

# National Cultures and Employee Commitment in Nigerian Organisations: Exploring Conflicts and Relationships

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of London for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Queen Mary, University of London

2018

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## Abstract

*This PhD thesis explores how core national cultural values of ethnically diverse employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of organisational values and their commitment to these values. The study is motivated by the need to understand the impact of ethnic culture on employee value allegiance and how this translates into ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment within private sector organisations in culturally diverse and developing economies like Nigeria. Twenty employees from two wholly-owned Nigerian commercial banks formed the subjects of this research. Using a multiple case study design, based on interviews and vignettes, constructs which represent employees' ethnocultural values and organisational values were explored in relation to employees' accounts of workplace practices. This thesis extends the knowledge in cross-cultural management, specifically in a multi-ethnic sample, first by revealing how commitment might be experienced in different cultures and why, and second, by putting forward propositions for applicable culture-specific considerations which can enhance the cross-cultural applicability/adaptability of egalitarian organisational values in a culturally diverse and developing country such as Nigeria.*

*The findings show that ethnocultural values and practices thrive in Nigerian organisations which espouse egalitarianism due to the inability of employees to translate implicit/explicit organisational values into required job/workplace practices. Also, the employees' consciousness of differences is sustained through organisational relationships based on status, and the social distance between managers and subordinates. Consequently, this research reveals a missing link between organisational structure on paper and the relationships which that structure presumably supports, in practice, in Nigerian Banks. This research also shows that the structural elements of an organisation can be disconnected from its attitudinal counterparts, which can have far-reaching implications, including negative consequences, for managing employees within organisations in a multi-ethnic context.*

**Key Words:** *Commercial bank; ethnocultural values; ethnic diversity; Nigeria; organisational commitment; organisational values*

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to those who supported me through this amazing journey writing this thesis – an endeavour which initially appeared to be a “fool’s errand”. First and foremost, I offer my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisors who have stood by me these last four years. To Professor Nelarine Cornelius, for believing in me and urging me on, right from my *research infancy* when, for instance, I thought it was a good idea to use only European authors to describe a uniquely African problem. To Dr James Wallace for mentoring me and guiding me through the days I seemed more stubborn than knowledgeable, for being so patient, so thoughtful, and so kind. To Dr Doyin Atewologun, for taking the time to read through this work, giving such insightful and helpful feedback and staying attentive till the end.

To my examiners, Professor Ken Kamoche and Professor Geraldine Healy. Thank you for your advice, guidance and most of all for taking time to read through this piece of work and helping me discover the diamond in, and the relevance of the clay. I am so indebted to Professor Jasmin Mahadevan, Dr Laurence Romani and Dr Henriett Primecz for giving me my very first chance at publishing. To Professor Ahu Tatli, Professor Gerry Hanlon, Dr Rowland Curtis, and Dr Mustafa Ozturk for guiding me and helping me through my teaching experience. To Saima Ahmed and Monira Begum for taking the time to give me the information I needed even when under work pressure.

I am so thankful to Pastor Andrew Abraham and his lovely wife Guvnor Leonora and the whole family at Christ Embassy Leeds. Thank you for your friendship, fellowship, care and brotherhood, every financial support and your dedication to the wellbeing of my family. Very special thanks to my ‘blood brother’ Tope Awere, who stood by me, with me and for me throughout using words, fellowship, partnership, financial and material resources and in ways too many to list here. I am so grateful for your labour of love my *soul (and spirit) brother*. I must also thank his lovely wife Nonye Awere, for love shown to my family especially my children and for coming to our aid when we needed it the most - when help was scarce. To brother Henry and his lovely wife sister Ese, Guvnor Mofe Davidson and his amazing wife sister Lizzy – thank you for your labour of love.

The wonderful story of my time at Queen Mary University would be incomplete without my fellow PhD colleagues; to Dr Samaila Tenebe and his sister, Marya for their benevolence, warmth and affection. To Dr Yakubu John and his lovely wife sister Dorcas for all the help in ways too numerous to mention; to Dr Muhib, Dr Joseph, Dr Uli, Dr Julia, Dr Pamela, Dr Destina, Dr Solomon, Asma, Itoro, Emilia, Kola, Anne, Zainab, Simeon, Lee, Zeezee, Emily, Nadia, Mohammed, Adie, Salem, Tuba and Martez – thank you for your friendship.

To my father Humphrey Umeh, for inspiring me to follow this path of seeking, discovering and ‘shouting’ about knowledge through research. To my late mum Ngozi Udokwu Umeh – I know you would have been very proud of what I have made of myself – continue to rest in peace. To my sister Thelma for all the moral, material and financial support. To my brothers Dr Rokie, Russel, Obum and Rex and my nephew Martin for understanding that I love you all deeper than I can ever express. To my brothers-in-law and their wives, Allen and Uche Emezue, Chris and Pastor Jane Ochei, Kingsley and Chinyere Emezue. Thank you for all your support and prayers.

To my children Joel, Zina and Zara for putting up with my many absences these last four years - thoughts of what fine children you are growing up to become have kept me going. Then, a very special thank you to the only one who would love a relentlessly passionate and irrepressibly stubborn soul like me: to my love, my best friend, my confidante, my soul mate and wife – Rose. We started this journey together in faith, hoping against hope, my sweet; now it’s over. We made it! Most of all, to my Lord and saviour in whom all things consist – I remain eternally grateful.

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## Dissemination of Research

### PUBLICATIONS

Beech, N., Cornelius, N., Gordon, L., Healy, G., Ogbonna, E., Sanghera, G., Umeh, C., Wallace, J., and Woodman, P. (2017) ***Delivering diversity: Race and ethnicity in the management pipeline***. London: Chartered Management Institute & British Academy of Management.

Umeh, C. (2018) **The Ethnicization of Identity**. In: Mahadevan, J., Primecz, H. and Romani, L. (Eds.) *Critical cross-cultural management – An intersectional approach to culture*. London: Sage. (Accepted for publication, August 3, 2018).

**Do Some Like It Cold? Analyzing Intersectionality, Ethnicity, Class and Inequality in a Multiethnic Context** (First author – In Review, Gender Work & Organization – ABS 3\*).

### PEER REVIEWED PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**The (Re)Construction of Ethnic Identity in Nigeria: Implications for Diversity Management**. Full Paper, presented at European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) Colloquium, Tallinn, Estonia- Jul. 2018.

**National Cultures and Employee Commitment in a Developing Country Context: Perspectives from Nigeria** - Developmental Paper, presented at The British Academy of Management (BAM) 31st Annual BAM Conference. **(Awarded Best Paper – International Business and International Management Stream)**. Warwick, UK - Sep. 2017.

**National Culture and Employee Commitment in Nigerian Organisations: Exploring Conflicts & Relationships**. Developmental paper, presented at Faculty of Management & Law Doctoral Conference, University of Bradford. **(Awarded Best Paper)**. Bradford, UK. - Feb. 2016.

## CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**Some Like it Cold: Contextualizing the Intersectionality of Ethnicity, Class and Status in a Developing Country.** Full Paper, presented at The Conference on African Business, Organisations and Society. London, UK. - Jul. 2018.

**Symbols, Symbolism and Symbolisation: A re-contextualisation of Schwartz theory of Values – Insights from Nigeria.** Developmental paper, presented at the British Academy of Management (BAM) Doctoral Symposium, 32nd Annual Conference. Bristol, UK. - Jul. 2018.

**Ethnic Identities and The Legitimation of Inequality: Developing Country Perspectives** Developmental Paper, presented at: AIDEA Capri Summer School. Capri, Italy - Sep. 2017.

**Strange Bedfellows? The Paradox of Value Congruence and Identity Conflict in the Nigerian Workplace - The Case of the Nigerian Banking Industry.** Developmental paper presented at the Faculty of Management & Law Doctoral Conference, University of Bradford. Bradford, UK. Jul. 2017.

**Ethnic Heterogeneity or the “*Narcissism of Minor Differences*”: A Reassessment of Perspectives of Multiculturalism in Nigeria.** Conceptual paper presented at Northern Advanced Research Training Initiative (NARTI) 11th Annual Doctoral Conference. Newcastle, UK. - Jun. 2017

**Silence Has a Loud Voice: How Name Avoidance Reinforces (In)equality in Culturally Diverse and Developing Country Contexts.** Conceptual paper, presented at Northern Advanced Research Training Initiative (NARTI) 10th Annual Doctoral Conference. Sheffield, UK. - Sep. 2016.

**The *Ethnoculturalization* of tipping in Nigerian Organisations: A case of the Nigerian Banking industry.** Conceptual paper presented at the British Academy of Management (BAM) Doctoral Symposium, 30th Annual Conference. Newcastle, UK. - Sep. 2016.

## **Chapter One**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

This thesis examines how allegiance to ethnic-based core values, or ethnic loyalty, determines how employees demonstrate commitment to egalitarian (Western-styled) organisational values in a culturally diverse and developing country – Nigeria. Implications for managing equality and diversity within organisations in these contexts are also explored. This study seeks to show how employee allegiance practices (actions and inactions) may be indicative of value conflict, negotiation and prioritisation (Schwartz, 2011; 2012). The study also seeks to examine the diversity management implications of the tension between employee ethnic loyalty and organisational commitment in Nigerian private-sector organisations, such as banks. Focused on the Nigerian banking sector, this thesis aims to explore how the core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of, and commitment to, organisational values.

#### **1.2. Background**

This section sets out the context and background of the study. It first identifies the topic of study and then places it in the socio-economic context of Nigeria and more specifically the Nigerian Banking sector. A brief overview of the historical, sociocultural and ethnographic considerations and the impact on employees will be highlighted

##### **1.2.1. Ethno-Cultural Values in the Workplace**

It has been suggested that when the value orientations of employees are better understood, successful management of human resources in a dynamic business context is more assured (Budhwar *et al.*, 2008; Beech *et al.*, 2017). Still, the workplace of most culturally diverse and developing countries is characterised by organisational values that may conflict with employee ethnocultural values (Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Sun, 2008; Branine, 2013; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). Such conflicts are more typical in postcolonial Western-styled African organisations imitating mainly Anglo Saxon (and sometimes American) administrative/business values (see Haque, 1997). As Haque (1997) explains, these values are perceived and accepted by organisations in developing countries as the principles on which organisations in developed

countries thrive. While challenges regarding achieving equality, diversity and inclusion issues still rage in developed countries like the United Kingdom (Beech *et al.*, 2017), organisations in post-colonial societies are most likely to remain *imitative*, manifesting the symbolism not the substance of these values in their practices (Haque, 1997).

Indeed, these egalitarian values, such as equality, formality, fairness, equity, and respect, are seen to resonate with related constructs like distributive justice or the ethics of equality (Putterman *et al.*, 1998; Clayton and Williams, 1999, 2002; Jacobs, 2004). However, ethnocultural values also manifest in the practices of employees in African countries like Nigeria. These values, such as respect for hierarchy, wealth, influence and affluence (Kamoche, 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013) are antithetical to egalitarian values.

Consequently, although some vertical division of labour by way of organisational hierarchies is always present, as in most contemporary organisations, the term 'egalitarian', which largely defines relations among equals, is frequently applied to organisations that (at least in principle) seek to deemphasise or moderate formal status differentials (Morand, 1996a). Such 'egalitarianism' among members of the organisation may be achieved through approaches such as first name address (Morand, 2010), greater uniformity of pay and incentives, as well as the equalisation of parking and officer spaces, canteen access, and dress codes amongst others (Lawler, 1990; Pfeffer, 1994). However, many descriptions of egalitarianism explicitly encompass interactional etiquette, the very manners of conduct, disposition and comportment exchanged among organisational members including managers and subordinates. According to Morand (1996a), a progressive organisation - or one that, amongst other things, presents itself as a model of fairness and equality - may claim that superiors and subordinates enjoy egalitarian relations. This is typical of organisations in the West (Beech *et al.*, 2017). In essence, employees treat one another with relatively comparable levels of regard, irrespective of social identity, by relating to each other on an equal basis, leading to the exchange of more equivalent behavioural cues among managers and subordinates. Hence, although it is supposed that subordinates generally speak more politely to individuals of higher status in the organisation irrespective of context, egalitarianism is assumed to exert a moderating

effect on the demonstration of power by managers in their interaction with employees (Morand, 1996b).

### **1.2.2. Egalitarianism in Nigerian Organisations**

Egalitarianism in formal Nigerian organisations is fundamental to this thesis because it is assumed to generate values and behavioural norms that moderate the controlling and dominating effect of managerial power, and specifically its effect on subordinate employees. Schwartz's (2010) basic values of egalitarianism (as opposed to hierarchy and conformity values) show how divergent sets of beliefs and behavioural rules are presumed to guide the enactment of status and power in the interaction between individuals. According to Schwartz (2010), individuals who are members of groups with egalitarian values may believe that displays of inequality should be minimized, that persons in power should try to appear less powerful than they are, and that hierarchy in organisations implies role inequality and should therefore only be established for organisational expediency. However, for individuals in groups with values such as conformity, tradition and hierarchy, as is the case in many African organisations (Kamoche, 2013; Debrah, 2013; Baranine, 2013) and specifically among Nigeria's ethnic groups (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013; Adegboye, 2013) 'hierarchy means existential inequality' (Morand, 1996a, p. 549). This suggests that ethnocultural values create striking power differentials in organisational interactions, as in the broader society. While exploring egalitarianism as a concept is beyond the scope of this study, what may be evidenced is the way in which egalitarianism may itself be seen as a behavioural construct, or a culturally influenced construct in multi-ethnic contexts like Nigeria. This particular concept may require further research, specifically in formal Nigerian organisations and Nigerian banks.

It has been suggested, that egalitarianism has contributed to confusion and the ambivalence of employees in developing and culturally diverse economies like Nigeria (Ahianzu, 1986; Adegboye, 2013; Kamoche *et al.*, 2015), as well as frustration and sometimes failure of organisations in these economies (Dowling *et al.*, 2008). Consequently, some studies suggest that within formal organisations in multiethnic African countries – such as commercial banks in Nigeria - an understanding of the ethnocultural values of the employee is critical for certain organisational contingencies, including producing the *committed employee* (Wasti, 2003) and managing diversity

and inclusion (Cornelius, 2002; Healy and Oikelome, 2007). However, my focus on Nigeria, specifically Nigerian banks, is further based on certain socio-economic considerations.

### **1.2.3. Socio-Economic Context of Nigeria**

According to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (2018) report, multi-ethnic Nigeria is a 'Next 11' economy with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$400.6 billion, constituting 0.5% of the world's GDP. Nigeria accounted for half of the improvement in Africa's overall growth in 2017. With a population size of over 190 million, half of Nigeria's population are under the age of thirty (Adeyemo, 2018), putting a strain on the availability of jobs in a nation currently (2018) witnessing a slowing economy and declining revenue, due to falling and unstable oil prices – Nigeria's main foreign exchange earner. Banking is important to Nigeria's development as is the case for many countries in the Global South seeking to grow and attract foreign direct investment and economic stability.

While the recent acceleration in the growth of the World Gross Product (WGP) from a low of 2.4 per cent in 2016 is attributed to steadier growth in several developed economies, the recurrent improvements in some countries, including Nigeria, can also explain the rise (of roughly a third) in the rate of global growth in 2017 (UN, 2018). This growth has been partly attributed to the instrumentality of the banking sector in the economic development of some emerging economies including Nigeria (BIS, 2017a). Larger banking inflows have been visible in these emerging economies based on investment in long-term projects, with an expected further increase based on a notable surge in global trade, which could further support credit and investment growth in emerging economies, specifically Nigeria (BIS, 2017b).

However, such positive results are contingent on broader domestic economic programmes and the development of human capital (UN, 2018). This research, therefore, is of practical importance for the Nigerian economy as banks are used as a base to launch many of the Nigerian government's socio-economic initiatives. These include: encouraging the growth of Small and Medium Size Enterprises – SMEs, youth entrepreneurial empowerment, promoting a banking culture in women (as potential employers or customers) and boosting youth employment (Herbst and Soludo, 2004).



Nigerian Banks are also part of the Nigerian private sector, which, in comparison to Nigeria's public sector, is still under-researched (Adegboye, 2013). Commercial banks are used for this research because organisational values within the Nigerian banking sector, are modelled on Western (mainly Anglo-Saxon and to some extent American) organisational value systems (Beck *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, the close supervision by certain financial regulatory bodies, including the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), among others, influence this state of affairs (Herbst and Soludo, 2004). Bank employees are also from diverse Nigerian ethnic groups. Therefore, the Nigerian banking sector has a combination of economic, ethnic, and organisational culture imperatives, which presents an ideal context for the exploration of ethnocultural influences on employee value allegiance in Nigeria and the implications for best practice for managing employees in these contexts.

#### **1.2.4. Socio-Cultural Context of Nigeria's Business Sector**

The Nigerian business sector has dual or parallel systems: the indigenous Nigerian (African) system and the Western system. Both systems manifest simultaneously in employee practices in the workplace (Ahianzu, 1986; Chete *et al.*, 2014). Since culture is ingrained and influences every aspect of behaviour (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al.* 2004), Nigerian workers will interpret and implement "foreign" practices within society's cultural contexts (Jaeger and Kanungo, 1990; Tung and Aycan, 2008). Although these organisational and work values and practices have earned a permanent designation of *imported and foreign*, many have lost their original meaning and purpose, resulting in a blend of, or conflict between, ethnocultural and organisational values (Nzelibe, 1986; Ahianzu, 1986; Anankwe, 2002).

Furthermore, top management involvement in organisational practices such as employee referrals, recruitment and selection, employee performance appraisals, and career progression is dominant in Nigeria (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013). This state of affairs might be consistent with the value dimensions of Schwartz (1992, 1994, 1999, 2012) which have been validated (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). Based on these studies, Nigeria demonstrates cultural value characteristics of *power* (social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources) at the individual level, and *hierarchy* (or societal emphasis on the legitimacy of hierarchical roles and resource allocation) at the societal level. In culturally diverse and developing countries such as

Nigeria (as in much of Africa), values such as unequal distribution of power are accepted, hierarchy is respected and not questioned, and seniors are obeyed (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). While processes such as performance appraisals may be emphasised and advocated as an effective career management strategy in developed or Western countries, such processes seem to serve the additional purpose of favouritism in Nigerian organisations (Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013; Kamoche *et al.*, 2015).

Moreover, with high levels of diversity across ethnocultural, religious, linguistic, age and socio-economic dimensions, Nigeria's socio-cultural context provides thought-provoking perspectives in the exploration of the concepts of equality and workplace diversity (Anankwe, 2002; Mustapha, 2006). Specifically, managing ethnocultural diversity in Nigeria has been challenging (Adeleye *et al.*, 2014). With at least 371 cultural-linguistic (or ethnic) groups (as listed by Otite, 1975,1990 - **see appendix 4**) and over 500 dialects (Mustapha, 2006; Adegboye, 2013), the potential for ethnic conflicts is never too far away. It is assumed that the arbitrary drawing of boundaries following the European colonisation of African countries, and the subsequent use of colonial administrative practices served to accentuate hostile ethnic/tribal sentiments in Nigeria (Nzelibe, 1986; Mustapha, 2006; Lergo, 2011). The importance of the family as a socialising unit and source of identity in Nigeria is amplified further at the ethnic level. As such, Nigerians tend to relate more to their ethnic groups than to the seemingly abstract notion of a nation-state (George *et al.*, 2017).

Within organisations, as in the wider society, this disposition is ultimately manifested in preferences along kinship and ethnic lines because the culture (across ethnic divides) requires the promotion of values such as care and brotherhood (Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013). Indeed, most legislation and efforts aimed at attaining, "ethnic diversity equity have focused on the public sector, public education and political institutions, leaving private employers and organisations (banks inclusive) with substantial autonomy on how they manage workforce diversity" (Adeleye *et al.*, 2014, p. 203). Thus, the absence of processes, policies and practices to manage equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in private sector organisations in Nigeria subsists. However, specifically within the Nigerian banking sector, reliance on supposedly

strong egalitarian organisational values, as opposed to specific diversity management initiatives, may not spontaneously translate into feelings of equality amongst employees in the workplace. This state of affairs may reinforce among employees the perception that holding on to ethnic group identity, and the values that underpin it, guarantees career progression and even job security (Ovadjie and Ankomah, 2013; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). In essence, even within organisations espousing values such as equality, fairness and impartiality among employees, status and class differences, discrimination and favouritism may remain *clear and present* in the workplace. Indeed, one way this has happened is through a form of favouritism and nepotism or *tribalism*. I explore this interplay of ethnic values in Nigerian organisations through the theory of basic human values.

### 1.3. Brief Theoretical Overview

*The Theory of Basic Human Values* by Schwartz (1992, 1994, 1999), inspired by the works of Kluckhohn (1958) and Rokeach (1973), defines human values as “desirable goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 88). Cultural or ethnic values of countries are,

*“the implicitly and explicitly shared abstract ideas about what is good, right, and desirable in a society [and] the bases for the specific norms which guides people as regards what is appropriate in various situations.”* (Schwartz 1999, p. 25):

The priorities or choices inherent in these cultural values are considered to be reflected in “the ways that societal institutions (e.g. the family, education, economic, political, religious systems) function, their goals and their modes of operation [values can be drawn upon] to select socially appropriate behaviour and to justify their behavioural choices to others” (Schwartz 1999, p. 25). Based on this thesis, Schwartz (1992, 2006) adopts a concept of values that specifies six main features implicit in the other theories:

(1) **Values are beliefs** linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling. People for whom independence is an important value become roused if their independence is threatened, despair when they are helpless to protect it and are happy when they can enjoy it.

(2) **Values refer to desirable goals** that motivate action. People for whom social order, justice and helpfulness are important values are motivated to pursue these goals.

(3) **Values transcend specific actions and situations.** Obedience and honesty values, for example, may be relevant in the workplace or school, in business or politics, with friends or strangers. This feature distinguishes values from norms and attitudes that usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations.

(4) **Values serve as standards or criteria.** Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. People decide what is good or bad, justified or illegitimate, worth doing or avoiding, based on possible consequences for their cherished values. But the impact of values on everyday decisions is rarely conscious. Values enter awareness when the actions or judgments one is considering have conflicting implications for different values one cherishes.

(5) **Values are ordered by importance** relative to one another. People's values form an ordered system of priorities that characterise them as individuals. Values determine if and when they attribute more importance to achievement or justice, novelty or tradition. This hierarchical feature also distinguishes values from norms and attitudes.

(6) **The relative importance of multiple values guides action.** Any attitude or behaviour typically has implications for more than one value. For example, attending church might express and promote tradition and conformity values at the expense of hedonism and stimulation values. The trade-off among relevant, competing values guides attitudes and behaviours. Values influence action when they are relevant in the context (thus likely to be activated) and important to the actor.

Consistent with the argument of Schwartz (2006), this study reveals that some basic human values conflict with others (e.g. benevolence and power) whereas others show congruence or compatibility (e.g. conformity and security). Therefore, consistent with

Schwartz (1992), the “*structure of values*”, specifically among employees within organisations, refers to the ***relations of conflict and congruence among employee values***. In essence, this study recognises that values may be structured in similar ways across culturally diverse employees, which suggests that there is a universally applicable organisation of human motivations irrespective of culture. However, while the nature and structure of values may be universal, individuals and groups differ significantly in the relative importance they attribute to values. That is, employees have different value “priorities” or “hierarchies” depending on what is important to each individual.

Schwartz’s (2010) argument also has some resonance with other studies by Hofstede (1980) and House *et al.* (2004), who describe countries in Africa, such as Nigeria, as evidencing a high *power-distance* cultural dimension, similar to *hierarchy* values. Schwartz’s (2010) *embeddedness versus autonomy* values also has some semblance with Hofstede’s (1980) *individualism-collectivism* dimension and House *et al.*’s (2004) *in-group collectivism* dimensions. The views of culture by Hofstede (1980) and House *et al.* (2004) are discussed in greater depth in **sections 3.6; 3.6.1; 3.6.2**. In **section 1.3** and **1.3.1**, a more detailed comparison is presented between the perspectives of Schwartz (2010) and Hofstede (1980) along with a robust critique of both theories in **section 3.8**.

### **1.3.1. A Brief Critique of Cultural Theories**

Cultural theories, such as Hofstede’s (1980) and Globe Studies (House *et al.*, 2004), have been critiqued for reinforcing prejudiced categories of culture or presenting Western values as the model against which other parts of the world should measure up (Prasad, 2012). However, Schwartz (1992, 1994) has been credited with presenting value dimensions that reflect an individual’s everyday experiences and challenges, including when in the workplace. Schwartz simultaneously presents value dimensions that also reflect the solutions that societies adopt to regulate human actions and resolve everyday challenges (Imm Ng. *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, Schwartz’s value dimensions are purportedly found in all cultures and therefore represent the universal needs of human existence. Still, there have been some efforts to assess the relationship between Schwartz’s and Hofstede’s frameworks (Imm Ng *et al.*, 2007).

Schwartz (1994, p. 117) argued that his value types were different from Hofstede's dimensions, as they were:

*"... based on different theoretical reasoning, different methods, a different set of nations, different types of respondents, data from a later historical period, a more comprehensive set of values, and value items screened to be reasonably equivalent in meaning across cultures".*

While this study acknowledges some criticisms against cultural value studies like Schwartz's (discussed in more detail in **section 3.8**), some research by Nigerian authors validates aspects of these studies. For instance, the view that Nigeria scores high in hierarchy, conservatism and tradition values has been validated by Grzeda and Assogbavi (1999), Ehigie and Umoren, (2003), Okunoye (2004). Although other scholars argue that these value categories are conceptually flawed because Africa is viewed as a nation, not a continent (Adegboye, 2013). That said, there is a need to focus on the aim of this research and how it can be supported by an applicable theory. Therefore this study acknowledges Schwartz's (1992, 1994) theory of values.

Here, I use Hofstede's dimensions to support Schwartz's (1994) theory of basic human values to explore how the core national values of commercial bank employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of, and commitment to, organisational values. Further, I use Schwartz's (1992, 1994) model in this thesis for descriptions of differences or similarities between ethnocultural values of employees; generation of assumptions; revealing, analysing or challenging ethnocentrism; inspiring and encouraging further studies; facilitation of new data; and identification of the limits of, or gaps in, existing theory. This approach is significant because in Nigeria there is as yet no rigorous, empirical or reliable study or classification of Nigerian cultures from organisational and behavioural perspectives (Adegboye, 2013). Therefore, Schwartz's classification of cultures is adopted for this study, as it provides a basis for a descriptive analysis of ethnocultural values and their effects on organisational contexts. Nevertheless, criticisms of this theory subsist as well as calls for a more indigenous cultural value model for Africa such as *Ubuntu*, as discussed in the next section.

### 1.3.2. African Cultural Value Models - *Ubuntu*

Having acknowledged that cultural value studies neglect Africa's diversity by treating African countries as aggregated regions (Kamoche *et al.* 2015), the works of both Hofstede (1980; 1983) and Schwartz and Bardi (2001), assume a small number of African countries are representative of the continent (Mangaliso, 2001; Kamoche *et al.* 2015). A postcolonial critique of these studies is discussed in more detail in **section 3.8**.

Discontent with extant cultural value studies of mainly Western extraction have led to calls for a model of African cultural values that deal with the dynamics at play in organisations in an African context. Indeed, these calls have not precluded the idea that cultures can be integrated, in some respects, into achieving positive management outcomes such as employee commitment. For instance, some scholars argue that the success of many Chinese firms in Africa may be indicative of shared cultural values of interdependence, harmony, and respect between the Confucius and the contemporary African cultural values, such as *Ubuntu* (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Mangaliso, 2001; Ramose, 2003). The inherent characteristics of human interdependence through the *Ubuntu* philosophy emphasise 'reciprocity and the virtue of symbiosis' (Mangaliso, 2001, p. 24), which is summed up as: *a person becomes a person only through his or her relationship with and recognition by others* (Mangaliso, 2001, p. 21). This philosophy, if employed, can be a powerful force behind employees' work commitment and success in the workplace, and thus organisations that consider embracing this philosophy may turn out to be ones that sustainably balance complex contextual issues that involve employee-organisation interactions in an African context.

However, Kamoche and Siebers (2014) found that while some Chinese firms showed Chinese-African value adaptability through *Ubuntu*-related values like interdependence, in one study, Chinese managers perceived African workers as low-skilled and exhibiting contrary work attitudes which were antithetical to Chinese work practices. This perception may be attributable to cultural differences and may emphasise a need for management researchers to *also* focus on under-researched African values such as *Ubuntu* and its applicability in various workplace situations. Thus, while Africans share some qualities, the thinking that *Ubuntu* will enjoy broad

and universal applicability across Africa may suffer the same limitation as the presuppositions of Hofstede and Schwartz - the idea that Africa is a country, not a continent, and that Africans are more homogenous than heterogeneous. Thus, cultural value models – including Ubuntu, Schwartz and Hofstede - may require strategic applications based on country-specific dynamics. In recognition of this, in this study, Schwartz's theory of basic human values is strategically applied to incorporate elements of kinship, collectivism, traditionalism, ethnocentrism, core value homogeneity, ethnic heterogeneity as well as socio-historical, socioeconomic and interpersonal/relational factors.

#### **1.4. Research Gaps and Research Objectives**

The concept of organisational commitment (or employee commitment to the organisation), as defined by mainly Western scholars in developed economies, is driven by psychological factors (e.g. Mowday *et al.*, 1979; Scholl, 1981; Weiner, 1982; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Brickman, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Brown, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Ghosh, 2014). Little is known, however, about the impact of socio-cultural influences on organisational commitment or how it manifests in culturally diverse, developing economies like Nigeria. The implications for organisations in these economies are also largely unknown (Wasti, 2003; Gelade *et al.*, 2006; Wasti and Oder, 2009).

The need for these studies has become more pressing because of the increase in international business activities and the need to manage diversity that accompanies the recruitment of employees from diverse cultures across different geographical locations. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed as organisations tend to treat culturally diverse organisations as if they were “entirely homogenous” (Wildish and Cornelius, 2002, p. 221). By exploring the concept of organisational commitment as a culture oriented and value-driven construct, rather than only a psychological concept, this study will attempt to examine how it may be contextually driven by culture-related factors (Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Onder, 2009; Ghosh, 2014). These include societal perception/definition of job titles or status, the influence of ethnocultural values, ethnocentrism, as well as informal ethnic grouping/affiliation within organisations (Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Onder, 2009; Ghosh, 2014). Therefore, the objectives of this study are as follows:



1. Determination of the manifestations of national cultural values in commercial banks in Nigeria.
2. Evaluation of ethnocultural influences on employee practices in Nigerian commercial banks.
3. Investigation of the effects of ethnocultural values on commitment to organisational values.

### **1.5. Research Question**

By focusing on core ethnocultural values of bank employees from the Yoruba and Ibo ethnic groups (as typical of Nigerian values), this study seeks to uncover if, based on Nigeria's multi-ethnic composition and common core ethnic value orientation, employees demonstrate or display commitment to organisational values differently from what the managers of the business intend. Indeed, this research is not an endeavour to judge the rightness or otherwise of any particular view or action of employees. Rather, it seeks to reveal how culturally diverse employees show value allegiance (indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment) within organisations that espouse egalitarian values. This will require an examination of how employees negotiate value conflicts, prioritise values and how this may have implications for managing equality and diversity in these contexts. Consequently, this thesis will address the main research question **(MRQ)**:

**How are employees' organisational practices affected by national cultural values?**

The sub-questions to support this are:

- How do ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance? **(SRQ1)**.
- How do organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Nigerian Banks? **(SRQ2)**.

## 1.6. Key Constructs

This thesis examines how employee practices may reveal allegiance to ethnic group values or organisational commitment, making it imperative to clarify what “values”, “ethnic group”, “commitment” mean. The meanings of these terms are frequently debated in management research, and the preceding section offered some insight as pertains to the understanding of “values”. **Chapter Two** presents details of these constructs and definitions of “ethnic group”, “values”, and “commitment” as they are used in this thesis.

## 1.7. Thesis Outline

The rest of this thesis is organised as follows:

**Chapter Two:** presents a definition of the constructs used in this thesis and set within a post-colonial context of Africa and Nigeria in particular.

**Chapter Three** (The Literature Review - Culture and Employee Commitment) presents the socio-historical background against which Nigeria’s cultural and organisational contexts can be comprehended. Here, it is discussed how certain shared core ethnocultural values (that transcend ethnic boundaries) represent typical Nigerian national values. Various views about the meaning of national culture are also analysed before relating the more nuanced concept of ethnocultural values to employee commitment within Nigerian socio-cultural and workplace perspectives. This approach is significant for establishing a clear understanding of Nigeria’s unique ethnocultural characteristics and the interplay (congruence or conflict) between core ethnic values and organisational values of Nigerian employees.

**Chapter Four** (Perspectives of Employee Commitment in Nigeria) is an extension of the literature review and focuses on the conceptualisation of employee organisational commitment in a Nigerian context. While Chapter Three is directed towards a comprehension of *values* as the core or essence of [ethnic] culture (Schwartz, 1994), chapter four, focuses on studies on organisational and national culture as important concepts for understanding organisational commitment in Nigerian organisations. In

this Chapter, extant studies are explored in order to find a definition of employee commitment that fits into Nigerian socio-cultural peculiarities.

**Chapter Five** (Research Methodology) focuses on designing a specific research plan with which I intend to achieve the aim and objectives of this research and address the research questions. Here, the research logic, approach, philosophy, and strategy are articulated. This chapter also outlines how sampling is undertaken and how data is collected and analysed in this study, in addition to exploring some alternative approaches before identifying, justifying, or recognising the implications of the chosen approach for this thesis. I conclude this chapter by discussing the significance of reflexivity in this study as well as ethical considerations.

**Chapter Six** (Findings) contains the presentation and analysis of responses to twenty vignettes and twenty semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 5 and 6). I analyse four vignette scenarios and an interview guide in order to address the two sub-research questions specifically. The structure of the analysis I adopt follows a similar analytical strategy to that espoused by Miles and Huberman (1994) in which data are put into different arrays to construct a matrix of categories. I then group these sub-themes from the vignettes and interviews into core themes.

In **Chapter Seven** (Discussion) the findings from the case analysis are presented in the context of existing research related to cultural, organisational, and diversity management studies. This chapter addresses the two research sub-questions, exploring the relevance or applicability of extant theories and perspectives in providing the link between core themes and, in essence, confirm or disconfirm the literature.

**Chapter Eight** (Conclusions) sums up this study, presenting an overview of the findings as well as a recap of the research gaps, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis. The managerial and policy implications of the thesis are also highlighted, in addition to the limitations of the study and directions for future studies.

## **1.8. Conclusion**

This research seeks to explore how employee views of, and commitment to, organisational values could be culturally influenced and how this can, in turn, determine employee value allegiance. Using Schwartz's (1992; 1999; 2006; 2010) Values Theory, the study examines how ethnic values may influence employee organisational commitment in formal organisations where Western organisational value systems (egalitarianism) are espoused (e.g. Nigerian commercial banks).

The way in which an employee displays commitment to organisational values will reveal where the value allegiance of the employee lies in the workplace – whether towards ethnic values or organisational values (or a mix of both), and this will have implications for strategic management, and managing equality and diversity in these organisations. The researcher admits the possibility of bias in this study, but, as Farquhar (2012) points out, such predispositions will be recognised, explained or addressed reflexively within the research. This study, however, acknowledges that the views expressed by the researcher are perceptual and may well exhibit and represent cultural imperatives.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Defining Key Constructs

#### 2.1. Introduction

The following chapter presented details and background to the definitions of the concepts used in this thesis. Each section will present the three core concepts of “ethnic group”, “values”, and “commitment” as they are used in this thesis.

#### 2.2. Historical Context: Tribes and Tribalism

Anthropologists generally defined ‘tribal societies’ as politically autonomous societies characterised by a ‘high degree of self-sufficiency at a near-subsistence level’, ‘simple technology’ and a ‘distinctive language, culture and sense of identity’ (Jacob, 2012). As Europeans expanded their trade, settlement, and military domination around the world, they began trying to understand the different forms of society and culture they met. In the 19th century, ideas that societies followed a path of evolution through definite stages became prominent. One widespread theory saw a progression from hunting to herding to agriculture to mechanised industry (Lentz, 1995). City-focused civilisation and related forms of government were associated with agriculture. Forms of government and the social organisation were said to precede civilisation among pastoralists, and simple agriculturalists were called *tribal*. It was also believed that cosmopolitan industrial civilisation would gradually break down older localised identities (Seriki, 2007).

This link of tribes to prestigious earlier periods of Western culture contributed to the view that tribes had universal validity in social evolution. Tribe became a cornerstone idea for European colonial rule in Africa. However, due to their emergence during the age of scientific rationalism, the theories of social evolution became intertwined with racial theories (Hodder-Williams, 2010). These were used to justify the latter stages of the Atlantic slave trade (originally justified on religious grounds) and were later used to justify European colonial rule. The idea that Africans were a more primitive, lower order of humanity was sometimes held to be a permanent condition which justified

Europeans in enslaving and dominating them. Other versions of the theory held that Africans could develop but needed to be civilised by Europeans. This was also held to justify dominating them and taking their labour, land and resources in return for civilisation. These justifying beliefs were used to support the colonisation of the whole continent of Africa after 1880.

According to the account of Lentz (1995), calling nearly all African social groups tribes, African identities tribal, and African behaviour tribalism - in the era of scientific racism - turned the idea of the tribe from a social category into a racial stereotype. By definition, Africans were supposed to live in tribes, preferably with chiefs. The colonisers proposed to govern cheaply by adapting tribal and chiefship institutions into European-style bureaucratic states. If they didn't find tribes and chiefs, they encouraged people to identify as tribes and appointed chiefs. In some African countries, colonial racial theory led to favouring one ethnic group over another because of supposed racial superiority. This was the case in Rwanda. In Nigeria, emphasis on tribes was simply a tool of divide and rule strategies by the British colonial authorities. Marxists and dependency theorists, who began in the 1970s to analyse African history in terms of international and local class relations, provided an important impetus to the final *historicisation* of tribes. They asserted that 'traditional' structures, did not represent failed modernisation or chance remnants, but rather had their function in colonial and post-colonial capitalist production. The idea of the tribe and tribalism in Nigeria is linked to these historical roots (Seriki, 2007). It can, therefore, be argued that tribes in the strict anthropological sense no longer exist in Nigeria today, but they did in the pre-colonial past.

Before colonisation, groups that constitute what today is known as Nigeria belonged simultaneously to various social networks - nuclear and extended families, lineages, age sets, secret religious societies, village communities, chiefdoms, etc. Loyalties and identities were complex, flexible and fluid, sometimes overlapping, sometimes complementary, and did not add up to clearly demarcated tribes (Otitie, 1975; Mustapha, 2006; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013). These multiple identities continued into the colonial period and were multiplied yet further by the introduction of Christianity, schooling and industrialisation. Within their policy of indirect rule in Nigeria, the British

introduced new political geography which ran counter to these complex networks and demarcated tribes with appeals to 'tradition'.

Notably, in the Nigerian case, the 'invention' of tribes, was not merely an administrative act supported and mandated by the British authorities. It was also nourished by the active involvement of some African leaders (chiefs, mission school trained traditionalists, and elders) through their creation of political and cultural traditions and a new tribal history in their own interest. These actors played a central role in the codification of tribal customs, a process which usually entailed systematic changes in the previous social organisation. As Iliffe (1979, p. 324) summarised:

*...Africans wanted effective units of action just as officials wanted effective units of government [...] Europeans believed Africans belonged to tribes; Africans built tribes to belong to.*

However, paradoxically, while the anthropological conception of the tribe may be arguably extinguished, *tribalism* still pervades everyday life in Africa (Kamoche, 2013; Branine, 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013; Debrah, 2013). It's a term evoked by groups when uncertainty and mistrust are awakened and when the need for resource control and competition arise (Mustapha, 2006). Indeed, it is debatable whether what is termed tribalism in Nigeria may not be better described as *ethnic divisiveness*, intensified by inherited colonial divide and rule tactics of the political elites. Colonial governments told Africans that they came in tribes and rewarded people who acted in terms of ethnic competition. It is argued that this same message of division is still being spawned today by the political elites (George *et al.*, 2017). Thus, for leaders trying to build multi-ethnic nations, tribalism seems to manifest in pursuing political advantage through ethnic discrimination and chauvinism. The association of nation-building problems with tribalism, therefore, reflects the colonial heritage.

Nigerian ethnic divisions are quite real, but it is arguable that they have little to do with ancient or primitive forms of identity or conflict in the primordial sense. What seems clear, though, is that ethnic divisiveness in Nigeria takes intensely modern forms. It takes place most often in urban settings within formal organisations, almost to the same degree as in relations of rural communities. Nigerians are aware of the

divisiveness of tribalism. It is a concept evoked by ethnic affiliates mostly derogatorily to emphasise feelings of discrimination, antagonism and mistrust regarding relations with another group – tribalism is typically evoked as a complaint. Smith (2010) argues that this narrative used by both the ruler and ruled, mostly negatively in everyday life, is manipulated by the political elites to play off the psyche of the collective. Nigeria's former national anthem, written in 1960 by a British expatriate in Nigeria was abolished in 1978, because a line in the anthem read “...**though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand...**”. The anthem was accused of reinforcing tribalism rather than unity in diversity (Mphahlele, 1960). Indeed, the concept of *tribe* seems to have vanished in equality diversity, and inclusion (EDI) studies even in the global North (see Beech *et al.*, 2017) because, in these studies, the *tribe* is not noted as an identity category like ethnicity, race, and colour etc., which is an indication that scholars are becoming increasingly ‘tribe averse.’

Therefore, the term *ethnicity* or *ethnic group*, as opposed to *tribe*, is used in this thesis.

### 2.3. Defining Ethnic Groups

Peoples and Bailey (2011) described an **ethnic group** or an **ethnicity** as a category of people who share a common identity based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, history, society, culture or nation, as well as symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, art or physical appearance. Specifically, the authors state (p. 389):

*... an ethnic group is a named social category of people based on perceptions of shared social experience or one's ancestors' experiences. Members of the ethnic group see themselves as sharing cultural traditions and history that distinguish them from other groups. Ethnic group identity has a strong psychological or emotional component that divides the people of the world into opposing categories of “us” and “them.” In contrast to social stratification, which divides and unifies people along a series of horizontal axes on the basis of socioeconomic factors, ethnic identities divide and unify people along a series of vertical axes. Thus, ethnic groups, at least theoretically, cut across socioeconomic class differences, drawing members from all strata of the population.*



Other scholars, including anthropologists (Eriksen, 2001), sociologists (Mason, 2000) and social psychologists (Zagefka, 2009), broadly agree with this definition but mostly differ regarding what constitutes the basis for ethnic group membership or claims of membership. The variety of views regarding this are contingent on the ontological and epistemological position of scholars as well as the periods in history or historical events which influenced their views. As Hall (1998) observes, World War II marked a revolution in studies on ethnic groups because Nazi racism was seen as based on a conviction regarding biological supremacy and perceptions of racial superiority rooted in overtly essentialist interpretations of ethnic groups and race. In practice, though, studies of ethnic groups have tended to incorporate elements within various approaches such as primordialism, essentialism, perennialism, constructivism, modernism and instrumentalism. Smith (1999) documents these various approaches starting with the anthropological views of ethnicity:

*Primordialism* holds that ethnicity has existed at all times of human history and that modern ethnic groups have historical continuity into the distant past. For advocates of primordialism, ethnicity is closely connected with the idea of nations rooted in the Weber understanding of humanity as being divided into primordially existing groups based on kinship and biological heritage (Zagefka, 2009). This approach to studying ethnicity has spawned several strands. For instance, scholars of *essentialist primordialism* argue that ethnicity is a logic of human existence and that ethnicity precedes any human social interaction and is unchanged by it. Here, ethnic groups are seen as natural, not just historical. However, proponents ignore the consequences of sociological, demographic and socio-historical issues that are the hallmark of previously colonised nations like Nigeria, such as intermarriage, migration and colonisation (Eriksen, 2001).

Advocates of *kinship primordialism*, on the other hand, hold that ethnic communities are extensions of kinship units, fundamentally being derived by kinship or clan ties where the choices of cultural signs, such as language, religion, and customs, show this biological affinity. This way, the myths of common biological ancestry (a defining feature of ethnic groups under this approach) are to be understood as representing actual biological history. A challenge with this view, however, is that it is often the case that mythic origins of specific ethnic groups directly contradict the known biological

history of the group. Clifford Geertz (1967), who notably espoused Geertz's *primordialism*, suggests that human beings broadly attribute an overwhelming power to links such as blood ties, language, territory, and cultural differences. Ethnicity then, based on this view, is not in itself primordial. Humans perceive it as such because it is embedded in their experience of the world.

However, more sociologically oriented approaches to the study of ethnicity have also emerged. For instance, *perennialism*, as an approach to viewing ethnicity, focuses on nationhood but proponents see nations and ethnic groups as the same. Nation here is seen as a social and political organisation having an age-old or "perennial" character. Smith (1999) distinguishes three variants; the first is continuous perennialism, which claims that particular nations have existed for very long periods; the second is recurrent perennialism, focussed on the emergence, dissolution and reappearance – or metamorphosis - of nations as a recurring aspect of human history; and the third is Perpetual perennialism where specific ethnic groups have existed continuously throughout history.

Finally, advocates of *situational perennialism* argue that nations and ethnic groups emerge, change and vanish through the course of history. This view holds that the concept of ethnicity is a tool used by political groups to manipulate resources such as wealth, power, territory or status in their particular groups' interests. Accordingly, ethnicity emerges when it is relevant as a means of promoting collective interests and changes according to political changes in society. Examples of a perennialist interpretation of ethnicity are also found in Barth (1969), and Seidner (1982) who see ethnicity as the ever-changing boundaries between groups of people established through ongoing social negotiation and interaction.

Advocates of *instrumentalist perennialism*, while seeing ethnicity primarily as a versatile tool that identified different ethnic groups and limits through time, explains ethnicity as a mechanism of social stratification, meaning that ethnicity is the basis for a hierarchical arrangement of individuals. Here, ethnicity becomes intertwined with class and power. Noel (1968), a sociologist who developed the theory, argues that under *instrumentalist perennialism*, some relatively fixed group membership criteria (e.g., race, religion, or nationality) are utilised for assigning social positions. Ethnic

stratification is one of many different types of social stratification, including stratification based on socio-economic status, race, or gender. Ethnic stratification will thus emerge only when specific ethnic groups are brought into contact with one another, and only when those groups are characterised by a high degree of ethnocentrism, competition, and differential power (Omohundro, 2008). Therefore, based on the theory of *Instrumentalist perennialism*, some degree of differential power must be present for the emergence of ethnic stratification. In essence, the existence of inequality of power among ethnic groups means that one group can impose its will upon the other. In addition to differential power, a degree of competition structured along ethnic lines is also a prerequisite to ethnic stratification. The different ethnic groups must be competing for a common goal, such as power or influence, or a material interest, such as wealth or territory (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996).

Other views of ethnicity, such as *constructivism*, have been put forward by social psychologists who see both primordialist and perennialist views as basically flawed and reject the notion of ethnicity as a basic human condition (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). Advocates argue that ethnic groups are only products of human social interaction, maintained only in so far as they serve as valid social constructs in societies. Specifically, *modernist constructivists* link the emergence of ethnicity with the movement towards nation states beginning in the early modern period. Proponents like Hobsbawm (1983) argue that ethnicity and notions of ethnic pride, such as nationalism, are purely modern inventions, appearing only in the modern period of world history. They hold that before this, ethnic homogeneity was not considered an ideal or necessary factor in multi-ethnic societies.

In all, no matter the approach, ethnicity is an important means by which people may identify with a larger group. Some authors still argue that ethnic identity, even within nations, is not universal (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991) but rather a product of specific kinds of inter-group interactions, as opposed to an essential quality inherent to human groups (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2012). Such authors argue that while members of an ethnic group may claim cultural continuities over time, many of the values, practices, and norms that imply continuity with the past are frequently of relatively recent inventions. In Nigeria, ethnic groups differ from other social groups, such as clans, interest groups or social classes, because they emerge and change over historical

periods, resulting in feelings of, and claims to, common ancestry (typically rooted in the mythological narrative of a founding figure) (Mustapha, 2006). Ethnic identity in Nigeria is also reinforced by reference to “boundary markers” and unique characteristics.

Regardless of approach, in Nigeria, demarcation on ethnic group lines could still be “real” for group members across ethnic divides. Here, perceived ethnic differences form an important part of people’s everyday lives, or what Zagefka (2009, p. 231) termed “psychological realities”. While ethnic group membership may not be solely based on immutable biological differences, it is often viewed as such in broader Nigerian society (Adegboye, 2013). Thus, while primordialism may not solely define ethnic group values or identity in Nigerian organisations, it is frequently recognised as the basis, and group membership must be underpinned by some assumed genealogical evidence which should, at least in part, support and legitimise claims of ethnic “otherness”.

In Nigeria, ethnic groups may occasionally be fusions created by intermarriage, intermingling, and assimilation. In such fusions, the cultural constituents maintain a limited individual identity (Kalejaye and Alliyu, 2013), and groups may be composed of smaller groups. It is pertinent, therefore, to bring out a few distinct features of this definition. The first is that each ethnic group is identified with a particular geographical part of the country; second, culture offers the main social marker of ethnic groups; third, all the distinct ethnic groups form inseparable parts of Nigeria, as each is encapsulated in a wider network of social relations provided by the State. Finally, each ethnic group is also an interest group and a cultural manifestation of its indigenous or traditional ideology. Group members regard themselves as brothers and sisters or as members of the same family with implicit trust, dependability or trustworthiness, reciprocated support and defence whenever needed or solicited. Therefore, among Nigeria ethnic groups, continued membership is built on a group-member interdependence rationale implicit in indigenous African cultural value models, like *Ubuntu*. This is because ethnic group membership in Nigeria emphasises what Mangaliso (2001, p. 21) put forward regarding *Ubuntu* in terms of ‘reciprocity and the virtue of symbiosis’: *a person becomes a person only through his or her relationship with and recognition by others* (Mangaliso, 2001, p. 24). This inherent characteristic

of human interdependence through Ubuntu philosophy underpins the bonds between individuals as ethnic affiliates in Nigeria. As Kamoche *et al.* (2015) argue, if properly harnessed and strategically applied, these values can be a powerful force behind employees' work commitment and success in workplaces in Africa (this strategic application of cultural value models like Ubuntu is discussed **in section 1.3.2**).

Based on the above considerations, ethnic groups have been described as categories of people characterised by cultural criteria of symbols, language, value systems and normative behaviour, and whose members are situated in a particular part of the territory called Nigeria (Mustapha, 2006). However, as noted by Rakov (1990) and Kalejaye and Alliyu (2013), even within mostly similar groups, polarisation still abounds. This scenario presents relations among Nigeria's ethnic groups as complex because ethnic frontiers can also be confusing (Otite, 1990; 2007). However, in this thesis, "ethnic groups" *are a social category of a population that, in the larger society, is distinct, its members being bound by common ancestry, language, history, society, culture or nation, as well as symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, art or physical appearance.*

## **2.4. Defining Values**

Values have played an important role in the field of management, and have been used to characterise cultural groups, societies, and individuals, to trace change over time, and to explain the motivational bases of attitudes, behaviour and practices (Oyserman, 2015). However, scholars within management and the social sciences have broadly disagreed regarding the conceptualisation of the values construct, including the conception of basic values, the content and structure of relations among these values, and empirical methods to measure them (Rohan, 2000; Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004).

More recent theoretical and methodological studies (e.g. Schwartz, 2012; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013) have brought about a resurgence of research on values with an emphasis on basic values that people of all cultures recognise. For instance, Bourne and Jenkins (2013), while acknowledging Rokeach's (1973) seminal study on the concept of values, argue that values are enduring beliefs that are personally or socially preferable to converse beliefs, which transcend specific situations, and which guide

selection or evaluation of behaviour. Consistent with this definition, Schwartz (1999, 2012) identifies three universal human requirements that form the basis of all values: the need for biological survival, social interaction, and social and institutional demands for group welfare. Differences in the relative significance placed on these requirements indicate that they hold potential for conflict within groups and between individuals in the larger society. People resolve such conflicts by engaging in value comparison (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Van der Wal *et al.*, 2008) or negotiation (Schwartz, 2012).

Consequently, conflicts of values (Schwartz, 1999, 2012) arise because of a distinctive characteristic of values, which is *oughtness* (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). That is, values do not necessarily reflect how a person wants or desires to behave, but rather, they describe a person's internalised interpretations about socially desirable ways to fulfil personal needs (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). This distinction derives from values being partially influenced by societal or ethnocultural factors. Hence, personal values may prompt an individual to help another person, even when an alternative behaviour would provide more pleasure because the benefits to the group outweigh the inconvenience to the individual (Schein, 2010; Schwartz, 2012). The social aspect of values is therefore manifest in the view that individuals experience guilt or culpability when they act inconsistently with social, institutional or organisational expectations that they endorse (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). In this thesis, *values* are defined as *individuals' personal or shared internalised interpretations about how they should or ought to behave*.

## **2.5. Defining Organisational Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three general themes that characterise various approaches to the conceptualisation of organisational commitment, namely: effective attachment to the organisation, perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation, and a moral obligation to remain within the organisation. Employees with affective commitment undertake actions because they want to; employees with continuance commitment engage in actions because they need to avoid leaving the organisation, and employees with normative commitment engage in actions because

they believe they should.

Some authors (Ghosh and Swamy, 2014; Pool and Pool, 2007; Jaros, 1997) have pointed out that the significance of the model of Mayer and Allen (1991), lies in the common component among the three forms, which is an effect on an employee's intentions and decision to remain a member of the organisation. The model, therefore, has implications, firstly, for the relationship the employee has with the organisation and secondly, for an employee's intention to continue or discontinue membership in the organisation. Further, *affective commitment*, which is sometimes used interchangeably with *attitudinal commitment*, is made up of items that denote the emotional connection of the employee to the organisation (Kuchinke, 2008; Kunda, 2006; Wasti, 2003). Attitudinal commitment is at the core of the moral or emotional attachment of employees to organisational goals and values (Harris and Cameron, 2005; Mowday *et al.*, 1979) and reflects the strength of the individuals' "identification and involvement with the organisation" (Suliman and Iles, 2000, p. 408). Continuance commitment is based on an employee's identification with an organisation due to what Wasti (2003, p. 539) calls "economic and social ties." According to Meyer and Allen (1991), an employee could display continuance commitment based on insufficient job alternatives or previous sacrifices to the organisation.

Normative commitment, is born out of the employee's feelings of an obligation to sustain membership within the organisation based on certain internalised values obtained through a process of organisational socialisation, during which a strong fit between the employee's values and the organisation's values is achieved (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Normative commitment is reinforced through incentives (such as rewards), used by the organisation to create in employees a feeling of a need to reciprocate by continuing their membership in the organisation (Gosh, 2014; Morin *et al.* 2010; Jacobsen, 2000). This suggests that normative commitment places more internalised pressures on an employee to act in a certain way to meet the goals of the organisation.

However, the model of Meyer and Allen (1991) is not without criticism. Some authors

have argued that although there has been some success with studies using this model in the US, the idea of defining commitment in such a narrow way within organisations may be challenging in non-Western contexts, as cultural value differences may alter both theory and empirical results (Gosh, 2014; Gosh and Swammy, 2014; Cohen, 2007; Gregersen and Black, 1996). Cultural differences may, thus, provide a different basis for viewing the universality of this model of organisational commitment (Wasti, 2003), especially in emerging, culturally diverse economies such as African countries. Some scholars have also raised the issue of a need to examine commitment in an all-embracing and multi-dimensional way (e.g. Ghosh, 2014). Indeed, socio-economic conditions, such as a depressed labour market, may mean that turnover intentions could be a poor commitment indicator, as suggested by Meyer and Allen (1991). In essence, employees may remain attached to an organisation for fear of losing their job during a high rate of unemployment or sector redundancies, rather than due to a feeling of obligation to remain.

Furthermore, Meyer and Allen's (1991) perspective of commitment does not cover commitment to other individuals or groups (interpersonal commitment) or commitment to significant others including fellow employees, superiors, professional colleagues, trade union, and customers (Simon, 1990; Arai, 1995). In essence, how a multiplicity of factors (including ethnocultural, economic and psychological factors) influence each other could have implications for how employees display or demonstrate commitment to organisational values in the workplace. This could happen in several ways but specifically, of interest to this research, is how ethnocultural values influence the way in which employees demonstrate commitment to organisational values. In this thesis, "commitment" is seen as *employee identification and involvement with, and acceptance of, organisational values within the workplace, reflected in how the employee adopts and implements values and practices, which meet organisational goals and interests.*



## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Culture and Employee Commitment: A Conceptualisation**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I examine the ethnocultural aspects of indigenous banking in Nigeria before and after colonialism, this is followed by an exploration of the origin, development, structure and metamorphosis of Nigeria's ethnic groups. I also undertake an analysis of the main theoretical base on which this research is grounded. First, I present the historical background against which Nigeria's ethnocultural and organisational contexts can be comprehended. I then carry out an analysis of the various views on the meaning of national culture as well as the perceptions of organisational commitment (employee commitment, employee organisational commitment or employee commitment to organisational values). Finally, I link ethnocultural values, as a more specific and nuanced aspect of Nigeria's national culture, to employee commitment to organisational values within Nigerian socio-cultural and workplace contexts. This approach is significant for establishing a clear understanding of Nigeria's unique ethnocultural characteristics and the interplay (congruence or conflict) between core indigenous cultural values and the organisational values of Nigerian employees in the workplace.

In each section of this chapter, I explore the historical dimensions of indigenous banks as well as ethnic groups and cultures in Nigeria and highlight the significance of culture in the study of organisational commitment. I also analyse two specifically relevant classifications of culture - national and organisational cultures – and extend the meaning and differences of these culture types. I also engage in an analysis of the dimensions and characteristics of Nigeria's national cultures with reference to the theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992, 1999, 2006).

#### **3.2. Indigenous Nigerian Banks: An Ethnohistorical Overview**

##### **3.2.1. Pre-1952**

In 1929, a group of African businessmen set up the first indigenous bank in Nigeria. This bank was an offshoot of the stillborn Industrial and Commercial Bank - an overseas bank in London which had failed to launch because of the outbreak of World

War I (Ayida, 1960). The philosophy of its founders was mainly Afrocentric because its emergence was a response to the constraints placed on the African business community as a result of colonial policies. However, the operation of this bank was brief as it went into liquidation in 1930 (Azikiwe, 1956). It has been documented (Paton, 1948a, p.7) that its liquidation was based on the fraudulent activities of the managing director. Not only had he enriched himself from the bank's funds, but he also facilitated a highly misleading document which named the company's solicitors, auditors and secretary as individuals from leading firms in London despite those individuals having no idea that their names were on the document. In essence, the birth of Nigerian banking was characterised by two considerations at its early stages – the synonymising of Afrocentrism (and the nationalist values it sought to promote) with unconventionality in organisational settings, as well as a connection of the banking business and its Western essence with status, influence, wealth and affluence which were typical Nigerian values.

The second indigenous bank, the Nigerian Mercantile Bank, began operations in 1931, however, it also had a short and unstable existence and was found to be involved in “share pushing” (Paton, 1948b, p. 8), and one of the bank’s directors happened to be the fraudulent ex-managing director of the collapsed Industrial and Commercial Bank (Newlyn and Rowan, 1954). The bank unsurprisingly recorded losses in each year of its existence, and by 1936, the bank had wound down. Consequently, this second attempt at indigenous banking marked the beginning of a challenge that will eventually plague not just Nigerian banks but many private and public organisations in Nigeria’s post-independence - failure based on personal enrichment of its management with that personal enrichment being legitimised through some shared national value. In this case, the bank's idea of nationalism was engaging in giving uncollateralised loans to family and associates, most of which remained unpaid at liquidation (Hopkins, 1966).

Although the National Bank became the first “successful” indigenous bank to be established in 1933, it was followed by the Nigerian Penny Bank which was short-lived due to the “*fantastic way in which the affairs of the company were managed*” (Paton, 1948. p.8). More banks sprang up though with the establishment of the African Continental Bank and the Nigerian Farmers and Commercial Bank in 1947.

Worried by the rate at which banks emerged and subsequently failed, the colonial government in 1948, appointed Mr G. D. Paton, a consultant of the Bank of England, to inquire into the business of banking in Nigeria. Still, by 1952, at least 24 more banks had been established, and almost all would eventually fail. Against this backdrop, a motion was moved in the Federal House of Representatives for the establishment of a Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), although the colonial government did not give its full backing to this legislation establishing the CBN. Without a regulator, mass failure followed, and sixteen of the indigenous banks failed in 1954 alone (Newlyn and Rowan, 1954).

### **3.2.2. 1952-2009**

The period from 1952, through independence and to the 1980s saw the establishment of many banks, but not without laid down regulations, such as the 1952 Banking Ordinance, and the Banking Amendment Act. Uche (2010) gives an account of this era, which marked the beginning of banking regulation in Nigeria, as well as mergers and acquisitions which remain a hallmark of the Nigerian banking industry to date. It was also a period that witnessed the establishment of specialised banks, such as development banks and merchant banks: the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI) and the Nigerian Agricultural and Credit Bank (Adeyefa *et al.* 2016). Indeed, the period between 1959 and 1985 experienced some growth in the banking sector. By 1970, there was a total of fourteen commercial banks, which rose to twenty-nine in 1980.

From 1986, there was massive expansion and structural changes in the Nigerian banking sector. By 1991, there were no less than one hundred and twenty-one commercial, and merchant banks in Nigeria, made up of 66 commercial and 55 merchant banks (Uche, 2010). This growth has been linked to the deregulation of the economy by the federal government and the liberalisation of the banking licensing scheme (Adamolekun *et al.*, 2012). However, there were also associated consequences, for instance since 1996, the number of banks has decreased due to the distress in the sector caused by mismanagement, uncollateralised loans, ownership structure, poor corporate governance, inadequate regulatory and supervisory capacity, and under capitalisation (Soludo, 2004). These factors led to

sector redundancies, job insecurity, erosion of public confidence, and declining relationship commitment on the part of employees and customers. Bank distress alone accounted for the winding down of twenty-seven banks between 1994 and 2003 (Uche, 2010).

It is worth noting that bank failure was not peculiar to the first era alone, nor was it only typical of the colonial administration's policies, as such failure cut across all other periods as well, although more significant cases were recorded in the period 1986-2003. Drastic regulatory measures were therefore taken in the subsequent years to address these issues. For instance, the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), was established by Decree 22 of 1988, to ensure deposit liabilities of licensed banks. In 2004, the CBN issued a directive ordering banks to increase their capital base (paid-up) from ₦25 billion within 18 months or by December 2005. By 2006, only twenty-five banks remained as products of the resulting reorganisations, mergers and acquisitions.

However, between 2007 and 2009, many Nigerian banks sustained huge losses, particularly as a result of the global recession and their exposure to the capital market and the downstream oil and gas sector. Therefore, the CBN had to undertake capital and liquidity injections to keep eight banks afloat, as well as removal of their top executives and the prosecution of those who committed financial infractions (Sanusi, 2011). Despite the tumultuous history of Nigerian banking, there have also been some success stories (Uche, 2010). Nigerian banks attracted an estimated 34.8 per cent of the net funds inflow into Africa from 2004-2007. In 2010, Nigeria had the second highest number (three) of the top 20 banks in Africa, and eighteen of Africa's 200 largest banks were in Nigeria during this period.

### **3.3. Ethnic Culture and the Nigerian Banking Industry**

The reasons for the historical failure of indigenous banks have been advanced by Uche (1997; 2010) and include bad management, based on ignorance regarding the business of banking, and the fraudulent enrichment of management. Some authors quite bluntly refer to these failings as reflective of elements within the "African culture" and more specifically Nigerian cultural values which, in the context of formal Western-

style bureaucratic business norms and practices, reveals “*inherent dishonesty and lack of integrity of the African businessman*” (Ayida, 1960, pp.31-32). But as Uche (1997) points out, when a managing director approves a loan or an advance to his wife or other family members or buys luxury cars with the proceeds, he may not consider this as dishonest. Because these acts reinforce status, collectivism and traditionalism, they become ethnoculturally legitimated. Fry (1976, p. 116) reports that:

*It was a frequent experience that the bank lent working capital to an African for his business, but the owner would divert the cash into buying or building houses as a private investment.*

What seems to go unnoticed among scholars, however, is the way in which ethnicity seeped into the banking industry and how this can be linked to the state of the industry today where commitment to organisational values are often secondary to ethnic loyalty. It was not surprising that, faced with the possibilities of liquidation, most banks sought help from regional governments, who were representative of particular ethnic groups. The Western region represented mainly the Yoruba ethnic group and other minorities of that region. The Eastern Region represented the Ibo ethnic group and other neighbouring minorities, and the Northern region represented the Hausa-Fulani (Mustapha, 2006).

To survive, these banks submitted themselves to the control of the politicians in these regions in exchange for an injection of much-needed funds from the regional governments (Rowan, 1952, p.171). Unsurprisingly, employee numbers in the bank in each region reflected the preponderance of the dominant ethnic group and employment practices were designed to favour one group over others. In the same way that deviant practices were legitimated by ethnocultural perceptions of status, wealth and affluence in earlier banks, discrimination against some groups in this era was justified based on the cultural value orientation of remaining “a brother’s keeper” (Brown, 1964, p.3). Thus, National Bank of Nigeria, African Continental Bank, Agbonmagbe Bank and Merchants Bank, all sought help from regional governments and in essence from ethnic blocs (Brown, 1964). Indeed, most of these indigenous banks had inherent characteristics which never differed from those of the colonial-era banks. One was the policy among regional banks to mobilise regional savings and re-

lend to regional borrowers who were mostly ethnic affiliates and who, for various economic and legal reasons, lacked the collateral necessary to attract loans from British banks (Rowan, 1952, p.171). The point is that the Nigerian banking industry has a history of value conflict linked to its tumultuous colonial past as well as its ethnocultural history, which is analysed in the next section.

### **3.4. Nigeria's Ethno-Cultural History**

Nigeria's social boundaries have been described as artificial (Otite, 1990; Njoku, 2012). This depiction is also presented in the works of some African scholars such as Nnoli (1986), Anankwe (2002), Mustapha (2006), Mazrui (2006). The idea here is that certain ethnic groups and administrative societies were split and placed within the colonial state territories. Thus, although Nigeria formally became one entity in 1914 (after the amalgamation of the then Northern and Southern protectorates along with Lagos), Otite (2007) argues that many members of different social groups suddenly discovered that their kin and friendly neighbours were outside Nigeria's (new) political boundaries. People in the pre-colonial geographical region, now occupied by Nigeria, and its neighbours such as Benin Republic, Chad, Niger, and Cameroun were not only linked by blood or ancestry but also by commerce, as well as by associations signifying friendship and conflict.

These factors defined the nature of inter-group and intra-group relations as people of diverse ethnic nationalities in this pre-colonial region were not entirely strangers to each other. On the contrary, as Rakov (1990) suggests, there was something natural and shared among them. However, this does not mean that one could consider modern Nigeria as a society with a "national culture" because colonialism brought with it ethnic polarisation along with its subsequent contradictions, relationships, conflicts, and divisions (Mustapha, 2006). This state of affairs laid the foundations for ethnic relations in modern day Nigeria and, in effect, within modern day Nigerian organisations.

#### **3.4.1. Nigeria's Emerging "National Culture"**

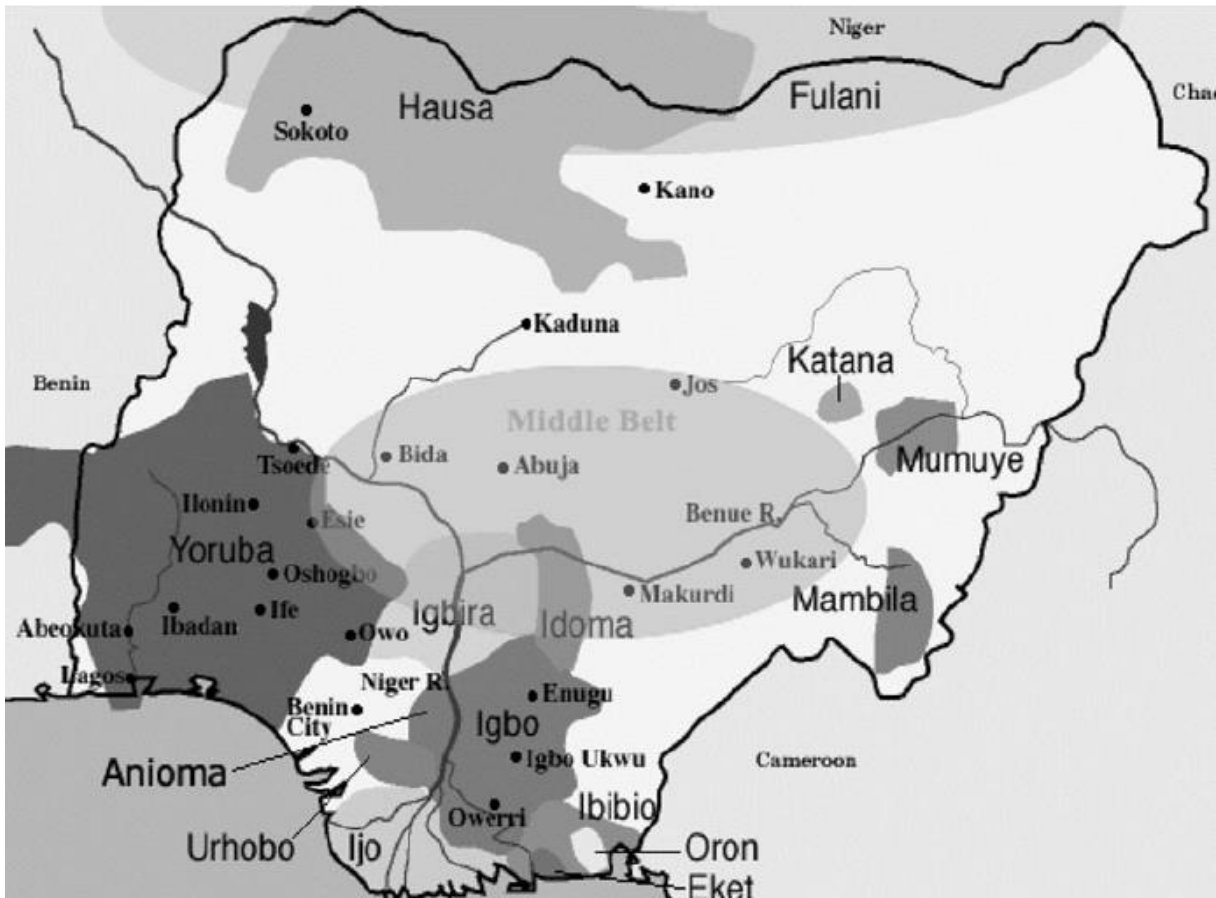
Nigeria's ethnic groups are better comprehended based on two notable features (Mustapha, 2006; Otite, 2007): The first feature occurs when a marginal group of

individuals are packed in between two larger ethnic groups, and adopt cultural elements from both ethnic groups, such as concepts and language. This group exists at the boundary of each of the ethnic groups, and aspects of their culture, particularly language, differ from those of the two core cultures. Examples of these societies are the *Obiaruku* and *Orogun* peoples of Delta State, whose cultures and languages incorporate both *Urhobo* and *Ukwani* dialects respectively.

