

It takes a village: How nonprofit leaders work with communities to create
social change in Nigeria

by

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B.S., Lagos State University, 2012

M.S., University of Lagos, 2017

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country blessed with enormous natural resources, yet its citizens suffer chronic poverty. If you walk down any street in Nigeria and ask the people why poverty exists despite all of the country's resources, you'll hear two things: bad leadership and corruption. There seems to be a consensus in the existing literature that leadership in Nigeria lacks leadership and that leadership is crucial in overturning its fortunes. However, scholars argue that a specific kind of leadership is required, which is rooted in our African culture and values. Many young people have responded to this call for leadership by being civically engaged. Working through nonprofit organizations, these young people are mobilizing resources and engaging communities to create social change. But how do they do it? What is the process?

This study answers the question: how do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create social change? Guided by postcolonialism and social change leadership frameworks, I utilized a qualitative case study method to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. Six executive members of the Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI) participated in this study. I collected data through interviews, analysis of organizational documents, and a collaborative Google document. Data were analyzed using abductive thematic analysis. The findings revealed four themes: (a) leadership expressed as positional authority, (b) a need for leadership as a collective process, (c) social change leadership activities, and (d) cultural barriers to engagement. These four themes inform the overarching theme: Nonprofit leaders work with multiple stakeholders to engage in social change activities to create change in their communities.

The findings suggest that collaboration is central to the work of leading change. Nonprofit leaders collaborate with multiple stakeholders to offer mental health services, raise

awareness, and advocate for policy change. This collaborative approach to leadership is consistent with African values and principles like Ubuntu. However, there are cultural barriers to engagement that leaders must navigate. A key recommendation is that practitioners continue to identify and engage diverse stakeholders to progress on their communities' challenges. Leadership requires a collective effort, and leadership educators must teach leadership as a collaborative process. Finally, future research should explore culturally relevant practices that foster collaboration.

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Dedication

To my parents, Chinedum and Ozioma Ekwerike, who sold all they had to send my older sister to college, instilling in me the value of education. And to my older sister, Chizobam Ekwerike-Oluikpe, whose academic excellence and selflessness paved the way and inspired me to pursue this path.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The problem with Nigeria is simply a failure of leadership

– Chinua Achebe (1983, p. 1)

Background

I was born in Nigeria, and I lived the past 30 years in Lagos, the country's commercial capital. With a population of over 206 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation. It is not just our population that makes us great; Nigeria is blessed with various natural resources. Nigeria is one of Africa's highest oil producers, second only to Angola (Eregha & Mesagan, 2016). We have great economic potential, with an average population age of 18. It is not surprising that Nigeria has the biggest economy in Africa, with a GDP of \$448 billion-demographic dividends (World Bank, 2021).

Yet Nigeria is like a sleeping giant. Despite our enormous human and material potential, Nigeria is regarded as the poverty capital of the world. Over 90 million people in Nigeria live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than one dollar a day (Kazeem, 2018). *Upon say we dey inside river, soap dey enter our eyes. We dey inside river, yet we no see fish chop.* Scholars point to corruption and lack of leadership as the root cause of the country's socio-economic and political problems (Edoho, 2008 Ebegbulem, 2012). Nigeria faces insecurity, rising unemployment, lack of access to healthcare, and poor infrastructural development attributed to a failure of leadership (Agbor, 2011). Corruption, bad leadership, and unfulfilled potential seem to be consistent themes to describe African countries' challenges (Iheriohanma & Oguoma, 2010; James, 2008).

A Call Leadership

African leadership researchers believe that there must be more African-centered leadership for Africa to fulfill its potentials (Mbigi & Maree, 1995; Prinsloo, 2000). Anazodo et al. (2015) assert that Nigeria needs leadership rooted in her cultural values—a kind of leadership that adopts a bottom-top approach—to unlock her potentials and rise above current challenges. Across the country, young people are rising to this challenge by creating nonprofit organizations that address the needs of people in their communities. Indeed, this is part of my story: I set up a nonprofit organization called Postpartum Support Network (PSN) Africa in 2015 to improve access to maternal mental healthcare for women and families in Nigeria. The PSN organization was founded out of my frustration with the lack of attention on mental health and perinatal mental health, specifically by the Nigerian government. As of 2017, over 1,287 nonprofit organizations were operating in Nigeria (NNNGO, n.d.). Nonprofit organizations are therefore a strategic research site to study leadership practices in Nigeria. In this chapter, I will discuss the nature of nonprofit organizations in Nigeria and highlight this study's goal to understand how nonprofit leaders address many of the country's pressing challenges.

Establishing the Phenomenon

The purpose of scientific research is to explain why phenomena exist or how they come to be. However, Merton (1987) asserts that scientists must first establish the phenomenon before explaining why or how it exists. One way to establish the phenomenon is to conduct an extensive empirical literature review. A look at studies conducted on the phenomenon of interest gives insight into its actual existence, and what about it is yet to be known. Following Merton's (1987) advice, I began my study by establishing that nonprofit organizations exist and play an active role in the work of social change in Nigeria.

Nonprofit Organizations in Nigeria

Nonprofit organizations (“nonprofits”) are establishments unaffiliated with the government, whose missions do not include profit-making (Enyioko, 2012). It is imperative to note that nonprofit organizations are synonymous with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Nigeria. Therefore, these terms are used interchangeably throughout the rest of this study to refer to organizations distinct from government institutions and are not set up to make profits. Primarily, nonprofits engage in two forms of activity: (a) providing essential services to people in need and (b) designing policies and advocating for social change (Bibu et al., 2013). In Nigeria, nonprofits play a vital role in the socioeconomic development of the country, working in the areas of health, women and girls’ rights, democracy building, education, conflict resolution, cultural and environmental preservation, leadership, entrepreneurship, youth development, and human rights advocacy (Biswas, 2007; Enyioko, 2012; Odiboh et al., 2017; Omofonmwan & Odia, 2009).

The Nigerian constitution allows for the registration of nonprofits in Nigeria. Nonprofit organizations are regulated by The Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA). All nonprofit organizations in Nigeria must be registered by The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), which works alongside CAMA to supervise nonprofits’ operations and other business organizations (Centre for Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, n.d.). According to the Nigerian Network of NGOs (NNNGO, n. d.), the exact number of nonprofit organizations in Nigeria is unknown, although there were around 1,287 nonprofit organizations in 2017. This number excluded religious congregations, foundations, and other philanthropic organizations in Nigeria (NNNGO, n.d.).

The rise of nonprofit organizations in Nigeria has been mainly in response to the government's failure to meet its people's needs. Nonprofits' flexible structures, embeddedness in local communities, and focus on direct beneficiaries make them well-positioned to drive rural development in many communities in Nigeria (Enyioko, 2012). Many nonprofit organizations in Nigeria are volunteer-driven. Volunteers are often recruited from the communities in which the nonprofits are physically based or embedded. Staff recruitments are also locally based, with expatriates sourced when local experts are unavailable (Uzuegbunam, 2013). Nonprofit organizations source funding through membership dues, grants from local and international organizations, and individual donations (Besler & Sezerel, 2011; Enyioko, 2012; Uzuegbunam, 2013).

Nonprofits or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are themselves a Western construct; however, in Nigeria, they are the vehicle driving change efforts and are embedded in many local communities (Odiboh et al., 2017). Nonprofit organizations are at the center of recent change efforts in Nigeria. They are more active than other forms of local leadership that may take a non-Western form, such as traditional rulers. They actively engage communities and very likely incorporate local practices and cultures into their organizing efforts. Nonprofits are the most common means for organizing communities to battle poverty and related social problems (Odiboh et al., 2017; Omofonmwan & Odia, 2009; Uzuegbunam, 2013). For these reasons, nonprofit organizations in Nigeria are a strategic research site (SRM) to study leadership in a non-Western context.

The formation of nonprofit organizations in Nigeria typically starts with an individual's or group's dissatisfaction with an issue in society. This individual or group then makes an effort to create change. Such action evolves into an organization that often works with donor

organizations and other organizations and institutions to bring about the desired change (Omofonmwan et al., 2009). However, it is still unclear how nonprofit leaders facilitate these collaborations to make progress on their communities' challenges.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how Nigerian nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. The engaged outcome of the study was the development of a context-relevant community engagement guide. Although nonprofit organizations are a Western construct, they function as the most common means for organizing local communities to battle poverty and related social problems. Therefore, it is important to study them. To this end, my central research question is: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change? Specifying sub-questions include:

1. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?
2. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture's role in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?
3. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to progress on challenges facing their communities?
4. How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?

Significance of Study

Leadership development, education, and scholarship have been colonized. This bold claim is supported by existing literature. Most knowledge about leadership and social change facilitation is based on Western research that does very little to understand how leadership emerges or is enacted in non-Western countries (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). Western leadership

scholars themselves agree that leadership is shaped or influenced by culture (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Dorfman et al., 2012; Leonard, 1987; Muczyk & Holt, 2008). In the context of this study, culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, practices, and norms that bind members of a community or organization together as a unique and homogenous entity (Roberts, 1970). It is not surprising that culture plays a role in shaping Nigerian leaders' leadership behavior and practices (Onukwuba, 2018). This finding is similar in other non-Western cultures. For example, Bown and McClellan (2017) found in their study of culturally situated leadership among Ecuadorian women that culture shaped these women's leadership practices. Evidently, how individuals define leadership, in terms of how a leader should act or not act and how much influence they assert, varies greatly and is a function of their culture (House et al., 1997).

Considering that leadership behavior is shaped by culture, it is logical that the Nigerian culture shapes the leadership practices of nonprofit leaders in Nigeria. There is, however, a shortage of empirical studies on how leaders work with communities to create social change in Africa and, specifically, in Nigeria. In most studies on leadership conducted in Africa, Western scholars engaged in research grounded in Western theories without considering the African culture and our unique leadership practices (Blunt & Jones, 1997; Jones, 1986; Montgomery, 1987). The lack of studies on culturally grounded leadership practices among nonprofit leaders in Nigeria makes this study expedient.

Operational Definition of Terms

This section provides a brief definition of key terms used throughout this study.

- Nonprofit organizations: Nonprofit organizations ("nonprofits") are establishments unaffiliated with the government whose missions do not include profit-making (Enyioko, 2012).

- **Leadership:** In this study's context, I define leadership as a meaning-making process that involves a group of people working together to achieve direction, alignment, and commitment to achieve a goal (Drath et al., 2008).
- **Leaders:** The term leaders in this study refer to individuals who participate in leadership activities. These individuals may or may not hold a formal position of authority.
- **Social change:** Social change refers to a process in which human interactions and relationships create a shift in cultural and social systems over time, leading to lasting change in society.
- **Social change leadership:** Social change leadership is defined as activities and practices that a group of people engages in to create a shift in social and cultural systems to achieve a set goal.
- **Nonprofit leaders:** Nonprofit leaders in this study refer to individuals in senior management positions in registered nonprofit organizations in Lagos, Nigeria. Nonprofit leaders include founders of nonprofit organizations, chief executive officers, communication directors, and program managers.
- **Culturally relevant leadership practices:** For this study's purpose, culturally relevant leadership practices are leadership practices and activities that nonprofit leaders in Nigeria have found to be useful and crucial in the work they do to lead change within the culture and context of their local communities.

Assumptions and Limitation

I come into this study assuming that there is something unique about how leadership is produced and enacted in Nigeria. I also assume that Western institutions and ideas might influence our leadership practices due to our continued colonization and that that we might yet

have practices that are uniquely African. Finally, I assume that some of these practices might be a hybrid, combining Western and African ways of being or engaging.

My research approach and analysis were guided by postcolonialism, the social change leadership framework, and my positionality as an African social change leader. Postcolonialism is a critical theory that aims to call attention to the damaging impact that colonialism had on Indigenous people. It also aims to shift attention away from Western ways of knowing and being while illuminating indigenous cultures and knowledge (Bhabha, 1995). The social change leadership framework is an emerging leadership model that articulates the practices and activities that leaders engage in to create systemic change (Ospina & Foldy, 2005). Western scholars developed the social change leadership framework, but the practices and activities they advanced seem to be consistent with what I have observed in Nigeria.

This work is not without limitations. I hoped to conduct this study in person, travel to Nigeria, sit with nonprofit leaders, and chat about their work. However, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, I could not travel to Nigeria from the United States. The travel restrictions limited my access to participants and opportunities for extended field work. I was able to conduct this study remotely, utilizing the Zoom application to conduct interviews with participants. However, during the interviews, my participants frequently ran into network problems which sometimes affected the flow of the conversations. The lack of access to quality and stable internet was a challenge. Additionally, the 7-hour time difference created a challenge in regards to scheduling. On several occasions, I rescheduled meetings with participants because the original timing was not convenient for them.

I had also hoped to attend and observe at least two meetings between participants and stakeholders. However, due to the pandemic, participants were busy responding to the increased

requests for services and did not prioritize stakeholder meetings. As an alternative form of data collection, I invited participants to use a collaborative Google document to share reflections on their work and contribute ideas to a community engagement guide.

Finally, this study's findings and recommendations apply primarily to social change leaders and leadership educators in Nigeria. The activities and practices identified are situated in the Nigerian context and do not describe how leadership is enacted across Africa. That said, leaders across the continent who engage in social change leadership work may find valuable insights and ideas within this study.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study's background and context and established the phenomenon of nonprofit organizations leading social change in Nigeria. I outlined the research purpose and guiding questions. By understanding how nonprofit leaders in one Nigerian organization work to create social change, there is an opportunity to document critical beliefs, practices, and activities that can contribute to non-Western leadership perspectives and inform nonprofit leaders' culturally relevant development. I described key terms and addressed the assumptions and limitations of the study. In the next chapter, I review existing leadership literature on leadership and discuss the study's theoretical foundations.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how Nigerian nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. The engaged outcome of the study was the development of a context-relevant community engagement guide. Nigerian nonprofits drive change efforts and are embedded in many local communities. In conducting this study, I assumed that nonprofit leaders in Nigeria engage in social change work. I also assumed that these leaders engage in leadership activities and practices that are similar and yet distinct from Western leadership practices.

In this chapter, I will first discuss how leadership is understood from an African perspective. Then, I will discuss how the construct of leadership is framed within the context of this study. I will briefly discuss theories that align with a constructionist perspective of leadership. Next, I will present my theoretical framework, which integrates a model of social change leadership as a lens to study leadership activity, postcolonialism, and constitutive communication. Finally, I situate my research questions within my theoretical framework.

African Leadership Perspectives

It's hard to pinpoint what exactly is the African leadership perspective. Africa is a vast continent with diverse people and cultures. Therefore, it is almost impossible to narrow down a set of leadership practices or ideas that might constitute an African leadership orientation (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). However, African scholars have called for an African-centered approach to leadership (Mulunga, 2006; Mbigi, 2005; Mbigi & Maree, 1995). Scholars believe that African-centered leadership is the key to changing the fortunes of the continent. In what follows, I attempt to curate current knowledge about African leadership practices and principles.

When discussing African leadership, it is necessary to mention Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a Southern African word that means *I am because we are* (Mbigi, 1995). Ubuntu is an African philosophy that focuses on the importance of relationships and the interdependence between people. This philosophy shapes the way Africans engage in management and leadership (Mulunga, 2006). Central to this philosophy are openness, respect, trust, and cooperation (Mbigi, 1995). Leadership guided by Ubuntu is motivated by a deep concern for people while working to create positive change in society (Khoza, 1994).

Ubuntu-oriented leadership is characterized by community engagement and participation. It stipulates that individuals must be willing to set aside their personal goals to achieve community goals (Khoza, 1994). Malunga (2006) highlights principles of Ubuntu that guide the enactment of leadership in Africa: (a) sharing and collective ownership of opportunities and challenges, (b) the value of people and relationships over material things, (c) participatory decision making, and (d) leadership and reconciliation as a goal of conflict management.

Traces of Ubuntu leadership practices can be found in recent studies to understand African people's leadership practices. For example, the GLOBE study presents findings from sub-Saharan Africa that show that Africans scored high on a cultural dimension called *humane orientation to leadership*. This orientation is characterized by a preference for working in teams and taking a more participative leadership approach (Chhokar et al., 2007). In another study, researchers found that sharing, compromise, and consensus, as well as deference to rank, characterized leadership in sub-Saharan Africa (Jackson, 2004). For the most part, African leadership approaches reflect the privileging of collectivism. Bolden and Kirk (2009) also found that Africans engage in community-based leadership that emphasizes collective engagement, learning, and growth.

However, Africa's complexity and diversity suggest more than one story about how leadership is understood and enacted by Africans. Hofstede's (1980) study on culture described Africans as scoring high on the cultural dimension of *power distance*. That is, African cultures accept, endorse, and often depend on people holding authority, power, and status. Blunt and Jones' (1997) study also found that the African leadership style tends to be authoritarian, centralized, and bureaucratic. This leadership style or approach centers on the individual leader; people look up to the leader for guidance and direction. This style has led to what Van Wart (2005) calls "hero worship" (p. 6). Hero worship creates dependency when people view leaders as saviors who will do away with all the community's problems.

Haruna (2009) argues that hero worship and a leader-follower model are a function of colonialism. Many sub-Saharan nations have adopted the leader-follower model without taking into consideration our unique social and cultural context. Haruna calls for a return to a more community-based approach to leadership (2009). One goal of my study is to understand how nonprofit leaders in Nigeria make sense of the construct of leadership. My assumption is that the constructionist approach to studying leadership is more aligned with how leadership is enacted in Africa.

Constructionist Leadership Perspective

Leadership as a concept and area of study has attracted interest from scholars across different disciplines, including psychology, management, education, and sociology (Bass, 1990). Yet, there does not seem to be a consensus on what leadership is. While there is no universal truth about leadership (Billsberry, 2009), scholars have distinguished between the entity and constructionist leadership perspectives (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). In this study, leadership is understood and investigated through a constructionist lens.

From a constructionist perspective, leadership is a subjective relational process produced through the interactions of multiple individuals and influenced by context over time (Carroll et al., 2015; Fletcher, 2004; Ospina, 2017). Constructionist perspectives represent a departure from the Western-centric, entity-based perspectives that continue to dominate the discourse and study of leadership (Carroll et al., 2015; Dugan et al., 2015; Pearce & Manz, 2005). Viewing leadership through a constructionist lens shifts the focus away from individual leaders toward the processes and practices through which the work of leadership emerges (Fletcher, 2004; Ospina & Foldy, 2005; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Leadership research from a constructionist perspective seeks to understand how processes and systems of relationships produce leadership in a group, organization, or system. Through this lens, leadership is viewed as collective work and can be identified when members of a group find a path forward, commit to it, and adapt to changing circumstances (Drath et al., 2008).

Leadership theories and models that align with the constructionist lens fall within an emerging theoretical umbrella referred to as collective leadership (Ospina et al., 2020). Collective leadership expands the scope of leadership, upending traditional assumptions about the location of leadership, its purpose, and its outcomes (Ospina, 2017). Ospina (2017) explained the location of leadership as residing within a system of relationships. While it is acknowledged that individual decisions, actions, and interactions exist, the work or activity of leadership is produced collectively rather than within individuals. Varying contexts influence the nature and condition of the collective system, shaping how leadership happens and what form leadership activity takes (Ospina, 2017).

Constructionist, collective leadership perspectives offer insight for studying leadership from a non-Western perspective (Ospina et al., 2020). Next, I will discuss four collective

perspectives most relevant to my research: (a) shared leadership, (b) discursive leadership, (c) complexity leadership, and (d) the social change leadership framework. These four collective leadership perspectives can be viewed as either type of collective leadership or a lens to study collective leadership (Ospina et al., 2020). My conceptual framework draws significantly from the social change leadership framework. In this study, I use social change leadership as a lens to study how nonprofit leaders enact collective leadership in Nigeria.

