians on how and to what extent they identify with their categories or groupings is consistent with the principles of the post-structuralist perspective. In the context of this study, such a perspective is embodied in the discussions that workers have regarding their priorities; the expectations placed upon them by their employer, their superiors and their workgroups; their sense of security or insecurity in their work environment; their methods of assimilating culture (e.g. contemporary, contextual, organisational) and their overall perception of daily work experiences, are examples of what post-structuralists take into account when interpreting identity (e.g. Foucault, 1972, 1988; Derrida, 1976; Baudrillard, 1983,1984). The post-structuralist perspective nonetheless emphasises the inevitability of perpetual identity re-construction. In the context chosen for this study (the workplace of the oil and gas sector of Nigeria), contextual shifts resulting in changes to the identity processes of contract staff and employee staff would trigger re-

construction. For example, if the separate entrances denoting hierarchy were abolished or if contract staff workers start to receive higher comparable pay as seen in certain industries in countries where the lucrative nature of temporary contracts sometimes compensates for the lack of job security, thereby enhancing fulfilment and overall self-esteem. Although the existence of these categories facilitates better understanding of identity processes, the premise for these categories is of course justified by organisational policy, which is not explored by this study. Although Table 7.1 illustrates the types of groupings that this research identified from the data, there was evidence of a new type of prototype. Recall the importance of the prototype to group identification as prescribed by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hogg & Turner, 1987). This prototype may be considered unconventional as it does not identify with a particular group or groups but rather expresses social identity by socialising with different groups without substantial commitment to any particular one. From the interviews, this type of prototype emerges from the post-colonial discourse with particular reference to how identity processes seem to be perceived in a westernised environment. This type of prototype has been described as one who "social networks". From this perspective, the prototype is concerned with building fruitful relationships, and not so much with group identification; recall the illustrations of participants 41 and 44 on pages 155 and 156. Relationships that enhance fulfilment, facilitate feelings of belongingness and sometimes aid career progression are examples of the sort of relationships that emerged from the data. Although the social networker may not identify intensely with any particular groups there is still an emphasis on family ties and the preservation of core Nigerian values (such as respecting elders and authority figures, generally being social and maintaining a communal spirit). This type of prototype can be interpreted as being the "modern Nigerian" who embraces the necessary western values and norms to integrate into the global community while retaining as much as possible of his/her indigenous identity. This type of prototype can also be interpreted through the concept of hybridity (in this context, hybridity refers to the idea of a Nigerian incorporating both foreign and indigenous influences within his or her self-concept), which will be addressed under post-colonial theory mainly through the perspective provided by Sen (2006).

In summary, when applying social identity theory to the Nigerian context, group identification is revealed to be an integral aspect of identity processes in the

workplace.The data reveals that Nigerians have a strong propensity to attach significance to group identification regardless of whether the social identities are acquired entirely by choice or not.The reasons for this orientation towards group identification range from 'enjoying the company of others', 'valuing the communal spirit' to 'having a greater purpose beyond one's immediate needs' (recall the accounts of participant 4 on page 137/138, participant 5 on pages 140 and 141 and participant 6 on page 142). The importance of social identities in the Nigerian context is also attributed to the combining effect of two desires: a desire to reduce uncertainty and insecurity by engaging with the 'fate' of a group. The data reveals that the Nigerian context is characterized by a fear of uncertainty and insecurity, which is largely associated with 'isolation'.This fear is facilitated by a harsh socio-economic environment that is characterized by intense ethnic diversity, strong ethnic identification, dominant status driven norms and a lack of employment opportunities. Consistent with social identity theory, the data reveals that prototypicality represents the yardstick by which Nigerians are able to articulate the 'central tendencies' or 'ideal' attributes of a group. From the results, prototypicality in the formal and informal groupings was characterized by the central tendencies of the group and the ideal attributes of the group respectively. For example, in a formal group like the contract staff, prototypicality required members to be aware of their limitation to entitlements thereby managing their expectations. In an informal group like 'the influential' groupings, prototypicality required members to accommodate the necessary aspects of western influences in their self-concept but also retain core indigenous values that are both compatible with the modern world and equally epitomise the positive aspects of their indigenous identity (i.e. become a hybrid). This is consistent with Sen's (2006) interpretation of hybridity.The data revealed that Nigerians are conscious of prototypicality and its importance to group prosperity as prescribed by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Hogg & Turner, 1987). The supporting concept of cohesion, solidarity and harmony engages with prototypicality to facilitate group strength. The surrounding environment of the Nigerian context is characterized by historical factors, which influence social identification processes. Due to the strong link between factors like intergroup conflict, ethnicity and status with colonialism in regions like Nigeria, social identification cannot be fully understood in the absence of such factors.

Research Question Two:

To what extent does post-colonialism, inform the identity of Nigerian workers in the chosen sector and region?

> a. How can "power", "dialectics of the colonized mind" and "social formations" be used to interpret the identity of Nigerians in the workplace?

In the context of post-colonialism, the central issues are related to social formations/structures, dialectics and the recurring theme of power. These social formations attributed to the colonial era manifested through the employee staff-contract staff dynamic, the foreign worker (expatriate)-indigenous worker dynamic and the ethnic hierarchies. Although two of these social formations excluded foreign workers, the dynamic that existed between each party was consistent with the notion that Nigerians subconsciously perpetuate class-consciousness in the form of status driven norms, which has been attributed to the colonial era by several post-colonial theorists (e.g. Ekeh, 1975, Ekanola, 2006; Oyeshile, 2004; Mizuno & Okazawa, 2009). The idea of employee staff feeling superior to contract staff and ethnic rivalry did not include a foreign dimension but they reflected the status driven norms that theorists have argued is one of the consequences of colonialism. As already mentioned under the analysis of social identification in this study, participant 39 on page 163 provided one of the most vivid illustrations of this realitywhen he emphasized, "Nigerians are…class conscious!" The expatriate-indigenous worker dynamic is considerably more explicit in its post-colonial discourse. The views and emotions demonstrated by some of the participants highlighted that there is a sense of colonialism being perpetuated by the role expatriates play in the context organisations. This sense can be traced first to evidence of segregation along racial identities. Again, recall the accounts of participants 26, 27 and 28 on page 164. In their social constructions, all three participants emphasise that the 'whites' associate with themselves and the 'blacks' associate with themselves. While this sense is not factual because the sample is of a very modest size, it is notable. The sense that colonialism is being perpetuated has nothing to do with a colonial administration or with apartheid but rather with experiences, which arouse feelings in Nigerians that are reflective of colonialism. Recall the account of participant 29 on pages 165 who expresses frustration with the perception that less qualified whites are

employed and trained up to manage or supervise more qualified blacks. In the extract, participant 29 insists that the situation is less to do with 'competency' and more to do with the white man maintaining 'control'.

There are several intense illustrations provided by participants that captured the overall dominance of white staff over black staff. For instance the accounts of participants 1 on pages 173 and 174, participant 29 on page 174, participants 28 and 35 on page 175 and participant 36 on page 176 reflect the perceived injustice of the dominance of white staff over black staff in matter of career progression. The summarised feelings of these participants were characterized by the fact that they felt white staff are given preferential career progression because of the colour of their skin and not because they are more competent. Such feelings were mirrored by several participants and illustrated the oppressive emotions experienced by Nigerians in the chosen context.Theaccounts of participants 24 and 26 on page 178 regarding humiliating experiences in meetings and the account of participant 22 on page 183 regardingthe 'adoration' shown to white foreign staff provided illustrations of this reality.Participants 24 and 26 both recount experiences of being overpowered and bullied in meetings because foreign staff were not receptive to their contributions. The accounts of participants 25 and 30 on page 177 highlighted the extremity of existing tensions. In particular, the fact that participant 30 felt that the 'white man sees the black man as a black monkey' is a crude representation of the extent to which the oppressive emotions may be affecting Nigerians in the chosen work context. The account of participant 23 on pages 178 and 179 provides an illustration of how a Nigerian employee felt bullied by a group of on-looking white staff after a meeting where she had disagreed with one of them had adjourned. As mentioned when addressing research question one, such instances illustrate findings that facilitate reflection on with the work of Escartin, Ulrich, Zapf, Schluter and van Dick (2013). In this instance, the superior strength of white staff's social identities resulted in their dominance over Nigerian staff's social identities. This dominance resulted in Nigerian staff being bullied. Irrespective of any harmony that may have existed between Nigerian staff through mediums like ethnicity, the strength of their group identification diminished when faced with situations that were reminiscent of colonialism.Although the strength of social identification is illustrated in the example cited here, to some extent this instance challenges the findings of Escartin et al. (2013) because the Nigerian staff in question chooses to adopt their individual identity rather

than their social identity. Therefore this study revealed that in cases reminiscent of colonialism, the capacity of social identification to satisfactorily act in the interests of in-group members (e.g. Nigerian staff) is somewhat impaired.

