

Emerging leadership practices in extremity: Case study of women advancing collective enterprise in peace building processes, Plateau State, Nigeria

by

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B.Sc., Nasarawa State University, 2006

M.A., University of Abuja, 2019

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Leadership Communication

College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

2024

Abstract

Nigeria has been dealing with protracted fratricidal and intractable communal conflicts, leaving its citizens dwelling in harsh deprivation, helplessness, and hopelessness in its wake. This is further exaggerated by poor leadership and economic insolvency, which has placed the country at a precipice of unprecedented poverty and insecurity. At the center of all this pathetic condition is poor leadership, which has affected provision of basic infrastructures like education, health, power, housing, water, sanitation, and hygiene. It also accounts for high levels of unemployment, with millions of idle minds available to mischief and notorious practices.

The effect of poor or good leadership cannot be hidden, and this is manifested in the health of the ecosystem where it is occurring. This means that leadership is not static, it is dynamic, and its dynamism is locked in everyday practices. Several extant leadership literatures theorize that Nigeria is lacking in the exercise of leadership that meets the complexities and lived realities of our time. Leadership is not something you pick off the shelf and administer like a template or blueprint, and this has not served the country overtime. However, a crop of scholars and practitioners are evoking a practice turn, that elevates the need to look inwards, and be endogenously creative. These folks are engaging context driven consideration in approaching leadership, prioritizing cultural practices, the lived realities of the people, with cognizance of the ever-evolving face of peace and conflicts.

This study sought to understand how context influences emergent local leadership practices in extremities. The research site is a conflict-ridden area which has experienced sporadic communal conflicts for over 23 years; highly patriarchal, with rigid gender and social hierarchy; and particularly under-resourced. This is a qualitative study, and leaned on the

theoretical framework of adaptive leadership, leadership-as-practice, and everyday peace. A twining of constructivist approach and case study methodology was utilized to understand the phenomenon, through co-construction of meanings with the co-researchers. Eight women leading peace building engaged in this study, through in-depth semi-structured interviews using mediated mediums (Zoom and Phone calls). Data was analyzed using an abductive thematic analysis which surfaced eleven themes and compressed as three main themes: (1) Leadership requires authority(*or authorizing self*), inclusion and should be nimble; (2) Community groups working on peace building should consider communication, collaboration, supportive culture, and leading by example as essential practices; (3) Groups may be motivated to engage in peace building because of experiences of exclusion & marginalization, hardships & loss, the gendered impacts of conflicts, and empowerments from trainings. The synthesis of these themes informed the overarching theme that: Context has a mediating and moderating influence in the emergence and practice of peace leadership.

The findings suggest that both intangible and tangible elements provide context to leadership. Leadership does not happen in a vacuum but requires a container that holds space for different elements to interact. The occupiers of this container serve as moderating or mediating factors that provokes progress or not. This includes the combination of the people (*identities, reasoning*) the culture and traditions (*practice, artifacts*), social norms, language, policies, and laws, lived experiences, and the environment. This study recommends that both peace leadership researchers and practitioners continue to expand the prism of theorizing and praxis to identify and center the varied and evolving elements within specific context as areas of inquiry. Finally, further research may consider how power structures (*intergroup and intragroup*) in extreme context are established, deconstructed, and dismantled in situatedness.

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Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude to Dr. Brandon Kliewer for the unwavering support and guidance. You have been my anchor, keeping me grounded and connected to what matters the most as I engaged on this Ph.D. journey. You constantly challenged me to be better, and I am grateful for your mentorship. You have always said to me that the best dissertation is a complete dissertation. Well, here I am, a complete dissertation. I could not have been able to accomplish this without your support and encouragement.

I also want to sincerely thank my powerful committee members for their sacrifice of time, advice, motivation and how they authentically engaged with me all through. Dr. Kerry Priest, you have been a huge and constant inspiration. Dr. Brett Mallon, you have been an incredibly wonderful resource and teacher. Dr. Sean Eddington, your guidance has pulled me through moments of confusion, and areas I felt stuck. I appreciate all your feedback and guidance.

Finally, I want to appreciate all the women taking risk, disrupting systems and structures that perpetuate intergenerational inequity and inequality. I particularly want to acknowledge women peace builders in Plateau state, Nigeria.

Thank you.

Dedication

To God, who helped me through the mountains and valleys of life, my unending gratitude. I am forever indebted to my father U. K. Ari and my mother Grace Ogodo Ari, who did their very best to nurture and raise me up to think beyond what I could ordinarily conceive. I would not be able to do any of this without the dream you both put in me, and how you painted the world to me. To my two kindhearted boys who continuously challenged and encouraged me in their own ways! Just the thought of the future I dream for you both keep me burning the candles at night. I am also grateful for my siblings who believed in me always, in all seasons! I am because of you all!

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

Context- The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, located in west Africa, the sub-Saharan region of the continent, with Abuja as its capital city. It has a population of 219, 809, 940 (World meter, 2023), large geography consisting of thirty-six (36) states, three hundred and seventy-one (371) ethnic groups. The country recognizes three (3) main religions of Christianity, Islam and traditional. The climate ranges from arid to humid equatorial, with rainy season between April to September, and dry season between December to March. There are over a hundred languages spoken with Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba being the dominant languages, and English as its formal language of communication (Usar, 2021). It is noteworthy that there is a different form of English called Pidgin English spoken by a large swathe of people in Nigeria and most part of West Africa, as an in-group form of communication. Pidgin is broken English and constructed by a group of people, with norms on how it is spoken and interpreted (Nweke, 2023). It is not a native language, but a mix of different languages to make meaning and communicate in a simpler form for easy comprehension of the group. That is why the Nigerian pidgin English is different from other African countries but may be understood to an extent by all.

Nigeria is rich in natural resources, the largest oil producer in Africa and domiciles the largest natural gas reserves on the continent (Elbadawi & Mohammed, 2015). Other natural resources include iron ore, lead, zinc, limestone, tin, coal, lithium, and niobium. In the southeast region, there is crude oil, natural gas, bauxite, iron ore, sandstone, lignite, clay, coal, tin, columbite. In the southwest there is gold, oil, lead, iron ore, tin, niobium, lead and zinc, while south-south has oil and gas, limestone, kaolin, clay, salt, barite, quartzite. The Northeast region

accounts for uranium, gypsum, limestone, gold, sapphires, topazes, and aquamarines while the North central has natural gas, tin ore, limestone, lead, niobium, zinc, and coal, and in Northwest, there is tin ore, limestone, natural gas, niobium, zinc, coal, and tin. Agriculture used to be the mainstay of the economy, until crude oil was discovered which should have been a great economic augmentation. However, this was not the case, as the focus on crude oil created a huge diversion to the agro-economy of the country (Onuoha & Elegbede, 2018), and impacting on the socio- economic conditions of the country.

The country is characterized as a collectivist society where values and practices are group-oriented, with values of long-term commitments and loyalty to relationships (Hofstede, 2022). In this context everyone feels responsible for each other, which demonstrates the mantra, “be your brothers’ keeper”. The country is characterized as a high context culture (Kim 1982), and deeply entrenched with religious and diverse cultural ideologies. This influences the predisposition to a masculine culture, where culture and tradition ascribes strong gender roles between men and women, with little or no room for overlap (Hofstede, 1998). It is a society characterized by adherence to norms, where traditions and cultural values hold significant reverence, and any hint of change may be perceived as disrupting the delicate balance of social cohesion. The people have a short-term orientation of survival (Hofstede, 2022), with the belief that “one has to eat and enjoy life today, and tomorrow will take care of itself.” Due to a huge level of inequality in the country, there is a cavalier and tacit acceptance of unequal distribution of power, which also demonstrates a culture of high-power distance. This is evident on a broad scale within governance institutions and on a smaller scale within familial structures, such as marital relationships and parent-child dynamics.

Research indicates that notwithstanding the collectivist culture, the diversity within the country can be linked to communal conflicts. (Oji et al., 2014; Nlewem, 2018; Osinubi &

Osinubi, 2006; Edewor et al., 2014). Diversity in Nigeria poses as a double-edged sword, with its enrichment value on one hand, and as an inflamer of conflicts amongst and across groups on the other hand. Owing to the distribution of natural resources across various regions of the country, with certain areas endowed with abundant quantities and diverse types of these resources, there arises competition among communities (Audu, 2014; Lindfors, 2019; Freund, 1978). Several ecological factors have resulted in drought which is experienced in the north, causing increased mobility and migration to other parts of the country in search of green pastures and fresh waters (Buba, 202; Peace, 2017; Oli et al., 2018). Hence, herders invade farms to feed their castles, causing destruction and loss to the farmers' enterprise. In addition, politics has continued to create a divide and fan the flames of religious fanaticism and violence (Abdu, 2011; Ukiwo, 2003; Çancı & Odukoya, 2016).

Concatenation of Events Leading to the Nigerian Protracted Communal Conflicts

Since the transition to democracy in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed perennial conflicts and complex insecurity situations. The sporadic and widespread conflicts are manifestations of the tensions within and across its diverse resources and population (Çancı & Odukoya, 2016). The nomadic, pastoralist and sedentary farmer conflict which has escalated from the middle belt to other parts of the country (Gursoy, 2020); the Niger-Delta militancy perpetrated by a group called the avengers, fraught with power struggles for resources in an oil rich region (Mahler, 2010); ethno-religious crisis amongst dominant and minority groups, reinforced by rivalry and intolerance (Yusuf & Abdulbaqy, 2012); political violence that is tacitly driven by religious and ethnic bigotry (Obadare, 1999); and the Boko haram insurgency (Aro, 2013) has continued to affect the development and peaceful co-existence of the citizenry. The insurgency has birthed an unprecedented level of banditry and kidnapping for ransom, which has further thrown the country into high risk and insecurity index (Mike, 2020). This is exacerbated by factors like

scarcity of resources attributed to climate change, inefficient state mechanisms, the oil boom, postcolonial effects, and the spike in armament of non-state groups (Gursoy, 2020). The country has experienced loss of millions of lives, widespread economic upheaval, hunger, and unprecedented displacement (Eneji & Agri, 2020).

It might seem plausible to expect a pronounced propensity for conflict in Nigeria, a country which is currently below the United Nations defined poverty line (Ipinnaiye & Olaniyan, 2023). Four (4) in Ten (10) Nigerians live without basic health, water, education, food, and decent accommodation (Haruna et al., 2023). Unemployment has been on a constant rise (Sasu, 2022), and the country is ranked 103 out of 121 countries for poverty (Index, G. H. 2022), situating it amongst one of the most underdeveloped countries (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). Before the oil boom, agriculture has been the mainstay of income for Nigeria, especially as an export enterprise. The combination of oil boom, climate change, corruption, insurgency, and the COVID-Pandemic has further impacted on the development of agriculture as a prime source of income for the country (Ayoola et al., 2011; Ilesanmi, et al., 2021; Tantua & Isukul, 2022). These conditions account for widespread loss, with increased tension and conflict between farmers and herders for grazing land. The escalation of communal clashes and insurgency has affected the social, political, and economic advancement of the country (Igbini, 2020). Despite all these challenges, the citizens are working as collectives to intervene for a more peaceful Nigeria (Obi, 2018; Irene & Majekodunmi, 2017; Akande et al., 2021). This has resulted in shifts in the definition and implementation of peace, as well as the type of leadership required to advance progress in Nigeria. (Garaba, 2016; Williams, 2023; Adebayo, 2019).

The Shifting Dynamics in Nigerian Community Peace Building

Despite the challenges experienced in peace building, and the loss of faith in systems and structures meant to ensure the protection of citizens and enactment of peace, a burgeoning

number of concerned citizens have risen to the call. These groups are resolved and committed to putting differences and grievances aside, and working collaboratively, engaging with communities to contribute to sustainable peace processes. The focus of this research is on a community group comprised of women peacebuilders. These women are actively broadening cultural boundaries and asserting their agency through a dynamic and iterative process of learning and adaptation, aimed at promoting everyday peace. (Mc Ginty, 2010). The context has historically undermined women's efforts through exclusionary practices that impacts on women's participation in peace building processes (Zvaita & Mbara, 2019). The United Nation's Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, of which Nigeria is a signatory to, charges nations to ensure women are included in all peace negotiations and interventions. Despite its pledge to adhere to this resolution, Nigeria has yet to effectively translate this convention into actionable provisions and interventions. (Adefisoye & Adefisoye, 2019; Olonisakin, et al., 2010). Women represent fifty percent (50%) of the population of the country, and their active participation would bode significant outcomes in peace building efforts. The normative and institutional barriers driven by a deeply engrained culture of patriarchy continue to stand as a huge impediment to an inclusive peace building approach (Cox et al., 2014).

However, there is a palpable shift from the traditional approach to peace building which privileges a mechanistic and interventionistic approach, to a context driven paradigm (De Coning, 2018; Uvin, 2002). The conventional approach has failed to meet the contextual permutations of conflicts in Nigeria, irresponsible to the lived realities of those affected by the conflict, and focuses more on the ends, than the means to the ends (Aghedo, 2013; Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016; Matthew, 2023). There is a growing paradigm in engaging peace processes that prioritizes localizing interventions and focuses on how context and processes interact to make progress adaptively (De Conning, 2018). It is a practice that gradually establishes connections to

support the concurrent emergence of concepts aimed at sustaining peace, like resilience, relationship, collectivity, and local ownership (Mahmoud & Makoond, 2017). It promotes approaches that prioritize bottom-up, non-hierarchical, participatory, inclusive, emancipatory, and empowering methods, emphasizing the significance of everyday peace. (Mac Ginty, 2014). Through intentional everyday practice of leadership, women groups have shaped community perceptions and practices in leading peace (Raelin et al., 2018).

Peace leadership places people at the center and engages in relational and cohesion building activities (Miller & Green, 2015). It is process-oriented and elevates concepts of everyday peace, like solidarity, reciprocity and sociality (Mc Ginty, 2010). The focus is not on the individual traits, title or authority and competency, but on practices and processes that engage others toward a shared goal or mission (Carrol, et al., 2007). Some peace scholars consider traditional peace leadership concepts which focus on individual trait and competency (Campbell, 2020; Yee et al., 2019; Shambach, 2004; Sullivan & Page, 2019). However, in this research, I lean on a leadership paradigm that is informed by a process ontology which conceptualizes leadership as a verb, that is actions, activities, or practices (Crevani, 2018; Barge & Fairhurst, 2008; Carrol et al., 2008; Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). The practices highlighted in this study encapsulate how the women engaged with each other, community stakeholders and factions. The leadership espoused is bounded on one hand by core cultural values of collectivity, connection, inclusivity, and relationship-orientedness (Miller & Green, 2015). On the other hand, constrained by patriarchal practices of power imbalances manifested in the form of domination, exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization (Garba, 2016; Adelakun & Adelakun, 2022).

Peace Leadership is focused on not just positions, intuitive meaning making, or definitions of what peace means for the community, but what is necessary to attain peace (Miller

& Green, 2015). This includes intentional activities that seek to inculcate a culture for strengthening existing positive communal practices that contribute to maintaining peace. In this case, the everyday action of individuals and groups, how they engage with each other, and practices that demonstrate “we are in this together” situates a praxis of collectivity (Mac Ginty, 2012; Gehrke, 2008). This praxis forms a framework that is contextually driven and elevates the indigenous knowledge and experiences of the community, thereby leading to outcomes that are relevant, practical, and sustainable (Darby & Mac Ginty, 2000). In this kind of leadership, space is created to innovate, adapt to the evolving nature of the crisis, and enact structures and processes that are transformational (Folke et al., 2010).

It is worth noting that this signifies a departure from the traditional leadership approach for women, which typically prioritizes hierarchy, traits, and competencies. (Aghedo, 2013). In this case, they engaged in dialogic inter-actions across groups, symbolic and material engagements that resonated with collective values, and actions that embodies inclusivity and joint efforts (Raelin, 2017). This created a practice turn that elevates attributes paradigmatic of Leadership-As-Practice (Raelin, 2016). It premises a praxis for engaging in reflexivity as they interacted with others, and the environment. Firstly, they identified an adaptive challenge, which has caused many great devastations in their lives (*Communal conflicts*). Secondly, they realized how implicated they are in the complexities of the challenge, and collectively ideated on the “what” and the “how”. Thirdly, they co-created strategies that helped them work in concert, connected, and engaged across diverse groups, religious, ethnic and gender representation. Fourthly, each step they embarked on was anchored on the recognition of how contextual dimensions influenced and shaped their aspirations, goals, and processes (Dresse et al., 2019).

The fusion of both indigenous peace leadership and a leadership lens focused on practice in this research supported the incorporation of local perspectives. This is lacking in

some mainstream theories of peace leadership, especially in connecting the lived realities and the peculiarities within the context of the global south (Chatterjee, 2014; Nnaemeka, 2004; Okpalike, 2014). Liberal and realist peace leverages on peace conventions that are western-centric, and limits alternative approaches to peace building (Mc Ginty, 2008. Selby, 2013). Peace has become elusive in the African context, and the local community have been looking inwards to advance an approach apropos to the contextual conditions. Being interested in indigenous people is one aspect, but giving priority to their voices as a primary reference for developing relevant and resonant processes and conditions is another. This is a primary critique of the interventions from the international community, who have continued to be the core advocate of liberal peace (Miklian, 2014).

Another theory that has also diminished the contribution of the indigenous community is the realism theory. It fails to consider the impact of the colonialist on the indigenous people and promotes a paradigm that neglects the social agency and culture of the local community, while focusing primarily on who matters across the global power community (Reid, 2023). The tussle for both economic and political power ensures that warfare is inherent in the culture of a people, thereby driving polarization and divisions across communities (Huntington, 1996). This has implication on how communities agree to cooperate, conflict, or disintegrate which is obvious in different civilizations (Chatterjee, 2005). This theory is in proximity to Karl Marx Conflict theory, which posits that domination and power is necessary for social order (Marx, 1973; Lumumba-Kasongo, 2017). In the case of local community conflicts in Nigeria, ethnic and religious crises exemplify the clash of civilizations among different groups. The local dominant power structures in Nigeria are deeply conscious of how power is distributed amongst groups, and this is how it plays out amongst the global powers (Huntington, 1996). Clearly, most ethnic

and religious conflicts involve issues of identities and differences, and this is what the realists have failed to recognize.

Leaning on the concept of local turn on peace building which builds on indigenous knowledge and experience (Mac Ginty, 2010), I sought to understand how context influence local peace engagement, especially in a less democratic society characterized by confounding conflict situations. The women who are promoting peace leadership in this specific research area have demonstrated remarkable efforts in overcoming structural and cultural obstacles to achieve progress through the dynamics of communication practices. This is paving way for an uncharted practice that embodies adaptivity and collectivity, while emphasizing a process of reciprocity of trust and learning, vertical and horizontal accountability, honest inquiry, critical empathy, and responsive communication (O'Neill & Brinkerhoff, 2017).

Previously, these women's groups operated as loosely structured entities, functioning in isolation and lacking coordination in their peacebuilding efforts. However, with the support of international agencies like the United Nations, and Women for Women International, they evolved. They co-created systems for community coordination and collaboration, which strengthened the drive and impact of peace building interventions (Gizelis, 2021). They are low resourced but leverage available opportunities in their communities to make progress. This includes training on community-led peace processes that focuses on activities that lead to effective peace dialogue and mediation, which underscores the practice of “everyday peace” (Mac Ginty, 2010). Part of this work also includes engaging families as part of micro interventions to contribute to a culture of peaceful living. The women also work with leaders of faith and culture, convening community groups across religious and cultural lines in the peace building process. Moreover, given the sporadic attacks occurring within the communities, they

function as primary alert providers, promptly escalating significant concerns to both community vigilante groups and leaders.

The practices these women engage in exemplify their vision of leadership and the type of leadership they aspire for their communities. They are committed, selfless, willing to experiment with new ways of intervening, courageous as they walk the edges of cultural cliffs, resolute yet subtle in expanding the cultural boundaries. Understanding how they evoke practices that defy social norms and engage in what communities may label as “anomalies” is an interesting leadership dimension to seek to understand. I have worked with this group in the past and I am excited about their willingness and availability to participate in this study. They are committed to participate as co-researchers, providing data and co-constructing meanings to help understand the phenomenon. They are also interested on how the outcome of the research will contribute to changing the culture of peace building efforts. There is a collective aspiration that it would serve as a tool for advocacy, to engage policy makers and community leaders on inclusive and contextually driven peace building leadership.

Problem Statement

In Nigeria, women are soft target and suffer disproportionately in crisis situations (Hesterman, 2016), including exclusion in peace building processes. Leadership practices that are inclusive and participatory are often stymied by cultural practices and dominant narratives that privilege patriarchy (Makama, 2013; Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015). Dominant studies and literature in peace building have ignored the grassroots advancement of peace building leadership (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Autesserre, 2017). This research focuses on understanding emerging leadership practices that served as mediating and moderating elements in advancing decolonized peace leadership. Through a constructivist approach with the peace building actors,

the role of context in effecting peace leadership practices in peculiarly extreme conditions would be studied.

Research Approach

This study utilized an extended case study approach to understanding the everyday practices of women leading peace processes in Plateau State, Nigeria. Through a constructivist lens, I worked with the women group to understand how their experiences and everyday practice contributed to local peace. The shift from traditional passive individuals bounded by culture and social norms to a cohort of emboldened individuals, taking risk, open to learning, and exercising agency within a conflict context was significant to be understood.

Eight (8) women were interviewed through multiple in-depth phone interview to share their experiences, and co-construct meanings to how their everyday actions contributed to a contextually responsive peace building process. To understand the women's experiences, practices, and their motivations to shift peace building leadership to meet the community lived realities, a thematic analysis was utilized (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Research Questions

How does context influence emergent leadership practices in extreme conditions?

(Leaning on Stake (1995) concept of topical & grand tour questions- Bhattacharya, K. (2017))

Specifying sub-questions are:

- a) How do community groups perceive peace leadership?
- b) How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?

c) How did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

Operational Definition of Terms

Peace building are intentional activities and processes that facilitate the establishment of sustainable peace (Maiese, 2003). This includes everyday acts and practices that seek to avert the re-occurrence or escalation of conflicts, while building social cohesion. (Mac Ginty, 2011). In a context under recovery, and still wary of the sporadic nature of communal conflict, peace building is defined as both relational and processual activities advanced by individuals and collective groups to make progress on peace (Funk & Said, 2010; Okoro Kingsley, 2010). These activities are aimed to engage community-based structures to strengthen practices that avert a relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). This definition underscores the practice turn in peace leadership, which is a departure from traditional peace building to a bottom-up relational approach which considers the agency of the grassroots community (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Randazzo, 2016).

Grassroot Leadership are processes that rely on innovative bottom-up approaches, aimed at consolidating political and socio-cultural efficacy necessary for group relational and institutional leadership (Ari & Kliwer, 2022). This kind of leadership exemplifies practices that advance indigenous civic dynamism and engagement (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013; Christens et al., 2021). Grassroot leadership expands the boundary of participation and innovation, while honoring the norms and values and mission of the community (Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2006). However, it still creates conditions that enable people to take risks by challenging existing and established practices, thereby evoking change or progress on peace leadership (Kezar et al., 2011).

Peace Leadership focuses on the ability to influence people and resources in a manner that results in positive peace (Miller & Green, 2015). This kind of exercise of leadership requires being present and engaging the whole self, with attributes of desire, commitment, attitude, behavior and thought (Van Zyl, 2018). It is a practice for peace which requires leading self, enabling others to lead, and leading with others towards a shared goal of peaceful communities (Van Zyl, 2018). The practices and processes are multi-dimensional and iterative, aimed at building connection, trust, and home-grown perspectives to addressing community conflict (Amaladas & Byrne, 2017).

Community conflicts are organized violent clashes amongst non-state actors with shared identities (Pearlman & Cunningham, 2012; Brosché & Elfversson, 2012). Such conflicts are usually because of perceived indivisible resources, such as natural resources or local political power (Oji et al., 2015; Asiyanbola, 2010). However, in the context of Nigeria, research has shown that it is largely due to ethnic and religious crisis. (Salawu, 2010; Çancı & Odukoya, 2016). These crises are attributed to colonialism and the forcible enactment of Nigeria by foreign powers, without due consultation of the people (Uka, 2008). This has led to rivalry, distrust and animosity amongst groups leading to clashes between religious and ethnic communities. As groups continue to navigate the quest for a true national identity in Nigeria, politicized ethno-religious cleavages have continued to deepen, leading to violent crisis and loss of lives and infrastructures (Agbibo, 2013). This has stifled the nations' building and development and continues to portend elusiveness despite sixty-three (63) years post-independence (Sanusi, 2010; Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). Concerns and thoughts have been ignited on what might be done differently, with a gravitation towards looking inwards (Adeyeri, 2021; Ottoh, 2022) Looking inwards means considering local and indigenous practices that fits the contextual challenges of Nigerian peace building landscape.

Indigenous peace building relies on bottom-up approaches, and relies on local, traditional, and customary forms of dispute resolution and reconciliation (Mac Ginty, 2011). It encapsulates an organic, adaptive, and culturally driven praxis to peacebuilding, where the processes are co-constructed by the people in a social setting (Gellman, 2007). It is termed organic because it has advantages of originality, sustainability, independence from the milieu of external peace support and interventions (Mac Ginty, 2010). It is a departure from a standardization of a template style peace building approaches to a participatory, relationship and process- focused, with a higher level of ownership and sustainability (Mac Ginty, 2008; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999). Interventions from external groups or institutions have proven ineffective in engaging the people affected by conflict and focuses on the elite representatives of the community (Murithi, 2008). It is noteworthy that there were already established traditional processes to conflict resolution and peace building in Africa, before the advent of the colonial masters (Ejike, 2022). However, these indigenous processes have almost fizzled out due to the advent of external and western peace approaches. Despite this trend, there is a growing refocus on what it may mean to engage locally driven approaches, and exploring the unique richness and strength that indigeneity brings (Werner, 2010). Hence, the local turn to more indigenous approach that places the people at the center and rely on extant cultural practices that elevates everyday actions and activities aimed at peace building (De Conning 2016; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2014).

Everyday Peace is embodied and inherent in the everyday behaviors of people, and this is contingent in the prevailing culture of a people (Mac Ginty, 2010). These behaviors may yield conflictual or peaceful outcomes, and either of this may be influenced by identities of gender, religion, and traditions (O'Driscoll, 2021). Practices that may contribute to everyday peace include engendering trust, even amongst enemies (Kelman, 2005), self-control, empathy,

honesty, commitment, and tolerance (Hamilton-McGinty, 2004). From the lens of everyday peace as an approach or method, it is a survival strategy particularly in a deeply divided context, where people are intentional about how they show up every day in their communities (Mac Ginty, 2014). This practice contributes to creating spaces that account for the agency of ordinary people, a people who are often excluded from peace building (Berents, 2015). The situatedness of the “everyday” and the “local” portends indigenous spaces for construction of locally led processes and solutions (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015). This may involve building trust to hold tough dialogic conversations, demonstrating empathy by considering how others feel, think, or are affected by the conflict. It also includes combining trust, empathy, and connectedness to make sense of their conditions and co-construct ways forward (Mac Ginty, 2021; Lee, 2021).

Constructivism is an approach of knowledge-building through reflection and active construction mired in intersubjective interpretation (Brau, 2020). Participants come with personal experience, cultural and social background, and personal views to co-create knowledge. It premises a paradigm where people socially construct their being and becoming (Theys, 2017). The process engages an interpretive approach that center’s identity and culture, space and time, to co-construct meaning of what is happening within a social context, and in this instance, shape the processes of peace building (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). With consideration for local factors driving conflicts, like identity and culture; the actors involved (*state and non-state actors*) influencing or shaping the peace processes; and the mechanisms involved that may be inclusive, engaging, and interactive, communities may make sense of what is happening around them (Paul, 2017). There is no space for prescriptive, formulaic, template-fit solutions to ameliorate conflict conditions (Bada & Olusegun, 2015), but solutions derived from how the people connect to their social realities, and make subjective interpretations (Driscoll, 2000). Conflict solutions

driven by co-construction of knowledge and meanings may prove effective as it engages recursive, reflexive, and adaptive approaches (Mac Ginty, 2021; Bada & Olusegun, 2015).