Distributed Leadership. Distributed leadership (also described as shared leadership) approaches decentralize the idea of leadership from a formal position while moving towards a systems-centered approach (Ospina, 2017). Context becomes a critical element of leadership. In shared leadership, “the end result of leadership is a group or organizational context that facilitates the conditions for sharing responsibilities” (Ospina, 2017, p. 34). Group members influence one another to ensure the achievement of goals without necessarily leveraging formal authority (Drath et al., 2008; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Manz, 2005; Spillane et al., 2004). Facilitating shared leadership fosters interdependence and connectedness among team members, which could cause leadership to emerge from several parts of the organization (Ancona, 2012; Bolden, 2011; Edwards, 2011; Gronn, 2002; Yammarino et al., 2012).

Discursive Leadership. Consistent with other strands of collective leadership, discursive leadership moves away from leadership psychology’s obsession with a leader-centric approach (Fairhurst, 2008). Through a discursive lens, the object of leadership is not the individual leader; instead, it is the talk, or discourse, and interactions between people that contribute to progress on challenges that matter to them (Fairhurst, 2008). The essence of discursive leadership is captured in Robinson’s (2001) definition, which states that “Leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in the talk are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are

important to them” (p. 93). Thus, leadership can be located in talk and actions, which are not necessarily functions of formal authority or positions. The departure point is that leadership is not an objective phenomenon that is static and waiting to be studied. Fairhurst (2008) argues that leadership is socially constructed through the interactions of social actors. Leadership is created and negotiated through actions and language (Fairhurst, 2008).

Complexity Leadership. Complexity leadership complicates the notion that leadership can be studied independently of systems that produce it and challenges the dominant view of leadership as individual influence. Complexity leadership advances a systems approach to leadership (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). In complexity leadership, the work of leadership is to foster an environment that produces collaboration while accounting for the role context and culture play in making progress on the challenge. The role of a “complex leader” is to create conditions that foster collaboration between members of the organization. They surface multiple perspectives to make progress on complex challenges and realize that their actions alone are insufficient to create significant change (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Social Change Leadership Framework. In exploring how nonprofit leaders enact social change in Nigeria, social change leadership provides a useful framework for building new knowledge. The work of social change involves not just serving the needs of marginalized people; it aims to deconstruct current systems and structures that maintain inequality in order to create a more equal and just society (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Ospina & Foldy, 2005; Ospina et al., 2012; Ospina & Foldy, 2010). Organizations enact social change by focusing on challenging systemic problems and empowering marginalized groups and communities (Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2006). Social change organizations work in various spaces seeking to address issues of inequality, power, and access (Ospina et al., 2012). These organizations are often small,

grassroots nonprofits that are distinct from other nonprofit organizations in that they address systemic problems with a commitment to social justice (Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2006). According to Drath et al. (2008), the work of leadership in organizations is to facilitate direction, alignment, and commitment. A group is said to have direction when they have clarity and understanding of their goals and aims. Alignment is achieved when a collective organizes and coordinates resources that help them achieve their purpose. Lastly, commitment is evident when group members are invested in achieving the group's goal (Drath et al., 2008). The work of social change organizations, then, is to facilitate the direction, alignment, and commitment necessary to create "meaningful changes in the lives of marginalized people" (Ospina et al., 2012, p. 261).

The framework of social change leadership developed by Ospina and colleagues illuminates how organizations create social change (Ospina & Foldy, 2005; Ospina et al., 2012). The foundational assumption of the framework is that social change occurs when social actors holding values of social justice engage in practices and activities that build collective power, which, in turn, creates collective impact for social change (Ospina & Foldy, 2005). According to Ospina and Foldy (2005; 2012), social change leadership is driven by individuals' ability to identify systemic inequalities and envision a future where these inequalities do not exist. These leadership drivers (systemic inequality and vision of the future) motivate social actors to deploy leadership practices (collaboration, dialogue, use of culture and identity, and reframing) and engage in leadership activities (organizing, advocacy, community development, services). In turn, leadership practices and activities help build the collective capacity of communities (individuals and organizations) to create social change (changing structure, changing policies, changing thinking).

Building on this work and focusing on collective leadership practices that facilitate social change, Ospina and Foldy (2010) described five collective leadership practices that bridge differences between social actors in a complex system and inspire collective action. These practices include (a) prompting cognitive shift, (b) naming and shaping identity, (c) engaging dialogue about difference, (d) creating equitable governance mechanisms, and (e) weaving multiple worlds through interpersonal relationships (Ospina & Foldy, 2010). Further advancing their model, Ospina et al. (2012) identifies three valuable leadership practices that individuals within organizations leverage to build capacity for collective leadership: (a) reframing discourse, (b) bridging differences, and (c) unleashing human energies. Other scholars have advanced related leadership practices that foster social change. For example, Parés et al.'s (2017) proposed model of social innovation identified (a) equality, (b) inclusiveness, and (c) transformation as values and practices that facilitate social change. In the same vein, Quick (2017) highlighted two leadership practices that social change leaders leverage to create social change, namely: (a) fueling a public imaginary and (b) organizing inclusively.

My study draws on the social change leadership framework by focusing on the leadership practices and activities that nonprofit leaders in Nigeria leverage to create social change. Through a postcolonial lens, I am interested in understanding how similar or different these practices are to the aforementioned leadership practices identified through the study of social change organizations in Western contexts. As Ospina et al. (2012) argue, social change leadership practices are “collectively created, purposive bundles of activities that build leadership capacity [and] they represent a useful entry point to meaning-making and an appropriate unit of analysis” (p. 258).

In summary, distributed, discursive, complexity, and social change leadership perspectives share a foundational assumption that leadership is a function of a collective. The essence of collective leadership is reflected in the words of Freire (2000): “The revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in unshakable solidarity” (p. 129). This quote beautifully illustrates how the struggle for political and social change reflects an inextricably intertwined shared humanity. Similarly, Ospina and Foldy (2016) assert that the complexity of the problems facing our world today requires collaborations between individuals and organizations and not solely the managerial ability of a single individual. What is more, they argue that the very nature of leadership is plural, and its production is co-constructed by social actors working together to make progress on a challenge (Ospina & Foldy, 2016).

Collective leadership has consequences for understanding the nature of leadership and for the practice of leadership development. A collective leadership lens shifts the goal of leadership development from building the capacity of individual leaders to developing the capacity of a collective, such as teams and other stakeholders, in order for them to produce leadership (Cullen et al., 2012). This study aims to understand how Africans, specifically Nigerians, understand and enact leadership. There are existing studies and writings on this subject that suggest that both collective and individual discourses of leadership shape how Africans understand and enact leadership.

Theoretical Framework

This section reviews the integrated theoretical framework that informed my research questions and guided my research design and analysis. These theories are (a) postcolonialism, (b) constitutive communication, and (c) social change leadership. I extensively discussed social

change leadership in the prior section; therefore, I will first describe postcolonialism and constitutive communication. Then, I will explain how postcolonialism, constitutive communication, and social change leadership align conceptually to provide a foundation for this study. Finally, I will discuss how these theories inform my research questions.

Postcolonialism

To understand how social change leaders in Nigeria work to create change, I employed postcolonialism as one of my theoretical foundations. In this section, I will examine and outline key assumptions, concepts, and proponents of postcolonialism as gleaned from existing literature.

Postcolonialism as a critical theory examines the impact of colonialism on colonized societies. It evaluates the cultural, physical, and psychological effects of colonialism on former colonies. Finally, it criticizes colonialism and highlights the various ways colonized groups have resisted colonialism in a bid to reclaim indigenous lands and identities (Browne et al., 2005; Mundel & Chapman, 2010; Steinmetz, 2014). Postcolonialism can be defined as a field whose critical methods were “theoretically and historically fundamentally hybrid, the product of the clash of cultures that brought it into being” (Young, 2004, p. 10). While the term “post” literally refers to a period after colonialism, this is not the case—the effects of colonialism are still felt today as it continues to shape the lives of the colonized (Browne et al., 2005; Steinmetz, 2014; Young, 2004). As Smith (1999) points out, “to call the world as ‘postcolonial’ is, from indigenous perspectives to name colonialism as finished business ... There is rather compelling evidence that in fact, this has not occurred ... the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained” (p. 98). Postcolonialism, therefore, can be considered a theory that has come to life at

a time when physical colonization is on a decline, but its cultural power is very much alive (Steinmetz, 2014).

There are three core assumptions of postcolonialism: (a) European colonialism occurred, (b) the colonizers not only dominated the physical land but also trampled upon the culture and ideology of the colonized, and (c) the social, political, and economic impact of colonization can still be seen and felt today (Young, 2004). According to Mitchell (n.d.), postcolonialism has undergone and is undergoing three broad stages:

1. The consciousness that there is an enforced sense of social and psychological inferiority just by being a member of a colonized state
2. The agitation for cultural, ethnic, and political autonomy; and,
3. A growing awareness of cultural overlap and hybridity.

In my study, I will explore the third stage—hybridity—as it relates to how nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work to create change. I seek to understand how the cultural overlap between Indigenous cultures and imposed Western ways of being impact how leadership is enacted in Nigeria.

Tenets. Postcolonialism emerged from a multi-disciplinary perspective (Browne et al., 2005). These perspectives have culminated in the development of several key tenets, including (a) an urgency to recall and examine the history of colonialism and its present-day effects, (b) the need to critically evaluate the impact of colonialism and its modern-day manifestations, (c) the need to consciously turn the spotlight away from dominant cultures in a bid to center oppressed cultures, privileging Indigenous perspectives in creating new knowledge, and (d) the desire to develop our understanding of how race, racialization, and culture are framed in an era of neo-colonialism (Gandhi, 1998; McConaghy, 2000; Kirkham & Anderson, 2002). This study aims to

turn the spotlight away from dominant conceptualizations of leadership and center Indigenous knowledge by illuminating how social change leaders in Nigeria enact leadership.

My study will draw upon the work of Bhabha (1984), who is renowned for the introduction of three important concepts in postcolonialism, namely: (a) mimicry, (b) hybridity, and (c) ambivalence. Bhabha (1984) first introduced the concept of mimicry to describe the adoption of Western behaviors and cultures by the colonized Indigenous people. Bhabha (1984) described mimicry as follows. At first, the colonizers come into Indigenous communities asserting their “superiority” and demanding that Native people adopt Western cultures as a way to dominate and control them. However, when Native people begin to adopt Western cultures and exhibit Western behaviors, it becomes a cause for concern for the colonizers; it robs them of the idea that their culture is superior, seeing as the Indigenous people now share the same culture (Bhabha, 1984).

Bhabha (2001) also introduced the concept of hybridity. Hybridity occurs when colonized people adopt the dominant culture while holding onto components of their Indigenous culture. In Nigeria, our fashion and language are classic examples of hybridity. The most widely spoken language in Nigeria is Nigerian pidgin. This language is a fusion of local languages and English, the language spoken by our colonizers. Western English speakers are unable to comprehend pidgin even though it contains components of the English language. Referring to the concept of hybridity, Bhabha (2001) asserted that no one can claim pure culture or nationality as there is always an overlap between Western and Indigenous cultures. He opined that when the colonizers encountered the Indigenous people, not only did they influence the culture of Indigenous people, but they also were significantly influenced by the Indigenous cultures.

Finally, Bhabha (2001) introduced the concept of ambivalence. He stated that Indigenous people experience ambivalence towards the colonizers as they consistently have to negotiate the tension of appreciating the material benefits of colonization while dealing with the anger that comes with realizing that they have been ripped of national identity. I am particularly drawn to the concepts of hybridity and mimicry. I aim to explore if and how the concepts of hybridity and mimicry show up in the enactment of leadership among social change leaders in Nigeria, a people who have experienced and are experiencing the effects of colonization.

Constitutive Communication

Perspectives of communication have been primarily viewed as a linear, one-way process that involves a sender, message, channel, and receiver. Meaning, an individual encodes information and sends it through a channel to another individual, who then decodes it (Griffin et al., 2019). A transmission model of communication has shaped understandings of leadership communication. Fairhurst and Grant (2010) describe leadership communication to include the ways communication serves as a tool that facilitates influence. The study of leadership communication has revolved around how an individual can leverage communication to mobilize groups to achieve a goal. Research has often focused on the “right” thing to say—or not to say—to influence others.

A related perspective is the transactional model of communication, which views communication as a two-way street with both the sender and receiver sending and receiving information simultaneously (Griffin et al., 2019). This perspective considers the role of context and culture in shaping communication between parties; that is, context and culture impact the ways in which people communicate. The transactional model of communication has also influenced understandings of leadership communication. For example, some leadership theories

argue that followers have as much influence on leaders as leaders have on followers (Meindl, 1995). This bi-directional influence is a function of communication. Both transmission and transactional models of communication view communication as a tool to express social reality or communicate how people make sense of the world.

My study draws upon an alternative perspective: constitutive communication. Constitutive communication represents a departure from the dominant perspectives of transmission or transaction, viewing communication as not only capable of expressing social reality, but more importantly, as creating social reality (Griffin et al., 2019). Constitutive communication scholars assert that social reality is created by people-in-communication. They argue that the social and cultural world is not objective but rather constantly changing as people interact with each other. Interactions not only shape the world but also create it. Thus, social reality is continuously negotiated through the interactions between people (Baxter, 2005; Manning, 2014; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). From a constitutive communication perspective, conversations between people produce a social reality (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). According to Craig (1999), “Communication is theorized as a process that produces and reproduces—and in that way constitutes—social order” (p. 128). All other social processes (psychological, sociological, and cultural) are thus a product of communication.

Constitutive communication advances the capacity of communication to not only describe phenomena but also create them (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). It demonstrates how communication can mold our thoughts, identities, and social relations (Manning, 2014). This view of communication has its roots in social constructionism, which states that social reality is shaped by and created through people's interactions (Crotty, 1998). The growing influence of constitutive communication can be seen in the area of organizational communication.

Communication Constitutes Organizations (CCO) Perspective. Organizational communication scholars have begun to appreciate the role of communication in constituting organizations (Griffin et al., 2019; McPhee & Zaug, 2000; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor et al., 1996). The CCO perspective argues that communication is not only a tool used in organizing, but that organizing is *in* communication. Communication plays a role in creating and shaping organizations. Blaschke et al. (2012) posit that communicative interactions give birth and sustain the life of organizations. The communicative practices of individual members of an organization give legitimacy to the organization's very existence. In the words of Bisel (2010), "Communication calls organization into being" (p. 124), meaning that organizations cannot exist independent of communication; there is no organization without communication (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor et al., 1996).

McPhee and Zaug (2000) postulated the four flows of constitutive communication that explain the group processes that facilitate an organizations' communicative constitution. These four flows include (a) membership negotiation, (b) self-structuring, (c) activity coordination, and (d) institutional positioning (Griffin et al., 2019). While the four flows are analytically distinct, primarily for academic reasons, they do not flow linearly or exist independently in reality. Instead, they overlap and interact with one another as any message can simultaneously contribute to multiple flows (Griffin et al., 2019).

The first flow, membership negotiation, involves a communicative process to determine how people get to be part of an organization (Griffin et al., 2019). This flow often includes two processes: recruitment and socialization. In the recruitment process, individuals, through their interactions, develop strategies to attract people to the organization and vet them by establishing requirements that must be met before one can be part of the organization. As McPhee and Zaug

(2000) argue, the very process of membership negotiation constitutes organization, as one cannot recruit someone to be a member of nothing.

The second flow, self-structuring, involves individuals interacting to create policies and documents that shape members' relationships with one another and their contributions to the organization's mission and goals. Self-structuring could take the shape of policies, corporate governance documents, or organograms. These texts "call the organization into being" (Bisel, 2010, p. 124).

The third flow is activity coordination. Organizations are often driven by a mission or goal that individuals must work together to achieve. In the self-structuring process, texts are produced to guide what each member should be doing to achieve set goals. These documents are often not exhaustive, and there could still be ambiguity regarding how to achieve the goals. Thus, activity coordination occurs when team members interact with one another to make sense of what work is required to make progress on organizational goals (Griffin et al., 2019). There will likely be challenges in achieving these goals. Within activity coordination, team members must work together to solve these challenges. McPhee and Zaug (2000) argue, however, that this is not always the case. Sometimes individuals find it challenging to work together, compromising the mission of the organization.

The final flow is institutional positioning. This flow involves the interaction between organizations and external stakeholders at a macro level (Griffin et al., 2019). Stakeholders can include government institutions, labor unions, customers or beneficiaries, competitors or partners, vendors, and suppliers. As the organization communicates with other institutions or stakeholders, it establishes itself as legitimate, developing an identity and maintaining a position in a broader social system. McPhee and Zaug (2000) argue that it is almost impossible for any

organization to exist without interacting with other organizations. Through their interactions, organizations draw on one another's resources to achieve their goals and further establish their position in the larger system.

The four flows demonstrate the various ways through which communication constitutes organizations. The intersections of these four flows constitute an organization, and all four flows are essential for organizations to function effectively (McPhee & Zaug, 2000). These four flows address different audiences. For instance, organizations maintain their relationship with their members through member negotiation and with themselves, through policies, corporate governance, and charters in a communicative process called self-structuring. Through activity coordination, they manage work relationships between individual members and teams to ensure the achievement of organizations goals, and they maintain their position in larger social systems by interacting and collaborating with external organizations (Griffin et al., 2019; MCPhee & Zaug, 2000; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009).

While many organizational communication scholars have come to embrace the theory that communication constitutes organization, there are tensions about just how this process happens. Taylor et al. (1996) argue that MCPhee and Zaug's (2000) four flows theory is too simplistic and vague. They assert that the four flows take a top-bottom approach that does not account for how everyday conversations between people constitute the organization. Taylor et al. (1996) offer a theory of co-orientation, postulating that communication organizes when two or more people are in conversation in relation to an object. The object, in this case, can be a report, a policy, or a project idea. This bottom-up approach suggests that organizations are constituted through everyday practices and interactions (Taylor et al., 1996).

Bisel (2010) argues that while both the four flows and co-orientation are sufficient conditions for organizing, they are not necessary conditions for organizing. That is, organizations can emerge when both four flows and co-orientation are enacted. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes communication can disorganize. Evidence shows that poor workplace communication patterns can lead to an organization's collapse (Bisel, 2010).

In summary, CCO scholars advance the capacity of communication to not only reflect organizations but also create them. From a constitutive communication view, organizations are living things. An organization maintains life through the communicative practices of its members. From this perspective, leadership involves influential acts of organizing shaped by various communicative practices (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). In the next section, I discuss how postcolonialism, constitutive communication, and social change leadership work together to provide a foundation for this study.

Postcolonialism, Constitutive Communication, and Social Change Leadership: A Shift from the Dominant Traditions

In proceeding sections, I unpacked how social change leadership is rooted in collectivists orientation of leadership, which represents a shift away from traditional dominant conceptualizations of leadership. I also discussed the rise of postcolonialism from four European traditions to challenge the domination of Western ways of knowing and privilege Indigenous knowledge. Finally, I highlighted the emergence of constitutive communication as a pushback to narrow communication theories that have historically dominated the field. Next, I will discuss how integrating these three theoretical perspectives provides a deeper understanding of leadership communication. I will offer a framework by which to decenter dominant Western views of leadership communication.

Challenging Dominant Perspectives of Leadership Communication. Over the years, leadership and communication's dominant traditions have shaped thinking about both constructs and their relationship (Fairhurst, 2008). Leadership communication research continues to be dominated by a leader-centric view of leadership that views communication through a limited transmission lens (Fairhurst, 2008). This leadership communication tradition sees communication as mechanisms utilized by individual leaders to mobilize a group of people to achieve a goal (Ruben & Gigliotti, 2016). While this seems practical, it is overly simplistic and restricts the scope of leadership communication. Several scholars recognize this and are now advancing a more constitutive perspective of communication in relation to leadership (Collinson, 2006; Grint, 2000; 2005; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Meindl, 1995; Vine et al., 2008). This social constructionist perspective views leadership as a co-constructed process of collective meaning-making that is constantly negotiated by social actors (Collinson, 2006; Grint, 2000, 2005; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Meindl, 1995; Vine et al., 2008). Social construction emphasizes the central role that language and communication play in the leadership process (Barge, 2001; Barge & Little, 2002; Cronen, 2001; Pearce & Cronen, 1980).