Admittedly there is no record of the white staff saying or doing anything offensive to her besides staring and speaking in their language amongst themselves. However, according to participant 23, she felt them staring at her and sensed they were talking about her. This of course was not the sentiment of every participant as some were indifferent about the role of foreign workers. However the objective of this study was to uncover to what extent post-colonialism influences the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace so the discovery of such experiences is a reflection of the post-colonial influence. Furthermore, the expatriate-indigenous worker dynamic is also an illustration of how struggles are informing identity processes in the chosen context. The thoughts and emotions expressed by many of the participants illustrated a frustration with being 'helpless' and yet perpetuating that state. For example the fact that there was a discourse amongst some participants that reflected the injustice of foreign workers dominating their career prospects and thus work experiences; there was also an admission amongst other participants suggesting the indigenous systems were not competent enough to succeed independently. Some even declared that colonialism should have lasted longer. The accounts of participant 10 on pages 180/181, participant 23 on page 182, and participant 17 on page 188 are illustrations of this sentiment. These factors illustrate a conflict in the way Nigerians may perceive themselves and each other in the workplace. This outcome reflects a reluctant submission to a system and authority based on a perceived sense of helplessness and a somewhat flawed self-perception that highlights the ambiguity of the dialectics of the colonised mind that Sen (2006) speaks of in his publication "Identity and Violence". Some of the participants suggested that the best context to explore colonialism in the context of Nigeria would be in an organization that is owned/run by indigenes of the colonizing country (i.e. the British) because then Nigerians are more likely to be conscious of their colonial past and as a result sensitive to all aspects of that colonizer-colonised dynamic (an example of such an illustration was provided by participant 7 on page 189). This suggestion sounded plausible because one could expect that the feelings Nigerians may have regarding colonialism would be directed at people they could relate to their colonisers the most. On the contrary, the data revealed that the influence of colonialism was not

isolated to British staff but rather characterized by references to 'the white man' implying all Caucasian staff irrespective of origin. Inparticular, the data revealed that the intensity of oppressive emotions that were reminiscent of colonialism appeared to be greatest when the context involved white non-English speaking foreigners.

The conflict and tension that existed between foreigners and Nigerians manifested through a breakdown in communication caused by the language barrier. It appeared that Nigerians felt emotions linked to colonialism the most when their foreign superiors were talking about them in their native dialects. The participants (for example the accounts of participants 25 and 30 on page 177) who depicted the most graphic first hand experiences complained about how they would be discussed by their white foreign superiors just because they made a comment or took an action, which they disapproved of. The participants described not only the discussion in a foreign language but just as important the body language, which made it obvious to everyone present that they were being discussed. The feeling of exclusion in such scenarios can certainly be likened to the use of language in ethnicity but the difference with the foreign dimension is the overwhelming sense of helplessness that participants felt because of steep hierarchies and the colonial discourse. According to several accounts, regardless of how humiliated the participants felt, in most cases they did not have the courage to confront their superiors at the time. Neither did they confront them privately after the meetings for fear of how it would affect their work experiences and ultimately job security. Although the above reasons were compelling reasons for in-action amongst Nigerians, the non-response by Nigerians at least collectively further fuelled frustration amongst participants who had first hand experiences of oppressive emotions. For instance, the account of participant 23 on page 191 referred to how 'annoyed' she was with the in-action of Nigerians, especially when Nigerians find themselves in the reverse situation (i.e. when a white person who had reportedly just mis-treated a Nigerian worker happens to walk past a group of Nigerians after a meeting). Furthermore, the frustration expressed towards the identity processes of Nigerians was captured by the way some participants claimed Nigerian staff idolized foreign staff. The accounts of participants 22 and 27 on pages 183 and 184 respectively provided illustrations of the extent to which Nigerian staff disapproved with the decision of their colleagues to revere foreign staff. Overall the account of participant 33 on page 183 provides the most expressive disapproval of the devalued Nigerian identity. His reference to white staff being

'human like us' captured the intensity of his frustration with how he felt Nigerian staff perceived foreign staff.

Ethnic hierarchies as a consequence of colonialism in the post-colonial era were captured by both Nigerian and foreign staff. For instance, the account of participant 16 on page 204 attributed the existing ethnic structures in Nigeria to colonialism. Participant 16 even highlighted the influence of ethnicity on recruitment in multinational organisations. In terms of foreign staff, the accounts of participants 45 and 47 on page 200 emphasised that Nigerians were more interested in identifying with their ethnic groups than their nationality as Nigerians. In fact, both participants described how divisive Nigerians were over ethnicity in team building programmes organized by the employer. According to the participants there always seemed to be competition between ethnicities for status. Foreign participants made references to Nigerians always 'blaming each other' further emphasizing the contentious nature of ethnic relations in the Nigerian context.

In listening to the narratives of participants, it would appear that colonialism refers to an acceptance of foreign cultural norms as one's own due to overwhelming influence. The acceptance of English language as the official language in formal written and verbal communication is a key illustration of this influence and acceptance. Even though there are practical explanations for the use of the English language in the work environments of Nigeria that relate to easier communication amongst a very diverse collection of ethnic tribes, the significance of using the English language cannot be overlooked.

The use of language by colonisers on colonized territories is well documented by historians and theorists of colonialism. For example, the African countries that were colonised by France, have French as their national language. This acceptance of the coloniser's language even after a formal colonial administration is over, indicates that the colonized territory is upholding a key aspect of the colonial legacy. Of course language is only one aspect as there are several other dimensions linked to human life (e.g. sense of clothing, formal and informal institutions, organizational structures and cultures etc.).

In the context of the descriptions provided by participants when they "felt" white foreign workers were discussing them in a derogatory manner right before them, one could argue that part of the frustration expressed by the foreign superiors was the fact that the participants did not emanate from contexts that their originating countries had colonized. In other words, aside from other factors that may have fuelled prejudice or discrimination, the fact that Nigerians did not speak their language exacerbated their feelings towards Nigerians in times of conflict.Such conclusions are particularly logical because although most of the participants did not speak the languages of their employer's originating country, the few that did were better equipped to handle conflict with foreign superiors. The participant who spoke the employer's language still expressed similar experiences of colonial discourse with their superior but felt less victimized because the superiors were not confident enough to talk about her too explicitly in her presence because of the implications that translation would cost them. Furthermore, the participants who worked for white English speaking employers were less conscious of the colonial discourse even though the influence of colonialism was clearly evident in their entire work experiences. For example most participants who worked for white English speaking employers willingly accepted the cultural and organizational norms of their employer as being part of their own. Even though the participants admitted these norms were originally not theirs (i.e. in the pre-colonial era), they willingly accepted that through colonialism, these norms now played a key part in their identity processes (e.g. language, sense of clothing, professional etiquette, organizational structures and norms etc.). There was evidently little attempt to resist the colonial influences in the work environments of white English speaking employers. This acceptance of colonial influences was reinforced by the perception of white English speaking employers by the participants. The participants found white foreign superiors who originated from English speaking countries to be more "easy-going" and "informal" and "pleasant" to work with than those who originated from white non-English speaking countries. An example of this was provided by the account of participant 7 on page 189.

In summary, the data revealed that the influence of post-colonialism on the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace is characterized by a number of factors. First, isthe "oppressive emotions" provoked in Nigerians by their interaction with white foreign staff, particularly white non-English speaking foreign staff. The contexts that

consisted of non-English speaking foreign superiors demonstrated the strongest influence of colonialism on identity processes. This was due to the presence of an overwhelmingly dominant foreign culture and way of life but also the consciousness of this influence by the Nigerian participants (the oppressed). Furthermore, the data revealed that the "oppressive emotions" in Nigerians was exacerbated by their decision to "bottle up" frustration for fear of how it would affect their personal circumstances. The account of participant 35 on page 175 captured the frustration felt by Nigerians who decided not to respond to treatment that was perceived as racially discriminatory. In the account, participant 35 who spoke of how any protest by him would receive grave criticism not just by his immediate family but also extended family and informal networks. This was due to the perceived risk that his protest would present to his job security. According to him, all those who depend on him financially would see it as an act of "pride" and not "principle". The dominance of white social identities over black social identities also resulted in a transition from group identification to individual identification when Nigerians were faced with scenarios reminiscent of colonialism. As mentioned when addressing research question one, the decision by certain Nigerian participants to engage with their individuality exposed their lack of confidence in their Nigerian social identity when faced with the oppression of white staff. According to such participants, Nigerians did not stand up for each other which implied that each individual Nigerian is left to negotiate the best route for their identity processes and work experiences. The data revealed that although the Nigerian participants recognized their Nigerian social identity and highlighted intergroup conflict between white staff (in particular non-English speaking white staff) and Nigerian staff, the pursuit of a positive social identity was based on individual identity processes and not group identity processes. Therefore, post-colonialism ignites the desire for 'self preservation' and not 'group preservation' in Nigerian staff in Nigerian staff (the oppressed) for 'self-preservation' and not 'group preservation' amongst Nigerian staff (the oppressed).

Second, is the dominance of foreign superiors perpetuated by the Nigerians' sense of a devalued identity.The data revealed that inspite of the "proud" stereotypes typically associated with Nigerians; there is still a sense of a devalued identity amongst many Nigerians when they compare themselves to the white man. As explained earlier, this sense of inferiority is fuelled by a lack of confidence in their race and more specifically nationals with matters pertaining to competency, accountability, commitment and

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leadership in the workplace and also an inability to see themselves any differently to the way the white man sees them. This sense of a devalued identity is therefore largely fuelled by Sen's (2006) interpretation of the dialectics of the colonized mind. The data revealed that inspite of the ambitious spirit that facilitates the need to prove themselves as worthy of any task or responsibility ascribed to the white man, the sense of inferiority is exacerbated by the fact that many Nigerians however reluctantly admit the white man's principles, methods and institutions are superior to theirs. Several participants who disapproved of the emphasized reverence many Nigerians paid to white senior staff in the workplace highlighted this fact.