Adaptive Leadership is a leadership model that challenges the status quo, is open to change and experimentation to make progress (Heifetz, 2009). This model focuses on the journey that leads to progress and not the destination, an end, or individual personal capabilities (Heifetz & Linsky, 2019; DeRue, 2011; Dunn, 2020). It is a leadership approach that is necessary for making progress on tough challenges and issues people care about (Heifetz et al., 2009). During the journey of change, systemic challenges/barriers may emerge which may show up in the context of this research as exclusionary social norms and practices, and formulaic peace building models (Glover et al., 2002). This kind of leadership is an excellent fit for complex, volatile, and ambiguous environments, like a crisis ridden zone (Johansen & Euchner, 2013). In such conditions, it is imperative to discover and try approaches and practices that foster learning and relearning, reflexivity, and recursiveness (Dunn, 2020).

Leadership-As-Practice is a model that detaches leadership from personality to the actual activities and social interactions that lead to progress or change (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2010). These activities include everyday exercise of emotional, moral, and relational muscles towards progress with a focus on the why, where, and how (Raelin, 2017; Crevani et al., 2010). It is a leadership with a practice orientation that relies on not just actions and activities, but also on how what we do every day is interconnected with what leadership may be or become (Turner, 1994; Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2010; Uhl Bien & Marion, 2007). This may involve how people influence themselves to make progress on both leadership practices development, and addressing issues that they care about collectively (Houghton et al., 2003).

Collective Leadership premises a leadership practice where members of a group or community negotiate the sharing and responsibility for leadership among team members in a

context that privileges hierarchy (Clifton et al., 2020). It focuses on collective accomplishment rather than actions of individuals, and this may require a process of shared vision, actions, and accountability for outcomes (Yammarino et al., 2012). A group of individuals engage in processes that elevates interdependencies of actions and activities, through defining shared goals; coordinate actions and activities in support of the shared goals; and exercise collective commitment to achieve the shared goals. (Drath et al., 2008). It involves elevating a collectivistic approach of “we”, “together”, and “shared” mindset, illustrating interactions across community structures, with multiple and shared roles, influencing each other towards progress (Yammarino et al., 2012).

Assumptions and Limitations

My assumption as I approach this study is that the women at the grassroots are adaptive in their interventions as they exercise peace leadership in Plateau state. These women have been exposed to western approaches to peace building processes, including normative instruments that seek to ensure the change in dynamics in a patriarchal culture. I also assume that despite such exposure, they are intentional about context driven approaches as they navigate local context and processes. Finally, I assumed that these women peace builders were not just practicing a learned behavior, but exercising a leadership practice that is paradigmatic of self-awareness, authenticity, connectedness, and responsibility.

The limitation of this study borders on my inability to conduct in person interviews. This would have premised a platform for more and deeper engagement by gathering the women together. Secondly, due to poor connectivity, the conversations on the phone and zoom were sometimes interrupted, which impacted on the quality and quantity of data I could gather. Lastly, the time difference was a huge challenge, and some of the participants were unavailable due to the nature of the work they do and are most of the time in the field with little or no connectivity.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study background, the research context, crisis conditions and peace building efforts in Nigeria. It also outlined the research rationale, interview guiding questions, my assumptions as a researcher and the limitation of the studies. To understand how women groups made progress on complex and protracted crisis situations, engaging in a constructivist approach to co-create understanding and build a tapestry of knowledge is necessary. In the next chapter, I will review existing literature on crisis situations in Nigeria and Plateau state specifically and discuss the theoretical framework that forms the foundation of this study.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

I engaged a qualitative approach, using a case study methodology, with an integration of constructivism to locate and understand the emerging leadership practices of a group of women advancing peace building in Nigeria. The women approached peace building through local practices that embodies leadership in tough and uncertain times. I approached this study with the assumption that peace leadership at the grassroots and in a conflict-ridden context may be adaptive, context-informed, and locally driven for sustainable outcomes. This type of leadership models connection to purpose, communal responsibility, and accountability.

In this chapter, I started by providing conceptual clarification and description of the phenomenon, which includes peace leadership within the African context, and a historical overview of conflicts and peace building efforts in Nigeria in the past three decades. This detailed the period from transition from military rule to democratic governance, and finally centered on the leadership model exhibited in the protracted crisis in Plateau State. Secondly, I presented an analysis of peace leadership practices charted by the women peace builders and how it is situated within the framework of everyday peace. I also discussed the efficacy of conventional peace theories of liberalism and realism within the context of this research. Thirdly, I presented my theoretical framework which argues that everyday peace theory may be a useful lens to understanding leadership-as-practice and adaptive leadership as the practice of everyday peace in peace building. Finally, I provided a clear illustration of how my research questions are situated within these frameworks.

Contextualizing Peace leadership in Africa

Leadership cannot be understood without context; thus, it is important to understand what defines and drives the conceptualization and practice of leadership in Africa. Africa is a highly diverse continent, with different ethnicities, beliefs and values which informs how peace leadership is practiced (Bins, et al., 2012). On the other hand, its diversity also defines how conflicts and crises are waged and mediated (Bujra, 2002). One would wonder if this diversity were a curse or a blessing, as most of its conflicts are driven by either ethnic, tribal, religious, or political differences (Deng et al., 2010). This accounts for the biggest conflicts in Africa, like the Somali Civil War in 1991, Nigerian Civil War 1967, Rwandan Genocide in 1994, Lord's Resistance Army Insurgence in 1987, and the Eritrean-Ethiopian War in 1998 (Fasuan & Adetunberu, 2018). These conflicts are usually characterized as having short duration and sporadic, however, its impact has been long lasting, impacting negatively on the socio-economic development of the continent (Nweke, 2018). The human impact of these conflicts is devastating and has continued to tear the social fabric of the continent, with an unprecedented level of displacement, forced migration, infractions of fundamental human rights, trauma, loss of means of livelihood, and death toll (Aremu, 2010; Arieff, 2009; Veney, 2007; Marc et al., 2015; Lawal, 2019).

It has been a staid belief and expectation by the citizens that the government is solely responsible for ensuring stability, security, and development (Adejumobi, 2009). Such expectations have been consistently unmet due to poor governance, evidenced by the capacity of public officials, corruption and over dependency on external support (Knack, 2001). The slow and regressive development in Africa may be attributed to poor or lack of civic participation in governance and leadership (Finkel, 2002; Bratton, 2006; Denhardt et al., 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2012). The disconnect between society and government is strikingly palpable, with citizens

preoccupied with daily sustenance and constant survival mode (Wulf & Debiel, 2010). Citizens may have either failed to see themselves as pieces of the puzzle of development (Fiorina, 1999), or may not have the capacity to engage civically (Levinson, 2010; Eten, 2015; Levin 2007). In addition, the gap in citizen engagement in society development may be because of ideologies or practices that are outdated, and do not fit the evolving nature of leadership and context the people find themselves (Levinson, 2010).

Peace leadership in Africa has historically taken a linear approach, less proactive to early warning signals, and devoid of local intelligence and voices (Mac Ginty, 2021). The focus has always been on an entity or authority, like the government, chiefs, and kings (Mustasilta, 2019), more than on processes necessary for sustainable peace outcomes. When there are communal conflicts or amongst kinsmen, it is usually brought before the community leaders to stand as judge, jury, and final arbiter. This is a perspective that defines leadership as a position, a person, and trait-based (Sanders, 2014). It usually focuses on the outcomes of interactions, and not on the dynamics and practices that nurture relationships and collectivity towards a shared outcome (Lederach, 2010).

In Africa, Leadership is perceived as the sole position of local elite who play the savior role for social, political, and economic development of their communities (Ismail, 2008). In informal settings they hold positions that are grounded with legitimacy from culture or religion. In the formal context, they hold positions attained through constitutional and political legitimacy, and across cadres in a federal system of governance. Both formal and informal African leadership influence their constituencies, make decisions for the public, and represent the interest of the people. In some instances, both roles of formal and informal leadership intertwine and overlap, with the informal leaders serving as conduits or intermediaries (McEvily et al., 2014; Recio, 2019). The informal leadership structures are more connected to the locals (Vivier &

Sanchez-Betancourt, 2020), and perform day to day functions of community stability and oversight. Such duties includes conflict resolution, ensuring continuity of social norms and customs, farmland authority and management, and galvanizing collective actions for community development.

The culture of a place or location influences the kind of leadership style espoused and practiced (Block, 2003; Kuada, 2010) The perspective that leadership is a person, authority and position dislocate the relational and collective piece from a collectivist African culture (Msila, 2014). The African culture privileges a leadership style that is hierarchical, provides direction and protection (Salzman, 2018). The culture of the people also is one that is relational and creates a shared purpose and identity (Hofstede, 2010). However, in developmental and peace building efforts within this context, the index of shared purpose is skewed, premising an ideology that representatives of groups and communities are not enough to advance peace building (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015; Karbo, 2008).

African Leadership Theory

The concept of leadership in Africa leans on an ontology of communitarianism, where practice of established moral values, beliefs, connectedness, relationship, and collective responsibility is privileged (Mosima, 2019; Bergquist, 2021). Social identity is a core indicator for togetherness, and this informs how people interact, engage, and make meaningful progress (Jenkin, 2014; Schirch, 2005). Africa is a diverse continent with different culture, religion, race, ethnicity, tribe, languages, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic categorization. The richness of diversity influences the kind of leadership espoused, which is often more emotionally driven (Howman, 1956), collective, hierarchical, selfless, and focused on the common good (Ayee, 2013; Chedondo, 2019). This underscores the concept of “Ubuntu” which illustrates the

intrinsic culture of interconnectedness of individuals and the promotion of communal responsibility (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Ewuoso & Hall, 2019).

Ubuntu is an African concept that explains human connectedness that supports collective community building and co-existence. It is derived from a Southern African phrase which means, “I am because we are” (Shumba, 2011). It elevates practices of selflessness, humility, honesty, compassion, collectivity, and sacrifice (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). Africans hold values of authenticity, which is an embodiment of all its values, beliefs, and moral code (Idang, 2015; Paris, 1995). However, the nuance of these values may differ across the vast culture and ethnicity represented in Africa, and this has a stronghold on how Africans relate and connect physically, materially, and spiritually (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2020).

The concept of Ubuntu illustrates to an extent the religious influence on leadership practices in Africa (Hailey, 2008). There is a popular saying that religion is the opium of the people. Marx stated, I quote, “It is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of our soul-less conditions” (Marx & Engels, 1990). Africans across the three major religion, Christianity, Islam and Traditional have a high affinity for spirituality (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020; Doumbia & Doumbia, 2004). In both formal and informal institutions, including academic spaces, marketplaces, hospitals, and local transport stations, before any work begins in day, it is mandatory to hold prayer sessions for at least fifteen to twenty minutes. It is believed that this sets the tune for the day and creates an atmosphere where everyone will be spiritually empowered to work in alignment, towards a shared goal, and for the common good. Conventional practices elevated within this ideology is the respect for authority and leadership, tolerance and endurance of differences and perspectives, and resilience in hardship and poor conditions. In some cases, during recruitment or elective or appointed positions, one of the criteria would be “Is this person a godly person?”.

Transformative leaders leverage their positions in a leader-follower dyad to influence others through the practice of leadership as an activity, and not a position (Kim et al., 2020). This means that spiritual leaders may practice what they preach, and not a superficiality of, “Do as I say, and not as I do”. This also implies that the focus of leadership is “leadership-in-action” (Cantwell, 2015), and models the ideals of moral spirituality through the act of doing. The litmus test of this kind of leadership is in the everyday practice of those attributes that lead to moral purity. This elevates ethical questions like, “what happens when you are bribed by a contractor to push an envelope?”, “How do you react or engage with a colleague who belongs to tribe or religion that invaded your community and murdered your loved ones?” “Would you give space for growth to someone who is from a different ethnic group or religion?”. All these questions highlight the complexity of leadership which embodies the practice for interconnection amongst members of a group or system, and the redistribution and shared power within a system (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). However, with such complexities especially in diverse context, there are opportunities to elevate cultures or practices that hold spaces to advance community interest (Kindon et al., 2007).

The practice of leadership that advances community interest is usually connected to indigenous leadership (Gram-Hanssen, 2021; Abeyta, 2020). Ubuntu is an indigenous leadership philosophy and embraces and elevates respect and empathy, local wisdom and knowledge, endogenous solutions to community challenges, and fosters a culture of collaboration and inclusivity in decision making (Sugamo, 2023). Indigenous leadership theory provides an alternate prism to addressing communal conflicts in Africa, as it premises home grown processes and solutions for sustainable outcomes (Murithi, 2008). This is a departure from the Eurocentric leadership theory, which provides a lens to diagnose, interpret and propose solutions to the myriad and complex local challenges (Mac Ginty, 2021). However, it lacks the local wisdom,

pragmatism, and transformative elements that indigenous theory embodies (Taylor, 2022; Panda & Gupta, 2007; Dilanyan et al., 2018; Randazzo, 2021; Funk & Said, 2010).

Having analyzed the broader perspective of African peace leadership and theories that informs its practices, it is crucial to add context to the lived realities of peace leadership. Leadership does not happen in a vacuum, as conditions and context provide the containers for its presence (Dugan & Humbles, 2019). The container is a social context, where interactions within groups influence social behaviors, and this is manifested on how people exercise leadership, and informs the prototypicality of leadership within that context (Crevani, et al., 2010). On this note, an analysis of the conflicts in Nigeria will illustrate how the communities have historically engaged in peace building.

Historical overview of community conflicts in Nigeria

Nigeria has been characterized by conflict situations since the colonial era, with the citizens conspicuously divided by religious and ethnic ideologies, driven by fanatical rhetoric (Yusuf & Abdulbaqy, 2012). This accounts for the persistent uprising primarily moderated by rivalry and bigotry, between dominant and minority groups (Ajayi, 2014). In a country with over 371 ethnic groups, three dominants nationwide, and pockets of other self-acclaimed dominant groups in the states, the idyllic hope to becoming “one nation, one people” is constantly derailed by politics (Okoi & Iwara, 2021). This has created an epoch in the chronicles of the country, replete with widespread religious and ethnic conflicts accounting for millions of deaths and destruction of properties. Nigeria has continuously struggled with the practice of democracy, operating beyond the tension and frays its rich diversity forges, innuendos of resource misappropriation (Okonjo-Iweala, 2014), and inequitable revenue allocation amongst the regions (Akov, 2017). The country’s ethnic and religious differences, the brazen scramble for its natural

resources, and quest for dominance of others accounts for its communal crisis and the depreciating security of the country.

Pre-colonial era, Nigeria had kings, kingdoms, clans, and empires, which became more westernized after its amalgamation in 1914 (Princewill et al., 2020). However, after its independence in 1960, the country became more reformed with a new system of governance which had clear roles and canonized by a constitution (Epelle & Nweke, 2019). Despite the beauty of development that ensued from the era of colonization, seeds of discord were sown amongst the people, through a divide and rule system (Anikeze, 2016). This was a strategy by the colonialists to plunder the resources of the country, and embedded an economic dependency mechanism (Wangare, 2022). The impact of this was a deepening of regional ethnocentrism, which escalated into civil war in 1967, between the republic of Nigeria and Biafra (Jacob, 2012). After the war, different groups continued to live in the same geographical axis, without healing or any substantive reconciliation. Consequently, in regions with high cohabitation of different ethnicities, volatility and high sensitivity became commonplace, and this fueled divisions amongst communities (Osaghae & Suberu 2005). These complexities have precipitated the prevalence in religious crisis, ethnic minority agitation, mindless control of natural resources, and land grabbing (Akov, 2017), which has continuously threatened the very existence of the country.

The transition from military rule to democracy premised a heightened ethnoreligious dichotomy, pivoted on political schism (Emelifeonwu, 1999). This calibrated a system of ethnicity cum religious patronage that has lingered, rather than a democratic system that proclaims a government by the people (Lewis 2007). Since 1999, political parties were formed to conduct elections based on regions and tribes, and this provoked tension during the electoral process. For instance, the Hausa-Fulani formed the Northern People's Congress (NPC); the Igbos

formed the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC); while the Yoruba formed the Action Group, (Cohen 1968). This ethnoreligious oriented formation of political parties has been the bane for Nigerian democratic development (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Politicians have continued to use such division as a strategy to exploit the masses, foment violence, thereby disrupting democratic ideals (Okoi, & Iwara, 2021).

Historically, the northern groups have always held hegemony in rulership (Philippe, 2015), and this continuously shaped the perception of Nigerians in politics (Kukah, 1993). The southerners do not have the commonality of language and identity that the Northerners have, and this tips the scale in favor of the Northerners. The 2023 Nigerian presidential elections evidence this supposition, with both southern presidential candidates enlisting a northerner as vice presidents, depicting a strategy to gain clout. The reality of one group having dominance over others accounts for partisan violence since 1999 (Madueke, 2019). Discontent is often predicated along religious and ethnic lines with violence (Dudley, 2013), and accounts for millions of deaths and destruction of properties (Election Watch, 2023)

This is further exaggerated by farmer-herder crisis which has become more rampant and perverse over the years, with the aggravating effects of climate change, a depleting use of traditional mechanisms of dialogue and negotiation, and population surge (Ugwueze et al., 2022). This crisis has been predominant in the middle belt states, of Nasarawa, Benue and Plateau states, and is now affecting other parts of the country. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been attributed to the escalation of the conflict as community members are emboldened by possession of weapons, and triggered by the slightest provocation (Aver, 2020). Another cause of the intensity of the crisis is the undue encroachment of the farmlands, with cattle destroying the crops of the farmers (Ojelade, 2019). This provocation often leads to violent

clashes, resulting in widespread destruction of property and accounts for millions of human casualties, with the worst hit ever in 2018 (Bizot, 2021).

During the dry season, the pastoralist migrates from place to place, seeking pastures for their cattles. In the past, they would approach the farmers, and get permission to go into their fallow lands with the cattles (Dimelu et la., 2017). That was the culture of community living, that upheld the classic “Be your brother's keeper” which has degenerated over the years by ethnic and religious rivalry and exacerbated by the Boko haram insurgency. There are suggestions that the crisis has religious and ethnic undertones, since the farmers are largely Christians, and the pastoralists are predominantly Muslims from the Fulani tribe (Mcdonnel, 2018; Gursay, 2020). However, there have also been incessant attacks on Muslim farmers too, by the Fulani pastoralist in Northern Nigeria (Bello & Abdullahi, 2021)

Finally, the country's security situation became more complex with the insurgency in 2009 which heralded the beginning of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). The jihadist rebel group began an armed rebellion against the Nigerian government and the citizens, with Borno, Adawama and Yobe being the worst hit. (Awake June 2006). Some school of thoughts suggest that BokoHaram Insurgency predates when it came to into light in Nigeria in 2011(Odo, 2015; Oyewole, 2013; Onuoha, 2012; Obaje, 2017; Badejogbin, 2013). This postulation is drawn from the fact that there are generations of people that have advanced political crisis, and driven by religious fanaticism (Ekanem et al., 2012). The word “Boko Haram is a mix of both Hausa language and Arabic mostly spoken in the Northern part of Nigeria and depicts “Prohibiting western ideologies or education”. The word Boko means “Western” in Hausa, while Haram means “Sinful or Forbidden” in Arabic. The Boko Harma crisis clearly has religious undertones (Nchi, 2013) with the Islamic fanatics rejecting western education, and prohibiting girls from going to schools (Peters, 2014). This led to the abduction of thousands of

girls, who were forced into marriages and childbearing by the terrorist. Most of these girls, to date, have not been found, while some have been rescued (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). The Nigerian government is befuddled on what solutions could be advanced to address this dire situation. However, the crisis is evolving into more complex and multi layered conundrum, with an unprecedented level of banditry and kidnapping for ransom, which has thrown the country into high risk and insecurity index (Mike, 2020).

Efforts at Peace Building in Nigeria

State and non-state actors have made efforts to intervene in ensuring the protection of its citizenry and nation (Oloka-Onyango, 2017). There are several instances that illustrates the kind of leadership advanced, which are paradigmatic of interventionist approaches, devoid of local voices, formulaic with heavy focus on just ending the direct violence, without addressing the root cause of the conflicts (Mac Ginty, 2010). One of these is the upsurge of militancy in the Niger Delta communities due to the oil exploitation and environmental degradation from oil spillage on land and water resources. This caused unprecedented loss of lives, livelihood, and infrastructures (Aworawo, 2013). The government introduced an amnesty program which was a government's intervention led by President Umaru Yar'Adua leaned on conventional and formal approaches that did not only exacerbate the conflict situation but failed to consider the locals in the peace processes. The programme targeted disarmament, rather than focusing on the agitations of the people, which fostered an environment of proliferation of small arms and weapons (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016). The rebels were offered unconditional pardon and cash payments by the government as incentives to lay down their arms. This certainly was a band-aid which was ripped off in no time, and the crisis continued, evolved, and became more complex. This peacebuilding effort was ineffective, as it failed to engage and create spaces for lasting peace (Adesoji, 2011).

Another instance was the government intervention in the farmer herder crisis which has endured for decades, with the worst hit in 2018 (Okoro, 2018). The government launched a National Livestock Transformation Plan meant to curb the movement of cattle across the country and reduce deadly herder-farmer conflict. However, the ten-year development plan was criticized for lacking the voices of those affected by the conflicts, and labeled an elitist plan, devoid of practical and local mechanisms for implementation (Apikins, 2020). The development of this plan was heavily resourced and would have been viable if the locals were engaged to ensure it meets their everyday experiences and needs. Currently, farmer-herder conflicts still prevail, with villages burnt, farmland destroyed, women and children raped, killed, and abducted.

The agitation of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) for the emancipation of the Republic of Biafra is another example where Nigerian peace leadership failed. The government engaged this group with militarized approaches, with no recourse for more relational engagement and other soft approaches that could support peace building (Maiangwa, 2016). There are suggestions that the grievances of the IPOB are intergenerational and are built from the experiences of trauma and suppression from the civil war of 1960-1967 (Schwab, 2010). This war happened because the Nigerian government resisted and rejected the secession of the Biafrans from Nigeria (Ugorji, 2017). The community group representing the elders of the Igbo community, titled as the Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo, have been leading opportunities for peace talks and negotiations. Such efforts have been ignored and the government has always resorted to persecution of the agitators, framing their movement as terrorism (Ojo, 2023). The repetition of the same approach on the same challenge has proven unproductive, unconscionable, and irresponsible.

In addition to an interventionist approach, and a lack of engagement of the citizens in peace building efforts, another perspective to poor peace building efforts in Nigeria is

exclusionary practices. Nigeria privileges cultural hierarchy, and this is reinforced and driven by a culture of rigid patriarchy (Ajibade Adisa, 2021; Badru, 2005). This practice undermines the agency of half of the country's population, which is representative of women (Porter, 2003)

Culture and the Practice of Inclusion in Peace leadership In Nigeria

Nigeria is a high-power distance context, and this centers a collateral orientation that elevates loyalty and commitment to shared values (Panocová, 2020). Culture has always had a huge influence in the Nigerian context, and has continued to shape how behaviors, practices, and values in both public and private spaces (Zagorsek et al., 2004). The culture in Nigeria is predominantly patriarchal, which is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1990). This determines how, why, when and what women are usually invited to participate in or otherwise. Women in Nigeria are expected to be confined to the domestic space, to cook, clean and cater to the children and men, while the men are responsible for providing and protecting the home (Azodo, 2007). This was the system the colonialist institutionalized into the Nigerian cultural landscape, and it held sway for a long period of time, and still prevailing (Dogo, 2014). However, due to exposure to modernization practices, Nigeria is becoming more gender aware and responsive (Chigbu, 2015). The wicked problems the country faces on a perennial level have also contributed to exploring the “alternatives”.

The conflicts situation in Nigeria has presented a new normal in the context of gender relations (Nwoke et al., 2022). Social norms and practices have experienced a huge shift, as people are adjusting to the hard realities of life. Women bear the brunt in crisis, as they are subjected to all kinds of violence – abduction, sexual such as rape, physical violence such as beatings, maiming, murder, involuntary pregnancy (Ihayere et al., 2014). Women also lost their

husbands and have in turn taken up the role of the head of household, which means they are the protectors, providers, care givers of the home (Agbiboa, 2022; Onah, 2017; George, 2015).

As the complexities and face of the conflicts in Nigeria is changing, so is the realization that approaches must be regenerated to meet the lived realities of the citizens. This cultural restructuring provides an interesting premise for more inclusion of women due to the circumstances that stimulated more citizens' voices to be part of the local solution in peace processes. As a result of this reality, women have gradually been considered in peace building processes, as not just participants in peace discussions (Gizelis, 2011; Bulus et al., 2020), by taking active roles in interventions targeted at enacting everyday practices that may advance peace in communities (Mac Ginty, 2014). These practices include collaborative actions to energize communities in peace building activities, like dialogues amongst groups, across gender, ethnicities, religion, and tribes. This has catalyzed outcomes that postured women groups to negotiate spaces for more collective pursuits in communal peace building (Garba, 2016; Gbowee, 2019; Isike et al., 2011).

Most feminist believe that women should create their own spaces, rather than seeking ways to be included in an existing space (Eke, 2021). This may be productive for shifting the ideologies and practice of patriarchy, thus, de-stereotyping cultural gender roles in all spheres. The conflict situations and impact has positioned women to start thinking about themselves differently, changing the narratives about their role in the society, and dismantling the walls of limitation placed on them by certain social constructs. Women engage in contesting, redefining, and renegotiating the social norms and practices to accommodate the new realities and inclusion aspiration for peace processes (Kandiyoti, 1988).

However, the restructuring and renegotiation of culture comes with multiple complexities. Certain levels of tension and pressure are experienced because of the existing

context and culturally established processes. Due to the asymmetric relations between men and women, there is tension in social relations driven by male dominance and reinforced by deeply rooted culture and traditions (Mbah & Oti, 2013). In addition, the process of interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, the dialectics, and patterns, precipitates a process that is culturally appropriate and contextually responsive to the success of negotiations (Martin, & Nakayama, 2013). The physical and invisible aspects of communicative patterns that are embedded in the process of negotiating cultural spaces provides nuance to the practice shift (Hofstede, 1991).

In addition, the complexities embedded in the act of negotiating spaces for more inclusive practices has always been diluted with religion, so it may be difficult to separate what constitute dogmatic religious beliefs and otherwise (Adelakun, & Adelakun 2022). These religious practices subjugate women and perpetuate male dominance in its doctrines and practices (Stopler, 2008; Sultana, 2010). Consequently, this contributes to reinforcing cultural norms that are no longer serving the needs and interest of the society, especially for women. The cultural context is key to be “in the present” while also considering the history and future of cultural practices (Zheng et al., 2021; Heine & Ruby, 2010). This is essential as groups continue to negotiate contested spaces that embodies collectivism and situates inclusivity in the center of peace building processes. Poor recognition of how social norms impact the reconstruction, reintegration and rehabilitation components of peace building processes may grossly impact on sustainable and wholistic peace outcomes.

The collectivist culture of Nigeria serves as a mediating factor in the banal intertwine of both religion and culture ((Panocová, 2020). The country is characterized by a practice of interdependency of its members, and a notion that everyone has an integral part to play in building social cohesion and communal development. This is due to an engrained culture that is

loyal to long term commitments to family, both nuclear and extended, neighbors and group membership (Hofstede, 2010). I would like to describe collectivism within the African context as “being your brother’s keeper”. This means that I am mindful of my neighbor or members of my group, and this mindfulness is reciprocal. It also means that trust, loyalty, commitment, and care about what affects us all is built on the honor of everyone. Even in formal settings, within organizations, despite the high-power distance, the work climate and interactions privileges and fosters strong relationships. This has also manifested in the peace building processes on the account that women have come to the realization that they have a place in peace building process, firstly because they have borne the brunt in conflict situations, and secondly, because the collectivist culture serves to moderate cultural tensions that are premised by the deep-rooted religious and cultural practices (Armenta et al., 2011).