From a social constructionist perspective, language both reflects reality and, more importantly, constitutes it (Deetz, 1992; Jian et al., 2008). The social constructionist view of leadership is consistent with the basic assumptions of constitutive communication. In addition to its ability to create or compose reality, the constitute communication perspective argues that communication also has the ability to unmask or reveal a phenomenon (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). Similarly, a constitutive communication approach to leadership enables researchers to reveal the nature of leadership in a particular social and cultural context through the lens and interaction of the social actors involved in the leadership process (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

Social change leadership and constitutive communication both share assumptions of social constructionism. These assumptions are best summarized by Pearce (1995) as found in Fairhurst and Grant (2010). Pearce illustrates social constructionism as a perspective in which “reality is both revealed and concealed, created and destroyed by our activities” (p. 89). This perspective challenges the leadership psychology view that privileges an individual and cognitive lens and reduces communication to a basic input and output process (Fairhurst, 2007). What is more, Fairhurst and Grant (2010) argue that a social constructionist approach to leadership communication provides an alternative to Western academic traditions that adopt a positivist approach to the study of leadership. While the social constructionist research approach to leadership communication seems to be inherently postcolonial in nature, this assumption remains unclear and contested.

Western perspectives dominate the current understanding of leadership (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). The constitutive communication approach to studying leadership focuses on social interaction. It provides a unique opportunity to research leadership in non-Western cultures, expanding our understanding of the communicative processes involved in the constitution of leadership. While Fairhurst and Grant (2010) suggest that this approach is an alternative to Western intellectual orientations to leadership, current studies in this area are still Western-dominated. A majority of studies have been conducted by Western scholars in Western contexts (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Fletcher & Kaüfer, 2003; Ospina & Foldy, 2010).

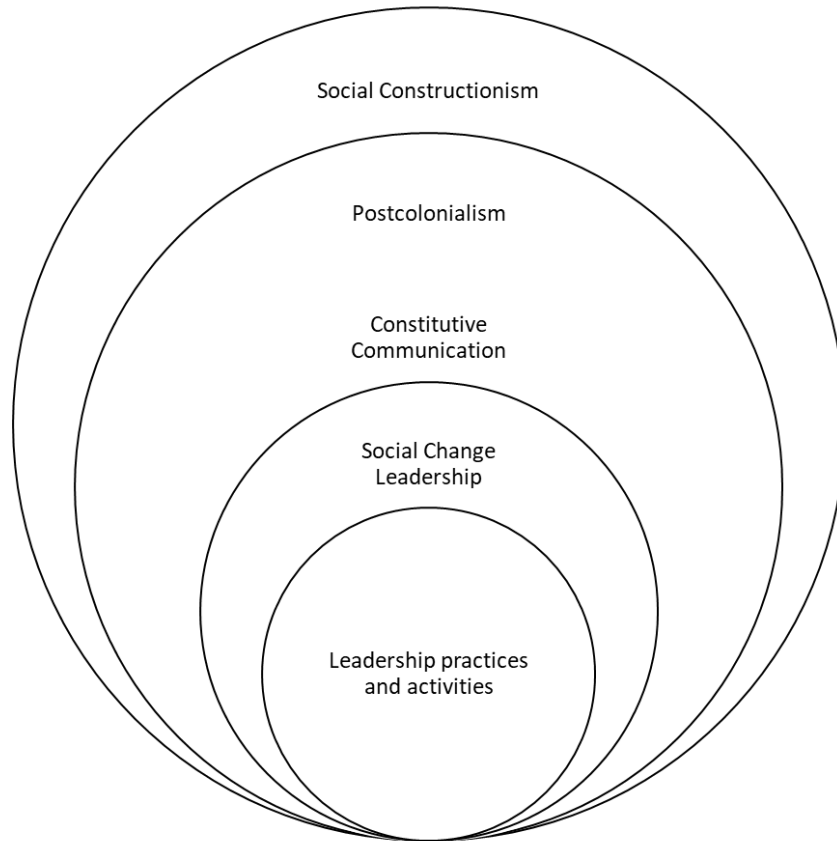
Postcolonialism challenges us to consciously turn the spotlight away from dominant Western ideologies and ways of knowing and invites us to advance indigenous knowledge (Gandhi, 1998; McConaghy, 2000; Kirkham & Anderson, 2002). It is important to note the assertion by Bhabha (2001) that no culture is “pure.” Western cultures and ideologies were

significantly influenced by their interactions with colonized people and vice versa. This has implications for my study. Nigeria was colonized by the British, a Western entity, and Nigeria's culture continues to be influenced by Western influences. While I aspire to uncover how social change leaders work to create change in Nigeria and gain insight into how leadership is produced in a non-western culture, it is possible that my findings will mirror what we already know about collective leadership in Western cultures (mimicry) or represent a combination of both Indigenous and Western practices (hybridity).

Figure 1 provides a visualization of how social change leadership, constitutive communication, and postcolonialism work together to provide a theoretical foundation for this study. In the following section, I will explain how my research questions are informed by the previously discussed theories and how they aim to respond to existing gaps in the literature.

Figure 2.1.

Theoretical Framework



Situating my Research Questions

The goal of my study was to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change in Nigeria for the purpose of developing a contextually relevant community engagement guide. My central research question is: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change? Specifying sub-questions are:

1. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?
2. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture's role in shaping their engagement

with the communities they serve?

3. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?
4. How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?

The central research question connects to my theoretical framework in two ways. First, it helps to advance one of the goals of postcolonialism: to shed light on ways of knowing that are distinct from dominant Western orientations, including our knowledge about leadership (Bhabha, 2001; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Secondly, it addresses one of the aspirations of the social constructionist leadership perspective: to move away from leader-centric orientations of leadership research in which scholars impose their own understanding of leadership onto their work rather than learning what it means in the context of the social actors enacting leadership. Observing how these nonprofit leaders work to create change will allow me to uncover specific practices adopted by these individual organizations. Analyzing these practices will aid my understanding of the extent to which they mimic Western practices or reflect hybridization (Bhabha, 2001).

Assumptions of constitutive communication and social constructionism suggest that a) human interactions shape the social and cultural worlds and b) culture shapes how humans talk and interact (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Many social constructionism studies emphasize how talk or discourse shapes how leadership is produced (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). However, very few studies pay specific attention to culture's role and the social-political context in shaping social change leadership work. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating culture's role in shaping how social change leaders enact leadership in Nigeria.

Regarding my third specifying question: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities? I am guided by the postcolonialism concepts of mimicry and hybridity (Bhabha, 2001). One of the effects of colonialism is a belief in the notion that the “West is best.” In participants’ descriptions of the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges, I seek to understand if participants tend to look to the West for leadership inspiration. Or, is there a yearning to utilize practices reflected in local culture?

My fourth specifying question draws on the ideas of constitutive communication to understand the role that communicative practices play in fostering collaboration between organizations in order to create change. McPhee and Zaug (2000) argue that an organization's existence depends greatly on its ability to form meaningful relationships with other organizations. Through these relationships, organizations draw on one another's resources to achieve their goals (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). Some scholars have investigated the conditions that facilitate these cross-organizational collaborations (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003; Jackson & Parry, 2008). However, these studies have also been Western-based.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the field of leadership communication by advancing the social constructionist perspective that views leadership as a product of meaning-making that is constantly negotiated through the interactions of social actors. In utilizing postcolonialism as a theoretical lens, this study also seeks to advance our understanding of leadership communication in non-Western cultures.

Summary

In this section, I reviewed leadership literature framing a constructionist, collective perspective. I outlined my theoretical framework, influenced by three theoretical perspectives:

social change leadership, postcolonialism, and constitutive communication. The proposed how the integration of these perspectives can provide a deeper understanding of leadership communication and offer a framework by which to decenter dominant Western perspectives. Finally, I discussed how my theoretical framework informed my research questions. In the next chapter, I will describe my research methodology.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how Nigerian nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. The engaged outcome of the study was the development of a context-relevant community engagement guide. Nonprofit organizations are themselves a Western construct; however, in Nigeria, they drive change efforts and are embedded in many local communities. These nonprofits are the most common means for organizing communities to battle poverty and related social problems. Therefore, it is important to study them. To this end, my central research question is: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change? Specifying sub-questions are:

1. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?
2. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture's role in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?
3. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?
4. How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?

This chapter presents a detailed description of my research design, sample and sampling techniques, procedures, and data analysis. I start the chapter by justifying my choice to utilize qualitative methods. I briefly explain how qualitative methods align with the study's purpose and its theoretical and methodological framework. Next, I provide a detailed description of my research design. In the research design section, I highlight and discuss my rationale for the case study. I extensively describe the research site and process of selecting participants for this study. I also provide rich details about how I collected and analyzed data.

Next, I interrogate my positionality, explaining how I locate myself within the study. I describe steps I took to ensure confidentiality, and finally, I detailed my process of ensuring rigor and trustworthiness.

Qualitative Approach

My goal was to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change in Nigeria for the purpose of developing a context-relevant community leadership engagement guide. The aim was to understand how people work together in communities to create change through the experiences of the social actors themselves. Qualitative research methods were most suitable as they enabled me to understand the experiences of people within a specific context and analyze the ways in which people make sense of their own experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017; Esterberg, 2002). Data gathered from qualitative studies were analyzed and interpreted to understand a particular phenomenon through the lens of the social actors involved (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative methods are most useful when researchers are keen on investigating a phenomenon as it occurs in its natural setting and through the lens of actors who are interacting with it (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 1998; Emerson et al., 2011; Katz, 2015). To understand how leaders work together to create social change, I relied on the accounts of social change leaders who are currently engaged within their communities.

Qualitative methods are rooted in the epistemological grounds of constructionism. Constructionism is based on the assumption that knowledge is co-constructed. That is, the assumptions one has about the world are a function of the interactions one has had with others. Reality then is merely a social process that emerges from conversations with others

(Crotty, 1998). With co-construction in mind, this study was also guided by principles of community-engaged research.

Community-Engaged Research

Community-based participatory research frameworks create the conditions for collaboration between academic and community partners across all stages of the research process (research done *with*, versus done *for* the public). At the heart of community-engaged research approaches are (a) community-driven priorities, (b) shared and equitable decision making, (c) co-creation of knowledge, and (d) a purpose of social or cultural change (Jacquez et al., 2016; Warren et al., 2018). Community-engaged scholarship shifts community members' roles from knowledge consumers to knowledge producers (Post et al., 2016). Community members are often portrayed only as beneficiaries of research outcomes. However, they have much to contribute to research, especially as they have first-hand knowledge of the community and its problems. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to involve community members throughout the research process, from the planning stage to the collection and analysis of data and even dissemination and application of findings. By collaborating with the community, researchers are better able to produce findings or outcomes that can make significant and positive changes in the community. Additionally, engaging community members affected by the issue leads to an increase in commitment towards solving the problems that the researcher seeks to address. When community members have a personal connection to the problem, they are more motivated to make progress on it (Post et al., 2016).

In employing a community-engaged research approach, participants selected for this study were not merely a site for data mining. On the contrary, they were actively engaged and involved in the quest to understand how social change happens in Nigeria. Furthermore, I

worked alongside them in the co-creation of a culturally situated community engagement guide, which was informed by the theoretical framework and data collected from this study. A copy of the co-created engagement guide is attached as Appendix C.

Research Design

My primary methodological approach was a case study. In case study method, the researcher analyses a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bound systems (cases) over time, through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case themes (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a multisite study) or a single case (a within-site case study) (Creswell, 2014). This method was particularly fitting as I sought to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change in Nigeria.

This research followed a single case study design. The case was a nonprofit organization in Nigeria working to create social change in the area of mental health. The participating organization and their work represented a bounded system existing within a larger system of social change organizations in Nigeria (Stake, 1995). The unit of analysis was the interactions between members of this nonprofit organization and the work practices they deployed to engage people in their communities. I utilized in-depth interviews and document analysis to gather information about how social actors within this organization are working to create social change in their communities.

Strategic Research Site

In chapter one, I followed Merton's (1987) advice and established the phenomenon. I described the nature of nonprofits in Nigeria and described some of their key activities. Once the phenomenon is established, Merton (1987) asserts that researchers should seek out strategic

research materials (SRMs). Merton (1987) defines SRMs as “the empirical material that exhibits the phenomena to be explained or interpreted to such advantage and in such accessible form that it enables the fruitful investigation of previously stubborn problems and the discovery of new problems for further inquiry” (p. 10). These SRMs could be locations, objects, or events that embody the phenomenon of interest. In the next section, I discuss the strategic research site for my study.

SRMs for my Study: Lagos, Nigeria, and Mental Health Nonprofit. Considering my research focus was on understanding how nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work to create change in their communities, it was imperative that the research site I chose exhibited the phenomenon of working with communities to create change. To this end, I selected individuals who worked with a nonprofit organization actively engaging communities in Nigeria to create change.

Additionally, I selected a unique organization working on a difficult challenge that requires the deployment of multiple leadership practices. The organization is located in Lagos, Nigeria. The choice of Lagos is strategic as it is not only the most populous city in the country with over 25 million people, but it is also the most ethnically diverse with over 250 ethnic groups (World Population Review, 2021). To understand how change happens in Nigeria, the most populous Black nation in the world, no other site is as strategic as Lagos. While Lagos is the country's commercial hub and is often referred to as a mega-city, 66% of its population lives in slums with no access to healthcare, clean water, roads, or electricity (World Population Review, 2021).

Hence, I selected a mental health nonprofit in Lagos as a strategic research site for this study. Mental health nonprofits work to raise awareness about mental illnesses and provide support for individuals dealing with mental health conditions. This mental health nonprofit was a

strategic site for understanding how nonprofit leaders work to create change in Nigeria as they work around a unique challenge.

Mental health issues in Nigeria are a significant social challenge. Reports indicate that one in four Nigerians suffer from a mental health challenge, yet mental health remains a taboo topic and receives very little attention from the Nigerian government (Wang et al., 2007). In Nigeria, only thirty percent of individuals who experience mental health challenges have access to mental healthcare (Wang et al., 2007). Mental health nonprofits in Nigeria are then taxed with the complex challenge of increasing awareness of mental health conditions, increasing access to mental healthcare, and advocating for the rights of people dealing with mental health challenges. Working to make progress on this complex challenge requires the deployment of various leadership practices and the engagement of different stakeholders. These conditions situate mental health nonprofits as strategic research sites as I strive to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create change. To this end, Mentally Aware Nigeria (MANI), a leading mental health nonprofit organization based in Lagos, Nigeria, was selected as the strategic research site for this study.

Mentally Aware Nigeria (MANI). Keeping with principles of community-engaged scholarship, I asked the organization's executive director to share with me how they would like to be described. To this end, the executive director sent me an “about us” document that provides a detailed description of the organization:

MANI was registered as a nonprofit organization at the corporate affairs commission of Nigeria on December 31st, 2015 but launched its campaigns on the 11th of June 2016. The founder, Victor Ugo, was diagnosed with major depressive disorder in his final year in medical school in 2014, and this is the inspiration behind the Initiative The

organization has grown to establish a network of thousands of others with similar experiences who engage in the organization's advocacy campaigns offline and online, volunteer on the suicide hotline and participate in various mental health education programs for employees, schools and force personnel across the country.

MANI's mission is to play a premier role in promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness in Nigeria. They envision a country where people are totally aware of how to prevent, identify and treat mental health conditions, and stigma is a thing of the past; where mental health is a fundamental part of the health care system, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services are universal and effective; where mental health professionals are trained in the best educational institutions in the region; where top research brings light to the specific issues of Nigeria and is broadly socialized.

In three years, MANI provided emergency support to over 30,000 people living/coping with a mental illness, including but not limited to de-escalation of distressing situations, suicide intervention with the aid of their talk lines with adequate and appropriate referral to mental health professionals. MANI has gained a reputation as one of the most trustworthy and largest social media resources for mental health in Sub-Saharan Africa, with their combined following reaching almost 50,000 very active followers. MANI has also built a mobile application that aims to promote better mental health and better access to mental health professionals. The app is expected to improve further access to mental health professionals as it will be housing the largest database for mental health

professionals in Nigeria. What is more, they have trained more than 12,000 students in high schools across the country, along with more than 3000 parents and teachers.

In recognition of their work, MANI was selected as one of the 100 sparks of hope across the world by THE ELDERS (an organization of past world leaders founded by Nelson Mandela) and was presented by Graca Machel to the United Nations General Assembly in a book published by the Elders. They also won the Best Civil Society Organization Category of the 2017 Nelson Mandela-Graca Machel award for innovation.

Since its inception, MANI has established 14 state chapters across Nigeria. These chapters are made up of more than 1500 young people who are part of a safe community that allows them to share their struggles without fear of stigma or discrimination and also with a better chance of getting appropriate help. MANI also provided mental health support for over 3000 Nigerians from March to August 2020 with our COVID-19 MH Virtual Counselling. Over 15,000 young people from English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa participated in their COVID-19 programs (MANI, 2020).

Recruitment

I recruited participants for this study using a purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique allows me to select individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Small, 2009). This was especially fitting as this study required participants who are knowledgeable and experienced with leading social change efforts in Nigeria and who collectively represent a range of styles. I interviewed people using a variety of practices and ideas to work within communities on a single issue. As a non-probabilistic sampling method, purposive sampling enabled me to maximize efficiency

and validity (Morse & Niehaus, 2009; Small, 2009). It was efficient, allowing me to select individuals who were not only available and willing to participate, but more importantly, they were able to communicate their experiences in a way that was reflective (Bernard, 2002; Bradley, 1979). Purposive sampling can be considered a valid approach as it allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, which is one of the goals of qualitative research (Patton, 2002).

Gaining Access and Recruiting Participants. I recruited individuals who were part of the MANI organization. To gain access to these individuals and the organization (Duneier, 2001), I leveraged my influence and relationships in Nigeria's nonprofit sector. I am a relatively well-known social change leader in Nigeria. My organization, Postpartum Support Network (PSN) Africa, has received a lot of recognition for the work we do to provide mothers access to maternal mental healthcare. To achieve my organization's mission, I have collaborated with a number of nonprofits in Nigeria. Additionally, I previously hosted a one-hour weekly video chat on Instagram called "Social Change Leadership with Kachi," where I interview social change leaders from across the continent of Africa, talking about their challenges and how they are exercising leadership. More importantly, I am an acquaintance of the founder of the organization. I am also friends with the executive director. In the past, MANI and PSN Africa have explored opportunities for collaboration around mental health policy advocacy. I sent a message to the executive director informing her about my desire to work with them on my dissertation. She was immediately open to the idea, and we scheduled a call. On the call, she asked questions about their role and the value of the research. I informed her of my desire to interview every member of the executive team. She gave verbal

consent and informed her team about the research project. Individual executive team members also gave their informed consent.

Upon gaining access to the organization, I realize that despite being an insider and having built a rapport over the years with this community of social change leaders, my work might not be totally welcomed, and I might not have their complete trust (Duneier, 2001; Becker, 2001; Emerson et al., 2011). So, during my engagement with the MANI executive team, I sought to stay humble and clearly explain the goal of the study to each member. It felt important to me to help participants understand how they contributed to valuable findings that can support their work and help other nonprofit leaders. I discuss my positionality more fully later in the chapter.

Per my protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I obtained a recorded oral consent from each participant in the study. The less formal verbal consent was appropriate in this case because it increased access to participants and reduced barriers to participation. In total, six individuals participated in this study.

About the Participants. The participants were part of MANI's executive team, including the chief operating officer, communication director, director of counseling services, head of training services, chapter lead, and head of graphics and design. Each executive member works with a group of volunteers within the organization and interfaces with different external stakeholders. For example, the director of clinical services works with 300 counselors who report directly to them. The clinical director also works with external partners like other nonprofits to provide therapeutic support to individuals in need. In working with volunteer counselors, the clinical director relies not only on their positional authority but also on other practices that build relationships and facilitates inclusion.