Third is the degree of status driven norms characterized by the participants as class-consciousness which manifested through social formations in the workplace. In particular, social formations along ethnic rivalries have been a prominent area of discussion amongst scholars. Ethnic rivalries were evident in the workplace and most participants strongly felt these formations were attributed to the colonial era. For instance, the dominance of the Yoruba tribe in some work contexts can be attributed to the fact that they were amongst the first ethnic groups to respond well to western education (e.g. Ekanola, 2006; Oyeshile, 2004). Several participants stressed that the Yoruba ethnic group possesses a strong representation in professional contexts as a result of the hierarchical advantage afforded to them during colonialism. The data did also illustrate that the surrounding socio-economic environment influenced the ethnic representation in the work environment. For example companies based in Lagos are more likely to have a strong representation of the Yoruba ethnic group than companies based in Rivers state because Lagos is one of the originating states for the Yoruba ethnic group. On the other hand, companies based in Rivers state had strong representation for ethnic groups that originated from that state. According to several participants who worked in Rivers state, the Igbo and Ikwerre ethnic groups were very influential in their work environment. The influence of the ethnicity in the workplace was consistent with regional representation but more importantly the ethnic rivalries attributed to the colonial era. Although some theorists argue that class-consciousness is an aspect of African identities, which dates back to the pre-colonial era, most scholars argue that ethnic rivalries that exist in Africa are largely a consequence of colonialism (e.g. Ekeh, 1975, Osaghae, 2006).

Finally, in the context of post-colonialism, the findings reveal that there aretwo perspectives of the global integration. One perspective ('a modern world') offers Nigerians a psychological break from the helplessness of a perpetuated colonialism while the other concedes to that very outcome ('neo-colonialism'). The feedback from the interviews reflected that a minority of participants distanced themselves from the post-colonial discourse by making a conscious effort to completely denounce its relevance to their work experiences even though the influence of colonialism is evident in the very social practices and organisational norms that they adhere to (i.e. language, sense of clothing, professional etiquette etc.). Furthermore those who denounced the relevance of colonialism made a conscious effort to embrace the concept of modern values, where the impact of past influences appears to be less relevant. Not surprisingly, the key indicators or symbols of modern society were the role of technology in developing new ways of cultivating relationships and identities and the idea that the world now emphasises unity and uniformity and where diversity no longer implies division but rather variety.

As mentioned earlier, the orientation of identity processes was determined by whether the person in question embraced the idea of neo-colonialism or a modern world. Participants who embraced neo-colonialism tended to be more conscious of colonial influences and thus were more likely to harbor "oppressive emotions" reminiscent of the colonial era. Such a category included those who had either experienced first hand or witnessed others experience various forms of discrimination or racial prejudice. The data revealed that people in this category were more reluctant to embrace the idea of a 'modern' world because they still felt the white man was oppressing their identities. This category mainly refers to the Nigerians who worked with white non-English speaking foreign staff. The symptoms of struggle were very much evident in the identity processes of this category of Nigerians. On the other hand, the data revealed that post-colonialism had a lesser influence on the identity processes of Nigerians who worked alongside white English speaking staff. This category of Nigerians was more willing to embrace the concept of a 'modern world' and made every effort to denounce the influences of colonialism (for instance is the account provided by participant 8 on page 191). The identities of Nigerians in this category demonstrated attributes like contentment, objectivity, accountability and self-assurance. The symptoms of struggle were less evident in the identity processes of this category of Nigerians. Most

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importantly the Nigerians in this category were not only more likely to see themselves as equal to their white colleagues but they also highlighted that their white colleagues treated them with respect. The discourse of Nigerians in this category focused more on the benefits of the modern worldand the opportunities afforded to their identity processes. This ofcourse was in stark contrast to the category described earlier whose discourse focused more on the dangers of westernisation in the form of perpetuated colonialism (e.g. the loss of their indigenous identity and the corruption of their identity processes by secular norms).

Research Question Three:

What kind of relationship can be drawn between social identity and post-colonialism in the context of identity construction for the chosen sector and region?

The findings reveal that the identity processes of Nigerians in the chosen sector arecharacterized by factors that relate to both areas elected for this study. While social identity is an appropriate interpretation of the identity processes of Nigerians, post-colonialism representsan important socio-economic phenomena, which has important consequences for these processes. The data reveals that while each area provides insight into an aspect of identity processes, it is only by considering both areas together that a more holistic understanding can be achieved. Through key concepts like the prototype, cohesion, solidarity and harmony, social identity theory emphasizes the benefits of group identification. Harmony and prototypicality are factors that cut across every aspect of social identity theory. The data revealed that the strongest social identities emerged from groups that had nothing to do with personal achievement. The social identities of group members were integral to their self-concepts. For example ethnicity, race or employee category (i.e. employee staff or contract staff) were central to how Nigerians identified themselves in the workplace and there was little evidence of struggle within these identities. Nigerians did not appear to be in conflict over which ethnic group, race or employee category they were in. They embraced these social identities. This ofcourse is in contrast to the influence of colonialism on identity processes where struggle and power were very much evident in the experiences of Nigerians. Struggle in this context refers to the conflict that Nigerians experience within their self-concept when contending with 'dialectics of the colonized mind'.

Power in this context refers to the experiences that provoked oppressive emotions in Nigerians. Therefore there is contrast between social identity theory and post-colonialism in the context of harmony versus struggle. However the data reveals that there is some overlap between social identity theory and post-colonialism.For instance, the influence of post-colonialism captures social identities attributed to the colonial era. Furthermore prototypicality can be used to capture the identity processes of Nigerians in different categories of post-colonial discourse. For example, as described earlier, the Nigerian who works alongside white non-English speaking colleagues had a tendency to feel oppressed. These feelings reinforced the "devalued identity" that was fuelled by the dialectics of the colonized mind. Based on a group's "central tendencies", such a Nigerian represented the prototypein those settings. On the other hand, based on a group's "ideals", Nigerians in the above category who spoke the language of their foreign colleagues and were able to remain objective about their identity processes represented the prototype in those settings. Therefore aspects of social identity and post-colonialism allow for both contrast and comparison when both theories are considered in the context of this study's results. Figures 7.3 and 7.4 have been designed to provide a summary of the key findings from both areas.

Fig. 7.3 Summary of Findings: Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Significance attached to group identification for sense of purpose, security and camaraderie

Prototypicality in the modern work-setting geared towards social/career networking

Social identities facilitated by attributes that characterize indigenous norms (e.g. loyalty, respect). Ethnicity emerged as major driver of harmony.

Two types of group categories discovered: formal, (e.g contract staff) and informal (e.g influential group)

For the formal group, prototypicality is based on the central tendenciesof the group. For the informal group, prototypicality is based on the ideal attributes of the group

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Fig. 7.4 Summary of Findings: Post-Colonial Theory

Post-Colonial Theory (PCT)

- Oppressive emotions are mostly experienced by Nigerian staff when interacting with white non-English speaking senior staff
- Identity struggle associated with devalued identity and intergroup conflict
- Hybrids are those who have incorporated Nigerian and Western cultures into their self-concept
- Devalued identity is fuelled by dialectics of the colonized mind

Theoretical Contribution

This section will now take steps to explain why interlocking social identity theory (SIT) andpost colonial theory (PCT) is beneficial to understanding identity processes. Social identity represents the type of identification process that is being applied to the context. As was mentioned in chapter two, struggle is recognised adequately in identity theory but it is somewhat neglected in social identity theory. A struggle of identity arises when two or more social identities become salient simultaneously, however this is not sufficiently addressed in social identity theory (Hogg &Terry, 2000). Parallels can be drawn between the struggle of identity that arises from one person having multiple social identities and the struggle that manifests through dialectics of the colonised mind in the context of post-colonialism. Under post-colonial theory, the mental conflict that a colonised mind has to negotiate is effectively an identity struggle. In the context of this study, a Nigerian who struggles with the notion of how the white man perceives him/her represents an identity struggle that arises from the conflict borne out of the dialectics of the colonised mind. Furthermore a Nigerian who denies the influence of colonialism to his/her identity processes is also a reflection of identity struggle. In effect, a Nigerian may be faced with an identity struggle that relates to his social identity or the dialectics of the colonised mind.