The second feature relates to the seeming disappearance of some of the Nigerian peoples and their languages, for instance, the *Ashaganna* in Plateau State and the *Bolewa* of Bauchi State, who have been reported to be near, if not entirely, extinct, are being culturally absorbed by nearby larger groups (Mustapha, 2006). Thus, Nigeria has been characterised by a complex phenomenon, suggesting both dynamic ethnic heterogeneity as well as inherent core-value homogeneity, involving the extinction of some groups and the evolution of new ones over the centuries. This point informs the contention among African sociologists and anthropologists, as pertains to the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. There are scholars, who, by aligning with the views of older anthropological and ethnographic studies, have repeated the time-worn narrative that Nigeria is made up of *more than 250 ethnic groups* (e.g. Onyemelukwe, 1973; Anankwe, 2002; Adegboye, 2013). There are others who have gone further to provide a wider margin by, likely, counting the existing and extinct groups and arguing that Nigeria is made up of *over 470 ethnic groups* (Overseas Development Institute Report –DFDI, 2006). There are yet other scholars, who have identified *over 350 ethnic groups* in Nigeria. Otite (1990), for example, lists 371 existing ethnic groups. I have adopted this latter view based on documented evidence (**see appendix 1**). Also, this list is of interest to this thesis because, while provisional, the Yoruba and Ibo ethnic groups have been listed too.

### **3.4.2. Ethnic Groups in Nigeria**

The previous section discussed the dynamic nature of ethnic group structure and membership in Nigeria. This section reveals how this arrangement is rooted in broader sociopolitical considerations and how this has implications for the two ethnic groups that this thesis focuses on.



**Figure 1: Some ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria**

**(Source: Uchendu, 2010, p. 64).**

While scholars agree on Nigeria's ethnic heterogeneity, the argument that core value homogeneity subsists has also been advanced. In essence, even with (at least) 371 ethnic groups, some values are typical among Nigerians. This archetypical characterisation of core ethnic values in Nigeria is partly sustained by the evolving nature of ethnic membership, and by what Mustapha (2006) refers to as Nigeria's tripolar ethnic structure. According to the author (p.5):

*“There is, therefore, the numerical and political preponderance of the three majority ethnic groups, in their respective regions, and in the nation as a whole. The tendency of many minority groups to cluster – politically, linguistically and culturally - round the big three,*



*has given Nigeria a tri-polar ethnic structure which forms the main context for ethnic mobilisation and contestation.”*

In essence, while unique in many ways, core ethnocultural values widely shared by these three distinct groups (**see Figure 1**), as well as by clustering, metamorphosed, assimilated, evolved or evolving ethnic “minorities”, typify core Nigerian values. The three dominant ethnic groups - Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo - are therefore seen as broadly representative of other groups and are often used in most social science research. These groups collectively represent 68% of Nigeria’s population (Mustapha, 2006). The focus of this thesis on the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups does not, however, suggest that individual groups are not unique in their own right, but rather that, like all other groups, the core ethnocultural values espoused by members of the Ibo and Yoruba groups typify core Nigerian values. Additionally, I have left out the Hausa ethnic group for ethical and strategic reasons. At the time of this writing, much insecurity subsists in mainly the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, but with occasional flashes of religious extremism and terrorism reported across large swaths of Northern Nigeria where members of the Hausa ethnic group remain dominant. I had to be mindful of my safety and that of my participants and, therefore, I confined my research to the more secure Southern part of Nigeria, specifically Lagos. I discuss this issue under “Sampling” in **section 5.4.1** and I have noted this focus on Ibo and Yoruba groups and the non-involvement of the Hausa ethnic group as a limitation of this study (see **section 8.7**).

### **3.4.3. The Yoruba and the Ibo Ethnic Groups**

Like each Nigerian ethnic group, the Yoruba and the Ibo groups have their identifiable way of life, including mode of dress, values, food and food habits, cultural inclinations, and shared mechanisms of socialising their members (Adegboye, 2013). Each group also has its systems of marriage and family organisation and values (Otite, 1990), which have different implications for the economic and political life of the people and manifest in employee organisational behaviour as will be discussed later in this chapter. This distinction among these ethnic groups also manifests in the political structure and power relations as pointed out by Rakov (1990), who argues that the culture of devotion and respect for Kings and Chiefs or, those in authority, features

strongly among the Yoruba, but is absent among the village group arrangement of the Ibos.

While Rakov's (1990) study seemingly underpins arguments for ethnic heterogeneity, on the contrary, Adegboye (2013), who represents authors more focused on core value homogeneity, argues that this supposed disposition among the Igbos is a misrepresentation of this group. The author submits that respect for titled individuals and the elderly, which is a deeply rooted cultural value among the Ibo group (Achebe, 1958), is comparable to the respect for constituted authority as found among the Yoruba. Additionally, the assumption that this behaviour by the Ibo is reinforced by a gerontocracy erroneously omits a few exceptions (Mustapha, 2006); some subgroups within the Ibo ethnic group have been found to value the respect for Kings and Chiefs based on their social and power structure, similar to what obtains among the Yoruba. Examples include Igbos of *Onitsha*, *Osamari*, *Aboh* and the ancient *Nri* kingdoms (Otite, 2007).

Based on these similarities between these groups, Otite (1990) submits that cultural differences between Nigeria's ethnic groups are only different manifestations of broadly shared core cultural values. In essence, while practices of ethnic affiliates may differ based on the uniqueness of their ethnic groups, the underlying values which drive these practices typify core and shared Nigerian values. These ethnic values influence group members' behaviour and practices within the larger Nigerian society and, in effect, within Nigerian organisations, and include:

- a. An existing practice of respect for parents, elders (reverence for age), and people in positions of power and authority (deference to wealth, influence and affluence). This translates to respect for and loyalty to superiors in the workplace (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013; Adegboye, 2013).
- b. The trait of collectivism suggesting altruism. This is commonly demonstrated in organisations through the tendency for ethnic members and affiliates to relate informally through language (vernacular) as well as signs, symbols, gestures and gesticulations (Morand, 1995a, 1996a, 1996b; 2005; 2010;

Kamoche, 2013).

- c. Kindness and hospitality to others, as well as helping needy group members and affiliates. A good appraisal or recommendation for promotion from a manager to a subordinate based on ethnic affiliation or loyalty, rather than skill or experience, are manifestations of these socially rooted values in the workplace (Ituma *et al.*, 2011; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013).

As Mustapha (2006) argues, many Nigerians now speak languages and marry from ethnic groups other than theirs, an indication that core-value homogeneity may also be the outcome of increased frequency of mutual social interactions and socialisation within one country. However, the idea has been advanced that some local traits could have been altered based on the adoption of new values (Adegboye, 2013). This has been attributed to a combination of factors such as advances in communication technology, western education (in institutions within and outside the country), and mingling with other cultures from other parts of the world (through travel and trade). The suggestion, therefore, that culturally diverse Nigerian employees may evidence common or shared values may not imply a spontaneous manifestation of purely indigenous values in all instances. Indeed, as will be discussed later in this chapter, employee practices may reflect a negotiation among conflicting values (Schwartz, 2006) including ethnocultural and organisational values.

In all, what is clear is that Nigeria is ethnically diverse and that this diversity frequently presents challenges. I consider it imperative at this point in the thesis, therefore, to analyse some of these challenges and the effort made by the political elite to resolve them.

### **3.5. Diversity and Inclusion Challenges in Nigeria: An Overview**

Following the amalgamation of the northern and southern regions of Nigeria in 1914 by the ruling British colonial authority, there has been continued ethnic tension and conflict between Nigeria's disparate cultural groups (Sowell, 2004). This prompted various equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) programmes and initiatives designed to address these ongoing inequalities. The Nigerian government adopted the Federal

Character Principle (FCP) as a constitutional imperative in 1979 (Tion and Godwin, 2015) to ensure that appointments to public and private service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country. Such programmes have, however, been poorly implemented in the public sector with those in the private sector (such as in banks) tending to allow organisational values to take precedence over fundamental EDI precepts (George *et al.*, 2017).

Notwithstanding these limitations, some evidence suggests that EDI policies in Nigeria have also failed because of the rapidly changing ethnocultural landscape. Much attention has been narrowly focused on the emotive issues of ethnicity based on the assumption that many Nigerians owe their allegiance first to their ethnic group, not to the entity called Nigeria (Mustapha, 2006). Also, the basis for the validation of ethnic group membership across groups seems to be evolving (Otite, 1990). The intersection of multiple social identities of employees has led to a shift in how ethnic group identity is perceived within organisations (Anankwe, 2002). For instance, some employees have Ibo names but do not identify as (only) Ibo. This is because they were born in a predominantly Yoruba part of Nigeria, are capable of speaking Yoruba and not the Ibo dialect and have married a Yoruba woman. To these individuals, ethnic identity is intersecting and the lines of demarcation are shifting and fluid. These assertions are discussed in more detail based on the participants' responses in Chapter 5 and 6.

However, rather than adopting EDI policies, Nigerian banks seem to favour what they consider to be strong organisational values (Herbst and Soludo, 2004) linked to other contingencies such as team-mindedness, performance, and productivity. Furthermore, Adeleye *et al.* (2014) argue that private-sector organisations ignore government led EDI initiatives because of a perceived defect in some socioeconomic and sociodemographic indices against which policies, like the FCP, continue to be based (e.g. population census). These indices may be seen as self-serving for the narrow interests of some groups. Consequently, the process and outcome of population censuses in Nigeria have been historically contentious (Mustapha, 2006).

Further, Otite (1990) argues that Nigeria evidences ethnic heterogeneity, suggesting value divergence. However, core cultural value homogeneity (Mustapha, 2006) indicates more core value convergence. In essence, against the notion of ethnic heterogeneity and its inherent inequality (a basis of EDI policies), there is some

suggestion that Nigeria's ethnic groups may have become fundamentally more similar over time. Hence, the perception that EDI policies, within banks, are simply a reflection of what Freud (1917, p. 48) calls "*the narcissism of minor differences*" or the unnecessary magnification of inconsequential dissimilarities, subsists. (I engage in discussing these considerations in detail in Chapter 6).

Still, ignoring EDI policies and focusing on organisational values may be indicative of a myopic view of EDI issues within Nigerian banks. As Anankwe (2002) argues, in spite of organisational value statements, employee organisational practices may still implicitly and covertly mirror conflicts in the broader society. For instance, Ovadge and Ankomah (2013) show how manager-subordinate relationships in Nigerian organisations evidence favouring ethnocentric values such as hierarchy (respect for status) over organisational values of equality (as suggested by flat organisational structures). In essence, although Nigerian banks may espouse egalitarian values, their employees' daily work-life or practices may be more particularistic and ethnocentric. Yet, private organisations in Nigeria continue to have significant independence in managing diversity-related issues, if at all. It is suggested that, in reality, the leadership of most of these organisations avoid the issue of EDI or specifically managing ethnocultural diversity (George *et al.*, 2017), and that diversity structures, policies and practices are noticeably absent in the majority of private-sector organisations in Nigeria, including banks. These considerations form a background against which employee value allegiance develops.

In the next few sections, I undertake a more specific analysis of *culture* as the broader construct through which the concept of *values* - organisational or ethnocultural - can be articulated.

### **3.6. The "Essence" of Culture**

Culture is a comprehensive concept that embraces almost all factors that influence an individual's reasoning process and which shapes behaviour and impacts people's inclinations, choices, and general perception of the world around them (Kirkman and Shapiro, 2001). This suggests that, since most human behaviour is not innate but learned, culture is acquired over time. Therefore, despite the debate about the meaning of culture, as well as the many dimensions and perspectives put forward,

most writers broadly agree that culture is an inevitable aspect of daily human life.

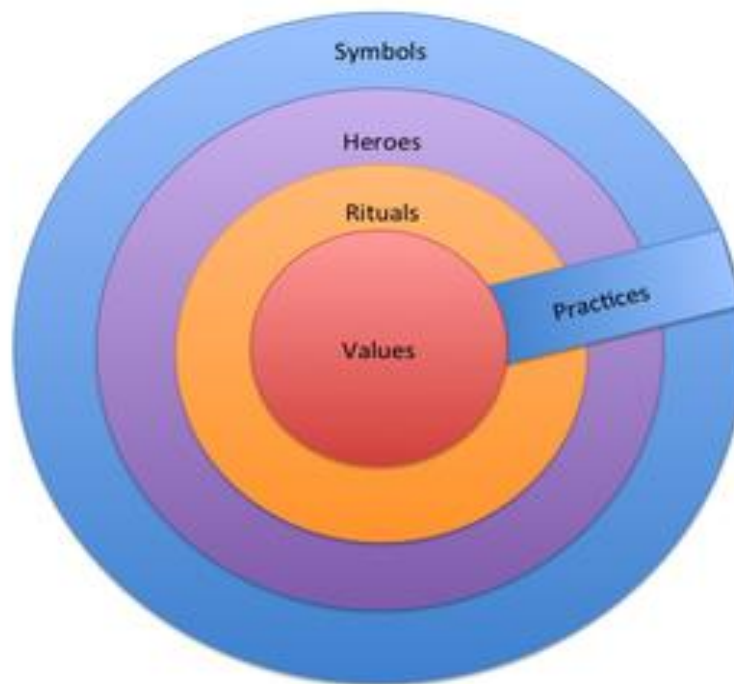
In spite of this common understanding, however, the debate on the elements that make up an all-embracing definition of culture subsists. Hammerly (1982, p. 74) attempted to include these elements in his definition and categorised culture into three parts: information culture, behaviour culture and achievement culture. Stern (1983, p. 36) focused on the observable and unobservable aspects of culture by dividing culture into three categories: “material culture, system culture, and psychological culture”. Stern (1983) explained that cultures deal with prevalent social attitude and habits that include daily life, behavioural norms, customs, tradition and general lifestyle. Relatedly, Lok (1997, p. 78) observed culture from two perspectives: the “positivistic” (also called structural or functional views of culture) and the “phenomenological” views of culture. Lok (1997) describes the positivistic perspective of culture as an inflexible variable made up of social subsystems and components, and the phenomenological view of culture as “a process of enactment, a root metaphor or something emerging from social interaction” (Lok, 1997, p. 78-79). This view also presents culture as a social construct - culture is flexible and can change and be changed to suit a society or an organisation’s existing needs or circumstances. To comprehend culture from this perspective would require having in-depth knowledge of a society’s, or an organisation’s, dynamic way of life through its *values*.

Furthermore, this comprehension suggests that culture can be observed, perceived, analysed and studied in the behaviour and practices of individual members of society. Thus, Peck (1998, p. 19) defined culture as, “The accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people”. Peck argues that culture can also be seen as membership in a community with common social space and history, reasoning, and shared values. In line with this argument, Hofstede (1980, p.25) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” and “patterns of thinking and feeling and potential acting” (Hofstede, 1991. p. 4). Hofstede presents the view that culture, though a vague concept, can be studied from two perspectives that seem interconnected and complex. A narrow view, which could mean civilisation (people) and a broad perspective better described as anthropology, which involves thinking (values), feeling (outlook) and acting (behaviour). The GLOBE project (House *et al.*, 2004, p. 15) defines culture as:

*“Shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across generations.”*

In this thesis, I view “culture” based on these various perspectives but more from the definition of Hofstede (1980, 1991) and House *et al.* (2004). A significant word in Hofstede's definitions is “programming”. It suggests that culture is not something that is easily learned, but is rather a process, albeit a slow one, of growing into society. It includes “learning *values* (dominant beliefs and attitudes), partaking in rituals (collective activities), modelling against heroes (role models), and understanding symbols (myths, legends, dress, jargon, and lingo)” (Jones, 2007, p. 3). These elements of culture are learned from birth and are influenced by family, school, religion, workplace, friends, television, newspapers and books, as well as many other sources. These elements are not static, but transferrable and are handed down from one generation to the other. This reinforces the idea that culture is a social construct because it is societally legitimated and sanctioned.

This structure of culture is depicted in Hofstede's (1980) “onion diagram” (**Figure 2**), as validated by House *et al.* (2004). In the diagram, values, as the core of culture, are expressed through rituals, heroes, and symbols (practices). Symbols are utterances (words), gestures, pictures or objects that convey distinct meanings, have notable implications, and are understood by only those who share a common culture, language, dialect, jargon, or fashion (e.g. dress and hairstyle) belonging to this class. Hofstede (1980) notes that while new symbols are easily developed, even deep-rooted ones disappear; in essence, as Schwartz (2010) argues, symbols are superficial. Further, symbols from one cultural group are frequently copied by others. Therefore, it can be argued that symbols represent the outer layer of culture (Hofstede, 1980).



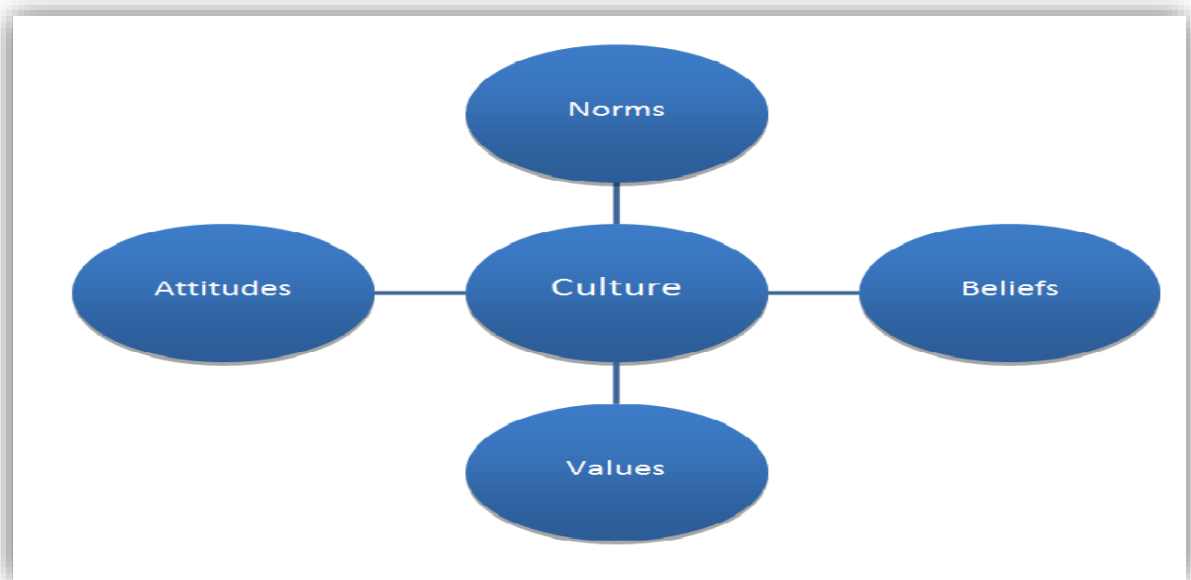
**Figure 2: Hofstede's "Onion diagram" showing the structure of culture**

Heroes are persons, living or dead, existent or imagined, who possess features that are greatly cherished in a culture and serve as models for behaviour. Successful business people, for example, often become cultural heroes (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Rituals are shared activities, which could qualify as unessential in principle, but which are considered socially indispensable and thus necessary for a group and required in order to reach desired ends. Thus, rituals are observed for their sake. Examples of rituals include ways of paying respect to others (e.g. greetings) as well as group ceremonies (e.g. religious ceremonies).

This suggestion (that culture is a relatively constant and enduring, yet dynamic and flexible construct) seems to be a more realistic approach for this thesis. It suggests that culture assumes an adaptable or an intransigent dimension depending on other factors, which can be economic, social and organisational (for instance, the rate of pay, changes in tastes and preferences, changing societal or family values, or the type of organisation - public or private, formal or informal). Culture is, therefore, a system of symbols, norms, belief, meanings, which is transferred from one generation to another and differentiates groups of people with distinct characteristics such as origin,



gender, religion, race, socio-economic class, ethnicity and political views (**See Figure 3**). Culture has *values* at its core, reflected through practices which can translate into how employees demonstrate organisational expectations or imperatives, such as organisational commitment.



**Figure 3: Indicators of culture**

Values are strong, passionate sentiments. According to Hofstede *et al.* (1997, p. 8) values have two sides, or a dual pointed arrow, depicting “a minus and a plus side. They deal with evil versus good, dirty versus clean, ugly versus beautiful, unnatural versus natural, abnormal versus normal, paradoxical versus logical, irrational versus rational.” Values are learned early from childhood and are implicitly unconscious. Primarily due to this reason, many, who hold values, are not even aware of them, and outsiders only rarely discuss them, because they cannot be observed directly, but are inferred based on the actions of people in different situations. Values are a common element in organisational and national cultures, and therefore, an understanding of values is fundamental to this thesis and is undertaken hereunder starting with an analysis of national culture and organisational culture.

### 3.6.1. National Culture: A Critical Overview

The analysis of culture at the national or societal level is perhaps the most predominant in empirical studies on the general perceptions of cultural differences. Hofstede (1980, 1991) argues that cultural differences (or cultural divergence) between nations can be described and measured using a set of what he called “dimensions.” These dimensions reflect answers to “universal problems of human societies” (Hofstede, 2006, p. 883). This view established the groundwork for understanding culture and cultural values as it relates to organisational imperatives (e.g. organisational culture and organisational commitment). More recently, the link between national and organisational cultures has been further buttressed by other writers, who have presented the view of cultural homogenization (Howes, 1996) or the cultural convergence view (Dorfman *et al.*, 2004). Under this view, national cultural differences are “replaced by global corporate cultures and universal organisational identification” (Jack and Lorbiecki, 2007, p. 82). Another perspective suggests that while nations and societies play a major role in the construction of social reality in organisations, multiple social identities exist within a national culture (e.g. Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003). In line with the definition of culture as the “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1991), culture, therefore, whether national or organisational, can be conceptualised and explored at different levels of observability and includes values, norms, practices and fundamental assumptions (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al.*, 2004; Schein, 2010).

Hofstede *et al.* (1990) also argue that national culture should be defined in terms of values, while organisational culture should be defined in terms of practices. Also, while organisational culture is acquired through socialisation at the workplace, the fact that people enter organisations as adults suggests that their national values are already fixed and stable and may take a long time (even generations) to be changed. In contrast, organisational culture is embedded in practices learned on the job, and can, therefore, change much faster than national culture. However, the GLOBE project (House *et al.*, 2004) included both values-based and practices-based measures of national culture and organisational culture in its analysis of culture. According to Hofstede (1980), national culture is the embodiment of the shared and unique ways a group of people conduct themselves and respond to others and which, though

relatively enduring, is still subject to change. Thus, national culture, like organisational culture, is an indoctrination (programming) of members of a group into a patterned and shared way of life or beliefs.

However, national culture differs from organisational culture. For instance, within organisations, culture is taught to existing and new members through a conscious process of socialisation. Therefore, it is possible that members may refuse to accept or continue identification with organisational culture once their membership of the organisation ends, whereas, national culture depicts a belief system that members are born into, and grow up to accept it as the best way to reason, think and act. Both national culture and organisational culture, however, have *values* as a central component (Mwaura *et al.*, 1998; Nazarian *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, when analysed from a traditional African perspective, national culture is vital to people's daily life. This is because it is a tool that facilitates the "sharing of emotions and meanings" by a group in such a way that people can understand "how their society, community or organisations function and how to behave within it" (Ba Banutu-Gomez, 2002, p.30).

Indeed, there are some similarities between the definitions of national cultures by different African ethnic groups from several African countries. For instance, according to Ba Banutu-Gomez (2002), the African peoples of the Manjako ethnic group found in the African countries of Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal view national cultures as: *"Our world of yesterday; our world of today and our world of tomorrow, which creates and nurtures cooperation, development and sustainability of our people and our society"*. This view is similar to the concept of national culture as seen by the Ibo ethnic group (mostly found in the south-east of Nigeria), who refer to culture variously as "Omenala" or "omenala anyi", "omume anyi" or "ihe ejiri mara anyi." These views of culture have been described frequently as *practices that are peculiar to us and just to us; our identity; what defines us naturally, our hereditary way of life, which can change, our behaviour - what we are known for* (see Stanton *et al.*, 2012). This understanding of culture by the Igbo and Manjeko ethnic groups fits into Schein's (2010) definition of culture and thus presents national culture as *shared emotions and meanings, which is sustained based on people's understanding of past and present ways of doing things*.

It has also been observed by Wasti (2002) that Schein's (2010) view of culture expounded on the link between employee organisational behaviour (e.g. organisational commitment) and national culture. It suggests the possibility that the perception and assessment of organisational commitment by employees may be influenced by the employees' national cultural values (Robert and Wasti 2002; Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Oder, 2009), which is a view supported by Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001) and House *et al.*, (2004).

Therefore, grouping these above-mentioned scholarly perspectives, and coupling them with the views of African and Nigerian ethnic groups, national culture may be seen as:

*A form of fundamental rules (assumptions), which are conceived, learned, or developed by a group (in an organisation or a nation), as it learns to cope with its challenges (which could come from external sources or linked to challenges of internal integration) through learning what has worked adequately and effectively enough to be cherished (valued) and communicated to new and existing members as the right way to understand, think and feel in relation to those problems.*

The above-listed points suggest that national culture, in addition to being a fundamental aspect of a people's way of life, possesses a multi-dimensional nature. National culture can be invisible, yet noticeable, constant, yet dynamic (Rollinson and Broadfield, 1998; Milikic and Janicijevic, 2009). This understanding defines the thrust of this thesis because, based on this view, national culture embodies the immediate and long-term conscious and unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings, assumptions, values, attitudes, goals, actions and reactions of a people. It influences the way people behave towards other individuals, groups, organisations, and within society as a whole.

However, views of national culture, like those of Hofstede's (1980), are not without criticism; some writers have questioned the capacity of instruments or methods, such as attitudinal surveys (which Hofstede used), to measure or compare cultures cross-nationally (Oyserman *et al.*, 2002; Kitayama, 2002; McSweeney, 2002a; Tung, 2008). According to Hechter (2000, p. 697), "our capacity to accurately assess these values

is unimpressive". Relatedly, Wagner (1975, p.11) wrote: "aggregating mightily, one can speak of national cultures. The chief attribute of such a broad concept is its uselessness". Tied to this is what surveys are meant to achieve. As McSweeney *et al.* (2010, p. 4) contend, surveys provide "a system of generalisations that can be used to make correct predictions." Indeed, this was what Hofstede intended when he identified his initial four dimensions (see Hofstede *and* Hofstede, 2001, p. xix). However, culture influences, and is influenced by, other factors, and is, therefore, more dynamic than stable, which limits any claims regarding the capacity to predict this concept (Oyserman *et al.*, 2002; McSweeney *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, some authors question Hofstede's aggregation of national cultures within an organisation because they argue that a study fixated on only one company cannot possibly provide information on the entire cultural system of a country (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007). Robinson (1950) described (in earlier studies) such designation of the characteristics of one level to other levels as an ecological misconception, while Galtung (1967) described it as the fallacy of the wrong level. Klein and Kozlowski (2000) therefore argue that relationships identified at one level of analysis may be stronger or weaker, or change direction at a different level of analysis. Also, Nasif *et al.* (1991) argue that Hofstede's research considers the domestic population as the same, when in fact, many nations, such as countries in Africa (and specifically Nigeria), are groups of ethnic units. Nations, therefore, should not be the appropriate units of analysis, as cultures are not necessarily bounded by borders (McSweeney, 2002a; Oyserman *et al.*, 2002).

Some African authors have also challenged the validity of Hofstede's research. By classifying Africa into one culture (see Hofstede and Hofstede 2001, pp. 151, 286) Hofstede treats Africa as a nation and not a continent. Although African cultures broadly espouse some basic similarities, each African ethnicity has their distinct cultures as is the case with Nigeria (Ogbor and Williams, 2003; Mustapha, 2006; Mazrui, 2006; Adegboye, 2013). Further, the classification of West African culture as feminine under masculinity-femininity dimensions may not be an accurate representation of Nigerian culture dimensions. For instance, the result of studies carried out by Ogbor and Williams (2003) show that in most Nigerian cultures, masculinity tends to be predominant, while a balance between femininity and

masculinity could also be found in other areas but to a lesser degree. This supposed misconception of the Nigerian cultural context is reflected in criticisms by postcolonial theorists (**see section 3.8**).

A concern of note when articulating the concept of culture, therefore, is that perspectives like Hofstede's (1980) may compel a dependence on national labels for the analysis of national cultures as the sole explanation for cultural differences, thereby suggesting that nations are implicitly homogeneous. This view does not recognise the ethnic diversity that may exist within a nation like Nigeria nor does it recognise any possible within-group differences. The GLOBE study (House *et al.*, 2004) attempts to avoid this conceptual slip by adopting the concept of *societal cultures* to account for differences amongst various cultures within nations.

In this thesis, however, I adopt my earlier articulated view of national culture as:

*A form of fundamental rules (assumptions), which are conceived, learned, or developed by a group (in an organisation or a nation), as it learns to cope with its challenges (which could come from external sources or linked to challenges of internal integration) through learning what has worked adequately and effectively enough to be cherished (valued) and communicated to new and existing members as the right way to understand, think and feel in relation to those problems.*

In places where I use the term “ethnic culture”, however, I do so in order to capture the diverseness of the Nigerian socio-cultural contexts; an approach which I adopt to create in the reader a sense of common, shared and unified core cultural values among otherwise dispersed and diverse ethnic groups under a single collective “nationality” (Gellner, 1983; Jenson, 2016).

### **3.6.2. Perspectives on Organisational Culture**

Smircich and Morgan (1982) argued that the concept of culture has been increasingly linked to the study of organisations. Calls for a cultural perspective on organisations have arisen with the recognition of the symbolic aspects of organised settings. The concept of organisational culture was first used in Silverzweig and Allen (1976) and has remained a common term and concept used in differentiating between

organisational and national values, although sometimes the lines between the two tend to blur. Wilson (2001, p. 354) argues that “the concept of culture has principally stemmed from the study of ethnic and national differences in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and social psychology.” In turn, the study of culture using this broadly multi-disciplinary approach has churned out countless definitions of organisational culture by scholars. Perhaps the most commonly known definition of organisational culture, originally credited to Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 4), is “the way we do things around here.” However, several authors also offer their views regarding the construct: Organisational culture has been defined as a belief system shared by an organisation's members (Spender, 1983); strong, widely shared core values (Peters and Waterman, 1982; O'Reilly, 1983); collective understandings (Van Maanen and Barley, 1983); a set of shared, enduring beliefs giving meaning in people's work lives (Kouzes *et al.*, 1983; Kouzes, 2003); and the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has developed to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1985). Organisational culture is demonstrated in the distinctive characteristics of the organisation and should be viewed as the right way in which things are done, and problems are understood and solved in the organisation (Van Maanen and Barley, 1983; Sun, 2008).

Consequently, organisational culture is “the deeply rooted values and beliefs that are shared by personnel in an organisation” (Sun, 2008, p. 137). However, it is also the case that organisational values are not immune to the influence of societal or national values, although the extent and dimension of such influences has been a source of debate (Smircich and Morgan, 1982; Adegboye, 2013). For instance, in Hofstede's (1992) view, deeply held national values and practices of employees in an organisation can be traced to the very core of the organisation's culture. House *et al.* (2004) also argue that individuals, as members of the organisation, will express their deeply rooted national values in the form of organisational practices. Sun (2008), therefore suggests that, for some employees, values will be so deeply held that they may be hard to change. In essence, organisational culture is a social construct. As a social construct, it can be seen as “societal value systems, values, beliefs and assumptions of organisations, which can be integrated into the socialisation process of the organisation” (Lok, 1997, p.751), as learned from or influenced by the larger society

(Wilson, 2001). It can also be seen as “important values, beliefs, and understandings that members of an organisation share in common” (Sun, 2008, p. 137). Thus, an effective organisation should have a strong culture that can attract, keep, and reward employees for showing commitment to its goals and values. Therefore, employee commitment to common organisational values typically characterises strong organisational cultures. These preceding studies suggest that organisational culture refers to (Schneider, 1987; Wilson, 2001; Sun, 2008; Serpa, 2016):

- (a) The values that lie beneath what the organisation rewards, supports and expects.
- (b) The norms that surround and underpin the policies, practices and procedures of organisations.
- (c) The meaning incumbents share about the norms and values of organisations.

While I acknowledge that many other definitions of organisational culture still exist, the ones which I state in this thesis tend to incorporate the conceptual elements that are present in most other definitions. Additionally, the understanding that culture is complex is relevant to this thesis because, while there seems to be no single accepted definition, most existing definitions share similar social constructs, including “values, understanding, perceptions, beliefs, and expectations” (Lok, 1997, p.78).

In contrast to other authors who focus on the social aspect of culture, Schein (2010) also incorporates the socio-psychological view. Schein argues that organisational culture is best viewed as a set of psychological tendencies or ‘basic assumptions’ that members of an organisation possess, which leads them to think and act in certain ways, explaining the concept as (Schein 2010, p. 9):

*“A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.”*



Schein's (2010) definition incorporates the view that culture is both a dynamic and flexible, as well as a deep-rooted and rigid, way of life. This "shared end" or shared values serve as a source of motivation and commitment for employees within the organisation. The significance of the above definition from a social constructionist perspective is based on its connectedness to a much earlier held view of organisational culture by Haggett (1975). According to Haggett, culture describes "patterns of behaviour that form a durable template by which ideas and images can be transferred from one generation to another, or from one group to another" (Haggett, 1975, p. 238). Both Haggett's and Schein's definitions are significant to current views of the meaning of organisational culture and, incidentally, to this thesis because both authors acknowledged key culture perspectives that distinguish organisational culture from other kinds of culture. Both definitions argue that organisational culture represents meanings "connected and expressed through social interactions" (Wilson, 2001, p. 353) and that the transfer of organisational values and behaviour takes place through social interaction between members of a group. Thus, both views support the social construct dimension of organisational culture, by defining it as a pattern of behaviour that is subject to change and can be taught to members through social interactions. In the next section, I undertake the articulation of the concept of values as the core of culture and a fundamental link between ethnic culture and organisational culture.

### **3.7. The Conceptualisation of Values**

Values have been a central concept in the social sciences since Durkheim (1897/1964) and Weber (1905/1958), both for whom values were crucial for explaining social and personal organisation and change. Values have also played an important role in the field of management and have been used to characterise cultural groups, societies and individuals, to trace change over time and to explain the motivational bases of attitudes and behaviour (Bik, 2010). Over time, however, scholars have broadly disagreed regarding the conceptualisation of the values construct.

More specifically, the debate has been around the conception of basic values, the content and structure of relations among these values, and the empirical methods used to measure them (Rohan, 2000; Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004). More recent theoretical and methodological studies (e.g. Smith and Schwartz, 1997; Schwartz, 2012; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013) have brought about a resurgence of research on values with emphasis on basic values that people in all cultures recognise. Bourne and Jenkins (2013), while acknowledging a seminal study on the concept of values by Rokeach (1973), argue that values are enduring beliefs that are personally or socially preferable to converse beliefs, which transcend specific situations, and which guide selection or evaluation of behaviour.

Consistent with this definition of values, Schwartz (1999, 2012) identifies three universal human requirements that form the basis of all values: The need for biological survival, social interaction, and social and institutional demands for group welfare. According to Schwartz, differences in the relative significance placed on these requirements indicate that they hold potential for conflict within and between individuals and groups in the larger society. People resolve such conflicts by engaging in value comparison, which is a cognitively-driven process (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Van der Wal *et al.*, 2008). *Conflicts of values* arise because of a distinctive characteristic of values, which is *oughtness* (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). This term indicates that values specify an individual's personal beliefs, how he or she "should" or "ought to" behave. That is, values do not necessarily reflect how a person wants or desires to behave, but rather, they describe a person's internalised interpretations about socially desirable ways to fulfil personal needs (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013).

This distinction derives from values being partially influenced by societal culture. Hence, personal values may prompt an individual to help another person, even when an alternative behaviour would provide more pleasure because the benefits to the larger society outweigh the inconvenience to the individual (Simon, 1990; Schein, 2010; Schwartz, 2012). The social aspect of values manifests in the view that individuals experience guilt when they act inconsistently with social or institutional

expectations which they endorse (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). This consideration informs how values are viewed in this thesis: *individuals' personal or shared internalised interpretations about how they should or ought to behave* in the larger society (Ravlin, 1990; Oyserman, 2015). These views, along with the conceptualisation of values by Schwartz (1999, 2012), are significant to this thesis and are further discussed in the following sections with a focus on how the structure of values evokes value conflict.

### **3.7.1. Values and Value Conflict**

Schwartz (1992) derived seven types of values (**see Figure 4**), structured along three polar dimensions. These were validated using the author's value survey of 56 single values (of which 45 values showed equivalence) submitted to 35,000 respondents (teachers and students) from 49 countries. A total of 56 value items were developed and distributed to 87 teacher and student samples from 41 cultural groups in 38 nations between 1988 and 1992. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each value as a guiding principle in their lives. These seven (individual level) value types are considered to form three bipolar (societal level) dimensions, which express the contradictions between the alternative resolutions of the certain basic human needs (see Schwartz 1999, pp. 26).

# Schwartz' theory of values\*

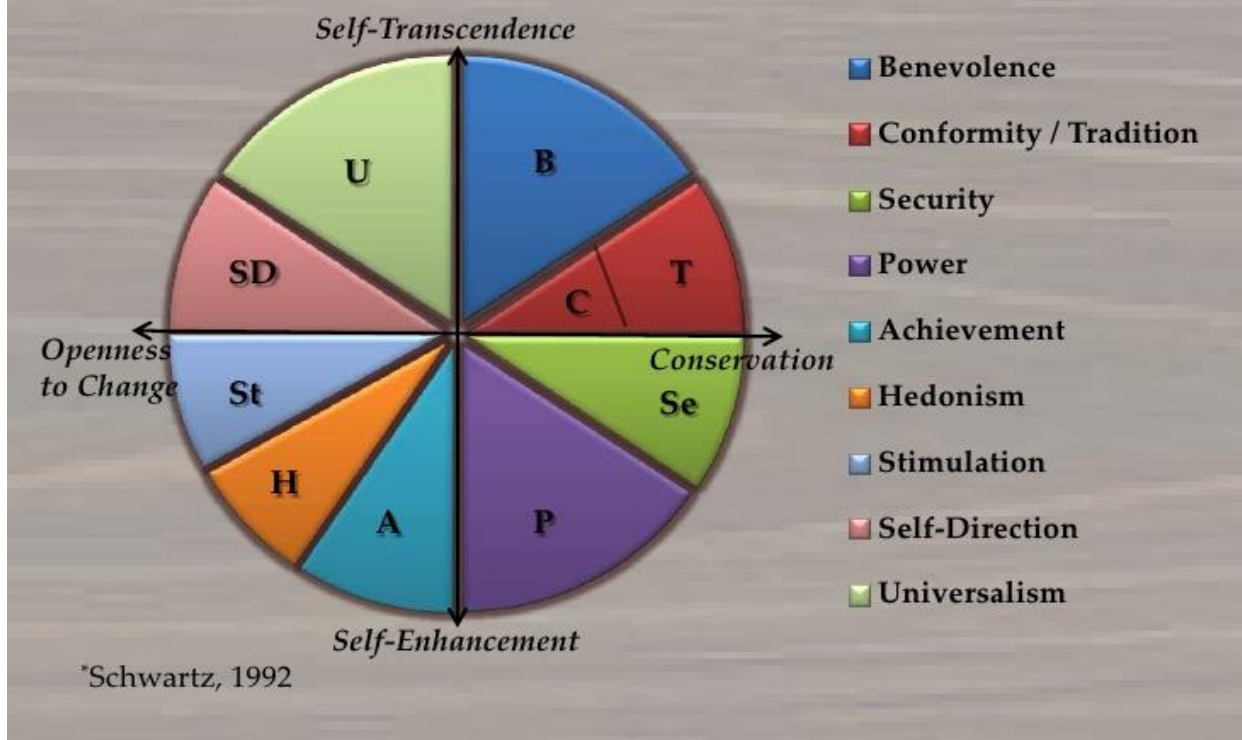


Figure 4: Schwartz theory of values

These needs were derived from **Individuals'** requirements as biological organisms, **society's** requirement for coordinated social interaction, and **groups'** requirement for survival and support (Schwartz, 1992). Thus, Schwartz's value types were derived and "developed to measure the content of individual values recognised across cultures" (Schwartz, 1994, p. 88). Schwartz claimed that the items were close to an exhaustive set of cultural dimensions. Also included were four earlier cultural dimensions by Hofstede (1980; 2001) who specifically defined values as a "broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (p. 5). Since individual values reflect a person's unique experiences as well as normative cultural influences, values can be analysed at both the individual and cultural levels (Schwartz, 1994) and reflect relatively general beliefs of what is right and wrong.

For example, in some cultures, values such as loyalty to the group, family or other collectives are prioritised over the individual, while in others, values like individual

achievement prevail. Individuals from one culture can predominantly believe in the good of people, whereas in other societies individuals may tend to apply a more sceptical approach based on the predominant values in those cultures. Individual practices are thus value driven and culturally contextual and are better comprehended through an understanding of the structure of values.

Regarding structure, Schwarz (1992) suggests that symbols are the outermost, superficial layer of values, the core of culture, and that they comprise words, gestures, pictures, objects and symbols recognised as such only by those who share that culture. Also, heroes are those persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and serve as models. At an individual level, sets of value priorities are said to reveal the trade-offs an individual makes to pursue a particular value. That is, within organisations employing a diverse workforce, employees may emphasise important values while downplaying less important or opposing values. Using a two-dimensional smallest space analysis, Schwartz (1992) presents the view that individual-level values are organised along two basic dimensions, which he termed **conservation to openness to change** and **self-transcendence to self-enhancement**. Within these two dimensions, ten individual value dimensions were identified, which represented likely conflicts and compatibility between values. These individual-level value types are described below (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001, p. 270):

1. Power - Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
2. Achievement - Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
3. Hedonism - Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
4. Stimulation - Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.
5. Self-direction - Independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring.
6. Universalism - Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and nature.
7. Benevolence - Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.

8. Tradition - Respect for, commitment to, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion impose on the self.
9. Conformity - Restraint of actions, inclinations, impulses likely to upset or harm others and to violate social expectations or norms.
10. Security - Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.

The next section looks at the concept of values within organisations more explicitly.

### **3.7.2. Organisational Values**

There remains a lack of agreement amongst scholars regarding definitions of organisational values (Schwartz, 2012). I, therefore, explore this concept in this section by setting out some essential characteristics. First, I acknowledge the view that organisational values embody those general principles or beliefs that guide organisational members in their selection or evaluation of behaviour (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Second, I also acknowledge the suggestion that organisational values represent a form of consent regarding the values that a social group or organisation considers necessary for its aims and collective welfare (D'Andrade, 2008).

Based on these two views, the term 'organisational values' is used in this thesis to refer to the small number of values that together make up a value system (**See Figure 4**). Value systems are broadly coherent arrangements of values that place greater importance on certain values over others (Schwartz, 1992). Individuals and groups develop value systems through experience and learning. Coherent value systems are neither wholly fixed nor fluid. Changes occur as members of groups learn and adapt, but these are characteristically gradual, occasional, and limited by the requirement for associated adjustments to other systems of beliefs and action (Schien, 2010; Schwartz, 2011).



**Figure 5: Examples of organisational values**

However, in comparison with personal values, which are located at the level of individuals, group and organisational values possess particular characteristics that make analysis challenging. As Rohan (2000, p. 265) points out:

*“there is no consensus about whether to understand these [organisational values] in terms of the average of the group members’ personal value priorities or, for example, group leaders’ or other significant members’ beliefs about what the group priorities should be”.*

Moreover, a group or organisation’s values may refer both to those that are presently held in common, and to those that it intends to reach in the future (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Rather than opting for the adoption of one of these forms instead of the other, I acknowledge that each is valid and that it is this interrelation that provides the basis for the argument by scholars (e.g. Duarte, 2010; Khandelwal and Mohendra, 2010) for

a broader and more dynamic conceptualisation of organisational values. When viewed as social values, organisational values may be comprehended at different levels and in both present and future perspectives. Still, they are supposed to guide members in their choice or appraisal of behaviour. Therefore, scholars have used different approaches in describing, defining and operationalising organisational values, which, according to Bourne and Jenkins (2013), come in four forms: *espoused*, *attributed*, *shared*, and *inspirational* values. I adopt these four forms as elements that comprise the term “organisational values” because, while each has a partial claim, no single form adequately represents the entire construct.

### **3.7.3. Forms of Organisational Values: A Critique**

This research seeks to expand upon each of the four forms of organisational values proposed by Bourne and Jenkins (2013), as well as considering their characteristics, the assumptions that underpin them, and the arguments regarding their representation of organisational values (**see Table 1**).

#### **Espoused Values**

Some scholars have argued that the values which are sanctioned by senior managers through verbal or written statements and formal documents represent organisational values (Bansal, 2003; Coetzee and Veldsman, 2013). These values are, therefore, “espoused” and symbolise value consensus among an organisation’s senior managers. Based on this view, Argandona (2003) argues for associating organisational values with those espoused by senior management. For instance, top managers are authorised to manage organisations so that they meet defined objectives or targets. Values, in this case, may be used as a form of social control to shape employee behaviours and practices. Additionally, the values of top managers have been shown to have a greater effect on organisational outcomes than those of other group members (Duarte, 2010; Khandelwal and Mohendra, 2010).



**Table 1: Forms of organisational values**

<b>Value Forms</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Limits/Critique</b>	<b>Distinguishing Characteristics</b>	<b>Theoretical Underpinning</b>
<p><b><i>Espoused Values</i></b></p> <p>(Coetzee &amp; Veldsman, 2013; Duarte, 2010; Khandelwal &amp; Mohendra, 2010; Bourne &amp; Jenkins, 2013).</p>	<p>Values that top managers sanction through verbal or written statements and formal documents.</p>	<p>Values of top management not necessarily shared by all members.</p> <p>Values are an outcome of social interaction; top management is only one of many players.</p>	<p>Differs from attributed value as value “espousal” does not equate to value “enactment”.</p> <p>May not mirror the history of past decisions.</p>	<p>The <b><i>Upper Echelons Theory</i></b> - The organisation is a replication of the values, perceptive styles, and biases of its top managers (Hambrick &amp; Mason, 1984).</p>
<p><b><i>Attributed Values</i></b></p> <p>(Pruzan’s, 2001; Whetten, 2006; Bourne &amp; Jenkins, 2013).</p>	<p>Values which implicitly underlie organisational decisions.</p>	<p>May not be shared by members.</p> <p>May represent prior arrangements that no longer characterise an organisation adapting to change.</p>	<p>Do not represent aspirations or intentions of the organisation for the future.</p>	<p>The organisation as <b><i>The Collective Actor</i></b>: The treatment of organisations by society as though they were individuals (Whetten, 2006).</p>
<p><b><i>Shared Values</i></b></p> <p>(Maxham &amp; Netemeyer, 2003; Cable &amp; Edwards, 2004).</p>	<p>Aggregation of the values of members of an organisation, indicative of the proportion of members who share the values and the importance with which one value or set of values is held in relation to other values.</p>	<p>Members’ sense of the similarity between their values and those of their organisation is subjective and contingent on other factors.</p> <p>Takes no account of asymmetric (unequal) power relations within organisations.</p>	<p>Does not reflect the fundamental influence of the personal values of more senior and centrally located members over subordinates.</p>	<p>The <b><i>sociological view of organisations</i></b>:</p> <p>The internalisation of shared values by actors in a social system should ensure that each ‘wants what it should want and acts as it should act’ (Nohria &amp; Ghoshal, 1994, p. 493).</p>
<p><b><i>Aspirational Values</i></b></p> <p>(Van der Wal et al., 2008; Bourne &amp; Jenkins, 2013).</p>	<p>Values which represent ideas of what should be in the future and may signal a break from historical patterns.</p>	<p>Has close similarities with shared personal values of those individuals promoting them.</p> <p>Differ from the shared values form in that they emphasise intention: what should or ought to be, rather than what is.</p>	<p>At the level of the members; unlike espoused values, they are not necessarily endorsed by top managers and instead may emerge from anywhere in an organisation.</p>	<p>The <b><i>Field theory of Aspiration</i></b>:</p> <p>The greater the value assigned to the potential goal or the greater the perceived likelihood of achieving it, the stronger the aspiration will be and vice versa (Lewin, 1951; Sherwood, 1989).</p>

Relatedly, using the upper echelons theory, Hambrick and Mason (1984) describe the organisation as a replication of the values, perceptible styles, and biases of its senior managers. Schein (2010) also argues that the values of many entrepreneurial organisations are those of their founders.

There are also arguments, however, against these assumptions. For instance, scholars like Hofstede (1998) contend that senior managers may officially adopt values that they believe should be the foundation for organisational choices and actions, but these do not spontaneously equate to organisational values. According to Hofstede (1998), acceptable or required organisational practices, originally established by founders and later modified by succeeding senior managers, are based on values not necessarily shared by organisation members, yet employees 'have to follow the practices if they want to remain, members, they do not have to confess to the values' (p.483)

Furthermore, in some cases, senior managers may espouse values because they may need to present the organisation in a way that appeals to certain stakeholders (e.g. customers, shareholders) or because some close stakeholders may wish particular symbolic values to be espoused so that they might eventually become adopted (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Thus, while some research suggests that senior managers can enforce values in a way that incorporates the personal values of organisational members (e.g. Berson *et al.*, 2008), a more critical view of the evidence suggests that the appearance of conformity to espoused values is all but a disguise (Hewlin, 2003). Based on this, Duarte (2010), citing Dow (1988, p. 60), argues that values "emerge from processes of social interaction in which top management is only one player among many". I acknowledge espoused values in this thesis, but to consider them as an adequate representation of organisational values would be misleading.

### **Attributed Values**

Attributed values are those that members mostly regard as attributable to and representative of the organisation or 'those values which could be said to implicitly underlie decisions made' (Pruzan, 2001, p. 274). This perception of values is linked to the treatment of organisations by society as though they were individuals, or what

Whetten (2006, p. 221) refers to as the concept of a “collective actor”. Indeed, espoused and attributed values have been used interchangeably in many studies. However, as Bourne and Jenkins (2013) argue, while there may be overlaps between espoused values and attributed values, differences abound.

For instance, the implication in Pruzan’s (2001) definition is that because attributed values underlie organisational decisions, they are different from those that may be espoused but not enacted. Also, because organisational members can assign such values to the organisation, these values retain a history which members recognise in patterns of past decisions. In contrast, however, espoused values may not always mirror this history. Furthermore, while members may understand attributed values as being representative of the organisation, and although those members may also identify with the organisation, this does not mean that they share these values (Hofstede, 1998; 2001); attributed values are therefore clearly different from shared values.

There are, however, arguments for relating attributed values with organisational values. The attributed form is based on repeated patterns and has had a historical influence on actions and decisions and can be agreed upon more readily than other forms because members can point to these values without necessarily sharing them (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). However, there are also arguments against attributed values. These values, for instance, may represent prior arrangements that may no longer characterise an organisation that is adapting to a changing environment. Also, they neither address the notion that values may refer to a future intended state, nor do they allow for the acknowledgement of the role of leadership in the management of values. Attributed values, therefore, symbolise the history of the organisation, but do not typically represent its aspirations or intentions for the future (Whetten, 2006).

### **Shared Values**

Organisational values have also been viewed as an aggregation of the values of members of an organisation (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). People are socialised through exposure to customs, norms and practices so that the characteristics of societies, organisations and groups are manifested in their members’ personal values (Schwartz, 2012). The aggregation of these values reveals the focus of shared

enculturation. Thus, Bourne and Jenkins (2013), citing Wiener (1988, p. 535), state that 'shared values of organisational members constitute an organisational value system', and are indicative of the proportion of members who share the values and the importance with which one value, or set of values, is held in relation to other shared values.

The shared values form, as described here, originates from studies of cultural values (e.g. Schwartz, 2012), and is distinct from the use of the same phrase to indicate organisational members' subjective sense of the similarity between their own values and those of their organisation (e.g. Maxham and Netemeyer, 2003; Cable and Edwards, 2004). I use shared values, in this thesis, with 'the organisation' as a subjective fit of personal values typically with either espoused or attributed values. This concept of within-organisation homogeneity of member values is attractive to the sociological view of organisations, which suggests that the internalisation of shared values by actors in a social system should ensure that each 'wants what it should want, and acts as it should act' (Nohria and Ghoshal, 1994, p. 493). This view is based on the assumption that members' personal values can be shaped through socialisation, and that divergence of interests can be minimised.

The shared values form of organisational values, however, takes no account of asymmetric (unequal) power relations within organisations and therefore does not reflect the relatively greater influence of the personal values of more senior and centrally located members over subordinates (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). The concept is also limited by the degree to which there can be any meaningful sense of shared values, particularly in large organisations. The shared values form is therefore relatively complicated when placed under closer scrutiny. Representing the organisation's values as an aggregation of the personal values of individual members is, however, clearly distinct from the espoused and attributed values forms.

### **Aspirational Values**

According to Bourne and Jenkins (2013), changing trends in social life may lead to changes in personal values that become reflected in the aspirational values of organisational members. Aspirational values may also be associated with variation in

the professional values of group members so that those of marketers differ from those of accountants; those of physicians differ from those of administrators, and so on. Alternatively, beliefs about the values that an organisation ought to aspire to may come from changes in the institutional field, which can reach some groups before others. While attributed values, represent organisation members' understanding of existing preferences, aspirational values represent ideas of what should be in the future and, thus, may signal a break from historical patterns (Van der Wal *et al.*, 2008). Importantly, aspirational values are found at the level of the group members; unlike espoused values, they are not necessarily endorsed by senior managers and, instead, may emerge from anywhere in an organisation (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Furthermore, aspirational values are likely to have close similarities with the shared personal values of the individuals promoting them, but they differ from the shared values form in that they emphasise intention: what should or ought to be, rather than what is (Van der Wal *et al.*, 2008).

To summarise, organisations, as social entities, carry intentions for their future survival. Aspirational values are representations of these intentions and thus form a significant component of organisational values, although they differ from espoused values in their location at the level of organisational members.

#### **3.7.4. The Significance of Values in This Thesis**

The notion that values are conceptual abstractions incorporating individual and group requirements (Schwartz, 2010) is consistent with the view that values are both personal cognitive structures and collective social structures (D'Andrade, 2008). The dual level of values exposes a dilemma facing every individual: the extent to which we respond to our own requirements and desires, or to the socially desirable values which belonging to a group requires (Rohan, 2000). This dilemma is underpinned by two opposing theories about values as espoused by social psychologists (or the functionalist school) and the social theorists (or the institutional school).

Social psychologists explore values at the level of the individual and understand a person's value system as a constant meaning-making superordinate cognitive structure developed through learning and elaborated through experience (D'Andrade,

2008). Organisational values are therefore aggregations of personal values which reveal shared cognitive structures. However, Rohan (2000, p. 266) pointed out the differences in values between individuals and the various social groups to which they belong, as 'people must decide whether to behave in line with others' expectations – consistent with social value priorities – or their value priorities.' Moreover, not every social group holds the same values, and so the decision may differ depending on whether the social group concerned is one's work organisation, family, community, or religious group.

Social theorists, however, do not share the psychologists' view that social values are simply aggregations of individual personal values, but rather recognise the influences of history, power and group dynamics (D'Andrade, 2008). In essence, social values may be collectively agreed upon, but not necessarily shared by all (Hofstede, 1998). This view, therefore, presents a distinction between social values as an aggregation of personal values located at the level of the individual, and social values derived from precedence, power and influence, located at the level of the collective organisation. However, I acknowledge in this thesis both the social psychologists' and the social theorists' representations of values because these views are accommodated in the four forms of organisational values already discussed, although the lines of distinction may not always be clear.

Attributed values are collectively agreed upon, though not necessarily shared, and are established and accepted. Espoused values are also collective social structures which carry a degree of power and influence. Aspirational values are those that some individuals and groups believe to be desirable for the organisation and, as such, are shared personal cognitive structures. This research, therefore, acknowledges the influence of both the social theorists' view and social psychologists' view of values on the adopted four forms of organisational values because these perspectives together are aligned with the focus of this research (cultural value influences on employee views of, and commitment to, organisational values). Furthermore, these two perspectives reflect an orientation embedded in past patterns or an orientation towards an intended future at the level of collectively accepted social structures or shared personal cognitive structures of organisational members.

I will now discuss postcolonial criticisms of cultural values theories such as those by Schwartz and Hofstede in the next section.

### **3.8. Postcolonial Critique of Cultural Values Studies**

Witte (2012) characterised studies of cultural values by mainly Western scholars (e.g. Schwartz, 1994, 1999; Hofstede, 1980) as comparative, multidisciplinary, and focused on the contrast between different cultural – and typically national – contexts. Still, significant criticism has been raised from post-colonial theorists, not against the validity of cultural models in the main, but rather against their origins, particularly their roots in scientific knowledge based on Western rationality, or what Kwek (2003, p. 138) refers to as a “colonial discourse”. Post-colonial theory (PCT) is focused on the contemporary legacy of colonialism and its influences on the perception of culture or cultural values (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007). Colonialism was one of the most intense and fundamental experiences that shaped the Western world’s perception of non-Western people and awakened many scholars’ interests in past and present discursive encounters between the developed Western economies and the rest of the world, such as former colonies in Africa (Prasad, 2012).

It is not uncommon for Said’s (1978) book *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* to be referred to as gracing the foundations of postcolonial studies, although, as Jack *et al.* (2011) argue, Said was influenced by the writings of Foucault (1977). Said (1978) argued that Western-constructed notions of the Orient (the non-West), and the Occident (the West) as juxtaposed, with the latter considered superior, civilized, developed, moral, and scientific, and the former considered inferior, uncivilized, backward, immoral and superstitious was a fictive reality. Prasad (2012) submits that, after developing first within literary studies (e.g. Bhabha, 1990a, 1990b, 1994), postcolonial theory began to affect other disciplines and came to influence scholars from history, anthropology, broader cultural studies, gender studies, human geography and, more recently, organisation and critical management studies.

Post-colonial theorists argue that the colonial discourse and its views of the world were strengthened by Max Weber’s quest for the roots of modernity. In effect, Weber (1978), who argued that there was a difference between Western and non-Western economic

mentalities, influenced the construction of subsequent scholarly views. These views assert that the economic failure of most states in the “Third World”, or the *Global South*, is rooted in the existence of a mystical, feudal and anti-rational system which was deficient in all those features that had made the progress of European states possible. Post-colonial theorists argue, therefore, that Weber introduced a hierarchical ordering of nations based on certain conceptual inventions. One is “race.”

As pointed out by Ashcroft *et al.* (2002, p. 198-99), race became a “fundamental imperialistic concept” because it transformed the colonial subjugation into a justifying theory and introduced a hierarchical system which placed the Europeans in a position that is superior to people within the appropriated territories. Though, as Fougere and Moulettes (2007, p. 8) argue, “culture” and “ethnicity” have come to replace the less agreeable concept of “race”. However, Prasad (2012) and Witte (2012) contend that the colonial mindset is still evident in cross-cultural studies and subsequently in much of the studies on cultural values. For example, Schwartz’s (1992, 1994, 1999, 2011, 2012) cultural value types and choice of cultural value attributes, as well as his underlying description of people’s values and behavioural patterns, are seen as a reflection/reproduction of the hierarchical ordering of nations.

Therefore, a fundamental criticism of cultural value studies such as Schwartz’s is that his value dimensions contribute to the replication of ethnocentrism – or the evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one’s own culture (Kwek, 2003; Witte, 2012). Furthermore, postcolonial theorists argue that, like Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions, Schwartz’s model of values is also subsumed under the dominant narrative of modernity, development, and rational economy, which emerged, to some extent, as a result of colonial conquests. Thus, Schwartz’s value dimensions, like Hofstede’s hierarchically ordered cultural dimensions, split the world in two: a *developed-modern* and a *traditional-backwards*. This position is seen as strengthening the perception of European superiority, which became essential for justifying the expropriation of territories (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007).

As pertains to cultural dimensions, post-colonial theorists argue that the *Hierarchy vs Egalitarianism* value dimensions (Schwartz, 1994), similar to *Power-Distance*



*dimension* (or PDD - Hofstede, 1980), highlight the assumption that being modern is being equal (Witte, 2012; Prasad, 2012). This submission is underscored by the view that in the PDD, for instance, all the “good cultures” seem to be on the same side, and low PDD is presented as the desirable predisposition. Hofstede (2001, p. 118) clearly suggests that the “low [power distance index] PDI” side, which happens to be overwhelmingly Western, is better. This is because it is considered more technological, legal, contemporary, urban, educated, learned, prosperous, democratic, fair, equal, *less imperialistic*, less centralised, more questioning of authority, and has more social mobility, a larger middle class, better wealth distribution, and is more representative of political power. Therefore, a core opposition by post-colonial theorists to cultural values studies is a fundamental distinction between ideas of modernity and tradition, and the modern and traditional man. Or, the suggestion, whether implicit or explicit, that the world is divided into a modern and economically developed part and a traditional and underdeveloped part inhabited by “modern” versus “traditional” people.

Also, post-colonial theorists argue that Schwartz’s *Embeddedness vs Autonomy*, which has some resonance with Hofstede’s *Individualism-Collectivism dimension* (ICD), evokes the assumption that being modern is being distinctive (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007). These value dimensions have been suggested as highlighting the distance between the West and the rest of the world, or what Said (1978) has earlier called the developed West and the backward rest. Specifically, Schwartz’s *Embeddedness vs Autonomy* value dimensions are the dimensions which seem to correlate the most with modernity and, as Hofstede claimed with the ICD, is “most closely linked to a country’s level of economic development” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 211). Witte (2012) therefore argues that the concept of modernity in much of cultural studies was defined beforehand and drawn from a kind of intuition, which was based on predetermined knowledge about the effects of unique/distinctive versus communal behaviour.

These studies espouse value dimensions which significantly echo the legacy of colonialism and its idea of Western superiority and, in effect, African inferiority. In essence, in much of cultural values studies, being *embedded/collectivist* is associated with ideas of backwardness. These are characterised by less economic development,

less social mobility, weak development of the middle class, an extended or tribal family structure, more children per parent couple, a traditional education system and collective thinking (Prasad, 2012). This idea of inferiority and backwardness is also discernible in the way that shared value patterns, in these so-called traditional societies, are supposed to set a limit on the possibilities for economic development. This is because these studies depict a clear relationship between an organisation's technology and the position of its members along the *embedded/collectivist* value continuum, suggesting that a precondition for economic development in non-Western societies is an adjustment to Western standards, values, and lifestyle since this, seemingly, is the only way to gain prosperity (Fougere and Moulettes, 2007).

Further, post-colonial theorists argue that with regards to African values and their value dimensions, as inherent in cultural studies, there exists an assumed lack of modernity of African countries. Specifically, while Hofstede's study had sought to "explore the differences in thinking and social action that exist among members of more than 50 modern nations" (Hofstede, 2001, p. xix), his discussion on Africa reveals the author's worldview. For instance, he starts by describing Africa as "a development economist's headache" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 369), with nine of the ten poorest countries in the world being African countries. Witte (2012) has argued that to Hofstede's credit, he did try to develop an additional cultural dimension rooted in explicitly African values, however that endeavour seemed to have been abandoned (Prasad, 2012) because Hofstede declared that "no serious candidate emerged for a new, African-inspired, cultural dimension" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 369) thereby suggesting that Africans are not worth their dimension. Indeed, Hofstede argues (p. 369):

*Ask Africans to develop a values questionnaire, administer this in both African and non-African countries, and see whether any new dimension emerges that might explain why Western recipes for development don't seem to work in Africa.*

Furthermore, Hofstede offers clarification on the underdevelopment of Africa, stating that African values contain some element that is "fiercely contrary" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 370). Hofstede also argues that, in the final analysis, supposed African characteristics such as "attributed wisdom that is not based on knowledge and

education is a dubious foundation for the development of a country”. Fougere and Moulettes (2007) refer to this position as value judgement, suggesting that what is wrong with Africa is the backward, unmodern cultures that characterise it.

In summary, post-colonial cross-cultural critics argue that cross-cultural management, in general, and cultural values studies, such as those of Schwartz and Hofstede, are subsumed under the dominant colonial discourses of modernity, development, and rational economy, and that they strengthen the idea of national culture and its inherent values as a stable, historically determined and essentialist phenomenon. This view supports a dualistic perspective which tends to construct the world as divided into two: a developed modern side, and a traditional backward side, thereby offering national cultural values as a central explanatory factor for essentially anything - for instance, innovation, intolerance, or even wealth. This thinking, which presupposes that inequalities should be blamed on a people's cultural values alone (cultural essentialism), has been described as a discursive construction based on colonial thinking, which qualifies most cultural values as promoting regimes of biased stereotypes. This position implicitly promotes a sense of collective cultural responsibility for developmental failure, which these authors subtly attribute to developing countries.

In the previous sections, I discussed the organisational and societal contexts within which the concept of values can be explored by highlighting some cross-cultural theories, particularly Schwartz's. To provide a more nuanced discussion regarding these considerations, I now undertake an analysis of culture and organisations in the private sector in Nigeria. I also attempt to justify the choice of the research focus – Nigerian Banks.

### **3.9. The Nigerian Private Sector**

In Nigeria, the private sector comprises any self-employed person or employer of labour, who is not part of the government or the public sector (Jerome, 1999). The private sector, therefore, includes all economic institutions, business firms, foundations, and cooperatives that are not owned by the government (Olayiwola and Busari, 2001). An efficient private sector organisation displays certain significant

characteristics, such as private ownership of business (by individuals or groups), freedom of choice (employees can select their occupations, change jobs, negotiate wages and benefits), private property (the right of individuals or groups to own and control), limited role of government, and profit motive (Imaga, 2003).

The Nigerian private sector is made up of industries such as manufacturing, telecommunications and service industries. Commercial banks, for instance, are service industries within the organised private sector. Much research into organisational behaviour in Nigeria has mainly focused on the public sector (e.g. Ogbunka, 2002; Imaga, 2003; Ajila and Awonusi, 2004; Afolabi, 2004; Amah, 2007; Idowu, 2009; Osemeké, 2011; Chiezey and Onu, 2013). Research results and conclusions focusing on the public sector abound, but these have been noted to lack validity as the same research may yield different results if centred on the private sector (Adegboye, 2013). Amah (2007) attributes this to some organisations in this sector conducting their business surreptitiously, which makes academic research in this sector particularly challenging, and portrays the banks as having something to hide.

Indeed, records support Amah's argument as was proven in the unearthing of massive fraud and the theft of millions of dollars by the management of many Nigerian banks, which was revealed through the consolidation exercise instituted by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2004 and 2009 (Asekome and Abieyuwa, 2014). Before this time, there was a disposition by Nigerian management scholars to depict organisations in the Nigerian private sector (commercial banks inclusive) as the model that all other organisations should emulate, while the public sector was considered the personification of all that was unethical (e.g. Imaga, 2003; Ajila and Awonusi, 2004). The revealed failings in the private sector imply that societal factors and environmental pressures may have influenced this previously unacknowledged metamorphosis (Ogbunka, 2002; Idowu, 2009; Chiezey and Onu, 2013; Asekome and Abieyuwa, 2014). Hence, the private sector suddenly assumed the place of an under-researched sector, and, more importantly, became noted as a previously misconceived one (Ndikumana, 2013). Therefore, based on this perception, banks make for very interesting scholarly research in Nigeria and are adopted as the focus of this study.

### **3.9.1. Socio-Cultural Conflicts in Nigerian Organisations**

It has been noted that in Western nations, the modern organisation emerged within a socio-historical context based on scientific and industrial revolution, the rise of capitalist production, the separation of the state from religion, and human behaviour guided by impersonal reason and competition (Haque, 1997). However, the ruling class in Nigeria adopted Western bureaucratic models without experiencing similar socio-historical events and contextual realities (Mustapha, 2006). Due to colonial origins, imitative post-colonial reform, and the exogenous nature of organisations in Nigeria, there emerged a significant degree of incompatibility and conflict between Western-styled principles of administration (as adopted in Nigeria) and ethnocultural values. I state these considerations in order to present the historical and socio-cultural background against which the core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of, and commitment to, organisational values. These views are discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **3.9.2. Organisation and Culture**

The modern Western model of organisation developed within a cultural context that personified certain values and norms such as secularism, individualism, rationality, competition, the profit motive, and achievement orientation (Fadeyi and Adisa, 2012). This cultural atmosphere had been conducive to the advancement of Western bureaucracy distinguished by its features of merit, competition, specialisation, and impersonality. All societies, however, do not universally possess such values and norms; these cross-cultural differences in bureaucratic/organisational attitudes and behaviour are evident within Nigerian organisations, including the Nigerian private sector (Dibie, 2000).