Similarly, the chief operating officer (COO) is responsible for MANI's overall operation and works across boundaries with all the other departments within the organization. The COO is also responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships with businesses as well as the execution of grants. The participants' varied responsibilities within MANI and the various groups and stakeholders they work with provide an opportunity to understand the range of activities and practices that characterize their work to create social change.

For the sake of confidentiality, these participants are referred in this document using the following aliases: Bolu, Ugochi, Opeyemi, Tim, Ola, and Mayowa. To maintain a minimum level of internal confidentiality, the order of names listed does not align with the previously listed job titles. A complete explanation of ethical considerations is outlined later in this chapter.

Data Collection

This section describes the various data collection techniques used during the study. The case study method involves in-depth data collection through a variety of data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). In this study, due to the limitations of COVID-19, I utilized interviews and documents.

Interviews. I utilized a semi-structured interview to collect data during the study. The interview method of data collection is particularly fitting as it enabled me to learn about participants' experience with leading social change in Nigeria (Weiss, 1995). Interviewing is regarded as one of the most prevalent and powerful methods used by researchers to understand participants' experiences (Fontana et al., 2008). I developed an interview protocol based on my research purpose and questions (see Appendix A for full interview protocol). In Table 3.1, I show how the questions I asked align with my research questions and purpose.

Sample questions included, “How do you describe the change efforts you are leading?” “Can you think of a time recently when led a change effort?”

I asked questions that invite people to share concrete incidents (Weiss, 1995), like “Tell me about a specific project where you engaged stakeholders. Could you walk me through it?” Asking participants to share concrete incidents provided me with detailed insights about leadership and social change. I subjected all of my interviews to the “visualizability test” (Weiss 1995), which means I was able to discern when I had adequately covered a topic or set of questions based on the information I received. I listened for data like who was involved, when, what happened, what moved the plot forward, and how the speaker felt at different moments in the story.

Each interview was 45-60 minutes in length. Consistent with the nature and strength of semi-structured interviews, I followed my protocol but allowed for flexibility. As a researcher, I tailored my questions to each participant in order to gain a deeper understanding of their responses (Weiss, 1995). This flexibility enabled me to pick up on markers, which are “non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, sighs, pauses or laughter, as well as logical contradictions that elude resolution, potent silences ... that gives me insight into what might be important to the participant” (Pugh, 2013, p. 51). At the end of each interview, I sent a debriefing email to participants to thank them for participating and reminded them that the information shared during the interview was confidential (See Appendix B for a copy of the debriefing statement).

Due to travel restrictions and social distancing mandates resulting from the global pandemic, I conducted interviews via the Zoom virtual communication platform. This approach is contextually relevant as participants were familiar with the Zoom platform; they

utilize Zoom to work remotely with their own team members. The Zoom application automatically transcribed the interviews. However, I listened to each of the recordings and made corrections where necessary to the transcription. In total, the transcription yielded 119 pages of data.

Documents. According to Yin (1994), case studies require at least two data sources. Besides interviews, I analyzed an organizational document to gain insight into how leaders at MANI were working to create social change (Merriam, 2009). I requested and received an “About Us” document from MANI. This document provided rich information about MANI’s current work, its mission, and vision, as well as its engagement strategy. During my engagement with MANI’s executive leaders, we utilized a collaborative Google document to generate ideas for the community engagement guide. Participants' ideas and comments shared on this document were also analyzed and constitute a data source for this study. Documents are an important research site as they “reflect their authors’ interests and perspectives” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 130). I utilized document analysis to triangulate data, increasing the credibility of the study (Eisner, 1991).

Table 3.1.*Matrix of Research and Interview Questions*

Research Question(s)	Form of Data Collection	Interview Questions or Other Protocol
How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change?	One-to-one interviews	Tell me about a time you worked with members of your community on a project; how did you bring them on board? What was most challenging?
	Documents	
		How do you describe the change efforts you are leading?
		Can you think of a time recently when led a change effort? Can you walk me through it? What happened? What happened next? Who was involved?
How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?	One-to-one interviews	How would you describe the kind of leadership required to create social change?
		What does leadership mean to you?
How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the role of culture in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?	One-to-one interviews	How would you describe the kind of leadership required to create social change?
		How would you describe the role culture plays in shaping your engagement with communities?
		Could you walk me through instances in which you changed your engagement strategies to adapt to the cultural context? What did you do and how?

How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?	One-to-one interviews	How would you describe the kind of leadership required to create social change? Could you give me an example of such leadership and the change it generated? What happened? Could you walk me through it?
How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?	One-to-one interviews Documents	Tell me about a specific project where you engaged stakeholders. Could you walk me through it? When did it start? Then what happened? What difference did it make?

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I utilized thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process of looking through qualitative data to identify patterns and generate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The identified themes were then used to address the research questions. Thematic analysis typically involves six stages: (a) familiarization, (b) coding, (c) generating themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing up results.

The first stage, familiarization, starts in the process of data transcription. I spent time listening to the recording, familiarizing myself with the data, and then personally transcribing it (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Emerson et al., 2011). As I did this, I made notes about how I felt about some of the information my participants shared with me. Next, I generated codes. A code is “a word or short phrase that captures and signals what is going on in a piece of data in a way that links it to some more general analytic issue” (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 146). I looked through the transcribed data line by line to get as close as possible to the data. I then highlighted sentences or paragraphs that stood out to me, copying and pasting them on a separate word document. The next steps involve generating categories. In doing this, I adopted the abductive approach, which includes induction and deduction.

Abductive analysis is the study and systematic analysis of deviant or surprising facts through the lens of different existing theories. The purpose is to reconstruct existing theories or create new theories when existing theories fail to explain the surprising phenomenon (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). More specifically, “abductive analysis aims at generating novel theoretical insights that reframe empirical findings in contrast to existing theories” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 174). Abductive analysis requires in-depth knowledge of multiple theories; researchers can only tell what is missing or anomalous in an area of study when they are very

familiar with the theoretical traditions in that area (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). When a researcher finds the anomalous case, they are able to extend existing theories in creative new ways or stimulate insights into how the anomalies observed can lead to the generation of new theories. The generation of theories through abductive analysis enables the generalization of causal links and descriptions observed in specific empirical instances (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

Abductive analysis leads to theoretical refinement, which can be considered a form of theoretical generalization. Lewis and Ritchie (2003) made a distinction between inferential generalization and theoretical generalization. Inferential generalization refers to a proposition that can be generalized to places and groups other than those studied. Theoretical generalization refers to ideas developed in a study that can lead to the generation and refinement of theory. The ways in which researchers use literature and other sources to construct their arguments strengthen or weakens the legitimacy of their claims (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003).

Abductive analysis draws on some of the foundations of grounded theory in that it involves a rigorous iterative inductive process that allows the generated data to suggest themes that facilitate the construction of new theories. Abductive analysis, however, represents a point of departure from grounded theory in the role theories play. Unlike grounded theory, where researchers are expected to analyze the data without applying any theoretical lens, abductive analysis argues for data to be analyzed through the lens of existing theories (Timmermans & Tavory 2012). To create new theories, the researcher must be sure that no other existing theories explain the observed phenomena. Through the process of revisiting, defamiliarizing and alternative casing, researchers seek out surprises or anomalies in the data that are not accounted for by existing theories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

To reiterate, I utilized the abductive approach to data analysis, which includes both induction and deduction. The inductive approach involved identifying categories that were closely represented in the data without the application of a theoretical frame (Patton, 1990). For example, I developed the categories under theme one (*leadership expressed as positional authority*) using exact words or phrases from the data to ensure they literally reflect participants' understanding of leadership. These categories include: (a) providing direction, (b) emotional intelligence, (c) be firm, and (d) be a role model.

For the deductive approach, I analyzed the data and identified categories that could be explained by my theoretical framework. I tested the generated themes against the data and refining them when I found contradictions. I applied this process again when I identified themes. I consistently used theory to inform or refine themes while ensuring that I worked closely with the data (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Theme two and three are examples of how my theoretical framework informed theme development. These themes (*a need for leadership as a collective process* and *engagement in social change leadership activities*) were informed by constructs and ideas advanced by Ospina and Foldy (2015) in their social change leadership model. However, while these two themes were informed by existing theories, I reviewed the themes to ensure that they accurately represent my data.

These themes enabled me to generate hypotheses about how nonprofit leaders work to create social change in Nigeria. Next, I tested the hypotheses I generated against the data and through the lens of existing leadership theories. I refined and tested my hypotheses while also looking for negative cases to disprove them. This process involved looking through the data repeatedly to ensure that I had not missed anything and that the identified themes actually appeared in the data. This process enabled me to learn something new about how nonprofit

leaders facilitate social change in Nigeria, which I discuss in chapter five through traditional perspectives of leadership, social change leadership theory, and postcolonialism.

Table 3.2 highlights the timeline of this research project.

Table 3.2.

Timeline of Procedures

Activity	Task Analysis	Timeline
1: Obtain IRB approval	1) Complete IRB and submit for approval	Sept. 25-Oct. 9, 2020
2: Recruit research participants	1) Contact Mentally Aware Nigeria requesting participation	Oct. 9-Oct. 15, 2020
3: Send follow-up emails and call willing participants	1) Secure verbal consent and thank participants for being part of the study	Oct. 19-Oct. 23, 2020
4: Conduct online interviews	1) Schedule interviews 2) Conduct two interviews with each participant	Nov. 2-Dec. 18, 2020
5: Attend team meetings and make observations	1) Secure dates of meetings to observe 2) Request Zoom invite	Nov. 2-Dec. 18, 2020
6: Transcribe interviews	1) Download Zoom Transcriptions 2) Review and revise transcripts for accuracy	Nov. 2-Dec. 31, 2020
7: Review and analyze interview transcripts and observation notes	1) Read and review transcripts 2) Manually analyze transcriptions 3) Manually analyze observation notes 4) Triangulate data 5) Carry out member checks	Jan. 1-Jan. 31, 2021

Researcher Ethics & Positionality

In this section, I described some of the tensions I navigated. Specifically, I held tensions around my positionality and ethical responsibilities to my collaborators. I explain how

community-engaged research and ideas from postcolonialism informed some of my decisions in conducting this study.

Positionality

I consider myself to be a cultural insider, having been born and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, the site of the study. However, I may also be considered an outsider to some people. I am Igbo, one of the over 300 ethnic groups in Nigeria. Lagos is regarded as the “melting pot of Nigeria” as it is home to all of these tribes. However, the Yoruba are still the majority, and Lagos is still very much a Yoruba State. Therefore, it is very likely that participants may have been members of a different ethnic group, most likely Yoruba. While I was conscious of this difference during my interviews, I do not believe it had any adverse impact on my interactions with the participants.

However, my identity as a nonprofit leader in the mental health sector may have impacted the flow of the interviews. Having worked in the mental health nonprofit sector for over six years, I was relatively known to some participants. Throughout the activities of this study, I sought to be reflexive, observing the ways participants reacted to me and how their knowledge of my nonprofit work influenced their response (McCorkel & Meyers 2003; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). I observed this reactivity when participants referenced my organization’s work when talking about their own challenges (Katz, 2015).

Reactivity also refers to the way participants alter their behaviors because of my presence or because they know our conversations are for research purposes. I sometimes felt like participants felt some pressure in responding to my questions, especially around their understanding of leadership. I often had to remind participants that there were no right or

wrong answers, and the interview was in no way a test of their understanding of leadership. I also endeavored to learn and understand the local meaning (Emerson et al., 2001) by not making assumptions but rather asking clarifying questions to allow participants to explain what things mean in their own language. For example, during an interview, a participant mentioned that most mental health nonprofits in Nigeria are struggling because “they are not sitting well.” Rather than assume what they meant, I asked what they meant by “not sitting well.” The participant then explained that mental health nonprofits in Nigeria were underfunded had no access to resources. At this point, they said, “Even your own organization, Kachi, I am sure you guys are not sitting well, I mean when compared to other nonprofits focused on gender-based violence and the likes.” In this comment, they insinuated that PSN Africa is not financially stable due to a lack of funding for mental health nonprofits.

I must also reiterate that my organization, PSN Africa, has previously collaborated with MANI. Hence, I care deeply about the work that MANI does and the working relationship I have built with them over the years. My interest in mental health motivated my decision to collaborate with MANI on this research project. I believe that by gaining an understanding of activities and practices that characterizes MANI’s social change efforts, I can, in the future, help other nonprofit leaders improve their social change and community engagement work.

In this study, I made a conscious effort to highlight positive practices and critical activities that leaders at MANI described as helping to move the needle on change. In my analysis and discussion, I made sure I represented the organization and their engagement in a way that dignified their work. Preserving the dignity of my participants and collaborators is consistent with postcolonialism. In my quest to shine a light on Nigerian leadership practices

and deconstruct colonialism, I tried to avoid perpetuating the very violence that has characterized research on Indigenous people by Western scholars (Smith, 2013).

Confidentiality

Regarding confidentiality, from the initial conversations I had with participants, they asked that I use pseudonyms in place of their names. However, they requested that I include the organization's name (MANI). As organizational leaders, the participants viewed this study as an opportunity to shine a light on their work. I thought it was important to honor their wishes because they do critical work and deserve recognition for their efforts. Using a pseudonym in place of the organization's name would constitute erasure.

What is more, the nonprofit space in Nigeria is very small. Social change leaders seem to know each other by virtue of being members of the same groups or participating in the same leadership development programs. This makes it difficult to maintain internal confidentiality, which refers to a researcher's responsibility to not disclose the identity of participants in the study (Tolich, 2004). I grappled with these complications by explaining to the participants that I could not ensure full confidentiality and reminding them of their rights to revoke consent at any point in the study if they feel uncomfortable (Thorne, 1980). Throughout the research process, I took steps to ensure the anonymity of characters mentioned by the participants, be they patients, clients, or other community members who did not consent to the study by using pseudonyms. I did this by removing any identifying information that can be traced to non-participants.

Reliability and Replicability

To ensure reliability, I carefully considered my descriptions and explanations to reflect the "right ones." I did this by articulating how I came about my interpretations and showed

how they are thoroughly grounded in the data. I reviewed alternative interpretations and showed how the ones I selected best accounted for all of the data. The reasoning behind every conclusion I also strived to make my explanations clear and accessible. In the end, a reader of this study should be able to draw clear connections between my theoretical framework, research questions, choice of methods, analytical decisions, findings, discussion, and final engaged product.

In interpreting my findings, I asked myself the question: How else can this phenomenon be interpreted? I came up with multiple interpretations by looking at my findings through different theoretical lenses (Small, 2009). I also ensured reliability by making sure that there is a tight fit between my interpretations and my data. When offering alternative explanations, I tested them against my data. With every interpretation I made, there is complimentary text and a supporting excerpt from my interaction with participants. I ensured replicability by being transparent with my entire research procedure. I utilized peer debriefing and member checking throughout the process and documenting each step of my data collection and analysis. I outlined the steps of my process in Table 3.2.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a detailed explanation of my research design, sample and sampling techniques, procedures, and data analysis. First, I justified my choice to utilize qualitative methods. I explained how qualitative methods align with the study's purpose and its theoretical and methodological framework. Next, I provided a detailed description of my research design. I highlighted and discussed my rationale for utilizing case study method. I extensively described the research site and process of selecting participants for this study. I also provided rich details about how I collected and analyzed data. Next, I interrogated my

positionality and explained how I locate myself within the study. I described steps I took to ensure confidentiality. And finally, I detailed my process of ensuring rigor and trustworthiness. In the next chapter, I present the findings from this study.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Introduction

The goal of this case study was to understand how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change in Nigeria for the purpose of developing a community engagement guide. The study was guided by the central question: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change? The following specifying questions included:

1. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?
2. How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?
3. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?
4. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture's role in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?

The findings presented here represent the results of analysis of in-depth participant interviews, organizational document, and review participants' reflective contributions to a google document. The overarching theme from my analysis was that *nonprofit leaders in Nigeria collaborate with multiple stakeholders as they engage in social change leadership activities to make progress on challenges facing their communities*. This overarching theme was developed from four sub-themes and 17 categories that answer the specifying research questions outlined above. I will describe the five sub-themes in the following order:

1. Leadership expressed as positional authority
2. A need for leadership as a collective process
3. Engagement in social change leadership activities

4. Cultural barriers to engagement

Theme 1: Leadership Expressed as Positional Authority

Theme one answers the sub-question: *How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?* To understand how nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with their communities to create social change in Nigeria, I thought it essential to understand how the construct of “leadership” is understood locally. In response to how they make sense of leadership, participants described their understanding of leadership as a function of positional authority (Komives & Johnson, 2009; Ospina & Foldy, 2010). They described leadership as something a person holding some sort of position does to help a group of people achieve a goal. For example, Mayowa, a member of MANI’s executive team, said:

A leader is someone who has a sight or a goal, who knows how to pull people together and then help them or make them achieve that goal, and leadership also then means that everyone in line with that goal knows what to do.

In explaining what leadership is, participants described the attributes of a leader and who an effective leader should be. Table 4.1 outlines examples of the categories and sample codes that supported this theme.

Table 4.1.*Leadership Expressed as Positional Authority*

Categories	Codes
Provide Direction	<p>Make sure everyone is aware that their role is as important</p> <p>Leadership also means your people know what they are expected to do</p> <p>Motivate people</p>
Emotional intelligence/Listening	<p>You also have to have emotional intelligence</p> <p>Leadership means listening to your people</p> <p>Put yourself in their shoes</p> <p>If you as a leader and do not listen, then that is going to be one of your most fatal mistakes</p>
Be a role model	<p>What being a leader is for me is that a group of people look up to you.</p> <p>Being a leader means leading, showing up, or leading by example</p> <p>You cannot ask your followers to do something that you, as a leader, isn't doing</p>
Be firm	<p>It is about being firm because you cannot be a doormat</p> <p>Be firm but also be calm</p> <p>I think vocal leadership is required</p> <p>Being firm but at the same time not being dismissive or bossy</p>

Provide Direction and Motivation

Participants revealed that leadership from their perspective as executives of MANI involved providing clear directions to organizational members so that each person knew exactly what was required of them. Organizational members include volunteers and staff. At each time, group members should have a clear picture of where the organization is heading and their role in helping the organization achieve its mission. Mayowa said:

Leadership also means that everyone or every single person in that organization has an

idea of, okay, this is what's expected of me. This is what I need to do, and then each person is carrying out their job at the right time.

Participants' stories and examples suggested clarity matters because when there is no clarity, followers, including employees and MANI volunteers, become unmotivated and lost. Leaders, therefore, need to help employees understand their roles and what is expected of them. To do this, there has to be a clear line of communication. A hierarchy of who reports to who and when. For example, Opeyemi said:

I think leadership is about making sure that everyone knows their roles and that you make them feel like their role is important. Leadership means that everyone, every single person in that team, has an idea of, okay, this is what's expected of me.

Participants described being frustrated when this reporting line isn't clear and considered it a failure of leadership when this happened. Bolu said: "Sometimes it's really frustrating, you know, like when I don't know who I'm to report to. Like I know I need to take charge and be creative, but sometimes I just need someone to tell me what I am expected to do."

Participants reported that clear communication about roles and expectations is how to keep volunteers engaged. Ugochi explained:

You see, most times, volunteers are just there; they don't even feel like they are a part of MANI because they don't know what they need to do. They are just there on the WhatsApp group. We need to do better engaging them, and it starts with being clear about what we need them to do.

Tim also emphasized the importance of clear communication. He said, "Communication from the top is so important, I cannot even overemphasize it. I literally cannot work for someone who does not know how to communicate."

Participants also believe that leadership involves motivating people. Ola said:

You also need to be able to motivate them because this work gets very tiring. So, whenever I interact with my people, I always make sure I use the word family. Hello family, good morning, family this, family that, because in as much as it is just the word. It goes a long way towards letting people know what exactly you think of them, and it keeps them motivated.

For the participants, it was crucial to leverage authority to provide clear direction to volunteers and staff members. Participants believed that a lack of direction from leaders could lead group members to become frustrated and unmotivated.