The introduction of post-colonial theory into the framework accounts for the struggle that social identity theory overlooks. It may be argued that social identity theory's pre-occupation with "cohesion, solidarity and harmony" overlooks the reality of identity

struggle and its consequences. From the data, there is clearly a strong power dynamic in the identity processes of the context region. Power is both consciously and subconsciously experienced by either, those who feel they have it and those who feel they are subjected to it. The role of power is of course central to post-colonial discourse as the dialectics of the colonised mind relate to the struggle to mitigate the effects of an oppressive power or influence. Due to the fact that post-colonialism is about one culture or way of life dominating another, post-colonialism epitomises the concept of power. Through the lens of post-colonialism, this dynamic of power relates to both the use of it by the colonising force/oppressor and the struggle to contain or overcome it by the colonised or oppressed party. Furthermore, the dynamic of power also relates to its use by social formations that have been attributed to the colonial era (i.e. status based structures and ethnic hierarchies). As mentioned in chapter two on identity, although the concept of power can be related to the theory's discussion of the prototype's (recall the prototype represents the group member that embodies either the central tendencies or idealistic attributes of a group, Hogg & Terry, 2000) influence on the fate of the entire group, the concept of power is somewhat neglected. Although there is mild recognition given to the strength that group identification elicits, there is no indepth consideration of how groups may exercise power or how the prototype may exercise his influence in the group, aside from the fact that the prototype adapts to changes in the group identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

**Fig. 7.5 Stage 1: Integrating SIT and PCT**
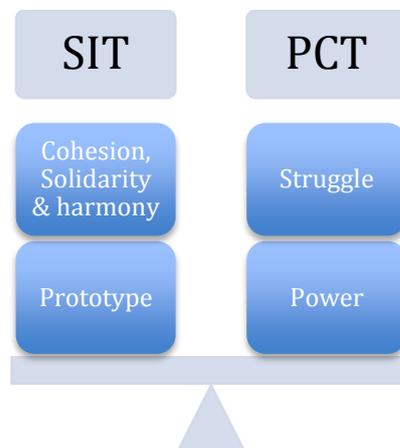
Figure 7.5 has been designed to illustrate how the components of social identity theory (SIT) and post colonial theory (PCT) facilitates a more balanced perspective of identity

processes in developing countries like Nigeria. Therefore when using social identity theory to interpret identity processes, the theory cannot effectively be used to interpret the concept of power within regions like Nigeria. Therefore to interpret the identity struggle that exists in a context like Nigeria, social identity theory is somewhat inadequate on its own. By integrating social identity and post-colonialism, post-colonialism addresses the power dynamic that social identity fails to cover adequately. This means that the power dynamic that exists in the identity processes of Nigerians in the workplace is catered for by post-colonial theory, which would have been overlooked if social identity was applied to the context in isolation. Although two deficiencies have been cited here when applying social identity theory to the chosen context, there is also a deficiency in post-colonial theory, which is compensated for by social identity theory. From the data, there was evidently harmony amongst group members, a factor that is not captured adequately by post-colonial theory. Post-colonial theory's pre-occupation with power and struggle means that the theory cannot be used to interpret the harmony that exists within groupings in the Nigerian context. Interestingly even the emphasis on groupings within post-colonialism embodies elements of power and struggle; the social formations that are attributed to the colonial era are not associated with harmony but rather with the use of power and intergroup struggles. On the other hand, cohesion, solidarity and harmony are foundational components of social identity theory, which are fundamental to the existence and longevity of group identification in the Nigerian context. These factors illustrate the value of integrating social identity theory and post-colonial theory.

Aside from the key components of social identity theory and post-colonial theory, the concepts of westernisation and neo-colonialism also emerged from this study's exploration into post-colonialism. The idea of neo-colonialism suggests a perpetuation of colonialism. In other words in post-colonialism, colonialism persists. This of course does not imply the same form of colonisation as propagated in the colonial era but rather a more subtle domination of norms, cultures and values under the guise of a 'modern' world (Robertson, 1992). Furthermore the concept of the prototype in the context of post-colonialism emerges in the form of an individual who may not necessarily identify with a particular group(s) but rather is able to successfully socialise across groups. The concept of the "social networker" is an idea that emerges from the data and potentially may increasingly be part of the consciousness of individuals all

over the globe. This of course also applies to the Nigerian workspace where individuals working with global organisations have the opportunity to embrace relationships across different groups on the assumption that they are not exclusively tied or committed to just any one group or groups. In the context of a modern world, the concept of the prototype therefore represents a break away from the traditional idea of social identity theory to identity processes forged in an environment that is not limited by space or time (Robinson, 2007). Furthermore, prototypicality is better understood in the terms of hybridity. Recall that hybridity refers to the integration of western norms and indigenous Nigerians norms into the self-concept. This study reveals that social identity theory does not adequately account for power and struggle in identity processes so the integration of post-colonial theory caters for this deficiency when developing a model that describes identity processes in the work setting of a developing economy.

Post-colonialism does not adequately account for harmony in identity processes so the integration of social identity theory caters for this deficiency. There is an evident overlap between social identity and post-colonialism as they both accommodate group identification even though social identity theory places emphasis on harmony and prototypicality while post-colonialism places emphasis on power, struggle and conflict. This is illustrated by the way social identity uses prototypical clarity, cohesion, solidarity, harmony and saliency to articulate the building blocks of successful group identification while post-colonialism uses social formations based on status and ethnic hierarchies to articulate intergroup conflict. In the context of the socio-cultural changes taking place globally that are affecting identity processes in developing regions like Nigeria, post-colonial theory provides reflections on the idea of westernisation and neo-colonialism.Having considered the highlights from the empirical contribution, Figures 7.6 and 7.7 represent how this study has integrated social identity and post-colonialism for the purpose of providing new insight into the identity processes in the work-setting of a developing economy.

Fig. 7.6 Showing the linkages between SIT and PCT (Themes)

SIT

Significance attached to group identification (white foreign staff, Nigerian staff, contract staff, Yorubas, Igbos)

Significance attached to group status (e.g the employee staff-contract staff and the white foreign staff-Nigerian staff scenarios).

Prototypicallity in the form of hybridity (i.e integration of western norms and indigenous Nigerian norms in an individual's self concept).

PCT

Keys:

SIT

PCT
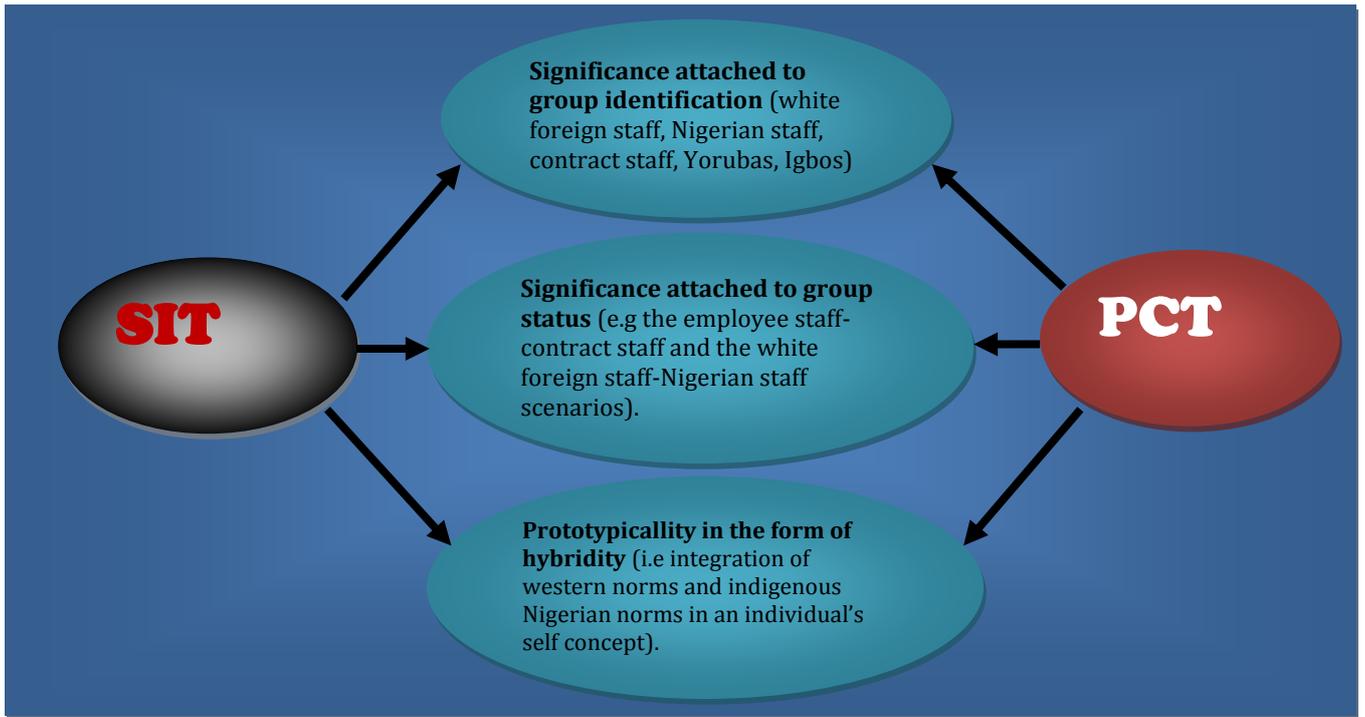
Linkages between each theory

Fig. 7.7 Showing the contrast between SIT and PCT (Themes)

SIT

PCT

Struggle is somewhat overlooked (e.g. there is little evidence of Nigerians experiencing tensions over which social identities to activate).

Struggle is associated with both the devalued identity and intergroup conflict (e.g the contradiction of a proud, capable Nigerianand the acceptance that Nigerians under-perform in comparison to white foreign staff; intergroup conflict between white non-English speaking foreign staff and Nigerian staff).

Power is largely overlooked (e.g. the potential influence of employee staff over contract staff)

Power is central to the perceived domination of white foreign staff (particularly non-English speaking white staff) over Nigerian staff and responsible for the oppressive emotions experienced by Nigerian staff

For group I.D., **harmony** is integral because emphasis is placed on the benefits derived from group membership and group survival (e.g. Nigerians are able to settle intotheir workplace by reducing uncertainties regarding where they stand). Harmony is informed by emphasis on certain attributes. (e.g. loyalty and respect). Ethnicity is a strong driver of harmony for in-group members.