A major twist to this is the conflating of the concept of development in culture with modernization, which has a complex connotation in a context with strong cultural and religious inclination (Okpe, 2014). In Nigeria for instance, feminism is an outlier, as the word “equality” between male and female sounds offensive, is frowned at, and shunned at all quarters. However, engaging this concept in line with women participation from the point of view of development was a game changer for women inclusion in peace building processes (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Women recognized the intersection of culture and religion in their approaches as there is increased engagement with leaders of culture and faith (Hayward, 2015), which is a constituency highly dominated by men. Secondly, consciousness about languages and semiotics creates interpretations that may be appealing to a group or not (Kendon, 2014). This is what underlines the tension in both discourse and practice of a more inclusive society that pines for social change. This move is a clear shift from the conformity to social norms where women may not be allowed to sit and speak in same spaces with revered groups like leaders of faith and culture.

Gradually, cultural negotiations within different context have shifted the perception of women from a place of victimhood to actual change agents (Owonikoko, 2020; Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012; Akpan et al., 2014). This is sticking in the political, economic and social landscape, and within the consciousness of the people (Kreft & Schulz, 2022). In times when women were allowed to be involved in formal peace building processes, they navigated their way through grassroot efforts (Akpan et al., 2014). The women engaged in loose structures, advancing the tough work, and cultivating local collaborative solutions that meets their lived realities. According to Donna (2000), it is the women who understand and engage with the rurality of context and processes that can contribute sustainably to the everyday exercise of peace leadership.

Women are piloting new approaches to indigenous peace leadership that is collaborative and expanding cultural boundaries, thereby dismantling dominant idiosyncrasies and beliefs that impugned on inclusive peace process (John, 2013). Due to their nurturing characteristics, women have been able to start challenging peace processes, following through, and accounting for mileage of progress ((Porter, 2007). It is significant to note that the women are currently in positions of leadership in their communities, and contributing to tangible and sustainable peace processes, through everyday practices (Mac Ginty, 2010). These practices are paradigmatic of leadership that centers progress as its prime indicator, which is moderated and implicated by a “culture” of commitment, duty of care for others, interdependency, and social cohesion (Jackson et al., 2012). This practice embodies the practice of adaptivity and collectivity that engages inclusive processes towards a desired outcome of community peace (Raelin, 2018).

Women and Peace Leadership in Plateau State

The recurring conflicts in Plateau state have abysmally affected the socio-economic and political development of the state. The negative impacts include enormous statistics in

human fatalities, huge displacement, hunger, loss of livelihood and unprecedented hunger levels (Sasu, 2022). The state is multi-linguistic, with different ethnicity and religious beliefs, and this situates the state as volatile. It also became a popular flashpoint for ethno-religious crisis, common with other states in the North Central Nigeria, like Nasarawa, Benue, Kwara, Kogi and Niger (Blench et al., 2006; Idike & Innocent, 2015; Belt, 2008). The primary pre-occupation for rural dwellers in Plateau state is farming, which is used as a primary source of food for families and as an enterprise. Because of climate change, there are shortages of land with pastures for grazing. Consequently, the herders who are predominantly Fulani Muslims invade farmlands, destroying the crops of the Christian farmers (Genyi, 2017).

In the past, the Fulani Herders would respectfully seek permission from the farmers to have their cattle go into fallow farmlands. However, the narrative changed over time, and was worsened by the Boko Haram insurgency. Herders invade farmlands, destroy crops, and unprovocative vandalize the communities, maiming, killing, abducting and raping the inhabitants. There are suggestions that the agenda is beyond farmer-herder conflicts, but ethnic and religious driven, with an end game of “Land grabbing” (Tari, 2021; Emenyonu et al., 2017; Awotokun et al., 2020). Due to the religious and ethnic undertone, the leaders of faith and culture have been at the center of peacebuilding efforts, supporting government interventions. However, a good mass of affected population of the communities are not included in the peace conversations. This population comprises of the women, and countless research indicates that they bear the brunt of the conflicts (Akubor, 2011; Nnadi, 2012; Aver, 2020; Theophilus, 2020; Atim, 2017; Dyikuk & Egielewa, 2020; Abdu & Shehu, 2019), thus, should be included in peace processes.

A lot of research focus has been on the causes of conflicts in Plateau state and the different types of government-led conflict resolution and peace building efforts. However, there

is a dearth of research literature on local women advancing peace efforts (Boyd, 2007).

International interventions were mostly engaging elite women than grassroots women who are doing the tough and messy bwork of ensuring everyday peace (Richmond, 2016; Sørnbø, 2010; Donais, 2009). These local women play significant role from the smallest unit of the family to the community, and the society at large. Due to feminine characteristics of nurturing relationships, value for people, believe in resolving conflicts through dialogue and negotiations, adaptability, prioritizing social cohesion, stability, and security (Hofstede, 2001), they hold a critical place in peace building efforts. The role of women in this context highlights peace building as a process that is dynamic (Laderach, 1997) rather than structures that may be put in place to avert a relapse to crisis (Galtung, 1976). Some community interventions focused on a continuous process and informal localized activities that are relational, engaging, collective and long-term oriented.

The women in Plateau state engaged in interventions that sought to build trust, empathy, and inclusion in peace building efforts (Krause, 2019; Enyiaka, 2019; El-Bushra et al., 2014). To close the dichotomy in relations between the Muslims and Christians, community women groups were established, and women across religions and ethnicity were invited to be part of the group. This supported the expansion of the group network, thereby ensuring more women are included across ethnic and religious lines. The beauty of this group is not just its composition, but the process engaged in ensuring the exemplification of a practice of inclusivity and collectivity. The group as comprised of leaders of faith and culture, community men and women from different ethnic groups and religion, including youths. Structures were established that ensured coordination, information sharing and accountability, like monthly meetings. In such meetings community members can interact and dialogue on peace issues, share experiences

and freely propose suggestions that could support community aspiration of cohesiveness, cooperation, and interdependency.

When there are lingering and urgent issues of farmer and herder tension, this platform creates a space for holding tough conversations, mediation, and reasonable and skilled disagreement. The women also contributed through this engagement to fostering trust where adherents of different religions feel safe to visit parts of the communities, they ordinarily would feel unsafe to. The women were able to achieve this by organizing meetings where practical actions are explored for sustainable outcomes. Primary topics of discussion encompassed matters necessitating immediate action and consideration, particularly focusing on collaborative efforts to sustain everyday peacebuilding practices in Plateau state.

Figure 2.1. Members of the peace community platforms in Plateau State. (*Photo: UN Women/Ladi Eguche*)



Theoretical Framework

This section is an ensemble of the theoretical framework that informed my research design, analysis, and the questions of Inquiry. The theories are Adaptive Leadership Framework, Leadership-As-Practice theory, and Everyday Peace theory. I will also explain the impracticality

of conventional peace theories on the evolving nature of peace building. I will first explain Adaptive Leadership Framework and Leadership-As-Practice theory in the context of peace building in Plateau state. Then, I will explain how theories of realism and liberalism evokes a breakthrough paradigm that is adaptive and practice oriented. I will also explain how Everyday Peace is integrated and aligns to Adaptive Leadership Framework and Leadership-As-Practice theory, which premises the foundation for this study. In addition, I will discuss how these theories informed my research questions which supported an understanding of the emerging leadership practices from women peace builders in communities in Plateau state.

Adaptive Leadership Framework

In this section, I worked with existing literature to discuss the concepts, proponents and assumptions of Adaptive Leadership Framework in the context of this research. It will help establish an understanding of how women groups advanced peace leadership in a complex setting, dealing with the multi-dimensionality of communal conflicts and retrogressive social norms.

The tenets of Adaptive leadership underpin the need to meet the people where they are, and work with what they have. This supports a process of empowering people to reconsider, regenerate or discard old practices that are not working for the realities of the current day. According to Heifetz & Linksy (2009), Adaptive Leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. This framework is a departure from the idealist and realist theories that advocate for standardization in normative and operative activities, while instituting the dominance of structures and established processes (Harter, 2006). Adaptive leadership is situated within the post structuralist theorization that investigates issues of justice, equality and power relations, while also situating the main emphasis on marginalized groups and discourses (Garcia et al., 2023; Atallah, 2018). Within this framework, peace building is not about

dominance of some hegemonic narrative, but a recursive process or approach of disrupting a system that no longer serves the people. This requires a practice of innovation with consideration of the past and the future, responding to new ways of being, beyond a long-established repertoire of expertise or know-how (Heifetz et al., 2009)

Most peace building efforts in Nigeria tackle conflicts as a technical problem, instead of as an adaptive challenge (De Coning, 2018; Ali & Matthews, 2004). Adaptive Leadership framework distinguishes between technical and adaptive challenges, and this has increasingly supported an ontology of examining underlying factors that drive these conflicts. According to De Conning (2011), the problems that peace building seeks to solve are more political, as there is need to look at the multi-faceted ramifications of options for addressing conflicts. This is where adaptive leadership stages an approach for sustainable peace building, particularly dealing with the structural and systemic drivers of conflicts. The framework elevates sustainable peace as a concept and practice. It focuses on co-creation of spaces for engaging in a dynamic and iterative process of learning and tactical experimenting. This is what Heifetz and Linksy (2009) conceptualized as iterative diagnosing, interpreting, and experimenting.

In engaging in this process, an evolution of new ideas emerges, and people keep learning new ways to interact, engage and make meaningful progress on issue-based challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009). The complexity of peace building cannot be addressed from a single template or by a single entity (Paffenholz, 2018; Paris 1999; Mac Ginty, 2010; Donais, 2012). It may require meaningful engagement amongst people within a system, across cultures, religions, gender, and social status. People may engage from a position of existing or preconceived ideologies, ways of knowing and doing, and experiences (Mezirow, 2003; Vosniadou, 2012), but considerate of what others also bring into the conversation or space. Engaging adaptively may precipitate disruption and losses; loss to belief, culture, individual priorities, habits, and loyalties

(Heifetz & Linsky, 2009). People do not resist change but are afraid of the loss that change brings (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Heifetz et al (2009) helps us understand the adaptive pressures people experience on the journey of change in a complex system, and how it influences a shift in the system. The complexity of this framework premises a non-linearity of social systems and emergent properties (Faucher, 2010). However, despite the palpability of the adaptive pressures on the system, Adaptive Leadership Framework may not help us predict how the systems will behave in the future (Randazzo & Torrent, 2021). Adaptive leadership framework is therefore resourceful within peace building interventions to empower communities to tactfully act on what is happening in their environments. This includes patterns and events, interpreting what is happening, equipping through multiple interactions, and collectively planning and acting towards making progress on shared goals (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011).

Leadership-As-Practice Theory

Leadership- As- Practice presents an emerging theory of leadership that challenges traditional thought about how leadership is defined and exercised (Northouse, 2021). It is a leadership paradigm that attempts to create momentum in the direction of the emerging practices predicated on the idea that anyone within the community of a project or process can contribute and influence directions and outcomes (Raelin, 2016). The practice turn in organizational and community leadership has given rise to an increasing call and interest in a leadership theory that considers practice at its core (Raelin, 2011; Carrol et al., 2008; Crevini et al., 2010)

This theory proposes a “we-ness” or subjective inclusiveness that stands opposite to the individualistic and hierarchal traditions of behavior leadership theory, with an underlying belief that leadership occurs as a practice, rather than reside in the traits or behaviors of individuals (Raelin, 2017). Leadership-as-practice is less about what one person thinks or does, and more about what people may accomplish together. It is concerned with how leadership

emerges and unfolds through day-to-day experiences (Raelin, 2016). This ontological paradigm removes the individual as the unit of analysis in understanding leadership, to a focus on the patterns of connected actions (Raelin, 2017)

Leadership-As-Practiced proposes that through practice, a socialized process that is not only discursive, but also agency driven may be attained (Dartey-Baah, 2014). It also offers a challenge of examining leadership dynamics “from within” to co-participate in engaging with actors in projects or interventions they care about, and advance their mutual endeavors (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). The practice of leadership is not dependent on any one person’s effort to mobilize action on behalf of everybody else, but it is intrinsically collective. However, in the process of engagement, leadership may emanate from the actions of individuals who, often because of historical reasons, may be able to suggest meaning with a high degree of insight. This may include actions like extracting or providing critical cues, suggesting behavioral patterns, or by transmitting cultural norms to minimize the range of choices available (Dawkins, 1989).

Practice leadership is democratic, allowing for gender inclusion and diversity, the examination of interpersonal dynamics that gives strength to community, and resonates with several closely related traditions, such as collective, shared, distributed, and relational leadership. Leadership- As- Practice premises a methodological that incorporates building blocks of agency, identity, materiality, context, power, and dialogue (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). Imagine a complex issue like peace building, and the agency of the people who find themselves implicated in chaos. It is one thing to find one’s place in the pieces of a puzzle, and another to influence others through collaborative agency for direction, focus and organization (Raelin, 2014; Crevani, 2011).

Leadership-As-Practice gives a distinction between entitative and relational forms of understanding leadership. This distinction is necessary in the context of this research as we seek

to understand what use to exist in the form of processes and entities, and the unfolding realities of how relations are formed amongst groups and entities to influence change (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). In traditional forms of leadership styles, the leader of a group sets directions and assigns tasks on what needs to be done, and measures progress by the outcomes. Leadership-As-Practice is relationship-oriented, and focuses on individual forming relations, rather than on existing relations shaping the individuals (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Clearly, Leadership-As-Practice relies on process orientation, which within the context of this research leans on the co-construction of processes and relationships (Schediliztki & Edwards, 2014).

Integrating Adaptive Leadership and Leadership-As-Practice as Everyday Peace- A Departure from Conventional Peace Building Approach

In the past sections, I provided conceptual clarification of peace leadership within the African context and efforts made by Nigeria in peace leadership in the context of the country's multidimensional communal conflicts. Secondly, I discussed Adaptive Leadership Framework and the Leadership-As- Practice, and how individuals, groups and the context hold implications for understanding everyday embodiment and practice of leadership. In this section, I will proceed to discuss conventional peace theories and its shortcomings. In comparison to conventional peace theories, I will discuss how everyday peace may be a useful lens to understanding Leadership-As-Practice and Adaptive Leadership. Finally, I will provide a clear illustration of how my research questions are situated within these frameworks.

Conventional peace theories and approaches have held dominance and focused on dichotomous conceptions of positive or negative peace (Jarstad et al., 2019). The complexities of peace leadership cannot be bounded by cognitive exercise, but on understanding how relations are formed and influence the interactions amongst groups (Carrol, 2008; Jehangir,2012). While it is important to understand why communities go to war, it is equally critical to understand and

recognize how communities might live peacefully. Globally and for decades, peace theories of realism and liberalism have dominated the peace building landscape (Richmond, 2020; Moe & Stepputat, 2018,). These theories have been criticized to be prescriptive, disconnected from the lived realities of communities, and state-centric (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Within the context of building an argument for a decolonized peace leadership as advanced by local groups, I will discuss both theories of liberalism and realism. Finally, I will connect my argument to the theoretical frameworks of this research, and in apropos to the research questions.

Liberal Peace Theory

Liberal peace theory is a westernized attempt to support peace building efforts in the global south (Richmond, 2012; Hughes et al., 2015). The intention of the early proponents was to unite the world under a hegemonic system that replicated liberal institutions, norms, political, social and economic systems (Richmond, 2011). This theory posits that there could be peace if the majority of the citizens of a state have control over decisions of state order, like economic and political issues (Fukuyama, 1992). However, this theory has been critiqued for perpetuating neo-colonialism with a blatant disregard for local and indigenous peace paradigms (Mac Ginty, 2010).

The theory assumes that within a symmetrical relationship, people have a self-interest in peace, because they can have access or maintain a means of sustenance when peace prevails (Hegre, 2004). The argument is that, in warring situations, basic means of livelihood may be lacking and lead to a life of deprivation. This theory was perpetuated beyond the cold war to the birth of neoliberalism, which elevated agenda of interventionist approaches. Interventionist approaches are known for their narrow focus, limited voices, coerciveness, and lacking local wisdom (Thiessen, 2011; Richmond 2011).

Richmond (2006) criticized this theory as lacking in practical application, especially amongst ordinary people. His criticism lies on its focus on long term institutional processes, neglecting interim elements that contributes to peace, like the behaviors and attitudes of the people driven by culture and ideologies; the level of individual and collective agency; and deeply entrenched beliefs and practices. Standardized global norms for post conflict interventions within the framework of reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation also requires the everyday practices of peace to make any progress and be sustainable (Langer et al., 2016). A peace framework focused on the social, political, and economic needs, and devoid of people-centered prioritization may not lead to sustainable outcome.

Institutions are no doubt necessary to ensure state order, by producing and reproducing peace agreements and accords. However, it is also critical to consider the relational aspect of co-existence and community cohesion. In the line of this thought, Lederach (2005) explains the connection of the concept of peacebuilding and web-making. He explained that peacebuilding is like spinning a spider web and cannot happen independently of a people who are not of common mind, and are not located in similar social, political, or economic space. Lederach's spider web analogy proposes a collaborative process which I quote "*The capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world, yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist*". This is rooted in a process of co-creating relational spaces, where it has both existed and not existed before, and scaffolding more web to be expanded and strengthened (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006)

Finally, the focus on the state agency to ensure peace building constrains the citizens from being agentic and looking inwards for local collaborative solutions (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). This theory has been criticized for its parochial effects on peacebuilding, where institutional and state building is prioritized, neglecting the needs and rights of the citizens

(Richmond & Jason Franks, 2009). In less democratized nations, the practice of liberal peace constrains the ability of the citizens to demand accountability for war and peace. This is because some state normative conventions produce social hierarchy that criminalizes any form of mass action against the state (Barnett & Zürcher, 2009). This way, militarized interventions are always incentivized and the best resort to peace building efforts. I believe it is important within the context of this research to understand this theory, because it is a model implemented by Nigeria to a large extent and has failed to yield sustainable outcomes.

Realist Peace Theory

The realist theorizes that the precondition for any tangible change is contingent on a disconnect between existing social system, and the redistribution of power towards those actors who would benefit most from a change in the system (Gilpin 1981). This model privileges a top-down approach to peace building, with assumptions that even when peace is attained, the actors at the top of the social hierarchy or governance are responsible for its sustenance (Ripsman, 2021). This premises a peace paradigm that focuses on war as a means of establishing power structures and systems. This means that the realist sees war as a key mechanism for change, and communities may engage any means necessary to maintain or change a status quo. This does not mean that the realist has antipathy for peace, but sees peace as just the absence of violence (Galtung, 1969), and may not pursue peace approaches that are democratic (Wivel, 2018).

Within the realism model, the state is the unit of analysis, from which different types of behaviors are extrapolated characterizing the state (Rosenberg, 1994). This projects a model that focuses on the state, rather than the people who should be part of peace building. The focus on the state elevates masculinist ideas of how the world works, and typical of the realist world of competitiveness. Such ideologies genderizes the notion of statehood, thus ignoring individual experiences of women who historically bear the brunt of conflicts. This conception has met with

push backs from the realist claiming that the conception of the state is not gendered but objective (Runyan & Peterson, 1991; Wadley, 2009). However, feminists have argued that objectivity has been historically weaponized to exclude women from engaging in public affairs (Phipps, 2016; Harding, 1995) and in this instance peace building. Such gendered injustice is found in the knowledge production, where the male knowledge is seen objective, and female as subjective (Code, 1991).

The tension between the realist and the feminist have supplanted the deeply entrenched realist traditions that privileges male actions and voices in peace building (Steans, 2003; Gentry, 2018; Tickner, 2001). This has offered a more nuanced understanding of the implication of realist paradigms on peacebuilding (McLeod & O'reilly, 2019; Wallis & Richmond, 2017). Firstly, peace scholars are interrogating what constitutes a state, and the focus on state as the unit of analysis (Chandler, 2010; Richmond, 2007). Secondly, scholars are interrogating the place of those who experience or bear the brunt of conflict in peace building (Porter, 2007; Donais, 2012). Thirdly, it is important to know who is probing a body of knowledge that neglects women as key actors in peace building (Lund, 2003).

Everyday Peace Leadership- A Departure from Conventional Peace Approaches

Peace building approaches have changed over the years from orthodox and generic, to more relational and contextual (Funk & Said, 2010; Wallace, 2010). Countries especially from the global south relied on externally driven interventions to prevent conflicts or defuse possibilities of reemergence of violent conflicts (Barnett et al., 2007). This interventionist conceptualization of peace building places it as exogenic (Mac Ginty, 2010) devoid of the voices of the local citizens, lacking contextual sensitivity, and language of empowerment (Christie, 2001). These approaches are intended to either create processes that ignore the agency, character

and needs of the local people (Richmond, 2006), or where the powerful are incentivized to maintain the status quo (Fowler, 2021).

Such approaches have failed to meet the lived realities of the local context, which abounds with cultural permutations that influences how people interact within a system (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Hughes et al., 2015; Paffenholz, 2018) Both liberalist and realist notions and practice of peace are power-based and reinforces societal norms that are exclusionary and retrogressive (Tom, 2021, Richmond, 2010; Tickner, 2001). Patriarchal systems hold sway in Africa, and this system marginalizes the voices of women, undermines their participation and rights. Studies have shown that power imbalances contribute to the drivers of conflict and may contribute to ineffective pathways to peace (Karim & Beardsley, 2017; El-Bushra & Sahl, 2006). These drivers of conflicts are either strengthened or disarmed as a result of interactions amongst groups within a conflict cycle (Østby, 2008; Yusuf, 2019).

Not all conflicts lead to immediate violent conflicts (Verwimp et al., 2009), and the phases of conflict may recede or escalate based on discrete everyday practices of community members (Kriesberg, 2007). Communal inequality may continue to build tension amongst groups which will surface in everyday practice of antagonism, neglect, polarization, rebellion, and greed, which are excellent mobilizers of conflict (Jeong, 2009; Raskin, 2016). Humans have natural responses to their environment and interactions with other humans, and such responses underpin how they coexist (Fuller et al., 2010). These local interactions may lead to emerging and new patterns of behavior and practices, and even evolve the complexities of conflict (Lansing, 2003). The complexity of such interactions, discrete or composite, requires an understanding of how everyday practices of people lead to either peace or conflicts (De Coning, 2018). This is necessary for considering practices that lead to peaceful communities, and critical areas that conventional peace approaches neglected.

Everyday peace theory provides a new paradigm where peace leadership practices involve people working together (Raelin, 2011), and influencing others towards a shared goal (Fairholm, 1991). It shifts the focus of peace building from an individual act or privileged few, to collective acts (Ospina, 2020). Everyday peace premises a constructivist approach where communities engage in meaning creation of what is happening, how it is affecting them, and approaches to advance processes and practices for the common good (Drath and Palus, 1994). It is a that process gives significance to both individual actions and social interactions that are necessary for peace leadership (MacGinty, 2010; Van Zyl, 2018; Olonisakin, 2017; Raelin, 2016). This centers social construction as a function of relationship that underpins leadership as a process (Uhl-Bein & Ospina, 2012). The focus on collective dimensions rather than traits or specific competencies possessed by individuals lends a practice lens within peace building efforts (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008).

Several peace leadership scholars have promoted this leadership paradigm, and have engaged the triad of theoretical, methodological and application advancement on peace leadership that is adaptive (De Coning, 2018; Gregorian et al., 2020; Moe & Stepputat, 2018; Campbell, 2011), contextually relevant (Richmond, 2011; Funk 2012; MacGinty & Richmond, 2013; Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015). and sustainable (Olonisakin, 2017; Ricigliano, 2015; Cockell, 2000; Funk & Said, 2010). The adaptive peace leadership framework views leadership as practices of mobilizing group of individuals to handle tough challenges (Heifetz, 2009), which involves focusing on the underlying driving factors of conflict (De Coning, 2018).

Adaptive leadership is a pragmatic model which relies on a flexible and process-based approach in solving complex problems, and considers the ever-changing environments and people (Faucher, 2010; Kruger, 2012). This concept and practice is a shift from conventional perception and practice of leadership. Conventional leadership practices focus on position, trait,

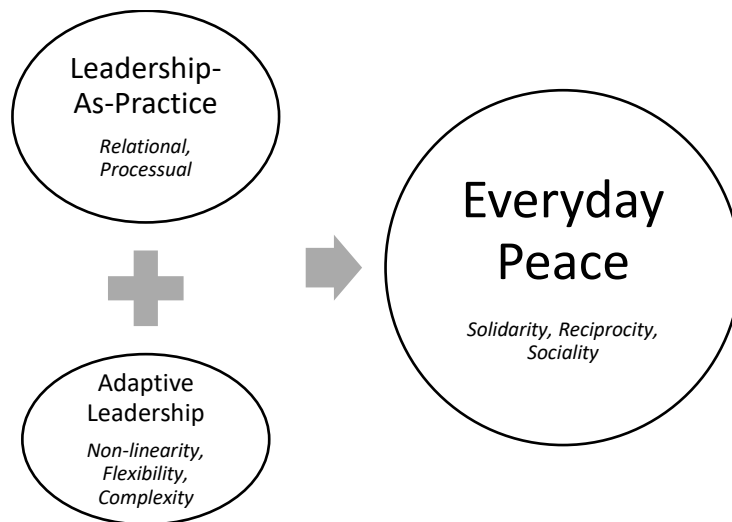
authority, procedures, rules, and regulations (Barker, 1997; Connel, 2002). Adaptive leadership framework provides an orientation of relational activities where sense-making is embedded in every action and activity (Paananen, 2021). Groups negotiate, engage constructively, reinvent, and co-create meanings in interpretive and subjective ways, and adapt to the complexities of local necessities (Jones, 2018). Peace building is a complex process that deals with different layers of systemic issues. These issues may require shift in belief, values, and practices (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013; Debiel & Rinck, 2016). It is process-based rather than outcome-based, and may prove effective through dialectic and iterative processes (Mitchell, 2010; Bau, 2016). This approach of leadership does not rely on one individual alone to solve challenges, but enables everyone to lead, no matter their gender, education, social and economic status (Heifetz et al., 2009; Obolensky, 2017; Uhl-bien et al., 2006).

From an everyday peace theory perspective which embodies social construction within the dynamism of its processes, the assemblages of individuals emerge (Macginty, 2021). It is often within collectives and across multiple levels of representation, with an aim to contribute knowledge, skill, and meaning to the task at hand (Dansereau & Yammarino, 1998; Day et al., 2004; Friedrich et al., 2009). It premises a plurality that elevates connection amongst groups who through exercising agency purely on a shared goal assume provisional roles and responsibilities. (Crevani et al., 2007; Denis et al., 2012). The fluidity of the mundane and intentional practices is experienced often in-the-moment intra-action— out of which a dynamic unfolding may emerge through some form of leadership agency that reorients the flow of practice (Barad, 2003; Raelin, 2016). These definitions align with my research epistemological, ontological and methodological commitments because of the emphasis on the spirit of connectedness that presumes a moral philosophy of ‘co-development’ rather than dependence (Woods, 2016).

The process-oriented nature of both leadership-as- practice and adaptive leadership provides an ontological framework to demystify how everyday peace is enacted in everyday mundane practice (Raelin, 2016; Heifetz, 2009; De Coning, 2018; Darr, 2016). It crucial to understanding how the ordinary everyday practices of communities sustain peace (MacGinty, 2021); nature of social relationships amongst communities with ethnic and religious divides (Lee 2021); connecting the local agency of the people to the broader political context (De Coning, 2018). This approach allows for a continuous process of experimentation with a range of options, coupled with a continuous process of selection and refinement. It is complexity-informed where peacebuilders, including communities and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured process to sustain peace by employing an iterative process of experimentation, learning and adaptation.