Be a Role Model

Leadership, according to participants, also involved being a role model. Participants describe an effective leader as one that a group of people looks up to for direction and guidance. Leadership from the participants' perspective involved leading by example and modeling behaviors you expect from followers. As Ola explained:

You cannot ask your followers to do something that you, as a leader, isn't doing ... as a leader, your followers, are going to look up to you as a source of inspiration and strength even in your weakest state. If, as a leader, you cannot stand firm and talk in those certain times, then everything is just going to fall into disarray.

Bolu believes that leading by example allows leaders to hold followers accountable when they fall short. Explaining this, Bolu said, "Sometimes it's not by telling people what to do. They should be able to see you do it. If, for example, you tell folks to be at an event by 10:00 and you come by 11:00, no one will take you seriously." In this example, Bolu suggests that if a leader wants other organization members to value punctuality, then the leader needs to be exemplary.

When the leader models the behavior of punctuality, then organizational members are more likely to adopt the behavior themselves.

Emotional Intelligence and Listening

Participants also shared that leadership required emotional intelligence and that an effective leader is someone who is a good listener. Participants felt strongly about listening and emotional intelligence being central to leadership. Ola said, “As a leader, you need to be emotionally intelligent. You need to put yourself in people’s shoes; before you say something, ask how I will feel if I was in their position? How will I take it?” Being emotionally intelligent means that leaders are socially aware and are thus able to tell what their followers are capable of delivering and what they cannot. Emotional intelligence also enables leaders to understand their followers better, and this understanding is important if leaders are to motivate and mobilize followers effectively. One way participants say a leader can do this is by taking a genuine personal interest in the volunteers and employees. Rather than focus on just tasks, leaders should engage followers in conversations about their personal interests. Bolu describes how (they) seek to model emotional intelligence:

You see, sometimes I just leave my office and go sit in their office and talk to them about life. We have meaningful conversations outside work stuff; we talk about their faith, relationships, and anything else that bothers them. That way, they see that I actually care about them, and it’s not just about work, work, work. It also allows me to know more about them.

As this quote suggests, taking genuine personal interests in followers and listening to them helped Bolu become a more effective leader. More importantly, it communicates to followers that they matter. Opeyemi also described how she does this:

I make it a habit to go to them to tell them that I am there for them and that I may not be able to understand what they are going through, but I am available to listen to them if they need to share.

Listening also enables a leader to know if their followers are on board with the vision. Tim said, “So I think that to me, leadership means listening to your people, making sure that people are content, and making sure that the goal which you all strive towards is something that you can reach unanimously.” Ola echoed this sentiment, saying:

Listen to people because if you do not listen to people, you're not going to be able to know their needs. Because our wants and needs change. And if you don't listen to people, you cannot know what your people are struggling with.

Emphasizing the importance of listening and emotional intelligence, Tim explained:

If you are a leader and you don't listen, then that is going to be one of your most fatal mistakes. Listening requires emotional intelligence. It communicates to your people that they matter. It also helps you know when someone is struggling with an emotional issue, so you know what to assign to them and what to expect.

Consistent with the need for leaders to be emotionally intelligent, participants shared that leadership required empathy. Leaders must be able to put themselves in the shoes of their followers. They also need to be aware of the temperaments and strengths of their followers. A leader who is conscious of their followers' strengths and weaknesses can more effectively manage them to achieve organizational goals. For example, Bolu said, “People make the leadership work, so you must acknowledge their importance, as they are crucial to your leadership. You must know their strengths and help them develop their weaknesses.” Mayowa also said:

As a leader, you need to have emotional intelligence because it makes you know how to communicate effectively with your team members. It makes you approachable, and sometimes even when your people keep things to themselves, you know when they might not want to share how they truly feel about something, you can sense it and ask them.

Ugochi also shared this sentiment, explaining:

Having a plan and a mission is cool, but you should be able to have empathy; you should be able to put yourself in their shoes. It's ok to have a vision, but you should be able to have a human side. When you have that human side, you will understand your people better. When you have that human side, you will know the strengths of your people, you will know when they are having emotional issues and what tasks to assign them, know what they are good at.

Participants also believed that when leaders show empathy, followers are more likely to go above and beyond for them. Opeyemi explained:

When they see that I care for them and I understand when they aren't able to do something when I need them to step up, I don't even need to say anything. They do it. Like if someone on the social media team can't cover their shift, someone else will because they know that if they are ill too, I can cover for them.

Participants described how being empathetic and a good listener helps them build quality relationships with their followers. They opined that this relationship is important if followers must trust leaders and if leaders are to receive feedback from followers. Ola said:

You have to literally be very cordial with your people. If you are not cordial with them, they're not going to trust you enough to come to you to tell you this is where you're doing it wrong. They won't tell you or come to you to correct you.

While being empathetic and a good listener was important, participants disclosed that being firm was equally important.

Be Firm

Leadership also involves finding a balance between being kind and approachable and being firm. Being firm as a leader means being tough in your dealings with followers.

Participants said that a leader should not be too “nice,” or group members will perceive them as a pushover. For example, Ugochi said, “I think leadership is also about being firm because you cannot be a doormat, but you have to be kind.” This sentiment was also shared by Ola, they said:

The thing with being too nice ehnn is that people will rubbish you, they will take advantage. You know our people. So, you have to be firm; you need to know when to be nice and when to get them to work

Participants, therefore, expressed that leaders need to be assertive and yet not bossy, kind but firm.

In summary, participants described leadership as a function of positional authority. This understanding of leadership is reflective of their leadership experience as members of MANI’s executive team. They described behaviors and characteristics of positional leadership. First, there is a need for clear communication between organizational leaders and members. Clear communication about roles and expectations prevents group members from feeling lost and frustrated. Leadership from this positional lens also involves finding a balance between being relational and being firm. Participants opined that leaders should be emotionally intelligent, which means being self-aware, empathetic, and able to manage relationships. Participants also asserted that leaders should be in tune with the needs of their followers. Being in tune with followers involves listening to them and understanding their needs. Thus, leaders must be good

listeners. They must be willing to listen to their organization's members and take a genuine personal interest in them. In the next theme, I present participants' descriptions of their work with other stakeholders to make progress on challenges facing their communities. These accounts from participants shed more light on the process of leadership.

Theme 2: A Need for Leadership as a Collective Process

Theme two answers the question: *How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?* When discussing the kind of leadership required to create social change, participants described a need for collaborations between multiple stakeholder groups. Participants made clear that they did not believe MANI alone was capable of addressing the mental health challenges facing Nigeria. The need for collaboration and engagement emphasized by MANI executive leaders aligned with ideas around collective leadership. Participants reflected an understanding that making progress on the complex challenges of mental health in Nigeria requires collective effort. Specifically, they highlighted four categories of stakeholders with whom they engage. Table 4.2 provides an overview of categories and sample codes that point to these categories.

Table 4.2.*A Need for Leadership as a Collective Process*

Categories	Codes
Collaborate with businesses & other Nonprofit Organizations	<p>I feel if we're going to forward with the movement for advancement, maybe we need to partner more</p> <p>Like, imagine if like slum to school, for example, and Cold Stone</p> <p>Definitely private sectors like people that have big bucks</p> <p>You need a lot of money because therapy is not cheap in Nigeria</p> <p>As nonprofits, we do not often work together</p> <p>Bring other organizations together</p> <p>We need to engage other organizations who are working in mental health</p> <p>This is not a problem one organization can solve</p>
Engage Government	<p>More than ever, definitely the government</p> <p>If these people are like, not on board with us, we can't succeed.</p> <p>We need people that can put the policies in place</p> <p>We just need someone who will help us start the conversation in places where it matters.</p> <p>We need to change policies</p> <p>If we don't have decision-makers on board, we will come off short.</p>
Engage Celebrities	<p>We need celebrities that can be ambassadors</p> <p>I know we have; I know we currently have celebrities that actually champion our cause</p>
Improve relationship with volunteers	<p>We need to do better with engaging our volunteers</p> <p>We have to make people feel like they matter</p> <p>Inhouse, we need to do better</p> <p>The volunteer system is in shambles</p> <p>Better communication is needed. And showing volunteers that they are important and not just disposable.</p>

Collaborate with Businesses and Other Nonprofit Organizations

First, participants described a need to collaborate more with private sector businesses to be able to achieve the organization's mission. One form of collaboration is fundraising.

Fundraising is essential for MANI to continue offering free therapeutic services. Opeyemi said:

We definitely need to start engaging more businesses, people in the private sector. People that have the big bucks, because as an organization, we need a lot of money because therapy is not cheap in Nigeria, and very few people have privy to it. So, to make it accessible and affordable, someone needs to be bankrolling it.

Participants opined that getting businesses to collaborate is difficult because mental health does not receive the same attention or interest as other social issues and challenges (for example, gender or education). The lack of attention may be due to the stigmatization of mental health and lack of awareness on the issue. On this, Bolu said:

It is very painful; you know that businesses don't support us as much as they do other nonprofits that focus on things like gender. When you look at the partnerships that those organizations get, say, for example, organizations doing gender work or education, they get a lot more money. There's no mental health organization that is sitting well right now, even your own organization Kachi; you can't say that PSN is sitting well.

Collaboration with private sector businesses involves more than making financial contributions to support MANI's work. Participants also mentioned that members of MANI had been invited by businesses to offer training aimed at educating staff on the need to care for their mental health. Such partnerships, participants say, are crucial if MANI is to remain sustainable. Partnering with businesses allows MANI to generate income to support their work and increases the visibility and credibility of their work. For example, Sola said that when they partnered with

ACT foundation/Access Bank, schools were more likely to perceive MANI as “legit” and accept their proposal to educate their students about mental health.

Second, participants report a need to collaborate more with other nonprofit organizations. They described current collaborations and emphasized that more progress could be made if nonprofits organizations join forces to tackle issues around mental health in Nigeria. Bolu described a current partnership with the nonprofit Stand to End Rape (STER), an organization that advocates against gender-based violence, saying:

We realized that a person is a whole, and if they go through something, it can affect other areas of their lives. So, for example, we have partnered with STER to provide therapeutic support for women who have been raped. Because when a woman is raped, STER can provide her support and fight her legal battles, but she will also require mental health care, and that’s where we come in.

Participants also mentioned their collaboration with the Sick Cell Society of Nigeria (SCSN), an organization that advocates for individuals living with sickle cell anemia. As with STER, MANI partners with SCSN to provide mental health support for individuals living with sickle cell who also struggle with depression and substance misuse. Collaborating with other nonprofit organizations, especially organizations who, on the surface, might not be concerned with mental health, allows MANI to reach a wider audience. These collaborations often involve sharing resources to offer direct services to community members. It also involves leveraging the network to advocate for policy change around mental health.

Engage Government

Participants asserted that collaborating with businesses and other nonprofits alone will not bring long-term change. They revealed that the government plays a huge role in improving

access to mental health care. According to participants, if MANI is to make progress towards achieving their goals to de-stigmatize mental illnesses and improve access to mental health care, they must engage the government. Ugochi said, “MANI cannot replace the government; MANI cannot address all the mental health needs of Nigerians; it's why we need the government.” Ugochi argued that the government is ultimately responsible for providing healthcare, and they have both the resources and the structure to create long-lasting change in the mental health sector. Opeyemi agreed, on the collaborative Google document she wrote:

1000 NGOs cannot replace the government, and I think we need to stop shouldering everything and march (maybe not literally) to the government to demand what is right.

There is strength in numbers, really. Imagine 5 NGOs focused on Mental Health coming together with the sole goal of reaching the government.

The challenge, though, is that the Nigerian government has so far shown little interest in investing and improving access to mental healthcare. Bolu said:

I hate talking about our government because they have failed us, like are they even embarrassed? It gets me worked up. They have done nothing, and they are doing nothing. All our efforts to reach them and nothing has happened. At some point, I stopped following up with our petitions, honestly, because it feels like there is no point.

Opeyemi, however, believed that MANI must be more creative in its engagements with the government. Rather than using petitions, Opeyemi suggested that MANI make an effort to build relationships with legislators by inviting them to events where these legislators can learn more about MANI's work and likely gain an appreciation for their role in creating change.

Opeyemi said:

One way we can do this is by hosting events nationally recognized events and inviting a

lawmaker to them. The event should have a lot of attention to get the government interested. Have them come see what MANI is building and why the work is important. We can share our future projects and why we need the government's support. Have the lawmaker speak at the event, and then when they leave, they will take the information back home to their colleagues. We just need someone who will help us start the conversation in places where it matters. I am not saying MANI has not taken steps; I just feel like we need to do more.

Mayowa revealed that another challenge they have experienced with engaging the government is the lack of access to government officials and legislators who have the power to create laws that will help MANI achieve its goals. Mayowa said, “We know the government is an important player, but how do we even get to them? It’s almost impossible.” When I asked Mayowa what MANI could do to overcome this challenge, they said:

I think we need to find people who know these senators. You know, like their family members or friends. At least they have friends; we need to find a way to get into that circle. Maybe that also means we need to get more politically involved; maybe one of us should run for office. We need to get involved; if we get involved, we can network with these people and get them on our side; we really should get involved.

Ola had a different approach. They believed that the masses should be doing more to demand change. MANI’s role then should be focused on educating the people about the state of mental health in Nigeria and the government's failure in providing access to mental health care. Ola argued that when the people are aware, they will demand that more from the government. Ola said:

Honestly, Nigerians are sleeping. This is why we need to keep making noise; once the

people know better, they will literally march to the government house with us to demand change. We cannot do it by ourselves. The government will more likely listen if there is public outrage. For now, there is no outrage. We need to make the people know that they can demand more.

Participants' accounts presented above suggest that they believe that no long-term change is possible without government involvement. They view the government as an essential stakeholder in addressing the mental health needs of Nigerians. With the government being unresponsive to the challenge around mental health in Nigeria, participants believed that there is a need to collaborate with other organizations to get the government's attention. They also described a need to intensify their awareness work to sensitize the Nigerian people on their role in demanding more from the government regarding mental health care. Besides the government, participants also identified Nigerian celebrities as important stakeholders.

Engage Celebrities

Besides businesses, nonprofits, and the government, MANI also engaged celebrities. Celebrities in this context include music and movie stars who have huge followings and are capable of influencing the public. Participants described how celebrities are important partners in helping to amplify MANI's work. Celebrities amplify MANI's work by posting information about mental health with links to MANI's social media handles on their own platforms. By posting on mental health and tagging MANI, celebrities shine a light on the work MANI is doing to improve access to mental healthcare. Celebrities also help shape public perception and thus can play a role in destigmatizing mental illnesses in Nigeria. For example, Bolu shared about their recent collaboration with two Nigerian music stars, "We have worked with Afro Di'ja and Korede Bello, and the impact has been amazing because people really do look up to them." Yet,

participants acknowledged that for celebrities to lend their voice to the movement, MANI must be more intentional about recruiting celebrities as ambassadors. Opeyemi said:

We need to get more celebrities to come on board. We need more big names, like imagine someone like Don Jazzy endorsing our work? Imagine the impact it will have if Don Jazzy goes on his Instagram live and says that it is okay to struggle with your mental health, and I know these guys called MANI that can help? It will be huge!

Ola believed that MANI should get celebrities not just to be ambassadors but also commit financial resources to support the work. Ola said:

Some of these celebrities may be unwilling to put their face out there on our behalf, you know, due to the stigma. But we can get them to give us money. I know I read somewhere that Lady Gaga recently gave out a huge percent of her income from one show to support a mental health organization in America. This is what we need. If we can get a couple of artists to donate regularly to our work, it can really help us become sustainable.

In this category, participants shared two major ways that celebrities can play a role in their social change work around mental health. First, celebrities can leverage their popularity by lending their voice to change campaigns. They can do this by talking about mental health on their social media platforms and encouraging their followers to speak up when they struggle with mental illnesses. Secondly, celebrities can support the work financially by making regular monetary donations to MANI. These funds could then be used to improve access to mental healthcare.

While the last three categories have focused on engaging external stakeholders, the following category focuses on engaging an internal stakeholder: volunteers.

Improve Relationship with Volunteers

MANI is a volunteer-based organization. The organization boasts of over 200 volunteer counselors. Participants revealed that effectively engaging these volunteers is key to the social change work that MANI is doing. An important way to keep volunteers motivated and engaged is by building meaningful relationships with them. Tim said:

I don't joke with my counselors. I really think they are the lifeblood of MANI. I don't see myself as their boss. Many of the counselors don't even know me as the boss. I try to be as friendly as I can with them. Sometimes I just call them on video calls just to chat with them; I do that a lot to remind them that they matter.

Besides calling volunteers regularly, MANI's leaders have created online spaces on Whatsapp where volunteers engage each other through games and other activities. These activities are said to foster inclusion and keep volunteers motivated. Speaking on this, Ola said:

You know some people don't like Whatsapp groups, but we try to make it engaging. Some days we just come on there to play. You have, we have our Mondays, which are ice breakers. Then Wednesdays, we have game nights. We have Fridays; this is our selfie days. So, we have activities, really. And then you can come to rant ... let off steam, you know, whatever. Really, and you get to meet people from other teams, and you guys just share and let people know that you all there for each other.

While these leaders agreed that volunteer engagement is important, they reckoned that they could engage the volunteers better. Like Ugochi quoted earlier said:

You see, most times, volunteers are just there; they don't even feel like they are a part of MANI because they don't know what they need to do. They are just there on the WhatsApp group. We need to do better engaging them, and it starts with being clear

about what we need them to do.

Opeyemi believes that MANI should be doing more to acknowledge the work that volunteers do for the organization. They said, “Volunteers are human beings with needs and mental health struggles too. I love the gifts that were sent out recently. More of those make them feel seen.” Speaking of making volunteers feel seen, Bolu opined a lack of communication between management and volunteers. Bolu said, “Communication has been really poor. It is almost like we go to them only when we need something from them. It has to change; someone needs to take charge of volunteer engagement.”

This finding was a bit surprising as it appears inconsistent with the way participants described their understanding of leadership. While they described leadership as a function of positional authority and enacted by an individual, they described the work needed to create social change as collaborative, requiring collective efforts. Participants mentioned that they needed to partner more with the government, businesses, other nonprofits, and celebrities for their organization to achieve its goals. What is more, they highlighted a need to engage internal stakeholders like volunteers who they say are crucial agents in the change process.

In summary, sub-theme two highlighted the need for increased collaborations. Participants expressed the belief that change can only happen when they engage and collaborate with multiple stakeholders, including businesses, nonprofits, governments, governments, celebrities, and volunteers. During our conversations, some participants also mentioned current collaborations with schools, churches, and mosques. The next sub-theme explores in more detail how MANI’s engagement efforts align with social change activities.

Theme Three: Engagement in Social Change Leadership Activities

Theme three answers the third research question that asks, “*How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?*” This finding suggests that MANI works with other organizations by engaging them in three social change leadership activities. These activities include: (a) Raising awareness about mental health, (b) Offering mental health services, and (c) Advocating for policy change. Table 4.3 highlights the categories and codes that make up this theme.

Table 4.3.
Engagement in Social Change Leadership Activities

Categories	Codes
Raising awareness	Partner with schools to educate students about mental health Partner with mega-churches to raise awareness We consistently receive invites from TV and radio stations to raise awareness We do interviews with BBC and Bella 9ja
Offering services	During EndSars, we worked with STER to offer therapeutic services We partnered with STER because when a woman is raped, she will need mental health care. We have partnered with a sickle cell organization to offer therapeutic services to people struggling with sickle cell To provide services effectively, it is important to collaborate
Advocate for policy change	Recently we ran a campaign tagged #SpeakYourMind We need to collaborate more with other mental health nonprofits to advocate for policy change I think that is a question for XX

Raising Awareness about Mental Health

MANI partners with a variety of organizations to raise awareness about mental health.

This activity is central to MANI's mission. Ugochi said:

Increasing awareness is important to us; we go into different communities to do this; like the world mental health day, we had a walk to raise awareness. We walked from UI gate to the market. The goal was to educate local market women in their own languages ...

We also went to a community and set up a tent where people come to receive free sessions. We typically do this to educate people on mental health.