Based on this theory, Haque (1997, p. 442) has attacked what the author calls “the myth of a value-free administrative system within organisations in post-colonial societies like Nigeria.” This “myth” fundamentally de-emphasises the role of cultural values in shaping the state and its bureaucracy, and primarily highlights the ineffectiveness of the borrowed Western administrative model in culturally diverse societies, like Nigeria, which has different sets of value systems. Also, while Nigeria inherited or adopted the Western administrative framework for its civil service, as well as for formal organisations like banks, the patterns of local cultures and values have

remained significantly different. According to Akinwale (2014), most organisations in developing nations like Nigeria (including bureaucracies and private companies) continue to advocate, on paper, the roles and attitudes which its employees should exhibit, as inherited from their colonial heritage.

Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) argue that these various Western management techniques were adopted in countries like Nigeria without considering the consistency of these techniques with local customs, values, norms, and cultures. National cultures in Nigeria, while unique in many regards, share the same sets of core values such as ritualism, ascriptive norms, patron-client relations, reciprocity, caste structure, informal interaction, seniority-based authority, extended family system, and collective responsibility. The point here is that there is considerable conflict in Nigeria between the values that are inherent in the indigenous cultures and the values inherent in the borrowed Western management models. These manifest in certain ways (Haque, 1997):

First, at a macro societal level, the overall values or principles of management mostly represent various foreign sources, including the colonial administrative heritage, the post-independence administrative reforms based on Western designs, and the knowledge of local experts trained in Western countries. Such normative standards are usually inconsistent with indigenous social norms and cultural values. This incompatibility leads to a conflict between the normative basis of traditional/local-indigenous authority and the Westernised state bureaucracy (Fadeyi and Adisa, 2012). This incompatibility is also evident in the impact of kinship, geographic affinities, ethnic identity, and caste system on the Western principles of merit and open competition.

It has been found that the organisational values of impersonality, merit, rationality, and neutrality are not always compatible with the collective and paternalistic local values of patronage, tribal affiliation and ethnocentrism in Nigeria (Adegboye, 2013). This racial and ethnic heterogeneity has important implications for organisations in Nigeria, specifically for private sector organisations in multi-ethnic Nigeria, including banks (Fadeyi and Adisa, 2012). For example, various forms of preferential policies are often practised to redress economic, political, and social inequalities between ethnic groups and to promote national integration, although this is often politicised (e.g. the Quota

system and the Federal character principle in Nigeria). Indeed, this politicisation of inequalities has caused some private-sector organisations, and banks specifically, to outright ignore these preferential policies (see Adeleye *et al.*, 2014; George *et al.*, 2017). These kinds of policies, while in use in Western capitalist nations like the U.S., are employed to rectify anomalies, such as inherited socioeconomic discrimination, in the bureaucracy or within organisations (Haque, 1997). In Nigeria, however, it may go beyond this socioeconomic rationale to incorporate more emotional and ethnocultural factors such as favouritism (Adegboye, 2013).

Second, at the organisational level, the above conflict between the exogenous administrative values and the indigenous national cultures is reflected in a gap between the formal official rules and the actual organisational practices, which has been described as “formalism” (Haque, 1997, p. 433). In other words, there is often a disparity between the formal administrative rules, policies, procedures, and codes of conduct representing the Western organisational model and the actual behaviour of employees influenced by societal values, culture, and expectations. It has been argued that in post-colonial Nigeria, the colonial administrative habits, styles, and values unrelated to local traditions continued to reproduce the symbolism, not the substance, of Western organisational practices (Haque, 1997; Mustapha, 2006). Thus, formalism, implying a gap between official values and actual practices, can be discovered in various organisational values in Nigerian organisations, banks inclusive.

For instance, although there are documented, and prescribed recruitment and promotion policies based on merit and achievement, in practice, many organisations tend to use ascriptive criteria such as ethnic group, class, background, language, and status instead (Adegboye, 2013). Thus, in many Nigerian organisations, the formal criteria of merit coexist with the culturally influenced criteria of ethnicity, favouritism, nepotism, and friendship. Similarly, although formal provisions for determining job performance and compensation exist in principle, the actual practices are often guided by a personal commitment to an individual, based on seniority and status (Dibie, 2000). These conflicts have not been addressed by training because, while an extensive network of organisational training is established in Nigerian Banks, for instance, such training is structured and conducted to acquire knowledge and skills

that are often imitative, and socio-cultural imperatives are typically ignored (Haque, 1997).

Finally, at the individual level, the top elites in Nigeria are usually accustomed to Western values and lifestyles, which they acquire through Western or Westernised education, training, and upbringing (Adegboye, 2013). It has been observed that the Western colonial rule and education led to the emergence of an elitist educated class in Nigeria creating room for the dominance of mental work as opposed to physical work (Haque, 1997). However, these imitative values and elitist lifestyles are often incompatible with the cultural beliefs and modes of life of the common masses. Mustapha (2006) argues that in Nigerian organisations there is consequently a significant cultural gap between the masses and the high-ranking employees.

However, the extent of this assertion by Mustapha (2006) is debatable because, as Adegboye (2013) argues, the excesses and idiosyncrasies of the Nigerian elites are supported, paradoxically, by ethnocultural values such as respect for age, seniority and status, which are equally espoused by the masses. Still, what the above analysis suggests for Nigeria is that underdevelopment presents inherent contradictions and situations of value conflicts in the political, economic, cultural and organisational realms. Value conflicts, therefore, cannot be isolated from modern Nigerian organisations, as is present in a more applied and nuanced manner in the next section.

### **3.10. The Appropriateness of the Cultural Value Dimensions to Nigeria**

The significance of this study is that it creates a picture of the broadly shared value system (culture) that characterises the Nigerian nation, which also influences organisational value systems and the perception and understanding of employees within it. According to Okunoye (2003), people are directly influenced by their identity, norms and values and controlled by social, economic and educational factors. While I have already stated the appropriateness of value dimensions for describing and analysing Nigeria's national cultures, and more specifically ethnocultural values, in this section, I provide insight into the relevance of culture in conceptualising employees' allegiance to organisational values. However, to show situatedness (of Nigeria within an African setting), I start with engaging with scholarly works that present this state of



affairs within an Afrocentric context.

### **3.10.1. National Values, Organisational Values and Employee Commitment: Implications for Value Allegiance.**

The socio-cultural context within which organisations exist in Africa is influenced by what Kamoche (2013, p. 214) calls the “African thought system,” which emphasises ethnocentrism, traditionalism, communalism and co-operative teamwork. Ethnocentrism is about using one's cultural values as a standard to judge others. Traditionalism is about adherence to entrenched attitudes, customs, beliefs and practices that ultimately shape the culture and define socially desirable values. Communalism stipulates that one does not merely exist as an individual separate from the community but as a member of a community that gives him or her a sense of identity and belonging.

The Nigerian social system is not exempt from this “African thought system” and is organised through extended family relations, which protect members and care for the elderly and needy. As a collectivist culture, the welfare of the group is considered a top priority. An integrated power structure and a kinship philosophy based on the extended family system produce a form of “authoritarian paternalism” (Tamale, 2011, p. 212). The obligation to family and kin is strong across ethnic groups in Nigeria and influences the attitude and disposition of employees to organisational values and culture. This commitment also affects human resource management practices. For example, although most organisations (public and private) use the conventional human resource management procedures of recruitment and selection, many vacancies are filled by family and relatives, making the process more of an administrative formality than an objective process (Smith, 2010; Kamoche, 2013, 2015).

Hence, kinship can take precedence over qualifications and skills as managers feel obliged to support their relatives and ethnic affiliates. In return, employees who get jobs through ethnic affiliations have a predisposition not to disagree with those who hired them. Adegboye (2013) concludes, therefore, that the commitment of an employee in Nigeria is directed towards a manager, who facilitated the employment of

a particular individual, not the organisation itself. Although one can argue that employee commitment to an organisation does not take place in a vacuum as it has to be directed at something or someone within the organisation, Adegboye (2013) clarifies that commitment is not to do with whom, or what, it is directed at, but rather what drives it: loyalty to the organisation or loyalty to the ethnic/tribal group. In this case, as Adegboye suggests, loyalty to the ethnic group seems to hold sway within Nigerian organisations, thereby creating an enabling environment for ethnic or culturally influenced employee commitment to thrive.

Relatedly, Debrah (2013) argues that traditional practices influence business practices, with traditions, customs and socio-cultural practices underpinning organisational decision-making. According to Iremeka (2012), in Nigerian society, there is a near cult-like reverence for age, social status, and people in authority, which translates into respect for positional authority in the organisation. However, the issue of respect for the elderly also makes it difficult for a young manager, for example, to discipline older subordinates.

Furthermore, in Nigeria, there exists what Debrah (2013), citing Nzelibe (1986, p.11-12), describes as “a culture of subservience” because the social distance between superiors and subordinates is striking. Employees are expected to do their work and follow management instructions and directives. Questioning directives or even suggesting an alternative is culturally deviant even in the workplace (Smith, 2010). Thus, employee commitment to organisational values assumes this “subservience” within organisations.

Ifechukwu (2010) also points out certain cultural values to which Nigerian employees may be more committed, but which are in direct conflict with organisational values. For example, Nigerians believe that when a man transgresses and asks for forgiveness, he should not be punished. Otherwise, the one who punishes the transgressor will be reprimanded by the ethnic group (this happens typically when the transgressor and superior share the same ethnic affiliation). If an employee has committed infractions of organisational rules and has asked for forgiveness, the manager is culturally required to oblige (Ugwu, 2012). This situation creates disciplinary challenges within Nigerian organisations and creates room for unfairness since a superior, while

culturally required to refrain from punishing a “repentant” employee from his own ethnic group is not culturally bound when the need to discipline other “repentant” subordinates from other ethnic groups arises. This consideration is what gives rise to culturally influenced nepotism within Nigerian organisations (Adegboye, 2013).

However, Branine (2013) contends that most ethically deviant employee behaviours (based on Western/egalitarian business values) within African organisations are culturally endorsed in these societies. Branine’s argument underscores the view that tribalism and favouritism across ethnic groups within Nigerian organisations remain the Nigerian cultural variant of what is typically found in other African cultures. Iremeka (2012) also describes a culture of favouritism and ethnicity in Nigerian organisations as a socially legitimised type of discrimination and an adaptive response to workplace isolation, whereby workers from the same rural area come together to give each other psychological and material support. Further, Kamoche (2013) argues that while the negative sentiments that exist between different ethnic groups constitute the socially undesirable notion of tribalism, in an era of high unemployment and political tension in Nigeria, people have rallied even closer to their ethnic roots in the hope of taking advantage of ethnically sanctioned obligations. These theses suggest that employee commitment to organisational values in Nigeria has assumed ethnic dimensions, thus limiting the applicability of Western management practices in the organisation.

Interestingly, Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) have pointed out the advantages that favouritism has within the context of the Nigerian cultural setting: the allies recruited, more by cultural affiliation than qualification and competence, usually have a firm commitment to their patron and are often unconditionally loyal. Thus, these employees manifest *ethnic loyalty* or *interpersonal commitment* because their understanding is that as long as their patron is successful in the organisation, their success and career progression will be guaranteed. These sets of cronies have been known to work even beyond the hours required by their formal job roles, and this consequently translates to stronger performance and commitment to the organisation’s objectives. In essence, Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) submit that, in some instances, organisational-based (and ethnically induced) favouritism leads to employee organisational commitment. This situation is challenged by a later argument by Adegboye (2013), who contends that favouritism breeds one group of employees loyal to a superior from the same

ethnic group, which is not a commitment to organisational values or organisational commitment, but, rather, *interpersonal commitment* indicating *ethnic loyalty*. Since other groups, who feel unfairly treated (and ethnically segregated), will most probably refrain from being committed to organisational values, Adegboye (2013) argues that culturally influenced anomalies within Nigerian organisations will fundamentally breed uncommitted employees. Still, on the negative side, other authors admit that with favouritism and ethnicity, managers may find it difficult to uphold objectivity in decision making regarding discipline, promotion and performance management and thus unfairness is introduced and sustained (e.g. Williams *et al.*, 1993; Ifechukwu, 2010; Iremeka, 2012)

The theses discussed hitherto have not been without some challenges: This starts with the meaning of commitment, which to Wasti (2003) may differ amongst countries based on macroeconomic and social conditions. It is also apparent that a study of the conflict of cultural contexts on a broader scale with a focus on the organised private sector in Nigeria lacks researcher perspectives that have hitherto focused mostly on the public sector. This understanding is one of the core motivations behind this research because studies with more focus on only the public sector suggest the limited external validity of results; a change of research focus from a restricted to a broader population may produce different outcomes.

It is possible, for example, that in private sector organisations, such as commercial banks, strong organisational culture may have suppressed ethnocultural values and that employees may be recruited based on the values they are seen to hold, and which are consistent with organisational values from the onset. It is also possible that private-sector employees who receive relatively higher pay than their public-sector counterparts may remain *committed* to organisational values to keep their jobs amidst a depressed labour market, where jobs are scarce. Related to this theory is a suggestion by Powel and Meyer (2004), that employee commitment could be the function of rational economic choices and not cultural factors. Nazarian *et al.* (2013) also argue that factors such as leadership affect job performance, which has been connected to employee commitment by Tolentino (2013) and possibly have a stronger influence on employee commitment in the workplace than national culture. Therefore, the need to understand how other contexts may influence the overall research

perception in the literature by examining the Nigerian private sector, with a focus on commercial banks, additionally informs the thrust of this thesis.

### **3.10.2. Culture: A summary of the Nigerian Perspective**

In line with Schwartz's (1992, 1994) view, this research acknowledges that the significant differences between organisational and ethnocultural value systems present room for the conflict of values within Nigerian organisations. While some authors (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; House *et al.*, 2004) have outlined meeting points between national and organisational values, the authors also agree that individuals in a nation or organisation will tend to behave according to their national culture. This view suggests that ethnocultural values not only influence how employees may interpret organisational values, in the general sense, but also how they demonstrate organisational commitment specifically.

Furthermore, evidence shows that, in Nigeria, culturally influenced values such as respect for tradition, respect for age, influence and affluence mostly determines the degree of respect one earns as well as one's social status regardless of one's occupation (Ebegbulem, 2012). This perspective has resonance with Schwartz's (1992, 1994) societal-level values of *hierarchy* and *embeddedness* and individual level values of *power*, *benevolence*, *tradition*, *conformity*, and *security*. These cultural values, captured by Schwartz's value dimensions, underscore the need to examine how employees in Nigerian organisations demonstrate organisational commitment based on the uniqueness of ethnocultural values, which include:

- Communal reliance
- Respect for social classes and status.
- Consideration is given to information and expectations, concerning rules and the requirements for members.
- Situatedness - Devotion to communal or shared values as a way of achieving personal goals.
- Informal relationships within, or in spite of, formal settings.
- Subservience to positional authority - identifiable gaps between superiors and subordinates as manifested in a culture of subservience and an association of dependence in the manager-subordinate relationship.

These submissions open up questions which require clarification, hence the need for this research. For example, one may need to confirm how societal power structures within the organisation influence employee understanding of, and commitment to, the values of their organisation. Of interest will be how employees negotiate the conflict-laden terrain of values and how this outcome has implications for employee value allegiance. Thus, understanding the impact of core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria on organisational values is essential.

It is crucial at this point in the study to review various existing studies on organisational commitment in Nigeria and to identify whether the assumptions found in the existing studies of culture are reflected in studies on organisational commitment within the Nigerian context.

### **3.10.3. Culture and Commitment: A Summary of Critical Issues**

The aim of this research is not to measure national cultural values or organisational commitment, but to explore how the core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria influence their views of, and commitment to, organisational values. Thus, some effort will go into analysing the various perspectives of the two concepts – culture (how ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance) and commitment (how organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment). According to Lok and Crawford (2003), the influence of national cultures on individual behaviour is well established in research studies. Equally abundant are studies on how differences in national cultures are reflected in the way in which organisations are structured and managed and how power is articulated within hierarchies.

However, studies on how ethnocultural values can exert considerable influence in organisations, particularly in the area of employee demonstration of organisational commitment, are sparse. Allen *et al.* (1988), Wasti (2003) and Wasti and Oder (2009) are among the few who have attempted to consider the impact of cultural values on employee commitment, with Wasti (2003) focusing on Hofstede's (1980) individualism and collectivism cultural dimensions. Some of these studies, however, only focus on

examining the effect of culture more openly and less specifically. This approach led Wasti (2003) to conclude that culture is relevant to the understanding of commitment and helps in framing parts of an individual's organisational behaviour, which is a theory validated by Wasti and Oder (2009) in a separate study. Further, Macneil and Campbell (2001) argue that individual organisational behaviour (such as employee commitment) is constructed and negotiated within social contexts (such as national cultural values).

Enz (2010) further clarifies that those individual behavioural factors “include one's knowledge, self-perception, self-esteem, and attitude”, which impact on one's community and, thus, are part of the culture. Therefore, in Nigeria, *embeddedness* and *hierarchy*-based cultural values represent the ethnic identity of its people. These theses “presume that all cultural members [such as the many Nigerian ethnic groups] are sharing a given perspective [core ethnocultural values] equally and identically” (Wasti, 2003, p. 534). The growing interest in this particular area of research arose from outcomes of Lee *et al.*'s (2001) and Gautam *et al.*'s (2001) findings on the implications of culture for understanding the concept of commitment.

The significance of this need was further emphasised in Allen's (2003) study, which argues that there would often be inconsistencies in the analysis of the definition of what commitment is in non-Western organisations due to cultural differences. In other words, employee demonstration of commitment can only be explored when the culture of the employee is considered, understood, and used in outlining the context of the definition of commitment to organisational values. It can be concluded, therefore, that national cultural values and value dimensions, like those of Schwartz, can be pointed to as influencing the meaning of various perspectives of organisational commitment from an employee perspective (Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Oder, 2009). Thus, culture indeed impacts on employee commitment within organisations, and in order to understand the meaning of commitment within an employee's cultural group, the characteristics of cultures relevant to the people in the study should be recognised (Lok and Crawford, 2003).

### 3.11. Summary

Attempts at the conceptualisation and definition of national culture, organisational culture and employee commitment have been examined in this chapter, along with an analysis of the role each concept plays in influencing the other. The conclusions arising from this review are summarised below:

- Historically, interactions between various ethnic groups that make up modern-day Nigeria have led to the assimilation of values among groups. However, while some groups have been swallowed up by others in modern-day Nigeria, others, which hitherto lay dormant, have become more visible and active. Thus, while Nigeria has been described as a heterogeneous society, broadly shared core values, common among all ethnic groups, have led to the argument that evidence of core-value homogeneity abounds. (Hambly, 1935; Otite, 1975, 1990, 2007; Nnoli, 1986; Rakov, 1990; Mazrui, 2006; Mustapha, 2006; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013).
- While Nigeria has at least 371 ethnic groups (Otite, 1990), these groups, including the dominant three (Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo), broadly share values that are typical among Nigerians. Understanding how these widely espoused values affect workplace contexts, such as employee understanding of and commitment to organisational values, can be undertaken by exploring these Nigerian values as espoused by members of ethnic groups. The Igbo and the Yoruba have been selected for this study (Schein, 2010; Lok, 1997; Wilson, 2001; Wasti, 2003; Sun, 2008; Wasti and Oder, 2009; Enz (2010); Adegboye, 2013; Kamoche, 2013).
- Symbolically, titles, income, and age are essential values of Nigerian society, and this is broadly applicable to ethnic groups. These values enable and influence the commitment of the holder to organisational values. Titles (even job titles) could serve as a significant consideration that distinguishes individuals in the wider society (Ogbor and Williams, 2003). These values have certain implications in the workplace, as younger employees respect older employees and may remain committed to organisational values based on ethnic-influenced organisational relationships. Organisational commitment



here, therefore, assumes a cultural dimension (Smith, 2010; Tamale, 2011; Ifechukwu, 2010; Iremeka, 2012; Adegboye, 2013; Debrah, 2013).

- Organisational commitment can take the form of ethnic affiliation and co-habitation within the organisation, to the extent that an employee can show commitment to organisational values because the organisation has become, for that employee, an extension of the social or ethnic group. It has also been suggested that employee commitment to the values of an organisation may be defined within the context of the cultural implications of rational economic choices. For example, the need to hold a job amid a scarcity of jobs, while seemingly a purely economic consideration, may be implicitly culturally influenced because such a choice may be due to financial pressures linked to extended family obligations (Ifechukwu, 2010; Branine, 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah (2013).
- Employee commitment to organisational values may be defined by cultural considerations, which may also influence other factors such as career, economic, developmental and life aspiration goals. The way in which cultural factors manifest in the understanding of the concept of employee commitment to organisational values is what this research will seek to explore (Kiggundu, 1989; Nzelibe, 1986; Alo, 1999; Williams *et al.*, 1993, Olugbile, 1997; Iremeka, 2012; Ghosh, 2014).

Nigeria's national cultural values, the power relationships which support them, as well as how these influence employee behaviour in the workplace have been identified and explored based on the value dimensions as propounded by Schwartz (1994). How this study resonates with others, such as Hofstede (1980, 2001) and the GLOBE study (House *et al.*, 2004), has also been highlighted. Based on these studies, Nigeria scores high on hierarchy and embeddedness dimensions at the societal level and *power, benevolence, tradition, conformity*, and *security* at the individual level. This theory is supported by some Nigerian authors (e.g. Ehigie and Umoren, 2003;

Adegboye, 2013).

- While Nigeria's inherited or borrowed Western administrative framework impacts Nigerian organisations that adopt egalitarian value systems (including banks), the patterns of local cultures and values have remained considerably different. Most private-sector organisations in developing nations, like Nigeria, continue to advocate attitudes which its employees should exhibit as inherited from their colonial culture despite these Western management techniques being inconsistent with local customs, values, norms, and cultures. These antecedents are the origin of organisational anomalies within organisations in Nigeria which evidence more particularistic tendencies as evidenced in employee workplace practices (Haque, 1997; Dibia, 2000; Mustapha, 2006; Fadeyi and Adisa, 2012).

Based on these theses, in the next chapter, I explore the meaning of commitment in the Nigerian context in order to articulate employee commitment to organisational values from a national culture point of view, and to examine how ethnocultural values influence employees' understanding of, and commitment to, organisational values.

## Chapter Four

### 4. Perspectives of Employee Commitment in Nigeria

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter is an extension of chapter two and focuses on understanding employee organisational commitment in a Nigerian context, having focused on *values* as the core of culture (Schwartz, 1997; 2011; 2012), and the importance of organisational and national cultures in Nigeria's socio-cultural and workplace contexts. Here, I review the literature and examine the theories and perspectives which explore the meaning of commitment within a Nigerian organisational context. I also attempt to distinguish employee organisational commitment from a related construct, "*employee organisational loyalty*", and justify the choice of "*employee organisational commitment*" for this research. One section of this chapter is dedicated to analysing equality, diversity and inclusion issues and challenges in Nigeria. The purpose of this structure is to draw a meaningful conclusion from the relevant literature and build the approach applied.

#### 4.2. Understanding Employee Organisational Commitment

The concept of organisational commitment has been extensively researched in the field of management, mainly as an important factor in employee retention and motivation (Kuchinke *et al.*, 2008) and its impact on organisational efficiency and performance (Beck and Wilson, 2000). However, Mowday *et al.* (1982) have pointed out the increase in the number of scholarly definitions of organisational commitment while highlighting the fundamental agreement amongst scholars, namely, the individual's attachment or connection to an organisation (**see Table 2**). Scholars have largely adopted this view, where high commitment is synonymised with positive feelings towards the organisation and its values. This view is also indicative of an assessment of the congruence between an individual's own values and beliefs and those of the organisation in the conceptualisation of organisational commitment.

Furthermore, this view reveals that value prioritisation, based on value congruence or conflict (Schwartz, 1997; 2011), may be significant in exploring commitment. Thus, Mowday *et al.* (1982, p. 27) consider organisational commitment (used interchangeably with attitudinal commitment by the authors) as "the relative strength

of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation". Significant factors in this definition include a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organisation's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation (to achieve these values); and a strong desire to retain membership in the organisation (by adhering to its values).

**Table 2: Some definitions of organisational commitment**

<b>Definitions of Organisational Commitment</b>	
The relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation.	Mowday <i>et al.</i> , 1979
A stabilising force that acts to maintain behavioural direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function.	Scholl, 1981
The totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way (based on cultural values and norms) which meets organisational goals and interests.	Weiner, 1982
The psychological attachment felt by the person for the organisation; it will reflect the degree to which the individual internalises or adopts characteristics or perspectives of the organisation.	O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986
A force that stabilises individual behaviour under circumstances where the individual would otherwise be tempted to change that behaviour.	Brickman, 1987
A psychological state that binds the individual to the organisation.	Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991
An obliging force that requires that the person honours the commitment, even in the face of fluctuating attitudes and whims.	Brown, 1996

Although still commonly used in the USA and elsewhere (see White *et al.* 1995), this definition has been criticised for not distinguishing between the motives for commitment and the effects of commitment. Also, the conceptualisation of commitment based (only) on individuals' internalisation of the values of the organisation has been challenged. Rather, it has been suggested that the influence of other factors should also be recognised including economic exchanges, expectancy notions or socio-cultural imperatives (Swales, 2002). Scholl (1981) advocates that commitment should be separated from basic expectancy theory, leading Farrell and Rusbult (1981) to define organisational commitment as the likelihood that individuals

remain in their job and feel attached to it whether or not it is satisfying.

However, Meyer and Allen (1991), in their seminal study, were the first to advise that their three components of commitment (affective, normative and continuance) should not be seen as mutually exclusive types of commitment, but rather as components that can variously coexist. This *inclusiveness* suggests that an individual's commitment can be based upon one, two, or all three reasons. Single, multiple, or simultaneous commitments may then be suggestive of value conflict or congruence. Indeed, based on these assertions, it has been suggested that an employee's desire to remain with an organisation can be seen as a consequence of commitment rather than as part of its definition (Peccei and Guest 1993; Ghosh and Swamy, 2014). Thus, as Wasti (2003) argues, commitment, as a significant imperative in value negotiation, is underpinned by the notion that the meaning of commitment may vary among cultures. This view suggests that a study in one culture may be difficult to apply elsewhere.

Therefore, the significance of examining organisational commitment as a culturally influenced construct has become fundamental as many organisations currently employ a multi-cultural workforce (Pool and Pool, 2007). Exploring cultural value influences on organisational commitment (through models, forms or types of commitment) in Nigerian organisations, as conceptualised in this thesis, provides an outstanding prospect for examining these two constructs (culture and commitment), which significantly impact organisational outcomes. Models of organisational commitment, with an emphasis on the model of Meyer and Allen (1991), are discussed in subsequent sections hereunder.

#### **4.2.1. Models of Organisational Commitment**

The evolution of models of organisational commitment can be categorised into several theories (**see Table 3**): The Side Bet theory from Becker (1960), Porter's (1974) Affective Dependence theory, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Meyer and Allen's Multidimensional theory (1991). More recently, Cohen's (2007) two dimensions theory, Somers' (2009) combined theory, and the multidimensional theory of Ghosh and Swamy (2014) have also been advanced, although these have been barely critiqued, reviewed, or empirically reassessed by scholars in comparison to the model by Meyer

and Allen (1991). However, each of these theories has a way of explaining the concept of organisational commitment and a strong bearing on its present conceptualisation.

According to Becker's (1960) theory, the relationship between an employee and the organisation is founded on behaviours bounded by a "contract" of economic gains. Employees are committed to the organisation because they have some "side-bets", or hidden vested investments, which they value because of the accumulation of certain costs that render separation difficult. Becker's (1960) theory was the first to identify organisational commitment as a major predictor of voluntary turnover. Despite the side-bet theory being abandoned as a leading proponent of organisational commitment, the influence of this approach is very evident in the works of Meyer and Allen's model (1991), who better acknowledged it as continuance commitment. Becker (1960) also influenced the works of Kanter (1968), Ritzer and Trice (1969) and Porter *et al.* (1974).

From side-bets, the focus shifted to an employee's psychological connection to the organisation. Commitment here was seen as a combination of attitude and interest in economic gains from associating with the organisation. Employee retention was attributed to economic gains but more so to affective influence. Commitment here was defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation" (Mowday *et al.*, 1979, p.226). Organisational Commitment, therefore, comprises of three components: Strong acceptance, participation and loyalty. Indeed, the idea that commitment was sometimes a better alternative construct to predict turnover intentions as opposed to job satisfaction was born. Also, commitment was characterised by a belief in, and strong acceptance of, the organisation's values, the willingness to exert substantial effort for the well-being and prosperity of the organisation, and a resilient aspiration to serve the organisation with allegiance (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). This concept of organisational commitment is grounded on the basic assumption of Becker's (1960) theory: commitment and employee turnover are highly interconnected. However, it still suffered the limitation that a unidirectional conceptualisation of commitment essentially focused on the attitudinal component.

**Table 3: Forms of organisational commitment**

<b>Forms of Commitment</b>	<b>Bases</b>	<b>Originators/Developers</b>
Attitudinal/Affective Commitment	Based on acceptance of and belief in the goals of an organisation or group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Etzioni (1961): Moral commitment</li> <li>□ Kanter (1968): Cohesion commitment</li> <li>□ Mowday et al. (1982) O'Reilly and Chatman (1986): Internalisation</li> </ul>
Continuance commitment	Based on socio-economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Becker (1960): Side-bets theory</li> <li>□ Kanter (1968): Continuance commitment</li> <li>□ Meyer and Allen (1984) Mowday et al. (1982) O'Reilly and Chatman (1986): Compliance</li> </ul>
Normative commitment	Based on feelings of loyalty and obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Allen and Meyer (1990) Kanter (1968): Control commitment</li> <li>□ O'Reilly and Chatman (1986): Identification</li> </ul>
Behavioural commitment	Based upon binding behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Salancik (1977, 1982)</li> </ul>

In response to these limitations, Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991) proposed the multi-dimension model, representing advancement from the single-dimension era of organisational commitment. This model has been the leading approach to organisational commitment for more than two decades (Swales, 2002; Ghosh and Swamy, 2014). While, unsurprisingly, criticisms subsist (as discussed in the next section), the scales proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) have been tested time and again. However, the focus has been placed on using these scales to evaluate and measure commitment, as opposed to exploring the concept through individual employee experiences, for instance. The scales have also been appraised for their psychometric properties, discriminant validity and relationship with antecedents and outcomes (Allen and Meyer, 1990; 1997; Ko *et al.*, 1997; Beck and Wilson, 2000).

Attempts have also been made to relate normative commitment to motivation theories (Meyer and Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer *et al.*, 2004).

#### **4.2.2. Meyer and Allen's Model of Organisational Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three general themes that characterised various approaches to the conceptualisation of organisational commitment: affective attachment to the organisation, perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation, and a moral obligation to remain with the organisation. According to Meyer and Allen, employees with affective commitment undertake practices because they want to; employees with continuance commitment engage in practices because they need to avoid leaving the organisation, and employees with normative commitment engage in practices because they believe they should.

Jaros (1997, p. 320) asserts that the significance of the model lies in the common component among the three, which is: "an effect on an employee's intentions and decision to remain a member of the organisation." The model, therefore, has implications, for the relationship the employee has with the organisation and for an employee's intention to continue or discontinue membership in the organisation, indicated through their practices or actions. Furthermore, *affective commitment*, which is sometimes used interchangeably with *attitudinal commitment*, is made up of items that denote the emotional connection of the employee to the organisation (Wasti, 2003). Attitudinal commitment is at the core of the moral or emotional attachment of employees to organisational values (Mowday *et al.*, 1979) and reflects the strength of the individual's "identification and involvement with the [values of the] organisation" (Suliman and Iles, 2000, p. 408). Continuance commitment is based on an employee's identification with an organisation due to what Wasti (2003, p. 539) calls "economic and social ties." According to Meyer and Allen (1991), an employee could demonstrate continuance commitment based on inadequate job alternatives or previous sacrifices made to the organisation.

Further, normative commitment is born out of the employees' feeling of an obligation to sustain membership to the organisation based on certain internalised values obtained through a process of organisational socialisation, during which a strong fit



between the employee's values and the organisation's values is achieved (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Normative commitment is also reinforced through incentives (such as rewards) used by the organisation to create in employees a feeling of a need to reciprocate by continuing their membership with the organisation (Jacobsen, 2000). This theory suggests that normative commitment has more to do with internalised pressures on an employee to act in a certain way that is consistent with the values of the organisation. The work of Meyer and Allen (1991) is regarded as a seminal study and has been applied widely to the field of management.

However, as already stated, their model is not without criticism. Gregersen and Black (1996, p. 210) argue that, although there has been some success with studies using Meyer and Allen's model in the US, the idea of defining commitment in a multifaceted way within organisations may be challenging in non-Western contexts, as cultural value differences may alter both the theory and empirical results. Cultural differences may, thus, provide a different basis for viewing the universality of this model of organisational commitment (Wasti, 2003), especially in emerging, culturally diverse economies such as African countries. Indeed, as is typical in African economies, socio-economic conditions such as a depressed labour market, which evidence scarcity of jobs, may mean that turnover intentions may be a poor commitment indicator as suggested by Meyer and Allen (1991).

In essence, Nigerian employees may remain attached to an organisation for fear of job loss (rather than a feeling of obligation to remain) amidst a high rate of unemployment or sector redundancies, as characterised by the volatile history of the Nigerian banking industry (Ernest, 2012). Furthermore, other individuals or groups that an employee may be committed to, besides organisational goals and values, have been mostly ignored - these include fellow employees, superiors, professional colleagues, profession, trade unions, and customers (Simon, 1990; Arai, 1995). Therefore, some scholars have also raised the issue of a need to examine commitment in an all-embracing and multi-dimensional way (e.g. Ghosh, 2014). For instance, employees presumably seek job security just as employers seek low turnover. However, with job cuts being used as a major strategy by Nigerian banks to remain competitive (see NBS report, 2017), a question of interest is whether, in that context, employers want tenure rather than turnover from their employees. Despite the

view that attitudinal commitment has been equated to organisational commitment (Porter *et al.*, 1974; Mowday *et al.*, 1982), only the component concerning a belief in values and goals is assessed as a pure attitude. While the tenure and effort components consider attitudes towards behaviour, the relevance of the *tenurial* component can also be questioned, given the already stated contemporary labour market dynamics in a country like Nigeria.

#### **4.2.3. Meyer and Allen: Conceptual and Theoretical Arguments**

While I recognise these abovementioned criticisms, the approach of Meyer and Allen (1991) was unique because it was an advancement from the single-dimension era of organisational commitment to a broader, more comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach. This study was also the leading approach to organisational commitment theory (Ghosh and Swamy, 2014), and a response to the misconceptions and downsides resulting from improper execution of past research on commitment, including Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. Furthermore, recent research on commitment subsists, such as Cohen (2007), who proposed a two-dimensional approach to commitment - instrumental and affective commitment. However, instrumental commitment, though focused on pre-entry values of employees, was a reproduction of Meyer and Allen's (1991) normative commitment. Cohen's (2007) affective commitment was also similar to Mayer and Allen's (1991) continuance commitment. Indeed, research by Ghosh and Swamy (2014) who see commitment as multiple, suggesting that an individual can show low or high levels of commitment simultaneously within the same organisation, is largely descriptive and tends to reemphasise aspects of the model by Mayer and Allen (1991). For instance, emphasis on *simultaneity* is a replication of Mayer and Allen's (1991) *inclusiveness*. Also, unlike the model of Mayer and Allen, neither of these two studies have been subjected to rigorous empirical review.

Therefore, a thrust of this research is the need to respond to a lack of emphasis of commitment theories on an individual's own experience of being committed (which can be ethnoculturally influenced). This has been acknowledged as a major loophole in the commitment literature (Ghosh and Swamy, 2014). While definitions of, and approaches to, research in organisational commitment have evolved from reviews of the literature, essentially leading to hybridisations of previous definitions, a focus on

measuring commitment alone may be inadequate for shedding light on how people in organisations experienced their own attachments to organisational life and workplace realities. I voice this concern in this thesis – that progress in commitment research should include an attempt to understand commitment from the standpoint of the individual *also*. One way to proceed is to look at how employees demonstrate commitment to organisational values in the workplace and how a multiplicity of factors (including socio-cultural ones) influence, and are influenced by, other factors. Consequently, of interest to this research is how ethnocultural values influence the way in which employees demonstrate commitment to organisational values within Nigerian organisations, specifically banks.

#### **4.2.4. Influence of Ethnic-cultural Values on Organisational Commitment**

Schwartz (1997; 2011; 2012) claims that contending values may compel employees to engage in value ordering or prioritisation, causing them to negotiate which values they adopt at any given point in time. This, in turn, determines employee actions and practices. Hofstede (1980) argues that the attitudes and behaviours of employees are shaped by the values of their national cultures, while Harris and Cameron (2005) assert that the type and form of employee commitment to an organisation would reflect the values of their cultures. The argument by these authors suggests a link between organisational commitment and individual and group identity, and has some implications for the social identity theory, as propounded by Tajfel (1978).

Based on this theory, the process of identification develops differently for various social groups because *social identity* is “that part of an individual’s self-concept that derives from knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Harris and Cameron, 2005, p. 159). By categorising themselves into groups, individuals distinguish themselves from other groups, thereby creating a positive sense of value. In line with this, some research does suggest that the process of identification is influenced by cultural factors (House *et al.*, 2004) and more specifically by cultural values (Schwartz, 2011; 2012). Furthermore, a person-centred approach to commitment suggests that personal features (such as a person’s values) are fundamental in exploring work experiences and organisational commitment (Morin *et al.*, 2010). Thus, the values of ethnic groups

will influence the affective disposition of Nigerian employees. These differences in affective disposition will moderate the work experiences of Nigerian employees and influence their views and understanding of, and consequently how they demonstrate organisational commitment.

As ethnocultural values shape the practices of these employees, the type, form, understanding and expression of their commitment to an organisation would also, reflect the values of their national cultures. This understanding is significant because the ethnocultural (or group) expectations of employees' behaviour and attitudes (as group members) are diverse across national cultures (Wasti and Oder, 2009). Culture, therefore, could be an important determinant of organisational outcomes, specifically in areas such as employee performance (Nazarian *et al.*, 2013), which has been found to have implications for employee commitment (Tolentino, 2013).

As previously stated, different cultural values can be classified as *embeddedness* or *autonomous* (Schwartz, 1997). This classification is based on the degree to which individuals within a national culture are assimilated into groups. An *autonomous* value disposition implies that the bond between individuals is loose. However, *embeddedness* suggests that people are integrated into strong, cohesive groups to whom they owe their allegiance and loyalty. Related to this view, Markus and Kitayama (2010) have proposed the concept of independent and interdependent self. The *dominant self* that develops in individuals displaying *autonomous* values can be characterised as independent. In such cultures, the self is considered as separate, distinct, and autonomous. In contrast, within cultures evidencing *embeddedness*, the interdependent self sees itself as part of the larger social group. Connection with others is seen as a way of expressing the self. In such cultures, individuality is subordinated to the social group.

In Nigeria, people are fundamentally identified as ethnic group members and are socialised to remain loyal to their group and committed to its values. Consequently, Slater *et al.* (2016) point out a significant aspect of the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel (1978) - the assumption that individuals define themselves in relation to social group membership, which, in turn, produces distinctive differences in social and organisational behaviour. Further, the more a person identifies with this group membership, the more that individual's organisational practices are affected by such

membership (Lipponen *et al.* 2005). Indeed, it has been suggested that Nigerians typically owe allegiance first and foremost to their ethnic group, more so than to the entity called Nigeria (Mamman and Baydoun, 2009, pp. 194). Thus, it seems logical to assume that, on account of having a distinct ethnic identity, the Nigerian employee is more likely to have distinct attitudes and behaviours that are characteristically incompatible with egalitarian (Western-styled) organisational values. The point is, adherence and allegiance to organisational values (through compatible and required workplace practices) is a requirement within these organisations because it evidences employee commitment. However, culture has a dominant influence on employee attitudes and behaviour in Nigerian organisations, and consequently, on employee understanding of, and commitment to, organisational values.

Further, since groups evidencing *embeddedness* values place greater emphasis on connectedness with members of the group, loyalty to the group, social conformity, mutual reliance, group empathy, and shared interests, the Nigerian employee will exhibit practices indicative of ethnic loyalty. Organisational commitment will be more likely evidenced in practices of employees influenced by *autonomous* cultural values such as independence, loose social ties, and less allegiance to groups showing some link between [ethnic] “loyalty” and [organisational] “commitment”.

#### **4.3. Employee Loyalty versus Employee Commitment**

Traditionally, scholars have used the term *employee loyalty* to refer to the ability of the employee to stay with the organisation in the long term (Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011). This view is based on the premise that employee loyalty could be measured by the amount of time one worked for the organisation (Silvestro, 2002). However, as the global economic landscape changed, the definition of employee loyalty has also changed, and the traditional view no longer applies. This state of affairs then opens opportunities for a new, enlightened view of loyalty grounded on mutual values, goals, caring and respect, which can be achieved by organisations tapping into the commitment of their employees (Mehta *et al.*, 2010). Loyalty, therefore, is *the willingness of an employee to invest in or sacrifice for the organisation to strengthen a relationship* (Reichheld, 2003). Some research has also shown that loyalty is strongly correlated with good personal relations with colleagues (Nijhof *et al.*, 1998);

that the culture of peers' work relations has a significant influence on loyalty (Fischer, 2004); and that culture moderates the relationship between leadership behaviour, job satisfaction, and loyalty (Yousef, 2000; Fischer, 2004).

However, Phaneuf (2013) contends that while previous studies tended to implicitly or explicitly link loyalty to employee length of service or tenure, employee loyalty cannot be measured by the length of time employees spend working for the organisation *alone*. There is a need to include the degree of commitment employees which demonstrate when they are on the job. Thus, Phaneuf argued for the presence of a relationship between organisational commitment and organisational loyalty. This relationship between the two concepts can be seen in a widely used definition of commitment by Mowday *et al.* (1979), who state that organisational commitment is the relative strength of the identification of the individual and the involvement of that individual with the organisation, and has three basic components: A strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organisation's goals and values (identification); a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation (involvement); and a strong desire to remain with the organisation (loyalty). Based on this view, loyalty is, in simple terms, *a sustained form of commitment to remain with the organisation*.

Consequently, Mehta *et al.* (2010) conclude that the relationship between employee commitment and employee loyalty can best be described in terms of a process, where certain attitudes give rise to certain behaviours (intended or actual). Loyalty is, thus, the *employees' emotional attachment to the organisation*, and is similar to the view of employee commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) - *employee psychological attachment to the organisation*, which further shows the close relationship between the two concepts.

While I acknowledge these relationships, some research has sought to distinguish between the two concepts. Simon (1990) and Antoncic and Antoncic (2011), for instance, argue that organisational loyalty is defined in terms of an employee's identification with the organisation, to the extent that the employee, in making a decision, evaluates the available alternatives in terms of their consequences for the group, rather than in terms of self-interest. Therefore, *employee decisions made in the*

*interest of the organisation over the long term translate into loyalty.* There are cases where these decisions are selective or show consideration for only a single aspect of the organisation (e.g. meeting financial targets, but without being a team player). Such cases cannot be seen as loyalty, despite demonstrating commitment to that particular aspect of the organisation.

Thus, organisational loyalty is also *the wholesome internalisation of the organisational goals and values by the employee in the long term* (Simon, 1990). Arai (1995) also argues that loyalty is *an extreme or irrational form of commitment based on employee discrimination between a “we” and a “they”*. While emphasising the similarity between these the two concepts, as well as their uniqueness, Mueller *et al.* (1992) identify loyalty (*intent to stay*) as a particular form that organisational commitment can take. Therefore, Al-Ma’ani (2013) concludes that loyalty (or *intent to stay*), though similar to and interwoven with organisational commitment, is conceptually distinct. This relationship was buttressed by a study by Zeffane (1995), who incorporates organisational commitment with the notion of corporate loyalty or attachment to the organisation.

However, O’Reilly and Chatman (1986), Gregersen (1993), and Becker *et al.* (1996) focused their studies on employee *loyalty to a supervisor* (not an organisation). Loyalty here takes two dimensions: employee identification with, and internalisation of, their *supervisor’s values*. Indeed, loyalty to a supervisor may extend beyond these two dimensions, especially in an extremely relationship-oriented (*embeddedness* value-driven) context like the Nigerian workplace. It can be argued that within Nigerian organisation, loyalty may be demonstrated in more ways than mere identification with and internalisation of the supervisor’s values. As Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) explain, attachment may arise out of attraction based on familiarity (with the value system of one’s manager, for instance), frequent interactions (with ethnically diverse colleagues) or common (ethnic) identity.

This point is underscored by Arai (1995), who argues that the cultural values of the society within which the organisation exists are fundamental because the degree of organisational loyalty is likely to differ among different cultures. Again, this assertion is similar to the one made, with regards to commitment in various cultures, by Wasti

(2003). Clugston *et al.* (2000), therefore, extended Meyer and Allen's (1991) dimensions of organisational commitment by to two other foci: supervisor and work-group. Here, normative commitment refers to an employee's aspiration to stay with the *organisation or supervisor* based on a sense of duty, loyalty, or obligation. This view is consistent with the idea of loyalty in a relation-oriented society like Nigeria. The authors, therefore, propose that in order to broaden the construct of employee loyalty, employee commitment should be included. Thus, the authors use loyalty interchangeably with commitment.

However, the focus of this thesis is not to explore employee attachment to the organisation or supervisor, as *manifested in employee intentions to stay* through identification with and internalisation of the goals of the organisation in *the long term*. This emphasis would be the preoccupation of a study on employee loyalty. Rather, this research seeks to explore possible socio-cultural influences on how employees express their commitment to organisational values. It is noteworthy that organisational values form only a single aspect of the whole organisation and commitment to this construct may be indicative of, but not synonymous with, loyalty to the organisation. However, I also recognise that commitment and loyalty are very similar constructs and one may be indicative of the other and *vice versa*, and, as Arai (1995) argues, employee loyalty is an extreme, even irrational, form of commitment. Consistent with the aim of this research, this thesis adopts *commitment*, instead of *loyalty*. However, when loyalty is used in this thesis, it is meant to buttress the researcher's arguments and to put in context opinions of other scholars regarding cultural values and commitment. Loyalty here is, therefore, mostly used to show when employee workplace practices are indicative of allegiance to ethnocultural values, including but not limited to a superior's ethnic values rather than organisational values. This approach is fundamental to this research and is based on the view that the meaning of commitment is culturally contextual (Wasti, 2003), which is an assertion I analyse in the next section with a focus on Nigeria.



#### **4.4. The Meaning of Organisational Commitment in Nigeria**

In this section, I present the meaning of some of the fundamental elements of the assumed meaning of commitment in a Nigerian context and theoretically relate outcomes with such views as those of Oloko (1973) and Gbadamosi (1995a; 1995b, 2003). These elements include inadequate job alternatives, previous sacrifices, cost of leaving the organisation and feelings of obligation to remain.

Sacrifices refer to the act of one giving up something valuable, while inadequate job alternatives refer to having limited work opportunities for which one receives regular payment, or a limited prospect of choosing between two or more jobs (Korabik and Rosin, 1990). In the context of this thesis, the first element of the concept of continuance commitment, which is the perceived sacrifices or previous sacrifices, points towards a consideration of how much of one's time and effort has already been given to contribute to organisational success. This could be in the form of the employee's length of service to the organisation (Loveman, 1998). It can also be other physical and mental services and efforts made towards achieving organisational goals and values. The "cost of leaving", just like sacrifices, denotes a consideration of what the employee may lose regarding value, advantages, or privileges if the employee leaves the organisation, as well as consideration of the differences between the benefits and detriments involved with the choice of leaving the organisation (Silvestro, 2002). In essence, the higher the cost of leaving the organisation, the less the likelihood that an employee will.

This situation may apply to Nigeria due to the high rate of unemployment occasioned by a depressed labour market. According to a report "*2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report*" by Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in 2012, 54 per cent of Nigerian youths (aged between 15 and 34 years) were unemployed. This rate of unemployment is further exacerbated by the fact that every year, 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market (see *The Sun editorial*, April 9, 2014). A more recent report by the NBS (2017) places the unemployment rate in Nigeria at 14.2 per cent, up from 10.4 per cent a year earlier. That same report records that unemployment was higher for persons between 15-24 years old (25.2 per cent) and women (16.3 per cent); and that the unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 9.76 per cent from 2006 until 2016.

This situation has led to highly skilled workers taking up unskilled work and when they do get these jobs, they are ready to work even beyond regular hours (unpaid) to remain employed. As Adegboye (2013) points out, in spite of high educational qualifications and personal development achievements, there is a perennial fear among Nigerian employees of losing a job even when it pays so little.

The socio-cultural implication of this state of affairs is that a situation develops where employees are willing to sacrifice much of their time and social needs and obligations for poorly paid jobs (Gbadamosi, 2003). Commitment may, therefore, be born out of rational economic choices, although, as Adegboye (2013) suggests, there is a cultural value element to this economic consideration. For instance, employees who are members of a wider society that exhibits embeddedness values, as well as tradition and conformity values (Schwartz, 2012), must deal with the pressures of the extended family system, which requires them to financially support not only nuclear but also extended family relations. Employee commitment to organisational values is, therefore, necessary in order to continue meeting this ethnocultural requirement.

#### **4.4.1. Normative Organisational Commitment**

Employee feelings are employees' expressions that reveal the state of their minds, while employee obligation is what employees are implicitly compelled to do because they have pledged to do it (Swales, 2004). Therefore, following the argument of Weiner (1982) and Meyer and Allen (1991), employee feelings of commitment towards an organisation could mean employee expression of emotions directed towards an organisation, which are borne out of a sense of obligation. This understanding implies that an employee's moral undertaking or potential to express feelings of commitment towards their organisations must be based, first, on their emotional persuasions, second, on their desire to do so, and, finally, on their consideration of what they may lose in terms of costs (sacrifices) if they leave the organisation. These costs could include prestige, status, time invested in the organisation, or a loss of something they had gained, such as career development and growth (Meyer and Allen, 1991). This approach to commitment seems representative of the Nigerian scenario, especially within the organised private sector. In this sector, organisations invest heavily in the

training and development of their employees for specific organisational benefits, thus allowing employees to contractually, psychologically and morally commit themselves to remain with their organisations (Adegboye, 2013).

These theories, therefore, tie the expression of moral feelings of obligation in the Nigerian context with previous studies on other elements of commitment like attitudinal and continuance commitment in Nigeria (Oloko, 1973; Gbadamosi, 2003; Ogbor and Williams, 2003). Indeed, employees' expressions of obligation to their organisation can sometimes become a means by which they can reciprocate the organisation's *kindness*. Here, the employee would see the "privilege" of having a job, the "honour" of earning a salary, or being offered a platform for career growth as acts of benevolence by the organisation. Culturally, acts of kindness from *others* (in this case the organisation to the employee) must be reciprocated (by the employee) using symbolic gestures produced by an ethnoculturally instilled feeling of an obligation to show gratitude (Oloko, 1973; Gbadamosi, 2003). These culturally instilled feelings produce and define the commitment of the Nigerian employee (Swales, 2004).

However, it has been argued that this obligation is not an expression of emotional attachment to the organisation, but rather a response to the fear of what an employee may lose (e.g. good relationship with superiors) if they leave the organisation (Swales, 2004). This argument, therefore, suggests that the commitment of the Nigerian employee is not a moral obligation borne out of a moral obligation to remain with the organisation or an emotional attachment to the organisation. Rather, it is a socio-rational contingency (see Schultz *et al.*, 2007) and a socio-cultural and socio-economic imperative borne out of the perceived costs of leaving the organisation and sustained by the cultural implications of job loss and job scarcity (Ogbor and Williams, 2003). This theory also informs the argument that normative commitment may be difficult to apply to the Nigerian socio-cultural and workplace contexts (Suliman and Iles, 2000). Indeed, this thesis recommends an investigation into this suggestion for further research.

This thesis considers these theories as fundamental because it questions some of the views of Meyer and Allen (1991) regarding employee commitment. This thesis essentially suggests that normative commitment is not a component of commitment in

the Nigerian context, and presents normative commitment as an element that may provide insight into attitudinal and continuance commitment. Thus, “organisational commitment does not develop simply through emotional attachment (attitudinal commitment), perceived costs (continuance commitment), or moral obligation (normative commitment)”. Rather, it develops through “the interplay of all these components” (Suliman and Iles, 2000, p. 408). Furthermore, by focusing on commitment as (also) a cultural, rather than a purely psychological phenomenon, this suggestion implies that commitment, as defined in Western studies, may be difficult to apply in the Nigerian context (Swales, 2004). This is because how it may manifest as a culturally influenced construct has been ignored (Suliman and Iles, 2000).

It is relevant, however, to point out that the theories of Meyer and Allen (1991), which focused on the psychological implications of organisational commitment, as well as the argument put forward by Suliman and Iles (2000), which presents commitment as culturally influenced, have found a meeting point with the argument of Wasti (2002). Wasti assessed the degree of the validity of the components of commitment in non-Western Turkish culture, a society driven by *embeddedness* and *hierarchy* values like Nigeria. The conclusion of the study showed some support for Becker’s (1960) argument, by suggesting that “in a collectivist [embedded] culture [like Nigeria] the normative nature of the employment relationship would generate expectations for loyalty [allegiance] to the organisation...” Further, “the perceived costs of violating these expectations would be reflected in increased continuance commitment” (Wasti, 2002, p. 525). In this instance, the commitment that is being referred to, according to Wasti’s (2002) findings, is affective or continuance commitment, which originates from normative pressures as a result of people’s societal values (culture), not from a normative feeling of moral obligation.

This finding is also supported by the definition of normative commitment by Weiner (1982, p. 421) as “the totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way [based on cultural values and norms] which meets organisational goals and interests”. In other words, normative pressures mirror the internal or external controls that are culturally or psychologically applied on employees, or the feelings expressed by employees based on some internal (organisational) pressures and external (societal) pressures, which influence employees to show commitment to the organisation. Commitment

here, therefore, becomes cultural and *value*-driven not simply obligatory.

Within the context of this study, however, normative commitment refers to the extent to which employees are culturally influenced, or culturally obligated, to exercise adherence to their organisation's values, either through continued sacrifices (continuance commitment) or by continued expression of feelings of allegiance (attitudinal commitment) to their organisation. Therefore, any obligatory pressure may not necessarily be considered normative commitment in this context, but perhaps an element that defines attitudinal or continuance commitment. Pressures resulting from employees' sacrifices and feelings towards their organisation as a result of their cultural values, or any other cultural factor, do not necessarily represent normative commitment. Rather, these pressures may be seen as culturally defined facilitators of employee desire or aspiration (affective commitment) and needs (continuous commitment) that "bind employees to particular organisations" (Swales, 2004, p. 188).

Admittedly, this understanding of normative commitment, as a component that taps into the definition of employee commitment, may indeed present some conceptual challenges. For instance, evidence that employees' commitment to their organisations is based on moral obligation is dependent on the continuance benefits that employees may enjoy within the organisation, or the emotional feeling they may have developed over the years for the organisation. This suggestion also shows that attempts to classify commitment into components may sometimes be misinforming because what may be classified as normative in one culture may indeed be different in another culture. It is also possible that any attempt at a definition or classification of normative components may end up being an endeavour mostly focused on an aspect of attitudinal or continuance commitment. This thesis brings to the fore the degree of contradictions that still exists in the conceptualisation of commitment in non-Western cultures like Nigeria. As Powell and Meyer (2004, p. 158) argue "after more than 40 years, questions about the classification, meaning, and measurement of commitment remains unsolved". With no clearly identified best approach as of yet, the central question remains: In the Nigerian socio-cultural context, should employee commitment be conceptualised and defined by a single (generic) concept, or as involving only two components: affective and normative commitment or, as Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed, a three-component conceptualisation?

Linking the above arguments to this research, while I acknowledge the existing contentions, I accept that commitment has three components (Meyer and Allen, 1991): attitudinal, normative and continuance components. However, I also recognise that these components may be interlinked, can overlap, and the lines between them can be blurred depending on the context (Suliman and Iles, 2000; Swailes, 2002). I also acknowledge that constituting elements of commitment can influence and be influenced by other factors such as ethnic culture (Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Oder, 2009). Therefore, in this thesis, I view attitudinal, normative and continuance commitment as **organisational commitment** (employee commitment or employee commitment to organisational values) and consequently view the concept as:

*Employee identification and involvement with, as well as acceptance of, organisational values within the workplace, reflected in how the employee adopts and implements values and practices, which meet organisational goals and interests.*

#### **4.5. Commitment and Culture: Connecting the literature**

This study aims to explore how the core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria influence their understanding of, and commitment to, organisational values. Based on already acknowledged studies on culture and commitment, a summary of the relationship between various social and organisational imperatives can be put forward. These contextual relationships show the influence of organisational contingencies, societal influences and socio-economic factors on employee socio-cultural (or ethnic) values, and how these, in turn, influence how employees demonstrate commitment to organisational values.

As already stated, Nigerian society evidences *embeddedness* and *hierarchy* values (Schwartz, 1997; 1999). Thus, individual level values of employees, such as *tradition* and *conformity*, (as opposed to *self-direction* which is indicative of values such as innovation and open-mindedness) will be reinforced not only by the nuclear family but also by a maze of extended family relationships rooted in tribal and ethnic standards and beliefs. These relationships, in turn, influence employee organisational practices

as well. For instance, employee *achievement* values will influence employee career choice, as well as practices consistent with associated goals and aspirations. Within the workplace, *hierarchy* values (as opposed to organisational values of equality and fairness) will define how employees interact with superiors and how they relate to the structure of authority in the organisation.

The idea, by Schwartz (1999), that an employee needs to dictate value choices amidst conflicting value priorities, implies that certain factors may influence an employee's choice of values at any point in time. For instance, *hierarchy* values of employees will influence how employees relate to senior colleagues at work. Employees' *hierarchy* values may support favouritism, for instance, which contrasts sharply with *egalitarian* values of equality espoused by formal organisations (such as banks in Nigeria). In essence, *hierarchy* values emphasise ethnocentrism (Kamoche, 2013), or ethnic/tribal consciousness, bias or sentiments. Relatedly, *hierarchy* values may also reveal ethnic/tribal or societally influenced perceptions of organisational status in the sense that an employee's job title may have some significance for how or where the employee stands in the social ladder in the wider society. Thus, *hierarchy* values can influence how the employee demonstrates commitment to organisational values such as informality and equality.

An instance of these influences (see Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013) is when employees demonstrate high loyalty to their boss (managers) or patron (*conformity values*) and their colleagues and friends (typically from the same ethnic group) within the organisation (*conservatism values*). This influence is also manifested when employees continue working in organisations, mainly due to pressures from elderly or influential family members (*tradition values*). Therefore, conceptualising employee organisational commitment in Nigeria will be challenging if ethnocultural and organisational values are ignored. This contextual appreciation is significant because of the need to understand the influence of cultural values at a societal level, or *hierarchy values at the individual level*.

Therefore, it can be argued that commitment is not limited to an employee's behaviour towards their organisation, but is also a concept that forms part of the every-day life of people within organisations. It includes people's purpose for continuing to work, as

well as the way in which employees value their work and other individuals in their organisation (Tomkins and Grove, 1983). Thus, commitment, like culture, is essential for sustaining a nation or an organisation. In accordance with Schwartz (1997, 2011), I recognise the views of Hofstede (1980, 1991), and the GLOBE Study – House *et al.* (2004), that culture is classified into organisational and national/societal cultures. Also, that the behaviour of individuals in a nation or organisation will be influenced to some degree by their national or societal cultural values, and this will affect their understanding of, and response to, organisational contexts.

In effect, distinctive ethnocultural characteristics can influence employee organisational practices, management outlook, and employee understanding of organisational imperatives and contingencies, such as commitment to organisational values.

Attempts were made in previous studies to measure commitment based on demographic variables such as years in the organisation, age, level of education, income and tenure (Chen and Francesco, 2000; Morin *et al.*, 2010). These variables were seen as “having a significant impact on organisational commitment” (Lok and Crawford, 2003, p. 325). However, this thesis does not seek to measure commitment, but rather to examine how Nigerian employees demonstrate organisational commitment based on their ethnocultural values. These abovementioned theories inform this researcher’s second view of commitment as:

*“Employee connectedness to their organisation, as demonstrated through a culturally influenced desire to remain in the employment of the organisation and expressed as emotional feelings, attachment, involvement, and consideration of alternatives, sacrifices, and costs of leaving due to societal and individual cultural value factors.”*

This definition, which is culturally influenced and appropriate for a society like Nigeria, seems to capture employees societal and individual level value characteristics appropriately. It presents commitment within the context of culture and as “constituting part of the everyday life of the organisations and people's reasons for continuing to work and the way they value their work and people in their organisation” (Tomkins and



Grove, 1983). This new definition of commitment implies that the researcher accepts Meyer and Allen's (1991) views that at every point in a study, what is defined as commitment must be fundamentally clear. Further, such understanding should, as Lee *et al.* (2001) recommend, lead to the development of the definition of commitment based on internal and external cultural factors inherent within the selected organisations and countries. These theories support the above definition of commitment and will lead to a more robust understanding of how cultural values may influence the demonstration of commitment by Nigerian employees. In effect, it focuses on the identification of important features, expressions, meanings and components of commitment and culture, synonymous with the Nigerian society.

#### **4.6. Summary**

Although some organisational commitment components overlap and attitudinal, normative and continuance commitment may be applied to Nigerian contexts (Oloko, 1973; Gbadamosi, 1995a, 2003), a review of the literature suggests that the Western conceptualisation of commitment, such as that of Meyer and Allen's (1991), could present challenges when applied to non-Western countries like Nigeria due to differences in cultural values, which necessitates a change in the meaning of commitment from country to country.

In order to have a generic definition that will aid the assessment of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct (attitudinal, normative and continuance commitment) in Nigeria, a working definition of commitment has been generated from the work of Mowday *et al.*, (1979); O'Reilly and Chatman (1986); Meyer and Allen (1991) and Swailes (2004), among others. Specifically, the definition of continuance commitment from Swailes (2004) and the definition of normative and attitudinal commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) is adopted for this thesis.

How cultural values influence employee demonstration of organisational commitment will, therefore, be fundamental in this research, and this knowledge will aid the effective comprehension of organisational commitment within Nigerian societal and workplace contexts. This can be achieved through exploring individuals' workplace practices and

employees' experiences of commitment (Mwaura *et al.*, 1998; Lee *et al.*, 2001, Macneil and Campbell, 2001; Gautam *et al.*, 2001; Wasti, 2002, 2003; Allen, 2003). To adequately explore the meaning of commitment within a society like Nigeria, would, therefore, require a need to identify the cultural peculiarities and meaning systems of the various (ethnic) groups that broadly make up the nation. There will also be a need to ascertain what organisational values exist in formal (egalitarian) Nigerian organisations, as well as how cultural values influence organisational contexts, and specifically employee *value allegiance*.

This review found that the practices of Nigerian employees will show value allegiance indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment as long as the organisation remains a source of income that allows the employees to meet their family obligations (Oloko, 1973; Gbadamosi, 1995a, 1995b, 2003; Ogbor and William, 2003). It can also be argued that employees may show ethnic loyalty if there are privileges, which the employees will lose by leaving the organisation (e.g. position, power, wealth, status, influence, affluence). Therefore, Nigerian employees will tend to demonstrate practices indicative of culturally influenced values, which support ethnic affiliation and tribal sentiments, as long as these will ensure career progress, growth, support job stability, and regular income (Ogbor and William, 2003; Gbadamosi, 1995a, 2003).

Furthermore, the collectivist composition of the Nigerian society (Adegboye, 2013), characterised by *embeddedness* and *hierarchy* value dimensions as well as individual level values such as *power, security, conformity and tradition* (Schwartz, 1999), employees are likely to show high commitment to their organisation as a way of satisfying the need for acceptance by (ethnic) group members (Ogbor and William, 2003). Nigerian banks specifically rely on what they consider to be strong egalitarian organisational values to curb ethnic loyalty and ensure organisational commitment (Herbst and Soludo, 2004; Adegboye, 2013).

Overall, these considerations have strategic, managerial and policy implications for managing a culturally diverse workforce (Cornelius, 2002; Adeleye *et al.*, 2014; George *et al.*, 2017). In the next chapter, I discuss the methods and methodology of this thesis and how these have been applied to achieve the research aim.

## Chapter Five

### 5. Research Methodology

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I describe how I collected the data, with which I addressed the research question: ***How are employees' organisational practices affected by national cultural values?*** The sub-questions to support this are: How do ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance? **(SRQ1)**; and how do organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Nigerian banks? **(SRQ2)**. I draw particularly on Saunders *et al.* (2009) and Creswell (2013a; 2013b). I begin by exploring the research logic, approach and philosophy. I then proceed with examining the study strategy, sampling, data collection and analysis techniques, acknowledging the works of others (such as Robson, 2011; Cunliffe, 2003, 2008, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Farquhar, 2012). By combining or blending ideas, I present a practical and practicable research design, showing how the research aim of the thesis will be realised and, more specifically, how the research question(s) will be addressed. In the final sections of this chapter, I focus on the use of reflexivity in this study before examining ethical considerations.

#### 5.2. The Research Logic

It has been argued that research frequently involves theory and that such theoretical foundations are identified either during the early stages or towards the latter stages of the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009) and largely determine the research logic. In the management literature, two major research logics are seen to exist: an inductive logic, in which data is collected, analysed and is used to build or generate a theory; and a deductive logic, in which theory and hypothesis are established, and the research is designed to test the hypothesis (Hakim, 2000; Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Creswell (2013a) points out that a combination of inductive and deductive logic is possible in a single study and is referred to as abduction.

I adopt an inductive logic for this thesis because the point of significance is in the comprehension of the way bank employees interpret their world as social actors. An inductive approach to research is strongly associated with a subjectivist ontology, a

social constructionist epistemology, social constructionism and a qualitative research approach (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008; Patton, 2014). The choice to adopt an inductive logic must be consistent with the research aims, objectives and context as well as the research approach, as discussed below.

### **5.3. Research Approach**

An approach to research is the choice a researcher makes on how that research is to be carried out (Denscombe, 2014)., The major choice is between quantitative and qualitative approaches or a hybrid of both - the mixed method approach. The quantitative approach follows the research procedure of the natural sciences, albeit in a social setting, and embraces a deductive logic and a positivist philosophical stance (Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012).

I adopt a qualitative approach in this thesis because this approach is associated with an inductive logic and grounded in the view that the target of social research is understanding of human beings in social settings. Qualitative research highlights the interactions between people in social situations as the appropriate approach towards understanding and studying social phenomena (Cunliffe, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2013; Patton, 2014). The qualitative approach is not without its common criticisms, including that it is strongly subject to researcher bias and lacks replicability and generalisability (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). However, this approach affords deeper insight into and analysis of the research phenomenon.

In this thesis, a qualitative approach allowed detailed subjective exploration of attitudes, feelings, views, experiences and practices (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012) of bank employees in Nigeria. Taking a qualitative approach, it focussed on the subjective views and experiences of bank employees in an organisational context. Given the complex nature of the research topic (ethnocultural values and allegiance practices of professional bankers), adopting a qualitative approach allowed me to explore several questions with my participants and ensure richness of data generated (Creswell, 2013a).

In the next section, I explore the philosophical stance adopted for this research and

the implications for the design of the study. All research is based on some underlying assumptions – the philosophy - about what constitutes reality and in essence how the researcher views knowledge. The researcher’s philosophy has implications for the research approach and chosen research methods (Myers, 2013).

#### **5.4. Research Philosophy**

Within the field of business and management, all research adopts an ontological stance that is the way the researcher views the world. According to Cunliffe (2011) and Farquhar (2012), this stance is objectivist if the researcher assumes that reality exists independently and is distinct from individual perception. Conversely, if a researcher views the world as socially constructed or understood only by examining the perceptions and views of social actors, then the research ontology is subjectivist. The ontological assumptions of a researcher point towards ideas about nature and sources, while their view on the limits of knowledge is referred to as epistemology.

Epistemology is concerned with “the sort of knowledge that such-and-such is true, for example, that the world is a sphere” (Farquhar, 2012, p. 17) and not with other forms of knowledge, such as how to cook, for example. A central concern in epistemology is what must be added to beliefs to transform them into knowledge, or how beliefs can be substantiated in research. While an objectivist ontology follows a positivist epistemology, a subjectivist ontology, which favours closer engagement with the research phenomenon or subject within social and organisational contexts, follows a social constructionist epistemology. A social constructionist stance is predicated on the view that research of the social world (in contrast to the natural world) requires a different logic that reflects the distinctiveness of social beings (Bryman, 2012).

A researcher also needs to appreciate the place of values, on which the research is hinged. This position is called axiology (Farquhar, 2012) and is based on the researcher’s ontology. A researcher adopting an objectivist ontology with a positivist epistemology will submit to the view that the process of research is value-free and that the researcher is detached from the researched, thus, eliminating bias at each stage of the research. In contrast, the researcher adopting a subjectivist ontology with a social constructionist epistemology will follow the view that values help determine what

might be considered facts and the interpretations that are drawn from these facts. In the latter case, the researcher must acknowledge, explain or address these facts and their interpretations, as well as their underlying values within the research.

I view knowledge as a product of social constructions built from the perceptions, opinion, experiences, and views of commercial bank employees and as a result, seen as being peculiar to them. Thus, I adopted a subjectivist ontology, social constructionist epistemology and social constructionism as the philosophical stance. This position means that I embrace the idea of generating knowledge subjectively and contextually, through multiple constructs “created through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially by social actors” (Mertens, 2009, p. 12) - in this case, Nigerian bank employees. The preceding submissions are underpinned by social constructionism which I analyse in more detail in the following section.