The shift from the ontology of liberal idealism and realism that are characterized as interventionist (MacGinty, 2021) has implications for peace building. These are approaches that creates disconnect between the communities and the broader challenge of conflicts and peace building (Newman, 2009). In the context of this research, it is important to examine the social relations that are constructed and reconstructed in the communities, especially across the divides that exist. The end goal is reconciliation, however, it is important to understand the process that leads to reconciliation and peaceful co-existence (Bar-Tal, 2009). The social interactions, the subjective attitudes, and the perception of existing relationships amongst individuals and groups conceptualize peace leadership as ontologically located on relational and adaptive practices (Lee, 2021).

Figure 2.2. Linkage between Adaptive Leadership, Leadership-As-Practice and Everyday Practice of Peace- *Interconnectedness of individual agency, collective action, and socio-cultural contexts.*



Relational and adaptive practices may differ depending on context (Ghitulescu, 2013).

This variability expands the conceptualization of everyday peace across cultures to make it meaningful (Ting-Toomey, & Dorjee, 2018; Shweder & Bourne, 1982). On one hand, it may focus on meeting the contextual realities of everyday peace, and on another hand, the real-life realities of the people who experience violence in their everyday life. Every day peace is an embodied experience, therefore, the local people are crucial in leading practices that either address the complexity of everyday violence in their community and/ or everyday constructive relationships (Berents, 2015). This may mean intentional actions at resisting everyday forms of violence and/ or transforming structures of power that reproduce them.

It is significant to note that everyday peace does not require institutional recognition, but the constant reimagining and reinventing of what security, stability, dignity, and respect for

the community means (Richmond, 2016). This constitutes the concept of “Positive Peace”, which Galtung (1969) posits as a peace that is beyond just an absence of direct violence. People face different forms of violence in their everyday life but due to the murkiness, may fail to distinguish between the different forms which may include direct violence, political violence, structural violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and economic violence. The absence of war does not mean peace, as everyday violence may still be happening in seemingly peaceful communities (Weber, 2013).

Situating my Research Questions

The goal of my study was to understand the emerging peace leadership practices advanced by local women groups in their communities. My central question is: How does context influence emergent local leadership practices in conflict conditions? Specifying sub-questions are:

- a) How do community groups perceive peace leadership?
- b) How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?
- c) How did the women’s experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

The central research question connects to my theoretical framework in the following ways. Firstly, it helps to advance a local turn for peace leadership that is a shift from the popular traditional peace leadership espoused by dominant western scholarships (De coning, 2018). Secondly, it elevates the need for peace building efforts to be pragmatic and meet the local contextual realities (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2021). Thirdly, it situates the efficacy of the social construction of peace as an everyday practice of meaning making, connectedness and plurality (Stokowski, 2002; Mac Ginty, 2014; Lee, 2022). Engaging with the women peace building

groups will contribute to building a body of knowledge on everyday practices that may have helped evolve a contextually driven peace leadership in extreme conditions.

Everyday peace relies on the following principles: (1) It is a value-based practice and must be embodied and experienced to make meaning; (2) It considers the specific historical, cultural, political, economic, religious, and ethnic context (3) It is socially constructed and relies on social relations to manifest and sustain peace. Despite these critical aspects necessary to advance peace building leadership that is inclusive, pragmatic, locally driven and sustained, very few peace leadership scholars consider the endogeneity of leadership practices (Crevani et al., 2010; Khalifa et al., 2019; Jimenez-Luque & Trimble, 2020). This study aims to contribute to advancing a decolonized peace leadership paradigm, by examining how local women groups stretched, changed, and transformed the practice of community leadership in Plateau state.

The first sub question considers how the context impacts on peace leadership. Peace building processes over the years have been ineffective due to standardization derived from hegemonic peace frameworks (Mac Ginty, 2008). These frameworks failed to consider the local context as a system that comprises of components that influence how people interact with their environment (Richmond, 2008). Every context engages in social relations, and these interactions are guided by societal norms derived from its traditional ideologies and history (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Considering the complexity of factors of religion, culture, ethnicity impact on social relations is critical for any peace building effort (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013. Heifetz et al., 2009). These constitute underlying conditions that are driving factors to conflict situations. The interconnection of all the elements that bounds the beliefs, values, and practices of the people, may be considered for sustainable peace (Laderach, 1995). Analyzing how the context of Plateau state influenced the leadership practices of the women group is significant for understanding the adaptivity and everyday practice of that contributes to peace building.

The second sub question sought to understand how community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership. Leadership is a process in which change emanates from all engaged in that process (Raelin, 2012; Finley, 1994). Social identities play different roles at different times and impact on peace building processes, making it situationally relevant or neglected (Schlee, 2004). The power structures and dynamics in groups and communities may impact on group interactions (Brown & Pehrson, 2019). For a deeper understanding of inclusion, the social constructs that inform the values of groups and communities should be considered (Hofstede, 2010). Leadership-As-Practice dwells within the historical context of the people, which may reinforce retrogressive dominant traditional practices that are exclusionary (Raelin, 2008). However, in the context of this research, I sought to explore how multiple interactions amongst these groups may be impacted by the ambiguity, complexity, and tensions of inclusion in a culturally driven context.

The third sub-question sought to understand how the group's experiences contributed to the emergence of leadership practices for more locally driven peace. Globally women, have continued to bear the brunt of crisis (Botreau & Cohen, 2020; López, 2007). These experiences in conflict ridden context may influence women's agency in peace leadership. Women have moved from just wishful thinking and passivity, to taking risk and engaging in ways that are not conventional (Porter, 2003). Adaptive leadership is all about risk taking and experimenting in new ways (Heifetz et al., 2009; De Coning, 2020; Reychler & Langer. 2006). Modelling a new kind of practice and behavior within a context with rigid norms is risky business and may lead to community sanctions (Posner, 2002; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). However, studies have shown that contextual experiences may contribute to the agentic process of expanding the boundaries of leadership practices (Osborn, 2002, Day, 200; Leung et al., 2008). The co-creation and learning amongst groups with similar experience may be necessary to advance understanding of

leadership- As -Practice, Adaptive Leadership, and Everyday Peace Practices (Osborn,2002; Ramaswamy,2009; Jackson 2021; Chaitin, 2013).

Summary

This section was an ensemble of the theoretical framework that informed my research design, analysis, and the questions of inquiry. I reviewed literature framing my epistemological and ontological commitments within the everyday construction of peace leadership, which includes the Adaptive Leadership Framework, Leadership-As-Practice theory, and Everyday Peace. I explained how Everyday Peace is integrated and aligns to Adaptive Leadership Framework and Leadership-As-Practice theory. I also explained how these theories forms the foundation for this study by explaining the impracticality of conventional peace theories on the evolving nature of peace building. Finally, discussed how these theories informed my research questions which supported an understanding of the emerging leadership practices from women peace builders in communities in Plateau state. In the next chapter, I will discuss my research methodology.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This is a case study with an integration of constructivism. The purpose of this study was to locate and understand the emerging leadership practices of a group of women advancing peace building in Nigeria. Peacebuilding leadership has been constructed over decades through the lens of dominant paradigms of peace theories and practice (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). However, the advancement of a local turn premises alternative lenses to understand peace leadership (De Coning, 2018; Paffenholz, 2018). I approached this study with the assumption that peace leadership in a conflict-ridden context may be context influenced to advance a different type of leadership. It is significant to study this assumption, especially in an era where peace scholars are expanding the boundary of what leadership practices means in different contexts.

In this light, my central research question is: How does context influence emergent local leadership practices in conflict conditions? Specifying sub-questions are:

- a) How do community groups perceive peace leadership?
- b) How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?
- c) How did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

This chapter presents a detailed description of my research design, sample and sampling techniques, procedures, study location and data analysis techniques. I start by elucidating my methodological preference to utilize qualitative approach, explaining the intersection of this approach to the study rationale and theoretical framework. I will also describe the research context- which includes the study site and the process of participants recruitment. In addition, I will detail how data collection happened, the analysis of the data, and

how I ensured rigor and trustworthiness. Finally, I will describe how my positionality showed up in this study.

Research Design

The research approach was qualitative and has both theoretical and methodological congruency to my study. Qualitative research interrogates the nature of a phenomenon and is particularly appropriate for answering questions of why and how (Bhattacharya, 2017; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Creswell, 1996). The responses to this kind of open-ended question are usually embedded in the construction of reality (Yates & Leggett, 2016). It is rooted on epistemological foundation of constructivism with the assumption that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world (Merriam, 2002). This approach is interpretive and makes use of a variety of empirical materials like introspection, interviews, interactional and personal experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Engaging in qualitative research involves a process where researchers identify a particular challenge or issue in the vastness of this world. The researchers then proceed to systematically collect and interpret the data in order to provide an analysis that elucidates the challenge or issue with the intent of possibly solving a social problem (Stokes, 1997). I chose this approach for the following reasons: firstly, it situates the researcher as an instrument of data collection, analyzes the data, and focuses on the meaning the participants construct (Creswell, 2016). However, because I leaned on a constructivist lens, I participated in the meaning making alongside the co-researchers and engaged with the women group as co-researchers. Secondly, qualitative research is appropriate for understanding the research context (Fossey et al., 2002; Lewis et al 2003)). I have lived and worked in that context for most of my life, and the co-researchers may have had similar experiences with me. But I am curious about the work the women group have advanced in the light of cultural barriers and the crisis. Thirdly, this study

relies on a ton of cultural interpretations and meaning making of community social relations (Becker, 1996; Lemke, 1998). Qualitative data provides insight into cultural activities that might otherwise be missed in structured surveys or experiments (Tracey, 2019). This supports deeper insights on research focused on issues of power, privilege, marginalized populations, and societies at large (Denzin et al., 2023).

In this research, I engaged with the co-researcher(s) in constructing meaning, and making interpretations of their experiences (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187). This shared pattern between the co-researchers and me helped build trust, and a pathway to generating candid accounts (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Constructivist Case Study

Adopting a constructivist case study methodology is necessary to understand in-depth the intricacies of the dynamics of peace building amongst groups that sought to advance a different type of peace leadership (Wallis & Richmond, 2017). The study of this phenomenon situates well with a case study for the following reasons, Firstly, it presents a case of women acting adaptively to advance a different leadership paradigm from what prevails within the research context. Secondly, the case represents a bound system, of which it is domiciled in a single geographical location, and within a time frame of 5 years. Thirdly, multiple sources of data collection were utilized to get in-depth information of subjective experiences. Lastly, it details a considerable amount of information describing the physical context, and the phenomenon in context and at large (Creswell, 2016). The purpose of this study and its research questions were derived such that it demonstrates methodological congruence with a twinning of case study and constructivism.

The constructivist case study approaches the premise of an ontological belief that reality is local and specifically constructed (Wallis & Richmond, 2017; Schwandt, 1994). This approach is appropriate for understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who lived it (Schwandt, 1994). According to Stake (2006), it falls within the interpretive paradigm and explicitly seeks out the multiple perspectives of those involved in the case. This means that the socially constructed understanding and perceptions of social actors shape the way peace leadership unfolds. In this instance, constructivist case study provides a useful theoretical lens in understanding the collectives of gender, ethnicity, power, and culture (Charmaz, 2017).

In addition, this fits into my research approach which prioritizes been cognizant to the diversity of the groups represented in the study, existence of multiple socially constructed realities, to illuminate the obscurity in power and inequities that may be existing in communities (Gergen, 2001). The subjectivism and construction involved in deconstructing lived experiences as they are narrated acknowledges the significance of the interrelationship between the co-researchers and me (Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010). The constructivist paradigm regards knowledge as a human construction that recognizes multiple realities and sees the research as a process through which the researcher and the co-researcher co-construct understandings (Charmaz, 2017; Sawyer & Norris, 2012). Through constructivist research, the phenomenon is understood through the meanings people assign to them (Krauss, 2015).

Collaborative Engagement with Co-Researchers

The success of this study required partnership with the community women groups working on peace building in Plateau state, whom I referred to, and worked with as co-researchers (Smith, 1994). I utilized a participatory approach which situated the participants as co-constructors, investigators, and developers of the research findings (Taliep et al., 2022;

Neufeldt & Janzen, 2021). I continuously examined my positionality as a woman from Nigeria who understands the context and have had similar experiences with the women groups. Secondly, my long-standing relationship with some of the women groups, including the focus and intent of the project may form some bias which I was conscious of. Thirdly, the engagement required a constant back and forth in the data collection and analysis process since I adopted a co-constructivist approach. Lastly, I ensured I discussed with the co-researchers on how the findings will be presented and disseminated. All of these are driven by my keen interest and intent to depart from an epistemological approach that is focused on data generation with participants as subjects. Rather, I engaged in an intentional relationship with the women group that created space for trust, interdependency, collaboration, empathy and curiosity. I had approached this study with a desire to integrate elements that are mutually empowering to both the co-researchers and me (Godden, 2017; Tanner, 2019), thereby co-learning and building connections. This was not an easy process, but took mutually driven efforts to build and sustain, and this relationship may continue even after the research due to my interest in the field of peace building and development interventions holistically.

Key elements considered in this engaged work, include- acknowledging the women group as the primary unit of identity and analysis (Kandiyoti, 2005), elevating, and leveraging on existing strengths and experiences of the co-researchers (Okigbo, 2019), and building relationship that elevates collaboration throughout the study process, from planning to development of findings (Weiner & Macdonald, 2013). The women group have direct experience of the conflict and its impacts, as well as peace building interventions advanced in their communities. There is a proverb that says, “the one wearing the shoes knows exactly where it hurts”, and this situates the women as resourceful co-researchers, with evidenced commitment to tackle the challenges of peacebuilding in their communities (Coleman, 2006). The solution to

peace cannot be better understood or addressed without the voices of the people affected, and a broader understanding of why certain groups are excluded (Kemmis,1990).

Research Site

My definition of “site” is located in my choice of research design (Groenewald, 2004) which involves seeking to understand a case through the study of the place that embodied the phenomenon, the activities that happened within the location, and how the women groups construct meanings in relation to the phenomenon. What this means is that I engaged both tangible and intangible elements to make sense of the phenomenon (Booth 2015, Merton 1987). Tangible elements include the geographical locations and the participants, while the intangible includes, the culture and social norms, their approaches and reasoning, loyalties, emotions, and acts that drive acts of resilience (Horlings, 2015).

The research site is called Plateau state and the twelfth largest states in Nigeria with a population of 4.7 million people. It is located almost in the center of Nigeria and known as the land of peace and tourism. The beauty of this state invites tourists from far and wide to experience the mountainous, incredible valley and waterfall topography. Residents of the state comprise of both Muslim and Christian adherents, with different ethnicities, often categorized as a heterogenous community. The state is famous for its peacefulness but has become a hot spot for violent clashes in the past two decades. This includes riots and bombings by jihadist Boko Haram insurgents, clashes between the ethnic groups, and between Muslim Hausa-Fulani herders and Christian farmers. It has also experienced ethnic violence, which is purported to be driven by climate change and land scarcity.

The government has made efforts to address the heightened communal clashes, but with little or no progress. The spate of insecurity kept getting worse, with killings and destruction

reaching unprecedented levels. However, a group of women rose to the challenge, self-authorized, and started something new and different in enacting change. These women work as leaders of organizations which are categorized as informal structures, and engaged in ways that are non-conventional. In this context, women's rights and voices are undermined due to a rigid form of patriarchy. Women are excluded from public affairs and discriminated against in leadership positions, and such discrimination even happens amongst women groups. Due to intergenerational gaps, there exist power dynamics, with older women loyal to cultural practices that is no longer serving the current realities. The women I interviewed were between the ages of 30-60 years old, with education qualification mostly at undergraduate level, some master's degree and one pursuing a doctoral degree. They are a mix of both Muslim and Christians and in terms of ethnicity, they represented tribes of Fulani, Shandam, Kwanpan, Garkida, Mwaghvuf, and Igbo. These women have lived most of their lives in Plateau State and are invested in the mission of contributing to making it a home of peace again. In addition to this site described, I also gathered more information that supports the study, from existing literature. This provided more data that helped in explaining the phenomenon of study- its multidimensionality, peculiarity, uniqueness, and complexities.

The women organization involved in this study include the following:

1. Africare Peace Initiative
2. Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
3. Peace Advancement Action Against Violence and Rape Foundation
4. Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development
5. Saphira Global Center for Social Development
6. Community Health Justice and Peace Initiative for Development

7. Social Justice and Human Development for Peace Initiative

8. Justice Peace and Reconciliation Movement

The principle of reciprocity played a significant role in my engagement with the women's group, particularly concerning visibility and recognition for their work. The women expressed a desire for acknowledgment and accountability for their efforts and progress. In discussions surrounding reciprocity, the issue of organization naming emerged as a point of contention. The women strongly believed that using pseudonyms for their organizations was disempowering and contributed to a culture of fear. They argued that genuine reciprocity entails transparency and mutual respect, including acknowledging their organizations by their actual names. This stance reflects their commitment to equitable partnerships and the importance of authentic representation.

By advocating against the use of pseudonyms, the women sought to reclaim agency and ensure that their contributions are accurately recognized and credited. This aligns with the principle of reciprocity, which emphasizes fair and balanced interactions, where each party's contributions is acknowledged and valued. In essence, the women's insistence on visibility and recognition without the use of pseudonyms underscores their commitment to reciprocity as a foundational principle in their engagement in this research. It highlights the importance of honoring their agency, dignity, and autonomy in collaborative efforts towards shared goals.

However, in acknowledgement of ethics of research in conflict regions or context, I sought to prioritize confidentiality (Brounéus, 2011). I leaned on a paradigm that this is social research, and there should be adaptivity to the contextual factors and demands (Smit, 2006). While it is significant to honor and respect the rights and wishes of the women, I also believed that it is important to consider ethical obligations (Guenther, 2009). My experience serves as a valuable reminder of the importance of cultural sensitivity and ethical reflexivity in research. By

honoring what emerges from the research site, it demonstrates a commitment to ethical research practices that are inclusive, contextually relevant, and respectful of local values and perspectives.

Table 3.1. Research Schedule and Timeline

Activity	Description	Timeline
Build Community Partnership	Participants Recruitment, which involved phone calls, emails, orienting on research intent and goals.	July 2023
IRB Approval	Complete documentation for approval	August 2023
Conduct Interviews	Virtual 14 days interviews- Zoom & phone calls (Spread out based on availability & follow up interviews	September- October 2023
Transcribe Recordings	Download and transcribe recordings. Review for detail relevance and adequacy	September– November 2023
Analyze transcripts & notes	Study & review transcripts, manually analyze transcription, observation notes, Crystallization of data, debriefing with co-	September 2023 – January 2024

	researchers, Research Report Draft	
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Co-Researchers Recruitment Process

I engaged in a purposive sampling technique to select the co-researchers, and this choice was informed by the peculiarity of the case, and the imperative to engage persons who have lived experiences and active in peace building work (Crewell, 2005). The sample of the participants allowed for a wide range of stories and experiences to be gathered which will support the process of determining common themes and patterns. This was a right fit for this study, as the women groups partnered with me as co-researchers, bringing multifold perspectives on peace building as a concept and practice, and as a process (Creswell, 2005). This technique was also necessary due to the limited number of women that could serve as primary data sources. This selection technique is also an excellent fit for case study as it premises reflective process and understanding, as well as my intersubjectivity, the co-researchers, and the phenomenon (Burawoy, 1998). Finally, purposive sampling supported the full utilization of an in-depth interview, with a broad range and depth of information gathered through multiple interviews and probing questions (Frey & Fontana, 1991; Johnstone, 2017). I relied on my judgement of the context, and the research intent and outcome in the selection process (Tongco, 2007)

Purposive sampling provided me a rich resource of experienced group of women, who were not just available to be interviewed, but passionate about peace building. Their age range are between 30-60 years, Muslim and Christian adherents, are indigenes of the state or have lived there long enough to experience conflicts or work on peace building.

I have an existing relationship working in the field of peace building in this region and with some of the community groups, and this paved the way for easy recruitment. Working in the development sector for two (2) decades has not only helped me build relationships and network, but also exposed me to the complexity and dynamics of the context. I started off by having informal phone calls with some of the women organizations and followed up with emails requesting their partnership to embark on the study. Through the phone calls and emails, I oriented the women peace leaders on the intent of the study, expected outcomes, and their role as co-researchers. I shared the consent forms with them and a brief note of the research and made myself available for any clarifying questions. I believe they got smitten by the fact that someone acknowledges the work they are doing in their communities, which has never happened.

One thing that really got the women endeared to the research is the element of sharing their lived experiences for potential replicability and the reciprocity in our engagement. The co-researchers expect that the report of this study will be shared with them as an advocacy tool with both state and non-state actors for a consideration of locally driven peace building. There is an aspiration that this research report will lead to policy and practice shifts.

The development of knowledge from the study is attributed to collective co-learning, co-construction and sense making of the phenomenon (Horner, 2016). In addition, the fact that I am a woman from their part of the world, who understands firsthand their personal experiences situated me as a trustworthy partner on this study. Nevertheless, I was supposed to interview ten (10) women, but due to unforeseen circumstances, I could only work with eight (8). According to Patton (2002), there are no rules for sample size in qualitative research. What matters is the richness in diversity and purposefulness.

Data Collection

The phenomenon was situated within the context of the study which combined broadly the physical, historical, socio-economic permutation within a bounded system (Creswell, 2016). I worked with multiple sources of information which include, one-on one interviews (semi structured and open ended), observations, documents, and reports. I interviewed eight (8) of the women representing different community peace building collectives. The interview lasted for fourteen days, with sixty minutes per interviewee. However, some interviewees were more conversational than others, and extended to ninety minutes. I also considered the necessity to go beyond just collecting data to interpreting and analyzing simultaneously within the interview itself (Tracey, 2013). In terms of richness and purposefulness of the data, I re-interviewed five of the women with follow up questions, and to close the gap on data collected initially due to connectivity challenges. I was cognizant that I do not have to conduct so many interviews to reach saturation of data (Baker & Edwards, 2012).

The women groups are natural story tellers and have been sharing their stories in several community platforms to energize other women to exercise leadership. They felt good that they were going to be interviewed for research purposes and will be a pivotal part of making sense of how they have demonstrated leadership in peace building. Using an in-depth interview was appropriate to gather data (Brounéus, 2011), as the women have been sharing their stories in different platforms to energize others on peace leadership. Secondly, through narrating their stories, and following up with additional probing questions, the women provided rich provide descriptions of both individual and group experiences (Schultze & Avital, 2011). Lastly, the nuance provoked by the interview approach helped me observe and gain access to the intangibles, like the personalities and identities of the group, their aspirations, passion and commitment to make progress towards a more peaceful community (Savin-Baden & Niekerk,

2007). Finally, I also worked with existing and relevant literatures on peace building efforts advanced by women.

Primary Data Collection

The primary data was collected through mediated platforms of one-on-one interviews which has proven to be a valuable means for interviewing (Tracey, 2019). The decision to engage a virtual platform for the interviews mitigates the risk of gathering the participants together (Douedari et al., 2021; Aronsson & Hassnain, 2021; Paluck, 2009), in a context that is volatile, with a history of sporadic community attacks by insurgents. This was partly zoom and more of phone interviews due to connectivity challenges and the mobility of the women at the time of the interview. Engaging the women groups through interviews was necessary and a right fit for this study due the complexity of the conflicts and the nuance of the work advanced by the women (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2014). It is important to hear their perspectives about the conflicts and how they have experienced leadership aimed at advancing peace building in their communities. The storied data incorporated what, how and why of each of their experiences (Sarbin, 1986). This approach also helped me to be conscious of the sensitivity of the phenomenon, and the one-on-one interviews helped me build rapport with the women groups. The questions were open-ended and allowed deeper and expanded conversations (Watt, 2007; Cumming-Potvin 2013).

The interview was done in English, but as necessary, I engaged with the local language to further connect with the co-researchers, especially in situations requiring more clarity. The theme of the research and its focus on women served as an interesting in-road to the engagement, considering the immense change the group have evoked in peace building in Plateau State. The tone of voices and inflections was also observed in the process of the interview, and helped me understand when it's time to pause, connect with some cultural

symbolic expressions necessary to build resonance and “be in the world of the co-researchers” (Gilligan et al., 2003). Data was collected within a period of fourteen days, but with follow-up interviews for more information to support the crystallization process. This iterative and recursive approach helped in analyzing existing data, identifying gaps, highlighting areas of interest, and interweaving patterns to make sense of the data (Ellingson, 2009).

The interview questions were framed to ensure sensitivity to the experiences of the women groups (Brayda & Boyce, 2014), responsiveness to what they can share ethically and to be protected (Bogner et al 2010; Udoh, 2013), nimbleness of the inquiry that influences the responses (Roulston, 2010), and respect for the women’s agency (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2014). This was all necessary to support the co-construction and meaning making of their experiences in peace leadership. Most of the time, the time was not enough, and I had to return to the co-researchers at another scheduled time to continue the interview. This allowed for more probing questions and richer data, as I leveraged that period to listen to the recording and approach the interview again with more targeted questions.

Data was recorded using zoom recordings and call recorder. I also had a journal with written notes during the interviews and when doing analyses. The journaling included key observations and insights from the interview (Percy et al., 2015). Zoom did its data transcription and phone data was self-transcribed. I really found the self-transcription useful as it immersed me more into the data, and there was more clarity than just listening to the voices. I was able to interact more with the data, interrogate the data in the process, identify gaps, and took notes of areas that needed more clarification or information. The data was coded anonymously, with all digital information placed on a thumb drive. When not in use, the data was stored in a locked safe in my desk drawer in the home office, being the primary location of coded data and written materials. I made sure to turn off the video function of each Zoom interview for privacy and

confidentiality. I had only the audio recording of the interview. Video clips that may have been included in the recording were then deleted, as Zoom technology automatically records video as well as audio, however with two separate data clips (Zoom, 2022).

Data organization helped with comprehension of the complexity of data and ease of analysis (Tracy, 2019; Merriam, 2015). It was important for me to act swiftly on this, after the first interview as it helped with indicators and insights of how and why to advance for re-interviews. Firstly, I started off by organizing based on the time the data was collected, tagging with version names and dates (Civan et al., 2008). Secondly, after the first set of interviews, I restructured the voluminous data into a more organized and meaningful dataset (Bandara et al., 2015). Through transcription, I was able to summarize and paraphrase, which helped in condensing the data. Thirdly, I categorized and labeled the data based on comparisons and contrasts to ensure that I winnowed data that was not useful (Creswell, 1997). I developed a graphical representation of the data because I am a visual person, and it works for me especially with a ton of data representation.

At the end of each interview session, I sent an appreciation note, thanking the co-researchers for their commitment and sacrifice of time. The note also assures the co-researchers of the attribution of their contribution to the research, confidentiality of their information, and reminder of the potential of this study to advance knowledge on local peace leadership and practice shift.

Table 3.2. Interview Mapping & Mining Questions

	Questions	Probing Questions
1.	How do community groups perceive leadership in peace building process?	Why did you choose to engage in peace building in your community?

		Can you share an experience of when you were faced with a challenge, and describe how you made progress on it, either individually or collaboratively, and explain why you made that choice/whether it was the only choice available. How did you create partnership across existing religious, ethnic and cultural divides?
2.	How do community groups practice inclusion in peace building efforts?	What conditions made inclusion in peace building efforts less complicated in your communities? How did patriarchy affect the progress of women-led community peace building? Did the approaches you adopted perceived as defiant to community social norms? If yes, why did you choose these approaches?
3.	How did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?	How do your identities come together and allow you to consider taking a risk? Are there some contexts that make it easier for you to take a risk as compared to others? How would you describe the impact of the approach women groups engaged with others

		in your community? For whom & what level of impact do you believe it made? What type of methods or approaches made more impact in community peace processes? Are they new to participants or it has been a tradition? Can you describe a situation when you think you or your group may have done something new/experimental. What happened? How? And how did it progress?
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Secondary Data Collection

The use of secondary data is becoming a more prevalent method of data collection and supports research that does not have the luxury of time and resources (Johnston, 2014).