Emphasizing this goal, the "about us" section in their organizational profile reads:

MANI's mission is to play a premier role in promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness in Nigeria. They envision a country where people are totally aware of how to prevent, identify and treat mental health conditions and stigma is a thing of the past (MANI, 2020).

One of MANI's strategies for creating social change in the mental health space is to catch them young. They partner with secondary schools to educate young people about mental health and how to identify common mental illnesses. Bolu said, "We typically go to schools to educate teachers and students, especially students, because it's important to learn these things early. We visit both high income and low-income schools." Speaking on how they secured these partnerships, Opeyemi said:

We split ourselves, like okay, we send so and so person to them to tell them that we're going to come and give them free sessions on mental health. So, I remember we split ourselves. Okay so since you are in this corner of the states, you go here. This is the number of schools you should go to, we should go to give it a try to speak to someone.

Often, they talk to the school principal, who then approves for them to come to speak to the students. However, not all schools are receptive to this program; sometimes, MANI's offer to speak to the students is rejected. On rejections, Opeyemi said, "Honestly, the rejections are painful because they are basically telling us that mental health is not important. It's even more painful because we run these events with our own money. We never ask them for anything." When asked about why some schools are less receptive, Opeyemi said it was all down to a lack of awareness. Hence, the need for the work they do. To get the principals on board, leaders had to sometimes educate them about why the work was important. Largely because some principals believed that Nigerian youths are immune to mental illnesses. Bolu said:

You know, some principals believe that these kids who are depressed are only struggling with their mood because their parents are poor. They often tell us that if we just give their parents' money that the kids will be fine and happy again. They think that every time a teenager commits suicide, it's because of poverty. So, our major challenge sometimes is helping them see that the problem is more than just financial and that mental illness is real, and it can affect anyone.

In 2019, MANI received a grant that enabled the organization to partner with more schools to host mental health awareness programs. Participants believed that receiving the grant gave MANI more credibility and increased access to schools that might have been unwilling to partner in the past. Speaking on this, Opeyemi said:

Once we got the grant from ACT, we had even more confidence to approach schools. When they see that we have the backing of ACT which is owned by Access Bank, they take us seriously. It opens doors, and we are able to reach more students. I think in total we covered over 20 schools, both private and government schools.

Besides schools, MANI also partners with churches and media organizations to raise awareness about mental health. They make regular appearances on TV and radio stations to educate the public about mental illnesses and how to get help. Tim said, “We have partnered with churches, mosques, and even go to TV and radio stations. Recently we granted interviews with BBC and Bella 9ja all to educate the masses.” While it is crucial to raise awareness, MANI also offers more tangible services to beneficiaries.

Mental Health Services

One of MANI’s main goals is to offer accessible mental health care. However, they realize that it is impossible to meet the needs of all clients who seek support. To effectively provide services to members of the public, for free, MANI collaborates with other nonprofit organizations. Ugochi said, “To provide services effectively and reach a wider audience; it is important to collaborate.” As previously noted, one organization they worked with recently is Stand to End Rape (STER). This organization advocates for and provides therapeutic support to women who have been victims of rape and other gender-based violence. When a client who has been raped contacts MANI, they refer her to STER and follow up to ensure she receives proper care. This cross-organizational partnership ensures that both organizations meet the needs of clients in their communities. Recently the recent EndSars protest in Lagos, which left many people dead and others traumatized, MANI partnered with STER to provide mental health counseling and first aid. On this partnership, Tim said:

Remember the EndSars period? Omo, it was crazy! We were overwhelmed with calls.

Our therapists were really struggling. We had to partner with STER to reach more people.

We had a lot of backlogs and even with this partnership, there were a lot of people we couldn’t reach. You know, that’s where I wish we had a functional government. If our

[Nigerian] mental health system functioned, we could have easily partnered with them too to help people. But nothing, nothing works here, and it's frustrating.

MANI has also partnered with freelance psychologists and psychiatrists to increase access to mental health care. Speaking on this, Ola said:

We partner with practitioners, with psychiatrists and psychologists, for people who struggle. Because we are a volunteer-based organization, there is only so little we can do. For partnerships, we just realize that you cannot be a jack of all trade, so you approach other organizations to see how you can collaborate.

However, more of these partnerships are needed if MANI is to continue offering free services. On the need for more partnerships, Bolu said:

This is not a problem one organization can solve. We need to keep sending random letters to other mental health organizations asking for partnerships. MANI needs help. Our counselors are overwhelmed. The counselors are breaking down, especially during the EndSars. If we can partner with others, we can get support to offer these services more efficiently.

Another service that MANI offers is called stranger support. This service allows individuals who may or may not be struggling with a mental illness to speak to a complete stranger about something weighing on their minds. The stranger listens without interrupting the caller except for when the caller asks a direct question. Bolu says that this service is one of their more popular services, with hundreds of people calling weekly to receive this support. Besides offering mental health services, MANI also advocates for policy change.

Advocating for Policy Change

As highlighted in theme two, leaders acknowledge the importance of engaging the government to create long-lasting change. While they have had very little success in doing this, participants believe that progress on government engagement can be made if they collaborate with other mental health nonprofits. Opeyemi said, “Imagine 5 NGOs focused on mental health coming together with the sole goal of reaching the government.”

A recent collaboration effort involved raising awareness about Nigeria’s outdated mental health bill, which criminalizes mental health disorders and provides little funding for mental health in general. Ola explained that MANI had worked with several stakeholders to advocate for policy change through a campaign tagged #SpeakYourMind. Ola said:

Advocacy is a key part of what we do. We run frequent campaigns to try to get the attention of the government. For example, in 2019, we really pushed the #SpeakYourMind campaign, even getting other organizations to join us both locally and internationally.

Most surprising about these findings on collaborations was that participants were unable to articulate how the collaborations developed. When I asked participants how they were able to develop the partnerships, they laughed, not in a way that conveyed amusement but instead suggested that they were uncomfortable with the question. Typically, participants said that they were not in a position to comment on partnerships as they are seldom in the know. They said the partnerships were developed by the founder of the organization and the executive director. Often I heard statements like, “That’s not a question for me, that’s a question for xxx.” Or, “This one is above my pay grade.” It is important to note that participants for this study were members of the

executive team and not volunteers who had no positional authority. However, the final theme presents how participants perceived the role of culture in shaping community engagement.

Theme 4: Cultural Barriers to Engagement

The final research question of this study was, how do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the role of culture in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve? The purpose of this question was to understand how culture impacts the way leaders work with communities to create change. The major finding was that participants viewed culture as a barrier to engagement. Participants' stories and examples surfaced how our cultural norms and beliefs created barriers to engagement at both the individual and organizational levels. Participants believed that our cultural norms and beliefs about mental illnesses lead to the stigmatization of individuals living with these conditions. These cultural beliefs also make people less receptive to change. Finally, participants report that they have had to adopt different communication strategies to overcome the challenges that our culture has created. Table 4.4 overviews the three categories and sample codes that support this theme.

Table 4.4.*Cultural Barriers to Engagement*

Categories	Codes
Stigmatization	Religion and stigmatization around mental health The fear that people have with speaking out about mental health They won't speak out because culture does not allow them.
Communication strategy	Culturally people are used to storytelling, so use stories to help people understand So, we need to focus on the most basic things, education. This is why we go to the markets and write things in their local languages. You know, through discussions; people are now seeing why they should speak up Meet people where they are
Hindrance	Because it is jealous of change Our culture has not helped with embracing the reality of mental illnesses Our culture dampens the intellectual capacity of our people. Overall, our culture holds us back People hide under it (culture) to block progress.

Stigmatization

Participants believed that the Nigerian culture, including religious beliefs, made it hard for them to make progress on organizational goals. They viewed culture as a barrier to social change, especially as it concerns mental health. For one, participants disclosed that mental illnesses are highly stigmatized, and individuals who struggle with mental illnesses are often ostracized. The fear of stigmatization makes it difficult for people who struggle with mental illnesses to reach out for help. This stigmatization is rooted in the cultural belief that mental illnesses are problems faced by White people and that somehow Africans are immune to them. It

is also rooted in our religious beliefs that mental illnesses are spiritual attacks and should be addressed spiritually. Shedding light on this, Mayowa said:

These things are what make me angry. You see culture and religion; those two things are our problem. You see someone is going through a severe mental problem like depression, but they won't speak out because culture does not allow them. Culture says you need to be a man, and you need to be strong. It really holds us back.

Tim, however, believed that the challenge with the stigmatization of mental illnesses was not just a Nigerian problem. Tim asserted that stigmatization around mental illnesses is common around the world. In their words:

Religion and stigmatization around mental health are huge problems we face. The fear that people have with speaking out about mental health. I do not think that this is a MANI thing; it is a universal thing because there is no place in the world where mental illnesses are not stigmatized.

Nigerian cultural norms and beliefs about mental illnesses make it hard for people living with mental illnesses to open up and get help. Participants reported that many people living with mental illnesses worry about being stigmatized and ostracized and thus would rather stay silent when they struggle. What is more, these cultural beliefs and norms also created a barrier to stakeholder engagement.

Hindrance to Stakeholder Engagement

According to participants, the deep-rooted belief that mental illnesses are foreign to Africans prevents stakeholders from taking the work seriously. Mayowa said, "Convincing people on the importance of mental health, getting people on board is hard because it is all still new here. Many people believe it is not an African thing." When community members do not see

themselves as affected by the problem, it is hard to motivate them to be part of the solution. You do not solve a problem you do not think exists. Ola said that the Nigerian culture hinders progress because it incapacitates the mental faculty of Nigerians. It prevents them from thinking creatively about solutions because they tend to resort to their deeply held cultural beliefs when faced with problems they do not understand, like mental illnesses. Ola said:

Our culture is rigid; it is jealous to change. It is not welcoming to new ideas. We see this every day with our government, they never welcome new ideas or methods. They want to keep doing things the way our culture prescribes, which is frustrating. Our culture dampens the intellectual capacity of our people and when you try to break free from the chains of our culture, you get ostracized and stigmatized.

Cultural beliefs about mental illnesses also make it challenging to get the support of corporate organizations. Ugochi explained:

Convincing organizations that mental health is important is a struggle. Because organizations do not understand that their staff maybe be struggling, and they need to offer support. They think that these issues are not real, especially for Nigerians, they believe it is not something we deal with, so they do not see a reason to give us funds.

Nigerian cultural belief that mental illnesses are both alien to us as Africans and likely caused by spiritual attacks make it difficult for stakeholders to embrace the work that MANI is doing. To break these barriers, MANI has had to adopt various communication strategies.

Communication Strategy

Cultural barriers influence the communication strategies MANI uses to engage communities. MANI utilizes a bulk of its resources to educate communities about mental

illnesses. They do this work using a variety of channels, from social media to physical community outreaches. MANI strives to meet people where they are, literally. Opeyemi said:

This is why we go to the markets and prepare communication materials in local languages. When community members read this information in their local language, for example, Yoruba, it touches their hearts more. One time we marched from UI gate all the way to the market, educating people along the way. You know, because not everyone is on social media.

Another communication strategy MANI adopted is storytelling. According to Tim, “Storytelling appeals to our people, culturally we are used to storytelling.” Rather than solely sharing facts on social media, MANI uses storytelling to help people appreciate the importance of reaching out when they struggle with mental illnesses. They do this by having individuals with lived experience tell real stories of how they found out about their mental illness and how they got help to cope with it. Besides storytelling, MANI also utilizes a conversation café approach to create the conditions for tough discussions around mental health. They hold these cafés once every month in different states to enlighten community members about mental illnesses. Participants believed that this educational work is a crucial first step in creating social change. Mayowa said:

You know, the plan is, if people become aware, when they see that mental illness is real and that they are affected, then they can add their voice and join us in calling the government’s attention to it. It’s beyond just asking them to sign online petitions. If people are truly aware; they will join us and march straight to the government house to demand change.

To overcome the cultural barriers to engagement, MANI has varied its communication strategy. They rely heavily on social media to educate and sensitize young people in order to normalize speaking up about mental illnesses. They also use local languages when communicating with community members so as to reach their hearts. Lastly, participants mentioned the value of storytelling as a culturally relevant approach to educating community members about mental illnesses.

Summary

This chapter presented findings from my analysis of interviews with leaders at Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI). The results also included data from an organizational document and a collaborative google document which I analyzed. I identified four major themes that respond to the research questions that guided this study from my analysis. Theme one, which was “Leadership perceived as positional authority,” provided an answer to the first specifying question that asked, “How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?” From the first theme, it was apparent that leaders in Nigeria held a traditional perspective of leadership. They viewed leadership as a function of positions within an organization. Leadership was said to be enacted when an individual can provide clear directions to followers in a bid to achieve organizational goals. They viewed leadership as enacted by an individual. This individual is to be a role model to followers and must be capable of motivating followers to achieve the group goals.

What is more, leadership was said to require emotional intelligence. Leaders were expected to be empathetic, being able to put themselves in the shoes of followers. A leader must also be a good listener. Lastly, leadership required a balance between being empathetic and being firm.

The second specifying research question asked, “How do nonprofit leaders describe the kind of leadership required to make progress on challenges facing their communities?” This question was answered by theme two, which was “A need for leadership as a collective process.” This theme highlighted participants' belief that social change will require collaboration between multiple stakeholders. It also described the work that participants are currently doing to engage businesses and other nonprofits organizations, government, celebrities, and volunteers. There was an appreciation of the fact that just MANI could not change the narrative of mental health in Nigeria. Changing the narrative will require intentional and sometimes emergent collaborations that will enable multiple partners to pull resources together to make progress on the challenge.

Theme three, “Engagement in social change leadership practices,” began to answer the third specifying question, “How do nonprofit organizations work with other organizations to achieve their mission?” From the analysis, it appeared that MANI engages other organizations in social change leadership activities. These activities included raising awareness about mental illnesses, providing mental health services, and advocating for policy change. To raise awareness about mental illnesses in Nigeria, MANI collaborates with diverse organizations and groups, including schools, churches, mosques, radio and television stations, and blogs. In providing mental healthcare for Nigerians, many have collaborated with other organizations like Stand to End Rape (STER) and freelance therapists and psychiatrists. MANI has also engaged other organizations to advocate for policy change.

The final specifying question, “How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the role of culture in shaping their engagement with communities they serve?” was answered by theme four. This theme reflects participants' beliefs and experiences of “Cultural barrier to engagement.” It highlighted how the stigmatization of mental illnesses in Nigeria is rooted in our cultural

assumptions. These cultural beliefs about mental illnesses make stakeholders less willing to engage in productive dialogue about making progress on the issue. To overcome these challenges, leaders have had to adapt communication strategies such as storytelling.

Together, these four themes provide insight into the primary research question, “How do nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change?” The findings suggest an overarching theme that nonprofit leaders in Nigeria collaborate with multiple stakeholders as they engage in social change activities to make progress on challenges facing their communities.

In theme two, we saw that Nigeria's social change leaders recognized the need to engage multiple stakeholders. These stakeholders included businesses, other nonprofits, celebrities, and the government. Theme three shed more light on the nature of these engagements. It detailed specific social change leadership activities that shape these collaborations. These activities included raising awareness, offering mental health services, and advocating for policy change. In engaging these diverse stakeholders, leaders took into account the cultural barriers to engagement. They explained communicative strategies adopted to overcome these barriers. These strategies included using social media as an effective channel and storytelling as a culturally relevant approach to health communication.

It is important to acknowledge that participants' description of how they engage stakeholders and the need for collaboration is in tension with how they described their understanding of leadership. In theme one, participants expressed their understanding of leadership as a consequence of positional authority. They related behaviors and dispositions that a leader should have to mobilize a group towards successfully achieving a goal. These include being firm, able to provide directions, and being emotionally intelligent. This perspective of leadership as positional authority likely stems from their experience as executive leaders within

MANI. In the next chapter, I will discuss these findings in relation to the existing literature on social change leadership, community engagement, postcolonialism, and my own positionality.

Chapter 5 - Summary, Discussion, and Implication

Study Summary

The leadership challenges facing Nigeria is well documented (Edoho, 2008; Egbegbulem, 2012). Despite being blessed with a host of natural resources, Nigeria remains the poverty capital of the world. Scholars have argued that leadership is needed to truly fulfill our potential (Iheriohanma & Oguoma, 2010; James, 2008). There is less clarity on what kind of leadership is required. African scholars have argued for African-centered leadership—a kind of leadership rooted in our values, one that adopts a bottom-top approach (Anazodo et al., 2015; Mbigi & Maree, 1995; Prinsloo, 2000). There is a need to study and document culturally relevant and contextually specific leadership. There is very little literature on leadership as it is enacted in Africa and specifically Nigeria. Almost every study on leadership I read during my doctoral program, even those reflecting non-traditional perspectives, was based on studies conducted in the West. This Western dominance reflects how the field of leadership studies has been colonized. I believe there are an urgent need and opportunity for decolonization. Thus, a critical contribution to the field was to study leadership in non-Western contexts.

In Nigeria, thousands of young people are leading efforts in a bid to change our country's narrative. Exploring how these leaders are enacting social change illuminates leadership activities and practices in Nigeria. The goal of this case study was to gain insights into how leaders of a Nigerian nonprofit work with their communities to create social change. My hope was that by studying nonprofit leaders and their work with communities, I could better understand how leadership is enacted in Nigeria. This case study's guiding research question was: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria work with communities to create change? Specifying questions that will help me to answer this central question included:

1. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership?
2. How do nonprofit organizations in Nigeria work with other organizations to achieve their mission?
3. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?
4. How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture's role in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?

Three theories guided this work: postcolonialism, the social change leadership framework, and constitutive communication. Postcolonialism is a critical theory that aims to shine a light on how colonialism impacts Indigenous people while also centering on Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Mundel & Chapman, 2010). The social change leadership framework is a theory that offers a lens to understand the practices and activities that organizations engage in to create social change (Ospina & Foldy, 2010). Constitutive communication views communication as not only capable of expressing social reality, but more importantly, as creating social reality (Griffin et al., 2019). These three theories lent themselves to the constructionist paradigm and aligned with the research design for this study—qualitative case study.

Qualitative case study is a method in which a researcher analyses a real-life, contemporary bounded system (case), over time, through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and then reports a case description and case themes (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). I collected data through interviews, organizational documents, and a collaborative Google document. The collaborative Google document enabled participants to share ideas that led to the development of a community engagement guide. Mentally Aware

Nigeria Initiative (MANI), a mental health nonprofit organization in Lagos, Nigeria, was the strategic research site for this study. Six members of the MANI executive team agreed to participate in this study. I analyzed data collected using abductive-thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Timmermans & Tavory 2012). Through my analysis, I identified four major themes that help me understand how nonprofit leaders at MANI work with communities to create social change. These themes included:

1. Leadership expressed as positional authority
2. A need for leadership as a collective process
3. Engagement in social change leadership activities
4. Cultural barriers to engagement

These four themes contributed to one overarching theme which answers my primary research question: *Nonprofit leaders in Nigeria collaborate with multiple stakeholders as they engage in social change activities to make progress on challenges facing their communities.* In what follows, I present a discussion, conclusion, and implications of my findings in relation to the existing literature on social change leadership, constitutive communication, postcolonialism, and my own positionality. Additionally, I will describe how my findings have informed the first draft of a co-created community engagement guide to help nonprofit leaders improve community engagement (see Appendix C).

Discussion

Since I start to dey study leadership, I don dey reason how we fit take study how our own nonprofit leaders dey take run things for Naija. This case study provides insight into how leadership is enacted in Nigeria, and more specifically, how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. The research design shifts the spotlight away from western-

centric leadership and illuminates indigenous ways of engaging in the work of leadership. The findings contribute to the scant body of knowledge of how leadership is understood and enacted in non-western contexts.

Research Sub-question One: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand the construct of leadership?