For group I.D., **harmony**is somewhat overlooked because of emphasis on intergroup conflict (e.g. racial groupings, ethnic groupings).

Keys:

☐ SIT

☐ PCT

☐ Points of contrast

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Figures 7.6 and 7.7 illustrate that although each of these areas offers insight into the identity processes, they are limited in their individual capacity to address matters that are somewhat overlooked in their respective fields. Each area is characterised by its capacity to interpret themes for a context like Nigeria but equally handicapped in application to other themes. Following, the integration of social identity and post-colonialism, through 'linkages' and 'points of contrast', the following diagram illustrates a summary of the contextual identity processes. Figure 7.8 represents the model for interpreting identity processes in the work-setting of a developing economy:

Fig.7.8 Model of Identity Processes in the Work Setting of a Developing Economy

IDENTITY

HARMONY

Survival within intense ethnic and racial diversity and a harsh surrounding socio-economic environment places emphasis on the benefits of group identification for the self-concept (e.g. uncertainty reduction).

PROTOTYPICALITY

1.Integration of western norms and indigenous norms in an individual's self concept = Hybridity
2. Modern prototypes = the 'social networker' and 'the influencer'
3. Emphasis on 'self' and not 'group' preservation when Nigerian staff experience oppressive emotions.

STRUGGLE

1. The devalued identity of indigenous staff fuelled by contradicting perceptions of their racial identities.
2. Intergroup conflict based on groupings attributed to post colonialism. (e.g white staff, black staff, employee staff, contract staff and ethnic identities).

POWER

1.The perceived domination of white foreign staff = oppressive emotions experienced by black staff
2. Language is used as a tool for exclusion thereby enabling in-group members to exert influence over out-group members (e.g. the use of language by non-English speaking white staff and various ethnic groups)

Characteristic factors of identity processes in a developing economy context

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From integrating social identity and post-colonialism, this study identifies certain themes as being dominant. This study finds that these themes represent an appropriate interpretation of identity processes in the developing economy context. Figure 7.8 illustrates these themes to be 'Harmony', 'Struggle' and 'Power'. As derived from existing literature and the primary research of this study, all three themes capture important aspects of the identity processes in the chosen context. Each of these themes is either a component of social identity (harmony) or post-colonialism (struggle and power). This study suggests that any meaningful interpretation of identity processes in such contexts would benefit from understanding how such themes manifest within the context in question. For instance, in the context of Nigeria, uncertainty reduction was a major driver of harmony because of the degree of ethnic diversity, perceived racial inequality and harsh surrounding socio-economic environment. Additional drivers of harmony included ethnicity andattributes like 'loyalty' and 'respect'.

The essence of this study was to provide a better understanding of identity processes in the developing economy context. The concepts of social identity and post-colonialism were identified as suitable tools to facilitate this goal. It is based on the perceived interpretation of the context from a socio-psychological point of view that social identity and post-colonialism were deemed adequate for the task. As this study has proven, integrating social identity and post-colonialism is by no means an exact science but it does provide a platform that facilitates a more balanced understanding of identity construction in regions like Nigeria. Figure 7.8 is a summarized representation of a more poised interpretation of such identity processes. Independently, social identity and post-colonialism focus on isolated aspects of the identity process however together a more informed interpretation is attainable. A work-setting of a developing economy context like Nigeria is best understood when considerations are made for the significance people attach to group identification, the drivers of group identification processes and the influence that post-colonialism has on the continuous process of identity re-construction. This study finds that an adequate understanding of identity processes in the work setting of a developing economy is characterized by dominant elements of social identity and post-colonialism.

7.5 LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study recognises some shortcomings and limitations. Due to time and financial constraints the study includes interviews with only 47 professionals in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. Though the essence of this study derives from the substance of the interviews and not so much the quantity, this number could be higher if circumstances permitted. In addition although the actual sample size is small, it represents a particularly good spread of candidates, with four of the main tribes in the Nigeria all represented and a reasonable distribution between men and women in spite of the fact that the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is perceived to be a somewhat masculine industry. Furthermore there is a good representation of professional disciplines within the chosen industry with the inclusion of engineers, lawyers, human resource managers, health and safety officers, custom and shipping officers and planning officers.

This thesis has identified a number of interesting areas for future research. Firstly, in acknowledgment of the changes taking place through global integration, the value of understanding each other is becoming increasingly important not just for the intellectual curiousity of academia or for organisational policy and performance but also for the effectiveness of public (governmental) policy. Secondly, exploring how organisational structures may foster better synergy between different worker categories (such as employees and contract staff or foreign workers and indigenous employees) would add value to existing knowledge on organisational behaviour and human resource management, particularly in the oil and gas industry where such categories are common place. One of the key lessons from this study was that interaction with non-English speaking foreigners tends to generate tension and emotions in Nigerians that are reminiscent of the colonial era. Ofcourse, such scenarios hinder the desired synergy to inspire optimal performance from a workforce. Arguably, this lesson is valuable to future cross-cultural studies that may want to investigate the interaction of Nigerians with foreign staff in the oil and gas sector; this may be implemented with comparisons between English speaking and non-English speaking foreign staff. In this regard, multinationals may consider training Nigerian employees in the language of the employer's originating country, particularly Nigerian employees who are required to work very closely with foreign staff. Furthermore, multinationals may also consider engaging their foreign staff in sensitization programmes that familiarize them with the identity proceses of Nigerians. In this regard, the oil and gas sector may benefit from

future studies that focus on white foreign staff (in particular white non-English speaking staff) and the processes they undergo while trying to adapt to the Nigerian context. In essence, it is important for both foreign staff and indigenous staff to understand each other better. Thirdly, exploring how multinational organisations can use a better understanding of identity processes in regions like Nigeria may enhance stakeholder management techniques. The clashes between multinationals and local tribes and communities in the context region of this study has been well covered by global media and even scholars (e.g. Obi, 1997) and to some extent a better understanding of how the people of such regions perceive themselves, foreign systems and working closely with foreign peoplewould constitute worthwhile knowledge. Such knowledge could be useful to organisations already operating in these regions, looking to expand or initiate business in these regions. As the barriers of time and space diminish, the importance of understanding identity construction in different contexts cannot be overstated.

In conclusion, the objective of this study was to uncover to what extent social identity, and post-colonialism informs identity processes in the work-setting of a developing country like Nigeria. While the findings revealed from the primary and secondary research re-affirms some of the arguments of theorists on such regions (for instance the manifestation of colonialism through status driven structures and the dialectics of the colonised mind); the findings also provides new insight based on a more holistic perspective of identity construction in these regions by integrating the two elected theorem. Indeed the notion by theorists to suggest that Nigerians have a propensity for group identification is acceptable; the notion that traces of post-colonialism linger in the psyche of people that emanate from previously colonised territories is also acceptable. Furthermore the competing notions that post-colonialism has evolved into westernisation or neo-colonialism thereby transforming identity processes are equally acceptable. The reflections on these two areas does not only reveal to what extent they influence the identity processes of people from the chosen context, they also create a platform to address the dynamics of social identification processes, the contradictions of post-colonialism and the relationship between social identification processes and post-colonialism. As a representation of the work setting in a developing economy, the Nigerian context is characterized by intense ethnic diversity resulting in intergroup conflict. The harsh socio-economic environment fosters overwhelming uncertainty and

insecurity in identity processes. The sense of a devalued identity and the perceived presence of oppression through steep racial hierarchies trigger a non-negotiable struggle within the self-concept.

In terms of industry, the oil and gas sector of Nigeria fosters steep racial hierarchies so through the integration of different races in the same workspace, oppressive emotions are elicited within the self-concept of Nigerian workers, which are reminiscent of colonialism. This study has facilitated a number of findings, which reinforce the novel nature of the knowledge discovered. Nonetheless, four of these findings arguably emerge to be the most dominant. Firstly, is the evolution of Nigerian prototypicality from traditional interpretations of groupings to more fluid manifestations of social networking that challenge historical and cultural norms and align with the needs of the modern work environment. This evolved interpretation of prototypicality is therefore characterized by the integration of western norms and indigenous norms within the self-concept, the process of hybridity. Secondly, is the perceived presence of oppression in a multicultural workspace that is based in a country considered to comprise of the world's largest population of black people. Despite the fact that Nigerian staff are in the majority and the contextual work setting is in a country that has gained independence from formal colonial rule for over fifty years, this study still finds elements of colonialism that locates power in the identity of the minority race (i.e. white foreign staff). This oppression is elicited by the way Nigerian staff reluctantly perceive themselves through the 'eyes' of white staff. Furthermore oppressive emotions experienced by Nigerian staff represent a symptom of how experiences in the contextual work-setting are reminiscent of colonialism. The third finding is that Nigerians attach significance to group identification for a variety of value-added reasons that range from uncertainty reduction to an enhanced self-esteem however their propensity for group identification is impaired when they experience oppressive emotions that are reminiscent of colonialism. Therefore the more conscious Nigerians are of colonial influences that translate into lived experiences, the less likely they will adopt black/Nigerian social identities. As explained earlier, this is the consequence of a dissatisfied social identity (i.e. a black social identity possessing a lower status than a white social identity). The final discovery of this study is that although social identity theory provides the most prominent representation of the significance that Nigerians attach to group identification, due to the overwhelming influence of historical roots

linked with the colonial era, post-colonialism captures more dominant themes within the Nigerian context. This is substantiated by the fact that post-colonialism also captures manifestations of group identification, the motivations behind such identities and the consequences of intergroup conflict. In the end, the findings reveal that social identity and post-colonialism can be used to understand different dimensions of identity processes in regions like Nigeria. These dimensions are inclusive of how people identify themselves in the context of wider communities or groups, how they process the knowledge of their historical roots (both ethnic and colonial) and how they embrace the prospects of maximising opportunities to enhance their identities in a more open world.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

My name is Kaanakia Konya and I am a researcher in the Business School at Brunel University, London, England.