#### **5.4.1. Social Constructionism**

Social constructionism has been applied in management to study how organisations, identities and knowledge are socially constructed. Social Constructionism has its intellectual roots in sociology, social philosophy and the sociology of knowledge (Andrews, 2012) and is rooted in the scholarly quest for new ways of thinking about social reality or the experiential nature of reality. A sense of the real is viewed as a practical accomplishment, achieved through the contextual, embodied, ongoing interpretive work of people (Garfinkel, 1967; Cunliffe, 2008). A social constructionist orientation often focuses on the context in which interaction takes place, as well as the interaction itself because personal experiences of social beings are shaped by social interaction and taken-for-granted uses of language (Schutz, 1960; Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). Society exists as both a subjective reality, and so, our social world can be viewed as a dialectical process of externalisation, objectivation, and internalisation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966): “Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product” (p. 61).

Social constructionists advance the idea that knowledge itself is socially constructed, and facts are social products. Social reality and identities, then, are created and

maintained in conversations with others rather than in structures. The point is that under social constructionism, social reality, identities, and knowledge, are culturally, socially, historically and linguistically – or contextually - influenced (Burr, 2015). Social constructionist research can be grounded in ethnography, discursive approaches, critically based work, poststructuralist-influenced work and relationally oriented work. It spans such methods as thematic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse, analysis, conversation analysis, ethnography amongst others (Cunliffe, 2008).

From a social constructionist perspective, these historically, socially or linguistically situated experiences are viewed as culturally situated understandings about contexts, times, places, individuals and groups of people – Cunliffe, 2011). Reality is seen as a discursive product, a power-infused process, which influences members of social groups because ‘reality is selectively perceived, rearranged and negotiated interpersonally’ (Weick, 1979, p. 164). Hence, our complexly interwoven, dynamically responsive relationships, which are neither fully within nor outside our control as researchers or participants, are recognised under social constructionism (Gergen, 2009). Meanings are multiple, shifting and always embedded in time, place and relation to others.

In this thesis, I engage with research participants in conversations to explore how we progressively interpret, understand and relate to others and our surroundings. As social beings, we are always selves-in-relation-to-others; we coexist with others, rather than with social phenomena, and our identities and collective understandings of our social world are shaped between us in our everyday interactions and experienced differently (relationality). My research emphasises the “we” but also embedded and embodied interrelated experiences (Cunliffe, 2003, 2008), which shift as I move through conversations over time, people and context (Shotter, 2008).

Adopting a social constructionist stance has several implications for this thesis. I used semi-structured interviews and to explore different meanings, perceptions, and interpretations of my participants. I used a case study to capture the narratives of my

research participants because I am interested in “the understanding of local meanings and everyday symbolic worlds” and not empirically verifiable facts (Prasad and Prasad, 2002, p. 7). These narratives, therefore, focused on real-life, tentative possible meanings and fluid interpretations potentially shared between people. I adopted a social constructionist stance based on what is represented as data (subjective views, opinions, values of employees underpinned by practices) in this thesis, how it was conceived and analysed, the language that was used, and the style of writing. I focused on the creation of meaning and insights or the “how” as against “what”.

Indeed, I am guided by suggestions that qualitative research avoids the tendency to fix meanings but rather draws inferences about meanings, as defined by research subjects (Cresswell, 2013a). In this research, understanding how ethnic values influence how employees view or demonstrate organisational commitment is constructed through interactions between individuals as employees and as members of social groups within society and understood through subjective views of participants, as relayed by the researcher.

The approach I adopted focused on the interaction of the research subjects (culturally diverse bank employees) with the social world (including organisational values, people from other sub-cultures, family units, tribal or ethnic associations, superiors, subordinates and colleagues in the workplace). This social world, in turn, influenced the research subjects and resulted in routinisation and habitualisation (Andrews, 2012) - frequently repeated actions (e.g. cultural practices, beliefs, values) that became a pattern and were reproduced. In time, habitualisation becomes embedded in routines, forming a general store of knowledge, which affects how participants, for instance, view or demonstrate commitment to organisational values.

Society further institutionalises this pattern to the extent that future generations experience this type of routine because it is continuously reaffirmed in the individual’s interaction with others through intercultural and intra-cultural relations within organisations and in the larger society (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). The experience of reality by the research subjects is achieved through primary and, to a lesser extent,



secondary socialisation (Andrews, 2012). Primary socialisation involves being given an identity (cultural, ethnic or organisational) and a place in the larger society. My research subjects are not just members of ethnic groups but also employees within the organisation. They frequently interact with other ethnic affiliates as well as members of other ethnic groups. Indeed, Burr (2015) suggests that cultural identity originates not from inside the person but from these interactions in the social realm. Socialisation takes place through culturally diverse groups, which facilitate the interpretation of what reality is by group members, render it meaningful to individuals, in this case, my research subjects (Berger and Luckmann, 1991).

#### **5.4.2. Social Constructionism: A Critique**

The main criticisms of Social Constructionism centre on its perceived conceptualisation of realism (objectivity) and relativism (subjectivity). It is accused of being anti-realist, in denying that knowledge is a direct perception of reality (Craib, 1997). In so doing, it questions clear and stable realities. Its emphasis on language as an agent of culture has been criticised for inferring that nothing exists beyond language (Sismondo, 1993; Craib, 1997; Schwandt, 2000; Burr, 2015). The suggestion by Social Constructionists that multiple realities and interpretations exist leads, in the opinion of Bury (1986), to a circular argument, because there is no way of determining that one account of reality may be better than another. Thus, Craib (1997) views Social Constructionism as a scholarly opinion rather than a philosophical position. The author engages in what Hammersley (1992) terms a *nihilist argument*: Social Constructionism, as a social construct itself, has no more claim than any other account (or theory), thereby resulting in there being no notion of what constitutes truth. Hammersley (1992) refers to this position as the self-refuting character of Social Constructionism.

Furthermore, if it is accepted that researchers (like other social beings) construct a social world rather than merely representing some independent reality (of research subjects, for instance), then this is a source of contention. Firstly, it leads to an increasing tendency for qualitative research to adopt the relativist or subjectivist position. Hammersley (1992) questions the practicality of the findings from studies that

use this method, given that the variety of accounts produced can each claim validity. This point gives rise to further criticism that research using Social Constructionism lacks any ability to change things because there is nothing against which to judge the findings of research (Bury, 1986). Andrews (2012, p. 41) refers to the effect of this situation on researchers as “political inertia” because of the reluctance of most researchers adopting a Social Constructionist approach to making any policy recommendations. However, Burningham and Cooper (1999) maintain that criticism against qualitative research adopting a Social Constructionist stance is a result of a misreading of the qualitative research process, an error traceable to researchers themselves. The point here is that researchers adopting this approach do not ground their arguments in or discredit opposing arguments by comparing them, even if unfavourably, with objective reality. Rather, they rely on the reasonableness of their findings, thereby reinforcing the criticism that findings of any social constructionist research are just one of many dissertations.

## **5.5. Research Strategy**

A research strategy is a general direction for the conduct of research (Bryman, 2012). Robson (2011) points out that the choice of research strategy is fundamentally dependent upon the research question(s), the researcher’s philosophical stance, the preferred or selected research logic and the research approach. Different research strategies tend to be connected to specific research approaches (Creswell, 2013b). The strategy adopted for this research is the case study strategy.

### **5.5.1. Case Study Strategy**

The case study strategy involves an empirical investigation (objective, positivist and quantitative) or exploration (subjective, relativist and qualitative) of a certain contemporary (existing) phenomenon within its actual (real life) context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Farquhar, 2012; Creswell, 2013b). There are two common case study approaches used in both quantitative and qualitative research. The first approaches case studies from a post-positivist viewpoint (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 2003; Flyvbjerg 2011). For instance, Yin (2003) has pointed out that theory should be developed and empirically tested within the case study. On this

basis, Yin is sometimes referred to as a positivist (see Myers, 2013). The second, endorsed by Stake (1995; 2006) and Merriam (2009), is aligned to a social constructionist perspective. Stake (2006) and Merriam (2009) point out that in a qualitative case study research, the investigator explores a bounded system (a case in a particular setting/context) over time. This is achieved through thorough, in-depth data collection encompassing multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes.

This thesis adopts the second, qualitative case study strategy approach as proposed by Stake (2006) and Merriam (2009). Qualitative case study research is a method that is universally accepted and increasingly used in management research (Stake, 2006). Hartley (2004, p. 323) describes it as:

*“a method that is “theoretically exciting and data-rich, consisting of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period or of phenomena, within their context”. It is aimed at providing the analysis of the context and processes, “which illustrates the theoretical issues being studied. It seeks to create an understanding of how behaviours or processes are influenced by, and influences context.”*

Case study strategy in qualitative social research is mostly associated with inductive logic (Creswell, 2013b). The case study strategy is of particular interest to this thesis because, as pointed out by Denscombe (2014), the focus here is to gain a rich contextual understanding (social and organisational) of multiple social actors. Further, I am guided by Creswell (2013b), who suggests that a case study strategy can be adopted if the research question(s) is primarily focused on answering “how” and “why” questions. Farquhar (2012, p. 6) argues, however, that the case study can be adopted when answering a research question focused on “how”, “who”, “why” and “when”. My choice of strategy is based on the main and sub-research questions (**see section 1.5**), which focus on the “how” in exploring employee behaviour within social and organisational contexts. In any case study, “the case” is the situation, individual, group, organisation or other units the researcher is interested in (Stake, 2006). A simple case study focuses on a particular person or organisation within a context (Stake, 2006; Merriam, 2009). However, for more complex phenomena, multiple case studies, which

involves several of such individual simple cases is adopted (Stake, 2006; Farquhar, 2012). The chosen “case” determines the particular design used in research. For this research, “the case” will be “culturally diverse employees in Nigerian banks.”

### **5.5.2. Social Constructionism and Case Study Strategy**

As noted, I undertake case studies for this cultural study, underpinned by a social constructionist approach, because I aim to understand and reveal a local and historically specific (contextual) cultural or bounded system of meanings (Stake, 2006). In order to comprehend a particular social action or practice by research subjects (such as actions or inactions indicative of value allegiance in the workplace), the meanings (such as employee ethnic values or organisational values) that constitute the action must be understood (Cunliffe, 2011). Thus, my task in the thesis using case studies underpinned by social constructionism is to point out a local structure of meanings in a case in such a way that it is possible to understand something that was unexplained or inconceivable at the onset.

This research must, therefore, seek to relay the historical, social, organisational, and culturally specific nature of meaning or structures of meaning of research subjects. These meanings include the views of culturally diverse bank employees as regards commitment to organisational values. Uncoupling these meanings required me understanding employees’ ethnic culture and their worldview through the structure of their meanings (societal values and beliefs). Taking a social constructionist approach to the qualitative case studies requires the researcher to have a subjective interaction with “the case.” In this research, it involved careful and in-depth consideration of the nature of the case, including historical background, physical setting, and other institutional and socio-cultural contextual factors (Stake, 2006).

Based on the discussions above it is clear that case studies:

- Is consistent with social constructionism, inductive reasoning, and qualitative approaches (Eisenhardt, 1989; Walsham, 1995; Stake 2006; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Lauckner *et al.*, 2012; Farquhar, 2012).
- Ensures richness and depth to understand the phenomenon of interest (Stake

2006; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Anaf *et al.*, 2007).

- Supports the exploration of complex situations, allowing for multiple perspectives, from a variety of sources, including contextual information (Stake 2006; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lauckner *et al.*, 2012).
- Is particularly useful when the unit of analysis is a behaviour - which is consistent with the research question(s) of this study (Walsham, 1995; Stake 2006; Lauckner *et al.*, 2012).

I now undertake an analysis of the research participant or “the case” as the unit of analysis in the next section.

### **5.6. Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis is defined as who or what is being studied in a research study (**see Table 4**). It is related to the fundamental problem of and for case study research relates to defining “the case”. Stake (2006) and Farquhar (2012) point out that the primary unit of analysis in most qualitative case studies are individuals, who represent the case being studied. Several such individuals or “cases” might be included in a multiple-case study. The unit of analysis for this research is the employee.

**Table 4: Participants by gender, role and ethnicity**

<b>CASE</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
<b>CASE A</b>	A1	Male	Auditor	Yoruba
	A2	Male	Head of Operations	Yoruba
	A3	Female	Operations	Yoruba
	A4	Female	Marketing	Ibo
	A5	Female	Marketing	Ibo
	A6	Male	Marketing	Yoruba
	A7	Female	Marketing	Yoruba
	A8	Male	Operations	Yoruba
	A9	Male	Operations	Ibo
	A10	Male	Marketing	Yoruba
	A11	Male	Marketing	Yoruba
	A12	Female	Marketing	Ibo
	A13	Male	Marketing Manager	Yoruba
<b>CASE B</b>	B1	Female	Operations	Ibo
	B2	Female	Operations	Ibo
	B3	Female	Operations	Yoruba
	B4	Male	Operations Manager	Ibo
	B5	Female	Marketing	Ibo
	B6	Male	Marketing Manager	Yoruba
	B7	Male	Marketing	Ibo

### **5.6.1. Sampling**

I adopted a purposive sampling technique in this thesis, in line with the nature of my research questions. Research that examines critical cases, unique cases or typical cases often adopts a purposive sampling technique (Silverman, 2013). Purposive sampling is used when researchers have to apply their judgement to select cases that aid them to answer their research question(s) (Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Also, it is appropriate when considering issues such as ease of access to participants. Purposive sampling is adopted when the sample of cases is very small and when the goal is to undertake the sampling of cases strategically so that those samples remain relevant to the research question(s) (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2014). Participants were selected from the banking industry in Lagos, Nigeria to capture Nigerian societal and organisational contexts.

The cosmopolitan city of Lagos, Nigeria's former political capital and presently its commercial capital (Smith, 2010) enjoys the popularity of being Nigeria's cultural hub. All of Nigeria's ethnic groups are represented in that city (Oyo, 2002) although the numbers vary across groups. I found for instance that the number of potential Hausa participants were so few in the subject banks that recruiting any meaningful number would have compelled me to travel to northern Nigeria, where the Hausa ethnic group is dominant and where it was more likely that I will find them working in organisations including banks. However, I was unable to travel to northern Nigeria because of safety concerns related to the Boko Haram religious insurgency in parts of Northern Nigeria (this led to my focus on the Yoruba and Ibo groups; **see section 3.4.2** for further discussion). The limitation this imperative presents for this research is also discussed in **section 8.7**).

Purposive sampling identified 20 employees of two locally owned commercial banks. The employees were from the Ibo and Yoruba ethnic groups. To undertake an in-depth exploration of the experiences and views of these culturally defined subjects, I focused on perspectives of employees who were known to have experienced the phenomenon of interest (cultural influences on views of, and commitment to organisational values). Additionally, random sampling was adopted for locating research participants, and a criterion sampling approach was used for selecting the banks for this study. For example, subject banks were from the older generation of banks, whose management have restructured policies and procedures to match industry standards and regulatory requirements over time, and who employed a large number of culturally diverse employees. Based on these considerations, I selected two banks for this study (herein called "Bank Alpha" and "Bank Beta").

I capped the number of actual participants at twenty. This sample size provided sufficient data to answer the research questions adequately. The priority here was sample composition (participants are representative of two of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria) over sample size.

### 5.6.2. Access to Participants

I wrote a letter to the headquarters of the subject banks, through the human resource department requesting access to employees at branch level voluntarily, using a letter from the University of Bradford confirming my identity and purpose. Most banks never responded, and some outrightly refused me access **[I must clarify here that this research started at the University of Bradford, United Kingdom, but that shortly after my data collection, I transferred to and eventually finished the research at Queen Mary University of London].**

Each bank offered the excuse that an interview during banking hours will negatively affect customer service delivery. The banks that eventually gave me a date for an appointment with staff were Bank Alpha, after a wait of almost two months, and Bank Beta, after almost three months (I have anonymised the original names of these banks for confidentiality). My appointment in Bank Alpha was with the Head of the human resource department (HHR) in Lagos, Nigeria. In this meeting, I made my intentions clear verbally: I wanted access to two branches of the bank so that I can interview participants. The HHR of Bank Alpha was concerned about several issues.

Firstly, she was concerned that interviewing employees during work hours could affect the quality and speed of customer service delivery in a branch since each interview will take up the time of an employee for a period. To resolve this, we agreed that I will limit interviews to a branch of the bank and that interviews could hold on a day during the week when the bank opened to customers by 10 am rather than 8 am. I could use the two-hour window to interview employees.

I met the deputy head of the human resource department in Bank Beta. He had the same concern with the HHR in Bank Alpha, but his solution was different. I was offered a list of some banks branches in highbrow areas where customer traffic was very low. I was expected to choose from any of these branches. In both banks, the officers made it clear that the bank must not be named in any publication or the thesis and that none of their products, services, practices or policies must be linked back to them by any third party. I was made to sign my consent on their letterhead. In each bank, I was then given a memo addressed to the branch manager requesting that I should be granted access and allowed to speak with the employees.



I contacted the branch manager of some branches in each bank initially by phone to fix a date for initial formalities, to inspect the proposed venue and to agree on a time for the interviews with potential participants. In Bank Beta specifically, I contacted all the branches on the list initially because of the possibility that some managers may not be cooperative. I went to each bank on the agreed day to meet the manager. While the manager in Bank Alpha requested the memo from HR introducing me, the manager in Bank Beta told me he already read a mail in that regard and did not need to read my memo. In both banks, the manager introduced me to the heads of unit, and I was shown a room where I could sit and speak with participants. I was also told not to go to certain restricted areas while security was made aware of my presence. In Bank Alpha, I was given a visitors' badge to wear. In Bank Beta, interestingly, I was asked to return the next day with a passport photograph. When I did, I was given a badge to wear and on it was my name and my designation – researcher.

In both banks, I interviewed the managers first. These were the longest of all my interviews because they were forthcoming and engaged in talking about football, politics and even marriage before we settled down to talk. Next, I spoke to the unit heads who then asked members of the team if they were willing to participate in the interview, and if they signified interest, he/she let them come with me to the designated room. Subsequently, participants pointed out the next participant because I made it clear that I wanted to speak with those of a particular ethnicity, namely Yoruba and Ibo employees. In both banks, though, there were times I made contact with potential research participants well ahead of the interview date due to work demands in the branch. In all cases, before the interview, a cover letter and a memorandum from the organisation, approving my engagement with employees, was presented to participants along with consent and withdrawal of consent forms. I separated the consent form from the data that the participant provided to ensure confidentiality.

## **5.7. Data Collection**

As already stated, a major advantage of the case study strategy is its use of multiple sources of evidence, both primary (e.g. interviews, vignettes, and observation) and secondary (e.g. document analysis and physical artefacts) (Stake, 2006; Farquhar,

2012). A significant difference between the methods of data collection is the role of the researcher. In primary data collection, the researcher adopts an active role in collecting original data in person. For secondary data, however, the researcher engages with data that has already been collected by other researchers or institutions (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

I used in-depth interviews and vignettes for primary data collection and document analysis for secondary data collection. Documentary data included journals, periodicals, other research studies and publications of the United Kingdom government and Commonwealth offices as well as newspaper publications and periodicals which captured the comments and thoughts of the local media. Within qualitative research, the use of multiple data sources is adopted to produce a deeper understanding of research data, an attempt to map out or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint (Creswell, 2013b). Some researchers have argued that this method is an endeavour aimed at corroborating findings and so is fundamentally a test of validity (e.g. Angen, 2000; Patton, 2014). This assertion, however, is a source of debate because it underscores the assumption that a weakness already exists in one method and so needs to be compensated for by another method.

This argument also implies that it is always possible for researchers to make sense between the two different accounts (Creswell, 2013b). While these debates are more common within quantitative methods, some scholars have adopted a different view for qualitative research. Some argue that rather than focusing on methods collaboration, validation or verification, qualitative researchers should focus on using multiple methods to ensure that an account is a rich, vigorous, broad and well-developed inquiry since a single method can never adequately shed light on a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013a). Using multiple methods can aid deeper understanding and gain a detailed and in-depth understanding of how people interpret meaning (Creswell, 2013a). A depth of understanding is significant to this research because the goal of using in-depth interviews and vignettes is not to seek data consensus or unanimity, but to understand multiple ways of seeing the data, as well as provide a check on selective perception through vigorous and robust interpretive analysis (Creswell, 2013b).

### 5.7.1. In-depth Interviews

The face-to-face interview has been noted for its flexibility (Saunders *et al.* 2009) because this technique makes it possible for a researcher to observe subjects within a research-specific context and situation, thereby enabling the repeat or further explanation of interview questions. The participant can also be pressed for further response or clarification if participants seem to be evasive with answers or when answers seem incomplete or irrelevant. Creswell (2013b) suggests that with face to face interviews, questions can go through a process of development, to ensure that they focus on the study aims and objectives as well as research question(s) (**see Appendix 8**) and also ensure equal coverage of approximately equal interview time for all participants.

The in-depth interview as a method of data collection has been criticised as it might elicit responses antithetical to the research aim (Farquhar, 2012). I was aware of the possibility that, rather than offer their views, my participants might respond in ways they consider socially desirable or, indeed, professionally approved ways. To mitigate this possible limitation of the interviews I also used vignettes immediately after each interview, which participants were asked to read and respond to. I discuss the vignettes in the next section. Semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 80-minutes. The interview protocol (see sample questions in Table 2) was derived from theoretical assumptions, that: *Values can be drawn upon to select socially appropriate behaviour and to justify behavioural choices to others* (Schwartz 1999); *the type and form of employee commitment to an organisation would reflect the values of their cultures* (Wasti, 2003; Harris and Cameron, 2005); *employee attitudes and behaviours (practices) - are shaped by the values of their national cultures* (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al.* 2004; Schwartz, 2011). I explored participants' views and opinions using specific questions to lead discussions underpinned by certain objectives (**see Table 5**). Using interviews presented an opportunity to familiarise myself with participants and a platform for open discussions on my topic of interest.

However, participants seemed reserved initially, choose words cautiously and answered without offering details. While much of my personal information was printed on the first page of the interview guide (**see Appendix 5**), I had taken some time to introduce myself and to explain what my research was all about to participants at the start of each interview. Still, almost all the participants proceeded to ask specific questions about my background and circumstances. They asked questions around my education, research interests, how long I have been in the United Kingdom, my thoughts about domestic, and in a few cases, international politics. However, I chose to present myself in my current status as a student and not my past identity as a banker. Revealing the latter, in my opinion, would be providing too much information to participants and may induce them to respond to interviews in what they perceive as professionally desirable (Saunders *et al.* 2009).

**Table 5: Sample questions in the interview guide**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Definition of construct</b>	<b>Academic reference to support research question(s)</b>	<b>Sample Questions (Refer to interview guide)</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Organisational Values</b>	Written and unwritten practices, which meet organisational goals and interests and lie beneath what the organisation rewards, supports and expects, including the meaning employees share about these.	Positioned to explore perception regarding organisational culture influences embedded in employees' thinking and practices. For instance: The place of organisational symbols, heroes, practices, policies and procedures.	What kinds of people are most likely to make a fast career here?  What are special terms in your workplace that only insiders understand?  Whom do you consider a particularly meaningful person for this organisation?	<b><i>To establish that employee is conversant with organisational values through identification of organisational symbols, heroes, policies, and practices.</i></b>	Schneider, 1987; Lok, 1997; Brown, 1998; Wilson, 2001; Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Sun, 2008; Schein, 2010.
<b>National Values</b>	The immediate and long-term conscious and unconscious values of a people, which influence the way individuals/groups, behave towards other individuals	Positioned to explore perception regarding national culture influences embedded in employees' thinking, feeling and practices, as exhibited in the workplace. For instance:	Is there any arrangement through which your ethnic group or other ethnic groups in your organisation meet?  How has being a member of an ethnic group helped you	<b><i>To identify workplace ethnic affiliations in terms of structure, scope, modus operandi as well as reveal employee identification and involvement.</i></b>  <b><i>To identify the place of age, affluence, influence,</i></b>	Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 1992, 2012; Stanton et al., 2012; Ekmekci et al., 2012

	and groups, within organisations and in the larger society.	The place of ethnic symbols, ethnic heroes, <b>age</b> , affluence, influence, status, authority, power, modes of salutation, workplace ethnic affiliations in terms of influence, structure, scope, modus operandi.	as an employee in your organisation?  Describe what kind of people most likely to rise fast into a leadership role in your community/village?  Describe those special terms in your community or village that only members understand  Whom do you consider a particularly important person for your community/village?	<b>status, authority, power in the workplace.</b>  <b>To identify ethnocultural symbols as identified/recognised/acknowledged by the employee</b>  <b>To identify ethnic heroes.</b>	
<b>Organisational Commitment</b>	Employee identification and involvement with, as well as acceptance of organisational values within the workplace, reflected in how the employee	These items will explore employee identification and involvement with as well as acceptance of organisational values, reflected in the degree to which the	Describe how you would verbally let a colleague know you need help with some information at work? Please explain any variety of other ways.	<b>To determine which values, influence interaction between colleagues in the workplace? Ethnic/societal or workplace/organisational?).</b>  <b>Which values influence</b>	Weiner, 1982; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Brickman, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Brown, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Ghosh, 2014.

	<p>adopts and implements values and practices, which meet organisational goals and interests.</p>	<p>employee adopts and implements values and practices, which meet organisational goals and interests.</p>	<p>Describe how you would verbally let your manager know that you need help with some information</p> <p>Describe how you will exchange greetings when you meet a colleague at any time of the day. <i>Will your approach be different if this was a senior colleague or a senior colleague from your ethnic group? Please explain.</i></p> <p>Describe how you will exchange greetings with your manager at any time of the day.</p> <p>State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your</p>	<p><b><i>subordinate-superior interaction – organisational policy? Age, status, authority? - Ethnic/societal or workplace/organisational?).</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Which values influence strictly formal expressions among colleagues Ethnic/societal or workplace/organisational?).</i></b></p> <p><b><i>To determine the possible commitment of the employee to Organisational values?</i></b></p>	
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			<p>colleague. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any).</p> <p>State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your manager. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any).</p>		
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I was concerned that this will lead to what I wanted to avoid in the study - a very formal discussion around bank policies and practices *as should be* rather than employee workplace practices *as is*. Throughout, I was not a former banker. I was a Doctoral student at Queen Mary University of London.

Eventually, all employees relaxed into talking about the banks' values, products, policies, practices and procedures. In all interviews, I perceived a need for approval by participants; to be seen as worthy of the suit and tie – obviously proud marks of the Nigerian banking profession. As the interviews progressed, participants offered insight, clarifications, recollection, rephrasing (when the need for clarification and self-examination inadvertently arose) and humour. In all, participants across the two banks were immediately or eventually open and verbose. Even when employees seemed to respond in ways that suggested unfamiliarity with the issue in question – for instance, in articulating the bank's values appropriately – I did not correct them but allowed them



to proceed. However, in all cases, I was obligated, based on prior knowledge and experience, to refocus attention on the subject of interest, when, as in several cases, employees digressed. For example in many instances, I led the conversation in ways that elicited responses which offered clarifications which, incidentally, provided context, insight and depth to participant responses.

By the end of all 20 interviews, all the participants were of a more open disposition. The interview method was flexible and suited for exploring complex issues (King, 2004) such as values and commitment in an organisational context. The method encouraged openness and sharing. The interviews revealed that bankers were knowledgeable about the expectations from the management of the organisation, job tasks, roles and requirements, organisationally approved proprieties, organisational values underpinning interaction across hierarchies. The interviews provided an opportunity for employees to evidence knowledge of organisational values and in this case to an *outsider* like me.

However, the interviews were limited regarding ethnic values or workplace practices indicative of these values. Only a few interviewees admitted openly that ethnocultural values played out in organisational life and specifically in the workplace. Typical across the two banks were halting, passive, and detached responses on the subject of ethnocultural values. Consequently, I could not explore first-hand accounts and views of ethnocultural practices in the workplace through interviews alone. Instead, using this method, participants seemed more willing to speak about the values of their organisation than workplace practices. I discuss the significance of this methodological constraint and how I overcame this using vignettes in the following sections.

### **5.7.2. An Overview of Vignettes**

Much management research is focused on the study of beliefs, attitudes, values and perceptions. These themes present many challenges for the application of research methodologies which aim to capture, as fully as possible, the reality of people's lives. Using multiple methods within the qualitative research approach has been suggested as a way of increasing research validity (Creswell, 2013b). To add rigour and

robustness, I introduced vignettes - text, images or other forms of stimuli which research participants are asked to respond to (Hughes and Huby, 2012) or stories about individuals, situations and structures. Vignettes can refer to important points in the study of perceptions, beliefs and attitudes (Pitard, 2015), and have been used in cross-cultural research (e.g. Soydan, 1995; Christopherson, 1998; Kristensen and Johansson, 2008).

The vignette technique can stimulate views, opinions, beliefs and attitudes through responses to scenarios and situations. Vignettes can be used as a separate method or as an addition to other research techniques such as interviewing. As vignettes need to elicit responses that help the researcher answer the research question(s) (Hughes and Huby, 2012), it matters how the story is presented, at what stage of the data collection process they are presented, and how responses are organised. Vignettes, generally fulfil three main purposes (Kristensen and Johansson, 2008): Interpretation of actions and occurrences that allow situational context to be explored, clarification of individual judgements, often in relation to moral dilemmas, and discussion of sensitive experiences.

Some issues have been raised around the use of the vignette as regards its development and construction, including internal validity, appropriateness to the research topic, participant involvement and relevance in the research encounter. The internal validity of vignettes depends on how the content addresses the research question(s) (Hughes and Huby, 2012). To address internal validity, Cheek and Jones (2003) recommend that the researcher draws on existing literature to develop each of the scenarios presented and pilots the vignette before its application. Vignettes commonly tend to be textual (short written prompts to extended stories), although static pictures and film and live performance are also used. This research adopts the use of open-ended textual vignettes (**see Appendix 6**), because, as Hughes and Huby (2012) argue, textual vignettes impose low mental demands on participants and only require selective attention, compared to the observation of videotaped or live events. Whichever is chosen, it is important to match the type of vignette used to specific participant groups. Some scholars have argued that responses to vignettes will reflect

how individuals respond in reality (e.g. King *et al.*, 2004). Jenkins *et al.* (2010) argue that this is not always the case but that the inclusion of vignettes will afford the researcher a means to simulate elements of the topic under study, as well as reduce complexity, stimulate honesty and reduce socially desirable responses.

In comparison to other methods such as observation and interviews, there are few detailed accounts of the use of vignettes, particularly within cross-cultural qualitative research employing multiple data collection methods. Also, as evidence from the literature was crafted in mainly western contexts, it might have limited applicability if used within the Nigerian social and organisational context. Consequently, I also drew in evidence about the Nigerian banking industry from secondary sources, including periodicals and publications from the Nigerian Central Bank and several commercial banks. My experience as a banker in Nigeria for over ten years, both formal and informal, was also useful.

Against this background, I now discuss how I designed the vignettes I used in this thesis in the next section.

### **5.7.3. Development and Application of Vignettes**

In qualitative research using vignettes, participants are usually asked to respond to a particular situation by stating what they would do, or how they imagine a character in the story would react to certain situations or occurrences. These situations often involve some form of a moral or value dilemma (Kristensen and Johansson, 2008). However, in some studies, participants are asked to comment on both, because, as Jenkins *et al.* (2010) argue, asking about what a third-party ought to do in a given situation is not the same thing as asking participants what they think they ought to do.

In this research, rather than comment on vignette subjects or about themselves, the participants tended to personify the vignette subjects by becoming *the subject*. The *abstract* or *non-figurative* as represented by vignette subjects was, therefore, reconstructed by participants to become the *real* and *symbolic*. Consequently, asking about what a third party ought to do in a given situation became synonymous with asking participants what they think they ought to do. These considerations are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

To address the main and sub-research questions (**see section 5.1**), I developed four vignettes. Each story sought to show how value conflicts (between employee ethnocultural and organisational values) occurred and how they were resolved in the workplace. Stories included how employees resolved the dilemma of value prioritisation and how this reflects ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment (Schwartz, 1992, 2011; Wasti, 2003; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013) and how these considerations may be manifested in employee work practices, as detailed by individuals based on the meanings they attached to their experiences.

The four vignette scenarios depicted everyday work practices of bankers in the workplace. Each painted a picture of a professional banker faced with making choices between conflicting ethnic and organisational values. Each value choice was indicated by practices which evidenced allegiance to organisational values (showing organisational commitment) or allegiance to ethnocultural values (showing ethnic loyalty). Thus, each vignette scenario shed light on a different aspect of the same phenomena (employee value allegiance). In designing the vignette stories, I sought to create real-life scenarios which my subjects could identify with because these are the issues and choices they face daily. I now briefly describe the vignette scenarios and the ideas behind them (see Appendix 6). I later analyse these stories based on participant responses in Chapter 5.

- The first vignette scenario sought employees' views on what the vignette subject, Pawache, would do when faced with a choice: accept or reject a tip offered by an elderly customer of the bank (**see Appendix 6**). Accepting the tip is considered ethnoculturally appropriate based on ethnic values such as respect for age indicating tradition and conformity values (Schwartz, 2010). However, refusing the tip is consistent with the bank's egalitarian values of formality and professionalism (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). The objective here was to understand what employees do when faced with value dilemmas in specific organisational contexts.

- The second vignette scenario required participants to consider what the vignette subject should do when faced with a pressured situation. The subject was ethnoculturally required to use titles or prefixes while addressing people of status and, in this case, the manager, but required by the organisation to use first name address (Morand, 2005) – a requirement which was ethnoculturally impudent but organisationally required. The objective here was to explore if time and context influenced how situations within organisations may produce different employee practices.
- In the third vignette scenario, the subject is a man, who has been redeployed to a new branch of the bank, and has strong patriarchal value orientation typical among many Nigerian ethnic groups (Ituma *et al.*, 2011). The subject considers women, even those in positional authorities (like the new manager) as inferior to men and is concerned that the branch manager, a woman, would demand deference from him based on her status. The subject is concerned that subservience to a woman will demean him and must decide on appropriate behaviour. The objective here was to find out if ethnocultural perceptions of gender (Adeleye *et al.* 2014; George *et al.* 2017) were a consideration in how employees interacted and made value choices in the Nigerian banking industry.
- The fourth vignette scenario sought to establish what the vignette subject should do faced with a situation where a manager was engaged in unscrupulous practices. This scenario presents a manager's deviation from the bank's values of *honesty* and *integrity* not just as procedural non-conformity but also an unethical practice. The objective was to clarify if the employee's professionalism or sense of duty (underpinning values such as neutrality) could dilute the ethnocultural requirement of respect for status (See Debrah, 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013).

Together, the interviews provided more insights into the principle and context (what ought to be or what was organisationally required through the first-hand account), while the vignettes provided more insights into practices (what is). There was some degree of overlap. Vignette responses offered an elaboration of interview responses.

In essence, vignettes in this thesis ensured corroboration as much as shed light on a different aspect of the phenomenon, thereby creating rigour in the data gathering process.

## **5.8. Data Analysis**

With qualitative interviews, the data analysis process often commences with the conversion of the audio data into text format (Creswell, 2013a). It then proceeds by reducing the data through a process of coding/categorising into themes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; 2011; Creswell, 2013b). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that different analytical techniques exist depending on the research strategy adopted. For instance, thematic analysis will have its preferred analytical technique for analysing data as will other methods.

For the case study strategy, I considered analytical techniques such as pattern matching and cross-case synthesis (Stake, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Consequently, I adopted a cross-case synthesis technique to analyse the data after the themes were generated - a suitable technique in multiple case designs (Creswell, 2013a). Using the cross-case synthesis technique, I created word tables that displayed the data from the individual cases according to the thematic framework. After this, I sought out similarities and differences among the cases. After making comparisons, I started the analysis to probe whether different groups of cases seem to share certain similarities and warrant to be considered illustrations of the same type of general case where I had sought similarities and differences (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Transcriptions of the interviews and vignettes responses were carried out separately for each participant, undertaken manually, and involved playing each interview recording several times to ensure every word and phrase, as well as nuances of spoken words, were correctly captured. Analysis of the data started with reading and re-reading of these transcripts, together with accompanying field notes to gain overall familiarity with the data. Another series of readings was then undertaken to identify important themes within the data which align with the research aims. Further reading of the transcriptions was then undertaken to establish the different emerging themes and to place the relevant quotes and notes within the different identified themes (**see**

**Appendix 9).** The process of sorting out quotes according to these themes allowed for the emergence of further themes, as some data did not fit into the existing categories.

In cases where there was a query over where a particular quote should fit, the last stage of the data analysis was carried out before deciding where to put them. The text in each theme was carefully scrutinised to ensure internal consistency and notes were written to register where the quotes came from and to identify the links between the themes. The existing categories and relevant data were recompiled according to their relevance to the different components of the research objectives. According to Creswell (2013a; 2013b), this process goes beyond identifying and describing themes during the coding process, to the identification of complex theme connections. The analysis of each vignette followed immediately after the analysis of the interviews for individual participants. Overall, the analysis follows a similar analytical strategy to that espoused by Miles and Huberman (1994), in which data are put into different arrays to construct a matrix of categories.

To ensure the validity and accuracy of the themes, I contacted some of the key participants by telephone to ascertain the accuracy of their accounts and descriptions and to ensure it was consistent with summaries of the categories from the data. This approach is consistent with a thematic analysis of research data and has implications for the philosophical stance, logic, approach, strategy and design of this research as I discuss in more detail below.

### **5.8.1. Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis has been described as “a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) across data”, aiding a researcher with organising and describing datasets in rich detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Some scholars have argued that there is as yet no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how it should be used in research (e.g. Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Wilkinson, 2003). Others disagree and suggest that scholars often fail to present their analysis as thematic, when in reality a much qualitative analysis is fundamentally thematic (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Taylor and Ussher, 2001; Tuckett, 2005). For example, Braun and

Wilkinson (2003, p. 30) write that their data were “subjected to qualitative analysis for commonly recurring themes” without explicitly naming thematic analysis as the adopted method. Also, it is not unusual to read of themes “emerging” from the data (Singer and Hunter, 1999, p. 67) or claims that analysis is stimulating because “you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 226). These claims could be describing the process of thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Thefore, I acknowledge that an assessment of the relevance of thematic analysis as a method of data analysis for this research is fundamental (see **Table 6**). According to Attride-Stirling (2001), if the way researchers go about analysing their data or the assumptions that inform their analysis is left unstated, then it is challenging to appraise their research and compare it with other studies. It is important to assess the relevance of thematic analysis. The methods of data collection and analysis adopted in this research aligned with what I want to know about the phenomenon of interest. In considering thematic analysis, it is important to consider what constitutes a “theme” (see **Appendix 4**). A theme captures something important about the data within the context of the research question(s) and represents some level of response which assumes a pattern or meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This pattern of meaning is based on participants’ subjective views. In essence, thematic analysis has been noted as consistent with a social constructionist paradigm.



**Table 6: Why thematic analysis?**

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Flexibility.
Relatively easy and quick method to learn and do.
Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research.
Results are accessible to the educated public.
A useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators.
Can usefully summarise key features of a large body of data or offer a 'thick description' of the data set
Can highlight similarities <i>and</i> differences across the data set.
Can generate unanticipated insights.
Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.
Can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.

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**Source: Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), p. 41.**

Thematic analysis can be conducted within Social Constructionist research with a unique outcome. Meaning and experience, as represented in the views of participants, are seen as socially produced and reproduced by individuals rather than inherent or intrinsic (Burr, 2015). A social constructionist perspective demands awareness of social and cultural contexts, as well as how the researcher understands, interprets and relays experiences of bank employees from different cultural orientations. In engaging with responses from participants, I bring myself, my own experiences and my prior learning into the “dialogue” with bank employees. At the same time, I remain aware of my social and cultural orientation, as well as the personal “biases” I might have. In essence, social constructionism implicitly recognises reflexivity within research by

accepting that researchers could also influence the research process. It also recognises the equal engagement of research participant and researcher as co-creators of a shared reality. Social constructionism, therefore, espouses such methods of analysis like thematic analysis, which allow for working with this type of participatory research.

### **5.9. Considerations around Reflexivity**

My research seeks to explore how the core ethnic values of employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of, and commitment to, organisational values. This focus is based on the notion that, in Nigeria, ethnic groups and values dominate everyday life even within egalitarian Western-styled organisations such as banks (Mustapha, 2006) because they influence how individuals make meaning. In this study, I am faced with a challenge of how to relay participants' views without allowing my own predisposition, and experience to affect how I relay them, while at the same time realising my own predispositions to be researched within the study. I address this challenge through reflexivity.

Reflexivity refers to an analytical and critical consideration of my role in the research (Dowling, 2006). Therefore, it refers to a level of consciousness I have in the course of the research, as well as an awareness of self or my identity/identities (Lambert *et al.*, 2010). I recognise that as a banker and a Nigerian, I am part of the social world that I seek to understand (Ackerly and True, 2010). I agree with Parahoo (2006) that by adopting reflexivity, I engage in a process akin to introspection, which accounts for the role of subjectivity in the research process. Indeed, in this study, I engaged in a continuous process of reflection on my values by identifying, scrutinising, and understanding how professional background and ideas and assumptions affect my understanding of my participants' responses. Through reflexivity, I acknowledge the changes brought about in the process of conducting this research, and how these changes have affected the research process. I recognise that my journey of discovering how I, as a researcher, may influence and also be influenced by the research is an iterative and empowering process (Palaganas *et al.*, 2017). I

acknowledge that reflexivity in this study is a significant part of my research findings and (I discuss this further in **section 6.11**).

Moreover, I view knowledge as an outcome of the meaning-making of ethnic affiliates, social constructions built on perceptions, opinions, experiences and views of individuals, which stem from their identities as bankers and ethnic affiliates and are therefore peculiar to them. Consistent with a subjective ontology and social constructionism, I relay understanding of my participants' realities subjectively, as created in their interaction within their everyday workplace. I adopt this position because my research embraces the idea of generating knowledge subjectively and contextually, through multiple meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially by my participants (Farquhar, 2012).

I argue that in relaying my participants' views, I reflexively subject my ideas, experiences, background and identity for exploration – thus enabling researcher situatedness and positionality (Anthias, 2002). I consider this important because this supports reflexive accounts within my research and allows the neutral reader to make independent conclusions from relayed meanings of participants. That is why in certain places in the research, I have adopted a first-person narrative. I argue that this kind of narrative in itself is very sensitive to how cultural realities are constructed. Consequently, by the understanding of my participants' experiences through their meanings, I rediscover myself – by reassessing and relearning my own experiences. I acknowledge that this has some influence on my interpretations of my participants' responses and experiences to a certain degree (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). This is significant to this study because it reveals that, like my participants, even my experiences, views and preconceptions have also been explored in my research.

Reflexivity involves several challenges for the researcher, such as managing the emotions of research participants or the possibilities of detachment from the research (van der Riet, 2012). The idea that it is difficult not to influence and be influenced by the research participants has also been suggested (Jootun *et al.* 2009). Nevertheless,

by adopting reflexivity, I acknowledge that while the findings of this study are partly the product of my interpretation of participants' meanings, it is also a product of my understanding and recognition of the inter-relationship between personal and methodological dynamics in the study. By embracing reflexivity, I show awareness of my participants and my contribution to the construction of meanings through their lived organisational experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

## **5.10. Ethical Considerations**

In a general sense, Blumberg *et al.* (2005, p. 92) define ethics as “the moral principles, norms, or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others”. In research, ethics concerns the appropriateness of a researcher's behaviour regarding the rights of those who become the subject of the research or are affected by it (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Research ethics, therefore, involves considering: how research topics are formulated and clarified, the nature of the research, designing of the research, collection of data, processing and storage of data collected, analysis of data and findings in a moral and responsible manner (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The following sections will focus on considerations around consent, confidentiality, anonymity and storage of personal data.

### **5.10.1. Consent**

Partially informed consent was secured, to protect the integrity of the research data generated, as it can be compromised if too much information is revealed to research participants (Sture, 2012). Firstly, I gave my commitment to the subject banks that they will not be named in this thesis and that none of their products, services, processes, procedures or policies will be named in such a way as to reveal their identity or make it possible for a third party to trace back to them. When this guarantee was secured in writing, then I sought permission from the organisations regarding the scheduled interviews, an information sheet was then distributed to staff in the relevant units, covering: The topic of the study; the nature of the research project; why they are candidates for the research; what risks or benefits are associated with the research; and what rights they have as research subjects. Where an employee indicated interest to take part in the interview, a consent form was provided and duly signed by the

employee.

A verbal affirmation of the freedom of participants to withdraw from the research will be offered intermittently and occasionally by the researcher throughout the research process.

### **5.10.2. Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Storage of Personal Data**

Since this study involved confidential participation by the subjects, extra measures were taken for their protection (Carey, 1998). Firstly, the collected data (interview records, pseudonyms, and transcripts) were secured in a password-coded personal computer (PC) and a locked file cabinet, to which only the researcher had access. Pseudonyms and codes that connect participants to the data were separated from the data and locked up in a separate file or cabinet. Also, no participant was named or otherwise identified in publications or other publicly disseminated materials. All interview recordings and records were downloaded and stored on a PC, which was password coded. Only the researcher has this password. While pseudonyms are used, there was a lookup sheet, where real names were paired with pseudonyms of participants, but this was permanently under lock and key. Only the researcher had access to this information.

Secondly, informing the research participants of these measures ensured confidentiality. The information provided was included in the written consent form that participants signed. Consent forms included plans to destroy the original data at some reasonable point after the research project was completed. Considerations as regards how long research transcriptions would be kept after this research project was guided by the specifications of the Data Protection Act of 1998. Specifically, the Act stipulates that information should be kept for “no longer than is necessary.” While each case is considered on its merits, as a general rule, when personal information is no longer required, it should be properly destroyed/erased. In this study, transcriptions are to be kept for up to 5 years after this research is over, strictly for assessment and research purposes and to be properly destroyed after this time.

### **5.11. Summary**

The aim of this study is to explore how the core national values of commercial bank employees in Nigeria influence their understanding/views of, and commitment to, organisational values. It is not the scope of this research to offer value-based opinions about how employees express cultural or organisational values in the workplace but to understand the possible influences of ethnocultural values on employee views about commitment to organisational values. From a philosophical perspective, a social constructionist stance has been adopted for this study as well as a subjective ontology and social constructionist epistemology. The focus of this thesis is on unravelling how employees construct meaning within social and organisational contexts and therefore, focused on the *products* as much as the *process* of construction (Cunliffe, 2011; Farquhar, 2012; Burr, 2015).

## Chapter Six

### 6. Findings

#### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation and analysis of responses to twenty vignettes and twenty semi-structured interviews (*see Appendix 5 and 6*). Four vignette scenarios and interview guides were structured to address the main research question: *How are employees' organisational practices affected by national cultural values?*

The sub-questions to support this are:

- How do ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance? (**SRQ1**).
- How do organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Nigerian banks? (**SRQ2**).

In total, the vignette responses produced seventeen sub-themes - eleven in Bank Alpha and six in Bank Beta (*see Table 7*). Also, interviews yielded a total of twelve sub-themes - six in Bank Alpha and six in Bank Beta (*see Table 7*). However, I have presented a summary of sub-themes from vignettes and interviews in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta in the final sections of the chapter to show how each data collection method reveals unique perspectives in addressing the sub-research questions in both cases (*see Appendix 7*). To provide a more nuanced narrative going into the discussions chapter, I further categorised specific themes into five core themes. Recurring themes are also discussed using thematic analysis.

#### 6.2. Scenario One

*Pawache works as a cashier in a bank. An old man from Pawache's village walks into the bank during banking hours and walks up to Pawache. Pawache greets him with a bow and with his right hand raised as he was taught from childhood by his parents. The senior gives Pawache a cheque, which Pawache proceeds to encash, before giving the cash to the old man. The senior seemed pleased with Pawache's service, and pushes a tip of ₦2, 000 towards Pawache and walks away immediately. In Pawache's village, waiting to be acknowledged after giving another person a gift is*

considered rude. In Pawache's village, also, it is considered taboo to refuse a gift from a senior. The bank, however, frowns at tips from customers to staff, although this is an unwritten policy.

- What should Pawache do?
- What would you do if you were Pawache?

### 6.2.1. Case One – Bank Alpha

#### Value Ambiguity

***In Bank Alpha, participants overwhelmingly advised the vignette subject, Pawache, to accept the tip and, subsequently, inform the manager. None of the participants indicated that Pawache should hand over the tip to the manager although all participants acknowledged that this was their bank's policy. All felt that, based on their own experience with tips, Pawache should keep the tip.***

Responses suggest that employees were knowledgeable about required and acceptable bank practices, processes, and procedures (written and unwritten policies). Employees were required to reject tips from customers at all times, including during festivities (such as Christmas celebrations) when employees would more likely believe that it would be acceptable to give and receive gifts. However, the management of Bank Alpha also recognised that “rejecting” tips may not always be possible on the part of the employees. In this scenario, for instance, the customer walks away right after giving the tip to Pawache, thereby denying the subject an opportunity to reject and return the tip.

The bank insists that employees report and surrender the tip to the manager, or “declare” it when faced with situations where they are unable to reject and return the tip. This was consistent with the bank's values of altruism, integrity and professionalism and there is a structure for the way in which the bank handles “unrefusable tips”, and based on their responses, participants were aware of these policies.

*In [Bank Alpha], during festivities like Christmas, they [management] will usually send us a mail that any gift that is given*



*[by a customer] to any member of staff, he or she should make it known to the management. It is mandated by the management that you [employee] must declare it [report and hand over to the manager]. (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba)*

*Well, collecting tips from customers are [is] not allowed...coming down to the organisation [as mandated by the organisation]...don't take [tips]. Well, you may politely decline [taking tips]... (A7, Marketing, Female, Yoruba).*

*You are supposed to give it back [to the giver] because you are not supposed to receive tips from customers. (A9, operations, Male, Ibo).*

While employees were aware of the bank's policy regarding tips, they seemed unable to grasp the sense of it. Indeed, participants like **A4** expressed exasperation at the bank's unreasonableness, specifically when, as was typical, consequent practices conflicted with employees' ethnocultural values such as reverence for age or status. This perception was reinforced by a perceived defectiveness of the bank's policy on tips. Responses suggest that there seemed to be no way of knowing if a tip had been offered and received without being reported. The whole policy and process relied on the presumed sense of honour, dedication and compliance of the employee. Consequently, except when an employee *declared* a tip, it was assumed not to exist. By implication, in Bank Alpha, values like professionalism, selflessness and formality were contingent on employee conformity, compliance and goodwill.

Responses suggest, however, that it was also the case that allowing employees such discretion evoked certain organisationally inappropriate practices. Specifically, some participants responded that the common practice was not to *declare* a tip but to keep it for themselves. Therefore, this organisational requirement was open to possible employee manipulation, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and noncompliance. As responses indicate, this process imputed procedural ambiguity, which allowed employees to freely participate (or decide not to participate) in the workability of an organisational policy or reject its underlying values. Employee value allegiance was, thus, dependent on a deficient organisational process/procedure. In this case, employee commitment to organisational values was inherently optional and they were

more likely to evoke ethnic loyalty as shown in the way employees handled this state of affairs, including *value swapping*, *value redefinition* and *value matching*.

### **Value Swapping**

Responses suggest that the perceived organisational policy vagueness reinforced the view of employees that organisational values could be interpreted based on common or shared practices of other employees (Khandelwal and Mohendra, 2010; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Employees seemed to identify more with the branch than with the concept of the bank. For instance, responses indicate that employees authenticated the “membership” of colleagues in this branch of Bank Alpha, based on the consistency of employee actions with other members, even if it was not consistent with organisational values. An employee must be seen to be “*doing what others do*”. Thus, the branch culture differed from that of the bank because the former reinforced values and practices contrary to those the bank’s management sought to communicate and promote among employees.

Responses suggest that regarding the bank’s requirement not to accept tips from bank customers, or to accept and *declare*, employees *mimicked* other employees’ values and practices by *value swapping*. This is the **replacement of (organisational) required practices with (branch reinforced) common practices, which determined employee value allegiance**, and in this case allegiance to ethnic values.

*Well, collecting tips from customers is not allowed. But we collect...we collect. I was once a teller, so I know. Personally, if I don't ask for something, and someone says 'take' I don't like to reject. But I don't solicit for it. But where ever you work do as they do...coming down to the organisation [based on organisational requirements] don't take [tips]. Well, you may politely decline...but like I said, even though the organisation said, 'don't take [tips]', we still take [tips]. (A7, Marketing, Female, Yoruba).*

*He [Pawache] should not refuse [the tip] because it will seem rude or disrespectful [to the senior] (A10, Marketing, Male, Yoruba).*

## Value Redefinition

Responses show that employee practices were legitimated by a conscious re-evaluation of salient aspects of the organisational value system. Here, employees effectively altered the meaning of some organisational policies as well as the values that underpinned them through *value redefinition* or ***the legitimation of deviation from bank values by thinking of, and acting on, policies differently***. Insight into this state of affairs was offered by the compliance officer, a member of the management staff of this branch of Bank Alpha. Consistent with responses from other participants, this manager insisted that there was nothing wrong with an employee receiving a tip as long as the employee *informs* a superior.

Therefore, while the bank requires employees to *declare* the tip (*tell and hand it over to the branch manager*), the re-characterisation of this requirement by management staff (like other employees) is that the employee should inform the manager but not hand the tip over to the manager. *Declaring*, as required by the bank, and its underlying values of altruism have therefore been redefined from notifying and handing over the tip to the manager to *informing the manager and keeping it*. The response below summarises all participants' views in this regard.

*I will not call what Pawache received a Tip...the old man appreciated his effort or his service. He can collect it; he can even accept it, nothing bad about it but he should inform his Branch Manager about it... one thing about this [one] is that I wouldn't say that nearly everybody that does that [collects tips] does that [declares it] (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba).*

## Value Matching

Refusing to hand over a tip, as required by the management of Bank Alpha, would suggest that the employee is acting defiantly. However, participants offered that they also held onto tips due to ethnocultural obligations, which required them to act in specific ways under certain circumstances. The vignette subject, Pawache, regarded the age of the customer as fundamental in the choice of an acceptable ethnocultural practice. In essence, based on participants' responses, employees reasoned that if rejecting a customer's gift offended the customer's cultural feelings, then they were obliged to accept the tip. Secondly, employees felt that they were duty bound by the

bank's customer service requirements to “keep the customer happy”. After all, one of the bank's mantras was “*happy customers, happy bank*”. Consequently, the point of participants refusing a tip, as the bank required, would make a customer unhappy and dissatisfied, then the employee was obliged to accept the tip, and in essence keep the customer happy, as suggested in the response below:

*He should not refuse because it will seem rude or disrespectful. In that kind of situation, you let your boss be in the know [let your manager know] (A10, Marketing, Staff, Male, Yoruba).*

*The business of the bank is to make the customer happy. Make that customer happy. Don't return the cash ... He [Pawache] should take the tip because the customer has to be happy by not feeling insulted. (A3, Operations Staff, Female, Yoruba)*

*Well, I have experienced something like that. There was an elderly woman ...after treating her transaction, she gave me some money. I said 'no, no, no'...that why would I receive a gift from an old woman like her? She responded that it would hurt her for me to reject her gift...if the person insists...you take it. (A9, Operations Staff, Male, Ibo).*

### 6.2.2. Case Two – Bank Beta

#### Policy Clarity and Responsiveness

***All participants in Bank Beta were of the view that, consistent with the bank's values (in this case integrity), the vignette subject, Pawache, should not refuse but “declare” the tip by reporting and handing it over to the manager.***

Interestingly, responses suggest that the applicable policy in Bank Beta did not require employees to reject tips. Instead, the bank required them to *accept, report and hand it over* to the manager. The unanimity of the participants' responses in this regard suggests policy clarity and consistency - employees seemed clear about the required process of the bank in this instance, as well as the explicitness of punishment in case of nonconformity - participants indicated that they conformed to these requirements because they did not want to get into trouble.

There were also indications that the bank's position had evolved because, in the past, employees were required to reject tips. Responses reveal that this practice changed due to management recognition of the ethnocultural implications of refusing tips and its effects on employees and bank customers. The change in bank policy was, therefore, necessitated by management recognition of the significance of employee ethnic values and the implications for superior service delivery. In this case, the obligations, which ethnic values placed on employees due to relationships with significant others in the broader society, were co-opted in the framing of specific bank policies and their underlying values. This suggests that policy responsiveness and organisational value adaptability can water down ethnocultural-driven workplace practices and indeed induce organisational commitment. Participants' views in this regard are best captured in the responses below:

*He [Pawache] can take the tip and declare. So, he gives to the HOP [Head of Operations] or BSH [Branch Service Head] as the case may be. ....in training school, I can tell you, they were telling us 'don't take gifts from customers'. But some customers find it very insulting when you refuse their gifts. So, the Bank now says take your gift, declare your gift and let them [bank] do what they have to do with it (B1, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

*You report it. I will take it to my immediate boss and report it and say 'this is this'... in case somebody saw me I do not know...I do not want to get into trouble. So I declare it, and so I have not offended the giver, and I have not offended the organisation. (B7, Marketing, Male, Ibo).*

### **Sharedness**

However, responses suggest that while the bank's position was explicit and while policies and underlying values were unambiguous, deviants still existed in Bank Beta. Two participants suggest outright disobedience to the bank's position for reasons linked to *perceptions of sharedness of deviation* or the idea that "I can do it because everyone does it anyway". Participant **B3** advised the vignette subject to *take* the tip (to collect and not to declare). This participant further affirmed that she (the participant) would do the same if faced with the same situation. Also, participant **B6** offered that while all the employees were knowledgeable about the bank's position, none of the employees had ever returned tips to customers, an indication that, as far as this

employee was concerned, tips were collected and not reported by employees in Bank Beta.

While these employees are not representative of the more consistent response across participants in Bank Beta, there is an indication that some employees in the bank are driven by perceptions of commonality of practice, or *sharedness*, as a basis for nonconformity with organisational values. While the idea that the perceived actions of the collective drive the actions of individuals (Tajfel, 1978), responses do not suggest that deviance is exclusively driven by the requirements of ethnic culture in this instance. Rather, this deviance may be indicative of individual values at play on a personal (not a social) level (Schwartz, 1999) within an organisational context as suggested by the responses below:

*The Banks policy is to declare it. Well nobody has ever declared such [Laughs] (B3, Operations, Female, Yoruba)*

*Sincerely, Pawache should take the money. I will take the money [if I were Pawache]. (B6, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba)*

### **6.2.3. Summary of Scenario One – Bank Alpha and Bank Beta**

The summary of responses to vignette scenario one in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta are articulated in **Table 7**. Participants in Bank Alpha advise the vignette subject to accept and keep the tip and then inform the manager. The basis for acceptance was respect for the age of the customer and ethnocultural obligations not to be rude and disrespectful in this case by refusing a gift from a senior. Ethnic loyalty was therefore evident here, sustained by tradition values (respect, obligation, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture provides). In Bank Alpha, however, employees were prohibited from accepting tips by bank management, the bank also admits that rejection is not always possible in every case. This caveat created some room for employees to use their initiative to determine what amounted to *unrefusable* tips. Value ambiguity, therefore, evoked ethnic loyalty in Bank Alpha.

In contrast, participants in Bank Beta mostly advise that the vignette subject should accept the tip and submit it to the manager – not keep it. The basis for acceptance here was not *respect* for the customer’s age or ethnocultural *obligatedness* as in Bank Alpha, but the need to do what the bank requires. Although by accepting the tip as required by the bank, the employee inadvertently fulfils a cultural obligation. The bank allowed this as a way of responding to social pressures on employees. Bank values here, therefore, evidence organisational value dynamism and adaptability.

On the other hand, in Bank Beta, clarity of required values and practices, as well as punishment for defiance, aroused organisational commitment. While this seemed to suggest that employees prioritised professionalism and integrity values over ethnocultural value requirements, a few responses indicate that some nonconformity still subsists, as some employees of Bank Beta accept and withhold tips. However, this practice was driven by perceptions of commonality of deviance, rather than concrete actions suggesting actual non-conformity. Therefore, this argument is significant because perceptions of sharedness could underlie the context against which value allegiance thrives.

Thus, value ambiguity, as well as the absence of sanctions, can drive value allegiance and, in this case, ethnic loyalty. However, value clarity, policy dynamism and sanctions for deviation, or the fear of sanctions thereof, can also drive value allegiance and, in this case, organisational commitment.

### **6.3. Scenario Two**

*Tseda joined the Bank 6 years ago through the help of her uncle’s friend, who, incidentally, is now her Manager. Tseda is a marketer. During her orientation programme, Tseda was told that she was free to call even the Managing Director by their first name as this was “the bank’s policy.” In Tseda’s ethnic group, calling seniors, people in authority, or “anyone above you” by their first name is considered disrespectful: one must always use titles. Tseda’s manager is much older than she is and even the customers refer to him as “Sir”. The inspection team is around from the Bank’s Head Office to observe if customers and staff are happy and interacting appropriately. Tseda needs to get a document signed urgently by her Manager, so she has to address him. The customer service team is watching and listening.*

- How should Tseda address her manager now?
- How should Tseda address her manager hereafter?
- What would you do if you were Tseda (both now and hereafter)

### 6.3.1. Case One - Bank Alpha

#### Respect

***Participants advise Tseda to show respect here: call the manager by their first name while the inspectors from the Head Office are present, but revert to using prefixes when the inspectors leave.***

Responses suggest that *respect* did not only permeate the interaction between customers and employees in Bank Alpha, but it also underpinned the relationship between managers and subordinates. The requirement by the bank management that employees at all levels (including executive management) should address each other by their first name was indicative of the management's aim to promote values such as equality, equal opportunity and impartiality (Schwartz, 1994) or *egalitarianism* (Morand, 2005) (**See section 1.2.2**). However, responses suggest that employees preferred to call their managers using prefixes like "Sir" or "Ma", rather than first names as required by the bank.

Morand (2005) clarifies that in American English, two address forms predominate: first name, or title/last name (also see Morand, 1996b; Slobin and Porter, 1968). Traditionally, though, within organisations in these settings the conversational custom among individuals varying in relative positional authority called for an asymmetric exchange. Title/last name was employed by subordinates when addressing superiors, while superiors used the first name address in speaking down to the employees (Morand, 2005). Yet, linguistic norms have shifted such that in many contemporary firms in the global north and the global south, it is quite normative for lesser status members to "first-name" their superiors and, as Morand (2005) argues, verbal exchanges in contemporary corporate settings are frequently punctuated by peculiar



sounds of silence or *name avoidance*. In essence, subordinates are thought to avoid title or last name to the degree that they perceive it as excessively formalistic and deferential within the context of egalitarian corporate and American cultures. This is the case in Nigeria where, as a federated state, imitative structures and practices still grace organisational policies, even when these practices are antithetical to local ethnocultural values (Haque, 1997; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013). However, responses from participants suggest that despite the bank's first name address policies, subordinates' use of first name address with their superiors is not without risk. For the subordinate, first name address projects a social familiarity and informality that a hearer, in this case, a manager, might view as overly indiscreet, audacious, or even disrespectful, particularly in relations of dependency where subordinates rely on managers approval for career success, and where demonstration of reverence and esteem is considered critical. Sometimes, subordinates, finding no easy recourse in either address form, may engage in name avoidance.

In response to scenario two, participants viewed the bank's requirement of using first name address as *culturally irreverent and impudent*, symbolising disrespect for status and positional authority, and therefore undignifying the person and office of the manager. Thus, using first name address, though underpinned by egalitarian organisational values, did not show recognition of the ethnic value requirement of respect for status. Relatedly, another representative of the branch management of Bank Alpha, the Head of Operation, indicated that it was inappropriate to call one's manager by their first name. This participant stated that he never calls his bosses by their first name (an indication that he would expect subordinates to do the same when addressing him). Therefore, management at the branch level of Bank Alpha also reinforced the perpetuation of deviance through the idea that the bank's policy is inconsistent with ethnocultural appropriateness, as suggested by some participants:

*She should say... 'sir'.... she can say excuse me, sir. And after that, she should go on with 'sir'. That's respectful. (A5, Marketing, Female, Ibo)*

*It's just decorum, respect. Worst case scenario say, "Sir, this is just for you". "Ma, this is just for you". I call my manager sir and no matter who is around, it's unconscious. (A2, Head of Operations, Male, Yoruba)*

*So, call the name but introduce the 'sir' to show the person that you still respect him. Thereafter, keep to 'sir'. (A8, operations, Male, Yoruba)*

### **Future Benefits**

Responses indicate that ethnic values such, as respect for status, underpinned employee practices, including regard for positional authority and, in this case, the manager. However, respect, though culturally expedient, was more valued for what it could produce for the employee in the future – career progression/ promotion. Based on responses, nonetheless, status essentially overruled age in Bank Alpha. Responses suggest, for instance, that an older subordinate was obligated to show deference to a younger manager at all times. Curiously, this disposition was not an accurate reflection of the state of affairs in the broader society (Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013). Responses from Ibo and Yoruba participants indicate that the idea that age was more important than status was changing among ethnic groups. Ibo participants, for instance, suggested that leadership qualities among Ibos were not based on age, but on notable accomplishments (status, wealth, affluence and influence). Achebe (1958, p. 28) validates this assertion:

*“Age was respected among his [Ibo] people, but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings”.*

The Yoruba participants also alluded to this idea that status seemed to matter more than age in ethnocultural terms, at least within the organisation. The manager, therefore, was not mainly respected for their age, but their positional authority, and more specifically for what that positional authority can (re)produce for the employee in the long term. Participants spoke of how a good appraisal was contingent on respecting the manager and how one can risk being fired if not seen by the manager as loyal, which is an indication that fear, caution and subservience are probable constituents of *respect* based on ethnic loyalty in Bank Alpha. Thus, since the manager appraised subordinates, *respect* was not based on the need to fulfil ethnic values per se, but rather on the employee's perception that this will translate into rewards, and assured career progression or futuristic needs satisfaction (Schwartz, 2010). However, it was also the case, as responses indicate, that *respect*, and the actions

and practices that reinforced it were not spontaneous. To be complete, respect must be accepted and endorsed by the manager, as suggested in the responses below:

*You are an MT [Management Trainee] and your manager is a Senior Manager, in terms of age, he has gone ahead of you as well as in terms of level and, mind you, he is the one that is going to do your appraisal. If you do not do it the way it should be done, your career will not progress. You will be frustrated and pulled [pushed] out of the system. (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba).*

*But then there are so many reasons why they [other senior employees] will not take that from you [first name address]. They will say ‘ah, is it not that boy they gave birth to the other day [my junior/subordinate]? Imagine calling me my name.’... ‘Sir’ is an English word that connotes respect. You understand... It’s just decorum, respect... I call my manager ‘Sir’ and no matter who is around. (A2, Head of Operations, Male, Yoruba).*

*Because of the customer service people there, she should go by the bank’s policy. Thereafter she can revert back to status quo. Respect is important. (A7, Marketing, Female, Yoruba).*

## **Identity**

Responses show that an employee’s sense of self, or *identity*, was linked to how the employee viewed the position of the *messenger* (employee), the *sender* (organisation), and the *message* (organisational values). In Bank Alpha, the messenger, not the sender, determines if the message will be delivered and how. Even though participants described organisational values as the “*right thing*”, “*what the bank wants*”, or “*a message*”, they, paradoxically, seemed critical of those practices that were consistent with underlying values. Here, the essence of values, or “*oughtness*”, (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013) seemed voided because although employees saw organisational values as *the right thing* to do, they legitimated nonconformity by recrafting their roles and *identity*.

Responses indicate that instead of delivering *the message* as directed by the bank, employees assumed the role and identity of the *message initiator*, suggesting that “*the right thing*” was ethnoculturally impracticable. In essence, in Bank Alpha, employee deviation from organisational values was sustained by the idea that organisational values were, ethnoculturally speaking, deficient. A Yoruba participant, the Operations Manager specifically, used a proverb to signify that when “*they*” (management of the

bank), send a messenger (an employee) with a message (banks values), the messenger should deliver the message “like a Prince” (or one capable of making decisions over and above the management of the bank). The point of this proverb is: even if one occupies a subordinate position in Bank Alpha, when the choice between being ethnoculturally compliant or organisationally appropriate arises, one must tweak identity by assuming a decision-making role – that is, act with independence and initiative:

*The Yoruba have an adage, a proverb ‘if they sent [send] you to deliver something as a slave, deliver that message as a Prince’. That is what the bank wants. (A2, Head of Operations, Male)*

Responses also indicate that even when organisational values, or doing “the right thing”, compel an employee to deviate from acceptable ethnocultural requirements, that the employee must recognise the deviation and acknowledge this by reaffirming loyalty to the manager. For instance, in response to the vignette scenario, participant **A9** spoke of the need to “apologise” to the manager for using the first name in such a pressured situation, after which the vignette subject should revert to the status quo (using prefixes). This is an indication that ethnocultural mindedness and interaction in Bank Alpha subsists not as a disposition towards organisational values. Responses, therefore, suggest that deviating from ethnic values, not organisational values, was considered a wrong that must be made right if and when it occurs:

*I think she [Tseda] should do the right thing by calling him, Michael. But later she can apologise...that ‘I cannot violate the policy at the time’. (A9, operations, Staff, Male, Ibo)*

*While the inspection team are there, call him his name but after they leave explain to him and make him see reason. I believe he will understand and [then I will] go back to calling him ‘Sir’. (A10, Marketing, Staff, Male, Yoruba).*

### **Balancing Ethnocultural Correctness and Organisational Appropriateness**

In some instances, participants sought to strike a balance between *ethnocultural correctness* and *organisational appropriateness*. Responses suggest that even in *pressured* situations, where employees are in a value choice dilemma, - employees

still sought a balance between the two value systems – organisational and ethnocultural. Faced with the need to prioritise values, some employees used *voice tone and speech forms*. For instance, participants talked about calling the manager’s name in a “*hushed tone*” or “*in a subtle manner*”, to communicate reverence. The idea here is that employees were obligated to *ensure* that the manager was aware that their *loyalty* was unwavering. For instance, participant **A6** alludes that it is necessary not just to show respect to a manager but more importantly “*that the respect is stable*”.