The findings supporting the first research sub-question suggest that the Nigerian nonprofit leaders in this study understand the construct of leadership as a function of positional authority. This perspective of leadership is not surprising given their positional role as executives of MANI. Their views largely reflect traditional leadership orientations and assumptions, which Drath et al. (2008) describe as a “tripod” ontology; leadership is understood as primarily about the relationship between leaders, followers, and shared goals. People holding the identity or role of a leader mobilize followers to achieve a goal, which is often the leader’s goal. This perspective could be seen in how the leaders within MANI emphasized the need to be firm, offering directions as needed to followers who look up to them for guidance. Such a traditional Western view of leadership is well documented; it is the dominant leadership perspective (Carroll et al., 2015; Ospina & Foldy, 2010). While theories have evolved over time, the traditional assumptions remain the same, emphasizing an individual leader’s role in mobilizing a group of people to achieve shared goals. A traditional perspective is also clearly seen in participants’ description of leadership as requiring individual leaders who are role models and capable of providing direction to followers to achieve goals.

The need for direction in itself isn’t a bad thing. Direction is an important outcome of leadership (Drath et al., 2008). Only when a group has direction can they successfully achieve their aim. However, looking up to one individual for direction might connote a dependence on

authority. Dependence on authority was an underlying theme throughout this study. Participants reported feeling frustrated when someone of a higher authority doesn't provide a clear direction. They also shared their frustration with the government not doing enough; they believe that the government should be leading change efforts. Dependence on authority could make people less proactive, and some could feel powerless in the face of challenges. I see this powerlessness, for example, when participants talk about the need for better volunteer engagement. Every participant said MANI should be engaging volunteers better but did not offer to take up this work. They spoke about the work as something that should be done by someone else, perhaps someone with more authority. They did not specify whose work it is or what they could do to improve volunteer engagement.

This finding is also consistent with Booysen and van Wyk's (2007) study of how leaders in South Africa understand leadership. In the South African study, participants posited that leaders should inspire others to follow a vision. Similarly, the emphasis on the individual suggests that "hero worship is certainly alive and well" in Nigeria (Van Wart, 2005, p. 6). Hero worship is evident across the country, from young people falling over themselves to meet and work with influential pastors and motivational speakers to citizens hoping to elect someday a president who will solve all of Nigeria's problems.

Given Nigeria's history with colonization, it is not surprising that dominant Western leadership perspectives have made their way into the thinking of nonprofit leaders. Our education is Western; we consume a lot of Western media, our system of government is a mimicry of the West. However, participants' understanding of leadership is not only or entirely reflective of a Western view. Nigerians had—and still have—ways of being and knowing that they are unique. We privilege relationships and community. A close look at this study's finding

suggests that participants recognize the importance of relationships between people holding supposed or ascribed roles leaders and followers. Participants emphasized the need for leaders to listen to followers and build meaningful relationships with them. Like one participant shared, there is a belief that a leader will woefully fail if they do not engage and listen to their followers. The findings also suggest that leadership requires the participation of followers. Leaders are not all-knowing and should encourage the participation of followers. This theme is consistent with the work of Bolden and Kirk (2009); they found that “Africans aspire for leadership founded on humanistic principles, and a desire for more inclusive and participative forms of leadership that value individual differences, authenticity and serving the community” (p. 80).

A relational and participative view of leadership is consistent with Ubuntu, the African philosophy that focuses on the importance of relationships and the interdependence between people (Mbigi, 1995; Mulunga, 2006). Ubuntu philosophy shapes the way Africans engage in management and leadership (Mulunga, 2006). Ubuntu's central tenets are openness, respect, trust, and cooperation (Mbigi, 1995). Listening, one of the concepts central to the participants' understanding of leadership, requires openness. Participants said leaders need to maintain an open mind and be willing to take feedback from followers to ensure the achievement of organizational goals. Listening also fosters trust, respect, and cooperation.

A relational orientation to leadership is also consistent with findings from the GLOBE study on leadership in sub-Saharan Africa, featuring data collected from Nigeria. The GLOBE study showed that Africans are more human-oriented in their leadership approach and have a preference for team-oriented and participative leadership (House et al., 2004). This preference explains why participants reiterated the importance of emotional intelligence in the enactment of leadership. If relational leadership requires collaboration between leaders and followers, then

leaders need to have social awareness and be good relationship managers, which are key aspects of emotional intelligence. While the term emotional intelligence was coined and advanced by Western psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer (Goleman, 1995), African cultures have long valued social awareness and relationship management as seen in our Ubuntu philosophy (Mulunga, 2006).

Therefore, participants' understanding of leadership appears to be a hybrid of traditional Western perspectives and Indigenous knowledge and philosophy. Hybridity occurs when colonized people adopt the colonizers' ways of knowing and being while simultaneously holding on to aspects of their Indigenous culture and knowledge (Bhabha, 2001). This overlap between Western and Indigenous knowledge is clearly reflected in the way nonprofit leaders in Nigeria understand leadership. Evidence of hybridity is consistent with the work of Jackson (2004, as cited in Bolden & Kirk, 2009), who also described the hybrid nature of African management practices.

What I find interesting, though, is that some recent Western leadership theories have also emphasized the importance of quality relationships between leaders and followers. For example, Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) is a Western relationship-based approach to leadership. LMX operates from the premise that effective leadership processes occur when leaders and followers are able to develop mature leadership relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). An interpretation could be that this theory is an appropriation of how leadership is understood and enacted in Africa cultures. Since Africans have always been relational, it is impossible to think that the emphasis on relationship by Nigerian leaders in any way constitutes mimicry of theories like LMX. It is more plausible that relational theories have evolved as a hybrid of African and Western orientations to leadership. As Bhabha (2001) argued, Western culture and ways of

knowing cannot be said to be without Indigenous influence. *Person wey enter house wey dey burn, if the fire no catch am, the smoke must smell for him clothe.*

Research Sub-question Two: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe the kind of leadership needed to make progress on challenges facing their communities?

Participants' perceptions of leadership as positional authority contradict how they describe the kind of leadership needed to create social change. It is also inconsistent with how participants actually engage in the work of leadership. In the second finding, participants revealed that they engage in deliberate collaborations to facilitate change in the mental health sector. They work with diverse organizations and stakeholders to increase awareness about mental health. These organizations include nonprofits like Stand to End Rape (STER), businesses, schools, churches, media organizations, celebrities, and government officials. They also leverage partnerships to increase access to services and advocate for policy change.

Participants acknowledged that no single organization could on their own fix the challenges with mental health in Nigeria and that progress will require a collective effort. The belief that progress on complex challenges requires collective effort aligns with collective leadership perspectives. For example, Crosby and Bryson (2005) asserted that collaboration is crucial in solving social problems. Participants' beliefs about the value of partnership are also rooted in Ubuntu principles of sharing and collective ownership of opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges (Malunga, 2006). If the challenges are a collective problem, then the solution will require a collective effort.

The practice of cross-organizational collaboration to make progress on complex challenges is in line with Ospina et al.'s (2012) framework of social change leadership. According to their research with social change organizations, inter-organizational collaborations

are critical for building the collective capacity necessary to create social change. Inter-organizational collaborations are particularly effective when social change organizations partner with “unlikely allies” to pull resources together to make progress on a systemic challenge (Ospina et al., 2012, p 227). MANI demonstrates unlikely partnerships through its collaborations with media houses and nonprofit organizations like Stand to End Rape (STER). On the surface, STER might appear to be an organization with a largely different focus than MANI, as they advocate for an end to gender-based violence. In contrast, MANI focuses on raising awareness about mental health. However, both organizations are working together to increase access to mental health for individuals within their communities. MANI’s engagement in inter-organizational collaboration to achieve its mission is consistent with practices highlighted in communication constitute organizing (CCO) theory. McPhee and Zaug (2000) argue that an organization's existence depends significantly on its ability to form meaningful relationships with other organizations. Through these relationships, organizations draw on one another’s resources to achieve their goals (Fletcher & Kaüfer, 2003).

This tension between how participants understand leadership and how they enact leadership is not surprising. Bolden and Kirk (2009) found that African leaders hold multiple, and often competing, leadership perspectives. It is possible that the leadership perspective shared with me by MANI’s leaders may only reflect their understanding of the concept as it relates to their work with other organizational members. That is, participants’ view of leadership as positional authority illuminates what they currently believe is the approach to getting organizational members to work towards organizational goals. It apparently does not impair them from appreciating leadership as a social process that involves both internal and external stakeholders.

Research Sub-question Three: How do nonprofit leaders work with other organizations to achieve their mission?

The third finding reveals core activities that characterize the leadership work that MANI is doing in collaboration with other organizations. Core activities include raising awareness about mental health, providing mental health services, organizing, building a community of young mental health advocates, and advocating for policy change. These activities are consistent with the leadership activities that characterize social change organizations discussed in Ospina et al. (2012). In the social change leadership framework, leadership activities include (a) organizing, (b) public policy advocacy, (c) community building, and (d) direct service provision. While most organizations engage in one or two of these activities (Ospina et al., 2012), MANI does all four.

The first social change activity that MANI engages in is organizing. Organizing is described as a process of recruiting, mobilizing, and educating community members who are particularly affected by the issue that a social change organization is trying to solve (Ospina et al., 2012). MANI also engages in policy advocacy. This work involves working with government officials and legislators to change policies that relate to the organization's work (Ospina et al., 2012). Over the past five years, MANI has made consistent efforts to engage elected officials to change mental healthcare policies in Nigeria. Recent efforts include soliciting online signatures from the public, calling on the government to pass a new mental health bill. The current policy on mental health in Nigeria is literally called the Lunacy Act. This law stigmatizes people struggling with mental illnesses. Participants reported having little success with this advocacy work, mainly due to a lack of access to Nigeria's elected officials.

While in Western countries like the United States, constituents have access to their elected governmental representatives, this is not the case in Nigeria. Politicians and elected officials are often far removed from the people. They move around with heavily armed security personnel and only engage the people every four years when it's time for an election. They also do not make their contact information available to the public, so it is challenging to reach them. The peculiarities of the Nigerian context make it difficult for nonprofits to engage government officials to change policies like the Lunacy Act that creates structural barriers.

A third leadership activity that MANI engages in is providing services to individuals living with mental illnesses. As described by Ospina et al. (2012), "direct service provision" involves "meeting the immediate and long-term needs of individuals or groups by providing ... services such as job training, healthcare, and counseling" (p. 276). MANI offers three primary services: (a) stranger support, (b) individual therapy, and (c) mental health first aid training for organizations. Stranger support is a remote service where clients struggling with their mental health can call a dedicated helpline to pour their hearts to a stranger who just listens without interrupting. MANI also offers individual therapy. They have over 200 volunteer counselors who provide pro-Bono therapeutic support to individuals dealing with mental health challenges. Finally, MANI offers corporate training on mental health first aid to organizations looking to learn more about mental health and how to support employees. While they may not in themselves lead to social change, these services are critical short-term strategies to help individuals struggling with their mental health. They also provide MANI an opportunity to generate income that will help them sustain leadership work towards their long-term social change mission.

In addition to the four activities discussed above, MANI also works to increase awareness about mental illnesses. Leaders at MANI emphasized raising awareness as an essential social change activity. According to participants, it is impossible to create change around mental health without educating the public about the problem and how they are affected. Raising awareness is an essential first step. When members of the community become conscious of the issue, they are more likely to join the change effort. It is also more likely to secure partnerships with other organizations when the potential partner is aware of the challenge that needs to be addressed. The organization's name, Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI), literally includes “Aware,” showing that raising awareness is central to MANI’s work. MANI leverages several communication channels to raise awareness. These channels include social media, radio and TV, blogs, newspapers, and physical community outreaches.

Community outreaches are culturally and contextually appropriate means of raising awareness. Outreach involves volunteers visiting rural and urban communities in large groups to educate community members about the challenges they face. Unlike in Western contexts like the United States, where most people have access to health information via the internet, many Nigerians do not have access to such technology. In many rural areas in Nigeria, communities do not have access to electricity and thus might not have access to health information via TV and radio. Hence raising awareness through community outreach is necessary and valuable leadership work.

Research Sub-question Four: How do nonprofit leaders in Nigeria describe culture’s role in shaping their engagement with the communities they serve?

This study found that culture plays a vital role in shaping social change leaders' community engagement efforts. This finding is consistent with existing studies highlighting the

role that culture and identity play in mobilizing collective actions to progress on social problems (Jacobs, 2002; Snow, 2004). However, existing studies often focus on the positive role of culture in shaping social change. For example, Ospina and Foldy (2005) highlight cultural practices that social movements use to mobilize collective action. These practices include utilizing collective identity narratives that help community members identify with a cause.

By contrast, this study highlights the cultural barriers that social change leaders might encounter when engaging communities. These barriers, like stigmatization, might be unique to the work that MANI does, which is mental health. Still, they can also pose a challenge to community engagement for other social change efforts. For example, an organization working to end gender-based violence might find that women who have been victims of violence in Nigeria may not speak up about their abuse. This might be because women who speak up against abuse are often stigmatized or further victimized. The point is that nonprofit leaders who are working to create social change must pay attention to how culture might be presenting a barrier for individuals affected to reach out for help or speak against the system.

There are also cultural barriers to engagement at the macro level. Participants described how difficult it is to get businesses and community leaders to support their work because the problem they are tackling isn't culturally regarded as important or relevant. Lack of attention or value due to stigma can also be a barrier to community participation. Community leaders are often advised that resilient interventions engage and involve communities in the change effort. However, if community members and stakeholders do not believe the problem is culturally or context-relevant, they might not be willing to participate.

To overcome this cultural barrier, participants describe using a variety of communication strategies. These strategies include utilizing storytelling, local languages, and leveraging social

media. These strategies are adopted to help community members appreciate the importance of the leadership work and potentially get them to participate. The communication practices they identified are similar to those highlighted in the social change leadership framework (Ospina & Foldy, 2005; Ospina et al., 2012). These practices help build bridges with stakeholders who might be resistant to the change process, including reframing discourse and bridging differences.

Reframing discourse involves changing dominant narratives about a problem to reach a diverse audience. To change a dominant narrative, leaders must first identify and understand this narrative and how the dominant narrative acts as a barrier to progress (Ospina et al., 2012). Once the dominant narrative is identified, leaders create new frames, new ways of talking about the problem so that people who might not relate to the old frame can see themselves as impacted by it. This practice is similar to the storytelling work that leaders at MANI do.

The goal of using storytelling is to change the public's perception of mental illnesses. For example, the dominant story about mental illnesses in Nigeria is that it is a "White man's" illness that does not impact Africans. To counter that narrative, MANI consistently tells real stories of Nigerians struggling with mental health challenges. They tell these stories using local languages to reach community members' hearts and change their perceptions of mental illness. MANI also invites individuals living with mental illnesses to share their stories using social media platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram. These individual stories are amplified and used as examples to help the public understand that mental illnesses are real. The participants report that they have found storytelling valuable in reducing stigma around mental illnesses, which is a barrier to mental health care. The use of storytelling to shape and change community members' mental illness perception aligns with the theory of constitutive communication.

The constitutive communication approach views communication as both able to convey reality and shape reality (Collinson, 2006; Grint, 2000; 2005; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Meindl, 1995; Vine et al., 2008). Leaders at MANI understand storytelling as capable of constituting a new reality about mental illness in Nigeria. MANI's leaders assert that using local language can influence how people perceive mental illnesses, illustrating social construction principles foundational to this study. From a social constructionist perspective, language is viewed as capable of creating and shaping reality (Deetz, 1992; Jian et al., 2008).

Bridging difference involves practices that facilitate collaboration between diverse organizations and stakeholders. Leaders build relationships with groups and stakeholders to leverage collective resources to make progress on shared goals (Ospina et al., 2012). In engaging various organizations, leaders strive to acknowledge and leverage the value of diverse perspectives and approaches. Bridging work can happen at an intra-organizational level or an inter-organizational level. At the intra-organizational level, leaders work to build relationships across groups or departments within one organization. At the inter-organizational level, leaders work to build relationships across organizations through partnerships and alliances. As previously highlighted, leaders at MANI engage in this bridging work by engaging diverse stakeholders and organizations to leverage resources and build collective power to increase access to mental health care for their communities.

MANI's leaders have adapted their communication practices in response to cultural barriers to engagement. This response is consistent with the assumptions of constitutive communication and social constructionist perspectives. Both constitutive communication and social constructionism share the assumption that human interactions not only shape the social and cultural worlds, but culture also shapes how humans talk and interact (Fairhurst & Grant,

2010; Fairhurst, 2007). More research is needed to understand how social change leadership practices might help overcome cultural barriers to engagement and how cultural barriers lead to the development of new leadership practices.

Overarching Theme: How nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change

The research findings described in the discussed themes inform one overarching theme of this study: *Nonprofit leaders in Nigeria collaborate with multiple stakeholders as they engage in social change activities to make progress on challenges facing their communities.* While MANI's leaders describe leadership through their lens of positional authority, they emphasize the need to collaborate with multiple stakeholders to progress on Nigeria's mental health challenges. Central to these collaborations are a variety of social change leadership activities. These leadership activities include raising awareness, advocating for policy change, and offering direct mental health services. The nonprofit leaders in this study sought out partners that could contribute/participate in these activities, with an awareness that they alone (the positional leaders) cannot successfully bring about social change. Informed by these findings and insights, Figure 5.1 illustrates a proposed framework for how nonprofit leaders work to create social change in Nigeria. This framework provides the basis for the community engagement guide, which I co-created with the participants.

The draft community engagement guide presented in Appendix C is designed to introduce nonprofit leaders to ideas around leadership as collective work. It explains the work of social change leaders and describes four activities that characterize social change leadership. These four activities include (a) providing direct service, (b) advocating for policy change, (c) organizing, and (d) raising awareness. More importantly, the guide invites nonprofit leaders to identify stakeholders that they should engage as they carry out social change activities. Nonprofit

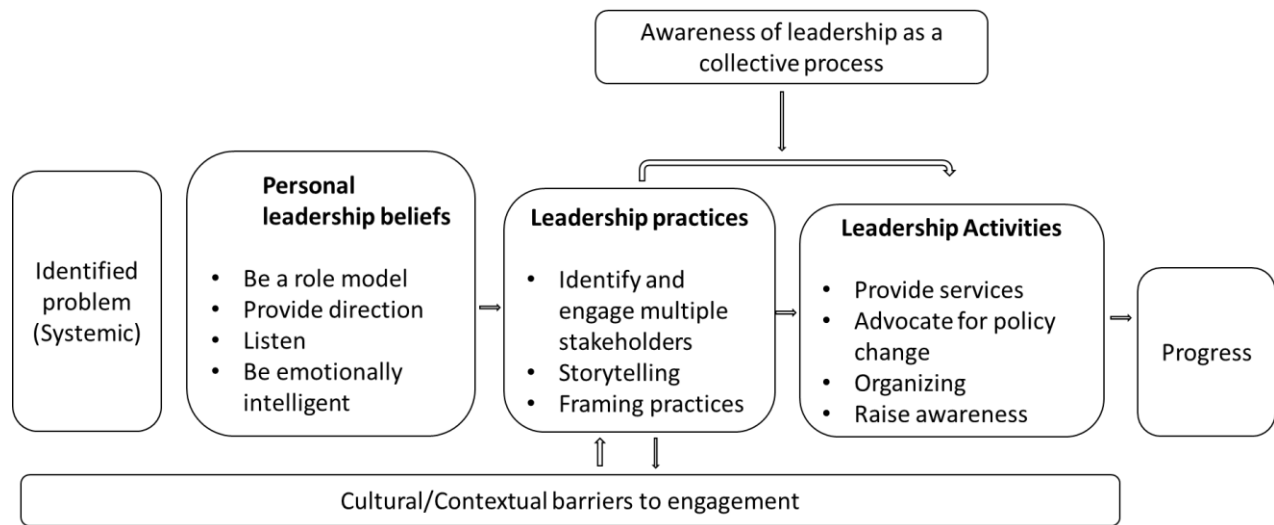
leaders are also encouraged to identify cultural factors, beliefs, and attitudes that might make progress on the challenge difficult. Once they identify these cultural barriers, they are then invited to come up with practices that will enable them to overcome the cultural barriers.