My work is centred on identity construction and the purpose of my study is:

To explore what factors influence identity construction in the workplace using social identity and post-colonialism as theories of reference. With each of these areas, it is to find out to what extent they influence the way people identify themselves in the workplace through lived experiences and observations.

Thank you very much for taking part in the interview. I am extremely grateful. Please be assured that this interview is in complete confidence. At no time will your name be used in any of the analysis.

The interview will cover the following broad areas:

Job, workplace, organisation
Your educational background and professional training (including work profile)
Your performance in your current role (general feedback from you and how you think your superior perceives your performance).
Types of observed group identification in the workplace
Group attributes
Importance of group identification
Ethnicity
Family
Religion
Informal networks
Post Colonialism
Working with foreign workers (expatriates)
Social Media

1. Job

Q. 1.1 May I start by asking you to describe your current position and workplace?

Probe:
Work tasks
Length of employment
Previous jobs

Q. 1.2 What were the reasons you decided to get into this field?

Probe:
Education
Career opportunity

Financial reason
Family

Q. 1.3 How would you evaluate your performance generally?

Probe:
General feedback on personal perception of performance
Thoughts on what superior thinks of the performance

Q. 1.4 Do you enjoy your work?

Probe:
Genuine satisfaction or a means to an end

2. Group Identification

Q. 2.1 Do you agree with the notion that Nigerians attach importance to identifying with groups?

Probe:
Reasons for yes or no answer
Workplace

Q.2.2 Give me examples of the types of groups you notice in the workplace

Probe:
Formal
Informal

Q2.3 Give me examples of group attributes

Probe:
Member traits, qualities or characteristics

Q.2.4 What comes to mind, when I say the word prototype?

Probe:
General perception
In the context of groupings in the workplace
Example of someone you can call a prototype and why (colleague, superior, yourself)
Q.2.5 Is family important to you

Probe:
Nuclear or extended

Q2.6 Are there people outside your family (immediate and extended) who you provide or care for?

Probe
Relevance of informal networks to Nigerians generally
Relevance of informal networks to you

Q2.7 Do informal networks affect the work life of Nigerians?

Probe:
Reason for the nature of informal networks amongst Nigerians
Impact of responsibility
Benefits versus costs
Effect on worklife

3. Ethnicity

Q.3.1 How strongly do you identify with your ethnic group?

Probe:
Knowledge of your tribe
Ability to understand and/or speak your native dialect
Frequency of trips to your village (rural community)

Q.3.2 How strongly do Nigerians identify with their ethnic groups generally?

Probe:
Groupings along ethnic lines
Friendships along ethnic lines
Business and other personal endeavours along ethnic lines

Q.3.3 How strongly do Nigerians identify with their ethnic groups in the workplace?

Probe:
Native dialects being spoken in the workplace
Groupings along ethnic lines
Effects on attitudes and behaviours
Effects on career progression

4. Religion

Q.4.1 Are you religious?

Probe:
Active (regular visits to place of worship)

Q.4.2 How strongly do Nigerians identify with religion generally?

Probe:
Group identification along religious lines
Frequency of faith references in the daily conversation

Effects on work practices, attitudes and behaviours
Thoughts on incidents of religious violence
Conflict or harmony between people of different religions

5. Post-Colonialism

Q.5.1 What are your thoughts on Nigeria's colonial period?

Probe:
General knowledge
Positive or negative

Q.5.2 Do you notice the effects of colonialism on the way people identify themselves in the workplace?

Probe:
Dress
Professional identity

Q.5.3 Is there anything about your work environment or experiences that reminds you of colonialism?

Probe:
Work structures
Groupings

Q.5.4 Tell me about your interaction with foreign staff.

Probe:
Frequency
Perception of foreign staff
Positive or negative experiences/interaction
Reminiscent of colonialism

Q.5.5 Tell me how indigenous staff interact with foreign staff

Probe:
Perception of foreign staff
Positive or negative
Reminiscent of colonialism

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE INTERVIEW (PARTICIPANT 19)

Researcher: So what is the name of your employer?
Participant: Chevron Nigerian Limited, an affiliate of Chevron Corporation
Researcher: And which country does your employer originate from?
Participant: The United States
Researcher: And how long have you been working with your employer?
Participant: Ten years
Researcher: And how long have you been in the industry?
Participant: Ten years
Researcher: And what is your current job title?
Participant: I am currently work as a Facilities Engineer
Researcher: Now in terms of your position in the company, what measures are in place to actually assess your performance?
Participant: We have an annual appraisal, called the Performance Management Process (P.M.P for short).
Researcher: Ok
Participant: And the P.M.P consists of a form that is meant to be populated at the beginning of every year with what's called performance agreement and at least three times during the year, the form is populated with interim results against those originally agreed in the performance agreement.
Researcher: Ok
Participant: And at the end of the year, the results are finalised as in all the results are collated and then finalised for end of year or year close
Researcher: Ok
Participant: And then that form is then fed into the ranking process which your supervisor would typically examine. The ranking process usually takes place in September of a given year and then by March of the subsequent year you will get a ranking...that is a result...you have meeting with your supervisor in which he/she reveals to you what your ranking was...and that ranking goes as follows: 1 is outstanding, 2 is satisfactory, 2 minus is slightly less than satisfactory and 3 is unacceptable...you have failed to meet the reason why you being employed.
Researcher: So quite clear guidelines basically?
Participant: Yeah
Researcher: And how would you view your own performance?
Participant: I mean largely I'm happy with the feedback...I forgot to mention that in addition to ranking, you're also told whether you've been promoted or not so promotion typically comes with good ranking. You wouldn't expect to get a promotion unless you've been ranked at least a 2. If you've been ranked a 2, you will probably look at how many years you've been ranked a 2. So if you were promoted last year, and you were ranked a 2, chances you will not be promoted. However if you were promoted five years ago and you've been ranked 2 consistently, your performance is not outstanding then after 4 or 5 years you should expect to get a promotion. So in response to your question on whether I was happy...my ranking was a 1...
Researcher: Ok
Participant: ....which is an outstanding performance and I would say I was happy with the ranking but disappointed with not getting a promotion as I was hoping to get promoted....I've been ranked a 1 over a three years now.
Researcher: Right, ok so through this system the employer is able to assess your contribution to the company?

Participant: Yes
Researcher: And how old are you?
Participant: 33
Researcher: Ok and do you enjoy what you do?
Participant: Hmm....for the most part yes! I enjoy the company I work for....
Researcher: Ok
Participant: ....I enjoy the industry we're in
Researcher: Ok
Participant: ...and I enjoy some of what I do...my specific job responsibilities but some aspects not so much.
Researcher: Ok, now looking at the subject matter of my study: 1 is Social Identity and 2 is Post-Colonialism. Now I will be asking you for your views on these concepts and how relevant they are in your every day working life. Now within your workplace, would you say that group identification is part of your working life, be it formal or informal?
Participant: Sorry could you repeat the question?
Researcher: I'm just trying to find out if you tend to gravitate more towards groups in the workplace...do you tend to socialise a lot within your work environment. If I was to come into the office and see you not working, am I likely to see you socialising with someone?
Participant: Well, yes I do socialise but I wouldn't consider myself as somebody who specifically identifies with any particular clique or groups. I'm actually quite the opposite in that I have a wide social circle within the workplace so you would associate me with any particular clique or group.

Researcher: Right
Participant: ....in that sense I would have to say that I have friends and acquaintances in the workplace that cut across the functional areas. I have friends who are lawyers, I have friends who are Engineers as well, I have friends who are in Commercial, who are in Planning...
Researcher: Yeah
Participant: ....so in that sense I'm not ehm....associated with any one group.
Researcher: You mentioned unique when referring to yourself in the context of such identification, do you notice that behaviour in other people?
Participant: Yes
Researcher: For instance do people in the workplace tend to just socialise with people they can identify with or are they quite proactive in identifying with groups of various types? How much is their socialising is dependent on establishing strong common groups and how much is dependent or an innate personality of generally being sociable?
Participant: Ehmm...that's a difficult one to answer....
Researcher: I mean would it be appropriate to say that Nigerians generally gravitate towards group identification?
Participant: Well, it depends on what level you're asking the question...ehm Nigerians tend to identify with ethnic groupings so on that level, yes!
Researcher: So it depends on the level?
Participant: But it depends on what level you're making the analysis. We notice that within the work environment, people will associate quite freely across various functions. Of course there are exceptions. For example in our canteen, we have a table which is popularly known as the "people's parliament" where a lot of people from different

international groups, different ethnic groups come together to debate political...current affairs in the country but apart from that, you will find that people will tend to socialise within their functional groups...however because the functional groups tend to be formed along ethnic lines so you will find that within those functional groupings, ethnic group identification is very noticeable....