Considering the available time of study, I employed the practicality of strategically sourcing and utilizing existing data to supplement the primary data. This approach was a good fit for this study, because it is important to engage existing literature on peace leadership research (Mazhar et al 2021). Firstly, the study necessitated an understanding of peace building theories and practices for both comparative context and power effects (Hox & Boeijs, 2005). The integration of secondary data into my qualitative research process was instrumental in several key aspects. Firstly, it provided theoretical frameworks from sources such as Adaptive Leadership, Leadership-As-Practice, and Everyday Peace theory, which informed my perspectives and

conceptual understanding. Drawing on existing theories guided my data analysis, interpretation, and conceptualization of findings, enriching the depth and rigor of my study. Additionally, secondary data supported a contextual understanding by providing valuable background information on the research site and phenomenon under study. Despite my familiarity with the research site, secondary data filled gaps in my knowledge, especially regarding historical information and specific occurrences. It also allowed me to contribute to closing existing gaps in the academic discourse and recommend areas for further exploration, thereby situating my study within the broader academic landscape and building upon existing knowledge. Moreover, secondary data played a pivotal role in the development of interview guides and data collection instruments. By refining research questions, objectives, and assumptions prior to data collection, secondary data helped ensure the effectiveness and relevance of my research instruments. It accounted for a rich pool of data which was collected from literature reviews of scholarly journals/articles, documents, newspapers, reports from public sector institutions in Nigeria, and civil society organizations, global reports from international development organizations and other relevant literature. Lastly, leveraging on existing findings helped me to generate new insights, validate my findings, and conduct comparative analyses. This integration of secondary data alongside primary data sources facilitated a holistic understanding of the complex phenomenon of peacebuilding leadership, enriching the depth and breadth of my research findings.

In summary, integrating secondary data into my qualitative research process proved invaluable, offering theoretical grounding, contextual understanding, methodological support, and opportunities for innovative insights and contributions to the academic discourse.

My Role as a Researcher

As a researcher conducting qualitative research, I played the role of instrumentation, co-construction and conducting qualitative study (Bellucci & Park, 2020). To understand the emergent leadership practices advanced by the women peace builders who served as co-researchers in this study, I engaged purposeful sampling. In pursuit of a considerable amount of data adequate for analysis, I conducted thirteen in-depth interviews, which comprises of eight initial, and five follow-ups. I self-transcribed all the interviews from mediated platforms of telephone calls and zoom meetings. I utilized bracketing in the transcription and analysis of the final conclusions. This approach helped with the synthesizing and qualitative observations, which I continuously journaled for further interrogation and analysis (Fischer, 2009; Percy et al., 2015).

As I approached the data analysis from the interviews, I examined the emerging themes that developed throughout the qualitative interviews using the thematic analysis with constant comparison approach (Percy et al., 2015). I engaged in clustering the data sets according to applicable categories and continuously interrogating the significance of the data set to the study goals (Percy et al., 2015). This process was followed by evaluating the qualitative significance of each theme, highlighting how each applied to the theoretical frameworks of the study, including its implications for future research on peace leadership (Percy et al., 2015). The next section will outline and discuss the themes that emerged through the qualitative interviews.

Data Analysis

I engaged in a thematic analysis with constant comparison of the data. This is an approach that has proven to be a successful method for analysis in the social sciences research (Percy et al., 2015). It's a method for identifying themes in qualitative data (Terry et al., 2017), and has flexibility for different data, like data from interviews (Niland, et al., 2014). I choose

thematic analysis for two reasons that forms the foundation of this study: (1) Seeking to understand emergent leadership practices amongst the co-researchers, I have to engage the data from bottom-up through an inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), (2) The predetermined concepts from the theoretical frameworks that provides a lens for seeing the data and meaning making through deductive coding (Joffe, 2011). Thematic analysis approach also situates well with my study as it is used in qualitative research to understand human behavior, why people do what they do, how they do it, and when they do it (Braun et al., 2016).

As I collected data, I engaged its analysis as an almost simultaneous process to make sense of what is emerging and what I need to further interrogate (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It is important to consider an analysis approach that helps me understand the emerging themes and hunches, and how it provides insight into the research questions (Butina, 2015). This process also helped me determine what questions needed reframing. This approach helped reveal and understand the unique perspectives of the women groups and it provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Kim, 2015). The stories shared by the women becomes the raw data for the study and analysis (Bleakley, 2005).

To ensure optimization, specificity, uniqueness, and particularities, considering this is a case study within a bounded system (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), I engaged the following process:

1. Reviewed and organized the collected data from the journaling and interviews, of the first interviewees.
2. Reviewed data to decide relevance to research questions.
3. Winnowed for data reduction and relevance and filing separately for further evaluation as I advanced.

4. Labelled and coded all data sets.
5. Clustering of all relevant data sets that may be connected and develop any observable patterns.
6. After this process was completed for the first collected data, subsequent data was analyzed, coded, and compared to the previously analyzed data. The data was compared to the previously analyzed data, resulting in constant comparison of the data (Percy et al., 2015).

In this iterative process, corresponding or emerging patterns were identified, and data categorized with the applicable corresponding data and compared. Thematic analysis was met with saturation on the study of peace building leadership practices, as the eight interviews which were conducted allowed for a variety of emerging themes to evaluate and report upon (Percy et al., 2015). Data saturation was observed after the re-interview of three co-researchers and patterns remained unchanged with no new emerging themes by the re-interview of the remaining two (Alam, 2021). Eleven main themes emerged from the interviews, and this was coded and analyzed (Guest et al., 2020). Each theme was identified with participant quotes that were deemed meaningful to the research in the investigation of each question. The main theoretical framework for the study included Adaptive Leadership theory, Leadership-As-Practice theory and Everyday Peace theory. There were identifiable themes that fell into the three theoretical categories which validates the scientific merit of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I categorized the themes under the three sub specifying questions to fully synthesize the theoretical and practical implications of the study results (Hopkins, 2017).

Trustworthiness of Data

Constructivist case study methodology is often criticized for reliability issues due to the subjectivity and the empiricism of the researcher (Riege, 2003; Street & Ward, 2012). To

ensure reliability of this study, I ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity which are the criteria for trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). I engaged in a crystallization process, to ensure that large data that details multiple truth of the women, both individual and shared experiences are brought together to form a coherent text for analysis ((Ellingson, 2009). This data represents what surfaced from the subjective and intersubjective meaning making of the phenomena by the co-researchers, and my reflexive influence in during analysis (Patnaik, 2013).

Through crystallization, I compared data and connected meaning making of the leadership experiences from the case study, especially as it is a function of the complex and disparate contextual factors. The approach helped me apply a method that is suitable to flow systematically through the main sources of research data between literature review, case evidence, and intuition (Lewis, 1998). It also helped with comparing emerging constructs and strengthening of the trustworthiness criteria.

Researcher's Ethical Responsibilities, Subjectivities and Positionality

In conducting research, it is crucial to pay attention and plan for your ethical responsibility to the participants or co-researchers (Tee & Lathlean, 2004), and how your subjectivities and positionality may show up in the course of the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). In this section, I explained how collaborating in both the planning and research process was accomplished, and what I owned and co-owned as responsibilities with the co-researchers, and how we all influenced a decolonized thinking as we constructed knowledge.

Ethical Responsibilities

The phenomenon of study is a rather sensitive one, where the community may have experienced directly or indirectly the impact of conflict. This may have entrenched a culture of

fear, distrust, poor collaboration, and deepened exclusionary practices. It is critical to plan and co-create what trust, transparency, accountability, collaboration, participation, co-learning, equity and inclusion means for this study (Allen, 1994; Kim, 2014). This research relied heavily on a constructivist paradigm, and I ensured that respect, reciprocity, confidentiality and collaboration was a core anchor in the engagement (Anderson & Lonsdale, 2014).

As a researcher who has first-hand experience of conflict situations in Nigeria, and can relate to the experiences of the women, I was conscious of respecting the differential experiences they all come with. These women have dealt with loss, deprivations, human rights infractions, trauma and cultural restrictions which stifles their agency. I ensured human dignity in relations and approach right from the planning stage of the research, and also reflected on how the questions were framed, and asked. During the interviews, I engaged with the women with curiosity, demonstrating respect for their experiences and their voices. In addition, due to the intensity of the work they do in the communities, their schedule was tight and unpredictable. It was necessary to plan for their availability and be flexible to changing schedules due to unanticipated events. Still on timing, the time difference was a huge part of consideration, as I had to be available in the early hours of the morning to interview them. Lastly, I always ensured to verbally appreciate the time they spent with me in the interviews, and for sharing their stories.

As part of trust building, I created space for the women to describe to me what confidentiality meant to them in the context of this research. As co-researchers, they were happy to have their stories and organization shared globally. However, they had reservations about sharing their names, but the use of pseudonyms. They are super proud of the work they have advanced, which was done in collaboration with the members of the communities. In recent times with the proliferation of small arms and weapons, and the sporadic community attacks by armed bandits, they harbor fears of reprisal attacks. In addition, there were some statements and

comments that the co-researchers and I needed to reframe as “what” and “how” they wanted presented to the world. It was part of my duty of care to ensure respect of the co-researchers and the beneficence (Brounéus, 2011). I ensured that even when some of the women waived the consent of confidentiality, stating that their voices did not implicate any individual or group, but illuminated practices they believe should be eroded, I still avowed confidentiality in its totality. I utilized pseudonyms to support data organization and give a human face to their narratives (Saunders et al., 2015). In addition, I also listed the names of their organizations, because they requested I do so. I explained this as one of the core ethics guiding peace research, especially, in a context still flagged as high risk (Gordon, 2021)

However, this experience had me thinking about what implications this may have for traditional qualitative researchers. Is there room for a more expanded perspective that is relevant to the contexts in which research is conducted that may ultimately contribute to localized ethical considerations and praxis? The everyday peace theory provides a prism for innovative and relevant ethics in peace research. Examples from this study include considering practical mediums for obtaining consent which might include verbal consent as a practice. Secondly, acknowledging the significance of local knowledge, experiences, and perspectives in shaping the research process. Thirdly, Researchers should be mindful of the potential risks associated with their research activities and take proactive measures to mitigate harm, such as ensuring confidentiality as a priority and as necessary. In this instance, the co-researchers and I weighed the implication for publishing their organization names as a redirection of power and an emancipatory move, while honoring cultural norms and sensitivities. Fourthly, the everyday peace lens helped me to be attentive to issues of power and privilege and take steps to ensure that the voices of all community members are heard and respected in the research process. Within the research context, I strived for equitable representation and participation of all stakeholders,

including marginalized or vulnerable groups. Lastly, Everyday Peace Theory encourages transparency and accountability in peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that processes and outcomes are accessible and accountable to local communities. I ensured I communicated openly with co-researchers about the purpose, methods, and potential implications of the research, and sought their input and feedback throughout the process as they assumed the role of co-researchers.

Further, still on the principle of reciprocity, I entered this research thinking about how it might benefit the community I engaged with, and I was intentional about it. I was convinced that the group have done good work in peace leadership, and I sought to hear directly from them how they could benefit from this engagement. This thinking was advanced into tangible forms by the activities I carried out with the women groups from the pre interviews, during interviews and post interviews. I started off by building trust as a form of reciprocity (Hopper, 1996), by sharing relevant information about the research, like the intent, scope, and outcome. I also shared my direct experience in conflicts, efforts I had contributed to peace building, and my concerns for the peace building in Nigeria. I also assumed that the women have agency and come into this research with clear definitions of their needs, and what is necessary to meet these needs. (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). This includes initial conversations on what should guide the research engagement, and what may be defined as a return for their participation. The women were clear and unanimous about creating visibility for their stories in peace building and sharing recommendations as a resource with both state and non-state actors to support peace building efforts in the state.

I could not have completed this research without the collaboration of the women groups as co-researchers. I ensured that they saw themselves as a primary part of the research and are willing to play the part. The social constructivism approach requires co-learning, co-construction, meaning making with the research group, and engaged as co-researchers. The

women group has the social capital, the community experience, have been civically engaged, and connected to the issue of peace building in their communities. I considered the unique strengths the women bring to the study and engaged with them on that level. Some of them worked directly within organized groups, while some worked as individual organizations, and this influenced what information they shared. Secondly, some were motivated to work in peace building due to direct experience with conflicts and had suffered personal losses, while others were driven by interest in peace building. However, these are women came into the research adept with the contextual knowledge and experience, willing and available to work as co-researchers. While building trust and engaging with the women group as co-researchers, I was also conscious of the story I tell me, how I show up when I engage with them, and how my background and experience may influence the research.

Positionality & Subjectivities

As a researcher originating from a high culture context and working on a sensitive issue as women in peace building, I was intentional about taking into cognizance my positionality and subjectivities. The constructivist case study method leans on a practice of acknowledging and honestly describing subjectivities in the course of knowledge construction with participants (Johnson, 2014). I continuously reoriented myself to my background, interest, motivation, affiliation related to the study context. This helped me suspend judgement, mustered the muscle to separate from my preconceptions, and defined assumptions appropriately, while also focusing on been objective in relation to the participants' views and meaning making, to reduce subjectivity (Heshusius, 1994). Having worked in the field of peace and security for over 15 years, I came into this research with a huge base of preconceived notions, assumptions, and bias. This was borne out of my past direct interaction with the phenomenon, both at the macro and micro levels. I assumed that my relationship and experience built through different

engagements and exposure could premise a situation of a “double edged sword”. For example, I assumed that my commitment to peace building work, which led me to pursue a doctoral programme, may be a threat for the group. This assumption was due to intergenerational tensions on evolving social norms, where first because I am a woman, and secondly, my positionality as a doctoral student. Nigeria is a country that privileges social organization, where leadership and exercise of power is an enterprise for the elderly (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015; Bello & Famoroti, 2023). However, this did not show up as much as I thought, due to the purposive selection of participants.

My advisory role in Nigeria to provide technical assistance to civil society organizations on community peace building efforts, afforded me access and familiarity with the leaders of coalitions working on peace and security issues. This exposed me to the unspoken conditions and the idiosyncrasies of the cadre of individuals referenced in my proposed study. This connection made elements of subjectivities like confirmation bias inevitable. However, I was intentional about interrogating, and in most cases minimizing researcher bias. I acknowledged that the constructivist method has been criticized for lack of immunity from facts (Glaser, 2004) and managed instances where this may show up in the course of the research. Nevertheless, I basked in the fact that my personal connections and familiarity to the phenomenon has an enrichment capacity. This meant that I bring valuable meaning and understanding of the socio-political intricacies of leadership and governance in Nigeria to the interpretive framework of this study.

I also acknowledged that I do have some unearned powers that play out in my everyday interaction with people and how I experience the world. However, it was oblivious to me, and I was not sure I had those privileges, until some deep reflections on what this meant. McIntosh (1989) identifies this as unearned power, and this may constitute what I may wear as

a cloak without even knowing it. I was raised in a family that places a huge significance on education, and luckily for me, despite being from a community that devalues the girl-child, I had a father who thought otherwise. He did not believe that a woman is meant to just be domesticated but can also be a great resource to her community. His words got deeply embedded in my subconscious and continues to stir curiosity and hunger to do more than the minimal. This may have projected my person in two ways; firstly, a cultural rebel with a history of breaking norms and cultural boundaries in my community, which is mostly what these women groups have done; secondly, as an individual who is connected to the issues in her community and seeking progressive change.

Another significant concern for me is that I am from Northern Nigerians, and they are considered more privileged than other parts of the country as they have easy access to social, economic, political and educational opportunities. This was an “unearned” privilege for me, and I assumed that it may influence how the women group reacted to me. However, because I built trust and camaraderie with the group, the engagement went smoothly, as I was both reflexive and observant of how they reacted to me (McCorkel & Rodriguez, 2009). I even got commendations from the women leaders that Nigeria needed more people like me. This squashed my fear and concerns that they may see me through the lens of “you do not relate to our experiences”.

Finally, I have earned professional experience with international and national organizations, across public sector institutions and civil society organizations, with varied opportunities to push envelopes that evokes positive social change in Nigeria. This held a huge fulcrum with which I approached this study, through a constructivist framework, which is stoked by the sum of the realities and experiences that has formed my identity, what I stand for/with, in addressing complex societal challenges in peace and security. But I have learned from past work that I do not make assumptions about meanings to words and non-verbal cues. I made conscious

efforts to learn and understand the contextual meanings, by asking clarifying questions, and making interpretations based on the exactitude of local meanings (Emerson et al., 2001).

Summary

In this chapter, I detailed my research design, sample and sampling techniques, procedures, and data analysis. I also explained my choice of qualitative methods and how it has congruency with the research purpose, and its theoretical and methodological framework. Secondly, I detailed a description of my research design, justifying my rationale for utilizing a constructivist case study methodology, the use of mediated in-depth interviews and relevant extant literature reviews. I described the research site and the participants recruitment process for this study. I also provided details about how I collected data, its organization, storage and method of analysis. Next, I interrogated my positionality and explained how I locate me within the study. I described steps I took to ensure confidentiality. Finally, I detailed my process of ensuring rigor and trustworthiness.

In the next chapter, I will present the findings from this study. This section includes all pertinent study information from each participant, keeping privacy and confidentiality in effect. I will explain and outline the research methodology, the data analysis, as well as the presentation of the data and results of the analysis. Lastly, I will provide a summary of the findings of the study on local peace building and emergent leadership practices.

Chapter 4 - Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the collected data from the qualitative guided interviews to understand emergent peace leadership within a local and conflict-ridden context. The collected data fulfills the entire dissertation requirements, as it fully synthesized and analyzed the results of the study, providing a full explanation of study outcomes and recommendations for future research (Monreal Garrido, 2018). It also demonstrates alignment with all I have detailed from chapter one to chapter three, fitting into the theoretical framework and providing practical implications for the study results. I provided detailed discussion and presentation of the data results and findings. Lastly, I provided a summary of the results of the study on emergent peace leadership practices amongst local peace building women groups.

The goal of this constructivist case study was to understand how local women were able to enact everyday practice of peace leadership in a complex and ambiguous context. The study was guided by the central question: How does context influence emergent local leadership practices in conflict conditions? Specifying sub-questions are:

1. How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state?
2. How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?
3. How did women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

From the overall analysis, the primary theme identified was that contextual factors have a huge influence in the everyday practice of leadership aimed at tackling the complexities of communal conflicts. This primary theme was developed from three main themes derived from eleven categories, which responds to the three sub-specifying guiding questions.

Table 4.1 Presentation of Themes Derived

Specifying Sub Question	Categories Derived	Themes
How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state?	Authority is necessary. Peace leadership should be nimble. Leadership requires inclusion.	Responsibly leveraging authority, staying adaptable in the face of change, and championing inclusion, leaders can create environments where individuals feel inspired, empowered, and motivated to work together toward collective success.
How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?	Communication Collaboration Supportive culture Leading by Example	Inclusive leadership requires a combination of effective communication, collaboration, supportive culture, and leading by example.
How did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership	Exclusion & Marginalization Hardships & Loss Gendered Impacts of Conflicts	Emergence of leadership from the lived experiences of a group is a dynamic process shaped by shared

practices for sustainable peace?	Learning from Trainings	challenges and perspectives.
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The above eleven (11) themes were subsumed into three overarching themes in response to the three sub-specifying questions.

1. Responsibly leveraging authority, staying adaptable in the face of change, and championing inclusion, leaders can create environments where individuals feel inspired, empowered, and motivated to work together toward collective success.
2. Inclusive leadership requires a combination of effective communication, collaboration, supportive culture, and leading by example.
3. The emergence of leadership from the lived experiences of a group is a dynamic process shaped by shared challenges and perspectives.

I will proceed to describe the sub themes and explain the categories that align with each of the sub themes, which responds to the three specifying questions asked.

Sub Specifying question 1: *How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state?*

In response to this question, the following predominant sub themes were derived: (1) Leadership most times requires authority, (2) Peace leadership should be nimble, and (3) Leadership requires inclusion. I will start with sub theme one.

Sub Theme 1: Leadership most times requires authority.

All eight co-researchers stated in their interview that, despite local women's efforts to intervene in transforming the conflict, some element of authority is necessary to make progress. This means that anyone can exercise leadership anywhere and anytime (O'Malley & McBride, 2023; Heifetz et al., 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). However, due to the social organization and the different layers of role state and non-state actors play in the community, authority is necessary to sustain any progress (Lederach & Appleby, 2010). The progress the women accounted for over the past five years is due to their engagement with community authority, which includes leaders of faith and culture and local government agencies. They asserted that despite their aspirations for peace in their communities, there is a limit to what they can advance. Co-Researcher 3 stated that:

Exercising agency in community conflicts is the prerogative of every member of the community. However, to really make progress and ensure that peace is sustained, those in authority have to provide encouragement, direction, and connect local efforts to the national.

Co-Researcher 6 affirmed that:

We hold leadership positions in our organizations, and we are recognized for the work we do in peace building. This ascribes some level of authority to us and gives us access to engage with other groups in the communities that we ordinarily may not have access to. But the government and community leaders have more influence and can thwart all our work with just raising an eyebrow.

In explaining their perception of leadership, the co-researchers described characteristics of leadership based on what they know and how their experiences informed such perceptions. These formed the sub-themes and how they were coded in the table below:

Table 4.2 Sub Theme 1: Leadership requires authority most times.

Category	Code
Self-Agency	We have no choice but to take action. If we want peace, we have to take the risk. We cannot wait for the government to stop the killings. We must mobilize women because we suffer most when attacked. The community should be proactive, not wait until the damage is done
Authority	The government has the responsibility to ensure order. I lead an NGO, so it grants me access. Religious and cultural leaders can influence their communities. We rely on the government to deescalate community crisis
Responsibility	We have to do the work for not just us, but future generations. If we do not do this now, who else will?

	We have to save the place we call home. We engage in early warning signs
Direction	You have to tell the community what to do or how to act. Every leader must be ready to give direction

Self-Agency

Self-agency for the women group is the foundation of leadership. They believe exercising leadership requires an open will, an open heart and open mind (Scharmer, 2008). When people are uncomfortable with a situation, they take action, challenging the status quo (Heifetz, et al., 2009). Co-researchers 1 stated:

We were no longer safe in our community. We do not sleep at night and are scared of going about our daily endeavors. The farmlands have also been destroyed by cattles, and some of our lands have been taken over. I needed to work with other women to plan on how we can make our homes safe again.

What the participants were saying suggests that uncomfortable situations could lead a group to collectively engage in understanding what is happening and co-creating how to intervene to make progress (Hirschberger, 2023). According to Hirschberger (2023), self-agency may be driven by self-interest and if connected to a broader issue, it leads to a collective agency. However, in groups where there are religious and ethnic polemical issues, this serves as a check and balance on actions and strategies adopted by the group. The group engages in ways that show agency for each other as a collective survival strategy. Co-researcher 4 narrated that:

We had our differences within the groups we work with because it is a heterogenous group, with Muslim and Christian adherents, and different ethnic groups. This made us conscious of what we say and how we say it. I believe we exhibited emotional intelligence and that kept us together in solidarity towards addressing this issue that is threatening our very existence.

The women group believe that leadership starts from the people, and it's a mindset and practice. To them, anyone can be an instrument of peace, and can bring to the fore personal or collective lessons to make progress. Such practice comes with determination, commitment, and focus.

Authority

Adaptive leadership focuses on the systems and the collective work of stakeholders needed to make progress within systems (Heifetz et al.,2009). One person cannot do the work, but an individual can be a source catalyst to ignite change (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Co-researcher 8 stated that:

It does not matter who is part of the group. Representation matters, I agree. But we are not focused on who is part of the group, their level of education, religion, ethnicity, social status, or age. We believe that leadership creates spaces for us to come together, with a shared goal and address the crisis in our community. That leadership is the formal authority that must support the work we do.

According to O'Malley & McBride (2023), when everyone leads, the toughest challenges are addressed. It does not matter what position you hold, or who you are. However, sometimes formal authority is necessary to make progress. Authority provides legitimacy, command and direction (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). In this instance of communal conflict

conditions, authority is essential to enact stability and security through policy and actions. Co-researcher 1 stated:

It is important to have some authority when engaging with the community, otherwise they will not take you seriously. No matter how good our plans and interventions are, it cannot advance without authorization from community leaders or the local government. Our positions as leaders of women peace building organizations, gives us some level of authority. That is why we can speak as women, and we will be listened to, to an extent.

The women believed that anyone could self-authorize to lead. However, most times, formal authority is necessary to make any progress due to an established social order. People tend to bow to formal authority, ascribing legitimacy to it than informal authority like what the women have. Their positions as leaders of community organizations portend some level of authority to influence change, but this is not enough to build mileage to the last mile (aspired goals).

Responsibility

Leadership requires mental modes that is positioned to do the work (Dunn, 2020). Both technical and adaptive challenges thrive on responsibility. To solve technical challenges, the responsibility is on someone who has the expertise to do the work because the solution is clear and known (Heifetz, 2009) However, for adaptive challenges the responsibility to engage daunting and complex challenges is borne by a group who collectively seek ways to make progress on the issue.

The women shared that the practice of leadership involves a huge responsibility to not just be involved (*grandstanding*), but also being committed to create shifts in the communities.

“Shifts that are progressive, impactful and take the work off future generations is what we aspire for”, stated co-researcher 8. In addition, co-researcher 2 said that:

Even if the situation around us is deeply confounding, we believe that we all contributed to it. What our predecessors did and did not do is part of the effect we are experiencing currently. It is important we do this work now to save our communities, build healthy relationships amongst the residents, and this will affect the world my grandchildren and great grandchildren come into.

Responsibility for this women group is also about implicating oneself on issues affecting the communities. Leadership is about acceding to the conviction that we are part of the mess and find our place as a piece of the puzzle (Daft & Lengel, 1998). It is not about pointing fingers for what has gone wrong, and who should fix it. The women stated, that, this is their home, and pushing blames will not solve the lingering crisis which has disrupted their daily lives. Co-researcher 5 stated that:

We might not know it all, or have all the expertise to address this challenge, but what I know is that no one is coming to save us. We need to do this ourselves and save our families. The government and those in authority are keeping themselves safe. They do not feel what we feel, and if they do not, then they cannot take effective actions to deal with this situation. We have to take charge.

Responsibility for the participants means taking action. Leadership that is passive is not leadership because nothing is done or acted upon (Barling & Frone, 2017). Responsible leadership requires action and activities towards the common good and is beyond the notion of having a need to feel an inner obligation to do the right thing toward others. (Waldman & Galvin, 2008). Clearly, this is beyond position or authority, but a sense of civility to others (Calhoun, 2000). Co-researcher 5 stated that:

We need leadership that is active and moving us in a direction, even if it is in the wrong direction. At least we know they are moving, and someone is acting on our behalf. We are sporadically attacked, and the government does not just lay around waiting to intervene or save us. We act collectively as early warning signs agents and notify the community vigilante on hunches or observations of danger.

Clearly these communities are tired of lip-service, especially as it pertains to conditions that situate them in a complex situation of communal conflicts and its attendant effects. They believe that leadership without responsibility is not leadership. Responsibility is ownership (Young, 1985), accountability (Bivins, 2006), moral perseverance (Wright, 2014), and selflessness to others (Knights & O’Leary, 2006).

Direction

Direction as a characterization of leadership could be seen as a construct of position, or a construct of issue (Crevani, 2018). The women perceived leadership as the ability to give directions to make progress on an issue. They looked up to the state actors who have the legitimacy to intervene in peace building to give directions on what to do and how to act. This is because the state actors are constitutionally obligated to provide protection and stability for its citizenry. However, they also believe that the practice of leadership to direct is processual and requires human engagement on an issue (Crevani, 2018). Co-Researcher 7 stated that:

We hold leadership positions in our organizations, and we have the expertise to engage community members on peace building. We also have legitimacy to guide the community on what to do to advance peace. We do this through dialogues with different groups, listening to every voice and making spaces for them to propose how we might address communal conflicts. We do not just convene the community and tell them what to do.