Responses, therefore, show that seeking a balance between organisational and ethnic values compel employees to call a manager by the first name, based on certain conditions. Firstly, the manager’s name must be called with *high regard* through, for instance, voice tone and intonation. Secondly, the effect of this act of “disrespect” to the manager must be recognised and explained, and an apology offered showing penitence. Thirdly, the employee must revert to using the more ethnoculturally respectable (but organisationally prohibited) option – prefixes. In essence, the employee must demonstrate remorse and the manager must be reassured that no impudence was meant. These imperatives were captured in the employee responses below:

*However, everything is about your tone with which you address [superiors]. There is a way I can address you on first name basis, and you will still know I have respect for you. There is a way I can address you not on first name basis [using prefixes], and you will know I don’t have respect for you. So, she [Tseda] should stick to the bank’s standards but address the manager with respect on a first name basis. He should say his name in a **subtle manner** so that he knows that the **respect is stable**. So, conform to the banks standard but still find an alternative way to show respect...my point is that I am talking about **the tone**. (A6, Marketing, Male, Yoruba)*

*There is a way about speaking in **hushed tones**...the way you and the person you are talking to can hear you [each other]. So, call the name but introduce the “sir” to show the person that you still respect him. Thereafter, keep to ‘sir’. (A8, Operations Staff, Male, Yoruba).*

Also, the responses suggest that employees sought a balance between organisational and ethnocultural requirements, not by avoiding the first name, but by calling it *along with the prefix*. This was used to *mitigate* the “disrespect” which organisational values

of equality induced through first name address. These were employees' ways of achieving a balance or avoiding culpability for failing to adhere to the requirements of ethnic or organisational values simultaneously, as the following responses indicate:

*I will still call the manager by name and still introduce the "sir". That way, the manager knows that I am not just trying to call your [the] name but that we have a situation here. I think it's a mix (A8, operations Staff, Male, Yoruba)*

*What I will do is to say 'there is a particular memo that I dropped on your table'. Can you just address it so that I can move on? Thereafter: She [Tseda] should continue with the status-quo because I believe that that is the best way of handling the situation at that time (A13, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

### 6.3.2. Case Two – Bank Beta

#### Sanctions

In Bank Beta, the second vignette scenario evoked an organisational account narrated by each subject. Participants spoke of how the Managing Director had fired an employee for addressing him as "Sir" (*see Appendix 7 - field report*). This story entrenched the reality of sanctions for contravening organisational values, such as using prefixes in place of first name address in Bank Beta. Participants also talked of the somewhat uncomfortable compulsion to address elderly colleagues by their first names, because the bank's top management (Executive Directors, for instance) modelled compliance through exemplary behaviour, insisting that subordinates addressed them by their first name. Open reprimand for those that did not comply also served as a deterrent. In essence, the institutionalisation of sanctions and the threat of sanctions drove value allegiance and organisational commitment as revealed in the responses below:

*The manager should be addressed in line with the bank's policy. Based on the training I attended one can be sacked for it. (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

*Where you find like Ed's [Executive Directors] coming around, and we are having a meeting, you can't say that [use prefixes]. Unconsciously, you call her [senior colleagues] first name. You just say 'ah, Lola...' You can't say that 'Mrs O'. So, it's something you have to...because you know the banks policy. In fact, I have seen people who have called her 'Mrs O' and then they quickly correct*

[corrected] themselves. *It's not allowed.* (B5, marketing, Female, lbo).

### Silence

Participants suggested that the vignette subject (Tseda) should avoid calling the manager by their first name (and stay ethnoculturally compliant), and equally avoid addressing the manager as “Sir” (thereby staying organisationally obedient). Indeed, what was observed here is that employees used **silence** – by neither calling the name of the manager nor addressing the manager using prefixes, and thus calling their manager **nothing at all**, evidencing name avoidance (Morand, 2005; 2010). The responses below best captured this common disposition by participants in Bank Beta:

*She [Tseda] can just take it to him [manager... it's either she does not call his name at all, and she says, 'sign this', and really, I don't necessarily have to call your name to talk to you. So, if she doesn't know what to do or say at that point, then avoid mentioning his name at all. Just try and get his attention.* (B5, Marketing, Female, lbo)

*If it was [were] me, it would be very very difficult for me as a person. I will rather not call him anything; I will rather just go and present what I need [and say] 'Please this is for...' without calling [a name].* (B7, Marketing, Male, lbo).

### 6.3.3. Summary of Scenario Two – Bank Alpha and Bank Beta

In Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the participants advise the vignette subject to call the manager by the first name. However, while participants in Bank Alpha saw this as consistent with the values of the organisation (equality values), they felt that it did not signify respect for status or positional authority as required by ethnic values. Participants mostly advise that the use of the first name should be situational. That is when defaulting could put one in trouble, one should abide by organisational values or show organisational commitment, but revert to the ethnic value requirement of using prefixes, job titles, abbreviations, and synonyms when the pressured situation is absent or has passed. In Bank Alpha, ethnic loyalty, rather than organisational commitment, played out in employee practices. Based on Schwartz's (2010) value theory, these practices manifested tradition values (subordination to managers) and conformity values (responsiveness to current and possibly changing expectations).

Rather than organisational commitment, here, employees evidenced ethnic loyalty by seeking managerial approval and endorsement for organisational value deviance. Responses suggest that employees felt that ethnoculturally endorsed practices (and thus ethnic loyalty) rather than organisationally sanctioned values (requiring organisational commitment) were significant for organisational productivity and success.

In Bank Beta, employees advised the use of the first name based on the idea that the bank institutionalised sanctions and that there was a threat of sanctions for deviation through organisational stories and the acts and pronouncements of executive management (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). However, participants also indicated experiencing pressured situations where they were faced with the ethnocultural requirement of not using first names to address colleagues who were one or more levels removed. In this case, participants signify that they use name avoidance. In Bank Beta, employees sought to fulfil organisational requirements (organisational commitment) and ethnic loyalty simultaneously. Employees seemed influenced here by security values of safety and harmony, stirred by a need for stability in their relationship with the manager, while also reinforcing a sense of organisational membership and belonging simultaneously.

Thus, rather than organisational commitment, the desire for *branch management* endorsement and job security induced ethnic loyalty in Bank Alpha, while in Bank Beta, the need for *bank management* approval, fear of sanctions and the threat of sanctions (such as dismissal), produced employee commitment. However, evidence still shows that ethnocultural pressures again played out in Bank Beta, although participants used *silence* and (name) avoidance to address this without contravening organisational or ethnocultural values.

#### **6.4. Scenario Three**

*Dejure* considers himself a professional banker and is also the Chairman of his tribal association in the City. *Dejure* has just been redeployed to the Funds Transfer Desk of a very busy branch. He had noticed that his boss, the operations manager, a woman (who was on her annual leave, when *Dejure* reported) had just resumed. She is much younger than *Dejure*. *Dejure* has also noticed how other staff relate with the manager:



*running errands, curtseying or bowing, greeting her using “Madame” or “ma”; not questioning her directives and asking for her advice even concerning personal/family issues. Dejure has heard from the grapevine that this attitude is essential because the manager appraises all staff at the end of the year and only “well-mannered staff” get an excellent appraisal. In Dejure’s ethnic group, older men do not bow to younger persons and for an older man to greet a younger woman first is taboo. The Bank encourages staff to call each other by the first name irrespective of position or age. Dejure needs to present himself to his manager as he has just resumed.*

- *How should Dejure relate with his manager?*
- *What would you do if you were Dejure?*

#### **6.4.1. Case One – Bank Alpha**

##### **The “Default error.”**

In response to this vignette scenario, all participants in Bank Alpha suggested that the vignette subject should change his value disposition to that of the branch. Responses indicate that the idea that employees should attempt to balance the conflicts between their ethnocultural values and their organisational values did not always subsist in Bank Alpha. Rather, employees change their value preferences (value prioritisation – Schwartz, 2010) depending on the *value disposition* of the incumbent head, *which* directly influences the *value orientation* of the whole branch. Thus, the employee becomes a *cultural chameleon*.

Furthermore, reassignments and redeployment meant that employees were mandated to move from one branch to another, which increased the likelihood that employees will become members of branches where the managers’ values were either consistent with organisational values or ethnic values. Responses, however, indicate that employees *changed with the tide*. In essence, employees did not adopt values (ethnic or organisational) based on their idiosyncrasies alone, but also based on the value requirements and value demand of the *current* workplace. Participant **A13**, the business manager in Bank Alpha, called this disposition on the part of the employee **“the default error”**. This term captured the assumption that there was a **default disposition** by all employees, a disposition not consistent with organisational values

and, therefore, an “**error**”. This manager offered that this mindset was the *normal starting point* no matter the branch of redeployment. Therefore, in this branch of Bank Alpha, the Branch Manager, Operations Manager, and Head of Compliance (or the branch management) agreed that the ethnocultural value disposition of the employee overruled organisational value requirements. At least at the branch level in Bank Alpha, the “*default error*” was the legitimated (accepted, approved and shared) mindset as suggested in these responses below:

*If I were him [Tseda], I will adopt the “default error”. I will explain myself: Default error in the sense that ...from where I am coming from [my last branch] I will already be programmed for this. Immediately I come to that particular system [my new branch] I will continue that particular system [the old way of doing things]. If afterwards I now begin to observe [the] attitude by people within, [suggesting a rhetorical question] ‘don’t you know there is a particular el Shaddai [superior] that we are supposed to be loyal to?’ At that point in time I can start to look at [I will take note of this and say to myself] ... “ok, is that what they want here?”. Okay. But in the first instance of my meeting with her, I will act by that particular default (A13, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

*... when you enter a new place [a new branch], you will, first of all, keep the culture that you have already imbibed and learn about the culture of your new location because your own culture may be different from theirs... So that man [Dejure] should learn the culture of the new place. If not, there will be an issue.... if you **are interacting with a lady that’s a higher officer, you may not call her by name. Say, “madam”, “ma” ...good (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba).***

*They say when you go to Rome, you behave like the Romans. He [Dejure] should just go with the culture of that branch (A5, Marketing, Female, Ibo).*

#### 6.4.2. Case Two – Bank Beta

##### **Immediacy**

Participants here advised the vignette subject [Dejure] to submit to the *branch culture* (underpinned by hierarchy and conformity values) irrespective of his ethnocultural value limitations, constraints and beliefs. While, in the vignette scenario, neither Dejure’s ethnic values, the manager’s values, nor the branch values were consistent

with organisational values of equality, participants advised Dejure to choose the practices that offered immediate benefits based on the question: what do I immediately stand to gain or lose through an action? Or what's in it for me **now**? Thus, *immediacy* here was a significant consideration in the prioritisation of values and consequent practices in Bank Beta. Responses suggest that employees weighed their options with regards to value prioritisation based on the degree to which they perceived that any practice would increase their career prospects in a new branch.

Furthermore, responses reveal that employees also prioritised values based on what they perceived they might lose *now*, although immediacy of a benefit (such as a good appraisal) in this instance was seen as one which could also have future significance (career growth). Here, value allegiance and ethnic loyalty were induced by fear of exclusion (being snubbed, alienated or ostracised by colleagues), career stagnation, victimisation, and being tagged as a deviant. Interestingly, in this case, fear of job loss was not a consideration, and managerial approval was as significant as the approval of other colleagues. This sharedness of immediacy is suggested in the response below:

*I may not stick to it all the time, but I will try so much to respect it. I will try to be diplomatic about this. I will not try to...well I will try and balance both. Left to me if I were outside the bank I will do it my way, but within the banking environment, I will try to tune it down a bit, especially when there is something in it for me, a good appraisal (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

*The thing is when in Rome you do as the Romans do. If you are interested in being promoted, I advise that you should do what others do. Because if you do not want to do that, then its either you remain stagnant or, you could be victimised or...you know if you do not do what others do you are a...what do you call...someone that fights against the establishment...a rebel...a deviant. You are just a rebel without a cause because everybody does it ... you may not last very long in the organisation, or you will have issues, and it all boils down to what everybody is doing, and you don't want to. (B7, Marketing, Male, Ibo).*

#### **6.4.3. Summary of Scenario Three – Bank Alpha and Bank Beta**

In Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, participants advise the vignette subject to conform to the branch values and show subservience to the manager. They advise that

employees should have a default ethnocultural disposition which they must alter in order to be consistent with the ethnocultural values of any branch of redeployment. In Bank Alpha, responses show that even when employee values are not organisationally consistent but ethnoculturally compliant, these values will not be accepted by colleagues or endorsed by the manager if they are not shared values. In essence, in Bank Alpha, the default value disposition of employees was towards ethnic values of *the current branch* and the expected default employee practices in all instances must be indicative of ethnic loyalty. Employee practices here were driven by conformity values and power values showing dominance/ submission or the attainment, or preservation, of a dominant position within the more general organisational system.

In Bank Beta, employees agree that the vignette subject should also submit to the manager. However, here, actions were underpinned by immediacy - a what's-in-it-for-me-now approach. Employees adopted any value orientation even when it departs from organisational values, as long as this value orientation translates into career progress through colleague endorsement. Here, it was as much about the manager's disposition as it was about attachment to and approval of colleagues. The driving values here were achievement values or ambitious demonstration of competence in terms of prevailing cultural standards, thereby obtaining managerial approval.

Therefore, in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, employees admit that managerial approval is as important as colleagues' acceptance and endorsement in determining an employee's value orientation and consequent practices. Although it was not clear which reinforced the other, both signified values indicating ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment.

#### **6.5. Scenario Four**

*Takudo's branch is a market branch (sited within a big market). His manager has asked him to report to work on a weekend because he (the manager) wants to pick up a parcel he forgot in his office the day before. Takudo is one of the key custodians of the Bank, and the Manager can't gain access without him. Takudo has noticed that any weekend the manager's wife wants to shop, he finds an excuse to get Takudo to come and open the door of the bank so that he can wait for his wife within the premises. Takudo has heard that the branch manager's wife owns a big shop in another part of*

town. The manager insists he has unfinished paperwork each time. The bank does not pay Takudo for this extra time. Within the last three months, Takudo has been coming every other weekend. Takudo's appraisal forms are on his manager's desk because it is appraisal week.

- What should Takudo do?
- What would you do if you were Takudo?

### 6.5.1. Case One – Bank Alpha

#### Managerial Subjection

Participants advise the vignette subject not to report the manager for unethical behaviour.

While responses suggest that the bank encourages employees, customers and the public to report customer service infractions and any unethical employee practices, employees seemed wary of reporting managers even when their conduct was unscrupulous. Indeed, all participants felt it was not the appropriate response for the vignette subject [Takudo] to *whistleblow* managerial deviance, while others spoke of negotiating a compromise with the manager. In all instances, participants suggested caution with regards to challenging the manager. The cultural requirement of respect for status, or positional authority, even related to managerial behaviour that was not just organisationally inappropriate but also ethically deficient.

Thus, as painted in the vignette scenario, a manager's actions, such as lying and abuse of position or power, did not qualify as a reportable infraction in Bank Alpha because of employee perception that "***your boss is [always] your boss***". This represents the view that respect for status bestows on the manager the privilege to be right at all times, and that the employee has the obligation to remain loyal and unquestioning. Thus, the power element in the manager-subordinate relationship in Bank Alpha was not just about *subservience* but also *subjection* of the employee and magnification of the manager's status as captured in the responses below:

*The Branch manager is your boss...close your eyes to it [infraction] (A4, Marketing, Female, Ibo).*

*He [Takudo] needs to be able to establish a relationship with his manager...He cannot come out and be rude to the man because no matter what your boss is your boss whether your boss is wrong or right and there are different ways to play things to get things...he should manage it (A12, Marketing, Female, Ibo).*

Responses also suggest that the task of accommodating any unrestrained behaviour or practice of a manager required the employee to “**manage the manager**”. In essence, participants indicated that the onus was on the subordinate to *make things work* in the manager-subordinate relationship, even where, as in this case, the manager was unprincipled, as revealed in the following responses:

*In order not to offend the manager, he should offer an opinion...’Sir, let us do it this way’. He does not have to inform management about it. He should find a way around it and **manage the manager** (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba).*

*I think to me the FT officer [Takudo] can still **approach the manager**...depending on the manner of approach and the manner of presentation, I don’t think reporting the manager is the best solution...he can still present it to the manager in a very polite way. (A11, Marketing, Male, Yoruba)*

Only participant **A5** in Bank Alpha felt that it was proper to report the manager in the vignette scenario, but this participant suggested that this should be after *all avenues for redress have been exhausted* and **after an appraisal period**. Indeed, responses suggest that employees in Bank Alpha will accommodate inconvenience and ignore unethical behaviour from positional authority as this disposition was seen as synonymous with career progress and job security. Below are responses which captured these considerations succinctly:

*He can’t back out now without risking his appraisal rating (A3, Operations Staff, Female, Yoruba).*

*As long as his appraisal is at stake, he should continue doing what the manager says (A7, Marketing, Female, Yoruba).*

*It will be difficult because if you don’t recognise the managers, you will start having problems. So, the first thing to do is to realise that the [work] environment is no longer [not] your community. So, you*

*have to behave as the organisation [branch] behaves or the way others behave or else, you may even lose your job (A9, operations, Staff, Male, Ibo).*

### 6.5.2. Case Two – Bank Beta

#### Sycophantism

The importance of career prospects and progression in Bank Beta was defined based on responses from participants with regards to the fourth vignette scenario; employees felt that the vignette subject should remain loyal to the unethical bank manager and refrain from reporting because reporting could hurt Takudo's career progression. Employees spoke of a need to maintain a good relationship or "*understanding*" "*rapport*" with the manager and to keep doing so until the end of the appraisal period. While this suggests that the manager also had a stake in the liaison, or at least enjoyed some benefits, some responses suggest "*managing the manager*", relied on the subordinate being unquestionably loyal to the manager and, as in the vignette scenario, remaining so even when it was wrong. The responses below are indicative of this general perception in Bank Beta:

*The best bet for him [Takudo] is to create an understanding between you and your boss...since your appraisal is involved you cannot be upset. (B1, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

*The people in charge [managers], sometimes you just need to lick their boots...to just climb [progress in your career]. Because guess what you do not also know what they are doing to also have climbed to where they are, you know, its...some pills can be bitter swallows but, if [one] can just ignore it. Just pretend that really you came to work. It may not really last for long but if you must confront the manager, let appraisal period pass and you can confront him nicely. (B7, Marketing, Male, Ibo).*

### 6.5.3. Summary of Scenario Four – Bank Alpha and Bank Beta

In both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, employees had the same advice - as long as your appraisal is at stake, don't report the manager for unethical practices even though the bank's policy mandates employees to do so. In both banks, participants suggest that

subordinates should seek other ways to resolve issues with unscrupulous managers (e.g. discussion, appealing) but never reporting, challenging, or refusing instructions. Also in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, participants' seemed to prioritise security values and conformity values. Employees were keen to just keep their job and had no assurance that they would be immune from eventually being antagonised or victimised even by another manager who could be sympathetic to a crooked manager being punished based on a report occasioned by a subordinate. In both banks, participants seemed to suggest that there was no protection for whistle-blowers and that employees had no assurance that reporting infractions was rewarding in the short or long term.

Thus, ethnic loyalty thrived in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta because of a subservient and subjective status assumed by employees and a sovereign and all-powerful symbolism of managerial authority. The perception that managers held the key to a subordinate's career growth kept employees submissive and managers all powerful. Indeed, egalitarian values under these circumstances seemed a mirage.

## **6.6. Case One Interviews - Bank Alpha**

### **6.6.1. Language**

Participants in Bank Alpha indicated the adoption of discrete behavioural markers of ethnic culture in workplace interaction and relationships, or symbols. *Symbols* can be defined as the outermost, superficial layer of values comprising words, gestures, pictures, objects and codes that are recognised only by those who share the culture (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001), these symbols impact organisational interaction and relationships, such as the interactional aspects of power in the manager-subordinate relationship (Jackall, 1988). For instance, the subordinate must extend a certain ritual of deference to the boss, follow the boss's lead in conversation, and must not speak out of turn at meetings (Jackall, 1988). Symbols here are representative of structural exigencies within organisations that give rise to *power values* at an individual level (Schwartz, 1994, 1996, 2010), underpinned by specific prompts that signal dominance and deference among employees in Bank Alpha. Such prompts include gaze, voice tone, pauses, body posture, and spatial proximity (Strongman, 2003). Participants in Bank Alpha reveal the use of these discrete



communicative prompts in a way that supports the emergence and sustenance of status as an element of ethnic culture; one is language, or *when employees use vernacular, not the English language, for communication.*

All participants acknowledged that the bank's policy specified the use of the English language for communication. However, they also all agreed that the local parlance sometimes took over when employees met other employees or managers of the same ethnic affiliation or others who speak their dialect, even if they are not of the same ethnic extraction. Participant **A10** captures this shared perception succinctly :

*The truth is that we are supposed [mandated by bank management] to speak to people in English. But once in a while, some people chip in [use] their [local] languages. The [bank's] policy is English. Any other language is vernacular. (A10, Marketing, Male, Yoruba).*

Specifically, the managers were instrumental in facilitating or eliminating the occurrence of language. Responses reveal that employees were more likely to openly speak their dialect when in the company of other ethnic affiliates or when it was the dialect of the manager. Thus, the status, influence and perceived power of managers in Bank Alpha promoted ethnic values. This situation resounds with the view that in the Nigerian workplace, a unit or department may assume the ethnocultural character or value orientation of the incumbent head (Olugbile, 1997), including the ethnic tongue of the manager, which may become the lingua franca in that unit, department, or branch (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013). Participants noted that they were aware that this behaviour (speaking the vernacular) was deviant because it was inconsistent with organisational values such as *equality* values (expressed through speaking a common language – English – as mandated by the bank). Interestingly, however, participant **A13** stated that managers used the ethnic tongue to assert authority and control because the English language watered down the power element. In Bank Alpha, the vernacular was, therefore, not just a medium of interaction, but also a means through which the authority and the status, power and control of the incumbent manager were reasserted; speaking the vernacular also evidenced ethnic loyalty. Responses evidencing these perspectives are better summarised below:

*Well... you [one] will show some sign of respect like bowing...there is this thing with the Yoruba, where respect is...ingrained in the wordings and gestures (A7, Marketing, Female, Yoruba)*

*Then also, there are some certain languages used...the reason you use those particular languages is because maybe you are a tribe to a particular person [from the ethnic group of another person] at maybe a particular setting [at a point in time] and you want to pass him a particularly strong message like "moni komajo kosibe" [Yoruba for "I said you should sit down there"], to better make that particular person to understand your authority...because if he [manager] says [in the English language]'I don't want you to sit down in that place', the person in his mind will say, 'you are just speaking English, when you are done probably you will let me know what you are trying to do [say]'. But, probably, by the time he changes his tone [dialect], "moni komajo kosibe"; so now the message has been passed that "this man is not joking with me" [is serious] ....and immediately, you [employee] will reshape [act accordingly]. (A13, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

However, while participants acknowledged that management disapproved of employees speaking vernacular, they said nothing about how the bank enforced this disapproval, which is probably because they perceived that the bank does not enforce it. Indeed, by speaking the vernacular, employees did not see themselves as deviants; instead, they saw their actions as reasonable and even realistic. In essence, theirs was a culturally influenced adaptive response (Kamoche, 2013) to *practical* ethnocultural value demands in the workplace and *theoretical*, and even *unrealistic*, organisational value requirements from the head office. Responses show that speaking the vernacular was normal in the workplace, giving the impression that deviance was institutionalised in Bank Alpha and that management disapproval was considered by employees to be a mere formality.

### **6.6.2. Body Language**

Responses also reveal the use of **body language** in Bank Alpha, or employee use of nonverbal cues for communication. Body language includes **voice tone, gestures and gesticulations** which underpin the interactional expressions. These consist of the behavioural display of power and demonstrate the way in which interaction among managers and subordinates in the organisation gives rise to status distinctions. Body

language has generally been referred to as symbols (Schwartz, 1991). Here, these communicative practices (gestural, facial, and intonational cues) are all nonverbal (Zander, 1994), but are, nonetheless, a means of communicating and interacting, as well as a way of showing deference to superiors.

Participants referred to “*a bow*”, “*shaking with two hands*”, “*shaking with one hand but with the other hand behind the back*”, “*prostrating*”, and “*curtseying*”. Thus, these cues in Bank Alpha were the outcome of the employees’ need to side-track overt ways of communication that were disapproved by the bank, at least in principle, such as language/dialect. Because the vernacular was laden with ethnocultural meaning, employees adopted more covert methods. In this case, the motivation for being this cautious was not to avoid punishment by the bank, but to get attention or a response to an official request by superiors. Participants spoke of using body language because “*[managers] will not respond to you without those courtesies*” and “*they [managers] will not even listen to you*”.

The participants’ responses also suggest that *body language* was employed in organisational interaction because the English language was perceived as ethnoculturally inadequate for conveying cultural meaning, especially the power element in the manager-subordinate interaction, because it conveys *deference* from subordinate to the manager. For instance, the use of body language could determine just how fast a subordinate gets a response to an official request from a superior. Participants like **A6** and **A8** specifically offered that they would demand cues from their subordinates in daily interactions if elevated to managerial positions, which shows that these occurrences are continuous and consistent and are handed down from employee to employee overtime. Consequently, this was one of the many indications of employee legitimation of a culture of deviance in Bank Alpha. Both Ibo and Yoruba participants across the bank, however, agreed that the Yoruba were more expressive and blatant with acts of deference (language and body language), while the Ibos were more subtle. The following responses best capture these various perspectives:

*Well, I know Yoruba prostrate, but we [Ibo] don't prostrate. Well, normally Ibos don't prostrate...sometimes they bow when they meet someone that's higher than them. They try to bow. Well...we try to be professional because they tell us not to be otherwise...but if it is*

*somebody [manager/senior colleague] that is culture-minded...what do I say...you know that this kind of person likes his culture, like some Yorubas, if you don't prostrate they will not even listen to you. So irrespective of the organisation [branch], you must prostrate as you are greeting them. So, when you see those kinds of people, you have to prostrate so that...that's the only way to show them respect. You must have heard that this kind of person...you cannot greet him standing straight. So, you just have to bear that in mind. (A9, operations, Male, Ibo).*

*We don't kneel, but we acknowledge the presence of our superiors. Even if you do call the person's name, there is still some sign of courtesy that you display. Such curtseys determine how fast you get a response. I for one will not respond to you without those courtesies. When you say it in a particular way, I am willing to do anything. (A8, Operations, Male, Yoruba)*

### **6.6.3. Organisational Stories**

The participants' responses evidence that value allegiance and ethnic loyalty can be induced through organisational stories - **tales and accounts which reinforce employee understanding of what the organisation desires, rewards, expects and accepts**. In Bank Alpha, participants shared the story of a male employee who opposed his manager (by maintaining a contrary opinion on an issue) and was not only physically assaulted by the manager in question but also lost his job after he reported the incident officially. All participants in Bank Alpha recounted this story, but none could offer any clue as to how, if at all, the manager in question was reprimanded/disciplined, most likely because he never was. Still, all the participants were clear regarding what happened to the subordinate - he lost his job. To employees in Bank Alpha, the moral of the story (and indeed which values the bank ended up communicating through this event) was: *all employees are not equal and, specifically, you are not equal to your manager. Always respect (show subservience) your manager, in a disagreement between subordinate and manager, the organisation will stand with the manager* (even if that manager has committed a contract-terminable deviation such as assaulting another employee). One participant, a manager from Bank Alpha, captured the position of all other participants in Bank Alpha regarding this story, as follows:

*“Let me share this with you before rounding off. In one of our ECs in [...], they were in a meeting one day. [A] Manager and one of the account officers... they were in a meeting, and something happened...this was a presentation where people were being asked to defend their performance for the month. And a certain guy was saying I brought inflow [deposit] of six million [Naira], I gave a loan of 50 million [Naira], the manager was now furious and responded ‘what do you mean? Are you alright?’ And the guy responded ‘Sir, you shouldn’t tell me that’. And the manager walked up to the guy and [gesticulating] slapped him. The CCTV [camera] captured everything. This case was reported to the Banks Head office. Nothing happened to the manager. Instead of the manager to go [lose his job], it was the guy that was asked to go. For you to know that...see you can’t rule it out, in every organisation...see, you can’t fight your supervisor and win. It is not done...it is not done. You must manage your manager. The guy that was slapped told the manager ‘I am going to report this to management’ and he did. In the end, who bore it [the repercussion]? Him. So, we should know how to manage [our managers]”. (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba)*

This story reinforced certain values among employees in Bank Alpha as was evident in the responses of all the participants - the importance of *status, power, and respect* in the manager-subordinate relationship. Here, status, which is indicative of *hierarchy* and *tradition values*, depicts *suitability* (Schwartz, 2010) and not necessarily *oughtness/correctness* (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013). Whatever a manager does while relating with a subordinate in Bank Alpha, therefore, was seen as *appropriate* by subordinates; thus organisational stories also reinforced the need for respect through compliance and subservience, which is indicative of ethnic loyalty (Schwartz, 1994) not organisational commitment. Ethnic loyalty here was imitative because responses also suggest that participants considered it necessary to act just like others in the branch, even when the organisation had formally declared otherwise. Staying compliant through organisational stories was considered a way to keep out of trouble by not getting into the “bad books” of a manager because it could even lead to the loss of a job. This response from participant **A2** best represents these views:

*You know in [Bank Alpha], when you come into a place, what you do is...for you to see what is practicable, what has been there*

*before you came in. Like I was new to the place, and they said 'meet this person, meet this person' even while introducing me to these people they are like "oh, this is our Head of Operations, Oga Bayo"; this is our....Madame this....you know, and when you see other people calling them that, even when [the] organisation have told you its first name basis, you won't start calling them their first name on your own...if not you will probably be getting into their bad books there and then (A2, Head of Operations, Male, Yoruba).*

#### **6.6.4. Managerial Role**

In Bank Alpha, participants mostly expressed the desire to remain in a superior's good graces because they had an interest in the consequent benefits. The basis for fear among subordinates seemed apparent: offending a powerful figure can induce retribution sooner or later. However, responses suggest that subordinates' fear does hold in a relational vacuum. That is, superiors most likely reinforce displays of deference and allegiance driven by efficiency concerns, and responsibility for meeting goals, or for ensuring that subordinates meet goals (Morand, 2005). Thus, while this assumption may suggest that employee fear of managers in Bank Alpha may not necessarily reflect a tendency of the manager to be authoritarian, responses indicate that managers enjoy, and thus implicitly encourage such behaviour.

Consequently, ethnic loyalty is indicated and reinforced in the social distance between subordinate and manager (*hierarchy/power* values – Schwartz, 1994, 1996, 2010) in Bank Alpha. However, managers do not simply act alone. Their actions seem to be supported, or opposed by, the existing supposedly egalitarian organisational structure which presents the platform against which the value orientation of the manager is built or decimated, and against which the value allegiance of the employee is defined. While this was the overall disposition of participants, participant A1 summarised these views, as follows:

*See you can't rule it out, in every organisation...see, you can't fight your supervisor and win. It is not done...it is not done. You must manage your manager (A1, Auditor, Male, Yoruba)*

Perspectives regarding this type of master-servant relationship between managers and subordinates in Bank Alpha has been articulated by Graen and Scandura (1987) and Liden *et al.* (1993) who suggest that supervisors and subordinates in Bank Alpha

develop exchange relationships through a role-making process, in which they test each other on the basis of certain role expectations. Fulfilled expectations lead to a high quality relationship characterised by high trust, interaction, support, and rewards (Graen and Scandura, 1987; Liden *et al.*, 1993). It has been suggested, though, that leaders and their subordinates hold different expectations and assumptions about the characteristics of effective relationships (Zhou and Schriesheim, 2009). Leaders tend to weigh performance-oriented considerations (e.g. competence) more heavily, whereas subordinates are more concerned about the interactive or emotional aspects of the relationship (e.g. the treatment they receive from supervisors).

The point in this regard is that if organisational values symbolically transmit a message of egalitarianism, the ability of this message to impact employee attitudes may in practical terms be mediated by supervisors' behaviour and their actions towards their subordinates. Only one participant in Bank Alpha suggested that her manager (in a former branch, though) was driven into relations with those considered as *performers* (those who showed commitment by meeting or surpassing financial targets). This suggests that a manager's role could evoke organisational commitment, as in this case, or, as more concretely evidenced in Bank Alpha, evoke ethnic loyalty in an employee as echoed in this participant's response:

*We try to be professional because they tell us not to be otherwise...but if it is somebody [manager/senior colleague] that is culture-minded...what do I say...you know that this kind of person likes his culture, like some Yorubas, if you don't prostrate they will not even listen to you. So irrespective of the organisation, you must prostrate as you are greeting them. So, when you see those kinds of people, you have to prostrate so that...that's the only way to show them respect. You must have heard that this kind of person, you cannot greet him standing straight. So, you just have to bear that in mind (A8, operations, Male, Yoruba)*

#### **6.6.5. Perceptions of Performance Evaluation**

The responses show the significance of performance appraisals for reinforcing value allegiance in Bank Alpha. Appraisals, or **the use of employee performance evaluation in promoting organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty**, are supposed to assess and reward the performance of an employee over a particular

period (Ituma *et al.*, 2011), and this could induce organisational commitment (Adebayo, 2013). However, responses suggest that in Bank Alpha, performance appraisals could be influenced by ethnocultural values and, thus induce ethnic loyalty, not organisational commitment.

Participants referred to the vagueness that characterised the appraisal process. Participant **A2**, for instance, stated that there were no boxes to tick on the bank's appraisal sheet and so, there was no way of knowing beforehand the requirements against which one was being evaluated. In essence, the absence of scales meant that there was no way of self-measuring one's actual performance. The responses suggest that this vagueness reinforced feelings of vulnerability and unfair treatment amongst employees. The point here is that participants felt that ambiguity was introduced into the appraisal system to create the situation where the subordinate will have to show loyalty to a manager, or “*act right*”, in order to get “a good appraisal”, thereby reinforcing relations based on ethnic loyalty. Participants in Bank Alpha suggested that it was commitment to the whims of the manager that was the criteria for a good appraisal rating and not the quality of the employee's job performance as aptly captured in the response below:

*Even when you are good, it takes heavens for somebody to recognise your effort [appraise you properly] and take you to the top [promote you]. Most people that get to the top there you understand, they have combined brains with wits. They have also combined this with the fact that, I have somebody to talk to [someone in authority] and ...I can do this. But then, if I am to be sincere with you, with my own experience, and with the bank I am in, most people stay five years on a grade. For example, there was a time for me in this bank I was stagnant for five years, and you [I] begin [began] to doubt your [my] capacity as [a] person.... can I...is it because I am not good...? But I can't say there is a particular pattern [a clear process of] I understand that somebody will climb to the top [appraisal and promotion]. If you ask me today that 'what do you need to do to get there?', I can't really tell you, you understand... if you ask me, I might not be able to tell you what I need to do to become an AGM [Assistant General Manager] in this bank... you almost don't even have a slot to comment on your appraisal. That means everything [career progression] lies with the perspective [opinion] managers have about you. (A2, Head of Operations, Male, Yoruba).*



#### 6.6.6. Organisational Outlook

Responses also evidence **Organisational Outlook** - The perception that **organisational leadership, employee numbers and relationships evidence the dominance of at least one ethnic group or ethnocultural value system**. While the Nigerian banking industry is assumed to be standardised regarding practices and policies (Herbst and Soludo, 2004), participants revealed that perceptions of diversity management or absence of discrimination might not be part of this perceived homogeneity. This is because participants explained their understanding of banks in the industry as divided along ethnic lines with regards to structure, management and employee numbers and, in effect, employee relationships.

Participants admitted the influence of ethnically based relationships on career development goals and plans, to the degree that employees were sensitive to the ethnic affiliation of colleagues, including managers, because it aroused assurances of promotion and career progression. Thus, ethnocentrism and inherent ethnocultural values played out in employee perception of equality, diversity and inclusion in Bank Alpha. For instance, the responses suggest that, to employees, career progression was contingent on the ethnic values and affiliation of the incumbent manager and not on skills and experiences.

*“.....well you still see people in pockets here and there [congregating based on ethnic affiliation] ....it exists in pockets here and there. People go like ‘Ah, he is an Ibo guy, an Ibo guy is now the Head of that unit [the manager] ..thank God’ then ‘ah, that Ekiti [Yoruba] man is there [the manager] now, thank God...at least now I can move one or two notches up [I can get a promotion]”.*  
**(A2, Head of Operations, Male, Yoruba,).**

However, an Ibo participant in Bank Alpha offered some hope regarding ethnically influenced animosities among Nigeria's ethnic group members. This was not traceable to any direct or indirect involvement of, or initiative from, the management of Bank Alpha, and this was not repeated by any other participant. The response of participant **A5** is an indication that some employees of different ethnic orientations still get along

even if this particular relationship was not a manager-subordinate type, but a relationship with a colleague:

*“Like me, personally, I relate with everybody [of different ethnic extractions] the same way. I don’t have any particular attachment because you’re from my place [my ethnic group], I have a particular thing... as a matter of fact, my best friend here [in the Bank] is a Yoruba guy” (A5, Marketing, Female, Ibo).*

### **6.7. Summary of Interviews: Bank Alpha**

In Bank Alpha, management mandated the use of the English language for communication. The use of a common language was meant to promote equality values because it prevented the dominance of a particular ethnic tongue. Still, employees sidelined the English language by using the vernacular. Because the vernacular was prohibited, yet explicit and laden with ethnocultural meaning, employees adopted more covert methods such as body language (gesticulation, gestures, voice tone). Employees used both language and body language for spotting other ethnic affiliates and for secrecy and privacy in communication. However, these discrete communicative prompts also aided the emergence and sustenance of managerial status underpinning hierarchy and power values as an element of ethnic culture. Specifically, managers used the ethnic tongue to assert authority and control because the English language seemed to dilute the power element in the manager-subordinate interaction. Therefore, ***Language and body language induced ethnic loyalty.***

Also, this idea that the manager needs to reassert power, dominance and control was evidenced in the managerial role, where it was revealed that even where employees are presumed equal, subordinates still revered those with higher status like managers. Employees were cautious about offending a manager because of the fear of managerial retribution. This led to a master-servant relationship in Bank Alpha, signifying a culture of subservience. Because this state of affairs evidenced hierarchy, tradition and conformity values, employee practices were indicative of ethnic loyalty, not organisational commitment. Indeed, the social distance between subordinate and manager reinforced ethnic loyalty in Bank Alpha. **Organisational stories also reinforced values of *status, power, and respect* in the manager-subordinate relationship.** Here, however, ethnic loyalty was imitative, shared and collective

because employees considered it necessary to act just like others in the branch in contravention to egalitarian organisational values of equity, formality and equality.

Therefore, while the management of bank Alpha, in principle, advocated and espoused values such as impartiality, fairness and equal opportunity to encourage organisational commitment, employee practices evidenced bias, prejudice and favouritism. Consequently, **perceptions of performance evaluation** evidenced the employees' belief that in order to make progress, to be seen as productive and to ensure career progression and success in bank Alpha, neither hard work, experience on the job nor skills would suffice as long as the manager does not give one a good appraisal. To qualify, the employee must be unconditionally submissive to the manager. Indeed employees believed that bank management was also culpable. For instance, participants felt that ambiguity was intentionally introduced into the appraisal system to create a situation where the subordinate will have to show loyalty to a manager to get "a good appraisal". Appraisals, despite being performance appraisal and reward tools in principle, have the effect of reinforcing relations based on ethnic loyalty. This perceived liability of executive management was also evidenced in **organisational outlook**. Participants admitted that employees felt more assured of career progression, promotion and a favourable appraisal when their manager, or other line managers, were from their own ethnic group. Thus, ethnocentrism voided any perception of equality, diversity and inclusion in Bank Alpha.

## **6.8. Case Two Interviews - Bank Beta**

### **6.8.1. Code Switching**

**Code-switching** - or when employees alternate between English and the vernacular to spot, identify, and interact with other ethnic affiliates - was evidenced in the participants' responses. In Bank Beta, *language* (both English which was official and the ethnic tongue which was prohibited) served as a *code*. Responses suggest that employees alternate between English and the vernacular to spot, identify, and interact with other ethnic affiliates to keep non-affiliates in the dark with regards to the contents of the communication. English was used when speaking to everyone, irrespective of ethnic affiliation, when seeking to show commitment to organisational values by reinforcing the idea that one is acting by organisational value requirements.

However, the vernacular also served as a uniting tool for ethnic affiliates, or proxies, and a call to identify with a common goal. *Code-switching* is different from *code-mixing* or “using two languages such that a third, a new code emerges, in which elements from the two languages are incorporated into a structurally definable pattern” (Maschler, 1998, p. 125). Or, “the alternate use of two [or more] languages within the same utterance or during the same conversation” (Hoffmann, 1991, p. 110). However, *code-switching* in Bank Beta has some resonance with the idea that speakers can code-switch for group identification and affiliation and indicate solidarity to a particular linguistic group (Gal, 1978; Milroy, 1987) when the language in use is perceived as wanting in some quarters (Adendorff, 1996), or to conceal certain information for the sake of privacy and secrecy (Maschler, 1998). Consistent with these perspectives, are responses in Bank Beta suggesting that *code-switching* is divisive by differentiating ethnic affiliates and proxies from the rest, rather than build employee bonds and reward commitment to organisation values, by for instance speaking English. These perspectives are captured in the responses below:

*Language plays a big role. It will play a role because I speak Ibo I come to an environment, I am working with Yoruba, Kogi, Hausa. An Ibo guy comes around and speaks Ibo, and suddenly both of you are speaking, and a lot of the time you guys are talking. If you are talking it will be like a switch you are speaking Ibo to yourselves, and if another person that is Ibo comes into that same environment, the person will switch on too. So for me, language is just how you attract people to yourself. (B4, Operations Manager, Male, Ibo).*

*Yes. You know they do. You can get to a place, and before you know it, this one is speaking Yoruba to you. And you may say ‘what are you guys saying? Speak English’. Mainly that’s when they don’t want you to understand what they are saying. They change to their language. (B3, Operations, Female, Yoruba)*

However, the responses indicate that while these codes were in use, the bank reasserted its position of disapproval on deviants. While this disapproval was spelt out

through the statement of organisational values/policies, more significant were the actions that reinforced it (sanctions or threats of sanctions). This shows how the bank sought to maintain an egalitarian culture by institutionalising punishment for deviance. Still, responses show that it was also the case that code-switching still played out in Bank Beta. There was some indication, based on the responses, that employees deviated from time to time, but this was against the background of consciousness and awareness of the serious organisational repercussions for such deviation, including termination of appointment.

The bank went to great lengths to assert this policy prohibiting the vernacular. For instance, responses reveal that the management of Bank Beta hired external mystery shoppers, who went round branches across the country to report through first-hand experience, exceptional or deficient customer service delivery as well as policy infractions among employees. While employees were not certain of the identity of these mystery shoppers, the result was that the bank took action on any reported service or policy infractions. Responses also reveal that in this case, managers were as accountable as their subordinates. Participant B1 spoke of a mystery shopper's report that led to the termination of the appointment of both a manager and a subordinate who were observed and heard speaking the vernacular (Igbo in this case, although participant B1 called it *Ibo*) in one of the bank's branches. The termination of the appointment of both employees suggested that the vernacular, indicative of ethnicity and ethnic loyalty, was prohibited but English, indicative of organisational commitment, was the approved medium for communication. The action of the bank to ensure that employees were complying with this policy requirement is a manifestation of their commitment to organisational values.

Furthermore, employees were being watched closely, suggesting that breaches in policy were occurring and were punished, with some employees even sacked, despite the position of the employee in the hierarchy. The response of participants B1 below captures these assertions:

*In [Bank Beta] in Abuja, you will never see that. Even, I know that a mystery shopper came into the [a] branch. My friend [...], used to be in [branch name] and he is a staff and when they, the mystery shoppers, heard the lady speaking Ibo, and minuted on it [noted it]*

*and said [wrote that] the girl was speaking vernacular in the Branch, they were sacked. The lady and her BSH [Branch Service Head]. So, it's not even allowed. You hardly find yourself speaking vernacular because you can be sacked for it ...Yeah...the only thing that can give you away, you know is your name in [Bank Beta] ...otherwise you are sort of faceless. Nobody knows where you are from and nobody is interested.... it's just your name (B1, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

### **6.8.2. Employment Training**

Responses from employees in Bank Beta evidence the significance of employment training in reinforcing employee value allegiance and organisational commitment. In essence, the idea that training can moderate the ethnocultural values of recruits by strengthening organisational values at the level of the bank's branch was evidenced. Responses suggest that, in Bank Beta, training had an impact on the *subsequent* value orientation of the recruit. Participants referred to the training programmes of their banks as a basis for their adherence to the bank's organisational values and spoke about how, by watering down ethnic imperatives such as grouping along ethnic lines, their bank's orientation programme made an impact on their long-term organisational values. What stood out regarding the significance of training for new entrants in Bank Beta was the rigour of the training process. This perception of rigour by participants was based on what the recruitment training they underwent meant to them as new employees at the time; specifically the positive feelings they associated with it, and how this impacted them personally and professionally in the long term.

Participants interpreted rigour in different ways, though in all interpretations, rigour was achieved when recruits seemed more aware that organisational commitment had to do with adherence to attributed values of the organisation (Pruzan, 2001; Whetten, 2006). Some saw rigour as manifest in the length of time they spent at training school (17 weeks or thereabout), while others saw rigour in the training process as evident in the way it changed their mindset. For instance, some participants indicated that during training, they began to see things *the management way*. Indeed, some participants revealed that they were able to see the long term goals of the organisation and

identified with these goals by positioning themselves to achieve them. Still, others spoke of long-lasting bonds that were formed with other trainees irrespective of ethnic affiliation and how this carried on even after the training was over, thereby blurring the lines of ethnic demarcations and differences and creating that sense of sharedness and shared values (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2003; Cable and Edwards, 2004). Overall, training was meant to impart organisational commitment and rid employees of ethnic loyalty as indicated by participants like B1 and B2:

*Then you go through the rigorous training for almost 4-5 months; it sharpens [shapes] you to see their own [bank management] perspective, to see where they are coming from and where they are going to (B1, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

*What I have noticed is that, because you spend 17 weeks in your training school class, you bond...you get in...everybody is using his own colleague to measure up, so that is basically what I notice. When you want to pair [pair up] when you want to group, you group with people that we [you] were in training school together around [at] the time not necessarily based on ethnic considerations. (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo)*

Furthermore, participants stated that the value orientation of the employee from the time of recruitment was so important that the management of Bank Beta employed graduates from only certain Nigerian Universities in order to increase the likelihood that recruits would already have values consistent with those of the organisation at the outset. Participants also claimed that bank recruitment was only focused on younger employees, because they believed they were more pliable and made instilling desirable organisational values easier. Participants, however, did not view this as discriminatory, but, rather, they seemed to be favourably disposed to what may ordinarily be considered a clear case of age discrimination. This assertion by participants though was evident from the preconditions they were informed they had to fulfil during the selection process (However, I was unable to independently confirm these assertions due to a lack of access to any bank officer in the Human Resource Unit of Bank Beta). Employee awareness of this had an impact on employee feelings regarding the requirements for continued organisational membership, identification with organisational values, and understanding of what the organisation expects and

rewards. These imperatives influenced employee value allegiance and, consequently, employee commitment to organisational values. The account of participant **B1** better summarises these responses:

*[Bank Beta] is a very corporate environment, extremely corporate. When you get in, first of all, the people or the guys that they pick from the training school are already polished if not totally polished. They [Bank Beta] don't take from every kind of school; then there is a particular age [requirement]. (B1, Operations, Female, lbo)*

### 6.8.3. Senior Management Practices

Participants gave an account of an employee who lost his job because he addressed the Managing Director of Bank Alpha using the *respectful* prefix “Sir”. This was against the bank's policy of using first name address. Such organisational practices are **employee interpretations of senior management actions, which reinforce organisation values and expectations**. The values of top managers, or *espoused values* (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013), have been noted to have a considerable effect on organisational outcomes (Khandelwal and Mohendra, 2010). This influence has also been evidenced through the upper *echelons theory*, which describes the organisation as a replication of the values, perceptive styles, and biases of its top managers (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). In essence, senior managers can enforce values in a way that incorporates the personal values of organisational members (Berson *et al.*, 2008). Responses suggest that employees saw this action of the Managing Director not just as a strong statement of the value orientation that managers and subordinates should espouse, but also as a demonstration of the type of punishment that would be meted out to those that did not comply.

*In [Bank Beta], somebody has gotten sacked for calling [Managing Director] ‘Sir’. [Managing Director] was coming into the elevator and the person was going out [coming on], and the person goes like ‘good afternoon sir’, and he got sacked. Yes....[Managing Director] was like ‘what’s your name? Go to [Head HR]. Tell her I sent you to her (B2, Operations, Female, lbo).*

However, responses also suggest that over and above practices of senior management or espoused organisational values, in Bank Beta, the manager was still



a considerable force in determining employee value allegiance. Indeed, a more critical view of the upper echelons theory suggests that the appearance of employee conformity to espoused values, as in Bank Beta, is an illusion (Hewlin, 2003). This is because values emerge through a process of social interaction which involves a multiplicity of actors and not just senior management (Duarte, 2010). One of these actors is a manager in Bank Beta. Responses indicate that employee fear of job loss through deviance from espoused values was not as intense as fear of career stagnation due to the absence of loyalty to a manager. *In essence, the fear of senior management action at the head office seemed to end where the fear of managerial power in the branch began.* Further, responses suggest that employees in Bank Beta seemed more willing to meet the ethnocultural whims of the manager (based on the possibility of career progression) than the organisational value-driven demands of top management, even if this meant risking their job.

This difference in value orientation, disposition and identification by managers and employees at the branch level may support arguments that top executives of an organisation may officially adopt values that they believe should influence organisational choices and employee actions, but these do not suddenly translate into organisational values for employees in this case. According to Hofstede (1998), acceptable or required organisational practices of senior managers may be based on their perceived required values, but employees may not necessarily share these values. Employees may follow the practices which underlie these values because they wish to retain membership to the organisation, but they may have inhibitions regarding these values and, thus, may refuse to internalise them. The account of participant B6 best captures the assertion of other participants:

*So each time you try to manage your supervisor because you know its key. ... If you have a good rapport with your supervisor, you might not even be doing much, but you will progress career-wise once you are loyal. You know your 'A' [appraisal grade] is sacrosanct – it's given that you will get your 'A'. But you might be somersaulting [going the extra mile] and doing all the work, but if not in good terms with your supervisor, she [or he] will always have one excuse or the other not to give you a good appraisal... Atimes people just like to do their jobs; you tell them to do this they do it,*

*they come in the morning, they face their job, they do their work and everything. And still, a supervisor may see it as rudeness that this person just likes keeping to himself. You just come in the morning [and say] 'good morning' and walk to your desk and start doing your work. Even if you are doing your work and delivering on set goals, they [managers] like the guy who goes 'Ah, ma, your bag is fine'; 'Your shoe is lovely'. You massage their ego [caress their vanity]. 'Ah, you look good this morning, ma'; 'ah, ma, I am going out now', they like it when you are loyal to them. (B6, Marketing, Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

#### **6.8.4. Recruitment Practices**

**Recruitment practices or the significance of an organisation's hiring processes for reinforcing value allegiance** was evidenced in responses in Bank Beta. Participants talked about hiring practices with confidence as they were assured, based on personal experiences, that the employment process was fair and not ethnically biased. Interestingly, the limits that the bank placed on recruitment age, as stated by participant **B2**, (24 years) was not perceived as discriminatory by participants, who mostly linked it favourably to the perceived intensity and rigorousness of the bank's orientation programme for recruits. Based on the participants' responses, so intense was the impartation of organisational values at the training school in Bank Beta, that recruits came out feeling like they were unique and "*on top of the world*".

Participants also spoke of how recruitment was based on performance, skills and brains or "*what you had upstairs*" not on ethnic affiliation. Indeed, some participants gave accounts of how, as recruits, more senior colleagues related with them as equals in their early days on the job (through mentoring), which meant that the values of top executives were imparted on employees at this early stage in their careers. Mentoring also gave employees at this stage a sense of belonging, importance and consciousness that they were not just '*a number*' in the organisation. Thus, by deemphasising *tradition* and *hierarchy* values and evoking values such as *autonomy and equality* (Schwartz, 1994, 1996), practices evidencing organisational commitment thrived in this instance. The point here is that organisational commitment was evidenced in employee practices when managerial behaviour moderated or extinguished the interplay of status and age in employee relationships and, in essence,

stifled ethnic loyalty. The responses below capture the essence of these feelings of equality, diversity and inclusion in the hiring process of Bank Beta and summarise the main point made by other participants:

*I have seen an ET [Executive Trainee] talking to the MD [Managing Director] and addressed him [MD] by his first name (B6, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

*In [Bank Beta] you take them [recruits] from a young age so you can mould them into what you want. Nobody is interested in how old you are or your surname [ethnicity]. In [Bank Beta] entry age is not more than 24 years. So, the age gap is not so much. If I am 22, for example, why can't I call someone of 32 by the first name? So, from that age bracket, you can't be too old...The truth about [Bank Beta] is that even if there was [ethnic loyalty], you will almost not notice it because we are all young kids getting to [Bank Beta] at the age of 21-22-23 when all you had to show for it [qualification for employment] was what you had upstairs [brains]. Basically that is what [Bank Beta] looks for...everyone is interested in what you are saying differently from what is the norm [initiative, creativity]. (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo)*

More specifically, participants spoke about their experiences as job applicants in Bank Beta. Responses suggest that positive employee perception of the fairness of HR processes was essential in reinforcing feelings of trust and inclusion right from the onset of the employment contract. For instance, participant **B2** spoke of how, as a recruit, she still felt a sense of fairness inherent in the process, even when the HR unit consisted of mainly Yoruba employees and the Head of HR was Yoruba. Thus, a lack of ethnic diversity in a branch of Bank Beta manifested in the preponderance of specific ethnic groups, may not necessarily sustain feelings of discrimination (perceived or real) if HR processes like selection and reward are clearly stated and followed. Here, a clear and precise value statement targeted at organisational objectives can assist in the recruitment and selection of employees that share, and can relate with, the stated values of the organisation (LeMon, 2000), and these employees are more likely to be productive and satisfied (Kouzes, 2003).

Here, the place of diversity management policies seems to raise some questions. For instance, this scenario in Bank Beta raises the possibility that an organisation pursuing diversity management policies may inadvertently compromise equality and inclusion. It might also suggest that diversity management policies may focus on inclusion by design and structure but may, on the contrary, lack feelings of inclusiveness among employees. However, the suggestion that a lack of EDI policies may raise the consciousness of differences among employees (Adeleye *et al.* 2014; George *et al.*, 2017) does not seem to tell the whole story in this case. Participants' responses also suggest that when employees feel that organisational tools and processes are unbiased, relevant, transparent, and effective, the employees' overall feeling of inclusiveness is greater than is achieved through EDI programmes *alone*. In essence, perceptions of fairness of HR practices may evoke organisational commitment and constrain ethnic loyalty, and vice versa, as revealed in the response below:

*I think it has to do with...the focus of recruitment policies. [Bank Beta] is fair and clear, they have a target, and they have a focus, and they stick to it. You know, when I was...during my [employment] interview [in Bank Beta] I met a friend, she wasn't taken [selected]. In fact, she had finished her Masters from [a school in] London. I was surprised that she wasn't taken and 90% of the people I came across in the HR department, they were all Yoruba....do you understand, so it came to me as a shock...it came to me as a major shock. From my own judgement I don't think I did better than this girl but... oh...what exactly could she have done wrong for them not to take her up [on]? At that point, I realised that in [Bank Beta] they are not interested in your surname [ethnicity]... no. (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo)*

#### **6.8.5. Appraisals**

Responses from employees in Bank Beta revealed that how employees perceived appraisals could induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment. Responses suggest that appraisals underpin **the role of employee performance evaluation in promoting organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty and** meant various things to employees including:

- **Tool for reward**

Two participants in Bank Beta affirmed the core purpose of appraisals as they saw it. The reward for “*sleepless nights*” [hard work], not influenced by ethnocultural value considerations such as status or ethnic loyalty. These participants present appraisals as fair, participatory (as appraisee input was part of the process), standardised and transparent. However, these participants (from the same branch and unit) were the only employees that spoke well of their bank's appraisal process. Their comments can be taken to mean that in Bank Beta, some employees positively perceive the bank's performance management system and are driven by some level of trust and confidence in the bank's appraisal process (even if this view was not corroborated or re-echoed by other participants from Bank Beta):

*That is how [Bank Beta] can be if you give it your all. You might have sleepless nights, get home very late and almost not sleep in your house. [Bank Beta] is....as you are putting in your effort you are seeing it [The outcome] everybody is seeing it. Nobody is saying because you did not greet me in the morning because you did not have the same views with me... In [Bank Beta] I can contest my appraisal. I can, comfortably. I can even as much as take it to HR. I can recall my appraisal if I feel my boss hasn't given me what I deserve (B2, Operations, Female, lbo)*

*For [Bank Beta] it's very transparent. In the sense that if they say, “meet this target”, and you meet your target, you are going to get an “A” Star. It's your target; your figures speak for you.... So, it's transparent in [Bank Beta]. (B1, Operations, Female, lbo).*

- **The subjective element**

Other participants complained about the subjective nature of the appraisal process and criticised the idea that at a particular stage of the procedure, which was the stage that determined the final grade, the manager had the final say. In other words, while the input of the appraisee was accommodated at an earlier stage in the process (giving an impression of objectivity), the overall outcome is determined by the manager in the absence of the appraisee (reinforcing employee perception of the subjective nature of the activity). Moreover, the outcome was incontestable and determined if the

appraisee would be rewarded or promoted or even made redundant. This made employees sycophantic and subservient to managers and, thus, evoked ethnic loyalty because ethnocultural values seemed to thrive in these situations:

*Appraisals are so subjective...people suck up a lot just to get a good appraisal. See, believe me, ...yes...like in [Bank. B] you know you have your KPI [Key Performance Indicators] and all those things, but when they are defending these appraisals you will not be there, it's your boss. 80-90% of the time it's your line supervisor's belief of you [impression about you] that really determines what you get in your appraisal. It's nothing else. if you like summersault [do something extraordinary]. If she [manager] says this...because she is the one that will be there [final appraisal meetings], you will not be there to fight her; you will not be there to argue with her. (B6, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba)*

*So if your boss is the kind of person that wants you to call her 'ma', or say 'Madame' just say it and get what you want, because you don't want to spoil your appraisal (B5, Marketing, Female, Ibo).*

- **Human relations dependent (the contingency consideration)**

Participants in Bank Beta also stated the need to apply “*human relations*”, not just hard work, to get a good appraisal. This involved *subtle lobbying*. Here, the employee who shows “concern” for the manager's welfare, runs errands for the manager (personal and official), sticks around the manager, even when not needed or summoned, is likely to get a good appraisal compared to one “*who just does his/her job*”. Participant **B6** reveals that this situation was normal because this is how his boss treats him, and this is how he treats his reports. Participant **B6** also reveals that based on the intervention of his boss, he had been made to recall, alter and regrade an appraisal he had completed based on his genuine opinion about the performance of a subordinate. The point of participant **B6** was that appraisals can be based on relationships of power between a manager and a subordinate and can become an exercise in favouritism, which re-echoes the words of participant **B4** “... **at times knowing certain people does also help**”. The responses below represent what other participants said regarding these considerations:

*Because it has happened [before]: there was a time I did [completed] appraisals for my subordinates, and I gave someone a “B”, I gave another person an “A”. And on the last day [of the appraisal] it was just weekly meeting, ...my boss just said, ‘this guy [who got a “B”] is he not your friend [not loyal]? and you gave him B’ ‘but is he not your friend?’ ‘I thought you guys are very close?’ And I started thinking, and the appraisals had already been submitted. [Senior Manager] had to recall it [appraisal], and we changed it there to “A”. At that point, it has [had] nothing to do with performance or the job or whatever (B6, Marketing Manager, Male, Yoruba).*

*Some people are still very hard workers, yet they have not climbed [been promoted]. I can give you [state] myself as an example. I don’t know why...so a times knowing certain people does also help. And when we do appraisals, which is what promotions is [are] based on...you try to make it objective...but that human factor is still there...you know it’s what your team lead or your supervisor feels. So, if you had issues with him or her [disloyalty] before now [appraisal time], it will come to play even if you work very hard. So, you will need hard work, but you also need a bit of human relations. (B7, Marketing, Male, Ibo).*

#### **6.8.6. “Us” versus “Them” Consciousness**

Responses evidence the interplay of “us” versus “them” or **when perceptions of (in)equality define employee value allegiance** and suggest that perceptions of diversity could influence employee value allegiance. Underscoring this view, participant **B5** responded as follows:

*[Bank Beta] cuts across all ethnic groups. There are Yorubas, there are Ibos, there are Edos, and there are Hausas. Even where I work currently, my Group Head is Hausa. Yes, and a lady for that matter. So yes, it cuts across. In [Bank Beta] there is no tribe predominating [predominating tribe] ...we are complete. Even in my office [soliloquising] do we have any Hausas in my office? No, though there is Yoruba, there is Ibo...oh, did I say there was no Hausa in my office? [laughter]. My group head is Hausa. (B5, marketing, Female, Ibo).*

However, this perception by participant **B5** was not representative of the consensus across other participants, who mostly spoke about antagonism from other managers (not necessarily the one whom they report to directly) due to culturally influenced expectations of how employees should respond when addressed. In essence, even when a manager of a particular ethnicity was driven by organisational values in a unit or branch, this was not representative of the value disposition of other managers. This is because other managers of a different ethnicity may be driven by ethnocultural values. Responses suggest that this situation evoked employees' consciousness of *differences* and sustained a general sense of *inequality* or the "us" versus "they" feeling in Bank Beta. Thus, participants admitted that despite the management's thrust to the contrary, ethnocultural values still evoked ethnic loyalty as suggested by the response below which best captures all other participants' comments in this regard:

*Someone [a manager] said 'Good morning' to me. And normally I used to say 'Hi, Good morning'. And then I said that to her. And she responded, 'When someone says good morning to you, you don't say 'hi'. It's just to show you that in the system, you can't just say 'hi' to anybody... You can't say 'How are you' [to an older, senior person] because it's disrespectful. I was discussing this recently...and I asked someone. He said, 'good morning', and I replied, 'How are you?', and then I asked him again 'are you offended that I asked you how are you?'; and then he said that it's not something to be offended about because I am in a corporate environment. But some people will take offence in it because you can't just say 'how are you' to them... when they are Yoruba, and they are older'. Well, I didn't understand what he was saying, but I just took it in and said okay thank God [thankfully] I am not Yoruba I am Ibo (B1, Operations, Female, Ibo).*

Furthermore, in Bank Beta, responses revealed some antagonism between the two ethnic groups chosen for this research, with Ibo participants showing hostility to Yoruba colleagues. Interestingly, no Yoruba participant spoke negatively of Ibo colleagues (or any other ethnic group for that matter). While this in itself is not necessarily suggestive of a favourable disposition of Yorubas to Ibos nor does it imply that the feelings of Ibo participants are representative of the feelings of the general Ibo employees, it does reveal a degree of antagonism, uncertainty, mistrust and a sense of discrimination in Bank Beta. It also underscores the need for a reassessment of the



overall impact of these hostile feelings on favourable organisational outcomes and the implications for overall EDI goals (if they exist) or indeed organisational values. Participant **B2** summarises the other participants' statements succinctly:

*The Head of the marketing team is a typical Yoruba man. And whatever errors I make he is going to try to tribalise it [show ethnic sentiments]. Maybe you come with a form, and you want me to treat, and I say, 'I can't treat because I am attending to a customer' he will say 'if it is [were] Tunde, Tunde respects elders' and all those kind of things... Then after then, I was moved to [...] branch. It was terrible. It was terrible to the point that my manager will tell me '[participants name], I am a Yoruba woman, and I will deal with you'. She tells me that on a daily basis. I pray I don't experience such in my entire life again. (B2, Operations, Female, Ibo)*

### **6.9. Summary of Interviews: Bank Beta**

In Bank Beta, employees used the English language (approved for communication) and the vernacular in turns subtly, calculatedly and situationally. *Code-switching* was used to achieve several things: for identification and assurance of ethnic affiliation, to indicate solidarity with a particular ethnic group, to reassert presence, and to conceal specific information from insignificant others. Thus, contrary to organisational values such as team-mindedness and co-operation, *code-switching* served a separatist, divisive function by differentiating ethnic affiliates and proxies from the rest. However, here, employees deviated with caution because of sanctions for nonconformity, which were severe and could include termination of appointment. However, using English was transient and fluid in this case. Employees used language as a code. Ethnic loyalty was, therefore, the rule, while organisational commitment was the exception, even if the view that management sanctions were a real consequence (as evidenced in the sacking of colleagues) subsisted.

This firm stand of management on required organisational values and indicative practices was inculcated in recruits right from **employment training**. Employment training, therefore, served as a way to moderate and check the ethnocultural values

of recruits by strengthening organisational values right from the onset because training, supposedly, had an impact on the subsequent value orientation of the recruit. The point, however, is that employee consciousness and clarity of what the organisation expects and rewards influenced employee value allegiance and, consequently, employee commitment to organisational values. Further, right from training school, employees were subjected to mentoring by more senior managers. Here employees were exposed to management practices as a model of who the employee should be. **Senior management practices** reinforced in employees a sense of what the organisation required. More so, when sanctions were also involved, it seemed even more effective. However, responses also suggest that more so than the practices of senior management from the head office, the value orientation at the branch of redeployment, led by the manager, determined employees' subsequent value allegiance. Consequently, employees in Bank Beta seemed more willing to please the manager than continue with all that was learned at training school, even if it meant risking their job. Thus, ethnic loyalty thrived in this case.

Further, employees personal experiences of being hired based on skills rather than ethnic affiliation induced feelings of fairness in the recruitment process of Bank Alpha. In this case, employees did not believe that the ethnic affiliation of the HR team (who were mainly from one particular ethnic group) mattered because only their skills, experience and knowledge seemed to have been used as selection criteria. Thus, organisational commitment was produced in employees when clarity and transparency were evidenced, even when ethnic diversity was not evidenced. Thus, organisational commitment is evoked when the preponderance of specific ethnic groups may not necessarily sustain feelings of discrimination. This happens when organisational processes, structures and values are explicit and observed. However, responses still evidenced the "Us" versus "Them" consciousness in employees which caused employees to focus on ethnic differences. This sustained feelings of difference, discrimination and antagonism in the employee workplace interactions and underscores the need for designing specific EDI programmes and initiatives to curb ethnic loyalty and induce organisational commitment.

## 6.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis of twenty employee in-depth interviews and responses to vignettes, in two branches of commercial banks in Nigeria. The two (anonymised) banks under study are Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. Certain themes emerged from the data (**see Table 8**) and reveal how employee actions and inactions are indicative of the divergence between ethnocultural correctness and organisational appropriateness.

### 6.10.1. Summary of Vignettes and Interviews: Bank Alpha and Bank Beta

Based on vignette responses and interviews from Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, findings show that employees deal with the dilemma of resolving value conflicts through value prioritisation in a variety of ways. In Bank Alpha, vignette responses evidence how employees swapped ethnic and organisational values through workplace practices and *matched* or attempted to equate shared ethnic values with required organisational values. Indeed, employees *legitimated* their ethnic-driven practices through a *redefinition* of organisational values. One driver of this state of affairs in Bank Alpha was organisational value vagueness. The more ambiguous employees perceived organisational policies and values to be, the more they redefined them through workplace practices to suit their ethnic value obligations. Thus, findings reveal ***value swapping, value matching, value legitimation and value redefinition.***

**Table 7: Comprehensive listing of sub-themes from findings**

Sub-themes - Vignettes	Sub-themes - Interviews	Core Themes
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy ambiguity <input type="checkbox"/> Value swapping <input type="checkbox"/> Value redefinition <input type="checkbox"/> Value matching <input type="checkbox"/> Value legitimisation <input type="checkbox"/> Policy clarity and responsiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Sharedness		<b>Value Hybridity</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Respect <input type="checkbox"/> Future Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Identity <input type="checkbox"/> A sense of balance <input type="checkbox"/> Sanctions	<input type="checkbox"/> Managerial Role <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational Stories <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Training <input type="checkbox"/> Senior management practices	<b>Debriefing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> The “Default error” <input type="checkbox"/> Immediacy <input type="checkbox"/> Managerial Subjection <input type="checkbox"/> Sycophantism	<input type="checkbox"/> Perceptions of Performance evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Appraisals <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment practices	<b>The HR Role</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Silence	<input type="checkbox"/> Language <input type="checkbox"/> Body language <input type="checkbox"/> Code-switching	<b>Identifiers</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational Outlook <input type="checkbox"/> “Us” versus “they” <input type="checkbox"/> Consciousness	<b>Diversity Management</b>

In Bank Beta, in spite of some evidence of value clarity, through management responsiveness and proactiveness in driving organisational ideals, responses reveal that common practices which evoke a sense of *sharedness* can drive employee deviance and, therefore, when employees perceive that they have some freedom to make value choices, they engaged in **value discretion**. Thus, *value swapping, value matching, value legitimisation, value redefinition and value discretion* make up the theme **Value Hybridity** – or **the outcome of employees’ efforts at reconciling organisational and ethnocultural values**.