Researcher: Right

Participant: ...however once you go outside the work environment and you examine the situation... whatever social intercourse takes place between people who work here in Chevron...interactions that take place between them within and outside the office, you will a lot more along ethnic lines so you will find for example a lot of my colleagues who are Yoruba will not have gone to the homes of some of their non Yoruba colleagues regardless of whether such colleagues are within the same group.

Researcher: Yes

Participant: ...and that is relating to people with which they may have lunch together or interact you know....within the workplace but once they go outside the work environment, they will tend to be more along ethnic lines...

Researcher: Right

Participant: So...if you said to one employee....which one of your Chevron co-workers have you been to their homes? That those colleagues that they identify with are those co-workers with whom they share the same ethnicity.

Researcher: So mostly, there's functional groupings, there's the political debate groupings, there's also a slight ethnic groupings which overlaps outside the workplace, are there any Religious groupings?

Participant: I don't think it's very relevant here because it's fairly homogenous....

Researcher: Ok

Participant..we're in the south of Nigeria....we're Christians predominantly, you have some muslim Yorubas but they're minority in the overall scheme...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...and because of the high levels of education in Nigeria amongst Yorubas, religion has never been a barrier

Researcher: Right and what about class within Nigeria....it appears to be a very strong form of identification? You notice that once people get to a certain level of hierarchy it's very rare you will see for example people of Senior Management socialising with people below in Middle management or below...do you find that's the case in your company or do you find that there are open channels of communication between Senior members of staff and Junior members of Staff....because they're important in this company, do people feel the need to separate themselves from the junior members of staff?

Participant: Hmmm...Well, I think you see a little bit of that but it's quite complex, it's not a simple answer because what you'll find is a lot of Senior Management who have joined the company around the same time...

Researcher: Right

Participant: ...who haven't made the same level of progress but you'll find overall, there is still quite free social interaction. I mean somebody may be Senior Management but he comes down to the canteen and sits down at a table with guys he went to secondary school with many, many years ago and who are may be three or four levels below him and so for that period of social interaction they don't remember that he's Senior Management....now so to that extent it is not restrictive but quite open. But when it is true is for example with a younger employee may typically not be sitting next to with more Senior employees both in terms of rank and class. So in other words with

you and I, we went to university together...what I've observed here is that let's say twenty years from now we happen to be working in the same company and one of us is much more senior in grade than the other, in terms of social interaction we will still come and do stuff together and have chit-chats and muck about in a way that would not suggest to a lot of people such hierarchical professional difference is not restrictive...but for example if you're much younger who may be the same grade level with me or whichever of us is the lower pay scale grade but happens to be much younger in age will tend not to typically socialise freely with the one that is more senior in age so to that extent it is true but dependent on certain circumstances so there's a bit of identity complexities and what you'll find is the two people who are similar in pay scale for instance but one is much older than the other may be one just moved up the ladder quicker, there would be interaction between them in social circles...so that's like your control right to test whether the distance between the high grade more Senior employee and Junior employee whether any of it has to do with their rank...yes some of it has to do with their rank because when I may comfortably socialise with a much older employee but who isn't a manager and we can chit-chat on the table whereas that guy's mate who is a Senior Manager...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant: ....I wouldn't just go and sit down with him and chit-chat so there partially related. I would say that on some levels class is relevant. I would say that some employees consider themselves to be of lower class setting...against each other and would socialise with other employees who have a working class background who may be have first generation parents...these are people whose parents all went to university and therefore were raised in the home where they had certain comforts, certain education levels and certain exposure...exposure to outside Nigeria, may be had lived abroad for a period of time, worked abroad for a period of time, had been partially educated well...for a period of time....I have found that such people tend to gravitate towards people of a similar calibre and I find that different from some people who may be raised in a family where nobody went to school in the first generation and so the quality of English is not as good and their knowledge of the world outside of Nigeria is not as good and they are much more traditional in their cultural norms as they're not as exposed....compared to the you and I type example.....

Researcher: Ok, what form of social identity that you've described so far is most prominent in your work environment? Which one of the social groupings is most noticeable?

Participant: I would say the one that is most noticeable is grade!

Researcher: Grade?

Participant: Yeah!

Researcher: Ok, people socialising based on grade?

Participant: Yeah...primarily yeah!

Researcher: Now if I was to say to you prototype, what would your interpretation of a prototype in any of the groupings you have been describing? Could you pick out someone from any of the groups...you know what within that group he/she is typical of that group?

Participant: Well, depending on which grouping you're talking about?

Researcher; ..If you said grade?

Participant: Ok, yeah I can think of a couple of people who are very grade conscious.....

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ..what's typical about them is because they're grade conscious tend to try very hard to stay separate from those they feel are in lesser places or positions....

Researcher: So how much of that would you attribute to them being Nigerian and how much of that would you say is just Corporate or company culture (i.e. the culture of Chevron)?

Researcher: Hmmm...I would say....90% of that is associated with them being Nigerian

Associated with them being Nigerian?

Participant: Yeah

Researcher: Would you say that Nigerians are typically class conscious?

Participant: I think Nigerians are very, very class conscious!

Researcher: Now do you identify strongly with your family?

Participant: Yes

Researcher: Ok and when I say family who would you call family right now?

Participant: My wife and my parents

Researcher: Now outside your wife and may be your parents, is there anyone else you have a financial responsibility for right now?

Participant: Hmm...none that is constant...

Researcher: Do you notice that is ehm....

Participant: Occassionally!

Researcher: Occassionally?

Participant: Hmm

Researcher: Is that a part of Nigerian culture within your workplace you notice that people tend to be responsible for people outside their immediate families...so the extended family too?

Participant: I know that a lot!

Researcher: And ehm....what sort of impact does this tend to have on their work?

Participant: Hmm

Researcher: ...does it impact it at all?

Participant: Yes it does...I think it's had a huge impact on the direction of the union...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: ...and union action

Researcher: In terms of Job security?

Participant: Well, I would say job security is one in the sense that ehm....that's a good point you mentioned because I would say that job security is relevant to everyone related..as people tend to be more cautious because they feel everyone in their homes...not just me who are dependent on me need security in my job

Researcher: Ok, Now would you say you have more than one identity that you display at different times?....

(BRIEF INTERRUPTION)

Researcher: I mean you're a Facilities Engineer...that's right? Do people generally see you as a Facilities Engineer here or as Nwachukwu the Commercial Professional or do they see you as a professional or...

Participant: Hmm...I think people see me in more than one light

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Hmm...what I mean is they realise I have functioned in more than just an Engineering role so they recognise I'm not just an Engineer, somebody whom you can put in pretty much a wide range of functions...

Researcher: Right

Participant:...and will prove useful to the organisation

Researcher: Right

Participant: I think other than that...they also think I'm somebody who is very well educated and may be middle class....most people who know me....who know my background....who know of my father...that presents a certain impression...they also see me as somebody who is a bit of eh...."ajebo"!

Researcher: Ok, Ajebo basically meaning?

Participant: Ajebo meaning middle class...sort of pampered when he was a kid...a soft life

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....and if you confirm to them where you went to primary school and where you went to secondary school and where you went to university, it firms up the impression the initial thoughts they had

Researcher: Ok,so they don't tend to identify you with any groups...they see you as more of a social networker?

Participant: Yeah

Researcher: Now looking at Post-Colonialism, how much of people's behaviours in your work environment today indicate influences from colonial times?

Participant: How they interact with other Nigerians?

Researcher: In general, both with other Nigerians and with foreigners

Participant: Well, I guess...depending on the definition...it is derived from the relationship...in other words, what we call middle class working people....those with career interests have made it possible to people to describe themselves as middle class and working class since it is colonization that led to those beliefs and systems...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant: ...because it's colonization that introduced the western style of education, the western style of management...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant: ....and so to now be Engineer or a lawyer or an accountant...these are all things that came with colonization and therefore if those are things which then help define our identity....

Researcher: Yes

Participant:...as being a Lawyer's son, or a Doctor's son, or a Professor's son.....to that extent, colonization has indirectly a profound impact on the way we perceive ourselves and I also think it affects our perceptions of each other and values of the organisation...it's also about norms and the values that we lean on through western style management...

Researcher: You don't think that same view with....

Participant: Well, those you consider to perform well are people who perform well under certain technical criteria not set by our own traditional African norms....

Researcher: Right

Participant:I think there is a bit of a thin line...some of our norms for what we perceive as the measure of effectiveness and professionalism comes from our core values...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:... but the truth is some of it is also to do with being modern and the fact that to survive in a modern world, you've got to have adopted certain modern disciplines and norms and that has nothing to do with whether you're in the workplace or whether you're in Asia or Africa because the norms associated with the modern demands on life...people need instant responses, data is accessible in real time....you know and so on and so forth. So what I'm saying is there's an aspect of ....a child of the

indigenous origins, a child of post-colonialism but there's also an aspect that just relates to being a child of modernity!

Researcher: Right; and would you describe the individual as a form of a hybrid?

Participant: So you're saying is combining western values with traditional values a measure of modernity?

Researcher: Yes

Participant:...is that your question?

Researcher: Yes....in the form of a hybrid?

Participant: Hmm...yeah, in a sense it is because the relevant aspects of western civilization today are those aspects most assimilated into modernity. I mean, we're not affiliated to the west because of inter-relation, we're affiliated to the west because of modern times....

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Twenty-first century, right!