The women group unanimously agreed that this is risky business, as tensions are high, people still come into these dialogues with grievances. In a tense condition, it might be unwise to sit at the head of the table and give directions. You need to engage with the people with sensitivity and respect to avoid arousing any feeling of angst or disrespect. Co-researcher 5 said:

Several things stand against me in this work; the first is that I am a woman in a highly patriarchal context. The second is I am young and most of the people I engage are older than me in a context where the elderly are perceived as the problem solvers, with tons of wisdom. I am looked down on. However, I hold my position as a leader of a peace building organization as a leverage, and how I engage with them with empathy and respect gives me the opportunity to make progress with them. But truth be told, they respond better to the government than me and my group.

The capacity to provide direction comes with authority. However, it is often perceived as coming from those at the top of a social and gender hierarchy, and in this instance, the government, community leaders, and men (Pfeffer, 1992). The women assume positions to give directions as a form of guidance to the community, because they lead community organizations. However, they believe that the kind of direction that the people will be comfortable with, is the one emerging from community social organization, like the government and community leaders.

Sub Theme 2: Peace leadership should be nimble.

Six out of the eight co-researchers stated that the ability to think quickly is a great leadership characteristic. They believed that in times where the world is getting more complex and uncertain, there is a need to be nimble. The ability and willingness to make smart and timely decisions based on real world dynamics and events is necessary for peace building. Issues like communal crisis are not left in the tyranny of bureaucratic processes (Freedman,

1974; Kemp, et al., 2011). The women unanimously affirmed this as necessity, and this was reechoed by Co-researcher 3:

It is too late to cry when the head is cut off. Why should our leaders wait for permission from the president of the county to intervene when there is carnage happening. We have lost many loved ones, and the land is soaked with blood. We need leadership that can think on their feet, and decisive action. Every minute you waste moving a file from one table to the other on an issue like community violence, many souls are lost. If their children were in such conditions, would they be sitting down reading files???

In explaining their perception of leadership, the co-researchers described characteristics of leadership based on what they know and how their experiences informed such perceptions. These formed the sub-themes and how they were coded in the table below:

Table 4.3. Sub theme 2: Peace leadership should be nimble

Category	Codes
Proactive	We want to make things happen, rather than waiting for things to happen
Courageous	Take risk, See things the way they are and not how you think they should be

Proactive

Proactive leadership considers generative ideas, leads initiations, and is focused on actions that is calculative of the future (Wu & Wang, 2011). From what the women shared, they

are looking at proactivity from a practice perspective, not from an individual's trait. The context and condition they find themselves in cannot risk just having some few initiative-taking individuals. What if they are not available to take proactive actions? They believe that proactiveness in peace building should be a necessity considering that one minute lost may lead to devastating and regrettable loss. The work of proactive peacebuilding requires constant observation of the environment for risk or danger, and opportunities to get resources; planning to intervene or planning for unanticipated occurrences from information gathered; Implement the plan, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to improve planning (Frese & Fay, 2001). Some of the women's response to this leadership trait are, co-researcher 6:

We are tired of waiting for the government to take action for us. They are shielded by their tall walls and security guards. We have no one protecting us, we are vulnerable. We need to continuously think about how to protect ourselves, plan for the future and for a peaceful future.

Co-researcher 7, added:

Our so-called leaders are reactive. They wait until things have deteriorated before reacting. Why do we have to wait for them. Only the loved ones of a corpse can still feel it as a human being, the public only sees it as a piece of wood or just another statistic. Leadership that is proactive is empathetic, can relate to our pain, and intervene quickly.

In addition, co-researcher 3 stated: I am deeply appalled when I hear people who do not live here and cannot connect to our experiences tell us what to do to address the conflicts. We know what to do. Yes, it can be unclear sometimes, but we are not lost. We have brains and can act proactively based on local intelligence and other factors. Yes, we have made mistakes in the past, but we are wiser now. This condition continues to be a learning process

for us. We want the conflicts to end, but we are grateful for all the lessons which have led us to be more proactive. We wish the government could be like that!

Proactivity is a leadership practice and not an innate characteristic that anyone is born with. It is learned, an intentional and conscious disposition to be alert to what is happening, anticipate, and plan to avert a bad situation or leverage a good opportunity. The women practiced proactiveness through a keenness to learning, being flexible in mind and action and not leaving any stone unturned in exploring ways to make progress.

Courageous

Contemporary leadership practices have been criticized for not been radical enough for the complexity of the world we live in currently (Şen, et al., 2013; Foster,1989 Heifetz et al., 2009). A flexible approach to leadership that meets the dynamism of our times is critical to make progress on tough challenges (Dess & Picken, 2000). In peace building, this kind of leadership may be the game changer (Diamond, 2000; Mayanja, 2013). The women repeatedly suggested that courage is a core leadership practice. Some of the responses are:

Co-researcher 3 stated, “Leadership for me is when people who are responsible for taking decisions that affect communities are not afraid to admit the truth about what is happening. They are unbiased, unafraid and have the heart to be point blank truthful. The thing you are scared of, might come back and haunt you”!

Co-researcher 5 stated, “An effective leader should always be ready to take quick and wise decisions and not rely on protocols. Protocols are great, no doubt. They ensure order and check and balances. But we must learn to be flexible. You can be rigid with your household affairs, but when it comes public issues that is a matter of life or death, why lean on protocols. A lot of people have died in hospitals from gunshot wounds because a

hospital protocol exist that states a victim of gunshot must first get a police report before they are treated. We should please be human by being courageous to act swiftly when necessary. That is the kind of leadership that works in a context like this”.

Co-researcher 7 stated, “As a leader, when faced with uncertainty, I feel excited because I know it is a pathway for learning new things. I am not afraid to act, knowing that this action might be the only initiative taken to avert a bad situation. I appreciate sitting with my group and discussing different alternatives to a situation, but what if there is no time to do that? I am happy to take the fall if this goes wrong knowing that at least I tried”.

All the co-researchers in way form or the other admitted that they have championed courage considering the challenge they are seeking to making progress on and navigating the challenge of rigid social norms. All of them mentioned that they have faced one form of community sanction or the other, because they were deemed radicals. In a context where historically the male lead peace building efforts, what they have courageously advanced is something to be reckoned with. They asserted that they have lost loved ones, and the courage they demonstrate is driven by pain and anguish (Goethals & Allison, 2012), and the spirited desire to defend their own, and what they have left (Brady, 2005)

Sub Theme 3: Leadership requires Inclusion.

Inclusivity is significant in deepening and scaling local participation in peace building. Inclusive leadership practice engages diverse voices in making progress on tough issues (Hudson,2009). It considers and priorities the needs of parties to conflict and other stakeholders, ensuring that all voices are heard and integrated in peace processes (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006).

The women attested to a leadership practiced where everyone irrespective of gender, religion, age and ethnicity were included in peace building processes.

In explaining their perception of leadership, the co-researchers described characteristics of leadership based on what they know and how their experiences informed such perceptions. These formed the sub-themes and how they were coded in the table below:

Table 4.4. Sub theme 3: Leadership requires Inclusion.

Category	Codes
Value for Others	Due to our differences, we often do not feel valued as women. We need encouragement for the work we do. Sometimes, it feels like taking one step forward and two steps backwards.
Engaging different voices	Our culture honors the male voices than the female. Most of the people have religious and ethnic bias
Sense of Belonging	As women groups, we feel deeply connected to the peace building group. The culture we have do not make feel like we should be doing peace building work.

	As women groups working on peace, we most times do not feel heard or seen in our community.
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Value for Others

A culture of value for others has energizing power on a group (Dreher, 2002). The participants thought that espousing values for others has a huge impact in the work of peace building and should be an intentional leadership practice. Value for others creates an atmosphere of trust, respect, confidence, and connection (Frost, 2014). As groups engage in processes, they ascribe value to how they are perceived, how they engage, and affect the values of others or be affected (Neville, 1989). This underscores some of the responses by the women group, with co-researcher 2 stating that:

Leadership that seems to focus on one gender over another, is biased. I know we live in a culture where men are privileged than female. The girl child is made to stay at home, while the boys are sent to school. Even in social gathering, the voices of women are not allowed, except it is an all women gathering. This kind of culture kills innovation and development. I appreciate leadership that acts based on how things have evolved. Not leaders that dwell in the ancient days of doing things. Things have changed, and people should change their orientation. It is not a woman that is a vice president of the most powerful nation on earth.? Abeg, leave this matter. People that want to change will change. They know all these things, but they are enjoying their exclusive privilege.

Co-researcher 6, stated that, “We have lived in division for a long time, and this has affected how we perceive others, and others perceive us. It is challenging to be in the same ethnic group that perpetuated violence against my tribe and be ok with it. However, because I am called to lead, I have to manage my emotions and treat others how I want to be treated. I am a woman of faith, and I am conscious of the need to let go of grievances and let peace reign. I believe this should be the disposition of a leader. To value everyone, including those that are different from us in one way or another. But last, last, we are all one”.

Co-researcher 4 stated “For me, a leadership that is encouraging to the work we do as women is an excellent leadership. The men have tried peace building in our communities, and they have not been able to make much progress. We swooped in, and we are doing something different, and seeing some progress. One thing I am sure of is that we have been able to make such progress because we felt encouraged by the leaders of faith and culture. Everyone wants peace, and alternative attempts are welcomed. We have met challenges at every stage of our work, but I believe with better orientation, people started to appreciate the work and want to collaborate with us. We will get there some day”.

Co-researcher 6 emphatically stated that, “The work we do is really challenging and discouraging most of the time. It feels like we take one step forward and two steps backwards. As leaders, we encourage each other to be strong and motivated and be focused on what we want to achieve. For me, this is what leadership is all about, showing values for each other by encouraging each other to persevere and be resilient. Working in groups is especially difficult because we all come with our fears and concerns and baggage, which could get in the way of how we approach others. Leaders should be able to manage their

emotions and be careful about how they engage with others despite their challenges otherwise you lose the people you are working with”.

These women have suffered exclusionary practices in all spheres of their lives, and this has limited their agentic capacities to contribute to community development. However, they were clear about what kind of leadership they want, which is informed from their past experiences. They modelled the kind of leadership they desire through their daily practice of ensuring all voices are represented in the meetings and discussion tables. Historically, it is the men that summon for meetings and decide on who they want to be present. Even when they have women voices represented, it is primarily to “check the box” to show they attempted at the practice of inclusion, with little or no consideration to engage the women’s voices.

Engaging different voices

It is critical in peace building to consider the processes we engage to transform conflicts and understand that this is a continuous process (Galtung, 2013). One of the processes that has proven resourceful is engaging different voices at different phases of reconciliation, reintegration, reconstruction (Does, 2013; Lee, 2020; Mac Ginty, 2014; Premaratna, 2020) The participants repeatedly noted that this is a leadership practice that has the potential to create change in their communities. However, they have continued to struggle with cultural norms that are exclusionary and problematic to inclusive processes. Co-researcher 1 responded by stating:

You have to listen to everyone and get their respective perspective on issues, otherwise you are limiting the opportunities to be successful in peace building. I learned that people are experiencing the crisis differently, it is important to ensure as leaders they are not ignored or neglected. When we make plans as leaders of peace building organizations, we

ensure that no one is left behind. That is how everyone will see their place on the table and be committed to the process. This is leadership for me.

Co-researcher 6 stated that, “I believe one of the reasons most of our plans to build peace in our communities have always failed is because we are not listening to the people that are affected by the crisis. Na who wear the shoe know where e dey pain am. I have always included everyone, irrespective of tribe and religion, to understand what their needs and interests are. Otherwise, what is the plan for? Who is the plan for?”

Co-researcher 7 stated, “I cannot say I do not value my culture. I have deep respect for my culture, but there are some things that I do not agree to or align me to. Why should women’s voices not be heard? Why should disabled people be discriminated against. It’s the same blood flowing in our veins, and we are all humans. This gender superiority thing is what is destroying this country. We have a lot of brilliant people that can contribute to the growth of this county, but no, only the men are considered in appointive and elective positions. Even when women are appointed to positions, it is just wayo. The men are behind, controlling them. Leadership for me is gender parity. Value for all and everyone”.

Engaging different voices is critical in any peace building work. It helps to foster trust, collectivity, purpose, and commitment to peace processes. Leadership is a process, and engaging different voices is process oriented. It is not just about having different voices on the table, but energizing dialectics that moves challenge from point A to point B in progression, and sometimes B to A, in retrogression (Talentino, 2004). The point is that there is a movement which shows engagement, but aspirational towards progress even when it seems like it is going south.

Sense of Belonging

It is important to consider how people or members of a group feel within spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013;). Kreijns et al., 2004; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Several studies have shown that spaces that nurtures open interaction, where there is free flow of information, encouragement and support towards a shared goal leads to a deep physical, material and emotional connection (Canlas & Williams,2022; Lampinen et al., 2018; Sedgwick & Yonge, 2008).

The participants were all emphatic about the need for a culture that fosters connectedness to each other, the community, and their collective issues. As leaders, they consciously promote this for others, through the collective issue of communal crisis. Some of the participants mentioned that community perception of women makes them feel irrelevant to community development. Notwithstanding, the feminist culture of maintaining values, relationship building and nurturing factor are always appreciated as the beacon of that holds the social fabric of the community (Hofstede, 2003; Bouderbala et al., 2020).

Co-researcher 8 said:

As women, we feel deeply connected to the peace building groups because that is where we find purpose. I believe anywhere you find purpose; you feel a sense of belonging. Part of what I do in leading others is create opportunities where they find purpose. I will feel worthless if I do not do something I find meaning to. Leadership is about engaging others in a way that they feel a sense of worth and connection to a purpose.

Co-researcher 3 added:

As women groups working on peace interventions, we most times do not feel heard or seen in our community. However, we do continue to do what we do to create a shift in social norms that subjugate women. Leadership is all about creating change. When I engage with

the men in the communities, I ensure that they feel they connected to the work the women do, and that way we continue to expand support and partnerships.

To summarize the perception of leadership by the women is that leadership is a practice, not a position, and can be practiced by anyone, as they have done in their communities. They did not have the authority as should have historically, with state actors been the primary and central authority to implement peace building initiatives. However, they exercise agency to engage others to advance peace building. The women also believed that leadership should be contextually driven and in a situation as peace building, which is sensitive, leadership must be nimble. This brings in the adaptive factor of peace building, where there is a need for flexibility to act outside of the box most time, and in some occasions build a new box altogether. Lastly, leadership is a practice of inclusion, which ensures that everyone is included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of pace building work. The women use to be historically marginalized, and they understand what this means to their connection to the community and the work they do. Their practice of inclusion is the major force that catalyzed the community peace work, thereby elevating the practice of inclusion as a peace leadership practice.

Sub Specifying Question 2: How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?

Inclusion was a major aspect of leadership that surfaced in the women's group definition of leadership. However, they shared their perspective on how inclusion is practiced in their communities. Inclusion is a core determinant of their functioning as women in peace building interventions. They explained that they were historically excluded due to the social norms and culture that marginalizes women in both overt and covert ways. However, the women feel that times are changing, and the orientation of the people especially the custodians and

influencers of the social norms is evolving to meet current realities. Fostering and sustaining an inclusive culture is a critical intervention in a complex and evolving world, and in this instance, communities that are dealing with divisions and conflicts (Ferdman et al., 2020). The women shared their experience of community inclusive practices as, talking to each other (communication), agreeing, and engaging in actions and activities (collaboration), create a supportive environment, and leading by example. These formed the categories and how they were coded in the table below:

Table 4.5. Sub- themes: Inclusive leadership requires a combination of effective communication, collaboration, supportive culture, and leading by example.

Sub-Themes	Codes
Communication	We do communicate with each other especially when the information is critical for safety. We ensure that we create spaces where people can talk to each other and share their concerns. We are conscious of how we talk to others considering that there are some things that are too sensitive. Information shared at men's gathering are also shared with the women by the men in their lives at home

Collaboration	We also ways find ways to work together despite what we think of each other. The men work with women on issues they believe the women are well positioned to perform. Working with leaders of faith and culture helps create the change we want
Supportive Culture	Leaders of faith and culture helps create spaces that ensures women's voices, and all ethnicities are represented and are heard. We ensure that when we hold meetings, everyone is represented irrespective of their religion and ethnicity. We collaborate with the men towards peace building. We ensure that how we engage, everyone feels safe, comfortable, and attuned to positive behaviors.
Leading by example	We need leaders of faith and culture to model inclusivity. We have often engaged communities in ways that help to stretch the culture to permit some of our practices.

	We are sensitive of each other's feelings and the women in other groups have started to practice this. We have been successful in engaging with those outside of our communities and influencing how we engage internally and externally.
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Sub theme 1: Communication

Inclusive communication is crucial in a context where there are different cultures, beliefs, and values (Jain, 2018). The women group explained that they could not have made any progress without communicating in a way that everyone feels included, valued, and heard. They all come in with different perspectives, concerns and grievances, and there is a need to communicate with groups in a persuasive way. There is communicative power in networks and groups which is exercised amongst and between the different groups (Arnfred Bojesen, 2019). The co-researchers stated that communication is the most important element of creating inclusive cultures:

Co-researcher 8 stated that, "For a very long time, community members were either not talking to each other, avoiding each other or outrightly calling out people who did not share the same belief and values with them. This affected how the community related with each other and continued to deepen an already existing divide. On Christmas day, I have no reason to share food with my neighbors, because I feel that they hate me. However, after some training we had as leaders of organizations on peaceful community existence, I started

to think, act and speak differently. I realized that communicating in a way that is reasonable and sensitive to the feeling of others changed how we engaged with each other”.

Co-researcher 1 added, “I am not sure we will be able to do this work without communicating with each other. Do you believe that community members across religions and ethnicities are now engaging in early warning signs, which is critical in a high-risk context as this? You won’t believe the number of deaths that have been averted by a single warning alert. As leaders we have to encourage the community to talk to each other, understand each other, and empathize with their pains and loss.”

Co-researcher 2 also stated that, “There is something unifying about how peace building leaders engage with each other towards a goal. We have gotten to the point where we have to tell each other the truth, and how we say it matters. We always ensure that we do not make others feel that we are dominating space, because we have been doing this work for a long time, and they are just new to the space”.

Co-researcher 5 stated that, “We have to be able to engage with the community leaders in a way that they do not think or feel that we are disrespectful to our culture. We recognize that to an extent, women are not permitted to engage with the community leaders directly, but through the men. However, we have subtly challenged that culture, and this is only possible by how we appealed to the consciousness of community leaders. They welcome us when we approach them about the work we are doing and how we want them to influence change”.

Communication in peace leadership requires a culture of trust and credibility to minimize power dynamics amongst and between group members (Arnfred Bojesen, 2019).

According to Mac Ginty (2014), community peace building is contingent on relational and networked processes, and this can happen when there are effectual modes of engaging with each other, verbally and non-verbally. The emphatic expression that communication leads to inclusivity in peace leadership by the women group is also underscored by the collectivist culture of the context, and the integration of a feminine culture of nurturing relationship.

Sub theme 2: Collaboration

When people hear collaboration, they think it is just a formal structure of collaboration driven by terms of reference or memorandum of understanding, said one of the co-researchers. We live in a collectivist culture where we are bounded by relational activities that organically leads to agreeing to work together on any issue that concerns us. One of the co-researchers stated that they had to work with community leaders to model what it means to collaborate on peace building. This underscores the need to identify a motivator who leads a reculturing for collaboration amongst and between groups (Leonard & Leonard,1999).

Co-researcher 2, stated that, “It is challenging trying to work with people from different backgrounds and experiences. However, despite the hurt and grievances amongst the people, we as peace leaders have been able to find ways to work together. For us, what matters is the end goal of bringing peace back to our communities, and this requires tolerance, respect and value for each and every one of us to work together”.

Co-researcher 4, added that, “We are guided by social norms that prescribes the roles of men and women in our communities. However, communal conflicts is changing the face of what those norms look like. The men are giving space to the women to be part of the peace building work, considering we are more patient, resilient and focused...(laughs). Women

are mindful to not take over the work or give an impression of that. We are rather working with the men and anyone who is tired of the conflict situation and seeking positive, irrespective of their tribe, religion, gender, or status”.

Co-researcher 8 said that “This is not a one-person job. We need to do this work together. Working with the leaders of faith and culture helps to create and catalyze the change we want for our communities. Everyone in the community is affected in one way or the other by this crisis, and we have all come to the realization that we need more people actively participating in this work. We as leaders of organizations make it easier to get everyone active in this work by alternating where we have meetings, to ensure that distance is not an issue, and no one is left behind”.

Co-researcher 5 also added that, “We are all part of this mess we find ourselves in one way or the other. Some of us contest this statement, but we all contributed to where we are right now by our daily actions and reactions to issues around us. This conflict did not start in day. It was a pile up of misbehavior, poor relationships, intolerance, indifference, and greed which we are all a party to. Therefore, we must all work together to address this condition we find ourselves. I always ensure that I let community members know that we all are part of the solution and must work together. This is not the time to work as silos. No progress will be made that way, and even if there is progress, it will not be sustained”.

The community clearly has a grasp on what it means to collaborate and is doing what it takes, including non-hierarchical approaches in a context that privileges hierarchy. This approach fostered a collectivist form of engagement, which is gradually erasing the culture of rigid hierarchy. However, despite the gradual erasure of the hierarchy and the elevation of collectivist

approaches, there is still a focal person that ensures coordination, focus, and direction (Friedrich et al., 2016). One of the women stated that, this work requires us all to work together to ensure that no one is ignored, and this requires intentionally working together.

It may be difficult to engage all members of the community considering that there are still grievances, and everyone has an individual bandwidths on how they process the pain and hurt. This may have some cultural permutations and the cultural context is crucial for persons leading collaborative functions and practices to be intentional of the cultural dimension that prevails. This will support a process of engaging in a way that is acceptable and cognizant of the needs of the members of a community (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

Sub theme 3: Supportive cultures

Creating a culture where everyone is energized to do their work is crucial for peace leadership. This requires a conscious leadership practice that engages an atmosphere of collaboration, inclusion, and relevance to the community work. This is contingent on what, where and how a leadership intervention is created. Members of a group want to feel supported, and that there is guidance on how they can be part of and contribute to peace building. Inversely, community leaders need to engage in ways that ensure that everyone feels heard, valued, and engaged in the issues they care about (Wendt et al., 2009).

Co-researcher 2 said, “We are afraid of what it means for us to be part of peace building in our communities. In a community where people are unsure of how their voices may be misunderstood or misinterpreted, it is scary to want to be part of peace processes, because you do not know who you might offend or disrespect, unintentionally. It is a very sensitive issue, and being very conscious about how you might create an environment where everyone feels safe is crucial to success”.

Co-researcher 6 added that, “I cannot believe how far we have come, especially now that we can all sit together and talk about what collectively concerns us and seek ways to move forward. Community leaders have played a huge part in this process where members of the community are oriented to understand that, first off, our collective culture is one that encourages everyone to live together, despite our perceived differences. This is core to our very existence and how we can find solutions to this very trying period we find ourselves”.

Co-researcher 4 stated that, “We engaged continuously with the leaders of faith and culture, and this has been very useful to engender a climate where everyone feels encouraged to do the work. It is important to have a crop of people who can influence others as we work on very sensitive issues as this. Tell you what, the leaders of faith and culture have been able to make it easy for community members to be receptive to the work that we seek to accomplish. There is never an end to this work. It is a continuous process, we continue to learn what ticks people off, and what is acceptable to the community where they all feel valued and heard”.

Creating an environment where everyone feels supported to do the work requires organizing the energies to be utilized to their fullest capacity (Last, 2000). Our approaches to making progress in peace building may often necessitate rebuilding relationships. This cannot be overlooked, said one of the women. We need to clear the air so we might engage freely, and authentically be connected to the issue on ground. When you are not authentic, people know. You cannot hide that. We have been deceived for a long time, and now we understand the nuance of how communities engage and why not.

Sub theme 4: Leading by example

Community leaders can serve as a trigger to changing the culture of hate, distrust and indifference that leads to community conflicts (Schraeder, 2005). Leadership involves influencing others towards a goal over a period of time. It is not a one time show but thrives on consistency to make any tangible meaning. Leading communities to turn from hatred to community friendship requires an everyday practice that models relational leadership (Lederach & Appleby, 2010).

Co-researcher 1, said, “As women leading peace building in our communities, we do not point fingers or blame anyone who is not acting the way that they ought to act for peace. In as much as I look up to the leaders of faith and culture, I also look at how community members behave themselves. Despite this, the women group and I have made it mandatory to behave in ways that will connect us all, rather than divide. The leaders of faith and culture have a huge stake here, as people are looking at them to practice how they want others to act or behave in the communities. These groups of people have always been seen as the problem, because they influence the people by what they say and how they act”.

Co-researcher 8 said, “We have a very rigid culture, but we do not allow that to stop the work we do. Infact, we do things that when people hear of it, they say it’s not normal. These are normal things, like going to sit and talk to the leaders of culture and faith. Ordinarily, it is the men who represent us women on this. The point is that we cannot continue like this if we want to make progress. We have to continue to act in ways that create a precedence for those coming after us. I believe that so many women in our past have done something, no matter small or big that has led us to the point where we are

now. I work with the women to do the right things that are necessary to bring peace to our communities, even if the culture frowns at it. The whole point is people are seeing us, and are beginning to act the way we act, courageously to ensure our communities are peaceful and safe. We have to show kindness, love, compassion and care on a daily basis, and we expect others not to do differently”.

Co-researcher 5 added that, “As leaders of peace, we have to practice everything that leads to peace, whether we like it or not. I always encourage my group to be conscious of how others feel by what they say, and how they act. We cannot say we are in pursuit of peace if we do not do the little things that lead to big changes in our community. This is a context where people are hurt and have lost lives and properties. We cannot afford to act anyhow without any form of sensitivity to how they feel. We are all dealing with pain, and it takes one who has experienced pain to know how to act with others that are in pain. We do not just preach this, but we act accordingly even if we do not feel like it. What needs to be done needs to be done. It is part of the sacrifice we have to do to make things right”.

Co-researcher 3 also stated, “I cannot say that we have gotten to where we want to be, but we are gradually changing the way people within the communities’ act towards each other, and how they act with those outside of our communities. It starts with trust, and then confidence to engage with others, and then they start with one conversation to another, and start to relate based on a common agenda of peace. It is tough, and it takes time. But the question is that, if we do not do it now, then when? It’s better we start now and continue to make progress. Sometimes, it feels that we have made progress and then

we are back to square one. That is discouraging, but we will continue to do this work until we get there”.

Authenticity is crucial for anyone to lead by example (Hattke & Hattke, 2019). You cannot give what you do not have it. People know when they are being deceived, and that breeds distrust, said one of the women. When you genuinely act, it inspires others to act better, especially as a leader. It is a responsibility with performance that is conspicuous. It cannot be hidden or delegated. Leading in a collectivist context, the spirit of connectivity and interdependency, social responsibility and solidarity, respect and responsiveness is not farfetched (Mangaliso, 2001). It is a culture that embodies the capacity for compassion for others, a mindset for reciprocity, and culture of dignity (Bekker, 2008).

Sub-Specifying Question 3: How did the women’s experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

These women have a shared history and tradition which has continuously informed how they live and engage with others. Traditions create legitimacy to the day-to-day practices and behaviors of a community, some more progressive, and some less (Smith, 2007). However, what creates connectedness and collectivity among members of a group must be learned and practiced by those leading (Heifetz & Pittinsky, 2009). We all acted based on long held feelings of exclusion, and it was worse to think that we were often targeted, with our children abducted or violated. We learned what it meant to act differently even within our rigid traditional practices, co-researcher 7 stated.