**Table 8: Relevance of core themes to sub-research questions**

Sub-themes - Vignettes	Sub-themes - Interviews	Core Theme - Vignettes and Interviews	Description of Core Theme	Relevance to Sub Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Value Swapping</i></li> <li>• <i>Value redefinition;</i></li> <li>• <i>Value matching;</i></li> <li>• <i>Value legitimization</i></li> </ul>		<p><i>Value Hybridity</i></p>	<p>The outcome of employees' effort at reconciling organisational and ethnocultural values</p>	<p>How do ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance? (SRQ1).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Respect</b></li> <li>• <b>Identity</b></li>   <li>• <b>Managerial Subjection</b></li> <li>• <b>Sycophantism</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Managerial Role</b></li> <li>• <b>Organisational Stories</b></li> <li>• <b>Employment Training</b></li> <li>• <b>Senior management practices</b></li>   <li>• <b>Perceptions of Performance evaluation</b></li> <li>• <b>Appraisals</b></li> <li>• <b>Recruitment practices</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Debriefing</i></p> <p><i>The HR Role</i></p>	<p>Practices and activities which replace ethnocultural employee values with organisational values and vice versa in recruits and experienced hires. When Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, processes and procedures support or constrain organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty.</p>	<p>How do organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Nigerian Banks? (SRQ2).</p> <p>(SRQ2).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Silence</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Language</b></li> <li>• <b>Body language</b></li> <li>• <b>Code-switching</b></li>   <li>• <b>Organisational Outlook</b></li> <li>• <b>"Us" versus "they" Consciousness</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Identifiers</i></p> <p><i>Diversity Management</i></p>	<p>The markers of ethnic culture which facilitate employee interaction based on ethnic affiliation. Considerations around managing the preponderance of a particular ethnic group in the organisation.</p>	<p>(SRQ1).</p> <p>(SRQ2).</p>

The findings show that this outcome does not happen in a vacuum and that it may be influenced by the value allegiance of the manager of a unit/branch. Indeed, vignettes and interview responses show a disconnect between stated egalitarian organisational values and the values that managers in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta project and

enforce. Consequently, the findings show that managerial allegiance to ethnocultural or organisational values evokes ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in subordinates with the former more likely than the latter in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta.

Specifically, in Bank Alpha, vignette responses show the expectations of, and need for, **respect** in the manager-subordinate relationship. Respect here was not in line with organisational values of impartiality, equality and fairness among employees at all levels, but was related to *subservience to and respect for the status of the manager*. For instance, the idea that the employee is obligated to please the manager unquestionably and unconditionally was revealed in the concept of “**the default error**”. This is the assumption that, in contrast to the values of the organisation, employees must always assume an ethnocultural value-driven mindset and disposition in the manager-subordinate relationship.

The findings show how subordinates’ practices were based on the perceived value of the action by the manager and, indeed, the future worth of that action for the employee. Thus, respect for status was valued for what it could produce for the employee, for instance, career progression or career stagnation. Relatedly, in Bank Beta, the findings from vignette responses reveal that employee perceptions of future **benefits drove value allegiance**. Also, **employee definition of self** (identity) influenced how employees perceived the manager-subordinate relationship and the values that underpinned that relationship. In both cases, employees legitimated their deviation from organisational values by redefining their role in the manager-subordinate relationship in ethnocultural, rather than organisational, terms. These conditions sustained ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment.

Further, in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the findings show how employee job role and identity was crafted based on organisational stories in Bank Alpha and employment training in Bank Beta. In the first, employees relied on tales and accounts of what had happened in the past, even when there was no communication by management regarding the authenticity of these stories. If the story goes that an employee was sacked because of a practice or lack thereof, employees defined their future practices accordingly, even if these adjusted practices suggested ethnic loyalty. In Bank Beta, the bank used **employee training** as well as mentoring by senior management,

including everyday senior management actions, to reinforce required employee roles and values. However, in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, findings show that, in the final analysis, business units/branches could either reinforce cultural values (ethnic loyalty) or organisational values (organisational commitment) in recruits, as well as experienced hires, through **managerial role** or practices underpinned by the value disposition of the manager.

In recruits, for example, specifically in Bank Alpha, the organisational values imparted at the bank's training school were stifled at the branch when that branch had "a different value system" typically driven by a manager's ethnic value orientation. In Bank Beta, organisational values were imparted in recruits through rigorous training, likened to a form of indoctrination by the participants, and could be *relatively* sustained when the unit/branch/department functioned as an extension of the learning and impartation process for the employee. Regarding this latter consideration, however, the responses from participants in both banks indicate a disconnect between HR and the business units in Bank Alpha and to a lesser degree in Bank Beta. The themes of **respect, identity (vignettes) and managerial role, organisational stories, employment training and senior management practices (interviews)** form the theme of **debriefing**. **Debriefing** represents **practices and activities which replace ethnocultural employee values with organisational values and vice versa in recruits and experienced hires**.

Furthermore, findings show how in Bank Alpha, employees used verbal and non-verbal cues for communication and interaction with colleagues, including senior colleagues. Some of the cues were unconscious, implicit and covert; others were conscious, explicit and overt. Contrary to the organisation-mandated use of the English language, the findings evidence the use of verbal cues or *language* (such as an employee's ethnic tongue or dialect). Also, employees in Bank Alpha used covert methods, or *body language*, including gesticulations, gesture, voice tone, and symbols, mainly to divert management attention. Indeed, management was more likely to focus on the more overt use of the dialect and thus typically missed these more implicit signs. Therefore, the use of ethnic dialect thrived in Bank Alpha because the

English language seemed incapable of asserting cultural meaning. Specifically, for managers, the English language voided the reassertion of the power element (signifying hierarchy values) in the manager-subordinate interaction. In essence, in Bank Alpha, **language** and **body language** were used to show ethnic loyalty.

In Bank Beta, vignette responses evidence the use of *silence* – when employees chose to say nothing in order to remain organisationally compliant yet ethnoculturally obedient. Furthermore, the use of the dialect in Bank Beta was remarkably different from how it was used in Bank Alpha, though no less diverse and still indicative of ethnic loyalty. The findings show how employees used **language** (English and the ethnic dialect in a back and forth way) as a *code*. Hence, **code-switching** in Bank Beta was employed by participants to spot, identify, and interact with ethnic affiliates (or “*the caucus*”) privately or secretly and, to exclude non-affiliates. These cues were not specific to particular ethnic groups in either bank, although participants spoke of Yoruba employees being more expressive, while Ibo employees were seen to be more subtle in their use of *language and body language*. Participants stated that the use of *language and body language* took place openly in Bank Alpha, while this use of *language and code-switching* occurred more covertly in Bank Beta. *Code-switching and silence*, however, was unique to Bank Beta. Thus, the sub-themes **silence, language, body language and code-switching** form the main theme **identifiers - the markers of ethnic culture that facilitate employee interaction based on ethnic affiliation**.

Findings from the vignette responses suggest that in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, employee value allegiance can be influenced by employee perceptions of fairness of internal HR tools and processes such as performance evaluation and, more specifically, the process and outcome of the appraisal process. In Bank Alpha, employees used terms like “*your boss is [always] your boss*” and “*manage the manager*” during the appraisal process suggesting that **managerial subjection**, and not merit, determined the appraisal outcome. In essence, loyalty to superiors drove the performance evaluation process. One imperative that influenced this state of affairs was the employees’ fear of job loss. The findings from the vignettes responses



in Bank Beta also reveal how employees resorted to soliciting and trying to appeal to managerial ethnocultural whims during the appraisal period, revealing the **sycophantism** of the process here. The need for career progression was a motivation in these circumstances.

In both banks, the structure, process and outcome of the appraisal process was so subjective that the necessity of the activity needs to be questioned. Also, in both banks, the appraisal process was decentralised, giving managers power and a free hand to grade employees as they deemed fit allowing ethnic loyalty, or loyalty to the manager, to be paramount rather than commitment to organisational values. Interestingly, the findings from the interviews revealed that in Bank Beta, employees did not view HR activities in the same positive way as the recruitment process through which they became members of the organisation. Here, employees stated that the process was based on skills and experience and not ethnic group affiliation. In essence, because the recruitment process was centralised in Bank Beta (processed from the banks head office), the ethnocultural value element was downplayed. The themes of **managerial subjection, sycophantism** (vignettes) and **perceptions of performance evaluation, appraisals and recruitment practices** (interviews) form the main theme, which is **The HR Role - When Human Resource Management practices, processes and procedures support or constrain organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty.**

Following the above, the findings from the interviews in Bank Alpha show that employee perception of the preponderance of a particular ethnic group was fundamental because employees sought reassurance of fairness and, in the absence of this, drifted towards those departments and units which had a manager from their ethnic group. Employees also seemed more confident about their career progression when a manager was an ethnic affiliate. Thus, a resounding theme, specific to Bank Alpha, was *organisational outlook, or the perception that organisational leadership, employee numbers and relationships evidence the dominance of at least one ethnic group or ethnocultural value system.* In Bank Beta, feelings of inequality, discrimination and bias, or the **“us” versus “them”** disposition, among

employees was sustained when organisational practices showed the absence of diversity management policies or when there was a lack of employee awareness regarding this. Thus, *organisational outlook*, along with the “*us*” versus “*them*” *consciousness*, forms the theme ***Diversity Management*** – or **considerations around managing the preponderance of a particular ethnic group in the organisation.**

### **6.11. The Banker: Researcher Reflections on Past Identity**

I have included a detailed reflexive account of my data collection experience in Nigeria in **Appendix 7**. However, before rounding off this chapter, I would like to emphasise some reflections regarding how my identity as a former banker was instrumental in this research.

I admit that I had gone into the field with certain preconceived notions based on my personal experience as a banker. I had worked for over ten years in the Nigerian banking industry and had risen through the ranks from a recruit to a manager. I, therefore, approached my subjects with a preconceived notion of the banking industry, and assumed shared meanings, understandings, and even views, regarding managerial relationships and power within organisations (**see Appendix 7**). In essence, being a former banker provided the basis against which to proceed with the research – it was this background that spurred my initial interest in the research topic, as it helped build a foreknowledge of the banking industry, aided purposive sampling of participants, based on certain predefined criteria, helped insight into industry regulations and organisational practices, provided an initial context for interview design, and gave me the confidence to approach former colleagues. After all, I was one of them and always will be – or so I thought.

Once I got into the field, however, I realised that I needed to separate myself from the knowledge attached to my identity as a banker, even if I could not separate myself from the experience itself. However, my reliance on my experience became suddenly misrepresentative, frequently misconceived and embarrassingly narrow. I had to relearn what I thought I knew about the industry, policies, practices and values by becoming an outsider. I had to drop those pre-determined labels and meanings, which I had designed in the United Kingdom, before moving on to studying the Nigerian

context and focusing on how employees developed these meanings, why they did so, and the implications. I discovered that presenting myself as a banker became a constraint instead of a facilitating factor for data collection: once employees learned that I used to be a banker, they sought to be professionally correct (**I discuss these issues in detail in section 5.5.1**). They ended up playacting, or became bottled up, uncomfortable, and eager to end each discussion. My identity as a banker, including everything that meant - predispositions, privileges, assumptions and ideas - became negative.

It was there and then that I dropped that identity, firstly, by exploring everything I thought I knew about banking all over again. I realised that I was frequently wrong regarding past assumptions. The point here is that when researchers approach participants with preconceived, predefined and prefixed labels and meanings and have a conversation with them, then confine responses within those predetermined meanings, thereby arriving at *themes* eventually, it is most likely that researchers will end up reporting *their meaning* instead of the participants' meanings. By stepping back and allowing the participants to present their meanings of ethnicity, relationships, status, power, affiliation, interaction, career, job roles, values, experiences, practices, and their stories, I was also subjecting my own meanings and predispositions to further exploration. Thus, by positioning and situating myself in the meanings advanced by my participants, this study is not anchored on my meanings and so my background as a banker became a virtue, not a vice.

In the next chapter, I undertake a discussion and theoretical grounding of the core themes from the findings: ***value hybridity, debriefing, identifiers, the HR role, and diversity management.***

## Chapter Seven

### 7. Discussion

#### 7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present an analysis of the findings from the cross-case in the context of the existing research related to cultural, organisational, and diversity management studies. This chapter is broadly divided into two sections each of which will address the respective sub-research questions. Specifically, I explore the extant theories and perspectives from the literature to the findings of this study. I start by presenting the Nigerian social and organisational contexts through an analysis of how ethnic identity and values are shaped among ethnic affiliates in Nigerian organisations.

#### 7.2. Ethnic Identity and Values in Nigeria

The suggestion that individuals who do not belong to a/the dominant ethnic group can still focus their attention on the distinct features (e.g. core values) of their collective to fulfil their need to feel exclusive, has been offered by Pickett *et al.* (2002). This general perception of ethnic groups, and the behaviour and practices that inform it, in Nigeria has been explained by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978). Based on this theory, individuals attempt to amplify the differences between their groups and rival collectives. Relatedly, Hornsey and Jetten (2004) argue that such magnification of differences is largely intended to ensure that individuals feel distinct. Individuals who experience a powerful need to feel distinct tend to perceive themselves as similar to the *stereotypes* or values of their group (Pickett *et al.*, 2002). The idea by some scholars is that in Nigeria, individuals as members of different ethnic groups, will perceive everyone in their group as similar in order to differentiate themselves from other groups and thus feel distinct (Kampmeier and Simon, 2001). Indeed, even the perceived size of a group can be biased in order to fulfil the need to feel distinct (Pickett *et al.*, 2002).

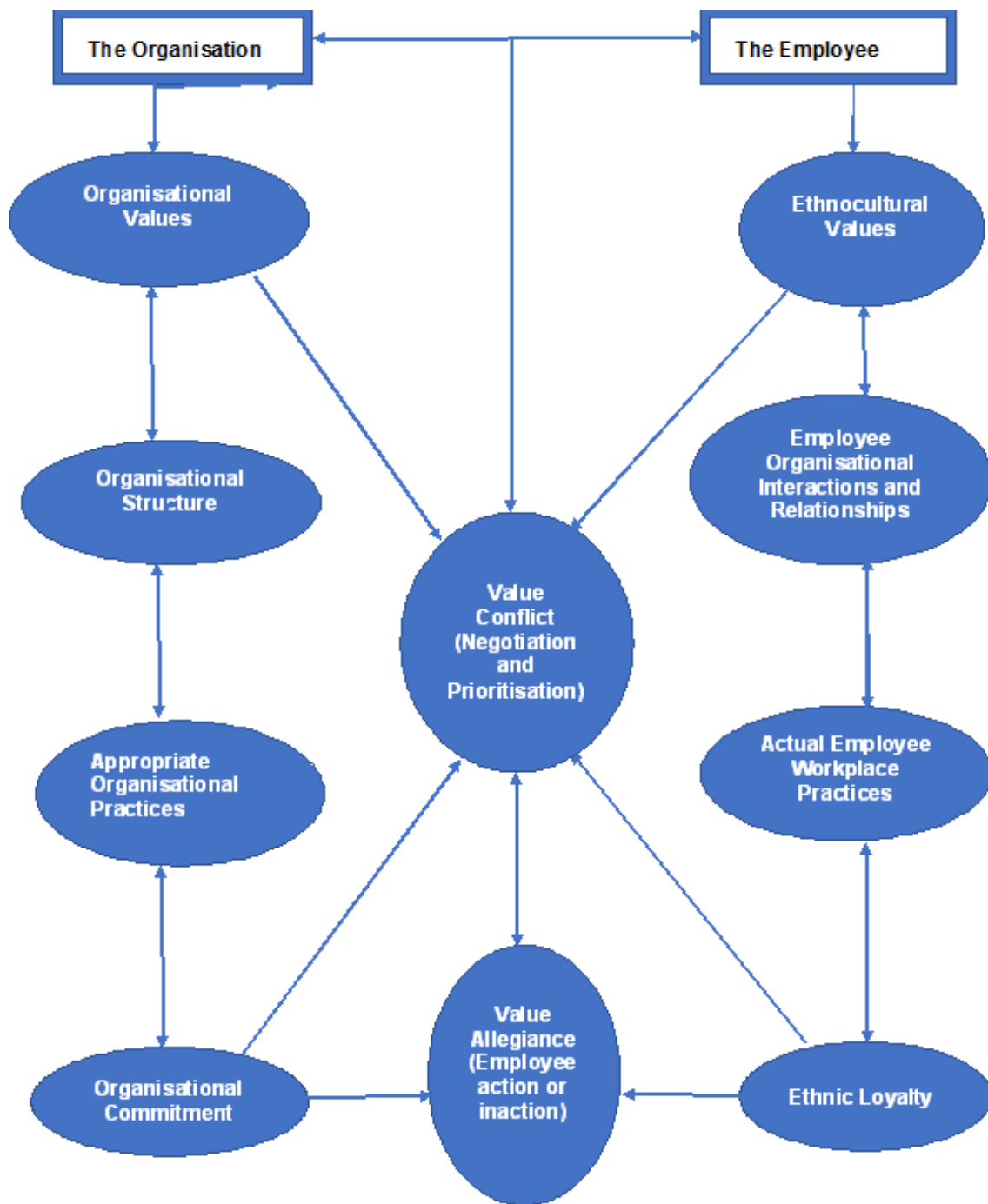
Common core ethnocultural values typical of the daily practices of average Nigerians (Otite, 1979) may indeed evidence that Nigerians have more features that make them similar (which groups sometimes de-emphasise) than features that make them different (which members of groups typically highlight). Freud (1917, p. 17) calls this predisposition by groups to accentuate inconsequential dissimilarities, “*the narcissism*

*of minor differences*". Specifically, in multiethnic Nigeria, individuals primarily craft their social identity based on ethnocultural values of their groups, which are frequently core values shared with non-affiliates. Reid and Hogg (2005), however, suggest that the social identities of individuals are not static, but evolve progressively over time. In particular, individuals implicitly construct a multitude of social categories.

Thus, for the Nigerian employee, each social category (such as women/man, manager, liberal/conservative) will be indicative of an individual's identification with common beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and values of affiliates and even non-affiliates. In larger society and within the workplace, employees may construct these social categories and characterise the underlying values not to differentiate affiliates in the main, but to know which values to follow in spite of affiliation. This background provides the context against which I now discuss the findings in this study according to the sub-research questions.

### **7.3. SRQ1: How do ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance?**

The first sub-research question seeks to address how employee value allegiance (organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty) is shaped by ethnic values and practices within organisations which espouse egalitarian values (**see Figure 5**). This research focus presupposes the existence of multiple competing/conflicting values which employees are obligated to choose from (prioritise) based on pressures instilled by short-term or long-term needs satisfaction (Schwartz, 1994, 2010). The findings reveal that employees are faced with value choices every day in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta.



**Figure 6: The interplay of organisational and ethnocultural values**

These values include organisational values (policies, practices, procedures, expectations and precedents (Bourne and Jenkins, 2013), which evidence autonomy and egalitarianism (or values which evoke informality, respect, equality, and independence (Schwartz, 2010). In Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, these stated values, which underpin required practices, such as first name address, conflict with

ethnocultural values of *tradition, hierarchy, and power* (Schwartz, 2010). These ethnic values are shown through practices that are indicative of respect for status such as calling seniors or persons of affluence, positional authority and influence by titles and prefixes.

The findings reveal that in Bank Alpha (where employees were proudly vocal about their bank's egalitarian values) and in Bank Beta (where employees appeared less so), employees signified guardedness in the use of first names especially for colleagues who were one or two levels removed, including managers, although all participants recognised that this (first name address) was an organisational value requirement by management. One recurring reason for this was the feeling of disrespect based on perceptions of status differences among colleagues or perceived social distance between those with positional authority such as managers and subordinates. This is an indication that, rather than egalitarian values, employees were driven by ethnocultural values and in this case, *power and hierarchy values* (Schwartz, 2010), and employee value allegiance evidenced ethnic loyalty, not organisational commitment.

The evidence shows that in Bank Alpha, employee perception that management retribution for such policy infraction was non-existent aided employee value prioritisation in favour of ethnic loyalty. This suggests that employees indulged in value deviation due to perceptions that there was no punishment for non-conformity and indeed no reward by the organisation for obeying. Interestingly, threats of sanctions for an infraction by management did not seem to produce compliance in employees. For instance, all participants in Bank Beta spoke of management expectations with regards first name address through the organisational story that the bank's Managing Director (MD) had fired an employee for using the prefix "Sir", rather than his first name while addressing the MD. However, findings reveal that in spite of this arguably extreme example of what management expects and the possible punishment for non-adherence, employees were still hesitant to address managers and senior colleagues by their first name due to ethnocultural requirements, expectations and pressures. Rather, employees attempted to resolve the value conflict through a process which, incidentally, had implications for shaping employee value allegiance in the workplace. This process is *value hybridity*.

### 7.3.1. Value Hybridity

My findings reveal the construct of *value hybridity*, which refers to a combination of multiple value systems (e.g. personal, ethnic, or organisational values) by employees to aid *negotiation* and *prioritisation* among conflicting values (Schwartz, 1991, 2011). Analysis of Bank Alpha and Bank Beta confirms the assertion of Schwartz (2010) that the relative importance, which individuals (in this case employees) attached to multiple values guided their *action*. However, while Schwartz's (1994, 2010) assertion is limited to employee *action* and those values that underpin it, findings in this study also evidence that multiple values can also elicit *inaction* (for instance, when employees use neither first names, prefixes or synonyms). Thus, *inaction*, which is missing from Schwartz's idea of behaviour produced through value negotiation, has been co-opted in this study with *action* to denote *employee practices*.

Concerning employee practices such as avoiding first name address, findings in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta evidence *verbal actions*, such as the use of prefixes (sir, *oga*, boss) and acronyms (BM-Branch Manager or HOP-Head of Operations). The findings also reveal the use of *non-verbal actions*, or what Morand (2005) calls language behaviour, to signal the power relationship or dominance between managers and subordinates. Findings also evidence *inaction* through *silence*, also called *name avoidance* (Brown and Levinson, 1987) or *the black hole* (Morand, 2005), when employees refuse to call any name or prefix to avoid being perceived as deviating from either organisational or ethnocultural value requirements.

The findings, therefore, show that *value hybridity* is the outcome of employees' efforts at reconciling organisational and ethnocultural values – a quest for value compromise. This overriding influence of values happens because cultures act like a press (Schwartz, 2011), this *cultural press* refers to those ***situations of conflict*** that draw attention to the underlying cultural values at play through language patterns (Kashima and Kashima, 1998), language behaviours (Morand, 2005), social expectations, or taken-for-granted practices (Schwartz, 2011). While *value hybridity* was evident in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the process through which it happened differed, even



if the outcomes were similar. In Bank Alpha, findings reveal that employees internalised organisational values to the degree they were perceived as relatively consistent with their ethnocultural values.

For instance, employees were of the view that there was a similarity between one of the value statements of the Bank “**respect for the individual**” and an ethnocultural value requirement - **respect** for status or age. By viewing what they perceived was *common ground* between two otherwise conflicting value systems, employees adopted practices underpinned by ethnic loyalty. For instance, in outright disregard for organisational values of equality, communicated through first-name address, employees specifically of Yoruba extraction expressed themselves to superiors in ways signifying blood relationship by phrases such as “**brother**”, “**sister**”, “**uncle**”.

Indeed, as Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) point out, expressions among the Yoruba signifying blood relations for unrelated others in communication is the height of *respect* among members of this group. Ibo employees in Bank Alpha, however, did not show *respect* like their Yoruba colleagues. While they were unlikely to use terms of address signifying blood relationships in addressing senior colleagues, they still avoided first name address and rather engaged in using acronyms, prefixes, or name avoidance to show *respect*. Thus, the findings reveal that in Bank Alpha, shared employee practices or “homogenised behaviour” (Meyer *et al.*, 2009, p. 1078) subsisted, irrespective of employee ethnic extraction, and influenced employee value allegiance and ethnic loyalty. However, in contrast to some scholarly views which suggest that employee practices are an outcome of the dilemma of choosing between *conflicting* and *competing* values (Schwartz, 2011; Bourne and Jenkins, 2013), the findings from Bank Alpha reveal that *value hybridity* can also be a product of more implicit *perceptions of congruence rather than conflict*. This finding represents a departure from Schwartz’s (2011) argument and shows that, in Bank Alpha, employee practices underpinned by *value hybridity* were a product of *value congruence* in some cases and *value conflict* in others. In this case, perceptions of value congruence shaped employee value allegiance indicative of ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment.

The findings also reveal that when employees perceived ethnocultural values as more beneficial than organisational values (and vice versa), employees switched values through *value hybridity* and *value replacement* or *value reinterpretation*. Again, in Bank Alpha, this process played out among employees irrespective of ethnic affiliation. This is evidence that perceptions of *sharedness* influence employee value allegiance, which is consistent with the view that, within the organisation, when an action is consistently reinforced (when individuals perceive others as doing and benefitting from doing the same thing regularly over time) others will follow (Tett and Guterman, 2000). This argument is underpinned by the trait-activation theory (Tett and Burnett, 2003). This theory posits that strong situations are likely to restrict or even override the effects of individual differences because they define appropriate behaviour and provide great external rewards for enacting these behaviours. As a consequence, strong situations or, in this case, the *cultural press* (Schwartz, 2011), tend to evoke homogenous responses from most individuals in the situation, irrespective of individuals' value priorities.

The findings show that *value replacement* evidenced homogenised behaviour indicative of a common and shared approach to value conflict or value congruence by employees irrespective of ethnic group affiliation or personal differences. Specifically, *value replacement*, in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, was manifested in the employees' response to strains between ethnocultural values and equality values. Findings reveal that employees indicated experiencing significant dependency on their managers in both Bank Alpha and in Bank Beta as well as uncertainty in their relationship with other superiors. For instance, the replacement of the first names of managers and senior colleagues with prefixes and acronyms is also indicative of *value replacement*. Turner *et al.* (1987) attempted to explain this state of affairs using the principle of functional antagonism or the idea that when the salience (prominence) of one identity or the values that underpin it increases, the salience of other identities/values will tend to subside. Findings reveal that in Bank Alpha, employees who were comfortable with first name address used it inconsistently depending on the value orientation of the manager or senior manager. In essence, based on the principle of functional antagonism, when organisational values amplified employees' sense of self or personal identity, employees become less aware of the values of their ethnic

groups. Thus, the principle of functional antagonism seems to evoke *value replacement* in Bank Alpha.

However, in Bank Beta, the findings reveal that *value hybridity* was reinforced through *value discretion* - **when employees perceive values as guided by freedom of choice**. Here, Schwartz's (2009, 2011) idea that a conflict of values exists and that individual behaviour is an outcome of value prioritisation, seems to ignore the idea of *fused identities* and the implication this may have for how employees negotiate their values or indeed employee value allegiance. Pickett *et al.* (2002) Simon (2004) and Turner *et al.* (2006) evidenced that employees may feel that their identities and the attending values - personal, organisational, or social - overlap almost entirely. Findings reveal that *value discretion* played out when employees in Bank Alpha received feedback about themselves (from colleagues, including managers) which seemed to deviate from their expectations. For instance, employees viewed adhering to organisational value requirements like first-name address as optional and contingent on the value orientation of the addressee.

In essence, consistent with the view of Pickett *et al.* (2002) Simon (2004) and Turner *et al.* (2006), but in contrast with the principle of functional antagonism as evidenced in Bank Alpha, when the required organisational values were activated, the ethnocultural values seemed amplified rather than inhibited in Bank Beta. This state of affairs then evoked the discretion to choose between using the first name (showing organisational commitment) or prefixes and synonyms (showing ethnic loyalty). Participants, for instance, talked about how important it was to address colleagues by their first name (after all, someone was fired for failing to do so) but in the same breath, they also spoke of how some managers still found it disrespectful, hence the need to employ freedom of choice. Findings also reveal that, in some instances, employees seemed to have internalised some aspects of their social and organisational identities, and their underlying values, in such a way that both were *attached*. Indeed, when the organisational identity of employees was salient (such as when the situation required them to call colleagues by their first name), their ethnocultural values, which define

their social identity, became even more prominent as well (causing them to use prefixes and synonyms). Thus, in some cases, organisational values may also act as cues that activate the organisational identity of individuals, which might enable their social identity as well.

This finding is supported in studies by Turner *et al.* (1987) who suggest that when individuals identify closely with more than one group (organisational and ethnic), they experience a process called *depersonalisation* and move in a back-and-forth way across the value requirements of either group. The effect of this state of affairs in Bank Beta is that employees saw themselves as part of the organisation and part of their ethnic groups simultaneously. *Value discretion* shows that the values that underpinned membership of both the organisation and the ethnic group were shared and interchangeable on some level in the workplace. Further, employees in Bank Beta did not merely comply with the values and expectations of their organisations or ethnic groups. Compliance was linked to a need to belong and to feel distinctive at the same time (Hornsey and Jetten, 2004). Hence, an employee's value allegiance, indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment, is demonstrated through engagement in practices which seemed to promote those values that helped feelings of connectedness and uniqueness simultaneously.

### 7.3.2. Identifiers

The findings in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta reveal ***certain markers of ethnic culture which facilitate employee interaction based on ethnic affiliation***, or identifiers. Identifiers included dialect/vernacular as well as gaze and voice tone. The vernacular, for instance, influenced modes of interaction between employees in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, who all seemed to indulge in the discernment of the dialect of colleagues to ascertain ethnic affiliation and to establish relationships. Interestingly, findings also suggest that in Bank Alpha, specifically, the vernacular was more important to employees than appearance. Therefore, in the workplace, and consistent with the theory of Rakic *et al.*, (2011), employees were more likely to accept individuals with

the same dialect but distinct appearances, than with different dialects but similar appearances.

This suggests that employees will use *identity markers* such as language, culture, colour, religion, kinship, association, and mode of living as a consideration to reinforce their social identity and values (Phukon, 2002). As Anthias (2002) suggests, these identity markers may function *contextually* (within the organisation) *and situationally* (depending on the situation). Evidence reveals that employees in Bank Alpha, used *identifiers* such as the vernacular not just to make distinctions between groups and group members, but also for tangible benefits and as a matter of “becoming”, as well as of “being” and “belonging” (Hall, 1994, p. 394) to their ethnic groups.

Findings evidence two types of *identifiers* – *language* and *body language*.

- **Language**

In both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, participants pointed out one out of many of their bank's organisational practices - the use of only the English language for communication, underpinned by *equality* and *formality* values. Interestingly, the evidence reveals that employees viewed the use of a common language (English) as mainly coordinative to facilitate communication among otherwise linguistically diverse groups. However, the logic that a common language could also deemphasise ethnic dominance or mitigate ethnocultural differences seemed lost here because employees sought the opportunity to speak their dialects, particularly when they identified members of their ethnic groups. In this thesis, *Language refers to **when employees use vernacular, not the English language, for communication.*** Evidence reveals that in Bank Alpha, vernacular was the dominant mode of expression between and among employees (subordinates and superiors) of the same ethnic affiliation as well as *non-affiliated speakers*.

Here, the definition of what constitutes ethnic group affiliation was significantly altered. *Biological roots*, as suggested by Rakov (1990), paled in significance compared to *language*. In essence, ethnic identity in Bank Alpha was more about the ability to speak the ethnic vernacular than it was about ethnic origin. This had implications for

organisational interaction and relationships, mingling, and bonding among employees. While the English language was underpinned by the notion that ethnic group membership was by biological roots, members used the dialect to create distinctions and build bridges between employees of different ethnic extraction simultaneously. As one female Ibo participant remarked “...**as a matter of fact, my best friend here [in the Bank] is a Yoruba guy**”.

This submission questions Schwartz’s (1992) and Schwartz and Bardi’s (2001) reference to *symbols* as recognised only by individuals who **share the** culture (implying membership by biological roots). However, these findings find some agreement with Otite (1975; 1979) and Mustapha (2006), who argue that over and above biological self-perpetuation, a continuous process of absorption/assimilation, as well as metamorphosis/renaissance, characterise Nigeria’s ethnic groups. Further, the evidence reveals that in Bank Alpha, the process of this mode of ethnic identity was incumbent on the social identity of the manager and the prominence of the values that underpinned that manager’s identity. As Olugbile (1997) and Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) argued, in the Nigerian workplace, the ethnic tongue of the manager tends to become the lingua franca in a unit/department /branch. Specifically, the evidence reveals that employees in Bank Alpha mostly communicate in their ethnic tongue because they regard this as a necessity for showing respect. As one respondent from Bank Alpha commented, “... *respect is unconscious and ingrained in the wordings and gestures [of bank employees]*”. Therefore, in Bank Alpha, speaking the vernacular was a vehicle for transmitting ethnic values and identity.

In Bank Beta, however, the findings reveal that employees spoke the vernacular because “...**that’s when they don’t want you to understand what they are saying**”. Thus, language here was a distinguishing code that defined a unique identity and the values that underpinned it, understood only by members of the same group as well as non-affiliated speakers. Language here was used by employees for privacy, secrecy, and to ostracise non-affiliates. In Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, therefore, the evidence reveals that language, as an *identifier*, defined the ethnic identity and values of employees and reinforced employee value allegiance and ethnic loyalty, not organisational commitment. Thus, the way in which employees used *identifiers*, in this

case *language*, to specifically highlight ethnic loyalty rather than organisational commitment is also evidenced in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta.

In Bank Beta, specifically, employees used the vernacular to mobilise affiliates towards a common goal and also to convey and communicate power in employee relationships based on the perceived role of status and positional authority in the manager-subordinate relationship. However, the way in which this played out in both banks differed. In Bank Beta, language served as a rallying call for ethnic group members or affiliates to identify with a common goal. Therefore, embedded in the employee's ethnic tongue is the power to command, to mobilise and to muscle, as one of the employees in Bank Beta opined:

*“...those people that do speak your language, that’s the caucus. So, for me, language is just how you attract people to yourself”.*

The idea that individuals used the vernacular in “***the caucus***” for attracting people to “oneself”, reveals the power element in language and how it is a vehicle for grouping or association based on common or shared identity/values. Here, there is no *chosen* leader. Whoever possessed the language at that time and wished to *make the call* could. In essence, language evoked and sustained *conservation and conformity values* rather than organisational values indicative of *openness to change* or *self-direction* (Schwartz, 2010). In Bank Alpha, however, the findings evidence that employees use the vernacular because they perceive it as an avenue for promoting ethnic values of power and hierarchy (Schwartz, 1994) and, as one manager put it, passing on a “*particularly strong message*” (typically from manager to subordinate). Thus, unlike Bank Beta, where, among employees, language bestowed *fluid* or transient leadership on the speaker, language in Bank Alpha reinforced leadership of positional authority, and was used as a vehicle to convey the power of the manager over the subordinate.

Indeed, in Bank Alpha, evidence reveals that the perception among employees, including managers, was that the English language seemed to *water down* the power element in speech. In essence, the English language, while approved by the bank,

had become unreliable for effective communication because it lacked what one employee termed “**seriousness**”. Remarkably, the idea of using the English language for *serious communication* by employees revealed further how *communication*, or *serious communication* for that matter, was characterised in the two banks. In Bank Beta, *communication* was viewed as a unidirectional affair, but one that had the potential of changing into a two-way back-and-forth affair, a *discussion* (between manager and subordinate), depending on the value orientation of the manager.

This would imply (at least in principle) the tentative, transient, and contingent nature of value allegiance in Bank Beta. In Bank Alpha, employees spoke of communication as characteristically unidirectional, or an *instruction* (from manager to a subordinate), suggesting *power*, *hierarchy* and *conformity* values (Schwartz, 1994). As an *instruction*, language here served as the medium through which the authority and the power of the incumbent manager were reasserted. One manager of Yoruba extraction spoke of how the Yoruba phrase “**moni komajo kosibe**” would better communicate power, authority and *seriousness* than the English interpretation “*I said you should sit down there*”. According to this manager, subordinates will remain passive, disrespectful and disobedient if the vernacular was not infused into everyday workplace expressions. Except when addressed in the vernacular, employees were most likely not to take you seriously. Thus, the vernacular, as a vehicle of identity and power values, subsisted in Bank Alpha because employees perceived organisational policy statements as lacking enforcement and, probably, signifying management consent for non-conformity. Language, as an indicator of employee value allegiance, seemed an adaptive response (Kamoche, 2013) to ethnocultural value demands sustained by perceived management indifference.

In Bank Beta, however, sanctions for deviance were institutionalised in organisational stories. For instance, employees spoke of one or two of their colleagues (a manager and his report) in one of the bank’s branches, who were spotted by a mystery shopper speaking the *Ibo* dialect during banking hours. Both employees were fired after the formal report was submitted to management, signifying the institutionalisation of management disapproval, which became reinforced through organisational stories.



Curiously, while the process and dynamics of how language reinforced employee value allegiance in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta differed, the outcome was similar. That is, *Language* evoked power, hierarchy, tradition, and conformity values rather than equality, formality and self-transcendence values (Schwartz, 2010) in both banks, which suggests the interplay of ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment.

- **Body Language**

The findings reveal that employees also used the *identifier* (body language) for communication and interaction in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. *Body language is the use of non-verbal cues for communication* and includes voice tone, gestures and gesticulations or what has also been called *language behaviour* (Morand, 2005). However, Strongman (2003) refers to *body language* as prompts which signal dominance and deference (power) among individuals. These prompts which broadly include gestural, facial and intonation prompts include gaze, voice tone, pauses, body posture, and even spatial proximity (the acceptable space between a subordinate and a superior in the course of workplace interaction). Findings show that the use of *body language* was manifest in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta although there was some indication that ethnic affiliation/identity, and the consequent underlying values, were fundamental to the type of employee body language during communication and interaction in the workplace.

Findings from Bank Alpha and Bank Beta evidence the general perception that Yoruba employees were more likely to be submissive to senior colleagues and Ibo employees more likely to be independent-minded. This may suggest that the aggregation of Nigerian values in studies on Nigerian culture dimensions, such as those by Hofstede (1980) and House *et al.* (2004), may need re-evaluation. In these studies, for instance, Nigerian society and, in essence, all the ethnic groups that constitute it, is classified as collectivist. However, as evidenced in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the Ibos have tended to be individualistic or collectivist in orientation depending on the power structure of their community both pre- and post-colonially (Mustapha, 2006). Some parts of the Ibo land was (and still is) governed by a form of gerontocracy and produced more independent/autonomous-minded individuals. Others like Onitsha were (and still are) ruled by a centralised power structure or monarchy similar to the Yoruba ethnic

groups in South-Western Nigeria and the Hausa-Fulani in Northern Nigeria (see Otite, 1975, 1999).

In this case, perhaps more applicable is Schwartz's (1994) argument that values can be analysed at a societal level (where some aggregation may take place) as well as an individual level where value differences between people (even from the same ethnic affiliation/society) may subsist. Thus, consistent with the principle of functional antagonism (the idea that the increased prominence of one identity/value decreases the prominence of other identities/values (Turner *et al.*, 1987), even individual Ibo employees, like their Yoruba counterparts, may have other values (e.g. personal or organisational), which may override their ethnic values at certain times. Furthermore, Ibo and Yoruba identities and the values that underpin these identities may even overlap (Simon, 2004; Turner *et al.*, 2006). As Anthias (2002) argues, *language behaviour* (language or body language) may function *contextually* and *situationally* consistent with evidence from Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. In the two banks, employees, irrespective of ethnic group, adopt workplace expressions emphasised through *body language*, which although varied still evoked ethnocultural values. For instance, while *body language* manifested in different forms and employees seemed more or less expressive, the underlying reason for adoption (*respect*) was the same across employees irrespective of ethnic affiliation in both banks.

In essence, the way in which *language* and *body language* were expressed in Bank Alpha, and Bank Beta differed in one regard – the degree of *covertness*. Still, the degree of *covertness* did not reveal any difference in the purpose *Identifiers* served in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. For instance, *body language* served as a *mitigant* in the two banks. Findings evidence that *body language* still emphasised the power element, which reinforced dominance and status in organisational interaction. For instance, employees spoke of the “*tone with which you address...the manager with respect on a first name basis*”. Remarkably, evidence suggests that in situations where an employee cannot but call the manager by his first name (for instance in meetings where members of executive management were in attendance), the subordinate was obligated to mitigate the seriousness of this ethnocultural value infraction through “*an alternative way*” (*body language*) and in this case *tone of voice*. As two employees conclude:

*“So, conform to the banks standard but still find an alternative way to show respect.” and “even if you do call the person’s name [manager], there is still some sign of courtesy that you display”.*

However, while body language seemed not as strongly adopted in Bank Beta, compared to Bank Alpha, it still played out in employee interaction. Identifiers also acted as a *qualifier* in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. Employees spoke of more expressive modes of body language such as a *slight bow* (or a subtler kind of prostration) which managers prefer otherwise “*they will not even listen to you*” because “*Such curtseys determine how fast you get a response*”. Therefore, findings reveal that *body language* also determined if/how managers responded to official requests from subordinates. In defence of this disposition by managers, one employee explains:

*“I for one will not respond to you without those courtesies. When you say it **in a particular way**, I am willing to do anything.”*

Body language here qualifies employee official requests in the eyes of the manager and represents an *ethnocultural precedent* handed from manager to subordinate in a progressive and enduring fashion. This is suggestive of *tradition* and *conformity* values (Schwartz, 2013) despite claims of egalitarianism by the management of both banks. This evidence of the concreteness of *identifiers* as symbols indeed is a disconfirmation of the extent of prominence of much of the literature as pertains to the structure of values, and specifically, cultural values. For instance, regarding national cultural values, Hofstede (1980) describes *symbols* as the *outermost layer of culture* (not the core), while Schwartz (1992) and Schwartz and Bardi (2001) indicate that symbols represent the *outer* and *most superficial* layer of values. However, findings evidence that in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, symbols such as *language and body language* reveal the philosophical and anthropological perspectives of values, which evidences that *embeddedness* and *hierarchy* value dimensions are deep, significant and comprehensive; an indication that symbols are not fleeting or superficial but tangible in Nigerian social and organisational contexts. As Ovadje and Ankomah (2013) argue, symbols and symbolism are embedded in Nigeria’s socio-cultural value systems, and

are replicated in employee organisational behaviour as evidenced in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. In essence, with regards to employee value allegiance, *identifiers* served as reinforcers of ethnic values and evoked ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment.

#### **7.4. SRQ2: Do organisational values/practices evoke ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in the Nigerian workplace?**

In this section, I address sub-research question two by continuing the discussions from the preceding section, which focused on exploring how ethnic values and practices shape employee value allegiance, and in essence, determine if employees adopt values indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment (**see Figure 5**). More specifically, I focus on how egalitarian organisational values and practices shape employee value allegiance. I also explore how organisations may consciously or inadvertently use (or fail to use) organisational structures, policies, procedures, and processes to limit, moderate, or extinguish the impact of ethnic values on employee organisational practices and some implications for broader discussions in diversity management in Nigeria.

##### **7.4.1. Debriefing**

In Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the findings reveal that there are ***organisational activities which replace employee ethnocultural values with organisational values and vice versa***. I call this ***debriefing***. *Debriefing* can be explained using the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This is the idea that that social behaviour and the values that underpin it is the result of an exchange process, in this case between employees (as ethnic group members and members of the organisation) and the organisation (Watkins, 2013). The purpose of *debriefing* as an exchange is to maximise benefits and minimise costs because, based on this theory, people or parties will evaluate the possible benefits and risks of social relationships. In this case, this evaluation will determine the consequent organisational practices which may be indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment. When the cost of employee practices outweighs the rewards for either party, they will either abandon or reinforce that relationship.

*Debriefing* occurred in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta in significantly different ways but, again, had considerably similar outcomes – **both were more likely to produce ethnic loyalty** although there were some indications that some organisational processes in Bank Beta reinforced the positive perception of organisational values on the part of employees. This, however, did not translate into practices indicative of organisational commitment in the final analysis. *Debriefing* happened through the HR Role or **when HR practices, processes and procedures support or constrain organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty** through recruitment, appraisals, and organisational structure. However, some studies suggest that the success of the HR role is dependent on several factors, which include employee trust or a “psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998, p. 395). Indeed, the mediating role of trust in management is implicit in the social exchange theory, which suggests that trust develops out of a social exchange process between trustor and trustee (Mayer *et al.*, 1995). Employees develop trust in their organisations in response to their perceptions of the actions management. As a consequence, employees tend to show deference to the symbol of the systemic level of authority.

Loyalty within organisations has been connected to trust because certain management actions play a pivotal role in initiating employee trust, which is indicated in several employer trust-building behaviours, including discreetness, integrity, fairness, loyalty, and openness (Butler, 1991). Further, the argument that the level of trust depends on the trustor’s assessment of qualities such as the trustee’s benevolence (Mayer *et al.*, 1995), i.e. perceptions that a trustee is friendly, caring, and respectful (Schwartz, 1994) has also been pointed out. Additionally, trustworthy behaviour has been characterised by consistency, integrity, the sharing and delegation of control, communication, and the demonstration of concern (Whitener *et al.* 1998). This suggests that certain organisational structures, policies, and cultures (including a decentralised, less formal, less hierarchical organisational structure, as well as a culture of inclusiveness and of valuing people) are elements conducive to trust

building. Therefore, organisations' moderation of symbols of hierarchical differentiation (status) comprises a logical antecedent to the development of trust.

Moreover, the notion that HR activities affect the development of employee trust is reflected in the high-involvement literature. Employees interpret the nature and implementation of HR practices as demonstrating the organisation's support and respect for them and reciprocate such perceptions with trust in management (Whitener, 1997). Studies show that trust builds in response to specific HR practices (e.g. performance appraisal – Folger *et al.*, 1992; Mayer and Davis, 1999) and leadership actions (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990; Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Jung and Avolio, 2000). Perhaps the most critical factor that influences HRM roles and practices in Nigeria is culture (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013). Hofstede (1980) emphasised the need for historical and cultural insights into local conditions in order to understand the processes and philosophies of HRM in different countries. HRM cannot be divorced from the values, beliefs and norms of a people. As with other HRM functions, when discussing recruitment and selection practices of Nigerian organisations, a distinction must be made between practices in small and medium-sized firms on the one hand, and the large organisations, including private-sector organisations, on the other. While there is a general understanding in the literature that in Africa small firms rely on friends and relatives (of the owners and the employers) and unsolicited applications to fill vacancies, there is some evidence that this practice also occurs in both the public and private sectors (Adegboye, 2013), and although no empirical work yet attests to the rate of occurrence in either, there is some evidence that HR processes are not always culturally value free (Kamoche, 2013).

Another HRM practice that can be easily influenced by culture in Nigeria is performance management. It is difficult for Nigerian managers to accept the Anglo-Saxon concept of performance management, which emphasises setting specific goals and objectives or giving face-to-face feedback, and newer practices such as peer and subordinate evaluations (Cornelius, 2002). These practices are at variance with some traditional values. In the Yoruba culture, for example, one cannot be critical of a person in his or her presence (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013). Consequently, giving negative

or critical feedback, or any face-to-face appraisal, is difficult for many managers, because it may be considered an attempt to ruin a subordinate's career. Thus, there is little distinction between good and poor performance in Nigerian organisations, and appraisal information may be unreliable because of cultural influences on the process. Against this background, I now discuss the role of HR in enforcing or constraining organisational or ethnocultural values through some HR practices - training and appraisals.

- **Organisational Training**

The findings reveal that organisational training, and more specifically training for recruits, has had implications for promoting ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta. *Training* here refers to programmes which the bank uses to impart required and desirable organisational values and practices. However, the findings suggest that employees in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta differed in the way they perceived their bank's recruitment training. In Bank Alpha, employees who went through a process of training as recruits, perceived the bank as representative of the values and practices they had learned while in training. However, findings show that after employees left training school, they developed a negative perception regarding their bank's training programme because, post redeployment, real everyday workplace practices were contrary to the values they had been taught.

Also, some of the facilitators at the training school did not practice what they *preached* in the workplace. For instance, training facilitators, who were mostly managers and senior managers, oversaw branches where the first name address of a manager was a transgression. These managers, against the bank's values, also encouraged speaking the vernacular instead of the English language, as well as demanding subservience by insisting subordinates' recognition of their status. Thus, the "formalism" (Haque, 1997, p. 433) of the training process highlights the disparity between the codes of conduct representing the Western management model, which the bank espouses, and the actual behaviour of employees influenced by societal norms, values, culture, and expectations. In essence, employees in Bank Alpha were *briefed* during the orientation process for recruits and then 'un-briefed or debriefed' of these values at the branch level, because each branch was more a manifestation of

the dominant value orientation of the manager, which was typically ethnically driven and not organisational values oriented.

In Bank Alpha, therefore, participants perceived recruitment training as a mere formality because, while in training school, the values were indicative of organisational commitment, *debriefing* was manifested in follow-up practices at the branch, which evoked ethnic loyalty instead. While the idea that normative standards within Nigerian organisations are inconsistent with the indigenous social norms and cultural values of employees (Fadeyi and Adisa, 2012), the findings suggest that a conflict of values was evident in Bank Alpha because the taught egalitarian organisational values were inconsistent with, and detached from, everyday practices at the branches. Ethnic loyalty here was not a product of value choices, congruence or conflict on the part of the employee, but was rather due to structural inconsistencies on the part of the bank. Therefore, the structure of recruitment training in Bank Alpha induced interpersonal commitment, or more specifically ethnic loyalty, among employees.

In Bank Beta, the findings show that employees positively perceived the bank's orientation programme for recruits, which they saw as rigorous and impactful. Participants recounted stories of how training school bonded otherwise culturally diverse employees and how this influenced future relationships. For instance, the bonds that developed created friendships within the bank that extended beyond the organisation into personal friendships, and facilitators at the banks training school were seen as role models.

Unlike the structure in Bank Alpha, where managers were invited to facilitate sessions and then return to their primary roles and tasks, facilitators at the bank's training school in Bank Beta were trainers by role designation. Also, in Bank Beta, in order to sustain the values and practices imparted during the training programme, a mentoring system was put in place after training. Though recruits were immediately introduced to their managers and reporting lines were clarified, mentors provided guidance which, to some extent, checked the direct influence of managers on subordinates. Mentors were also more senior employees who engaged with recruits as equals, not based on age or status differences. Thus, *hierarchy* values were deemphasised, and *autonomy*



values induced (Schwartz, 1994, 1996). Based on this structure, *debriefing* took place in Bank Beta in the sense that the recruits' personal or cultural values were supposedly watered down and purportedly replaced with desirable and required organisational values and practices. On the face of it, the structure of training in Bank Alpha was more likely to prompt employee commitment to organisational values.

- **Performance Management**

In principle, the structure and outcome of appraisals in egalitarian organisations are based on merit and achievement (Dibie, 2000). In practice, however, many organisations tend to use ascriptive criteria such as ethnic group, language, and status (Adegboye, 2013). The findings reveal that in both Banks Alpha and Beta, the formal espoused criteria of merit coexist with the culturally influenced criteria of ethnicity, favouritism, nepotism, and friendship. Similarly, although formal provisions to determine job performance and compensation existed in principle, the actual practices were guided by perceptions of status and, essentially, by ethnic loyalty. This finding is based on the way in which employees defined appraisals in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, as perceptions of vagueness characterised the appraisal process in both banks. Employees saw it as deficient in objectivity, as well as vague, unfair and unbalanced because it did not accommodate appraisee feedback, only the comments of the appraiser.

Participants also complained that appraisals were structurally defective because there was no way of knowing the requirements against which one was judged or graded. In essence, these structural weaknesses reinforced feelings of vulnerability amongst employees as it increased their dependence on the goodwill and favour of the manager. Employees interpreted the appraisal process as not being related to skills or hard work that evidence commitment but rather managerial approval, and good appraisals were contingent not on merit but on managerial endorsement. This subjective element made employees sycophantic and subservient to managers and thus evoked ethnic loyalty because, as the findings show, ethnocultural values seem to thrive in these situations. In this instance, structural defects in an organisational tool,

policy or practice (appraisals), are seen to evoke value allegiance and specifically, ethnic loyalty.

Further, in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, the findings reveal a desire for employees to remain in a superior's good graces and the consequent benefits. For instance, in both banks, the idea that a more participative climate in the workplace will engender egalitarian culture was lost because when faced with the prospect of challenging their superior's ideas, participants evidenced an overwhelming need for politeness and, overall, a desire to forgo disapproval entirely. This is not unique as some scholarly work does observe that even in developed country contexts, individuals as members of teams who are supposedly equal tend to slip into deference patterns, which gives those with a higher status more prominence, and their opinions more weight. This state of affairs provides them (senior colleagues) with a privileged position in the group (Kanter, 1983).

Thus, the seductiveness of status or hierarchy within organisations may be universal and may have emotional roots. These emotions, which include fear (or *respect*, *reverence*) on the part of the subordinate, and comfort (reassurance) on the part of the manager, make it easier to reproduce organisational practices which sustain employee value allegiance based on ethnocultural values or ethnic loyalty and not organisational commitment. This is because the basis for fear is apparent: offending a powerful figure (such as a manager) in a group can induce retribution sooner or later, in this case through a deficient and defective appraisal. Thus, the structure of organisational processes, procedures and policies can present the platform against which the value orientation of the manager is built or decimated, and the value allegiance of the employee is defined. This influence of the organisational structure is discussed next.

- **Organisational Hierarchy Dimensions**

The findings reveal overarching relationships that the organisation supports and sustains. In Bank Alpha, employees viewed organisational hierarchies, or more

specifically, the status of the manager, from a place of submissiveness. Managers were to be served, never to be challenged. Indeed, disposition has resonance with Schwartz's (1994) embeddedness and hierarchy dimensions evidencing *power*, *tradition* and *conformity* values. The findings show that the perceived social class between manager and subordinate in Bank Alpha was significant in promoting a culture of subservience (Nzelibe, 1986) because the social distance between manager and subordinate was perceived as considerable. Thus, an organisation that is egalitarian in principle could, on the contrary, put up organisational structures and hierarchies that support ethnocultural employee values and practices. In Bank Alpha, a structure of authority and reporting lines which compel employees to relate to managers based on ethnic loyalty, not organisational commitment, subsisted.

In Bank Beta, there was some evidence that the bank made attempts to promote a flat organisational structure aimed at promoting *equality* values. Employees spoke about interacting with superiors just “*a phone call away*”, and the lack of any need to become personal with managers to get their attention or to *buy* their approval. These perspectives were manifested in relationships between the managers and subordinates and were, supposedly, based on strong organisational values and not ethnocultural values. This finding may suggest that, contrary to much of Hofstede's (1980) assumption, high power distance or high collectivism in the Nigerian society may not necessarily reproduce employees who exhibit these characteristics within organisations due to the intermediation of organisational systems, structures and relationships based on egalitarian values. These findings from Bank Alpha and Bank Beta may be an indication that strong egalitarian values encourage organisational commitment and suppress ethnic loyalty when applicable organisational structures and processes are not flawed.

This finding may also suggest that, contrary to much of Hofstede's (1980) assumption, high power distance or high collectivism in Nigerian society may not necessarily reproduce employees who exhibit these characteristics within organisations due to the intermediation of organisational systems, structures and relationships based on egalitarian values. However, this theory cannot be conclusive because findings in

Bank Alpha echo those in Bank Beta. These findings suggest that, whether high or low, an organisation's claims to egalitarianism may still be relatively ineffective in moderating ethnocultural values and outcomes, such as ethnic loyalty, as well as perceptions of organisational hierarchies along ethnocultural lines within organisations. Indeed, these outcomes in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta were determined by the manager-subordinate relationship.

According to Graen and Scandura (1987) and Liden *et al.* (1993), this relationship between managers and subordinates suggests that supervisors and subordinates develop relationships through a role-making process, in which they test each other on the basis of certain role expectations. When their interacting partners meet their expectations, they are likely to forge a high-quality relationship that is characterised by high trust, interaction, support, and rewards (Graen and Scandura, 1987; Liden *et al.*, 1993). It has been suggested that leaders and their members bring different expectations and assumptions about the characteristics of effective relationships (Zhou and Schriesheim, 2009). Leaders tend to weigh performance-oriented considerations (such as competence) more heavily, whereas subordinates are more concerned about the interactive or emotional aspects of the relationship (e.g. the treatment they receive from supervisors). Therefore, if organisational values symbolically transmit a message of equality, impartiality and fairness, the ability of this message to impact employee attitudes may in practical terms be mediated by supervisors' behaviour and actions towards their subordinates. There was at least one participant in Bank Alpha, who suggested that her manager was driven into relations with *performers* or those that met their financial targets as opposed to employees who were solely ethnic affiliates.

Overall, whatever organisational tool, process or structure was in place, what the employee eventually became through *debriefing*, was contingent on the managerial role, which either reinforced organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty.

#### 7.4.2. Diversity Management

Findings in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta evidence a lack of attention to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives by the management of the two banks. Diversity management here refers to ***considerations around managing the preponderance of a particular ethnic group in the organisation***. There was no overt, direct evidence of ethnic discrimination by management in either bank, nor was there any indication of recognition or acknowledgement of the diversity of the workforce, or any mention of a diversity management initiative. Corporate statements by the two banks made no mention of these considerations. However, findings show that not attending to the needs of an ethnically diverse employee base, through conscious and deliberate programme, may have contributed to feelings of discrimination on the part of employees in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta.

Indeed, a contributing factor was employee practices inadvertently sustained through the presence or absence of specific organisational policies as well as through consistent, enduring and ongoing employee organisational behaviour. For instance, employees sought to “*act out*” unwritten ethnic codes through speaking the vernacular or through gestures and gesticulations to ostracise and to discriminate against non-affiliates. Also, employees were more inclined to relate to a manager based on cultural requirements of status and hierarchy over organisational values of equality and were more reassured of career progression when they were certain that their acts of loyalty were approved and endorsed by the manager. These are all signs of a need for EDI policies in both Bank Alpha and Bank Beta (Cornelius, 2002). The Nigerian Constitution contains an anti-discriminatory clause which prohibits discrimination on the basis of association, ethnicity, place of origin, gender, religious affiliation, or political ideology (Adamolaekun *et al.*, 1991). However, the findings evidence signs of prevalent inequalities and discrimination in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, reflective of the near absence of diversity management initiatives by the management of the two banks.

This finding has some resonance with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that employees develop general perceptions regarding the intentions and

attitudes of the organisation toward them, based upon the actions taken by the organisation. Organisations' positive, beneficial actions towards employees create obligations for employees to reciprocate, which employees do by returning the favourable treatment in some manner (Cornelius, 2002). In essence, the findings are inconsistent with the view that symbolic egalitarianism diminishes a sense of separation or discrimination among organisational members, and that organisations espousing formal organisational values will seek to moderate the "us" versus "them" identity perception (Hornstein, 2003). Furthermore, while the idea has been put forward that the more egalitarian and collegial the organisational value system and culture, the more employees may feel valued, respected, and trusted (Morand, 2010), the findings did not show that this process is spontaneous.

In essence, while high-quality exchange relationships tend to be characterised by trust, respect, and mutual obligation (Holmes, 1981; 2008; Settoon *et al.*, 1996), the findings evidence that these values were culturally defined among employees. The point is, these egalitarian concepts (trust, respect, and mutual obligation), which are indicative of organisational commitment, assumed an ethnocultural dimension among employees and reinforced inequality through ethnic loyalty. This state of affairs may be consistent with the argument that employers and organisations in Nigeria manage workforce diversity in a way that promotes their business goals, not necessarily equality goals (Adeleye, *et al.*, 2014; also see Beech *et al.* 2017).

Specifically, in Bank Beta, the findings reveal that employees felt obliged to respond to what they interpreted as actions by the bank, which seemed to suggest that management did not intend to discriminate against individuals on the basis of ethnic identity. These *intentions*, however, were assumed by employees, not explicitly stated by the bank and not reiterated or reinforced by management (even in the induction of recruits). The findings show that employees already had an awareness (even expectations) of the likelihood of discrimination before and after joining the bank because feelings of inequality and perceptions of injustice on the basis of ethnic identity pervade everyday social life in Nigeria (Smith, 2010).

In Bank Beta, employees who felt they were recruited based on their skills and experience, felt a need to reciprocate through expressions of greater dedication and

commitment to the organisation. This is because such acts are in contrast to the typical experience of the average Nigerian, who feels that in some quarters, merit has been sacrificed to privilege some ethnic groups under cover of the quota system and federal character principle (George *et al.*, 2017). Thus, applying social exchange theory, it is expected that favourable employee perceptions, rather than concrete evidence of diversity management, within Nigerian private-sector organisations, and specifically Nigerian banks, will enhance employee organisational commitment (Locke, 1976; Hulin, 1991; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Mohr and Zoghi, 2008).

However, the evidence suggests that employees' favourable perceptions of the Banks' management of ethnic equality, did not imply the absence of discrimination in the workplace. Indeed, employees seemed to perceive their top management as neutral, but their managers as biased, authoritarian and demanding of subservience. Consequently, the manager-subordinate relationship evidenced real demands for employee value allegiance, indicating ethnic loyalty, which evoked favouritism, discrimination and selective relationships (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013) at the branch level. The findings show that the demand for daily face-to-face interactions helps to explain the frequency of the observed divergence between actual and espoused workplace values and practices related to equality and discrimination (Martin, 2001). That is, where it exists, EDI might be given lip service in statements of corporate culture and organisational value statements. However, at the level of speech, actual behaviours, practices and exchanges in everyday workplace conversation, as well as relations among ethnically diverse employees and between subordinates and superiors may reveal quite authoritarian and discriminatory dealings, thus showing a disconnect between structure and action in organisational relationships and consequently a lack of success in diversity management (Hosking and McNamee, 2006). These imperatives reveal how the success of EDI policies may be contingent on manager-subordinate real-time perceptions of their relative powers.

Participants in Bank Alpha mostly spoke about antagonism from other senior colleagues due to culturally influenced expectations of how employees should respond when addressed. This situation evoked employees' consciousness of *differences* and sustained the "us" versus "them" feeling. In both cases, however, responses revealed some antagonism between the two ethnic groups chosen for this research - the Ibo

and Yoruba. While it's beyond the focus of this research to examine the far-reaching implication of this state of affairs, it does reveal that uncertainty, mistrust and a sense of discrimination subsist in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta and that both banks may be in dire need of diversity management initiatives.

## 7.5. Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, I have explored how ethnic values/practices and organisational structures/processes shape employee value allegiance, and how this may be indicative of ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment, and the implications for diversity management in Nigerian organisations.

The findings which address **SRQ1** show that ***ethnocultural values and practices thrive due to the inability of employees to translate implicit/explicit organisational values into required job/workplace practices.*** This lack of *translatability* may not be unconnected to vague and ambiguous organisational value statements and expectations which lack any appreciation of context, situation and even management will. Sometimes this situation puts employees in a dilemma regarding the applicability of the required work practices in workplace interactions and relations and at other times gives them room to socially construct a unique solution. Employee practices were indicative of value allegiance and were shaped by ethnocultural values to the degree that such practices rewarded and reinforced ethnic loyalty rather than organisational commitment. Furthermore, the employee did not navigate the perilous waters of the conflict between organisational values and ethnocultural values in a vacuum. The value orientation of the manager, the social distance and power dynamics between managers and subordinates, as well as the perceived significance of status in the relationship between manager and subordinate were important.

What was interesting was that while the organisation prided itself on having an egalitarian structure driven by Western-styled values and processes, supposedly indicative of employee organisational commitment, the likelihood that employees would adhere to organisational or ethnic values was contingent on managerial value orientation and managerial preferences, which consequently drove employee value allegiance. For instance, employees and management had a different understanding



of what organisational commitment or even *respect* meant. While the organisation saw organisational commitment as adherence to organisational values, employees saw it as synonymous with interpersonal commitment or loyalty to the manager who, to them, personified what the organisation wants.

Ethnic loyalty, in this case, was a function of a misrepresentation of organisational commitment. Further, the word *respect* kept recurring in this research. Still, the bank's management and employees in the branches understood *respect* differently. The bank saw *respect* as “*esteeming everyone equally*”. For employees, however, *respect* for a superior, in ethnocultural terms, while obligatorily, was not synonymous with admiration or approval – indeed, in several instances in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, it evoked quite the opposite. In ethnocultural terms, employees had *respect* even for managers whom they most resoundingly despised. ***Therefore, this research reveals a missing link between organisational structure on paper and the relationships which that structure presumably supports in practice in Nigerian Banks.***

The findings which address **SRQ2** show that ***employee practices were not only driven by ethnic values or organisational values but were also sustained by a fragmented structure and a selective approach to policy execution across the organisation.*** Recruits trained by management staff, for instance, encountered a different value system and practices in the workplace after redeployment. Findings indicate a disconnect between HR and the business units. While formal organisations, driven by equality and egalitarian values, typically espouse a flat structure and reporting lines, this structure was not replicated in the business units where the manager was, as one participant put it, “Lord above all”. It is also likely that, faced with daunting targets and requirements to deliver, managers sought loyalty and subservience and ran their branches like command centres. The findings suggest that managers who delivered on set targets seemed untouchable and, in this way, managerial authority and subordinate subservience was reinforced. With final appraisal scores and grades tied to managerial endorsement, managers employed control to drive loyalty and employees, faced with the possibility of a stagnating career,

job loss, or both, employees fell over each other for managerial approval – thus, ethnic loyalty thrived and not organisational commitment.

Indeed, many employees equated loyalty to the manager with organisational commitment, because, in this case, the organisational structure supported this kind of outcome. Furthermore, there was an apparent absence of any structure, initiatives or programmes for managing diversity in both banks as there was an obvious lack of awareness of employees that any such initiative existed. However, feelings of discrimination were evident and evoked employees' consciousness of *differences*. While the organisation centrally preached respect, fairness and equality through organisational value statements, the business units stimulated inequality, discrimination, and unfair treatment because the organisation's business goals were seen as separate, even unrelated, to equality goals. ***In essence, this research reveals that the structural elements of an organisation can be diffused from its attitudinal counterparts, and this disconnect can have negative consequences for managing equality, diversity and inclusion.***

## Chapter Eight

### 8. Conclusions

#### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by highlighting the research contributions and how these address the research gaps. I also present an overview of the theoretical contributions of the study – specifically contributions to the cross-cultural and commitment literature and more broadly contributions to international human resource management and international business literature – as well as methodological contributions. I then discuss the managerial and policy implications of the study. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing the study's limitations and directions for future research.

#### 8.2. Research Gaps

Organisational commitment has been defined by mainly Western scholars as a cognitive, meaning-making process driven by psychological factors including emotional attachment to the organisation or fear of job loss (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Mowday *et al.*, 1979; Scholl, 1981; Weiner, 1982; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Brickman, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Brown, 1996). Calls for a re-evaluation of these studies by non-Western scholars (Robert and Wasti, 2002; Wasti and Onder, 2009), and specifically African authors (Jaeger and Kanungo, 1990; Anankwe, 2002; Kamoche *et al.*, 2012), are based on the argument that the adoption of Western management theories, values and practices may be unsuitable for the developing countries of Africa. This is because of a lack of consideration of contextual factors such as socio-cultural, environmental and industrial relations.

However, the possible impact of socio-cultural influences on organisational commitment, how it manifests in culturally diverse, developing economies like Nigeria, or the implications for organisations in these economies remains largely unexplored despite being fundamental (Wasti, 2003; Gelade *et al.*, 2006; Wasti and Oder, 2009). Certain imperatives have made the need for these studies even more pressing. These include increased interest in diversity management within organisations employing a culturally diverse workforce (Wildish and Cornelius, 2002; Adeleye *et al.*, 2012),

specifically in Nigeria (Adeleye *et al.*, 2014; George *et al.*, 2017), as well as the human resource implications of increased international business activities, which is, primarily, the challenge of managing employees from diverse cultures across different geographical locations (Wildish and Cornelius, 2002). Further, while scholarly works on employee commitment in African organisations have been focused on public-sector administration (Ogunna, 1999; Ayida, 2001; Aluko and Adesupo, 2004; Anazodo, 2009; Ayanda, 2012; Okeniyi, 2013; Beetseh, 2014; Akinwale, 2014), studies on the mismatch between organisational contexts and the overall socio-cultural value system, specifically within the Nigerian private sector, have been limited (Adegboye, 2013).

Here, I explore organisational commitment as a culture-oriented and value-driven construct by examining how it may be contextually defined in Nigerian banks by culture-related factors (Wasti, 2003; Wasti and Oder, 2009; Ghosh, 2014). These include ethnic loyalty, the influence of socio-cultural groups, ethnic identity, ethnocentrism (communalism, traditionalism and favouritism), informal grouping/affiliation within organisations, as well as societal perception/definition of job titles or status. While some studies examine cultural influences (Ifechukwu, 2010; Brescoll and Friedkin, 2012; Adegboye, 2013), they do so on a level of analysis entirely distinct from the drivers of culture in organisations in culturally diverse and developing countries like Nigeria, as explored in this study.

In comparison to the prevailing organisational forms of the past, contemporary Nigerian organisations, and specifically Nigerian banks, are more decentralised (Herbst and Soludo, 2004). This is manifested in tangible structures that define hierarchies – driven by the organisations' adaptive responses to complex and turbulent environmental contingencies and erratic and often spontaneous government policies (Daft, 2009; Adegboye, 2013). Decentralised Nigerian organisations have been mostly characterised regarding structure (Tamale, 2011; Ifechukwu, 2010; Iremeka, 2012; Adegboye, 2013) rather than culture (Nnoli, 1986). That is, decentralisation is reflected not only in shifts in decision authority but also in the norms, value systems and symbols which members use to interpret and to navigate their social worlds in these contexts (Martin, 2001, Kunda, 2006). Indeed, all Nigerian banks, at least in principle, attempt to engineer egalitarian cultures (see Haque, 1997) through practices intended to

diminish or blur the trappings of hierarchy and status within the organisation (because these constructs are more symbolic of ethnic culture/value systems). However, studies on how such strategies may fail to translate into clear and unambiguous values for employees and how this state of affairs could influence employee value allegiance workplace practices are missing. In consideration of these research gaps, I have gone some way in this thesis towards revealing how, within an organisation espousing egalitarian (Western-styled) organisational values (Morand, 1996a; 1996b; 2005) in a culturally diverse and developing economy, ethnocultural values and practices shape employee value allegiance (**SRQ1**) and how organisational practices and underlying values might evoke ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in the Nigerian workplace (**SRQ2**).