Researcher: Ok

Participant: So our interest or our drive to be similar or close to the west is not because of some medieval inter-relation or medieval affiliation with the west, No!....it's because of the modern quest of culture!

Researcher: Right

Participant: So to that extent...to the extent that western culture in today's age is represented by aspects of modernity...

Researcher: Yes

Participant: ..it is...you could argue that a measure of modernity is the extent to which you adopt or integrate western culture into your own indigenous culture because so many aspects of today's western culture are inexplicably inter-woven into modernity...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:..so many aspects of the way westerns behave or communicate in today's world....interlink or inter-woven with the ehm...paraphernalia of modernity...email, internet, television, you know...flying...being able to fly on holiday to a different part of the world...just so many things that ....even the appliances have changed and the need to have those is driven a lot by those of the appliances becoming a standard in the west...

Researcher: So the west cultivates the norms?

Participant: Yes...or conversely modernity and the facets of modernity are a very dominant influence on today's global culture..

Researcher: How much of modernity would you attribute to indigenous values...Nigerian values....do you notice anything about the way Nigerian work or behave in your department and you attribute to Nigerian traits?.....

Participant: Well....

Researcher:..or is it pretty much western values?

Participant:I think that's the bit that I said is tricky....because I guess what you're asking....if for example Nigeria today became ehm...completely independent economically, would we throw off all of these norms and aspects of the western culture...even if those things are essential part of modern living...I think the answer is No! I don't think we would...however much you can associate or trace where those things came from...from westernization...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant:....to the coming of colonial powers..etc. However much you can trace it, people wouldn't say that because cars were first brought into Nigeria by white men, we won't drive cars anymore...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant:..we going to use bicycles....I mean, do you see what I'm trying to say...so I guess what I'm saying is...in terms of what we incorporate from indigenous values in modernity....it's difficult to ascertain because the fact is...the reality was driven a lot by the coming of western power...

Researcher: Yeah

Participant:...but what I'm saying is....assuming we were never colonized, we would soon have adopted one...we would have been exposed to...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....and I believe we would adopted those aspects of western culture that are more inherent to modernity...modern living

Researcher: Yeah

Participant:..whether or not they came from Japan or the United States...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....so sorry I can't be more concise...

Researcher: That's ok

Participant:....but my answer to your question is not by much...but may be its not relevant...not very much of what we consider to be modernity is traditionally Nigerian...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:..but that's just because Nigeria wasn't the originator of a lot of those modern trappings...if Nigeria was to improve economically...ehm...then we probably would evolve...if we improved economically then we would probably come up with modern extensions that have a distinct Nigerian cultural imprint....

Researcher: Right

Participant: You see what I'm saying?

Researcher: Yes

Participant: And I guess may be what you could say is that it's in those areas where people can have an imprint on a chapter of modernity even if you were not the originator of that chapter of modernity...that device or norm...may be in music..so for example you could say that even though Nigeria didn't invent the guitar or the saxophone or anything...or any instrument...any musical instrument that is used in modern sounding music as opposed to classical music or fifteen century music...we have as a people been able to put our imprint...our cultural imprint on some of the music that is being generated by the modern music industry...that's an example

Researcher: That's an example...

Participant:...and then I'll give you another example...take the example of the use of telephone re-charge card as a means of charity....that's something which I think we have largely come up with in Nigeria whereby somebody...it's almost like a new form of giving financial assistance. You now don't have to send the money, what you do is you buy a scratch card for filling credit...phone credit...pay as you go credit....scratch off your number...scratch off the covering so that you can reveal the voucher number and then send that voucher number to your loved one or the person you're trying to help so in that way you've brought a Nigerian cultural component to a modern chapter...

Researcher:...a modern chapter. So would you say modernity is the trend that leads to Globalisation?

Participant: Absolutely! I think technological advancement is what is driving globalisation because it is advances in information and communication technology that has made it possible for people to reach out of their immediate locale...

Researcher: Right

Participant: Part of it is driven by the...saturation of people in the immediate locale from the point of view of the market.

Researcher: Right

Participant: So if you're looking at any business concern where you're marketing a product or service because of the advancement of technology, because of advances in banking...modern banking and indeed those advances in banking are tied to the technological interconnection between banks throughout the world because of that businesses are forced to look outside their locale...in order to remain competitive...and because of that drive and the ability to do so by means of email, internet, websites, global advertising on satellite broadcasts which you couldn't do thirty years ago...

Researcher: Yes

Participant:....you now have coming together or the coming closer of the world which is what we refer to as Globalisation

Researcher: Ok and what impact would you say Globalisation has had on social identity...I mean, how would you feel about the suggestion that because of the advancements in technology, people might reach out much further but there is no longer the same degree of human or group contact as there once was?

Participant: Well, I would argue the opposite. I think the fact that you now have ehm...much easier communication channels, means that people are much more likely to interact across geographical, regional and ethnic lines....you're more likely to maintain friendships with people on different continents, you're more likely to ehm...go on holiday with a friend that you've made...who is of a different race, a different nationality and whose in a different part of the world because you can bb them, you can email them, you can call them for dirt cheap cost and you can organise a holiday online and all five or six of you go on vacation on an agreed date...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:...so I mean if we go back thirty years, what are the chances that you know you'd be able to go to a wedding...I went to a wedding in Hong Kong in January 2007; what are the chances that my father who also went to university in the UK at the time would have ever had the chance to do that?

Researcher: Very slim?

Participant: Yeah!

Researcher: And obviously you're strength...or are they unique or do you find these qualities are common in the workplace...have people had similar experiences?

Participant: Yeah, I think like I said earlier....one of the unifying factors of people who consider themselves to be modern....is their level of exposure....

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....and that exposure is in the form of how much experience do you have outside Nigeria, outside you're locale, did you attend institutions outside Nigeria...

Researcher: Yes

Participant:...did you work in an organisation outside Nigeria...

Researcher: Yes

Participant:...so it is that very thing which I said brings people of a similar pedigree together that applies....

Researcher: Right

Participant:....so the answer is Yes! If people have had experiences abroad...outside Nigeria...you know...interacted with non-Nigerians a lot...then they tend to be more likely...to want to travel outside...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....to want to experience things outside their locale...

Researcher: How much of these trends of identification determine how well employees get along in the company?...if someone came into company but didn't

identify very well within any groups, would they have to be quite unique, would they have to do what you're doing or is it quite easy for a typical Nigerian to come in here and work in this environment and not necessarily identify with a group but get on well in progressing within the company?....

Participant: Ahh....I see what you mean....so what you're saying....you seem to be asking to questions...

Researcher: Ok

Participant: The first question is how much importance do people as individuals place on being connected to, associated with or part of social groups?...

Researcher: Yes, that's the first question.

Participant: The second question I'm picking up is how important is such connectedness appropriation of ehm...being part of eh...what's the importance of that to such a person progressing...which is not necessarily within the person's control...

Researcher: Yes

Participant: So I think the first question is...the answer...I think most people here tend to want to have a group that they get along with and that group may be different inside and outside the office...

Researcher: Right

Participant:...even in relation to co-workers. So in relation to the same co-workers, the groups that people want to be associated with as part of their affirmation of being employees...so that's one area....people feel that being employees is being in the in-group...

Researcher: Right

Participant: So the first step is I want to be an employee, the next step is we're now employees...are you an active member of your functional group?....

Researcher: Right

Participant:...which is if you're an Engineer, do you work with other Engineers do you go to work with those Engineers...may be hang out on a Friday night....couple of beers with those other Engineers. The same goes for lawyers, the same goes for people who work in other capacities so I think people do find it important to be part of a group...however what I was trying to point out is that not only is it important to people but it's also people's desire to be part of different groups that they want to be associated either inside or outside the workplace. So for some people for example, outside the work environment it's very important for them to remain connected to, associated with a Pastor...a church that consists of some Chevron employees...

Researcher: Right

Participant: Hmm...and within the work environment, there may be variable contact with those same employees and the group of employees that are now important are a different group which may be the functional group

Researcher: Ok

Participant: Hmm...and then like I said earlier, you've also got the ethnic group..

Researcher: Yes

Participant: So you've got people who would be very close to anybody now..who within their functional group ...

Researcher: Yes

Participant:.......in the work environment. Outside the work environment they may only associate within the realms of...or have social engagements and weddings and so on with those who are from their ethnic group...

Researcher: Yes

Participant:....so it could be those who are from their ethnic group or those from their church.....depending on that individual...which criteria has a stronger pool

Researcher: Ok, now my last question....was Post-colonial good or bad for Nigeria?

Participant: Well I think largely it was bad....

Researcher: Ok

Participant:...because I don't believe that there are any of the aspects of modernity that have come with colonisation that Nigeria wouldn't have gotten if we simply traded with the west. I think the natural forces of capitalism would have ensured that Africa, both sub-saharan Africa and North Africa would have inevitably got involved...

Researcher: Ok

Participant:....in the global economy.

Researcher: Ok

Participant:A good case in point is Ethiopia which is a country which was never colonised.

Researcher: Ok

Participant: It was occupied by Italy for six years so...ehm...partly during the world war two. Now Ethiopia hasn't remained some backward....it's just like any other African country. It has become integrated into modern life, the modern economy....indeed it has one of the most efficient airlines

List of Abbreviations

1. SIT: Social Identity Theory
2. PCT: Post-Colonial Theory