All eight women agreed that their individual and shared experiences stimulated the zeal and commitment to lead peace building efforts in their communities. These experiences premised opportunities for the women to act in ways that expanded the cultural boundary that

hoovered as a limitation for more inclusive peace processes. Sub themes from their experiences are tabulated below:

Table 4.6. Sub-Themes: The emergence of leadership from the lived experiences of a group is a dynamic process shaped by shared challenges and perspectives.

Sub-Themes	Codes
Exclusion and Marginalization	We felt undignified as women for a very long time due to exclusion on issues that affects us. Things were happening to us, and nobody cared about our voices and how the conflict was affecting women. In our homes we felt marginalized, and in public spaces we stand no chance. We have to make efforts to factor in women's talents and insights into community work
Hardship and Loss	We lost our loved ones, some of us are widows. Our farmlands were grabbed from us in the name of farmer-herder conflicts. Sometimes we have to run out of our homes, to the forest or mountain top and live out in the wild, insecure and in deprivation. We thrived on being resilience. We persevered and continuously sought ways to bounce back from our losses.

Gendered impact of Conflicts	There are so many widows now, as the men are killed in community attacks. Women have to take up the role of head of household. Women's role changed from just care givers, to the role of provider, protector and care givers all together. We are now invited to peace building conversations and efforts due to the recognition of the valuable role we play in the community.
Learning from Trainings	We were open to training to learn how to better engage in peace building. It was an eye opener to understand from the experts what it means for women to lead. This work requires engaging different local groups to work together, and we learned how to hold dialogues, negotiate, and engage in early warning signs. I have learned that we need to continue to evolve our culture in subtle ways. We do not have to be violent to make peace. That is not peace. Peace is non-violent.

Sub theme 1: Exclusion and Marginalization

All the women mentioned this as a core experience that led to where they are right now, and a premise to the progress they have made in culture shift. There are different layers and forms of exclusion, and includes conditions where women are not included in public affairs, not giving credence to their role in peace efforts, pressure to form a single coalition rather than multiple, and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms (Oyekanmi & Pogson; Isike, 2009; Obiora, 2015)

Co-researcher 4 stated that, “As we women, we do not have a voice in both private and public spaces, and this has been happening since before my great grandmother was born. We got so used to this practice that it became an everyday practice and custom. I believe that with exposure and the effects of the conflict, things began to change”.

Co-researcher 1 added that, “We see ourselves differently from the past generations, and we are committed to the continuity of our work. We are intentional about working with younger generations to create this cultural shift. There is never a time that we get it all completely right, but we just need to keep making the necessary progress, one step at a time”.

Co-researcher 5 said, “I believe it all starts with understanding that everyone needs to be on the table, and if the table is too small, we make a bigger one. We as women have been impacted by the exclusionary practices. This has been embraced as our culture for a long time, and we respect it. However, the tide is changing, and people have started to see the benefits of having more people on the table than less”.

Women have been able to contest various patriarchal spaces due the socio-economic impact of communal conflicts (Clarke & O’Brien, 2019). The losses and hardship presented am

inevitable situation of proactiveness and responsibility to challenge a system that is no longer working for them. There are policies and legislations that are meant to improve women's inclusion in public affairs and peace building processes. However, not much progress has been attained due to lack of or poor implementation (Para-Mallam, 2017).

Co-researcher 3 also said, "Look around, how many women do you see in leadership positions, both elected and appointive positions? Most areas you find women are where they have on their own set themselves up. Look at us! We recognized the need to intervene in peace building in our communities, and we summoned the courage to this work. Of course, we could not have done it alone, so we are reminded that it must be an inclusive process and a win for all when we make any form of progress".

Co-researcher 6 stated that, "Working with women as a woman, I see what we bring to the work we do. We nurture relationships, we are patient and tolerant, we ensure every voice is heard and valued, and we invest time to process issues. We do not act without considering different options. I believe that is why we have been able to make good progress with peace building in our communities. Also, because we bear the brunt in conflict situations, we come with lived experiences, and this is a perfect motivation to go the extra mile".

There is a changing narrative where women are no longer seen as victims in conflict situation, but active participants in peace efforts (Karam, 2000; Ettang & Okem, 2016; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; Carpenter, 2005). From the domestic sphere, women play a critical role of creating the foundations of peace orientation in the family, and in public spaces, they embody values of empathy, tolerance, humility, collaboration, and respect (Isike, 2009; Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013). This is the collectivist culture inherent in the Nigerian culture (Hofstede, 2011). Their disposition to collaborate with the men highlights one of the ways they approach peace building

differently (Porter, 2007; Strickland & Duvvury, 2003). Women also engage through the lens of processual approaches that engenders shared power and blind to ethnicity, religion, and gender (Byrne & McCulloch, 2021; Avruch, 2015). This creates an intentional culture of breaking systemic barriers that impedes inclusive peace processes (Ricigliano, 2015; Barnes, 2009; Simonsen, 2005).

All the women interviewed emphasized the need to tap into the strengths and insights of women in order to make any sustainable progress. One of the women said, I know we come with our vulnerabilities, but we have recognized the need to turn our fears, concerns and pains into power, motivation and a bold vision of peace. This spans from calling government and other community duty bearers out, to challenging infractions of women's rights to full participation on issues that affects their lives. One of the women stated that is it incredibly phenomenal how we are able to bring people together across socio-cultural barriers. We are crossing boundaries, and that is critical for any peace process. Collaborative efforts where there is shared power towards peace building is critical in these times.

Sub Theme 2: Hardship and Loss

Conflicts comes with its attendant challenges of adversity in all its forms and shapes. In some cases, this precipitates forms of motivation for addressing the challenges of peace in communities or not (Rombo, 2016; Cahil, 2014; Kaindaneh & Rigby, 2012; Agbiboa, 2022). The people are tired, we have lost so much, the community is not developing, and we want to see the end of this conflict, said one of the women. Beyond the loss of material resources, there is an emotional dimension to community conflicts, which the state-based intervention has ignored (Kaindaneh & Rigby, 2012).

Co-researcher 2 said, “We have lost our spouses, children and loved ones in this community crisis that has lingered for too long. How is the ground going to continue soaking up blood? This is totally unacceptable, considering that we are meant to co-habit this land, and not tear each other up or destroy each other’s lives. I do not have to be in government or a cultural or religious leader. I have influence from the work I do to an extent in peace building. Wherever I find me, I will speak up against such terrible human inhumanity to humanity. I beg, we should be tired, except you are of the devil”.

Co-researcher 8 also stated, “I always remember what it felt like growing up, where I played in the field with my friends and neighbors without thinking of what tribe or religion they are. This whole conflict thing is affecting the new generation, the generation after us. I cannot imagine how other generations will live their lives. I know we are doing what we can, right now and in this place. But with the way things are going, it is going to be all rolled back? Our relationships due to the conflicts is not strong anymore, sometimes it feels like we are just pretending with each other. Authentic communal relationships is lost and I hope we continue to build what it takes to be bonded again”.

Co-researcher 7 said, “Being a widow has reshaped how most women engage with the community. Losing their spouses in the conflict has given them no option than to rise to the occasion. They are not out for revenge, but to ensure that their losses is not in vain. It is so great that we are working with these women as survivors and not victims. They are eager to do what it takes to curb the killings and pain that this conflict has brought to the community”.

Co-researcher 4 also stated, “I hear a lot about the reason for farmer-herder conflicts, and I shake my head. Why should people who are not natives of the community come and claim lands? I call it land grabbing, and I believe most community members also see it like that.

Now, we cannot go and farm on our lands because we are scared of been attacked by some wicked people. We have no option but to understand why this trend, by having conversations with the perpetrators, and also discussing a way forward. This cannot continue, abeg”.

Co-researcher 6 said, “It gets so unsafe, that we sleep with one eyes open. This has become a mode of life. In this town, the weather is so good [laughs], that we want to sleep, and sleep well [laughs], wake up in the morning, feeling refreshed and go about our daily work. But in this life, we find ourselves, we have to be alert all the time, and sometimes, even run from our homes to the forest and mountain top for safety for days. Because we are practically running for our lives, we do not plan for food and sustenance. Sometimes we run almost without decent clothing. We cannot wait for the government; we must act for things to change”.

Co-researcher 1 added that, “I think the crisis has made us stronger. It does not have to be the reason why we are strong as a people anyways. We have a culture of enduring suffering[laughs]. A typical Nigerian will be suffering and laughing, as if it a joke! It starts to seem like there is something in the water we drink that makes us adjust to our sufferings. However, for some of us, we do not just passively adjust to the conditions we find ourselves, we adjust actively. It is this adjustment that has led us collectively to where we are now in peace building efforts, trying to make out communities safe, getting people to begin to talk to each other, and clothing ourselves with a garment of responsibility for our collective good”.

In peace building efforts, it is crucial to understand what motivates groups or communities to engage or not to engage (Doblas et al., 2019; Good, & Funk, 2020; Le, 202; Fischer & Fischer, 2004). Different groups may decide to be part of the efforts for peace building

or not, and this is usually informed by their differential experiences. In addition, not everyone may have the bandwidth for going through the process of reconciliation and a daily effort that contributes to peace building in our communities, said one of the women. Key issues that may lead to this are the (1) Getting the perpetrators to atone for their wrongs and the victims forgiving them; (2) Reconciling parties who see each other as enemies, and thereby fostering trust and dislodging hatred (Tamai, 2017).

It is challenging getting actively involved in peace building efforts, because you are deeply hurt and traumatized and the last thing you may be thinking about is sitting face to face with the perpetrators, said one of the women. No matter the progress made, you may still be looking at them with distrust, and as the enemy. However, because we want to make a difference in our communities and live a better life for us and our collective families, we must do what is necessary.

Sub theme 3: Gendered Impact of Conflicts

Women bear the brunt of conflicts, outnumber men as survivors in post conflict context, and find it challenging to get recourse for the crimes committed against them (Pankhurst, 2008; Väyrynen, 2010; Peuchguirbal, 2004; Nyirongo, 2023; Cutter, 2017; Omotayo, 2006). The conflict has also changed the face of rigid social norms, where due their loss, the women assume head of household role, serving as both bread winners and care givers. The women have also joined the war as combatants, and on peace as peace builders, all in a bid to protect their loved ones and enact peace in their communities (Agbiboa, 2022).

Co-researcher 8 said, “We are now invited to peace building conversations, and this demonstrates the recognition of our role in peace building efforts. We have in multiple ways exercised agency to stop the killing and destruction of properties. It could be as simple as

just greeting your neighbor and asking about how they are doing. These are little things women do, but most times not recognized as big enough to contribute to community cohesion. It could also be in the form of buying extra groceries from the market and sharing with the neighbors. Clearly, the gate keepers, and decision makers have seen that women are instrumental to peace building, and I am so happy that the progress we have made speaks for us”.

Several scholars have emphasized the role both men and women play during conflicts and post conflicts (Afolabi, 2022; Byrne, 1996; Bouta et al., 2005). It is critical to understand and address the differential impact of the crisis on gender, in order to plan for how men and women engage or address how they are impacted by the crisis conditions (Aoláin et al., 2011; Buvinic et al., 2013)

Co-researcher 2 said, “I always consider how the crisis is impacting both men and women. I do not know why the focus is most times on women. I believe for us to make progress that is sustainable, then we need to understand a genderized approach. Men and women are dealing with a lot in this situation, especially with men at the front lines, and women perceived as soft target and hugely inflicted”.

Co-researcher 3 said, “Women are now active, as agents of war and peace. Did you get that? They do not just sit but engage either as combatants, especially with the proliferation of small arms, and they also act as spies, disguising self to get information. As agents of peace, you can see the tremendous work we are doing, influencing community members to be active participants in peace building. We refuse the narrative of victimhood, not anymore, and probably not in my lifetime. We have been quiet for too long, and we are pushing back

on that bracket and statistics where we are termed, women bear the brunt, women are vulnerable, etc”.

In Plateau state, Nigeria, the Gender Equal Opportunity Bill was passed, but implementation has been a huge challenge. This Bill was meant to ensure that boys, girls, men and women have equal access to opportunities for education, income, health, and social networks. However, in times of post conflict interventions, the men have access than women, and this continues to place women in the vulnerable conditions (Bradshaw & Fordham, 2015).

Co-researcher 5 said, “We have always felt discriminated against or marginalized against when it comes to opportunities to bounce back from a crisis situation. We lose a lot when there is crisis, and there no recourse for us, especially as women head of household is increasing with the spate of the communal clashes. When we cannot control what happens upstream, we do what we can downstream. What we can do is seek ways to avert any future communal clashes through the work we do. If there are no conflicts, then we would not lose anything and start struggling with unanticipated needs”.

Research shows that context with a considerable level of gender equality is more likely to build peace after violent conflicts (Gizelis, 2009; Tripp, 2015). The gendered impact of the conflicts creates a nuance to gender relations in multiple ways, which either leaves positive or negative legacies that stick for a while (Mazurana et al., 2005; Wood, 2008). Another area is the essentialization of women in post conflict interventions which highlights the feminine gender roles and characteristics. This places women as the weaker ones, who are more inclined to be peaceful and tolerant (Cook-Huffman & Snyder, 2017).

Sub theme 4: Learning from Trainings

The women peace groups have engaged in multiple trainings that helped them to clarify their own core values in relation to inclusive peace building. The women stated that the trainings were useful in connecting their historic and community contexts for a peace leadership practice that is practical. They expressed that though some of the training did not factor in an aspect of empowerment that is essential to address issues of vulnerabilities, they found it empowering for the direct work they are doing. Co-researcher 7 stated:

I really benefited from the training, which has been a key part of my motivation for this work that we do in our communities. Of course, I have always put in experiences as a pathway for effectively engaging with the communities, but it is important to learn key approaches from the UN and other organizations helping this cause.

Co-researcher 3 stated, “I have learned a lot about me and others through some sessions in the training I have taken. In leadership, I think this is important to be able to engage effectively to create the change we all want to see. If I do not come to a realization of what I can do and what a big part of me belief in, then how do I make any sense with anyone else. I approach any conversation thinking about the other people I am engaging with, what they want and why. That helps a whole lot, especially in the era we live in, where things are changing fast and there is need to do things for the present but with the past in mind for any tangible progress”.

Peace leadership training is critical for value clarification and what it means to make a difference in the world we live in (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003; Fountain,1999). Training that are designed to fit the realities of the local context is most effective for peace building work (Bennett, 1986; Flaspolder, 2016; Lederach, 1996). Trainings done in the past through the lens of a liberal peace accounts for a reproduction of hierarchies, while perpetuating the disconnection

of the local voices and agency of the of the communities (Gamaghelyan, 2023; Mac Ginty, Richmond, 2013; Donais, 2009).

Co-researcher 1 said, “We have the power to make a difference. We just need to put it to work. Local knowledge is important without which I may not be doing this work. But the training on how to convert those local experiences into something that creates peace building process that supports a process of respect, dignity, trust, cooperation, and inclusion is critical for me as I engage with community members”.

Co-researcher 4 added that, “I was afraid and not too sure of what it meant to lead as a woman, especially on something as sensitive as peace building. I tell you; I was not confident that I could do it. However, when I reflect on what we have gone through as a people, and my personal experiences, i feel more confident with the empowerment I have gathered from the trainings I have attended. It is tough leading as a woman, but we have to do what we have to irrespective of that. Now look at the progress we have made so far. I could do more and more of this work. Is it strange what fear does to you? No look at me, leading one of the foremost peace building collectives in the state. You do not need magic. You just have to put in the work, mentally, physically and emotionally”.

Co-researcher 8 also stated, “The work we do is so complicated, and we need to understand how to hold different groups together in the process to make any tangible difference. It is our differences that has led us to where we are right now, and that difference is what we leverage to move forward and make our communities peaceful. Now I can hold dialogues with different religious groups and ethnicities. I can moderate a conversation that seems like it is getting out of hand in ways that keep the people safe and trusting. Much of the work we do requires talking to one another, and even people we have no pleasure talking with. I have even led other women through negotiations on different occasions on issues of culture that

stands in the way of our work. But what can we do. Like I said, we have learned, and those learnings have helped us to do our work better”.

Co-researcher 2 said, “I have learned that we need to continue to evolve our culture in subtle ways, not by force. If we engage with force, we meet resistance. We need to appeal to the consciousness of the people who influence the social norms in our communities, like the leaders of faith and culture. I believe this process has continued to help us gradually change some of the cultures and practices that do not make sense any more in the light of our realities”.

Co-researcher 6 also said, “I do not understand why people think or believe that we must meet violence with violence. I learned a lot from training on non-violence towards peace. Yes, we must protect ourselves, but when it comes to really building a culture of peace, we must explore non-violent approaches. It could be the little things we do, how we relate with each other on a daily basis, having deep conversations on how we may act differently and better, and even peaceful protest. We do not have to destroy things or burn buildings because we have grievances”.

The empowerment opportunities offered to the women peace leaders clearly had a huge impact on the work they do. The beautiful thing is that they ignite their agentic capacities to lead change in their communities and had well off started doing the work leveraging on what they know and the resources available to them. The training made available to them was complementary to the capacity that existed, and this had a heuristic effect on peace building interventions. They learned and quickly moved the learning to tangible endeavor which has helped moved the needle on peace building leadership in Plateau state.

Summary

This chapter presented findings from the analysis of the in-depth interviews with women groups leading peace building efforts in Plateau state, Nigeria. From the analysis, I identified eleven themes that respond to the three specifying questions asked.

In response to the first sub-specifying question: How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state? The responses to the question surfaced three themes, which are: (1) Authority is necessary, (2) Peace leadership should be nimble, (3) Leadership requires inclusion. The women group explained how despite their aspirations to mobilize community members to take action and be agents of peace, it is unattainable without authority. They explained the necessity to engage with those in authority to get any tangible outcomes. However, the women also expressed that they hold some level of authority as leaders of non-profit organizations working on peace building, and that gives them some legitimacy. But they also need formal authority to push the envelope. The second theme states that leadership should be nimble demonstrates the need of the community to be responsive to conflict situations in a quick and decisive way. Some situations do not need delay in decision making, and require leaders who think on their feet, are proactive considering the uncertainty and volatility of the context they inhabit. The third theme is that surfaced is that leadership requires inclusion. The women peace leaders believe that without inclusion, not much progress can be made. The testimonies they shared evidence this leadership practice is critical to peace leadership. This shows that they engaged adaptively and continuously sought ways to include leadership practices that is curious to explore new ways, while engaging in unusual ways in tough situations.

In response to the second sub-specifying question, how do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership? The following themes emerged: (1) Communication, (2) Collaboration, (3) Supportive culture, (4) Leading by Example.

Communication was a key to the practice they were intentional about. The women believed in relational activities as a means to engaging others productively. They affirmed that the work of peace building could not be done without social interactions which helps in crossing the artificial boundaries that have been built across ethnicities and religious groups. They developed a culturally accepted mode of communication to appeal to the consciousness of the custodians of culture and tradition and the patriarchal system. Secondly, engaging with others in a way that power is shared to make progress was a core strategy that supported the work of peace building. The women emphasized that there was no way they would have made any progress without collaborating with different groups in their communities. They shared similar sentiments about collaboration, emphasizing that a collaborative culture ensures everyone recognizes how they are implicated in the process, and commit to some responsibilities where they have the strength and social capital to break through tough barriers. The women also elevated the need for contributing to a culture that enables the work to be done by everyone. They believed that change happens when everyone feels secure, motivated and committed to a process established for the good of all. For them, creating a supportive culture also places a responsibility for those leading a process to walk their talk. It is important that leaders model what they want to see in others and in this instance they stated, the need to lead courageously, engage with others inclusively, giving others space to be part of the process and be ready to change what is not working for the greater good. What these women have practiced here showcases a combination of leader-as practice, collective and adaptive leadership.

In response to the third sub-specifying question, how did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace? The following themes emerged; (1) Exclusion & Marginalization; (2) Hardships & Loss; (3) Gendered Impacts of Conflicts; (4) Learning from Trainings. Women's engagement in peace building was informed

and shaped by their individual and collective experiences. These women have been historically excluded from public affairs for generations, and this has impacted on how they up in both public and private spaces. Their agency and right as a human being has been undermined, despite legislation and policies that are meant to protect and promote their fundamental rights. Secondly, the conflict have impacted on their livelihood in different ways, with differential experiences of adversity. They stated that, they could not continue to live this way. The social norms prescribe that men protect and provide, but most of them have lost their spouses and have become a head of household, thereby changing the face of gender and social norms. Lastly, these women have engaged in trainings which they stated has empowered them to do the work of peace building effectively. However, one of the attributes of the leadership they espoused is collectivity, and this a huge part of the Nigerian culture. They engaged in a collective leadership as a community practice to peace leadership, which was subsequently streamlined to what they learned as peace building approaches by international organizations. All of these experiences served as motivation to continue to do the work despite the challenges and risk they faced. They emphatically state how tired they are of the crisis situations and their attendant effects on their lives and potentially the lives of other generations. They stated that the government is not diligent in intervening in this situation, but they have no choice as a community to protect and preserve their communities. According to Duncan (1999) direct engagement coupled with group consciousness mediates relationships between collective action, the individual agency and life experiences. This demonstrates that lived experiences have a strong hold on community participation on issues that affect their wellbeing and daily lives.

Chapter 5- Summary, Discussion, and Implication

This section leads to a summary of the study, which includes the research purpose, rationale, methodology, significance, and the study outcomes of local peace leadership approaches in a context with protracted communal conflicts. An outline of the study outcome includes discussions of both the practical and theoretical implications of the study, and my recommendations for future research based on the study outcomes. It is expected that this research outcome will contribute to a decolonized peace paradigm and theorizing in the global south, which is particularly rare (Kurian, & Kester, 2019; Johnson et al., 2023). de Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2019; Medie & Kang, 2018 Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013).

Discussion of the Study Results

For decades, Nigeria has grappled with the significant challenge of establishing the leadership essential for advancing peacebuilding efforts (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2014; Aghedo, 2013; Emelonye & Buergenthal, 2011; Idowu, 2015). Efforts have been made through different avenues to address the complexity of communal clashes, but to no avail (Attah, 2013; Haynes, 2009; Krause, 2011; Brechenmacher, 2019; Odoh & Chilaka, 2012). As a result, the country has experienced poor and inadequate development, despite its abundance of natural resources and a substantial pool of human capital (Eneji & Agri, 2020; Garga, 2015; Alao, 2007; Danaan, 2018). Several scholars have blamed the crisis as elitist driven, with political undertones (Omilusi, 2020; Denis, 2020; Kifordu, 2011), while some others contest that the diversity of the country is the cause of the incessant lack of peace (Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009; Adebayo, 2010). Nigerians are weary of the prolonged conflicts and are hopeful that the government will fulfill its constitutional mandate to protect its citizens and territory.

Understanding the complexity of the conflicts has been a formidable task amongst international and national organizations and expertise. The focus has been on immediate interventions, with little or no consideration for long standing, enduring and sustainable peace measures. In addition, the local agency and voices of the people affected by the conflict is most times ignored or neglected (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Consequently, Nigeria continues to deal with a cycle of conflicts embedded with the tyranny of liberal or realist approaches (De Coning, 2018). However, with a burgeoning paradigm of peace building amongst local communities which focuses on relational processes and adaptive practices, there are accounts of sustainable progress (Reychler & Langer, 2006; De Coning, 2018; Isike & Uzodike, 2011).

However, there is scarcity of literature that shows a practice turn and advancement of peace building processes in Nigeria (Obaje, 2018; Issifu, 2016). Grassroots and community groups are actively engaged in a significant amount of work. This study sought to explore and document the leadership practices of a group of local non-profit peace building organizations that are women led. It is my aspiration that this study will showcase some emergent peace leadership practice, which expands the cultural boundary of what women can accomplish in a highly patriarchal context. The study's overarching question was: How does context influence emergent local leadership practices in conflict conditions? Specifying sub-questions are:

- a) How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state?
- b) How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?
- c) How did the women's experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

This research leans on three theories; Adaptive Leadership Theory, Leadership-As-Practice Theory, and Everyday Peace Theory. Adaptive Leadership Theory is a practical

leadership framework drawn from behavioral and natural sciences theory with an aim to help individuals, groups and organizations remain agile and resilient in challenging environments. It often involves challenging the status quo, creating disequilibrium, and making uncomfortable changes that are necessary for progress (Heifetz et al., 2009). Leadership-As-Practice is a conception of leadership as occurring as practice, rather residing in the traits or behaviors of individuals. The focus of this theory illuminates the social and material interactions embodied in the practices of individuals and groups towards a shared goal. This may include dialogic patterns, the context where leadership is exercised, the nature of the agency amongst groups and artifacts and symbolic meanings of social relations or interactions (Raelin, 2016). Everyday peace theory focuses on bottom-up peace and survival strategies that help individuals and groups navigate their way through the complexity of deeply divided societies. This approach to peace building seeks to close the gap and deficiency of formal peace building processes which are often focused on state building. This study surfaces elements of both Adaptive Leadership and Leadership-As-Practice in engaging everyday peace, where creativity, innovation, collectivity, norm disruption is at its core (Mac Ginty, 2021).

This study utilized a qualitative approach which is an inquiry process of understanding a phenomenon, a social or human problem. The researcher is the instrument of data collection, gathers the data, analyzes the data, inductively, deductively or abductively. The researcher subsequently presents findings in an expressive or persuasive format (Creswell, 1998). My methodology was constructivist case study. The constructivist case study approaches an ontological belief that reality is local and specifically constructed (Wallis & Richmond, 2017; Schwandt, 1994). This approach is appropriate for understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who lived it (Schwandt, 1994). According to Stake (2006), it falls within the interpretive paradigm and explicitly seeks out the multiple perspectives

of those involved in the case. This means that the socially constructed understanding and perceptions of social actors shape the way peace leadership unfolds. In this instance, constructivist case study provides a useful theoretical lens in understanding the collectives of gender, ethnicity, power and culture (Charmaz, 2017). Eight women peace building leaders consented to participate in this study as co-researchers. I also have experience working in this context and engaged the women constructively to make meaning of the work of peace leadership.

The analysis of the data constructed eleven themes which I have subsumed into the following three overarching themes:

1. Responsibly leveraging authority, staying adaptable in the face of change, and championing inclusion, leaders can create environments where individuals feel inspired, empowered, and motivated to work together toward collective success.
2. Inclusive leadership requires a combination of effective communication, collaboration, supportive culture, and leading by example.
3. The emergence of leadership from the lived experiences of a group is a dynamic process shaped by shared challenges and perspectives.

These three overarching themes respond to the overarching research question: Context has significant influence on emergent local peace leadership in communal conflicts through social, unstructured, and adaptive processes. This implies that context holds significance in every peace initiative, and local peacebuilding may prioritize informal social interactions as a prerequisite for any advancement. In the following section, I will provide a discussion, draw conclusions, and explore the implications of the study findings in relation to existing studies and literature on adaptive leadership, leader-as-practice, and everyday peace.

Discussing the Findings

This case study of local women advancing peace leadership in Nigeria, illuminates how indigenous leadership can shape peace building efforts. The constructivist approach provides a situatedness of local context and its influence in leadership practices which is departure from liberal and realist paradigms of peace. It considers the specifics of context like the sociohistorical, geographical, cultural contexts, and social and power relations. This presupposes a tangible notion of a system where multiple perspectives of social actors are dynamically constructed, negotiated, and contested as leadership is occurring (Heifetz 2009; Raelin, 2016). The findings of this study contribute to a decolonized understanding of peace leadership, which has little literature to reference from the global south.

Against this backdrop, I will start with discussions of the research question and the particularities of the findings.

Research sub question 1: How do community groups perceive peace leadership in Plateau state?