### **8.2.1. Developing the Research Questions**

Some research has found that employees, who hold values that are congruent with their organisation's values, are more productive and satisfied (Kouzes, 2003; Miller and Yu, 2003). Although an organisation's value statement is meant to guide decisions and goals within the organisation, competing and incompatible values of individuals produce value conflicts and a need for value prioritisation (Schwartz, 2010), some employees may not always be committed to organisational values and value conflicts may arise (Schwartz, 1999, 2010, 2011). One reason for this may be the influence of ethnocultural values on an individual's value allegiance and, consequently, employees' workplace practices (Wasti, 2003; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013). In this study, organisational commitment was evidenced when employees showed allegiance to organisational values, and ethnic loyalty was demonstrated when employees showed allegiance to ethnocultural values. Thus, based on these considerations, **SRQ1**, "*how do ethnocultural values/practices shape employee value allegiance*" has been explored.

The centrality of values (Schwartz, 1994, 1996, 2010) is also significant in this study because what organisations' values or ethnocultural values mean for employees, could determine employee value allegiance. Findings from this study, suggest that Nigerian organisations use value statements either simplistically or indistinctly in attempts to influence employee organisational commitment, which leads to value vagueness or ambiguity. While I acknowledge the nature of values and their structure

may be universal (Schwartz, 1994, 1996, 2010), evidence suggests that the comparative significance of values may be contextual. Individuals and groups differ significantly in the relative meaning they assign to values and so have different value priorities or “hierarchies” depending on what is important to each. This study suggests that the vaguer the organisation’s value statements, and the more desirable the practices, the more likely employees will prioritise ethnic values and thus demonstrate ethnic loyalty, rather than organisational commitment. This addresses the second research question, that organisational practices may evoke either ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment. Namely, ***‘how do organisational values and practices induce ethnic loyalty or organisational commitment in Nigerian Banks?’***

### **8.3. Relevance of Findings**

#### **8.3.1. Relevance of findings for HRM in Africa**

In reality, Africa is characterised by diversity, which cuts across various spheres – political, economic, social, and cultural (Blunt and Jones, 1992; Kamoche, 2000). After declaring independence in many African countries, countries like Nigeria are still in the process of defining themselves as nation-states with a comprehensive social-political and economic agenda (Mustapha, 2006; George *et al.*, 2017). Understanding this context in its entirety necessitates the development of a comprehensive research agenda to identify the definitive characteristics of HRM in Africa, the variety and appropriateness of approaches currently in use in specific countries like Nigeria, and how these might be affected by key contextual factors. Regarding these considerations, Western models of cultural values, like Schwartz’s (2010) and Hofstede’s (1980), have been accused of treating the African continent as entirely homogeneous (**see section 1.3, 1.3.1, 3.8**), rather than adopting an Afrocentric model which addresses sociocultural, environmental and human relations in African countries. Consequently, a more indigenous model like *Ubuntu*, based on its philosophy of human interdependence, has been suggested (**See section 1.3.2**) (Mangaliso, 2001; Kamoche *et al.*, 2015). However, the findings in this study indicate that the application of *Ubuntu* may still suffer some of the limitations of the previous models of Schwartz and Hofstede, if not applied strategically by considering African

countries in terms of their unique characteristics on a progressive and evaluative *basis*. In this research, while evidence of ethnic heterogeneity exists in Nigeria, how members of groups self-identify seems fluid, transient, contingent, shifting, intersecting and even paradoxical. Thus, while this research does not prescribe any model (indeed this is not the aim of the study), it suggests that any potential model, including *Ubuntu*, should build on the imperatives identified, such as the changing ethnocultural landscape in African countries like Nigeria.

Furthermore, scholars like Jackson (2002) have argued that there is the tendency in cross-cultural and management research to analyse the challenges of managing in Africa based on notions of '**developing/developed**' versus underdeveloped. On the face of it, the limitations of HR practice in 'developing' countries like Nigeria are no less prevalent or evident than in Western countries. Limitations include a common failure in HR policy implementation, high discretion, cronyism, gaps between policy and practice, and unclear appraisal schemes (see Beech *et al.*, 2017). The developed-developing dichotomy is not just pejorative (Kamoche, 2002) but incorporates subjectivity rather than a critique of HRM research in Africa. The danger of trying to make the 'developing' more like the 'developed', ignores the indigenous roots of the approaches relevant for Africa. I find that this may be the case in Bank Alpha and Bank Beta, where management crafted their values based on Western administrative models, while seeming to ignore employees ethnocultural values (Haque, 1997) (**section 3.9.1 and 3.9.2**). The desire to make employees 'become', using presumably ideal Western values without acknowledging conflicts of translation by employees, is also evident in this research.

The findings show that ethnocultural values and practices thrive in Nigerian organisations that espouse egalitarianism because employees are unable to translate implicit/explicit organisational values into required workplace practices. Additionally, employees' consciousness of differences is sustained through organisational relationships based on status, and the social distance between managers and subordinates. Consequently, the findings reveal a missing link between organisational structure on paper, and the relationships which that structure presumably supports in actual practice in Nigerian Banks. Thus, the structural elements of an organisation can be disconnected from its attitudinal counterparts, which can have far-reaching implications, including negative consequences, for managing employees within

organisations in a multi-ethnic context. These findings suggest a need for a cross-cultural model that incorporates various manifestations of the ethnocultural values of people in organisations within culturally diverse contexts like Nigeria, thereby managing people in such a way as to build what Kamoche (2002, p. 995) calls *cross-cultural synergies*, which may have manifested as *cross-ethnic synergies* as indicated by the findings in this research.

In line with Jackson's (2002) critique of the 'developing/developed' dichotomy, Horwitz *et al.* (2002) argue that there has been an over-emphasis on comparative analyses between African and Western nations, with the term 'developed world' used to refer to Europe and North America. It has been suggested that research will need to go beyond the current framework of convergence-divergence and begin to embrace elements of 'cross vergence' with particular regard to the diffusion of high-performance work practices (Kamoche *et al.*, 2015). Regarding these scholarly assertions, the findings in this study reveal this challenge, but also suggest an alternative based on ethnocultural dynamics in a country like Nigeria. The findings show that even the cross-vergence argument may inadvertently ignore some changing but largely unacknowledged imperatives in African countries like Nigeria, specifically, the uniqueness of the changing ethnocultural landscape. For instance, while cross vergence researchers may proceed with the assumption that certain imperatives, like ethnic culture, in Africa are relatively bounded and that the identity of Africans, regarding their ethnicity or ethnic roots, is relatively fixed, findings in this research suggest that what ethnic group membership, ethnicity, or ethnic identity means to supposed affiliates, including how people self-identify, is changing. Indeed, within workplace contexts, like banks, findings suggest that the way in which ethnic identity develops and spans professions in African countries may be changing. While research regarding professions and ethnicity has been sparse (for an exception see Healy and Oikelome, 2007), how individuals, as ethnic affiliates, self-identify may be influenced by specific professions in a multi-ethnic context like Nigeria. This study found this to be the case regarding employees in Nigerian banks, and that this perspective remains fundamental but largely unexplored.

### **8.3.2. Relevance of findings for managing EDI in Africa**

Working towards building a workable model for managing equality, diversity and inclusion in Africa will require a strategic application of organisational policies and



practices in the management of human resources based on what these practices mean to individuals in various professions. In this study, employees simply imitated their managers or adopted the ethnic orientation of their managers, thereby self-identifying with the manager's perceived status, what that status meant symbolically in the broader society, and the manager's ethnic values. Language or the ability to speak the manager's ethnic tongue, rather than biological roots was also a basis for self-identifying. Thus, in ethnoculturally diverse contexts, the management of organisations may need to adopt a culturally sensitive approach to diversity management.

While these perspectives were evident in this study, it is possible that other sectors may reveal nuances of these perspectives, or offer completely new insights. What these findings show, is that managing diversity in these contexts might require more than just adopting principles inspired by Western scholars regarding EDI. This underpins the challenges currently being experienced in applying diversity management policies, like the Federal Character Principle (FCP), in Nigerian organisations (**see section 3.5**), including the private sector.

In essence, managing an ethnically diverse workforce in a country like Nigeria may demand that *transparent* work policies and processes be used to promote feelings of equality and inclusiveness without, as the FCP has been accused (**see section 3.5**), sacrificing rewards, productivity, skills and experience (Healy and Oikelome, 2007; Adeleye *et al.*, 2014; George *et al.*, 2017). It is arguable that the emphasis of this policy is on managing diversity, but at the expense of quality, skill and experience, which translates into a lack of effort to manage equality or inclusion. Indeed, in Nigerian organisations, there is a possibility that a numerical quota may be achieved at the expense of reassurance of inclusiveness on the part of employees, and that strong organisational value statements may not lead to feelings of inclusiveness on the part of employees. This study calls for a reassessment of the FCP and a more strategic application of that principle in public and private sector organisations. The end should not be focussed on the achievement of a numerical quota alone, but also on the degree of feelings of fairness and inclusiveness among individuals in Nigerian organisations based on their own meanings, experiences, views and opinions.

## **8.4. Theoretical Contributions**

This study contributes to the literature on international human resource management and international business, and more specifically in the field of cross-cultural management. By exploring the work practices of culturally diverse employees in a developing country context, these practices may be indicative of organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty. Thus, the theoretical contributions drawn from the three research objectives in this study are (i) Determination of the manifestations and impact of national cultural values in commercial banks in Nigeria (ii) Evaluation of cultural influences on employee practices in Nigerian commercial banks. (iii) Investigation of the effects of ethnocultural values on commitment to organisational values.

### **8.4.1. Contribution to the Cross-Cultural Literature**

The contribution to the cross-cultural study literature draws on Kamwangamalu (1999), Mangaliso (2001), Ramose (2003) and Kamoche *et al.* (2015) and suggests that a focus on interdependence, which is central to Ubuntu, may be a solution to problems of ethnic divisiveness, ethnic conflict and *tribalism* in multi-ethnic countries like Nigeria. While the broader application of this theory is desirable, one way to start is to apply it to organisational settings in a context like Nigeria where these ethnic sentiments and tribalism are as real as in the broader society.

However, it would be erroneous to assume that such applications across countries and sectors in the continent will be problematic. I have argued that values across cultures can be integrated in some respects to achieve positive outcomes in the workplace and the broader society of African countries (**see section 1.3.2**). However, I suggest that Ubuntu may not be applied without problems if applied spontaneously and unilaterally irrespective of unique contexts across Africa. This is because, while African countries may be similar in many regards, there remains unique elements regarding economy, development, language, and even culture. The call to adopt Ubuntu may need to address these realities. Therefore, I draw on Kamwangamalu (1999), Mangaliso (2001), Ramose (2003) and Kamoche *et al.* (2015) who argue that shared cultural values of interdependence, as inspired by Ubuntu, if mixed with Confucian values of harmony and respect may indeed yield positive results in

managing human resources in Africa. However, I recognise that these values need to be applied consciously and strategically to achieve the desired results, due to within-country and between-country differences (differences not accounted for in the cultural value dimensions of Schwartz, 2010 and Hofstede, 1980). While I do not join the call for an abrogation of Western value models, this study contributes to the cross-cultural literature by revealing the need for synergy between these cultural models and African cultural models by strategically applying this hybrid model of culture to the management of human resources in African countries like Nigeria.

This study contributes to the cross-cultural literature by showing the sociocultural significance of ethnic values in a multiethnic sample within egalitarian organisations in a culturally diverse and developing context. The study reveals that in these contexts, ethnocultural values, and allegiance to these values, serve to legitimate inequality, to translate the abstract into the real through ethnocultural symbols, symbolism and symbolisation, to motivate and control the behaviour of individuals as affiliates and non-affiliates, to define behavioural appropriateness as a basis for affiliation over and above primordialism, ethnic boundaries and ethnic origin, to justify the demands of individuals on others (affiliates and non-affiliates), and to stimulate desired behaviours and practices irrespective of ethnicity.

Furthermore, while mainstream cross-cultural studies define symbols as a *superficial* aspect of values (Schwartz, 1994; 2010), this study suggests that in the Nigerian context, symbols are the *core* of values. In essence, how employees, as ethnic affiliates, construct meaning is likely to be reinforced by the power of symbols. The more powerful the symbol is reinforced – by organisation or group – the more likely that employees will show allegiance to organisational or ethnic values. Admittedly, it has been suggested that the nature of organisational relationships and interaction and the meaning which individuals attach to organisational values, as well as allegiance to these values, are likely to be shaped by prevailing embedded ethnocultural values (Wasti, 2003). This could instil ethnic loyalty in employees within organisations which, nevertheless, espouse egalitarian values and demand organisational commitment. Specifically, through the significance of symbols in this research (body language and silence for instance), the relevance of *inactions* is revealed as a formally ignored imperative in the cross-cultural literature. Therefore, an employee's choice of action or

*inaction*, which promotes one value, may infringe on another competing value. Employee value allegiance within Nigerian organisations, may be indicative of the recognition that alternative actions could be psychologically, socially or organisationally inharmonious. This research evidences that a critical focus of employee value allegiance is to develop social relationships of a more relational nature through organisational interaction, leading to identification with and loyalty to group (and affiliated non-group) members through symbols of status, power and class.

Nevertheless, this research shows that the pursuit of competing values by employees is not a linear phenomenon and indeed not a single act. Rather, it is done through different actions and *inactions*, at different times, and in different settings, meaning that values are hierarchical and provide a standard for employees to compare priorities. However, the multidimensionality of value choices, as evidenced in this research, reveals that values do not always conflict. Indeed, unlike the focus of mainstream cross-cultural management research (Schwartz, 2010), value choices and prioritisation are also an outcome of congruence, not just conflict. Thus, this research reveals the multifacetedness of ethnic values based on how affiliates navigate opposing and agreeing values. Therefore, the implications of this study for cross-cultural research is that employee actions and inactions in pursuit of any value may conflict with some values but remain consistent with others. In the final analysis, value allegiance is based on the meaning (symbolism), which employees ascribe to perceived benefits of action or inaction in the choice of values.

#### **8.4.2. Contribution to the Commitment Literature**

Based on evidence from this study, I would argue that mainstream literature on commitment, including Meyer and Allen's (1991) seminal Three-Dimensional Model of Commitment (TCM), is limited in explaining organisational commitment in the Nigerian context as the dimensions of culture are not typically considered or accommodated. One major assumption underlying much of these theories is the macroeconomic context in which organisations exist. Commitment studies, like Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM, emerged and gained ground in the US in a period of economic strength and stability, opportunity and mobility underpinned by post-materialist values emphasising self-expression, subjective well-being, and quality of life as opposed to

the materialist values, which emphasise economic and physical security (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, this study evidences that in lower-income countries like Nigeria, where employees are extremely dependent on the income provided by their organisations, material concerns such as pay, and job security may have a great impact on employee value allegiance and thus employee organisational commitment (Gelfand *et al.*, 2008).

Mainstream commitment models also assume that organisations are characterised by bureaucratic structures, a consequence of strong legal systems and institutions that determine the prevalence of formal, enforceable contracts. Evidence from this study shows that weak legal systems and institutions, such as those in developing countries like Nigeria, can enable authority structures that are particularistic (Fligstein, 1996). Consequently, organisational interactions may be underpinned by a display of power through relationships that prioritise status and authority indicative of ethnic values. Therefore, mainstream commitment literature does not consider the web of relationships that may influence employee organisational behaviour. Evidence from this study suggests that in culturally diverse and developing contexts, organisational relationships and interaction may be characterised by a greater emphasis on relational, affective and interpersonal commitment (Sanchez-Burks and Lee, 2007) or ethnic loyalty (Ovadge and Ankomah, 2013).

Extant commitment models like the TCM further assume an *achievement* mindset on the part of employees, whereby they seek personal success by demonstrating competence according to social standards, or through *hedonism* by seeking pleasure and sensual gratification. These two values, as determined by Schwartz (1994), indicate a belief in the indomitability of employees' personal choices (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), suggesting that employees freely choose the best companies to work for, and are preoccupied with personal needs fulfilment (Gelfand *et al.*, 2008). However, in this study, I demonstrate that these assumptions may not be germane in contexts like Nigeria where embeddedness, hierarchy, power and tradition (Schwartz, 2010) prompt individuals to socially construct preferences and behaviour in order to fulfil their relational duties and obligations. Indeed, this latter theory is not new. Research from these stated contexts has demonstrated the relative importance of normative commitment (Wasti, 2003) and, in particular, commitment towards the

supervisor/manager (Cheng *et al.*, 2003), considered by some as employee loyalty or an extreme, and arguably irrational, form of employee commitment (Arai, 1995).

However, while some scholarly works on Nigerian organisational contexts suggest that interpersonal commitment plays a significant role in determining and shaping employee value allegiance, this study further reveals how the multiplicity of the relationships occasioned by these imperatives would have implications for what commitment means to the Nigerian employee and how it develops and unfolds as it spans employees' personal, social and professional life domains. Further, this study underscores how commitment might be experienced in different cultures and why. This is because the nature of organisational relationships and interaction and the meaning that individuals attach to their values are likely to be shaped by the prevailing socio-cultural values embedded in this context; these imperatives, in turn, influence employee value allegiance (Wasti, 2003).

#### **8.4.3. Contribution to International HRM and International Business Literature**

The successful management of diversity in organisations has become a major focus in the field of international human resource management (IHRM) and international business (IB) (Cox, 1993; Agocs and Burr, 1996; Cassell and Biswas, 2000; Kramar, 2001). In the case of African countries, while the context may be different, the significance of diversity management is related to the most pervasive problematic issues pertaining to the ethnic diversity of most of the continent's countries, including Nigeria, and the consequences associated with it (Healy and Oikelome, 2007). For instance, the consequence of ethnic diversity within organisations in most African countries, including Nigeria, manifests in open favouritism in recruitment and promotion (Kamoche, 1992; 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013). In public and private sector Nigerian organisations, ethnic identity has been said to promote the exclusion of talented and skilled individuals (Obi, 2001) and translates into privileges, competition, conflict, or co-operation among groups in these contexts.

However, this study raises questions regarding mainstream assumptions about ethnicity and the implications of managing diversity across borders, specifically in multi-ethnic contexts. Views by some scholars in the Global North, led by writers in the

USA and UK, inform a common understanding about aspects of global diversity. One is the association of ethnicity or ethnic identity with disadvantage, geographic boundaries, determinable identity markers, intragroup homogeneity and intergroup heterogeneity (Healy and Oikelome, 2007). However, this study shows how the basis of affiliation may be changing in Nigeria and how such changes may be indicative of the need to revise how diversity is managed in a global context. Rather than assumed differences in values underlying ethnic identities as a basis for differences, this study evidenced shared core ethnic values among affiliates of different ethnic groups, yet remarkable differences in the way affiliates expressed those values in the main. Also, individuals' sense of self was not linked to geographical boundaries as determining their ethnic origin. Rather, in this study, ethnic identity was fluid, hybridised, contingent and shifting based on shared symbols of benefits and perceptions of relative power, as well as socio-emotional, relational and interpersonal organisational relationships.

Although Nigeria is described as a country maligned by ethnic divisions, tribalism, and rivalry (Mustapha, 2006), the study reveals certain interesting ideas for organisations operating on a global scale and managing an international workforce across borders. Firstly, the way individuals construct and experience ethnic identity is progressive, shifting and transient. Understanding and recognising such changes is one way to play a role in global diversity analysis for applicable and effective organisational diversity management. Secondly, professions and professional groups can play often hidden roles in the diversity structures of the destination country and provide important means of managing a multinational and multicultural workforce in these contexts.

While some studies emphasise cross-cultural constraints in administering home country HRM tools in some developing countries of Africa (Budhwar and Debrah, 2013), what is often ignored is what these tools may mean to the employees and how these tools reinforce ethnocultural symbols. Understanding such meanings may be key, not just in adapting them to various contexts across international borders, but also in getting employees to commit to making them work. Finally, this study reveals that in a rapidly changing global economic landscape, international organisations may be faced with challenges of managing ethnic diversity, implicit in the changing bases for

affiliation in a country like Nigeria. Such changes still present challenges for international and domestic organisations, however. In this study, common core ethnic values among affiliates, such as respect for status and power, were indicative of shared legitimisation of inequality and discrimination. However, it is suggested that one way to proceed regarding managing diversity in these contexts is linking business goals with diversity goals (Beech *et al.*, 2017). Indeed some research does suggest that such strategies are fundamental in attracting foreign direct investment, which is a goal of many emerging economies in the Global South, like Nigeria (UN, 2018).

### **8.5. Methodological Contributions**

I have extensively discussed how the use of interviews and vignettes, separately and collectively, aided me in exploring value allegiance among professional bankers in two banks in Nigeria (**see sections 5.5.1, 5.5.2, 5.5.3, 5.7, 6.11**). For robustness and rigour (Creswell, 2013a), I adopted multiple data collection methods by using interviews and vignettes. While face-to-face interviews have been used in cross-cultural research in developed and developing contexts (House *et al.*, 2004), the use of vignettes and interviews simultaneously in culturally diverse and developing contexts, as in this study, is novel. Through interviews, I discovered that my research subjects, as banking professionals, seemed more eager to answer questions in ways they perceived as professionally consistent, organisationally approved and societally desirable. However, using vignettes in addition to interviews meant that employees were then not inadvertently enabled to *advertise* the bank's values reflected in their value statements and revealed manifestations of ethnic values.

Arguably, much of the research in cross-cultural studies and diversity management may be saddled with the inherent constraint of being unable to penetrate the professional walls of research subjects. Through vignette responses, employees personified vignette subjects by *reconstructing* the subject. In essence, vignettes served a *personification role* and provided not only a situational (organisational and social) context within which I explored interpretations and practices of participants, but also elicited interviews by clarifying the participants' judgements about ethnocultural and value dilemmas, as well as discussion of sensitive experiences.



## 8.6. Managerial and Policy Implications

This study reveals that ethnocultural values or organisational values can shape employee value allegiance, but this is contingent on the perceived degree to which such practices reward the employee. Questions inherent in this disposition by the employee include, '*what's in it for me? What do I lose if I don't? What do I gain if I do?*'. Evidence from this study reveals that when organisational processes lack the answers to these questions in ways that link up to organisational values, employees are more likely to prioritise what is ethnoculturally symbolic of the most rewarding outcome. This is likely to be organisationally inconsistent, as is the case when employees prioritise ethnocultural values and is highly dependent on the value orientation of the manager.

In this study, the value orientation of the manager was more likely influenced by ethnic values, rather than organisational values as proposed by Bourne and Jenkins (2013). Equally interesting was how employees perceived and constructed the status of the manager, and the social distance and relative power between manager and subordinates. This suggests that while Nigerian organisations may take pride in their policies, underpinned by a structure and organisational processes driven by Western-style values of equality and fairness, the likelihood that employees would adhere to organisational or ethnic values may be contingent on managerial preferences, endorsement and approval. Consequently, these imperatives drive employee value allegiance. This disjointedness between organisational egalitarian values and employee (including managers') ethnocultural values, is emphasised in this research because employees and management had a different understanding of organisational commitment. Even an organisation's definition of respect – esteeming everyone equally - was recrafted by employees to mean *subservience* or, more succinctly, *corporate servitude*. In this study, organisational commitment, as adherence to organisational values, can be misconstrued by employees to mean interpersonal commitment or loyalty to the manager in contexts where inequality is endorsed or legitimated.

The findings also suggest that, to employees, everything the manager does is right and is seen to personify what the organisation wants. Thus, managers must be aware that a missing link can exist between organisational structure and the relationships which that structure presumably supports. Such a structure can also aid the fragmentation of employee commitment and induce, to the contrary, ethnic loyalty,

especially when such structures evidence a selective approach to policy execution across the organisation. Training here is germane and must show a connection between HR (management) and the business units (led by managers). Flat structures and reporting lines do not spontaneously translate into employee relationships based on equality. Such structures must be monitored for consistency and coherence, and valuable feedback (from employees' experiences) must be adopted and acted on.

Organisational evaluation tools such as appraisals ought not to be tied to a single authoriser. Ethnic loyalty evolved in this research because many employees connected loyalty to the manager with career growth and job security – through a favourable appraisal rating by the manager. Finally, an apparent absence of any structure, initiatives, or programmes for managing diversity has been evidenced in this research and is indicative of the trend not just in the Nigerian banking industry, but in Nigerian private-sector organisations (Adeleye *et al.*, 2014; George *et al.*, 2017). Certain troubling indicators emerged here: an apparent lack of awareness of diversity initiatives by employees, the absence of this consideration in training at recruitment, seeming absence of any grievance address mechanisms or a lack of awareness by employees thereof, employees craving for identity approval by any means, and feelings of discrimination and differences.

In this study, these feelings and dispositions on the part of the employees were reinforced because the organisations' business goals were seen as separate, even unrelated, to equality goals. What is clear here is that a diversity management policy is not synonymous with, nor can it be spontaneously replaced by organisational value statements. Consequently, the absence of equality, diversity and inclusion policies and initiatives can sustain feelings of discrimination in organisations espousing egalitarian values.

Thus, some of the managerial implication in this study is the tension between the internal processes of employee conformity with organisational requirements and the employees' organisational, social and institutional environment. In essence, managers must be aware that Nigerian organisations might merely *imitate* egalitarian practices while employee daily work life reflects *particularistic* tendencies. Indeed, a simple

change in organisational structure and symbols without a deeper appreciation or recognition of what they represent to the employee may be ineffective or counterproductive.

### **8.7. Limitations of the Study**

This research study is not without limitations. Anonymising the Banks meant there was a constraint in terms of being able to use specific documentation to provide a clear rationale of the banks' HR strategies through their own documents such as web pages, financial statements or even documents used for internal/external communication as these would make the banks easily identifiable. This is an acknowledged limitation in this study because this constrained an evidenced based and deeper insight into how national policies affect banks and a more robust presentation of the rationale of the banks' HR strategies in this thesis.

The study was also carried out using a limited sample size and period - twenty employees from two ethnic groups in two Nigerian Banks within a space of six months. While the focus of the study was on typical Nigerian values or core ethnocultural values, widely shared by these three distinct groups (see Figure 1) as well as by clustering, metamorphosed, assimilated, evolved or evolving ethnic "minorities", I acknowledge that these ethnic groups are also unique in many ways. How this uniqueness may sometimes influence how individuals respond was not robustly explored in this research. Furthermore, I have focused on only two out of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Yoruba and the Ibo groups, and focused on South West Nigeria. I omitted the Hausa group in this research because of safety and ethical concerns occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency in many parts of Northern Nigeria (see sections 3.4.2, 5.4.1). I acknowledge this is a limitation in this study because inclusion of the Hausa group may yet present interesting research dimensions and insight and may even change the overall research perception.

However, given that the study is not intended to achieve a statistical generalisation but rather, an analytical generalisation, such a limited sample size is acceptable since

theoretical saturation is attained (Creswell, 2013). As this study is focused on national cultures, and specifically ethnocultural values, a considerable amount of data that is relevant to understanding value allegiance in each of the cases was gathered and analysed using data from the interviews and vignettes. The level of depth of analysis carried out in each case compensates for the limited size of the sample. Additionally, even though cases were selected through a rigorous purposive sampling process, there can be potential for some bias based on the subjective nature of participant views, despite the best efforts of this researcher.

This research has also adopted a reflexive account of the data collection process (see appendix 7 – field notes). The idea is not adopted to control bias, as this research deals with the socially constructed and inherently subjective views of participants within social and organisational contexts. While the background of the researcher as a banker and a member of one of Nigeria's ethnic groups is acknowledged, the researcher's predisposition has also been subjected to exploration in the study (Cunliffe, 2003, 2008, 2011), although, admittedly, the views expressed by the researcher may well embody cultural imperatives.

Finally, in the third vignette scenario in this thesis, I sought to find out if ethnocultural perceptions of gender (Adeleye et al., 2014; George et al., 2017) were a consideration in how employees interacted and made value choices in the Nigerian banking industry. (see appendix 6 and section 6.4.1). I discovered that employees seemed to relate more to ethnic identity and status irrespective of the gender. For instance, responses by participants seemed more focused on how the vignette subject should submit to the manager based on her status. In essence, gender, as a theme, did not come through strongly in this research. I do admit the possibility that this was the case because discussions seemed more focussed on status and ethnicity and not other social identity categories like gender, age, disability or sexual orientation, which is a limitation of this study, but provides opportunities for future research.

## **8.8. Directions for Future Research**

While EDI research is ongoing, compared to the global north, the global south still lags in scholarly endeavour related to managing diversity in organisations employing a

multi-ethnic workforce. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to rigorously address these limitations. Although issues around the challenges of managing EDI was an emergent finding, there was insufficient empirical underpinning that could address these limitations in this thesis. However, I find that specifically in countries like Nigeria, there is not yet sound evidence of a good understanding of diversity management, its nuances, multiple meanings and critiques. What seems obvious and calls for more research is how specific strategies can be adopted as a culturally sensitive approach to diversity management in organisations employing an ethnically diverse workforce in Nigeria.

On a managerial and policy level, this study highlights the need for more research to explore the relationship between work systems that espouse egalitarian values or *symbolic egalitarianism* (Pfeffer, 2005; Lawler, 2006; Morand, 2010) and organisational commitment in private-sector organisations in a developing country context. This can be achieved through examining the effect of social processes and values (e.g. perceptions of status and authority) on employee value allegiance. Drawing from this, it will be interesting to show how national/ethnic cultures impact the value allegiance of employees or their perception of organisational requirements and imperatives in various sectors. In the Nigerian organisational context, ethnocultural values can accentuate or mitigate organisational realities, such as power relations in the manager-subordinate relationship. Some evidence from the data indicates that consistent with embeddedness and hierarchy dimensions (Schwartz, 2010), managers in Nigerian banks show autocratic and paternalistic tendencies, and this has some influence on employee value allegiance and how employees demonstrate commitment. More research into how perceptions of *status* in the organisation could be an extension of the distance between social groups in the wider society is needed. The point is, underlying cultural currents at play in Nigerian organisations that espouse egalitarian value system need to be further explored.

Further, the strategic HRM literature suggests that there is no “one size fits all approach” to human resource strategy. Organisations must engage in tactical practices consistent with their overall values, mission, vision, and goals. Hence, the suggestion that high-performance, egalitarian-driven organisational practices are

dynamically interlinked and mutually reinforcing has been pointed out by some scholars (Wright and Anell, 1998). In Nigerian organisations, HR-related practices that promote EDI, such as flat organisational structures, employee mingling and bonding, and organisational practices, like performance appraisals, must be transparent, participatory and integrated in such a way that some form of linkage must be established between business units and the HR departments. In essence, more research is needed on how business units can become execution arms of the HR unit; a partner not - as evidenced in this research - an onlooker.

On a more theoretical level, this study calls for more research relating to Schwartz's (1994, 2010) theory of basic human values and its applicability and adaptability to Nigerian cultural, social and organisational contexts. For instance, Schwartz (1994, 2010) asserts that employee behaviour is the outcome of value prioritisation, which guides employee *action*, or overt and explicit behaviour, and those values that underpin it. However, more research is needed to explore in more detail how multiple values can also elicit covert and implicit behaviour such as *inaction*. This is because how both *action* and *inaction* may influence *employee practices* might shed more light on certain organisational imperatives, including how more covert employee practices may be indicative of how employees form value allegiance, how they construct identity, and the implications for managing EDI. Also, Schwartz's (1994, 2010) argument, to the effect that employee practices are a reflection/outcome of the dilemma of prioritising *conflicting* and *competing* values, is contradicted by evidence in this study. The findings suggest that employee practices can also be the outcome of *value congruence* in situations where employees find that organisational values and ethnocultural values *match* – through value hybridity.

Thus, more research may be required into the overlapping nature of the social identities of culturally diverse employees (Pickett *et al.*, 2002; Simon, 2004; Turner *et al.*, 2006) and how this may influence the way in which employees negotiate and prioritise values and indeed the implications for managing diversity in these contexts.

Finally, these calls for research into these areas represent some contention regarding the basic structure of *values* (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001) or cultural *values* (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al.*, 2004). The more generally accepted conclusion from these studies is that the outward and most superficial, part in the structure of values are *symbols*. These findings, as applied to organisations, have been validated by other studies (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Van der Wal *et al.*, 2008; Borne and Jenkins, 2013). While these assertions seem relevant to the psychological views of values, more research is needed to address the limited research on the philosophical and anthropological perspectives of *symbols* (as well as *symbolism* and *symbolisation*), which characterises symbols as a core of values in cultures that show embeddedness and hierarchy value dimensions, such as Nigeria.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Ethnic Groups in Nigeria (Some ethnic groups are present in more than one state)

1	Abayon	Cross River
2	Abua (Oduai)	Rivers
3	Achipa (Achipawa)	Kebbi
4	Adim	Cross River
5	Adun	Cross River
6	Affade	Yobe
7	Afizere	Plateau
8	Afo	Plateau
9	Agbo	Cross River
10	Akaju-Ndem (Akajuk)	Cross River
11	Akweya-Yachi	Benue
12	Alago (Arago)	Plateau
13	Amo	Plateau
14	Anaguta	Plateau
15	Anang	Akwa Ibom
16	Andoni	Akwa Ibom, Rivers
17	Angas	Bauchi, Jigawa, Plateau
18	Ankwei	Plateau
19	Anyima	Cross River
20	Attakar (ataka)	Kaduna
21	Auyoka (Auyokawa)	Jigawa
22	Awori	Lagos, Ogun

23	Ayu	Kaduna
24	Babur	Adamawa, Bomo, Taraba, Yobe
25	Bachama	Adamawa
26	Bachere	Cross River
27	Bada	Plateau
28	Bade	Yobe
29	Bahumono	Cross River
30	Bakulung	Taraba
31	Bali	Taraba
32	Bambora (Bambarawa)	Bauchi
33	Bambuko	Taraba
34	Banda (Bandawa)	Taraba
35	Banka (Bankalawa)	Bauchi
36	Banso (Panso)	Adamawa
37	Bara (Barawa)	Bauchi
38	Barke	Bauchi
39	Baruba (Barba)	Niger
40	Bashiri (Bashirawa)	Plateau
41	Bassa	Kaduna, Kogi, Niger, Plateau
42	Batta	Adamawa
43	Baushi	Niger
44	Baya	Adamawa
45	Bekwarra	Cross River
46	Bele (Buli, Belewa)	Bauchi
47	Betso (Bete)	Taraba

48	Bette	Cross River
49	Bilei	Adamawa
50	Bille	Adamawa
51	Bina (Binawa)	Kaduna
52	Bini	Edo
53	Biom	Plateau
54	Bobua	Taraba
55	Boki (Nki)	Cross River
56	Bkkos	Plateau
57	Boko (Bussawa, Bargawa)	Niger
58	Bole (Bolewa)	Bauchi, Yobe
59	Botlere	Adamawa
60	Boma (Bomawa, Burmano)	Bauchi
61	Bomboro	Bauchi
62	Buduma	Borno, Niger
63	Buji	Plateau
64	Buli	Bauchi
65	Bunu	Kogi
66	Bura	Adamawa
67	Burak	Bauchi
68	Burma (Burmawa)	Plateau
69	Buru	Yobe
70	Buta (Butawa)	Bauchi
71	Bwall	Plateau
72	Bwatiye	Adamawa

73	Bwazza	Adamawa
74	Challa	Plateau
75	Chama (Chamawa Fitilai)	Bauchi
76	Chamba	Taraba
77	Chamo	Bauchi
78	Chibok (Chibbak)	Yobe
79	Chinine	Borno
80	Chip	Plateau
81	Chokobo	Plateau
82	Chukkol	Taraba
83	Daba	Adamawa
84	Dadiya	Bauchi
85	Daka	Adamawa
86	Dakarkari	Niger, Kebbi
87	Danda (Dandawa)	Kebbi
88	Dangsa	Taraba
89	Daza (Dere, Derewa)	Bauchi
90	Degema	Rivers
91	Deno (Denawa)	Bauchi
92	Dghwede	Bomo
93	Diba	Taraba
94	Doemak (Dumuk)	Plateau
95	Ouguri	Bauchi
96	Duka (Dukawa)	Kebbi
97	Duma (Dumawa)	Bauchi

98	Ebana (Ebani)	Rivers
99	Ebirra (Igbirra)	Edo, Kogi, Ondo
100	Ebu	Edo, Kogi
101	Efik	Cross River
102	Egbema	Rivers
103	Egede (Igedde)	Benue
104	Eggon	Plateau
105	Egun (Gu)	Lagos, Ogun
106	Ejagham	Cross River
107	Ekajuk	Cross River
108	Eket	Akwa Ibom
109	Ekoi	Cross River
110	Engenni (Ngene)	Rivers
111	Epie	Rivers
112	Esan (Ishan)	Edo
113	Etche	Rivers
114	Etolu (Etilo)	Benue
115	Etsako	Edo
116	Etung	Cross River
117	Etuno	Edo
118	Palli	Adamawa
119	Pulani (Pulbe)	Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe.
120	Fyam (Fyem)	Plateau
121	Fyer(Fer)	Plateau

122	Ga'anda	Adamawa
123	Gade	Niger
124	Galambi	Bauchi
125	Gamergu-Mulgwa	Borno
126	Qanawuri	Plateau
127	Gavako	Borno
128	Gbedde	Kogi
129	Gengle	Taraba
130	Geji	Bauchi
131	Gera (Gere, Gerawa)	Bauchi
132	Geruma (Gerumawa)	Plateau
133	Geruma (Gerumawa)	Bauchi
134	Gingwak	Bauchi
135	Gira	Adamawa
136	Gizigz	Adamawa
137	Goernai	Plateau
138	Gokana (Kana)	Rivers
139	Gombi	Adamawa
140	Gornun (Gmun)	Taraba
141	Gonia	Taraba
142	Gubi (wa)	Bauchi
143	Gude	Adamawa
144	Gudu	Adamawa
145	Gure	Kaduna
146	Gurmana	Niger

147	Guruntum	Bauchi
148	Gusu	Plateau
149	Gwa (Gurawa)	Adamawa
150	Gwamba	Adamawa
151	Gwandara	Kaduna, Niger, Plateau
152	Gwari (Gbari)	Kaduna, Niger, Plateau
153	Gwom	Taraba
154	Gwoza (Waha)	Bomo
155	Gyem	Bauchi
156	Hausa	Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Taraba, Sokoto.
157	Higi (Hig)	Borno, Adamawa
158	Holma	Adamawa
159	Hona	Adamawa
160	Ibeno	Akwa Ibom
161	Ibibio	Akwa Ibom
162	Ichen	Adamawa
163	Idoma	Benue, Taraba
164	Igalla	Kogi
165	Igbo	Abia, Anambra, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Rivers
166	Ijumu	Kogi
167	Ikorn	Cross River
168	Irigwe	Plateau
169	Isoko	Delta
170	Isekiri (Itsekiri)	Delta



171	Iyala (Iyalla)	Cross River
172	Izondjo	Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo, Rivers
173	Jaba	Kaduna
174	Jahuna (Jahunawa)	Taraba
175	Jaku	Bauchi
176	Jara (Jaar Jarawa Jarawa-Dutse)	Bauchi
177	Jere (Jare, Jera, Jerawa)	Bauchi, Plateau
178	Jero	Taraba
179	Jibu	Adamawa
180	Jidda-Abu	Plateau
181	Jimbin (Jimbinawa)	Bauchi
182	Jirai	Adamawa
183	Jonjo (Jenjo)	Taraba
184	Jukun	Bauchi, Benue, Taraba, Plateau
185	Kaba (Kabawa)	Taraba
186	Kadara	Taraba
187	Kafanchan	Kaduna
188	Kagoro	Kaduna
189	Kaje (Kache)	Kaduna
190	Kajuru (Kajurawa)	Kaduna
191	Kaka	Adamawa
192	Kamaku (Karnukawa)	Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger
193	Kambari	Kebbi, Niger
194	Kambu	Adamawa
195	Kamo	Bauchi

196	Kanakuru (Dera)	Adamawa, Borno
197	Kanembu	Borno
198	Kanikon	Kaduna
199	Kantana	Plateau
200	Kanufi	Kaduna, Adamawa, Borno, Kano, Niger, Jigawa, Plateau, Taraba, Yobe.
201	Karekare (Karaikarai)	Bauchi, Yobe
202	Karimjo	Taraba
203	Kariya	Bauchi
204	Katab (Kataf)	Kaduna
205	Kenern (Koenom)	Plateau
206	Kenton	Taraba
207	Kiballo (Kiwollo)	Kaduna
208	Kilba	Adamawa
209	Kirfi (Kirfawa)	Bauchi
210	Koma	Taraba
211	Kona	Taraba
212	Koro (Kwaro)	Kaduna, Niger
213	Kubi (Kubawa)	Bauchi
214	Kudachano (Kudawa)	Bauchi
215	Kugama	Taraba
216	Kulere (Kaler)	Plateau
217	Kunini	Taraba
218	Kurama	Jigawa, Kaduna, Niger, Plateau
219	Kurdul	Adamawa

220	Kushi	Bauchi
221	Kuteb	Taraba
222	Kutin	Taraba
223	Kwalla	Plateau
224	Kwami (Kwom)	Bauchi
225	Kwanchi	Taraba
226	Kwanka (Kwankwa)	Bauchi, Plateau
227	Kwaro	Plateau
228	Kwato	Plateau
229	Kyenga (Kengawa)	Sokoto
230	Laaru (Larawa)	Niger
231	Lakka	Adamawa
232	Lala	Adamawa
233	Lama	Taraba
234	Lamja	Taraba
235	Lau	Taraba
236	Ubbo	Adamawa
237	Limono	Bauchi, Plateau
238	Lopa (Lupa, Lopawa)	Niger
239	Longuda (Lunguda)	Adamawa, Bauchi
240	Mabo	Plateau
241	Mada	Kaduna, Plateau
242	Mama	Plateau
243	Mambilla	Adamawa
244	Manchok	Kaduna

245	Mandara (Wandala)	Bomo
246	Manga (Mangawa)	Yobe
247	Margi (Marghi)	Adamawa, Bomo
248	Matakarn	Adamawa
249	Mbembe	Cross River, Enugu
250	Mbol	Adamawa
251	Mbube	Cross River
252	Mbula	Adamawa
253	Mbum	Taraba
254	Memyang (Meryan)	Plateau
255	Miango	Plateau
256	Miligili (Migili)	Plateau
257	Miya (Miyawa)	Bauchi
258	Mobber	Bomo
259	Montol	Plateau
260	Moruwa (Moro'a, Morwa)	Kaduna
261	Muchaila	Adamawa
262	Mumuye	Taraba
263	Mundang	Adamawa
264	Munga (Mupang)	Plateau
265	Mushere	Plateau
266	Mwahavul (Mwaghavul)	Plateau
267	Ndoro	Taraba
268	Ngamo	Bauchi, Yobe
269	Ngizim	Yobe

270	Ngweshe (Ndhang.Ngoshe-Ndhang)	Adamawa, Borno
271	Ningi (Ningawa)	Bauchi
272	Ninzam (Ninzo)	Kaduna, Plateau
273	Njayi	Adamawa
274	Nkim	Cross River
275	Nkum	Cross River
276	Nokere (Nakere)	Plateau
277	Nunku	Kaduna, Plateau
278	Nupe	Niger
279	Nyandang	Taraba
280	Ododop	Cross River
281	Ogori	Kwara
282	Okobo (Okkabor)	Akwa Ibom
283	Okpamheri	Edo
284	Olulumo	Cross River
285	Oron	Akwa Ibom
286	Owan	Edo
287	Owe	Kwara
288	Oworo	Kwara
289	Pa'a (Pa'awa Afawa)	Bauchi
290	Pai	Plateau
291	Panyam	Taraba
292	Pero	Bauchi
293	Pire	Adamawa
294	Pkanzom	Taraba

295	Poll	Taraba
296	Polchi Habe	Bauchi
297	Pongo (Pongu)	Niger
298	Potopo	Taraba
299	Pyapun (Piapung)	Plateau
300	Qua	Cross River
301	Rebina (Rebinawa)	Bauchi
302	Reshe	Kebbi, Niger
303	Rindire (Rendre)	Plateau
304	Rishuwa	Kaduna
305	Ron	Plateau
306	Rubu	Niger
307	Rukuba	Plateau
308	Rumada	Kaduna
309	Rumaya	Kaduna
310	Sakbe	Taraba
311	Sanga	Bauchi
312	Sate	Taraba
313	Saya (Sayawa Za'ar)	Bauchi
314	Segidi (Sigidawa)	Bauchi
315	Shanga (Shangawa)	Sokoto
316	Shangawa (Shangau)	Plateau
317	Shan-Shan	Plateau
318	Shira (Shirawa)	Kano
319	Shomo	Taraba

320	Shuwa	Adamawa, Borno
321	Sikdi	Plateau
322	Siri (Sirawa)	Bauchi
323	Srubu (Surubu)	Kaduna
324	Sukur	Adamawa
325	Sura	Plateau
326	Tangale	Bauchi
327	Tarok	Plateau, Taraba
328	Teme	Adamawa
329	Tera (Terawa)	Bauchi, Bomo
330	Teshena (Teshenawa)	Kano
331	Tigon	Adamawa
332	Tikar	Taraba
333	Tiv	Benue, Plateau, Taraba
334	Tula	Bauchi
335	Tur	Adamawa
336	Ufia	Benue
337	Ukelle	Cross River
338	Ukwani (Kwale)	Delta
339	Uncinda	Kaduna, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto
340	Uneme (Ineme)	Edo
341	Ura (Ula)	Niger
342	Urhobo	Delta
343	Utonkong	Benue
344	Uyanga	Cross River

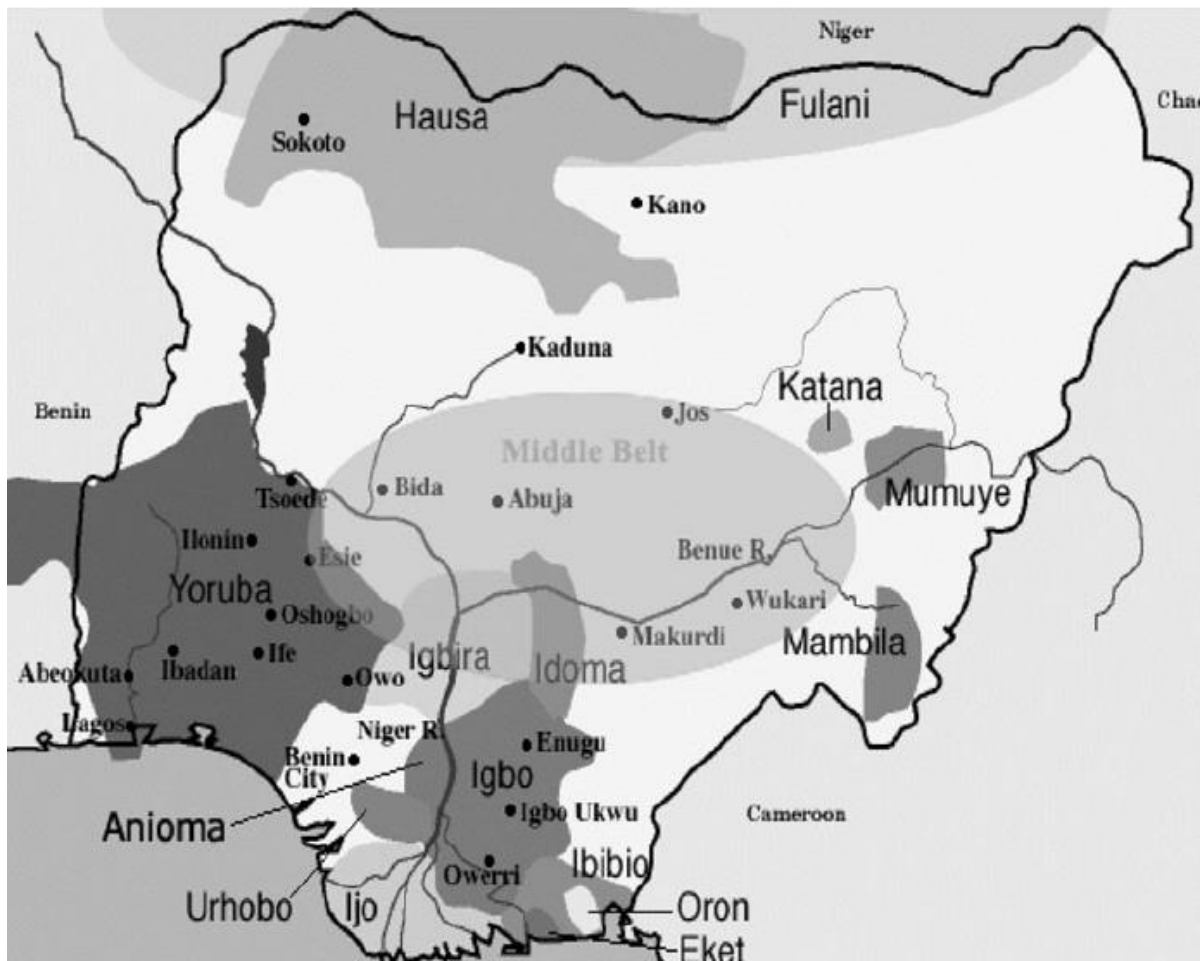
345	Vemgo	Adamawa
346	Verre	Adamawa
347	Vommi	Taraba
348	Wagga	Adamawa
349	Waja	Bauchi
350	Waka	Taraba
351	Warja (Warja)	Jigawa
352	Warji	Bauchi
353	Wula	Adamawa
354	Wurbo	Adamawa
355	Wurkun	Taraba
356	Yache	Cross River
357	Yagba	Kwara
358	Yakurr (Yako)	Cross River
359	Yalla	Benue
360	Yandang	Taraba
361	Yergan (Yergum)	Plateau
362	Yoruba	Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Kogi
363	Yott	Taraba
364	Yumu	Niger
365	Yungur	Adamawa
366	Yuom	Plateau
367	Zabara	Niger
368	Zaranda	Bauchi
369	Zarma (Zarmawa)	Kebbi



370	Zayam (Zeam)	Bauchi
371	Zul (Zulawa)	Bauchi

**Source: Otite, O “Ethnic pluralism and ethnicity in Nigeria: With comparative materials” (Ibadan: Shaneson Publishing, 1990), p. 28.**

## Appendix 2: Some ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria



Source: Uchendu (2010, p. 64).

### Appendix 3: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question(s) and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

**Source:** Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), p. 41.

#### Appendix 4: A 15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis

Process	No	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead, the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.

- 
- 13 There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e., described method and reported analysis are consistent.
- 
- 14 The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
- 
- 15 The researcher is positioned as *active* in the research process; themes do not just ‘emerge’.
- 

**Source: Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), p. 41.**

## Appendix 5: Consent Form

### Consent Form

**Name & Address of Researcher:**

**CHIDOZIE UMEH**

Doctoral Researcher in Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour,  
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Faculty of Management and Law,  
University of Bradford,  
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[C.R.Umeh@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:C.R.Umeh@bradford.ac.uk)

**Title of Research Project:**

**NATIONAL CULTURES AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN NIGERIAN ORGANIZATIONS: EXPLORING CONFLICTS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

By answering the questions put to me and filling out this Vignette:

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- My participation will be for a time not exceeding 60 minutes
- I understand that I was selected to participate in this study due to my position and occupation as a bank employee.
- I understand that I was selected randomly from a larger group of people.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected. I understand that my responses will be used in aggregate form only so that I will not be personally identifiable.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my participation in this research.
- I confirm that I have not been involved in any other study around this same topic.
- I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially, kept by the researcher, for research purposes only, for a period not exceeding 5 years and destroyed thereafter.
- I understand that this research might be available to readers in a university library in printed form, and possibly in electronic form as well.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.

**Name of Participant** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Participant** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** : \_\_\_\_\_

The researcher must supply you with an *Information sheet* which provides his / her contact details, outlines the nature of the research and how the information will be used and explains what your participation in the research involves (e.g. how long it will take, participants' roles and rights - including the right to skip questions or withdraw without penalty at any time -, any anticipated risks/benefits which may arise as a result of participating, any costs or payment involved (even if none, these should be stated))

Has this been provided?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Have you received verbal confirmation/explanations where needed?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

## Appendix 6: Interview Guide

Good morning. I am Chidozie Umeh, a Research Student at the University of Bradford.

This interview is being conducted to get your input about your experiences as regards how the practice of your national culture, values, practices and beliefs promotes or limits your workplace culture, values, practices and vice versa. I am especially interested in any problems you have faced that may have arisen because of how different your cultural practices (your traditional beliefs and values and cultural attitudes and behaviour) are with your organisation's workplace culture (written and unwritten policies, procedures and practices) and any recommendations you may have that will make you happier as an employee.

If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is to get all the details in your response correctly and at the same time be able to carry on a thoughtful conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain comments by certain staff without any reference to individuals. If you agree to this interview and the tape recording, please sign this consent form.

-----  
I'd like to start by having you tell me your ethnic group, level of education, job role: what you do, for how long and what else you have done before this role.

Now, I'm now going to ask you some questions that I would like you to answer to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer, please say so.

### **EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF AND IDENTIFICATION WITH ORGANISATIONAL & NATIONAL CULTURE/VALUES**

- What are the special terms in your workplace that only insiders understand? (**To identify organisational symbols**) Please explain. Describe those special terms in your community or village that only members understand (**To identify national cultures symbols**). *Any relationship? Probe further*
- What kinds of people are most likely to make a fast career here? Please elaborate in detail. Describe what kind of people are most likely to rise fast into a leadership role in your community/village? Please elaborate in detail (**To identify the place of age, affluence, influence, status, authority, power**).
- Whom do you consider a particularly important person in this organisation (**To identify organisational heroes**)? Please explain your answer in detail. Whom do you consider a particularly important person in your community/village (**To identify ethnic heroes**)? Please

explain your answer in detail. (the **Possible link between Q3A & B?**)

- Is there any arrangement through which your ethnic group or other ethnic groups in your organisation meet? How has being a member of your ethnic group helped you as an employee in your organisation?
- Is there any leadership for members of your/other ethnic group(s) here in the workplace? Does the organisation recognise this leadership/group? Are other ethnic groups welcome to join? (**To identify informal workplace ethnic affiliations in terms of structure, scope, modus operandi**) **PROBE FURTHER**

### **EMPLOYEE EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT (INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE)**

I would like to introduce a new topic: I'm interested in the way colleagues would address or communicate with each other at work.

- Describe how you would verbally let a colleague know you need help with some information at work? Please explain any variety of other ways (which values influence interaction between colleagues? Ethnic? Workplace?).
- Describe how you would verbally let your manager know that you need help with some information (which values influence subordinate-superior interaction – organisational policy? age, status, authority? - Ethnic? Workplace). *Could you say something more about that?*
- Describe how you will exchange greetings when you meet a colleague at any time of the day. *Will the approach be different if this was a senior colleague or a senior colleague from your tribe? Please explain.* (Ethnic or Workplace values in informal/casual interaction among colleagues?)
- Describe how you would exchange greetings with your Manager at any time of the day (Ethnic or Workplace values in informal/casual interactions between subordinates-superior).
- State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your colleague. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any). (Ethnic or workplace values in strictly formal expressions among colleagues).



- State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your Manager. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any). (Ethnic or workplace values in strictly formal expressions between superior and subordinates)
- Describe how you would exchange greetings with an elder or senior from your community at any time of the day. Please explain the importance attached to this form of greeting by your village/community (The presence/absence/significance of employee cultural values orientation)
- Describe the symbols/gestures that people use when communicating or interacting in your village/community (Possible replication of workplace values in non-work/cultural setting).
- Describe the symbols/gestures that people use when communicating or interacting in your workplace (Possible replication of ethnic values in the workplace).
- Explain your thoughts about these similarities or differences then.

**CONCLUSION:**

**Is there any other information about aspects of the project that you think would be useful for me to know? (If so, need to probe to gather the information)**

-----

Thank you for your response. I need to re-emphasise again that these responses are confidential, and you will not be named directly in any publication that has to do with this research. Additionally, please feel free to get in touch with me through this self-addressed stamped envelope if you have any further comments on these questions or if you want to offer further clarification. You are also free to withdraw from this process at any time even after now.

Once again, thank you.

## Appendix 7: Vignettes

**Pawache** works as a cashier in a bank. An elderly man from Pawache's village walks into the bank during banking hours and walks up to Pawache. Pawache greets him with a bow and with his right hand raised as he was taught from childhood by his parents. The elderly man gives Pawache a cheque, which Pawache proceeds to encash, before giving the cash to the old man. The senior seemed pleased with Pawache's service, and pushes a tip of ₦2, 000 towards Pawache and walks away immediately. In Pawache's village, waiting around to be acknowledged after giving another person a gift is considered rude. In Pawache's village, also, it is considered taboo to refuse a gift from a senior. The bank, however, frowns at tips from customers to staffs, although this is an unwritten policy.

- What should Pawache do?
  - What would you do if you were Pawache?
- 

**Tseda** Joined the Bank six years ago, with the help of her uncle's friend, who, incidentally, is now her Manager. Tseda is a marketer. During her orientation programme, Tseda was told that she was free to call even the Managing Director by the first name as this was "the bank's policy." In Tseda's tribe, calling seniors, people in authority or "anyone above you" is considered disrespectful: one must always use titles. Tseda's manager is much older than she is and even the customers refer to him as "Sir". The inspection team is around from the Bank's Head Office to observe if customers and staff are happy and interacting appropriately. Tseda needs to get a document signed urgently by her Manager, so she has to address him. The customer service team is watching and listening.

- How should Tseda address her manager now?
  - How should Tseda address her manager hereafter?
  - What would you do if you were Tseda (now & hereafter)
-

**Dejure** considers himself a professional banker and is also the Chairman of his tribal association in the City. Dejure has just been redeployed to the Funds Transfer Desk of a very busy branch. He had noticed that his boss, the operations manager, a woman (who was on her annual leave, when Dejure reported) had just resumed. She is much younger than Dejure. Dejure has also noticed how other staff relate with the manager: running errands, curtsying or bowing, greeting her with “Madame” or “ma”; not questioning her directives and asking for her advice even concerning personal/family issues. Dejure has heard from the grapevine that this attitude is essential because the manager appraises all staff at the end of the year and only “well-mannered staff” get an excellent appraisal. In Dejure’s tribe older men do not bow to younger persons and for an older man to greet a younger woman first is taboo. The bank encourages staff to call each other by the first name irrespective of position or age. Dejure needs to present himself to his manager as he has just resumed.

- How should Dejure relate with his manager?
  - What would you do if you were Dejure?
- 

**Takudo’s** branch is a market branch (sited within a big market). His manager has asked him to report to work on a weekend because he (the Manager) wants to pick a parcel he forgot in his office the day before. Takudo is one of the key custodians of the bank, and the Manager can’t gain access without him. Takudo has noticed that any weekend the manager’s wife wants to shop, he finds an excuse to get Takudo to come and open the door of the bank so that he can wait for his wife within the premises. Takudo has heard that the branch manager’s wife owns a big shop in another part of town. The manager insists he has unfinished paperwork each time. The bank does not pay Takudo for this extra time. Within the last three months, Takudo has been coming every other weekend. Takudo’s appraisal forms are on his manager’s desk because it is appraisal week.

- What should Takudo do?
- What would you do if you were Takudo?

## Appendix 8: Field Notes

### Cultures Apart: My Cultural Journey with Bank Alpha (Bank A) and Bank Beta (Bank B)

*“Age was respected among his people, but achievement was revered. As the elders said, if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings” (Chinua Achebe, 1958, p. 28)*

I had 23 interviews, and these were very enlightening although I could not adopt three because the respondents were from a Micro Finance Bank, not a Commercial Bank. I admit though that the three interviews happened as I got talking with a number of friends, who introduced me to their friends who happened to be bankers. Thus, my initiation into the world of research interviews was initially unplanned! I had worked in the bank for several years before now, but nothing prepared me for the sheer variety of perspectives and dimensions of ethnic culture and how it played out in Nigerian banks. I was received well by staff although I always kept my identity as “a former” banker secret. I was afraid it might influence how my informants perceived me and how they will interact with me. They may, for instance, decide to “play along” giving me answers which they believed were both socially and organizationally desirable.

I got to realise several things quickly. I had assumed I will be talking to the staff of two banks but:

- Most bankers are a product of more than one bank, as they have been in at least one other bank previously.
- Most banks are a combination of more than one bank through mergers and acquisitions occasioned by the two past consolidation exercises by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).
- Most bankers are a product of several banks’ organisational cultures. While the informants’ current bank was the focus, comparisons with a former employer were inevitable.
- Some informants, who were Ibo by birth, spoke the Yoruba dialect very well – some did not even speak Ibo at all even when they had Ibo parentage.
- I did not meet any Yoruba that could speak Ibo.

I had started my research with certain assumptions, nay convictions, based on my experience in the industry. I believed that ***all Nigerian banks had a homogenous culture***. I discovered that this was in theory. Informants indeed recognised the value system which their banks supported as taught in training schools to recruits, as they appeared in the bank's bulletins and publications were reasserted in meetings, executive management actions and pronouncements; most were written, others were unwritten. However, what happened at the branches/business units in practice was different. Even in “**Bank A**” which showcased a strong formal organisational value system, ethnic culture still played. The character/outlook of a branch could be determined by the value orientation (organisational or cultural) of the manager or the departmental head. Deviance from organisational values or the practice of ethnic values was regarded by informants in “**Bank A**” as was punishable by termination of appointment. This was not so in “**Bank B**”, where ethnic culture influenced employee interaction. An informant in “**Bank B**” told me that he interacted based on ethnic values because he found it consistent with the organisational values. I was shocked. I had thought that there was always a conflict. This was the basis of my research: how staff resolved the tension between national and organisational cultures. However, this informant told me that one of the bank’s core values was “**respect for the individual**”.

To respect the individual (customers or employees), you must relate with them the way they feel comfortable. If they were comfortable being associated with based on tribal values, the bank's values supported that form of interaction because that was “respect”. That is was what I called ***Value Hybridity - the effort by employees to reconcile the tension between national/ethnic and organisational value systems***. Some staff went further in this *value hybridity* to defend it - they cited respect for the individual which they defended in various ways (1) ***I have to respect what you value when relating to you; if my way and manner of addressing you insults your cultural sensitivities then I have not respected you*** (2) ***To respect the individual (staff, customers) I have to relate with them in ways they are comfortable with even if it means it's based on traditional values.***

In both banks, I had this overwhelming impression based on responses that the managing directors commanded great respect amongst the staff. Many saw them as role models and affirmed that they inspired them. In two cases, two informants, however, did not feel inspired by the managing director of the bank they had previously

worked with, which they perceived had practices suggestive of the dominance of a particular ethnic group. They felt that the managing director, who was a member of that ethnic group, was responsible for the preponderance of one ethnic group; they complained about this throughout the interviews. At a point, I must admit, the interviews with these two informants was an exercise in the comparison between their presently “favoured” bank and their last which they “despised” wholeheartedly. However, Group Heads (or General Managers) and their reports (managers and senior managers) directly and indirectly did not command as much respect as the managing directors in “**Bank B**” especially. In “**Bank A**” staff prided in the fact that their MD could be addressed by the first name and that some punishment of very extreme measures like outright termination of appointment had befallen an employee who referred to their managing director by a prefix which signified respect: “sir”. But staff in “**Bank B**” did not insist that it was “culturally disrespectful” to call seniors, the elderly or men of title or position in society by the first name. These informants were of the view that there was a need to respect their managers and that they could not call them by first names although “calling first names” was the bank’s policy. Could it be that the MDs had been unable to communicate or impress a strong culture down the line of authority or was it that the MDs were running a one-person campaign sustaining a “break in the chain of command”? Why was the MD of “Bank B” such a symbol of organisational values while his managers such a symbol of national cultural values?

One way this disconnect played out was through performance appraisals. Staff in “Bank A” seemed to see appraisals as a transparent, impartial process *albeit* influenced by one’s verifiable results and outcomes on the job and which one could discuss and contest. However, there was this general acceptance from staff in “Bank B” that someone (typically a manager) to whom one owed and demonstrated allegiance or commitment (not a good appraisal) was responsible for one’s career growth no matter how good one was on the job. Marketing staff of “Bank B” though affirmed that customer deposits (cash, tenured funds or demand deposits) in accounts tied/linked to marketing staff were the basis for growth and career progression for that staff as appraisals were based on the numbers for marketing staff. However, those figures must be affirmed, approved, recognised and acknowledged by a manager in a process so subjective it begs the question “is this not just a formality?”. If the manager

did not approve of an employee promotion or career progression was not guaranteed. I observed how revered managers were (their *sacredness* was affirmed in a story I will come to later, as told by an informant). I was informed by informants just how the appraisal process could be used to evoke employee commitment/loyalty to a manager in “**Bank B**”. I observed the two managers I spoke with in “**Bank B**” their mien and disposition as I spoke with them, showcasing Western dress codes and a sense of style in their ties and suits but refusing in practice to disconnect with their traditional cultural value systems.

I was also struck by the vagueness of the process of appraising staff. It seemed to me that the vagueness was to cover the subjectiveness of the process. I reason that if the process is transparent, then the employee can contest the results based on a predetermined structure. One informant told me he does not know what the requirement is for him to be promoted to the next level.

*“But I can’t say there is a particular pattern I understand that somebody will climb to the top. If you ask me today that ‘what do you need to do to get there?’ I can’t really tell you, you understand, and maybe that’s why so many people are not even motivated to go and do things.”*

Some said they were knowledgeable about the process in theory but that this was not the practice. Even in the case where staff portrayed the bank as being very formal and strong in terms of the organisational value system, they still affirmed a commitment to national cultural values. I was impressed by how staff crafted a mix of organisational and national value systems - calling first names *but* with prefixes to suggest and communicate respect. Calling the prefixes *but* not in the local dialect or in simple English but *broken* English. For instance, the word “*Oga*” was used as a broken English variant of “boss” or “sir”. This again is “*value hybridity*”. Some informants though admitted situations where they will prefer not to call any name at all rather than deviate from the organisational values or offend their bosses’ cultural sensitivities. This situation is what Morand (2005) refers to as “*The black hole*” - or when employees decide not to call any name at all. In “**Bank B**” and in former banks of some informants in “**Bank A**” though, this was hardly an acceptable alternative because not calling a title or prefix to suggest respect was as insulting/disrespectful as calling a name without the prefix!.

*...in fact they even call 'Mummy', 'Aunty'. There is someone that they call aunty in my office because they can't call her Ma because she is not totally a boss...boss...boss... but she is elderly somehow although she is not married. They put a lot of things and so they just call her Auntie. So, I find it difficult to even call the lady, I just tap her anytime I want to speak to her that ..... because I don't know what to say.... if I call her auntie, it doesn't....it doesn't sound nice to me...and I can't call her 'Ma' because that's not what they call her. So, I just say, 'Excuse me.'*

So, I also discovered that people use “Uncle”, “Auntie”, “brother” or “sister” for that matter - not for blood relatives. I found out that this was not a prefix, the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria particularly use it as a mark of respect, and it does not come with a name, just the mention of the prefix is a sign of respect. Some other staff seemed to suggest that the use of prefixes as in the title of job roles like “BM” (or Branch Manager) will not be anti-organisational but will be a mark of respect as names are not mentioned just titles, even if it's a job title. I was amazed at the social significance of a job title and its implications for employee organisational behaviour. One thing that was amazing throughout this research process was the feeling some staff in “**Bank B**” expressed about “what the bank wants” through its policies. The statement of the bank's policies in itself was not enough to be taken at face value, it had to be culturally fine-tuned and qualified or read through the lens of ethnic values. One staff specifically qualified what the bank wanted using a proverb/adage.

*'If they sent you to deliver something like a slave, deliver that message as a Prince'.*

In essence, if the bank asked you to display organisational values, go further and display them in all fullness and all ramifications because that is what the bank wants: Go beyond the letters!

Back to the sacredness and importance of showing reverence to a manager. This was reaffirmed through a disturbing story told by an informant, a manager, of how the management of “**Bank B**” refused to address the physical abuse and assault of a junior employee by a manager even though there was evidence in terms of witnesses and CCTV cameras. This story shows how the assaulted employee was asked to leave the bank and how the manager who assaulted him remained. This is an extreme case



of a situation where organisational values replicate the *symbolism* of Western-styled value systems and the *substance* of ethnic/cultural values in Nigerian organisations (Haque, 1997). The point of the informant who told this story is simple: respect your manager as in a fight with him the organisation will support the manager, not you.

*“Let me share this with you before rounding off. In one of our ECs in [.....], they were in a meeting one day. Manager and one of the account officers.... they were in a meeting, and something happened...this was a presentation where people were being asked to defend their performance for the month. And a certain guy was saying I brought inflow [deposit] of 6 million [Naira], I gave a loan of 50 million [Naira], the manager was now furious and responded ‘what do you mean? Are you alright?’ And the guy responded ‘Sir, you shouldn’t tell me that’. And the manager walked up to the guy and [gesticulating] slapped him. The CCTV [camera] captured everything. This case was reported to the Banks Head office. Nothing happened to the manager. Instead of the manager to go [be sacked], it was the guy that was asked to go. For you to know that.... see you can’t rule it out, in every organisation...see, you can’t fight your supervisor and win. It is not done...it is not done. You must manage your manager. The guy that was slapped told the manager ‘I am going to report this to management’ and he did. In [at] the end, who bore it [the repercussion]? Him. So, we should know how to manage...eh”.*

I kept feeling that “**Bank A**” and “**Bank B**” were *cultures apart*. The issue of First names kept coming up. In “**Bank A**” informants affirmed they went by first names:

*“...in [....] you can say ‘hi ma’, ‘good day ma’, ‘Morenike how are you’, ‘Ade how are you doing’, but in my former bank, you have to put that “ma” ....*

There was this sense of “well this is what the bank says, and that’s how it is” in “**Bank A**” as against “well this is what the bank says, but that’s just the theory not the practice” in “**Bank B**”. In both banks, informants seemed divorced from goings on in their village as regards cultural values. However, they still expressed knowledge about how things worked generally. It seemed to me that among the Yorubas I spoke with age was important in traditional culture but wealth was more recognised at least in modern times. The idea was that people would respect a man or woman who can contribute to the well-being of a community through his or her wealth. Also, among the Ibos I

spoke with, age was not as revered as wealth (see Achebe, 1958). To me, this was an indication that ethnic practices had changed significantly over time and that they were imbibed by members not necessarily by attachment to or connection with the village but that the family played a very crucial role in this process. I was struck by two informants in “**Bank A**”:

It seemed to me that in both banks the attachment between employees and senior staff/managers was manifested in two very distinctively separate ways. There was the part (in “**Bank A**”) where there was *no admiration just respect and loyalty* and the need to show and evidence this in the daily interaction chiefly to progress a career through a favourable appraisal. The appraisal was perceived to be a reflection of the positive perception and recognition of the loyalty and respectfulness of an employee in the subordinate-manager relationship; this was in “**Bank B**” In “**Bank A**” the subordinate-manager relationship was sustained and grounded in *mutual respect* based on the demands of the job. In “**Bank A**” respect could flow from a boss to a subordinate because the subordinate has distinguished himself/herself on the job as evidenced by the electronic performance records. The informants in “**Bank A**” seemed confident about their processes and policies and had a fair knowledge of how it worked.