This study's theoretical framework also informed the engagement guide's development in at least two ways. First, my decision to co-create the guide with participants reflects an assumption that knowledge and reality are socially constructed. To this end, I created a WhatsApp group with the participants to exchange ideas on how findings from this study can inform a community engagement guide. We then utilized a collaborative Google document for pulling ideas together and creating the guide. The choice to use WhatsApp for collaboration and deliberation was also intentional. WhatsApp is a widely-used communication platform in Nigeria. Many nonprofit organizations use WhatsApp to host workgroups that allow for easy access and communication from my observations. MANI also used WhatsApp for work-related activities. Hence participants were familiar and comfortable with using the platform during our engagement.

Secondly, the social change leadership framework, which formed part of my theoretical framework, also informed the engagement guide. Ospina et al. (2012) highlighted four leadership activities that characterized social change work. These activities include organizing, community building, offering direct services, and advocating for policy change. This study's findings show that leaders at MANI engaged in all four of these activities, including a fifth activity called increasing awareness. Participants agreed that the engagement guide should explain these social change leadership activities and a reflection tool to help other nonprofits leaders build capacity to create social change with communities.

Figure 5.1.

A Proposed Framework of Social Change Leadership in Nigeria



One major strength of this study is that it identifies and takes into account the cultural barriers to engagement. These barriers make the work of social change difficult, and leaders respond to them by deploying a variety of culturally relevant communication strategies like storytelling. In this way, this study contributes to the existing literature on how leaders work to create social change (Ospina & Foldy, 2005). This study also has rich implications for how nonprofit leaders in Nigeria engage in social change leadership. It also has value for how leadership educators in Nigeria teach leadership. Finally, it opens up possibilities for new research around social change leadership, one that takes into consideration the context in which leadership activities are enacted.

Implication and Recommendation for Practice

I write this section with African nonprofit leaders in mind, including anyone who holds—or aspires to hold—a formal position of authority within a nonprofit. There is a lot to learn from the first finding, which describes how participants understand leadership from their lens as nonprofit executives. Participants emphasized the role of leaders in providing direction for

organizational members. This is important because members of the organization need clarity about the direction the organization is going and their role in it. However, in providing direction, one must involve others. One way to involve others is by asking them to share how they see themselves contributing to the organizational goal. The same principle applies to developing a direction for the organization. Leaders holding positional authority should not lord it over other members of the organization or group. Those who hold the identity of a leader should ask other members of their organization for their input when making decisions, especially decisions that impact members directly. Asking others for their perspectives or input is one way to be inclusive.

Being inclusive is part of who we are as Africans. Being inclusive and participative in the way we engage individuals within our organization also ties back to what the findings show regarding the importance of listening. Leaders should listen to the people with whom they work. While society might expect leaders to be all-knowing, no one person has all the answers. As a leader working to create social change, one must be willing to listen to others' perspectives. Listening to others and inviting them to share their perspectives is an important way to show them that their contribution is valued and invite their participation in the leadership work.

A disposition of valuing collaboration and being inclusive was particularly emphasized when participants described the kind of leadership needed to create social change. The findings show that collaboration with multiple stakeholders is vital. Nonprofit leaders must ask themselves, “Who am I currently collaborating with? Who else needs to be at the table?”

When thinking about who needs to be at the table, it’s imperative not to narrow the scope to include only people perceived as having great influence and a high stake (McBride, 2018). It is also important to include individuals who have low influence and high stakes, and those who might have great influence but low stakes like celebrities, for instance. Participants talked about

the value of involving celebrities in their work. Celebrities are highly influential but might be perceived as having a low stake in the issues of mental health. Leveraging their influence can help raise awareness about the cause you're passionate about, enabling you to reach a wider audience. Celebrities can also help you attract other partners. By engaging with them, they lend visibility and the perception of credibility. *I mean, if top music producer Don Jazzy endorses your work, you must be legit ... You get?*

Engaging multiple stakeholders in Nigeria isn't always easy, especially when we've been *colonized*, sorry, *socialized* to think about leadership as a function of individual positional authority. Leaders might be tempted to do it all on their own to take all the glory of appearing like the knowledgeable, powerful leader. *No reason am*. Nothing of real significance has ever been achieved without a group of people working together towards progress. Leaders are more likely to make progress on tough challenges when they work with others than when they go alone.

There is also a need to involve community members in work. In this study, participants describe communities as just sites for interventions. Participants do not emphasize or articulate how community members can get involved and own the work. Interventions are only resilient when there are community buy-in and participation. Community participation might take a lot more time and resources, but it is entirely worth it. Social change organizations should work to build community members' collective capacity to take charge of the work. For example, rather than merely educating community members about mental illness, is there a possibility to train members of these communities to be peer educators? Instead of only providing services for individuals with mental health, how can you empower survivors to become advocates

themselves? Empowering those who are most affected by the challenge to take up space and lead is in itself leadership.

This study highlights how cultural factors might create barriers to engagement. Nonprofit leaders must keep this in mind and must continue to develop strategies to overcome cultural barriers. It is important to find out how the local community is reacting to the leadership work. What concerns do they have? How do they make sense of the change project? What loss might they experience from the change you hope to create? How do you attend to that loss? Or at least acknowledge it? When engaging communities where English isn't their first language (aka, every community in Nigeria), how might leaders use the local language to reach the people's hearts? These are all critical questions that nonprofit leaders must ask themselves as they do the work of creating social change.

Implication for Leadership Learning and Development in Nigeria

What do these findings mean for leadership learning and development, and for leadership educators and developers, in Nigeria? For starters, there is a need to integrate leadership learning and development within current educational systems. In particular, higher education has a moral and civic responsibility to prepare young people to be active citizens. Nigerians cannot keep complaining about poor leadership when we are not preparing our young people to engage in leadership activities. From my own experience, I first learned about leadership in 2012, during my third year of college, during a class on industrial and organizational psychology. In my college program, we only covered trait theories of leadership. I was privileged, as none of my friends in other disciplines learned anything about leadership.

A tangible action is to develop and expand leadership education within Nigerian universities. When universities in Nigeria begin to teach leadership, they must center on African

approaches and perspectives. If universities must teach Western perspectives of leadership, they should contextualize the ideas to be relevant to Nigerian students. Leadership educators and developers can make teaching context-relevant by using local illustrations and examples. For example, educators could highlight people enacting leadership in Nigeria, like MANI in this study. Leadership educators can also collaborate with organizations like MANI, inviting them into their classrooms to teach students about how they are enacting leadership.

Leadership educators should also design a leadership curriculum to be experiential. One way to do this is by including a service-learning component. Leadership educators can partner with nonprofit organizations in their local area and have their students work with them during the semester to make progress on a particular challenge. Leadership revolves around a challenge, and the learning is in the doing.

Research Recommendations

For researchers, this study only begins to scratch the surface of how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change. In this study, I illuminate how leaders understand the construct of leadership. I also shed light on some of the activities these leaders engage in to create social change. There is, however, a need for more research to understand specific practices that foster community collaboration and participation, especially in non-Western settings. There is also yet a lot to learn about how culture shapes community engagement in nonwestern settings. In light of these, I recommend the following questions to guide future research:

- How is inclusive leadership understood and enacted within nonprofit organizations?

Participants in this study described a need for more volunteer engagement. This might require leaders to be more inclusive in their practices. Therefore, it is important to

understand how inclusive leadership is understood and enacted in a bid to improve engagement within nonprofit organizations.

- How do nonprofit leaders empower community members to engage in leadership activities? As highlighted in the discussion section, community engagement is incomplete without community participation. It is therefore important to understand how nonprofit leaders facilitate participation through empowerment.
- How do nonprofit leaders describe and navigate barriers to community engagement? Besides the cultural barriers already identified, what other barriers to engagement exists, and how do nonprofit leaders navigate these barriers.

Finally, there is more to learn about how leadership is enacted and understood in places other than the West. This study contributes to knowledge about how nonprofit leaders work to create social change. Importantly, it shines a light on the cultural barriers that these leaders have to overcome while doing their work. These barriers are unique to their context. It is no surprise then that the strategies for navigating these barriers are also unique.

While Nigeria's leadership challenges are well documented, this study demonstrates that young people are rising to the challenge. There is hope. Documenting the activities and practices that nonprofit leaders engage in to create change shows that there can be a method to the madness. While this study was situated in the mental health space, the findings inform social change leadership engagement across nonprofit sectors. These activities and practices are transferrable and can help nonprofit leaders all across Nigeria make progress on the social issues they seek to address.

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Appendix A - Interview Guide (Semi-structured)

Length: 45-60 minutes

Primary Goal: to learn how you work with communities to create change. There are no right or wrong answers here.

1. To begin, please tell me a little bit about yourself and your story up to this point in your life. How did you get involved in this work?
2. How will you describe yourself as a leader and what does leadership mean to you?
3. Tell me about a time you worked with members of your community on a project, how did you bring them on board? What was most challenging?
4. How do you describe the change efforts you are leading?
5. Can you think of a time recently when led a change effort? Can you walk me through it? What happened? What happened next? Who was involved?
6. How would you describe the kind of leadership required to create social change?
7. Could you give me an example of such leadership and the change it generated? What happened? Could you walk me through it?
8. Tell me about a specific project where you engaged stakeholders. Could you walk me through it? When did it start? Then what happened? ... what difference did it make?"
9. How would you describe the role culture plays in shaping your engagement with communities?
10. Could you walk me through instances in which you changed your engagement strategies to adapt to the cultural context? What did you do and how?

Appendix B - Debriefing Statements

Debriefing Statement after Interview

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me today. This research will be helpful in understanding how nonprofit leaders work with communities to create social change in Nigeria. It will also be helpful for leadership educators who might be interested in teaching emerging social change leaders how to effectively engage communities in Nigeria.

As a reminder, to ensure confidentiality of the audio-file that we just created, I will save it as a password-protected file on my laptop computer. After I transcribe it, I will send a copy of that transcript to you via email to make sure it is accurate, and then I will also save it as a password-protected file on my laptop. When I write the results of this research or present it at conferences, I will use a pseudonym for you so that no one can identify you.

Also, if you want to read the results of my research, I can share those with you via email once I have completed the study.

Do you have any questions? Thank you so much for giving your time and energy to participate in this study. It is greatly appreciated!

Appendix C - Engagement Guide

Leading Social Change: *Only you no fit run am* (An Engagement Guide for Social Change Leaders)

Introduction

When you think about leadership, what comes to mind? Perhaps you might picture yourself and the work you're doing. You might also imagine a leader you look up to, one who you believe is doing fantastic work to create change in her community. The truth is most times when we think about leadership, we think about it at an individual level. One individual is doing something to mobilize a group of people to get stuff done or achieve a goal. There is nothing wrong with this. However, the complex nature of the problems we face today, particularly in Africa, requires us to think about leadership differently. The complex issues facing our country and communities require collective work. It requires us to think about leadership as a collective activity.

If you are a social change leader or interested in engaging in social change activity, this guide is for you. In what follows, I present in simple terms what it means to think about leadership as collective work. I also highlight and discuss critical activities that characterize social change leadership. Lastly, I describe some practices that can help you and the people you collaborate with make progress on the challenges facing your communities. This tool will help you improve the way you engage communities to tackle social problems. Throughout this guide, I use the work of Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI) as an example to help deepen your understanding of the concepts and ideas discussed.

Leadership as Collective Work

What social problems are you passionate about solving? Who and who are you working with to make progress on this challenge? *As long as e be say na Social problem only you nor fit run am.* Research suggests that the problems facing us today are way too complex for one person or even one group of people to solve. Whether it is poverty, increasing access to mental health care, eradicating gender-based violence, or improving education access. These problems will

require multiple stakeholders working together to make progress. Leadership for social change, therefore, is a collective process. It involves various people and groups working together to achieve a goal. If you are not engaging multiple stakeholders, you're not leading social change. *Reason am.* However, besides thinking about leadership as collective work, what else does social change leadership entail? In the next section, I'll detail key activities that characterize social change leadership.

Social Change Leadership

To create social change, you must first identify a social problem. These problems are often rooted in systemic inequality or injustice. Think, for example, about Access to quality education. Why is this a social problem that requires social change leadership? For one, it is often rooted in systemic inequality. Some people have access to a better education than others. Make we use Nigeria as an example. Think about the outstanding government schools, say Kings College or Queens College. Who typically has access to those schools? Compare those schools to your average public schools in Lagos. Do you see the inequality? Oya check the top Private schools, who typically have access to those schools? *Shey mama Shukura fit send her pikin to Loyola Jesuit College abi Chrisland? Shey her own pikin no deserve good education just because she no get funds? Check am.* Your ability to identify these inequalities and envision a society where these do not exist will often drive you and your collaborators to action. Now that you're gingered, what would action look like? Research suggests that social change organizations/groups engage in 4 different types of activities. These activities include raising awareness, organizing, providing direct services, and advocating for policy change. Let's consider each one of these.

Increasing Awareness

One key activity that characterizes Social Change organization is their work to raise awareness on social issues. When you identify a problem and try to work with others on a solution, you and your team might be surprised about how little the public knows about the issue. Even when these problems appear apparent to you, many might still have no clue about it or how it impacts them. Using various strategies and via multiple channels, social change leaders work

to increase awareness about a social problem in a bid to gain support. Social media is one channel that many social change organizations have leveraged to increase awareness. It is inexpensive and efficient. Are you currently leveraging social media to raise awareness? You are doing well! However, raising awareness about a problem doesn't necessarily fix the problem, especially when it's a systemic problem. In addition to raising awareness, social change leaders also organize!

Organizing

Organizing means coordinating activities to make progress on a goal. One key organizing work is to build a community of people affected by the social problem you're passionate about and empower them to get involved. What does this look like? So, say my team and I are interested in improving access to mental health care, we will reach out to individuals living with mental health challenges and invite them to join our community. This community can be a physical or virtual community or both. When they join the community, you educate them about the magnitude of the problem and listen to them as they share their own loved experiences with mental illnesses and lack of access to care. You work with them to develop other strategies that can help you all make progress on the challenges. These strategies could include how to effectively raise awareness, better provide a service, or get the government on board. Let's talk about providing services; this is a critical activity that characterizes social change organizations.

Providing Direct Services

While the long-term goal might be to eradicate a problem, individuals currently dealing with that problem might need help. For example, if MANI's goal is to ensure everyone has access to mental health care, MANI might offer therapeutic support to individuals currently living with mental health challenges. They do this! Offering direct therapeutic support for individuals living with mental illnesses will not eradicate the problem of lack of access. However, it gives affected populations a respite. It is a short-term fix that allows the organization to demonstrate the need for this service while also helping those they can along the way. Besides offering direct services to individuals affected, organizations can also offer training to the public

or professionals seeking to learn more about the problem. Training can be commercialized and can be a source of income for the organization to sustain its work.

Policy Advocacy

Making progress on systemic issues often requires policy change. Policy change requires collective work. It involves government and other individuals' engagement in authority to rethink current policies that maintain the social problem and develop new policies that help to make progress on the challenge. Think about the problem with the lack of access to mental health care in Nigeria. One of the most significant barriers is the current policy on mental health. The Lunacy act of 1954 criminalized severe mental illnesses, making it almost impossible for individuals living with mental illnesses to ask for help. This law complicates the work that MANI is doing to improve access to mental health care. To make progress, MANI is working to engage the government to change this law. As a social change leader, the question you and your team need to ask is what laws are currently in place that make progress on this challenge difficult? How might we begin to advocate for policy change?

Now all these four activities I've mentioned and discussed, *only you nor fit run am!* You should be engaging with multiple people and groups in each of these activities. The following section highlights how you can identify stakeholders and practices that can help you engage them effectively.

Engaging Multiple Stakeholders

There might be a temptation to do it all on your own when it comes to leading change. The prestige of being called a leader and having people look up to you might have you thinking you don't need anyone. It's a trap, don't fall for it. The truth is progress on complex social problems requires collective work. However, how do you know who you should be engaging? Who needs to be at the table?

One question that might help you is who has a stake in this issue? A second question is who has the influence to help make progress on this issue? Some people or groups can have high stakes but little power. Others might have a little stake but great influence, while some may have

a high stake and high influence. Using a stakeholder map below can help you identify who needs to be at the table.

Figure C.2.

Stakeholder Engagement Map



* Stake = A person's interest in the issue; how little or how much it affects him/her.

** Influence = Tends to be perceived as synonymous with a person's position in a hierarchy.

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Let's think about Nigeria's mental health challenge again. When you think of who MANI should be engaging, who comes to mind? Who are those with a high stake and high influence? Who are those with a high stake and little influence? And who has little stake but high influence? On the one hand, the government, for example, has a high stake in this issue whether they are aware or not, and they, of course, have a significant influence in that they can create policies that can be game-changing. On the other hand, celebrities like musicians and actors might have low stakes in this issue but could have great influence in that they could get more people to start taking mental health seriously if they lend their voice. Lastly, individual members of society who struggle with mental illnesses have high stakes but might have low influence.

When it comes to engaging stakeholders, one mistake leaders make is that they tend to engage only one set of people, often those they perceive to be highly influential. They tend not to include people who have high stakes but low influence. Do not make this mistake. You can learn a lot from people who are most affected by the issue, even when they appear to have little influence. What is more, when you think about the work of organizing, this is the group with whom you should be building a community. Given their personal experience with the problem, they are more likely to be passionate and committed to making progress and creating change. Engaging them is a must!

Now, given all you've learned so far, how might these ideas help you to make progress on the challenges you're passionate about? Use the worksheet below to rethink your engagement strategy.

1. What is the challenge you're passionate about addressing? Describe it in as much detail.

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2. Describe critical activities that can help you make progress.

A. How do you intend to raise awareness? What channels will you use?

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B. Who is most affected by this issue, and how might you build community with them? How do you empower them to participate in the work?

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C. What services can you provide? What else can help you generate funds?

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D. What are the current laws or policies that maintain the problem? What needs to change, and how might you advocate for policy change?

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3. Using the stakeholder's engagement map, who needs to be at the table? Who should you be engaging?

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Understand Cultural Barriers to Engagement

You might not always achieve success when engaging multiple stakeholders. There could be some barriers to engagement. Notably, from my study of MANI's work and my reflections on the work I do, there are often cultural barriers to engagement. In the context of MANI's work to create change in the mental health sector, they encountered some cultural resistance. Cultural resistance manifested at both an individual and organizational level. People are reluctant to reach out for help at an individual level because they fear being stigmatized. The Nigeria culture stigmatizes people who live with mental illnesses. We have all kinds of derogatory terms for people living with mental illnesses. No one wants to be labeled Werey. In Lagos, the biggest psychiatric hospital has been stigmatized. The Yaba psychiatric hospital is labeled Yaba Left. Yaba Left is now a derogatory metaphor for anyone who might be living with a mental illness.

Culturally, many Nigerians also do not believe that mental illnesses are real. Many people believe that individuals who have mental illnesses are possessed by evil spirit forces or have been cursed. Beliefs like this also make it hard for people to reach out for help. Government officials who hold these erroneous beliefs might again fail to act on behalf of the people. They might resist laws that should create access to mental health care. MANI might struggle to get the support of organizations that should be partnering or funding MANI's work at the organizational level.

1. Now, think about the work you're doing or what work you're hoping to do. What might be some of the cultural barriers or resistance to engagement?

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- A. Besides culture, what other barriers to engagement might exist?

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Overcoming Cultural Barriers to Engagement

Now that you have identified these cultural barriers, what can help you navigate and overcome these barriers? Our research with MANI highlights certain communication and leadership practices that leaders at MANI use to navigate and overcome cultural barriers. First, in their work to help local communities understand mental illnesses, MANI utilize local languages in their messaging. During community outreaches, they speak using a language that can easily be understood by the community members. Leaders at MANI also utilize storytelling. They acknowledge that Nigerians love hearing and telling stories. Nigerians might not believe a thing is true until they hear a story about someone who was impacted. So, MANI leverages storytelling to help people realize that mental illnesses are real.

How can you use local languages and storytelling in your own work to overcome cultural barriers? Besides these two practices, what else can help you overcome cultural barriers to engagement?

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