*“In [...] I can contest my appraisal. I can, comfortably. I can even as much as take it to HR. I can recall my appraisal if I feel my boss hasn’t given me what I deserve. For [...] because I said before that it is very transparent, nobody is asking you to even do anything outside the policy...”*

Thus, appraisals in “**Bank A**” were based on determinable, affirmed, recognised processes. Appraisals in “**Bank B**” seemed a reflection of employee commitment to the manager and his value orientation, be it organisational or cultural. I also noticed through the responses of my participants that organisational structure played a significant role in sustaining ethnic values or organisational values. In “**Bank B**” for instance, the lines of communication were fragmented and hierarchical with different levels ensuring that the next person of authority had to be reached through a maze of subordinate managers and supervisors. In one instance, the employee referred to the Group Head as “Jesus Christ” viz

*“...in [...] you can pick up the phone and call your Group Head; your Group Head is not far away from you. You see your Group Head every other day unlike my former Bank where seeing your group Head is like seeing Jesus Christ. My group Head is just a phone call away from me [In Access Bank] There in my other Bank ...I will either...the only time I hear my Group Heads name is from my boss’s mouth”.*

This to me was like a picture of a pre-modern traditional kingdom where the less the king is seen in public, the more the mystery and the stories of invincibility and strength are reproduced, sustained and reinforced. In “**Bank A**” flatter or horizontal structures encouraged communication and employee bonding and deemphasised ethnic and tribal affiliation, while in “**Bank B**” hierarchical or vertical structures supported ethnic and tribal sentiments.

In “**Bank A**” I was inspired to coin a word - “*debriefing*” - or **the substitution of ethnic or personal values with organisational values in recruits**. It involved several processes including (1) A training school (2) Recruitment from certain schools (obviously for value consistency) (3) Prolonged rigorous training (for over four months) (4) A curriculum tailored to inculcate the bank's values, vision and mission. An informant captured this in her statement (5) An age limit for recruits (23 years).

*“[...] is a very corporate environment; extremely corporate. When you get in, first of all the people or the guys that they pick from the training school are already polished if not totally polished. They don’t take from every kind of school; then there is a particular age, then you go through the rigorous training for almost 4-5 months, it sharpens you to see their own perspective, to see where they are coming from and where they are going to”.*

Another thing I found out was that the more a common language was allowed for communication, the more staff identified and gathered on the basis of that language. I decided to call this the (ethnic) “*marker*” In “**Bank A**” where this was deemphasised, staff appointments were terminated in a branch because a subordinate was heard speaking vernacular to her manager (although there is no proof they were from the same ethnic group). This to me was an indication of the perception by the management of “**Bank A**” that language can fuel ethnicity, although a staff speaking a language may not even be from the ethnic group that speaks that language. Language,

therefore, may not always reinforce ethnicity per se, but it does reinforce common cultural values irrespective of the ethnic group. It can also be used as an identifier, just like names, for picking out those who may share an employee's ethnic values. The more language is allowed (vernacular) in an organisation (like in '**Bank B**'), the more ethnic values will be apparent and sustained.

I also noticed that even when staff do not call names, ethnic values can be reinforced and sustained through gestures, gesticulations, signs, and body language, not only words. It seemed to me that even when employees could not say prefixes, or relate by calling first names, or in situations where they could not say "sir" for any number of reasons, they used body language like bowing, curtseying, and shaking with both hands.

During my interaction with employees of "**Bank A**" I noted that Human Resource (HR) Management Practices could also reinforce ethnic or cultural values. I did not have any affirmation of transparency of HR processes from informants in "**Bank B**" but informants in "**Bank A**" saw their recruitment process as unbiased, and transparent:

*I think it has to do with a generational gap influenced by the focus of recruitment policies. [...] is fair and clear, they have a target, and they have a focus, and they stick to it. You know, when I was...during my interview, I met a friend. She [eventually] wasn't taken [selected]. In fact, she had finished her Masters from London. I was surprised that she wasn't taken and 90 per cent of the people I came across in the HR department, they were all Yoruba....do you understand, so it came to me as a shock...it came to me as a major shock. From my own judgement I don't think I did better than this girl but.... oh...what exactly could she have done wrong for them not to take her up [on]? At that point, I realised that in [...] they are not interested in your surname....no".*

I must point out two things that made an impression on me. One is something that was considered a virtue in "**Bank A**" but a vice in "**Bank B**". This is the use of **discretion/initiative** or thinking out of the box. In "**Bank A**" an informant said:

***"[...] does not like people doing things just because everybody does it".***

Therefore dissent/disagreement is seen as promoting rigour and debate and so valued in “**Bank A**”. This was not the case in “**Bank B**” where an informant asserted:

*“For you to know that.... see you can’t rule it out, in every organisation...see, you can’t fight your supervisor and win. It is not done...it is not done. You must manage your manager”.*

Evidently, disagreements (typically with a manager) had unpleasant consequences in “**Bank B**”. Commitment to organisational values was seen as conformity to the manager and employees know and follow this rule, although this is not one of the organisational values.

Lastly, I also was told two stories by two informants in “**Bank A**”. The stories captured extreme measures applied by “**Bank A**” to sustain strong organisational values and keep ethnicity out:

*“In [...], somebody has gotten sacked for calling the Managing Director ‘Sir’. MD was coming into the elevator, and the person was going out, and the person goes like ‘good afternoon sir’. Yes.... Aig was like ‘what’s your name’? Go to Head HR. Tell her I sent you to her. Yes, he was sacked”*

*“Even, I know that a staff....a mystery shopper came into the branch, my friend [...], used to be in [...], and he is a staff and when they....the mystery shopper heard the lady speaking Ibo, and minuted on it [noted it] and said the girl was speaking vernacular in the Branch...and they were sacked. The lady and her BSH [Branch Service Head]. So, it’s not even allowed”.*

I concluded after the interviews that while these two banks were very different in terms of how their staff and management perceived organisational and national/ethnic cultural values and how they defined employee commitment to either, they still had something in common: **A terribly extreme way of showing which values they cherished whether organisational or national cultural values.**

### Appendix 9: Construct Table

#### Concept/Construct and Relevance to Research Question(s):

Concept to explore	Construct	Definition of concept/construct	Academic reference to support central research question(s)	Sample Questions (Refer to interview guide)	Purpose	References
Personal data	Demographic characteristics	Studies of a population based on factors such as age, race, sex, economic status, level of education, income level and employment, among others.	The personal profile of research subjects presents basic information, e.g. Ethnic group, education background, job role and length of employment.	I want to start by having you tell me your ethnic group, level of education, job role: what you do, for how long and what else you have done before this role.	<b><i>To be certain that informants meet the predetermined selection criteria (e.g. from Yoruba or Ibo ethnic groups, core employees – not contract, not less than five years in employment)</i></b>	Saunders <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Farquhar, 2012; Creswell, 2013a, 2013b.
Organisational Values	Cultural perspectives	Written and unwritten practices, which meet organisational goals and interests and lie beneath what the organisation	These items are positioned to explore perception regarding organisational culture influences embedded in	What kinds of people are most likely to make a fast career here?  What are the special terms in your workplace that only insiders understand?  Whom do you consider a particularly	<b><i>To establish that employee is conversant with organisational values through identification of organisational</i></b>	Schneider, 1987; Lok, 1997; Brown, 1998; Wilson, 2001; Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Sun,

		rewards, supports and expects, including the meaning employees, share about these.	employees' thinking and practices. For instance: The place of organisational symbols, heroes, practices, policies and procedures.	meaningful person for this organisation?	<b>symbols, heroes, policies, and practices.</b>	2008; Schein, 2010.
<b>National Values</b>	<b>Cultural perspectives</b>	The immediate and long-term conscious and unconscious values of a people, which influence the way individuals/groups, behave towards other individuals and groups, within organisations and in the larger society.	These items are positioned to explore perception regarding national culture influences embedded in employees' thinking, feeling and practices, as exhibited in the workplace. For instance: The place of ethnic symbols, ethnic heroes, <b>age</b> , affluence, influence, status, authority, power, modes of	Is there any arrangement through which your ethnic group or other ethnic groups in your organisation meet?  How has being a member of an ethnic group helped you as an employee in your organisation?  Describe what kind of people are most likely to rise fast into a leadership role in your community/village?  Describe those special terms in your community or village that only members understand  Whom do you consider a particularly important person for your	<b>To identify workplace ethnic affiliations in terms of structure, scope, modus operandi as well as the extent of employee identification and involvement.</b>  <b>To identify the place of age, affluence, influence, status, authority, power in the workplace.</b>  <b>To identify national culture</b>	Hofstede, 1980; House <i>et al.</i> , 2004; Schwartz, 1992, 2012; Stanton <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Ekmekci <i>et al.</i> , 2012

			salutation, workplace ethnic affiliations in terms of influence, structure, scope, modus operandi.	community/village?	<b>symbols as identified/recognized/acknowledged by the employee</b> <b>To identify ethnic heroes</b>	
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Expressed organisational values/culture</b>	The relative strength of an employee's attachment to, and identification and involvement with values (organisational or cultural/personal), including the meaning the individual holds about such values.	These items will explore employee identification and involvement with as well as acceptance of organisational values, reflected in the degree to which the employee adopts and implements values and practices, which meet organisational goals and interests.	Describe how you would verbally let a colleague know you need help with some information at work? Please explain any variety of other ways.  Describe how you would verbally let your manager know that you need help with some information  Describe how you will exchange greetings when you meet a colleague at any time of the day. <i>Will your approach be different if this was a senior colleague or a senior colleague from your ethnic group? Please explain.</i>  Describe how you will exchange	<b>To determine which values influence interaction between colleagues in the workplace? Ethnic/societal or workplace/organisational?).</b>  <b>Which values influence subordinate-superior interaction – organisational</b>	Weiner, 1982; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Brickman, 1987; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Brown, 1996; Cohen, 2007; Ghosh, 2014.



				<p>greetings with your Manager at any time of the day</p> <p>State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your colleague. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any).</p> <p>State an opening sentence in an official mail from you to your Manager. Please explain other choices of expression open to you (if any).</p>	<p><b>policy? Age, status, authority? - Ethnic/societal or workplace/organizational?).</b></p> <p><b>Which values influence strictly formal expressions among colleagues Ethnic/societal or workplace/organizational?).</b></p> <p><b>To determine possible commitment of the employee to organisational values?</b></p>	
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Source: Template Provided by Prof. Nelarine Cornelius and Developed by the Author

**Appendix 10: Thematic Analysis Table**

Construct/ Indicator	Code	Definition/ Description	Reference	Confirmed Disconfirmed the literature? or from	Supporting Statements from the data	Supporting Statements from the data
					<b>BANK Alpha</b>	<b>BANK Beta</b>
<b>Construct – Value Hybridity (The outcome of employees’ effort at reconciling organisational and ethnocultural values).</b>						
Value Re- Interpretation		When employees use the lens (understanding) of ethnic values to interpret organisational values.	Ovadge and Ankoma, 2012; Kamoche et al., 2012; Adegboye, 2013; D’Andrade (2008) Adegboye, 2013)	Supported	Ideally, it has [ought] to be. But, you know, we have to mix it with our culture. Otherwise it will be disrespectful; otherwise, you cannot rule it out. Kenneth is my boss, but I can’t say ‘Kenneth’. I would rather say ‘Oga Kenneth’. But if I am sending a mail through our intra communication platform, I will say ‘good day boss’. I can call him boss (1A, 1).  When you enter a new place, you will, first of all, keep the culture that you have already imbibed and	For [Bank B] ...because, as I said before... that it is very transparent, nobody is asking you to even do [even to do] anything outside the policy...most times...they are not so particular about the policy and stand on it....no.... in [Bank B] you have to. If you are supposed to wear, err...your uniform, wear your uniform. If you are supposed to come to the office by 7.15am, be there by 7.15am. If you are supposed to say ‘sir’ say it. If you are supposed to say ‘ma’ say it. In fact [in Bank B] they go as far as your

					<p>learn about the culture of your new location because your own culture may be different from theirs. So, what you need to do is, first of all, put your culture aside. Learn a new culture and at the end of the day balance them (1A,1)</p> <p>The Yoruba have an adage, a proverb 'if they sent you to deliver something as a slave, deliver that message as a Prince'. That is what the bank wants. But then there are so many reasons why they [other senior employees] will not take that [first name address] from you. They will say 'ah, is it not that boy they gave birth to the other day? [Junior/subordinate].</p>	<p>emails.... the font that you use to reply your emails and the colour. They give you information on that. (B2, 1).</p> <p>In [Bank B] you don't do that. It's just that at times you use your discretion, Sheee [hope] you understand? We are on first name basis in the bank. But me at times I don't use it. I can't just see someone as old as my mum, and I call that person by their first name...and if the person is very far away, I will move closer to him. It's not normal to me...it's not normal to me but some people...they don't see it as anything. Oh, people do [call first names] ....a</p>
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				<p>Imagine him calling me [by] my name.' (Vig, 1,2).</p> <p>If I were in his shoes, I may [might] call a title like BM [Branch Manager]. I may not have called a name anyway. The call of titles does not negate tradition or the bank's culture. Look for that point in culture where no one including the bank is offended (Vig, 1,2).</p>	<p>lot...but [for] me I can't.(B2, 3).</p> <p>Well... we know our culture so whichever one, you know what you want, and you know how to get it...I think that's what counts: an understanding of who your boss is. I think you need to know your boss and know what works for you. So, if your boss is the kind of person that wants you to call her 'ma' or say 'Madame' just say it and get what you want. Even if I don't need anything from her, it doesn't mean I am going to disrespect her. I will still communicate to her the way I feel is right... Organisation policy is first name but practice is not first name because you</p>
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						don't want to spoil your appraisal [laughter]. You say oh 'Madame Chike', 'Oga Chike', 'and Madame this', 'Madame Stella' Oga Bayo' That's the way they have been (B2, 5).
Value Matching		When organisational values are viewed as consistent with/comparable to employees cultural/ethnic valuse.			When a colleague is senior in age but same level yes, I am going to add 'Brother, or Uncle'. And that one is part of our [organisations] core values. You can't rule it out. Respect for the individual. That is why I said it cannot be ruled out; it's part of our core values so we must inculcate culture into it. And the point really is that whatever you offer to the individual during interaction must be palatable to the individual to qualify as respect; so,	Basically, that is what [Bank B] looks for...everyone is interested in what you are saying differently from what is the norm... [Bank B] does not like people doing things just because everybody does it. (B2, 2).  What I am today is a mix of my personal and organisational values from [Bank B]. I went to Covenant University so the values of Covenant University with that of [Bank B] are compatible

					<p>we must imbibe our core values. In Yoruba culture, if you are meeting a very aged man, you have to prostrate. But when you are meeting someone who is a bit older than you, you bow. Then when you are meeting your age mate, you handshake. Likewise, in the bank too. The day I met with one of the executive directors of the bank, I did not handshake alone, I still had to bow. And it is still part of what I am saying; there is a consistency between the demands of our ethnic values and the demands of our organisational values here. They are therefore interrelated...so no matter how it is stated [in the organisation] we will</p>	<p>and then I mixed the words with faith. (B2, 2).</p>
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					<p>still imbibe cultural values (1A,1)</p> <p>Talking to my boss [Manager], I don't call him... [First name) ...no...I try as much as possible to say 'ECM'... People always try to avoid that [First name address] ...because it's disrespectful, somehow. It happens here...yes, it happens here...because even here in... [Bank Alpha], respect is one of our core values. (A1,5).</p> <p>But in the core value of the bank, there is respect. Respect is core. You can't rule it out. The 'sir, sir, sir' we call is respect. Respecting the office, respecting your decision. (A1, 7).</p>	
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Value Replacement		When organisational values are so vague, they are substituted with employee's cultural values.			<p>Anywhere you go in life you look at their culture. When I got into the bank, during our orientation, even the MD can be called by his first name, even the managers too. But when I got to the job [resumed my first posting] I discovered that it does not work that way (Vig, 1A, 1).</p> <p>Oh yes, we are on first names but when you are talking to the 'ogas'...I will say 'Good morning sir. I need your input on that and that and that'. Just for courtesy. One of the things we do 'codedly' [informally] is we find a pet name or a name around that person that...we now know that...I try to call auntie this or brother that. See most of the time just</p>	<p>They [Management] always fight for that sameness of service impression. That's why if you cannot deliver that same professionalism as a staff you will be shown the way out. (B2, 1).</p> <p>The manager should be addressed in line with the bank's policy. Based on the training I attended one can be sacked for it... (Vig. B, 2)</p> <p>I know someone in my office that we call by the first letter in her name because everyone looks at her as if...she is quite elderly. From day one we called her Mrs 'O'. It has turned to a nickname, just because we don't want to call her by her first name. So, they just say Mrs 'O'.</p>
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					<p>to show our culture; you know who we are as Africans. it's still my own way of saying 'I dare not call you by first name; I am still respecting you that way' (1A,2)</p> <p>On paper, yes. In reality, in practice, we try to show some respect. By the way, this is Africa. Somethings supported by policy could turn out to be an insult; Well...courtesy is what I try to do...just to show some respect (1A, 3)</p> <p>I use "Dear Sir" for my bosses. Yes, we are [on first name basis] but because of where we are coming from...Africans...we limit this...so you use style 'na</p>	<p>Where you find like Ed's [Executive Directors]coming around and we are having a meeting, you can't say that. Unconsciously, you call her first name. You just say 'ah, Lola...' You can't say that 'Mrs O'. So, it's something you have to...because you know the banks policy. In fact, I have seen people who have called her 'Mrs O' and then they quickly correct themselves. It's not allowed. (Vig 2, 5).</p> <p>So, it's either she does not call his name at all, and she says 'sign this'...and really, I don't necessarily have to call your name to talk to you. I can walk into your office...at least I already have your</p>
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				<p>your oga' [he is your boss] (A1,4).</p> <p>In my place when you see an elderly person, not that you kneel down [you don't really kneel] you bend your shoulder kind of and then go 'good morning sir' or 'good morning ma'. Well, you don't do that, but you notice that sometimes in your sub-consciousness [unconsciously], you find yourself kind of doing like this [gesticulating with the shoulder] to greet some people...unknowingly. It's like an unconscious thing...involuntary. You find yourself... but maybe because it's already there, this is your senior. (A1, 4).</p> <p>Definitely, its first name basis...but we need to</p>	<p>attention ... 'oh a customer is out there, and I really want...' I don't have to call you. So...then avoid mentioning his name at all. Just try and get his attention. (Vig, 2, 5)</p> <p>Well going by the bank's policy, it's by first name. They frown at it seriously if you use 'sir', 'ma'. But out of courtesy and cultural reasons, you use 'ma' for example. My group Head if I am sending something, I use that I don't just ....and other people does [do] it too. But that's not the bank's way of doing things. (B2, 6)</p> <p>In a mail, I will use first name. Yes, we are on first name basis...even my manager, as much as I call</p>
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					<p>show respect. You don't go overboard just because we are on first name basis. What we were told is that the organisation's values supersede whatever other values for basic interaction. (A1, 6).</p> <p>The bank's policy is first names, but we all know that when we do some things, everything is also tainted by our culture and where we are. In Nigerian culture, you give respect to whom respect is due. Even though you are my GH [Group Head] and the bank's policy has said...that I should call you [name], I am a Nigerian, an African at heart...you are older than me and your position senior to me [mine], so I won't just be</p>	<p>her by first name, a lot of times I also say ma. Initially, she resisted...but I told her 'ma, it's not really...it's just cultural'. I can't bring myself to always [always to] call you by your name. So sometimes I say ma... well she is grown to live with it...yeah (B2, 7).</p> <p>I will rather not call him anything; I will rather just go and present what I need. 'Please, this is for...' without calling [any name] (Vig 2, 7).</p>
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					calling you [name], depending on how or where we are. For instance, my branch manager, I can call him 'Oga', I can call him 'Sir' (1A, 12).	
<b>Construct – Debriefing – (Activities which replace employee ethnocultural values with organisational values and vice versa).</b>						
Employment training		Organisational led orientation programme for new recruits.	Kamoche, 2013; Ovadje and Ankoma, 2012; Morand, 2005; Adegboye, 2013; Iremeka, 2012; Powel and Meyer, 2004;		You know even when we left training school we were told that everybody should be addressed by first name. But the fact is that we came from different backgrounds and based on our backgrounds...we are all have the African mentality, even those that told us that we should address one another by first name, are they really practising it? This is what I am saying. We have Executive	[Bank B] is a very corporate environment. Extremely corporate. When you get in, first of all, the people or the guys that they pick from the training school are already polished if not totally polished. They [Bank B] don't take from every kind of school; then there is a particular age. Then you go through the rigorous training for almost 4-5 months; it shapens [shapes] you to see their

					<p>Directors, and they will just call the MD and say 'Efe'. Most of them will say 'Oga'. Even my branch manager cannot wake up one day and just call the Executive Director 'Mary'. They call her 'ED Mary'. ED is not her name. But because of our culture, our background...maybe where we are coming from, we find it somehow very difficult...very difficult.... Now we have been told that everybody should be addressed by first name, let's assume that maybe I am having interaction with my...my...divisional head, for instance, his name is Seun. I cannot have that audacity to call him by...even by first name. It doesn't show courtesy,</p>	<p>own perspective, to see where they are coming from and where they are going to (B2,1).</p> <p>What I have noticed is that, because you spend 17 weeks in your training school class, you bond...you get in...everybody is using his own colleague to measure up, so that is basically what I notice. When you want to pair [pair up] when you want to group, you group with people that we [you] were in training school together around [at] the time not necessarily based on ethnic considerations. (B2, 2)</p> <p>The manager should be addressed in line with the</p>
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					and the first impression will go a long way. (Fig. 1, 11)	banks policy. Based on the training I attended one can be sacked for it... (B2, 2)  In training school, I can tell you; they were telling us 'don't take gifts from customers'. But some customers find it very insulting when you refuse their gifts. So, the Bank now says take your gift, declare your gift [Show your supervisor] and let them do what they have to do with it. (Fig. 1B, 1).
Organisational stories/practices		Activities, tales and accounts which reinforce employee understanding of what the organisation desires, rewards, expects and accepts.			Anywhere you go in life you look at their culture. When I got into the bank, during our orientation, even the MD can be called by his first name, even the managers too. But when I got to the job [resumed my first posting] I discovered	In [Bank B] it's voluntary. You can say 'okay, I don't feel like saying 'ma', I just feel like saying 'hi'. But because we are already Nigerians, we already have the inborn, respectful whatever in our bodies, so... First name policy? Yes. Well, they say its first

				<p>that it does not work that way (Vig, 1A, 1).</p> <p>She should say "sir" .... she can say "excuse me, sir". And after that, she should go on with "sir". That's respectful Vig 1, 5).</p> <p>They say when you go to Rome, you behave like the Romans. He should just go with the culture of that branch (Vig 1, 5).</p> <p>What we were told is that the organisation's values supersede whatever other values for basic interaction. So...and, the organisation, has its own standards. So, we all try to conform to the standards of the organisation. So, we are not allowed to go</p>	<p>name, but you dare not. I mean...err...it's in policy.... the bank will not want to portray itself as too local or too....so....and the boss will not.... okay...why I will assume its first name and it's strictly first name in [Bank B] is because then, [Managing Director] will not let you call him [address him as] 'Sir', yes. You see him, and you both are taking a lift together you can't say 'good morning sir'. You may be sacked if you say 'sir'. You can say 'Good morning [MD's name]. That's fine, so if the head can understand that then you down below you need to .... you need to take it (B2,1).</p>
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					<p>outside the standards of the organisation. (A1, 6).</p> <p>I feel that this man should submit himself to the Branch culture (Vig. 1, 6).</p> <p>Well, collecting tips from customers is not allowed [by the organisation]. But we [employees] collect...we collect. I was once a teller, so I know. Well, you may politely decline...but like I said, even though the organisation said 'don't take, we still take'. (Vig. 1, 7).</p> <p>Because of the customer service, people are there [around], she should go by the bank's policy. Thereafter, she can revert</p>	<p>In [Bank B] you can say "[Manager's name], I can't do this, please. I really can't". And he is like "prove to me why you cannot do it that way". So you have to be ...you have to be on top of your game to be able to present your case...you understand...and it is welcome. (B2, 2).</p> <p>The appraisal is just for a short period; I will wait for the appraisal time to pass and bear as long as the appraisal is going to be good. Because one thing I learnt the hard way is manage your boss. So I will stay until the appraisal is over. If it was in [Bank B] I will not but in my former bank, I will, because, when you are in Rome, you</p>
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				<p>to status quo. Respect is important. (Vig 1, 7).</p> <p>Yes, we are, but we also use abbreviations and titles. For instance, my service manager...like if I need to speak to her, I won't call her by her first name given her position and all, I would refer to her as 'SM'. (A1, 7)</p> <p>It will be difficult because if you don't recognise the managers, you will start having problems. So, you have to behave the way others behave or else, you may even lose your job. (Vig. 1, 9).</p> <p>While the inspection team are there, call him his name but after they leave explain to him and make</p>	<p>behave like the Romans (Vig. 2, 2).</p> <p>Now: Address manager by first name now because of the inspectors in the bank Afterwards: Go back to the normal. (Vig 2, 3).</p> <p>Well, he should address the lady as 'ma'. He should do what the whole branch does. (Vig 2, 3).</p> <p>We are on first name basis in the Bank, but officially I cannot call him [Manager] his first name. I think it's all what people are used to...if I want to write to any of my bosses in my organisation, I will still use dear sir or dear Mr [...]. [B2, 4)</p>
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				<p>him see reason. I believe he will understand and go back to calling him 'Sir'. (Fig. 1, 10).</p> <p>I don't think it will be wise to report to a higher authority because even if you do report, you are still going to be working with that person. So, wisdom is important. (Fig. 1, 10).</p> <p>Well, officially you have to address a superior by name. That's the [banks] standard. But based on where I am coming from, it's disrespectful....so I have to respect. For instance, I want to address my manager, for instance, I can't just say 'dear Michael. I will say Dear Sir' based on my background. (A1, 10).</p>	<p>He should get a better rapport with his manager, when he gets that better rapport, then he and the manager can devise a better way that will not be affecting him as much, So, he should just manage his boss. [B2, 4)</p> <p>We address ourselves by the first name in [Bank B]. But when I am... I am like...'Good Morning ma' so I just put that for....well it doesn't matter. Nobody holds it [against you]. It's your choice. (B4, 5).</p> <p>You know in the case of [former bank], when you come into a place, what you do is...for you to see what is practicable, what has been there before you came in. Like I was new to</p>
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					<p>Yes. Let me give you another example. Two months ago, we went for [to] an MPR [Management Productivity Review], and a guy came out. You know MPR, you have to come out and give your presentation. And, actually, the guy was not doing well. And you know after...they will harass you...and you will talk, you understand? And the guy was.... his two hands were inside his pocket, and he was talking to everyone including the senior people. They started harassing the guy, talking to him 'You are not performing', and to me, I do not believe that the guy has done anything bad. I am just saying...Culture</p>	<p>the place, and they said 'meet this person, meet this person' even while introducing me to these people they are like "oh, this is our Head of Operations, Oga Bayo"; this is our....Madame this....you know, and when you see other people calling them that, even when organisations have told you its first name basis, you won't start calling them their first name on your own...if not you will probingly be getting into their bad books there and then (B2, 5).</p> <p>I have seen an ET [Executive Trainee] talking to the MD [Managing Director] and addressed</p>
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					<p>and the perception...that guy had done nothing wrong. In another Branch, they will not see it [his performance] as anything. But based on our environment, our culture, our background, those factors are very important. Your body language, your culture your background...very very important. (Vig. 1, 11)</p> <p>So even when she addresses the manager by first name, he will understand, because he is being addressed based on what is on ground at that point in time. So, I think the manager should understand that something is at stake at least some inspectors are around. And after that the</p>	<p>him [MD] by his first name (B2, 6).</p> <p>Because of the situation at hand: because you have people around and everything...for that period I will do as the bank has said. Thereafter, I will go back to doing it how we have done [had always done] it before. (Vig, 2, 6).</p> <p>I have seen an instance when someone got a B [in an appraisal] because the supervisor told him that the people reporting to him always alter their register. Not his own register now, he is a supervisor, but people working under him...their own register, you know when they are writing there is [are] always alterations, that</p>
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					<p>person can go back to how it has always been done. (Fig. 1, 11).</p> <p>So, it depends on the level of maturity you want to establish. You don't do things for the short run, you look at the big picture...you look at the long run when you want to do somethings. (Fig. 1, 12).</p> <p>I prostrated because I heard that I have to respect other people. You know. I felt that...this was my first time of working in a formal organisation. I did it for quite some time... (A1, 13).</p> <p>That has been my culture. Though when I got here I think they addressed by</p>	<p>has been signed off. That was the excuse. And she was able to prove it at the divisional appraisal level saying, 'this is why this person should not get an A'. And everyone knew that it should not be that way because this is not directly under him [Appraisee] because even the alteration had been signed off so that should not have been an issue. So, it's always very subjective. (B2, 6)</p> <p>So, each time you try to manage your supervisor because you know its key. ... If you have a good rapport with your supervisor, you might not even be doing much, but you will progress career-wise once you are loyal.</p>
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					<p>first name but in practice, no. Because it seems disrespectful to someone, who is much older than you. (A1, 13).</p>	<p>You know you're 'A' is sacrosanct – it's given that you will get your 'A'. But you might be somersaulting and doing all the work, but if not in good terms with your supervisor, she will always have one excuse or the other not to give you a good appraisal. (B2, 6)</p> <p>In a mail, I will use the first name. Yes, we are on first name basis...even my manager, as much as I call her by first name, a lot of times I also say ma. Initially, she resisted...but I told her 'ma, it's not really...it's just cultural'. I can't bring myself to always call you by your name. So sometimes I say ma.... well she is grown to live with it...yeah (B2, 7).</p>
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						<p>But now, for culture, I think ...it's still there, the first name basis is there, but...a younger person cannot come and see an older person and say, 'How are you?', you know...but in developed countries, "how are you" is "how are you"? But in Nigeria here it's not like that. In the Nigerian or African way, it's insulting. So, you can't. You know this is an environment...we are taking a lot of things from the whites, so there is no way a square peg can fit in a round hole and vice versa because it's a bold culture, we are only trying to adapt. And even the first name thing, it's something we are learning to do, but</p>
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						<p>it can never just completely go away. (B2, 7).</p> <p>The thing is when in Rome you do as the Romans do. If you are interested in being promoted or still keeping that Job, I advise that you should do what others do. Because if you do not want to do that, then its either you remain stagnant or, you could be victimised...you may not last very long in the organisation, or you will have issues, and it all boils down to what everybody is doing, and you don't want to... (Vig 2, 7).</p> <p>The Head of the marketing team is a typical Yoruba man. And whatever errors I make he is going to try to</p>
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						<p>'tribalise' it. Maybe you come with a form, and you want me to treat, and I say, 'I can't treat because I am attending to a customer' he will say 'if it is [were] Tunde, Tunde respects elders' and all those kinds of things. Tunde will treat not because it is right, but Tunde will treat because maybe the person involved [customer] is the Oba [chief or local king] or the Oba's son. So, it means that Tunde respects tradition. That's why he is treating it. But me [for me] I don't know who they are, I don't know what the carry, as long as it's not in line with the bank's culture [policy] then I am not going to do it. Then after then, I was moved to Ojo branch. It</p>
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						was terrible. It was terrible to the point that my manager will tell me 'Dorris, I am a Yoruba woman, and I will deal with you'. She tells me that on a daily basis. I pray I don't experience such in my entire life again. (B2, 2).
<b>Construct – Organisational Structure (The overarching relationships that the organisation supports and sustains).</b>						
Organisational hierarchies		The influence of reporting lines on the manager-subordinate interaction.	Smith, 2010; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013; Nazarian et al., 2013; Kamoche, 2013; Anankwe, 2002.		See you can't rule it out, in every organisation...see, you can't fight your supervisor and win. It is not done...it is not done. You must manage your manager (1A, 1).  In order not to offend the manager, he should offer an opinion...'Sir, let us do it this way'. He does not have to inform the management about it. He	In [Bank B] you can pick up the phone and call your Group Head [General Manager], your group head is not far away from you. You see your group head every other day unlike my [Former bank] were seeing your group Head is [was] like seeing Jesus Christ. You interact with people in HR almost every other day; you fight

				<p>should find a way around it and manage the manager (Vig, 1A, 1).</p> <p>If I was in his shoes, I will weigh my options. If I can't win, I will try and 'pally' him, [be diplomatic]. If this fails then seek other mediums for addressing this such as anonymous letters. The aim is not to report this. (Vig, 1A, 2)</p> <p>He needs to be able to establish a relationship with his manager because if he says he wants to report the man, it can backfire against him [be counterproductive]. He cannot come out and be rude to the man because no matter what your boss is your boss whether your boss is wrong or right and</p>	<p>for what you believe in. (B2, 2).</p> <p>Basically, that is what [Bank B] looks for...everyone is interested in what you are saying differently from what is the norm. (B2, 2).</p> <p>When I am sending emails at [Bank B], it's like 'Good Morning [Group Head's Name]'. [...] is the Group Head for [of] Banking Services. He doesn't know who you are...you don't know who he is... I just say "Good morning [...]" because even if I see him personally, that is what I am also going to say. My group Head is just a phone call away from me (B2, 2).</p>
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					<p>there are different ways to play things to get things. It's simply a matter of trying to establish a relationship with the man...he should manage it. (A1, 12).</p>	<p>[Managing Director-MD] is not far away. You see [MD] every day, you see [Deputy MD] every day. You go for parties, and you meet them there. Do you understand? (B2, 2).</p> <p>It's inbuilt, one but when you work in an organisation, you need to learn [study] your boss otherwise you will always have issues. [B2, 4)</p> <p>The people in charge, sometimes you just need to lick their boots....to just climb. Because guess what you do not also know what they are doing to also have climbed to where they are, you know, it's...some pills can be bitter swallows but, if can just ignore it. Just pretend</p>
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						that really you came to work. It may not really last for long but if you must confront the manager, let appraisal period pass, and you can confront him nicely (Vig 2, 7).
Managerial Role		The influence of the manager's value orientation on interaction with subordinates.			<p>There is a way I will tell you 'you are stupid' and you will fight me. There is another way I will tell you [the] same thing, and you will remain my friend. If I were the one I will manage my manager properly (A1,3)</p> <p>Nobody cares how you behave. Your figures state the point. You can be a very humble person; you can be a very good person, if your figures are bad, they will hit you as a matter of fact...or you can be a very saucy person,</p>	<p>My fist posting was at VI, [Lagos]. The Head of that unit was Ibo. Her name was Ada, and she was very strict. That was just her own personality. She was not interested in whether you were Ibo or Yoruba or from wherever; top performers are the people she brings around her because she doesn't want to mess up. (B2, 2).</p> <p>They [manager] will just address you and say 'Oh, they [you] feel too big that's why you would call me by my first name". And</p>

					<p>but whenever your boss sees you, he loves you even more than the best person in attitude. (A1, 5).</p> <p>Talking to my boss [Manager], I don't call him... [First name] ...no...I try as much as possible to say 'ECM'... People always try to avoid that [First name address] ...because it's disrespectful, somehow. It happens here...yes, it happens here...because even here in... [Bank Alpha], respect is one of our core values. (A1,5).</p> <p>It's best that he forgets his ego and do [does] as his manager wishes.... As long as his appraisal is at stake, he should continue</p>	<p>there and then they will just address you because it's something I know they can do, they will just address you and say 'oh, are you not scared? Why would you call me by my name?'....so that's how...it's not really a choice of the employee. (B2, 5).</p> <p>So, once you already know that this is this person [Manger], this is her belief, this is the type of person that she is, you just try to manage her. But really if you think you don't believe in her own stance, you don't believe in her own way and everything, then you probably look for a way not to work with her so that you don't create conflict (Vig 2, 6).</p>
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				<p>doing what the manager says. (Vig 1, 7)</p> <p>It all depends on whether he wants the job or not. If he wants the job, he needs to adjust to the boss. But, if he doesn't need the job he can insist on his cultural values. (Vig 1, 8).</p> <p>We try to be professional because they tell us not to be otherwise...but if it is somebody [manager/senior colleague] that is culture-minded...what do I say...you know that this kind of person likes his culture, like some Yoruba, if you don't prostrate they will not even listen to you. So irrespective of the organisation, you must prostrate as you are</p>	<p>A times people just like to do their jobs, you tell them to do this they do it, they come in the morning, they face their job they do their work and everything. And still, a supervisor may see it as rudeness that this person just likes keeping to himself. You just come in the morning [and say] 'good morning' and walk to your desk and start doing your work. Even if you are doing your work and delivering on set goals, they [managers] like the guy who goes 'Ah, ma, your bag is fine'; 'Your shoe is lovely'. You massage their ego. 'Ah, you look good this morning, ma'; 'ah, ma, I am going out now', they</p>
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				<p>greeting them. So when you see those kinds of people, you have to prostrate so that...that's the only way to show them respect. You must have heard that this kind of person...you cannot greet him standing straight. So, you just have to bear that in mind (A1, 8).</p> <p>It will be difficult because if you don't recognise the managers, you will start having problems. So, you have to behave the way others behave or else, you may even lose your job. (Vig. 1, 9).</p> <p>I think she should do the right thing by calling him, Michael. But later she can apologise...that 'I cannot violate the policy at the time'. (Vig. 1, 9).</p>	<p>like it when you are loyal to them. (B2, 6).</p> <p>I believe I am already biased myself. Because I have some reportees [reports], who seem headstrong [stubborn]. They do the work, but they don't flow. You may call them to come before they come. Meanwhile, there are those that will come around five times when you never even called them. When they come, they go 'Ah, Oga, have you eaten?' 'Oga mi [my master/boss] I am off to buy food, should I order food for you? Though they are doing their work, there is a relationship. That one who comes around to say 'Oga mi have you eaten', 'Oga, this one you are not</p>
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					<p>Yes...first name is the bank's position...that's how it's supposed to be, but you know the way Nigeria is...our culture and all.... top people in management you can't address by their first name. It's a cultural thing to show respect (A1, 10).</p> <p>While the inspection team are there, call him his name but after they leave, explain to him and make him see reason. I believe he will understand and go back to calling him 'Sir'. Like even if you are an older person than your manager as long as that person [manager] is your boss, you have to respect that person. She is your boss for that period in that</p>	<p>looking too well'. It's given that when the time of appraisal comes, you will remember that person first. (B2, 6)</p> <p>In a mail, I will use first name. Yes, we are on first name basis...even my manager, as much as I call her by the first name, a lot of times I also say ma. Initially, she resisted...but I told her 'ma, it's not really...it's just cultural'. I can't bring myself to always call you by your name. So sometimes I say ma.... well she is grown to live with it...yeah (B2, 7).</p> <p>When I first entered [first got employed], I was refering to [Manging Director] [as]'sir...sir...sir'...They</p>
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					<p>place that you are. You know she is the one that will do your appraisal and everything. You have to show that respect...give respect to whom respect is due. (Vig. 1 , 10)</p> <p>And even the person I am addressing as well...maybe when I discover that the person is a Yoruba person, I have to factor that in because Yoruba people, trust us we don't joke with respect. And don't be surprised that your mail may be ignored because of that...simple lack of courtesy. (Vig. 1, 11).</p> <p>He [Manager]now called me into his office one day, he said, "[name], this is a formal organisation, you</p>	<p>said 'no, the first name'. Because I did not have much to do with him directly, it was Sir, if I want to but, if I was talking to other people, I learned to say [MD's first name]. I learnt it. But one on one, I can't call him [MD's first name], I always say sir (Vig, 2.7).</p>
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					don't need to prostrate". I say good morning.... you told me good morning...if you feel like putting 'Sir', fine, because of our culture. So, the issue of "sir" is not something that maybe you just discount like that even in a formal system. Like 'sir, you have a call', 'sir, I quickly want to get to this place'... (A1, 13).	
<b>Construct - Identifiers (The markers of ethnic culture which facilitate employee interaction based on ethnic affiliation).</b>						
Language /Dialect		When employees use Vernacular, not the English language for communication.	Tamale, 2011; Adegboye, 2013; Ovadje and Ankomah, 2013; Kamoche, 2013;		Well unconsciously.... unconsciously you will show some sign of respect like bowing...there is this thing with the Yoruba, where respect is unconscious and	In [Bank Beta] in Abuja, you will never see that. Even, I know that a mystery shopper came into the [a] branch. My friend [...], used to be in [Bank Beta] and he is a

					<p>ingrained in the wordings and gestures but still used to insult and demean. For instance, 'Broda me ori opke' 'Broda' is what you call a man older than you. 'Ori Okpe' means going crazy (nuts). Literarily, "Broda me ori Okpe" means my "Broda" is "crazy". (A1, 7).</p> <p>The truth is that we are supposed to speak to people in English. But once in a while, some people chip in their languages. The policy is English. Any other language is vernacular. But sometimes, once in a while, people chip in their languages. (A1, 10).</p> <p>Then also, there are some err...errr...certain</p>	<p>staff and when they, the mystery shoppers, heard the lady speaking Ibo, and minuted on it [noted it] and said [wrote that] the girl was speaking vernacular in the Branch, they were sacked. The lady and her BSH [Branch Service Head]. So, it's not even allowed. You hardly find yourself speaking vernacular because you can be sacked for it (B2, 1).</p> <p>Yeah...the only thing that can give you away, you know is your name in [Bank Beta] ...otherwise you are sort of faceless. Nobody knows where you are from and nobody is interested.... it's just your name (B2, 1).</p>
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					<p>languages, used...the reason you use those particular languages is because maybe you are a tribe to a particular person [from the ethnic group of another person] at maybe a particular setting [at a point in time] and you want to pass him a particularly strong message like <b>"moni komajo kosibe"</b> [I said you should sit down there]. To better make that particular person to understand your authority...because if he says [in english]'I don't want you to sit down in that place', the person in his mind will say, 'you are just speaking English, when you are done probably you will let me know what you are trying to do [say]'. But, probably, by the time he</p>	<p>Yes. You know they do. You can get to a place, and before you know it, this one is speaking Yoruba to you. And you may say 'what are you guys saying? Speak English'. Mainly that's when they don't want you to understand what they are saying. They change to their language. (B2, 3).</p> <p>Language plays a big role. It will play a role because I speak Ibo I come to an environment, I am working with Yoruba, Kogi, Hausa. An Ibo guy comes around and speaks Ibo, and suddenly both of you are speaking, and a lot of the time you guys are talking. If you are talking it will be like a switch you are speaking Ibo to</p>
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				changes his tone, “ <b>moni komajo kosibe</b> ” So now the message has been passed that “this man is not joking with me” ....and immediately, you [employee] will reshape. (A1, 13).	yourselves, and if another person that is Ibo comes into that same environment, the person will switch on too. So those people that do speak your language that’s the caucus. So, for me, language is just how you attract people to yourself. (B2, 4).
Body language (language behaviour)		The use of cues for communication		However, everything is about your tone with which you address. There is a way I can address you on first name basis, and you will still know I have respect for you. There is a way I can address you not on first name basis, and you will know I don’t have respect for you. So, he should stick to the bank’s standards but address the manager with respect on a first name basis. He	For some people [bowing/prostrating] it’s inbuilt. Yes...it is for some people. They just want to.... before they know it, they are down...The organisation frowns at that.... does not encourage that (B2, 4).  You should learn how to balance things at all times. You shouldn’t just be one way because you are dealing with customers

					<p>should say his name in a subtle manner so that he knows that the respect is stable.</p> <p>So, conform to the banks standard but still find an alternative way to show respect...my point is that I am talking about the tone. (Vig 1, 6).</p> <p>We don't kneel, but we acknowledge the presence of our superiors. Even if you do call the person's name, there is still some sign of courtesy that you display. Such curtseys determine how fast you get a response. I for one will not respond to you without those courtesies. When you say it in a particular way, I am willing to do anything. (A1, 8).</p>	<p>both internal and external. You should know what different people want. Just know how to balance it. It's not rocket science. Like me in the office, some people I am talking to them I know the kind of person that they are. If they are Ibos even the ED's and the rest you call them by their first name 'no qualms' but the Yoruba, even when they are just a grade ahead of you, or when they are older than you when you call them [by their first name] they see it as an insult...that you are being disrespectful, so I try to....and even from their body language, you know that this person is not comfortable with me addressing her by the first</p>
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					<p>.hmmm...my people, we are big on respect...we are big on respect although we may not do the prostrating and kneeling....A normal Yoruba person can kneel down for an elder in the middle of the road. But we might not necessarily do that, but we might do curtseying, bowing...as in we will recognise that an elder or person of standing has walked in. (A1, 8)</p> <p>I will still call the manager by name and still introduce the sir. That way the manager knows that I am not just trying to call your name but that we have a situation here. I think it's a mix...you can still say 'Kemi, please ma, can you</p>	<p>name or addressing him by his first name (B2, 6)</p> <p>Well generally with Ibos...apart from...we don't really have any...you show some...a sign of deference...maybe you...you...a little bow...a slight bow, or like when you are shaking hands you like use your two hands to show that you respect the person but, actually, Ibos don't prostrate, we don't ...you can even stand up to shake hands and greet but there is a lot of respect in your body language...Well maybe [with] more senior people in the organisation...yes. So even if it's on first name I do a little bit of bow and</p>
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					<p>help me sign this'. There is a way about speaking in hushed tones...the way you and the person you are talking to can hear you [each other]. So, call the name but introduce the 'Sir' to show the person that you still respect him. Thereafter, keep to 'sir'. (Vig, 1, 8)</p> <p>Well I know Yorubas prostrate, but we don't prostrate. Well, normally Ibos don't prostrate...sometimes they bow when they meet someone that's higher than them. They try to bow. Well, we don't normally bow in this organisation. We try to be professional because they tell us not to be otherwise...but if it is</p>	<p>any other act of deference. (B2, 7).</p> <p>But in [Former Bank], right from the reception, you feel it [ethnic culture] ...yes...I have suffered that a lot in [former bank]. Okay, my first branch, I was taken to a remote village...okay...ibo...i don't look Ibo, and then my name [...] does not give me out in the first place; but when they get to know that you cannot converse in Yoruba, they don't want to relate with you...yes....they rather relate with those they can speak with...those that understand their dialect. (B2, 2).</p>
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					<p>somebody [manager/senior colleague] that is culture- minded...what do I say...you know that this kind of person likes his culture, like some Yoruba, if you don't prostrate they will not even listen to you. So irrespective of the organisation, you must prostrate as you are greeting them. So, when you see those kinds of people, you have to prostrate so that...that's the only way to show them respect. You must have heard that this kind of person...you cannot greet him standing straight. So, you just have to bear that in mind. (A1, 9).</p> <p>I am just saying...Culture and perception...that guy</p>	
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					<p>had done nothing wrong. In another Branch, they will not see it [his performance] as anything. But based on our environment, our culture, our background, those factors are very important. Your body language, your culture your background...very very important. (Vig, 1, 11).</p> <p>Through your body language...even through handshake.... for instance, when you use both hands to shake. That is a sign of respect... So even within the organisation, it can be unconscious. In fact, it can be so unconscious; you still show respect even when you are not feeling good [you do not feel</p>	
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					<p>good] about that person. (A1, 11).</p> <p>I think to me the FT officer can still approach the manager. Depending on the manner of approach and the manner of presentation, I don't think reporting the manager is the best solution. But the manner of approach is important. He can approach the manager to see reason that what he is doing is not right because it's affecting him the FT and its bad for the branch and the organisation. All depends on his manner of approach and presentation to the manager. He can still present it to the manager in a very polite way. (Vig. 1, 11).</p>	
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					<p>Well, people might do one or two things like bow or put their hands behind their back or shake with two hands while bowing or curtsying based on their culture. Someone like me...you know the Ibos, you can say.... that two hands thing, and it's the heart of their culture. We don't have such where I am from, so, basically, if I am seeing let's say my boss in quote for me it's going to be 'Good afternoon Sir', I probably won't courtesy because we are in the organisation. I will go 'Good afternoon sir...good afternoon ma' or something like that...because that's as far as it goes in my culture. (A1, 12).</p>	
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**Construct – Diversity - Considerations around the preponderance of a particular ethnic group in the organisation**

<p>Organisational Outlook</p>	<p>The perception that organisational leadership, employee numbers and relationships evidence the dominance of at least one ethnic group or ethnocultural value system.</p>	<p>Anankwe, 2002; Branine, 2013; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013; Kamoche et al., 2012; Adegboye, 2013; Cornelius, N. (ed), (2002); Wildish and Cornelius (2002).</p>		<p>In Yoruba culture, if you are meeting a very aged man, you have to prostrate. But when you are meeting someone who is a bit older than you, you bow. Then when you are meeting your age mate, you handshake. Likewise, in the bank too. The day I met with one of the executive directors of the bank, I did not handshake alone, I still had to bow. And it is still part of what I am saying; there is a consistency between the demands of our ethnic values and the demands of our organisational values here. They are therefore interrelated...so no matter how it is stated</p>	<p>A lot of them. So, it's the same thing everywhere. If you go to one of these so-called Yoruba Banks.... they have a way they classify banks. You can say this bank is a kind of Yoruba Bank because you find out that a lot of people there.... for instance, they call [...] Yoruba Bank because most of the people there are Yorubas. You have more Yorubas than any other ethnic group just like in [name of bank], you have more of the delta Ibos than any other side. In [Bank Beta] I cannot say that they have one ethnic group more than others...I will tell you that about [Bank Beta].</p>
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					<p>[in the organisation] we will still imbibe cultural values (A1, 1)</p> <p>It doesn't exist [ethnic groupings] but I know that there was a time that...you just see some people.....well you still see people in pockets here and there...it exists in pockets here and there. People go like 'Ah, he is an Ibo guy, an Ibo guy is now the Head of that unit...thank God' then 'ah, that Ekiti [Yoruba] man is there now, thank God...at least now I can move one or two notches up'. (A1, 2).</p> <p>Like me, personally, I relate with everybody the same way. I don't have any particular attachment because you're from my</p>	<p>[Bank Beta] is Diverse. So, I will not say they have ethnic groupings. But like in every other work area they have a caucus. It does not necessarily mean that to belong you have to be from a particular ethnic group. It all depends on how you behave and how you can .... what's the word I am looking for.... suck up to me to be in my caucus. (B2, 4).</p> <p>[Bank Beta] cuts across all ethnic groups. There are Yoruba, there are Ibos, there are Edos, and there are Hausas. Even where I work currently, my Group Head is Hausa. Yes, and a lady for that matter. So yes, it cuts across. In [Bank Beta] there is no</p>
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					<p>place, I have a particular thing... as a matter of fact, my best friend here is a Yoruba guy (A1, 5).</p> <p>If you are an Igbo...Igbos are usually people that adjust very easily to first name basis in the organisation. But if you see a Yoruba man...he struggles to adjust because of where he is coming from. So, if you see the Igbos they go 'Michael, Michael can you help me with this? But to me it all depends on your intonation. The way you approach a person, the way you call the name. So, if you call it in a way that it speaks of the fact that there is no respect, the person may get annoyed but when you but when</p>	<p>tribe predominating...we are complete. Even in my office [soliloquising] do we have any Hausas in my office? No, though there is Yoruba, there is Ibo...oh, did I say there was no Hausa in my office [laughter]. My group head is Hausa. (B2, 5).</p> <p>I know it is only Yoruba's who will want to add brother this or sister this, but it's not obtainable in the Bank [Bank Beta] No you just find one or two people that do that, but I know that one of the terms they use...for the females they add 'Madame' to their names and the guys 'Oga'. But there is nothing like 'auntie' or 'brother' except they are doing it on one on one basis. (B2, 5).</p>
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					<p>you call it in a way that...the person feels that it's because of what's happening around here that he or she is just trying to conform to what's obtainable then he or she feels okay (Vig, 1, 7).</p>	<p>But also, I think it has to do with where we are coming from -in [former Bank] you know we use a lot of 'ma' 'Sir', but in [Bank Beta] it's not like that. [In Bank Beta] it is everybody by first name even if that colleague is from the same ethnic group. (B2, 6).</p> <p>You should know what different people want. Just know how to balance it. It's not rocket science. Like me in the office, some people I am talking to them I know the kind of person that they are. If they are Ibos even the ED's and the rest you call them by their first name 'no qualms' but the Yoruba, even when they are just a grade ahead of you, or when</p>
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						<p>they are older than you when you call them [by their first name] they see it as an insult...that you are being disrespectful, so I try to....and even from their body language, you know that this person is not comfortable with me addressing her by first name or addressing him by his first name (B2, 6).</p> <p>It's not very very pronounced here, at least I haven't noticed but, you see, the Yorubas are always ethnically disposed.... they do it unconsciously. So, if you ask me generally or in terms of frequency, no, it's not very pronounced. But if you asked me if there is anyone I have noticed no</p>
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						<p>matter how little, yes. Very informal...yeah. (B2, 6).</p> <p>Very professional. But later on, I found out that when [name of a defunct bank] came to [was bought over by] [Bank Beta], you find the 'little clique of people' somehow, but it wasn't really... [name of defunct bank] was mainly Yoruba...you find them; they are always together somehow. I think because of where they were before. So, you find out that there is always a.... I don't know how to explain it now...you will notice the difference when you see a [name of defunct bank] staff and when you see an 'original' [Bank Beta] staff. So, the thing about.... when it was [Bank Beta] ... [Bank</p>
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						<p>Beta]... [Bank Beta]..., everybody was just on with their business, doing what they were supposed to do. Without having to look at any ethnicity (B2, 1).</p> <p>[My former bank] .... it's a Yoruba, based bank... errr...you have a lot of... because you even have older people, and they are already.... already set in their ways. So, they already have clique...clique...clique of Yoruba friends so...you will probably see one Ibo or one Hausa or, depending on the area where you are. For me when I was in.... because I was in Abuja for a long time, in [former bank name] Abuja, you will see ethnicity, it's glaring. I</p>
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						<p>mean even among the staff you see them speak a lot of...I mean whatever language it was... (B2, 1).</p> <p>But in [Former Bank], when I got in, I was a little confused...I was like.... what's going on...I kept complaining about it...you are in the mist of people, and everything they are saying is [dialect].... It's a bit tough to understand. So, ethnicity is very very strong in [former Bank]. But in [Bank Beta] it's really mild. You hardly find yourself speaking vernacular because you can be sacked for it. (B1, 1)</p> <p>In [My former Bank], someone said 'Good morning' to me. And</p>
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						<p>normally I used to say 'Hi, Good morning'. And then I said that to her. And she responded, 'When someone says good morning to you, you don't say Hi'. It's just to show you that in the system, you can't just say hi to anybody.... You can't say 'How are you' because I was discussing this recently...and I asked someone. He said 'good morning', and I replied 'How are you?', and then I asked him again 'are you offended that I asked you how are you?'; and then he said that it's not something to be offended about because I am in a corporate environment. But some people will take offence in it because you can't just say 'how are you'</p>
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						<p>to them....when they are Yoruba, and they are older'. Well, I didn't understand what he was saying, but I just took it in and said okay thank God [thankfully] I am not Yoruba I am Ibo (B1, 1)</p> <p>In [my Former Bank], sorry, if you don't say 'sir' to the Head (Manager), you may be punished, subtly, yes, you don't even know why you are being punished. You just know that something is just going wrong. You just know that they are moving you from one department to another department or from one branch to a very thick forest [underdeveloped areas]. So, you just have to be very careful with your 'Sir'</p>
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						<p>and 'Ma', but you will have to say It. You have to be very respectful (B1, 1).</p> <p>In [Former Bank] there are a lot of elderly people. This is unlike [present Bank] where you take them [which recruits them] from a young age so you [they] can mould them into what you [they] want. But in that one [Former Bank] you already have husbands coming in, wives with four children...and they are already.... already set in their ways. Well, I know siblings still work together and even in the same department. (B1, 1).</p> <p>The Head of the marketing team is a typical Yoruba man. And whatever errors I make he is going to try to</p>
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						<p>tribalise it. Maybe you come with a form, and you want me to treat, and I say, 'I can't treat because I am attending to a customer' he will say 'if it is [were] Tunde, Tunde respects elders' and all those kinds of things. Tunde will treat not because it is right, but Tunde will treat because maybe the person involved [customer] is the Oba [chief or local king] or the Oba's son. So, it means that Tunde respects tradition. That's why he is treating it. But me [for me] I don't know who they are, I don't know what the carry, as long as it's not in line with the bank's culture [policy] then I am not going to do it. Then after then, I was moved to Ojo branch. It</p>
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						<p>was terrible. It was terrible to the point that my manager will tell me 'Dorris, I am a Yoruba woman, and I will deal with you'. She tells me that on a daily basis. I pray I don't experience such in my entire life again. (B2, 2).</p> <p>But I must say that when [Bank Beta] merged with [former bank name] it was kind of difficult because this was also a bank that had a very strong ethnic leaning Management and of course that ethnic thing. (B2, 2).</p>
					<p>In Yoruba culture, if you are meeting a very aged man, you have to prostrate. But when you are meeting someone who is a bit older than you, you bow. Then when you are</p>	<p>The Head of the marketing team is a typical Yoruba man. And whatever errors I make he is going to try to tribalise it. Maybe you come with a form, and you want me to treat, and I say,</p>

				<p>meeting your age mate, you handshake. Likewise, in the bank too. The day I met with one of the executive directors of the bank, I did not handshake alone, I still had to bow. And it is still part of what I am saying; there is a consistency between the demands of our ethnic values and the demands of our organisational values here. They are therefore interrelated...so no matter how it is stated [in the organisation] we will still imbibe cultural values (A1, 1)</p> <p>It doesn't exist [ethnic groupings] but I know that there was a time that...you just see some people.....well you still see people in pockets here</p>	<p>'I can't treat because I am attending to a customer' he will say 'if it is [were] Tunde, Tunde respects elders' and all those kinds of things. Tunde will treat not because it is right, but Tunde will treat because maybe the person involved [customer] is the Oba [chief or local king] or the Oba's son. So, it means that Tunde respects tradition. That's why he is treating it. But me [for me] I don't know who they are, I don't know what the carry, as long as it's not in line with the bank's culture [policy] then I am not going to do it. Then after then, I was moved to Ojo branch. It was terrible. It was terrible to the point that my manager will tell me</p>
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					<p>and there....it exists in pockets here and there. People go like 'Ah, he is an Ibo guy, an Ibo guy is now the Head of that unit...thank God' then 'ah, that Ekiti [Yoruba] man is there now, thank God...at least now I can move one or two notches up'. (A1, 2).</p> <p>Like me, personally, I relate with everybody the same way. I don't have any particular attachment because you're from my place, I have a particular thing... as a matter of fact, my best friend here is a Yoruba guy (A1, 5).</p> <p>If you are an Igbo...Igbos are usually people that adjust very easily to first name basis in the organisation. But if you</p>	<p>'Dorris, I am a Yoruba woman, and I will deal with you'. She tells me that on a daily basis. I pray I don't experience such in my entire life again. (B2, 2).</p>
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					<p>see a Yoruba man...he struggles to adjust because of where he is coming from. So, if you see the Igbos they go 'Michael, Michael can you help me with this? But to me, it all depends on your intonation. The way you approach a person, the way you call the name. So if you call it in a way that it speaks of the fact that there is no respect, the person may get annoyed but when you but when you call it in a way that...the person feels that it's because of what's happening around here that he or she is just trying to conform to what's obtainable then he or she feels okay (Vig, 1, 7).</p>	
<p><b>Construct -The HR Role (When HR practices, processes and procedures support or constrain organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty)</b></p>						

Recruitment practices	The significance of an organisation's hiring processes for the preponderance of one or more ethnic groups.	Adegboye, 2013; Budhwar and Debrah, 2013; Nzelibe, 1986; Mustapha, 2006; Anankwe; 2002	<p>In [Bank Beta] you take them [new recruits] from a young age so you can mould them into what you want. (B2, 1).</p> <p>Nobody is interested in how old you are or your surname. In [Bank Beta] entry age is not more than 24 years. So, the age gap is not so much. If I am 22, for example, why can't I call someone of 32 by the first name? So, from that age bracket, you can't be too old. (B2, 2).</p> <p>The truth about [Bank Beta] is that even if there was, you will almost not notice it because we are all young kids getting to [Bank Beta] at the age of</p>
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						<p>21-22-23 when all you had to show for it [qualification for employment] was what you had upstairs. Basically that is what [Bank Beta] looks for...everyone is interested in what you are saying differently from what is the norm. (B2, 2).</p> <p>I think it has to do with a generational gap influenced by the focus of recruitment policies by both Banks. [Bank Beta] is fair and clear, they have a target, and they have a focus, and they stick to it. You know, when I was...during my [employment] interview [in Bank Beta] I met a friend, she wasn't taken [selected]. In fact, she had finished her master's from London. I was surprised</p>
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						that she wasn't taken and 90% of the people I came across in the HR department, they were all Yoruba....do you understand, so it came to me as a shock...it came to me as a major shock. From my own judgement I don't think I did better than this girl but.... oh...what exactly could she have done wrong for them not to take her up [on]? At that point, I realised that in [Bank Beta] they are not interested in your surname.... no. (B2, 2).
Appraisals		The role of employee performance evaluation in promoting organisational commitment or ethnic loyalty.			Even when you are good, it takes heavens for somebody to recognise your effort, and take you to the top there. Most people that get to the top there you understand, they have combined brains with wits.	For [Bank Beta] it's very transparent. In the sense that if they say, "meet this target", and you meet your target, you are going to get an "A" Star. It's your target; your figures speak for you. Majorly for those that are



				<p>They have also combined this with the fact that, I have somebody to talk to and ...I can do this. But then, if I am to be sincere with you, with my own experience, and with the bank I am in, most people stay five years on a grade. For example, there was a time for me in this bank I was stagnant for five years, and you begin to doubt your capacity as person.... can i...is it because I am not good...is it because I am not good? But I can't say there is a particular pattern I understand that somebody will climb to the top. If you ask me today that 'what do you need to do to get there?', I can't really tell you, you understand, and maybe</p>	<p>marketers and those from the other departments apart from the branch ...emmm...it's their KPI [Key Performance Indicators]. So, it's transparent in [Bank Beta]. But in [Name of Former Bank] it is the "Man-know-Man" (favouritism) thing. I mean you can do well if you cannot be [are not] an impolite staff to your boss because that's what they use to grade you. Its .... they always say, "it's an appraisal issue". (B2, 1)</p> <p>But if I want to come out straight, the best bet for him is to create an understanding between you and your boss. .... since your appraisal is</p>
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					<p>that's why so many people are not even motivated to go and do things because, you see people that are chattered, and they are just still there. They rot away in some departments, and you just see somebody move up, that's not chattered... and you know that that person is not chattered and he is in that same department, where you need chattered.... maybe a chartered banker. if you ask me I might not be able to tell you what I need to do to become an AGM [Assistant General Manager] in this bank. (A1, 2).</p> <p>While the inspection team are there, call him his name but after they leave,</p>	<p>involved you cannot be upset. (Vig 2, 1)</p> <p>That is how [Bank Beta] can be if you give it your all. You might have sleepless nights, get home very late and almost not sleep in your house. [Bank Beta] is....as you are putting in your effort you are seeing it [The outcome] everybody is seeing it. Nobody is saying because you did not greet me in the morning because you did not have the same views with me. (B2, 2)</p> <p>In [Bank Beta] I can contest my appraisal. I can, comfortably. I can even as much as take it to HR. I can recall my appraisal if I feel my boss</p>
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					<p>explain to him and make him see reason. I believe he will understand and go back to calling him 'Sir'. Like even if you are an older person than your manager as long as that person [manager] is your boss, you have to respect that person. She is your boss for that period in that place that you are. You know she is the one that will do your appraisal and everything. You have to show that respect...give respect to whom respect is due. (Vig. 1 , 10)</p>	<p>hasn't given me what I deserve (B2, 2).</p> <p>For me, I will try so much not to deviate from the bank's policy. I may not stick to it all the time, but I will try so much to respect it. I will try to be diplomatic about this. I will not try to...well I will try and balance both. Left to me if I were outside the bank I will do it my way, but within the banking environment, I will try to tune it down a bit, especially when there is something in it for me like a good appraisal (B2, 2).</p> <p>So, if your boss is the kind of person that wants you to call her 'ma' or say 'Madame' just say it and get what you want. Even if I don't need anything from</p>
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						<p>her, it doesn't mean I am going to disrespect her. I will still communicate to her the way i feel is right.... Organisation policy is first name but practice is not first name because you don't want to spoil your appraisal [laughter]. You say oh 'Madame Chike', 'Oga Chike', 'and Madame this', 'Madame Stella' Oga Bayo' That's the way they have been (B2, 5).</p> <p>Appraisals are so subjective...people suck up a lot just to get a good appraisal. See, believe me...yes.... like in [Bank. B] you know you have your KPI and all those things, but when they are defending these appraisals you will not be there, it's your boss. 80-</p>
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						<p>90% of the time it's your line supervisor's belief of you [impression about you] that really determines what you get in your appraisal. It's nothing else.... if you like summersault [do something extraordinary]. If she says this...because she is the one that will be there [Final Appraisal meetings], you will not be there to fight her, you will not be there to argue with her. (B2, 6)</p> <p>I have seen an instance when someone got a B [in an appraisal] because the supervisor told him that the people reporting to him always alter their register. Not his own register now, he is a supervisor, but people working under</p>
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						<p>him...their own register, you know when they are writing there is always alteration, that has been signed off. That was the excuse. And she was able to prove it at the divisional appraisal level saying, 'this is why this person should not get an A'. And everyone knew that it should not be that way because this is not directly under him because even the alteration had been signed off so that should not have been an issue. So, it's always very subjective. So, each time you try to manage your supervisor because you know its key (B2, 6).</p> <p>I believe I am already biased myself. Because I have some reportees</p>
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						<p>[reports] who seem headstrong [stubborn]. They do the work, but they don't flow. You may call them to come before they come. Meanwhile, there are those that will come around five times when you never even called them. When they come, they go 'Ah, Oga, have you eaten?' 'Oga mi [my master/boss] I am off to buy food, should I order food for you? Though they are doing their work, but there is a relationship. That one who comes around to say 'Oga mi have you eaten', 'Oga, this one you are not looking too well'. It's given that when the time of appraisal comes, you will remember that person first. (B2, 6).</p>
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						<p>Because it has happened [before]: there was a time I did appraisal for my subordinate, and I gave someone a "B", I gave another person an "A". And on the last day [of the appraisal] it was just weekly meeting, my boss just said, 'this guy is he, not your friend? And you gave him B' 'but is he not your friend?' 'I thought you guys are very close?' And I started thinking, and the appraisals had already been submitted, she [Senior Manager] had to recall it [appraisal], and we changed it there to "A". At that point, it has [had] nothing to do with performance or the job or whatever.</p>
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						<p>Some people are still very hard workers, yet they have not climbed [been promoted]. I can give you myself as an example. Some people like junior staff...sometimes...what is happening? Why haven't you...? I don't know why...so a times knowing certain people does also help. And when we do appraisals, which is what promotions is based on emmm...you try to make it objective...but that human factor is still there...you know it's what your team lead, or your supervisor feels. So, if you had issues with him or her before now [appraisal time], it will come to play even if you work very hard. So, you will need hard work, but you also need a</p>
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						<p>bit of human relations. (B2, 7).</p> <p>The people in charge, sometimes you just need to lick their boots....to just climb. Because guess what you do not also know what they are doing to also have climbed to where they are, you know, it's...some pills can be bitter swallows but, if can just ignore it. Just pretend that really you came to work. It may not really last for long but if you must confront the manager, let appraisal period pass, and you can confront him nicely (Vig 2, 7).</p> <p>People go like 'Ah, he is an Ibo guy, an Ibo guy is now the Head of that unit...thank God' then 'ah,</p>
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						<p>that Ekiti [Yoruba] man is there now, thank God...at least now I can move one or two notches up'. (A1, 2).</p> <p>But in [Former Bank], right from the reception, you feel it [ethnic culture] ...yes...I have suffered that a lot in [former bank]. Okay, my first branch, I was taken to a remote village...okay...ibo....i don't look Ibo, and then my name [...] does not give me out in the first place; but when they get to know that you cannot converse in Yoruba, they don't want to relate with you...yes....they rather relate with those they can speak with...those that understand their dialect. (B2, 2).</p>
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						<p>But in [Former Bank], right from the reception, you feel it [ethnic culture] ...yes...I have suffered that a lot in [former bank]. Okay, my first branch, I was taken to a remote village...okay...ibo...i don't look Ibo, and then my name [...] does not give me out in the first place; but when they get to know that you cannot converse in Yoruba, they don't want to relate with you...yes....they rather relate with those they can speak with...those that understand their dialect. (B2, 2).</p> <p>But there [First Bank] you almost don't even have a slot to comment on your appraisal. That means everything [career</p>
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						progression] lies with the perspective [opinion] managers have about you. (B2, 2).
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