The literature on the theoretical framework of adaptive leadership and leadership-as-practice suggests that the complex site where a process or activity occurs embodies the representation of leadership practices (Raelin, 2016; Heifetz 2009). In the context as Nigeria, and plateau state specifically, the notion of leadership is drawn from culture and tradition of rigid social and gender and hierarchy (Ajibade et al., 2021; Badru, 2005; Essien & Ukpung, 2012; Jaiyeola, 2020).). The study of how leadership is perceived in plateau state yielded three themes which fell in both the adaptive leadership and leadership-as-practice theory. The first theme was leadership sometimes needs authority, which constructed the sub-themes of self-agency, responsibility, authority, and direction. The second theme is peace leadership must be nimble, which also yielded the sub-themes of proactive and courageous characteristics. The third theme

is peace leadership must be inclusive, with sub-themes of value for others, engaging different voices and sense of belonging. These themes and subthemes are key elements in answering the research question on the perception of peace leadership and its adaptations in peace building or in times of crisis.

The perception of leadership requiring authority was a notable theme throughout the interview with all the eight co-researchers. It aligns with existing research on how groups perceive leadership as a necessity in certain situations and context, and as a formal and perceived position (Heifetz, 2011; Woods, 2016; Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2017; Eglene et al., 2007). The women groups expressed that they represent leaders of organizations, and also engage with community leaders and state actors who have the authority to legitimize the work of community peace building. This underscores the paradigm that leadership is not a solitary function, but engages others in co-creating social change (Fairhurst, 2017). Co-researcher 4 stated that, “If the community does not see us as having the authority to do this work, then we would not have been listened to at all”. What this means is that there is honor and respect for authority in both formal and informal structures, and these women have seized the opportunity to exercise leadership within their reach as an everyday practice (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Heifetz, 2006; Raelin, 2020; Kezar, 2012). During the interview, the women consistently expressed that while such behavior might be deemed acceptable within male circles, the idea of women taking the lead on an issue classified as a public matter was viewed as unconventional. This arises from cultural and traditional norms that establish the social framework for gender roles. (Badru, 2005; Amadiume, 2017). However, because women have started to negotiate what leadership and authority means within the context of their everyday existence and work, cultural boundaries are expanded (Okeke-Ihejirika, 2004; Pittin, 2002; Makama, 2013).

In order to make any real progress in the work of peace building, the women needed formal authority. Co researcher 1 stated that “As we seek to negotiate the barriers our culture brings to our work, we recognize that as much as we want to engage the community in peace work, we must ensure that “community recognized authority”, that is the government and the men are perceived to be leading the interventions, we all know who is doing the real work”. For the women, implicit negotiation of formal and informal leadership working in concert is a strategy to claim authority. Some research claim that women adopt different leadership styles than men, and more effective on different leadership dimensions (Bowles & McGinn, 2005). Their adaptive capacities to negotiate authority within the informal spaces evidence how they seize opportunities to surmount existing and potential barriers.

The second theme which clearly has a high appreciation of the women is that leadership is nimble. They believed that anyone who cannot think on their feet should not be a leader. This proves what some scholars in leadership opine, that leadership is an activity and not trait based (Raelin, 2016; Crevani, et al., 2010). Co-researcher 4 stated that, “It is too late to cry when the head is cut off”. Conflict situations sometimes, does not have space for having a two-day deliberation on what needs to be done. Quick decisive actions are required to avert a brewing conflict situation or an impending attack. According to Heifetz et al., (2009), leadership requires risk, and risk requires courage in times of uncertainty and ambiguity. Co-researcher 6 said, “We are tired of waiting for the government to take action for us. They are shielded by their tall walls and security guards. We have no one protecting us, we are vulnerable. We need to continuously think about how to protect ourselves, plan for the future, and for a peaceful future”. In times of communal clashes, there is a need to decisive and take quick action, otherwise damage will be done (Hardin, 1997; Prideaux et al., 2020; Chinwokwu, 2015; Fisher, 2000; Minciu et al., 2019).

Leadership has shifted for this women group from, a known way of doing things to taking a road uncharted. It is the lack of adaptive capacities that keeps people in a state of unpreparedness, where they fail to see or anticipate what lies ahead, and plan accordingly. A conflict context is continuously in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) situatedness (Breninger & Kaltenbacher, 2023; Krawchuk, 2018). Due to this VUCA nature, the women were ready to take risk, defying long entrenched social norms and practices, and engaging across the factions and divides of their communities. In a VUCA context, there is need for leadership that is agile to take quick decisions, and flexible to bend the rules and protocols particularly of peace interventions.

Opportunities abound to try out different dimensions in a VUCA context, while also focusing on the associated risk (Minciu et al., 2019). This is because the context is ever changing, evolving in its complexity, including the community entities involved in peace building work (De Coning, 2018; Raelin, 2003; Edmonstone, 2016). There is a need to always be active in the moment, not just for decision making, but also for planning and strategizing. Co-researcher 8 stated that, “We need leadership that is proactive not reactive”. Most of the efforts at peace building are more reactive in nature and it is quite expensive for those in authority and the community (Reychler, 1998). Reactivity would lead to the conflict escalating even beyond the geographical context, lives and properties lost, social and economic activities disrupted, and general apprehension by both local and international enterprises to invest. Conversely, being proactive is economical as it entails a daily commitment to intentional actions geared towards peacebuilding and conflict resolution (Macginty, 2021). This may involve practices of tolerance, empathy, inclusion, compassion, respect, and constructive dialogues.

According to Reycheler (1998), there are two preconditions for proactive peace building; first, the need to engage more visible efforts that improve the lives of the people. This

may include democratic practices of inclusive communities, free and fair elections, a strengthened and autonomous legal system, improved health systems, educational and economic reconstruction. The youth in Nigeria have always been blamed for violent community clashes, as they are used as pawns to ignite and catalyze political, ethnic, and religious crisis (Luqman, 2010; Akpan, 2015)). This is attributed to a lack of productive engagement of seventy percent of the population of Nigeria, who represent the youth and are unemployed due to poor governance (Jega, 2017; Olorunfemi, 2021; Odeh & Okoye, 2014). Secondly, there are less visible aspects of proactive peace that involve an everyday practice of peace, not just by those in authority, but ordinary people (Mac Ginty 2021). It may manifest as co-creating a climate and culture where people are engaged in conciliatory and reconciliatory activities aimed at community cohesion. This emphasizes the importance of individuals empowering themselves to take on leadership roles (O'Malley & McBride, 2023; Badley & Hughes, 2022). It also elevates engaging in relational activities and processes that creates spaces for others to be implicated in the process, while holding on to a collective responsibility (Crevani, 2011; Raelin, 2016).

The third theme is inclusion, which is a core practice in all three theoretical frameworks guiding this research. Leadership literature has over the years focused on trait-based characteristics (Barge, 2019; Zaccaro; 2007). This leadership dimension privileges the personal and innate characteristics of individuals (Raelin, 2014), rather than relational or processual activities or practices (Heifetz, 2009). Trait-based leadership has implicated leadership practices to be rigidly hierarchical (Crevani & Lammi, 2023), focus on the individual (Raelin, 2014), heroism (Crevani et al., 2007), and inevitably, exclusionary practices (Fisher & Cox, 2006). This is why the leadership culture in a highly patriarchal context as Nigeria is more oriented towards a trait-based approach. However, with an evolving context, both human entities and environment, leadership practices are also changing. Co-researcher 7 described leadership as a collaborative

function. She stated that “Leadership is the ability to engage everyone irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender or status”. This underscores a practice of inclusivity, and this might not be attained without social interactions, and co-construction of what this means to the people. According to Crevani et al (2008), leadership is a collective construction of a group through a series of interactive processes. The women believe that there is a need to negotiate what inclusion means and seek ways to make everyone feel included. They stated that this is the kind of leadership they have desired for a long time, where there is no discrimination or perception of it, and everyone is respected for who and what they are. Co-researcher 5 stated that “We have lived in division for a long time, and this has affected how we perceive others, and others perceive us”. It echoed across participants how they have leveraged the platforms of their organizations to create a shift in inclusive leadership practices. Consequently, when there is a meeting anywhere in the community, the members exercise leadership by interrogating who ought to be in the meeting and why they are absent.

Finally, the practice of leadership of these women is an attempt to dismantle the power structures that inhabit progress in peace building processes. Co-researcher 4 stated that “As women groups working on peace, we most times do not feel heard or seen in our community”. To address this challenge, it is important to consider approaching peace building through a power lens (Mac Ginty, 2014). The leadership approach emerging from this theme suggests that recognizing the existing power structures and systems in a context has a huge role in navigating the challenges of inclusion (Heifetz et al., 2009). It is no doubt that in every community, there is in-group and out-group dynamics, which causes further stress in social interactions due to a holding pattern of group inter friction (Mac Ginty, 2014). However, the way the power structures are negotiated demands a close look at the context to be meaningful. It is critical to be sensitive to categories, like gender, ethnicity, religion and class as groups seek ways to engage in inter-

groups. Co-researcher 3 stated that “We feel like people do not think we should be doing peace work. This is power dynamics at work, controlling the community climate and dictating the level of agency that may be exercised. Understanding the necessity of appealing to the ego of the power structures is an exercise of leadership on its own. The power structures may have positive or negative impacts on inclusive peace processes, but contingent on the particular situation in focus, they can also serve as catalyst or accelerator of progress, depending on how they are engaged.

The perception of leadership by these women groups which is a shift from dominant definition of leadership as purely a position is clear. They projected leadership as more of a practice than a position, but also recognized that sometimes, authority is necessary to drive change.

Research Sub Question 2: How do community groups practice inclusion in the exercise of peace building leadership?

The women group responses were congruent with how they defined leadership. The group stated that in the past inclusion was sparse and was not a common practice due to the patriarchal culture that prevails. Women have been historically, marginalized and discriminated in this context. The social construct that ascribes gender roles, according to Co-researcher 3 “kept us in our lane”. We have come a long way, and still have a long mileage to cover”. Co-researcher 4 added that “We have learned what not to do in leadership due to the experiences of patriarchy, and which reinforces retrogressive social norms”. The women group are engaging in ways that is inclusive, and the themes of communication, collaboration, supportive culture and leading by example surfaced from the interviews. These themes align with previous literature on adaptive leadership, leadership-as-practice and everyday peace.

The first sub-theme of communication is in tandem with relational and processual activities. However, the communication in this instance is both vertical and horizontal to make meaning and have everyone included. In conflict ridden context, communication is critical to inform, warn and engage in constructive dialogues. Without effective communication, some groups may feel disconnected from the peace engagements, and this may breed grievances and distrust. According to Co-researcher 1, “we make concerted efforts to ensure that relevant information is shared with all. Sometimes these people say it is too much information and struggle to see why they need the information. After a while, they realized it’s all for their good and the good of the community”.

Leadership has refocused in the past years from just looking at individualized understanding, to adopting a cultural and social lens (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). This shift has created attention on how culture and social interactions impact leadership (Mittal & Elias, 2016; Alvesson, 2011; Javidan et al., 2010). The social and cultural aspects of leadership rely on communication (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Through communication, a divided society can come together, stretching a collective imagination to make progress on an issue they all care about (Lederach, 1997). This calls for inclusivity in communication to foster trust, collectivity, and inclusion. Co-researcher 6 stated that, “It’s important to create safe spaces where people talk to each other and are honest about their concerns.” This fosters trust and confidence amongst groups in a culturally diverse context with deep cleavages on any and every community issue. People tend to seek security by identifying with something close to their experience and what might be within their sphere of inference, and communication strengthens group cohesion (Gibson & Manuel, 2003).

According to Fairholm (1994), effective communication creates a culture of trust where members of a group work towards a shared goal through mutually agreed processes. Co-

researcher 3 elevated a very critical issue about how members communicate with each other, “We are conscious of how we talk to each other considering that there are some things that are too sensitive”. In conflict situations, people are hurt and pained differently, and it is important to be responsive to these needs and sensibilities to avoid a relapse of the conflicts (Lindner, 2009). There were instances where wrong statements and communication have led to devastating communal crisis (Abdu, 2011; Raji & Abdulkadir-Imam, 2018).

The second theme is collaboration, with all the women interviewed attesting to its centrality in ensuring inclusion in community peace building. Through engaged social interactions, collaborative agency may be mobilized to enact change (Raelin, 2016). Through their collaborative endeavors, involving all those within their sphere of influence, they achieved positive outcomes in terms of inclusion. Adaptive challenge requires engaging multiple voices and interpretations of what the challenge means to them (Heifetz et al., 2009). Co-researcher 6 stated that “Despite the differences that sought to tear the people apart, we still found ways to work together towards a common goal, a peaceful community. The women exercised agency through deliberate everyday practice that broke the barrier of inclusion in peace building. Deterministic approaches focused on state building, and not the collaborative elements of local agency (De Conning, 2018; Mac Ginty 2021)

According to Co-researcher 1, “In past, we were not included in peace efforts as it was determined to be an affair for the men, we were not involved and felt left out and neglected, but we are the ones who bore the full brunt of the crisis.” The women perceive leadership as a social construction (Raelin, 2014), and they co-create what it means to collaborate in the work they do. This creates a practice of power sharing or what is called shared process of engagement stretched over and across many actors (Avolio et al., 1996). It shifts the focus away from a single individual possessing specific traits and authority, towards an inclusive engagement process

where everyone is inspired and empowered (Vecchio et al., 2010). It also sets the stage for a mutually interactive process that engages others in shared responsibility (Ospina and Foldy, 2009), through meaning making predicated on discursive elements of subjectivity, cultures, and identities (Fairhurst, 2007). Co-researcher 5 stated that “It is remarkable to see how the men in the community now value working alongside women. It is evident that they still adhere to traditional gender roles, but they acknowledge and respect the capabilities that women possess to achieve their goals.” Through discursive practice, the process of assigning meaning to women's involvement in peacebuilding was achieved.. The men have tried all that they can, including the leaders of faith and culture who are predominantly men. However, the women showed up differently, by being more inclusive, collaborative, tolerant, empathetic and deeply invested in the process. This underscores a process of engaging in adaptive work, where people are open to alternate ways of doing and knowing (Heifetz, 2009). It also shows that deliberate daily practices can yield results in both the short and long term. (Mac Ginty, 2021)

The third theme was supportive culture which the women emphasized a lot all through the interview. As interspersed, all through this research documentation, in different formats and words, the women have always felt like they are perceived to not have any value in community development work, including peace building. This strengthened their resolve that if they are not included in the discussion table, they will have to negotiate expanding space on the table to be actively involved. Co-researcher 1 stated that “If they won’t include us on the discussion table, we will have to make our own table and come with our chairs. “This is not the time to be slow or passive abeg, e don do us”. The outcome of the process of negotiation for these women did not just happen abruptly or overnight. Through interactions, groups were able to make meaning of both individual and group values, norms, fears and concerns. There were times when there were tensions around blending within groups with dominant religion and tribe, but with constant and

meaningful interactions these tensions were quelled (Brett, 2007). People started to interrogate how they show up in social interactions, what drives the opinions and perspectives they have on an issue, and why they feel resistance to certain decisions within groups.

Due to the perseverance and strong determination of the women, the tide is gradually shifting. The process of engaging with the community leaders has endeared them with appreciation of the work they do. Leaders of faith and culture are intentionally creating spaces for the women groups to engage the community in dialogues, training and resolving conflicts amongst individuals and groups. The women also are now appointed in positions of community leadership, like the community council” and other local organizations. Co-researcher 7 stated that, “who are we in the scheme of things that we will be consulted before community decisions are taken? This still feels like a dream to me”. The orientation has also changed a lot with community leaders ensuring that when a meeting is called, or there is a gathering to discuss community affairs, an audit of who is represented in the gathering is made to be sure that no one is left behind, and all are included. This practice goes a long way in fostering trust and togetherness, and for the women, they feel that their work is acknowledged and supported.

The women also admitted that they feel deeply implicated in creating a culture where everyone feels encouraged, included, motivated and empowered to do the work. Co-researcher 2 stated “that we take the risk of going beyond the geographical boundaries to other areas with different religions and culture as us. It is scary, but we know this work we do is noble work, and we are focused on the outcome which so far has been worthwhile”. This implies that sustained boundary interactions is critical to creating deep connections to both an adaptive issue and to human entities (Harris, 2005). Through these interactions, they experienced a process of discovery, learning, trust building, and rediscovery of alternative ways of making progress on issues they care about. To sustain these efforts, the women group formed a locally driven

community of practice that play a key role in addressing existing and emerging peace building issues.

The fourth theme that describes how the community is engaging in inclusive practices is leading by example. This particular theme fits into the theoretical framework of leadership-as practice and everyday peace. Leadership involves the exercise of influence and guiding others, rather than vetoing a collective action (Underdal, 1994). In this instance, I lean on a process ontology of leadership which considers relational activities that are contextual, and co-creates platforms of shared values, interest and beliefs (Crevani et al., 2010; Krauter, 2020; Wood & Dibben, 2015). This comes with a responsibility for members to not just say what their values and interests are, but to model them towards creating a community of purpose.

The leadership -as practice is tilted on a practice orientation, with group members within a context producing definition and guidance on group processes, with emergent co-construction through collaborative agency (Crevani, 2021; Raelin, 2014). However, it is important to see this from a practice perspective and not from an entitative framing. The women described their actions as, Co-researcher 2, “ Expectations of others and self to model what it means to be inclusive”, and Co-researcher 4 stated “We have often engaged communities in ways that help to stretch the culture to permit some of our practices”, Co-researcher 1 stated “We have been successful in engaging with those outside of our communities and influencing how we engage internally and externally.” All these attestations show that they are subjective as they make meaning, and while they look at the individuals as the entity that transmits the practice, what holds significance for them is the actual manifestation.

Co-researcher 4 stated that “We are not interested in just showing us that you are inclusive in one meeting and then you act differently in another”. This implies that the focus is on orienting a culture to become entrenched as a practice overtime despite the context. Clearly,

what the women are projecting is a culture where individuals and groups are responsible for a collective culture and driven by a lead by example leadership style. Co-researcher 6 stated, “We have been trained by international organizations on diversity, equity and inclusion, but this will only be latent as a knowledge domiciled on individuals if it not put into our daily practice. I want to be known as an inclusive leader, but I also want people to say the things that I do or did that show I am an inclusive leader”. It is not about the leaders, but the exercise of leadership through practice (Raelin, 2016)

To conclude on inclusive practices by the community, it is important to note that the conflicts in this research site is lodged in long-standing relationships that are protracted and complex. Authentic inclusion has been challenging and a struggle and can be attributed to long held animosity, perception of enmity, and deep-rooted fear by the conflicting groups. To complicate the challenge more, people are living next door and a village away from the so-called enemy. This portends a critical dynamic that drives the need for conciliation and reconciliation which underscores the practice of everyday peace.

Research Sub-Question 3: How did the women’s experiences contribute to the emergence of leadership practices for sustainable peace?

The women’s responses to this question developed four themes which include: (1) Exclusion and marginalization, (2) Hardship and loss, (3) Gendered impact of conflict, (4) Learnings from trainings. Pulling these themes together to make sense of it shows that the common thread is the factor of motivation. The long-standing practice of exclusion, and experiences during and post conflicts had a stronghold on why the women engaged in peace building, and how they defined their practice of peace leadership.

The gradual emergence of women in plateau state, Nigeria, working to advance peace has created a process of evolution in leadership practices. Leaders in Nigeria are perceived as

tribalistic, egoistic, power focused, lacking in accountability and coercive (Ejimabo, 2013). Leadership within this context is trait-based, focusing on the individual, and engages in practices of command and control (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012; Asaju et al., 2014). This leadership orientation stems from a culture that privileges hierarchy in all spheres. In this scenario, women have endured the consequences of gender hierarchy for years, placing them in subordinate positions. Co-researcher 2 state that “We felt undignified as women for a very long time due to exclusion on issues that affects us. Up till now, we are still experiencing this in both direct and indirect forms.”

Nigeria is a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2010), and such culture requires a moral rectitude to “be your brother’s keeper” and has a full expression of “ubuntu” where leaders are expected to serve and not be served (Murove, 2012). Despite this culture, Nigeria seems to engage a leadership style that is peddled as democratic, but clearly is not (Orukpe & Isibor, 2018). A country where over 50 percent of the population is experiencing exclusionary practices, with weak rule of law, elections rife with violence and manipulation cannot be qualified as democratic (Lewis, 1994; Ezeanya & Owoeye, I. (2021). These practices occur both at the macro and micro levels, and they can be particularly pronounced at the local level. (Atela et al., 2021; Agunyai et al., 2014). Co-researcher 4 stated that” We have felt marginalized in our homes and in public spaces, we stand no chance”, Co-researcher 5 added that “Things were happening to us, and nobody cared about our voices and how the conflict was affecting women”.

However, despite these challenges, the women made concerted efforts to engage culturally, crossing the boundaries of what the extant cultural permutations offers (Schirch, 2005). Co-researcher 3 stated “We have to make efforts to factor in women’s talents and insights into community work, but we honored what was culturally available.” The women engaged with the community influencers, which are the leaders of faith and culture to create a

shift on how women are perceived. They engaged with their voices, and charged by their experiences to ensure differentiated voices were part of the quest for peace in their communities. Co-researcher 6 stated that “This accounts for the rousing attention to the gradual shift of perspectives that is shaping the gender landscape of peace building. It is ostensibly important to recognize the incredible leap of courage summoned by these women to create this visible change. According to Heifetz (2009), leadership is all about courage to take risks, even if it means challenging the status quo.

The more people feel included, the more they are committed, and want to collaborate and stretch themselves to achieve shared goals (Bourke et al., 2020). Commitment is needed as a mediation between the individual and the collective, and the commitment espoused by these women is a commitment that is beyond collective, but from woman to another (Castelfranchi, 1995). Co-researcher 6 stated “I have experienced what lack of inclusion does to a people. Nigerian women can testify to this, and we might not be the expert, but I know what exclusionary practices can do to the progress of any country. See as we dey, with all our resources. Nigeria is rich, but na us dey use our hand spoil am.” Co-researcher 1 stated “Engaging in this work of peace building is not just about addressing the crisis situations in our communities, but also showing a duty of care for my neighbor. If my neighbor cannot sleep at night, then how can I sleep.” This implies that there is a sense of obligation that comes with working collectively, with everyone as much as possible representing the diversity of a group. People do not feel controlled or that they have been essentialized to be there, instead, they engage in stretch collaboration which creates space for the exercise of leadership (Kahane, 2017).

This experience of exclusion and marginalization has spurred an unshaking motivation for the women group to do this work of enacting peace in their communities. According to Tan et

al., (2019), experience facilitates a pathway or drive to creative process engagement. These women were both intrinsically and extrinsically driven to practice inclusive leadership due to their past experiences. Co-researcher 5 stated “We have to break the cycle of exclusionary practices with our everyday intentionality. We do not have to wait for an opportunity to do something humongous. Today is the opportunity, and we will act today in all the small ways we do. It is a sacrifice worth doing, whether we like or feel like it or not.”

The second theme is hardship and loss, and the women shared how adversity, pain and loss brought them to the path of peace they are leading. The impact of the crisis has been devastating, with millions of lives and properties lost and destroyed. Its complex nature is yet to be understood, as every time it seems like progress is made, it gets rough again. Co-researcher 6 stated that “It feels like when we take one step forward, we take two steps backward.” The crisis in this region has been on-going on for twenty-three years now, and the state which used to be one of the prosperous, safe, and diversified in Nigeria has become a shadow of itself.

Co-researcher 5 stated that, “We have lost loved ones, and some of us are widows. Some of our children have been abducted and married off to people we do not know. How hard can that be?” Co-researcher 3 also stated that “Land that has been in my family for generations, and a source of the family livelihood and honor has been overtaken from me. They call it farmer-herder clash, but this is more than that. This is stealing. Infact we have given it a name and it is “land grabbing.” Co-researcher 5 stated that, Do you know we do not sleep to relax. I go to bed well-dressed because I do not know when there will be an attack. We have experienced attacks in the middle of the night where our houses are burnt down, and we run into the forest and mountain top for days. We are always unsure of what will happen to us. We starve, we thirst, and we are out in a cold.”

The women working on peacebuilding are treading on risky terrain, considering all the contextual factors working against them, and the biggest of all being the cultural norms. This is further exaggerated by the impacts of the conflicts that bring untold hardship and loss. To them survival is key to keep the work going, and they did what was necessary to keep breathing. Despite the risk they face on a daily basis, they still continue to push the boundaries of what it is meant to lead. Co-researcher 7 stated, “What am I scared of? We will all die someday. It is inevitable. But I want to die knowing that I have played the card of obligation to others, commitment to serving, resilience in the face of pain, and be a part of transforming something that may not have been done in my lifetime.” Co-researcher 2 stated that, “We thrived on being resilience. We persevered and continuously sought ways to bounce back from our losses”. The most effective way to forge a winning team is to call on the players’ need to connect to something larger than themselves (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). These women see the peace building work as larger than their very existence and are pouring in all that they have to create a peaceful community.

Due to the loss and adversity, people who have been inactive or showing signs of apathy in the community became involved in the shared goal of peacebuilding in the community. The work and experience of these women shows that when people who are fence-sitters are provoked to do the work necessary, they become engaged to work through the challenges embedded in their everyday life (Heifetz, 2006). According to Sanfuentes et al (2021), resilient capacity can activate constructive relational dynamic by leveraging on collective agency through self-organization, collaboration, and mutual caring. Co-researcher 5 stated that, “If we had not been impacted collectively by the conflict, then maybe, we might not have been working together towards a common goal.” This implies that affective-relational elements can drive the practice of shared leadership in dealing with adversity in a conflict context.

The third theme is the gendered impact of conflicts. The conflict has differential impacts on men and women, boys and girls, on the economic, social and political front. These impacts are gender neutral, come in different ways, with communities stuck with the struggles over power and scarce resources. Scholars have been researching conflict from a gender perspective to understand the different challenges different gender identities face in conflict situations. The calamity of conflicts brings death and untold hardships to families and the community at large. This invariably alters the structure and dynamics of households, dismantling the gender roles, with women becoming head of households.

The women shared extensively how the conflicts has impacted their lives and changed the stories they tell about themselves. The women lost their spouses who are traditionally the primary source of livelihood, as a protector and provider. In most cases the women and children are displaced and become refugees in their own country. They live in continuous deprivation of the basic needs of life like food, water and hygiene products. They live in deep vulnerability, with some of the women and girls sexually abused by those assigned to protect them. With all of these conditions, the women are situated to intergenerational poverty. With all these factors in operation, there is tendency for either positive or negative impacts on preexisting gender inequalities.

Co-researcher 3 stated that, “In post conflict situations, people are in survival mode, and they are in constant struggle for sustenance. Because the conflict has created some disorganization in the community. People scramble for power to be able to control resources and to maintain a status quo they might have been benefiting from.” Clearly the protracted conflict rocked the boat of social norms and community social organization, and despite the positive impact it has spawned in the gender roles and expectations, it also portended some negative effects (Buvinic et al., 2013). What this means for the women is that, as they are driven to do this

work of peacebuilding, they must engage people of varying views, ideologies, and values to make any progress. (Heifetz, 2020).

These experiences have taught the women to understand how power shift in a community could impact their work. Firstly, the focus of women as victims of conflicts and a deeply entrenched patriarchal culture took a gradual turn. The women assuming head of household roles automatically places them as decision makers in their home and the community. The subordinate roles placed on them as gender roles was switched to the role traditional placed on the men, like the protector, defender and provider. Co-researcher 5 stated, “Every good thing also has a bad side. We are happy with the gender role transformation, where the women are seen as active participants in peace work. But at the same time, we have to deal with the double burden of wearing the hat of the male traditional role and the expected role of a woman as a caregiver. This was really stressful.” Co-researcher 2 added, “We are not happy that our men are gone, but every adversity comes with opportunity if you look closely. Women participating in public affairs is something we have been advocating for, for years. Now it has hit us when we least expect.” Such a shift in gender roles may open up new spaces for women’s agency and the exercise of leadership within evolving family and community structures (Snyder, 2008). This is a departure from research that is continuously fixated on the negative gendered impact of conflict, to a nuanced understanding of its empowering properties.

The fourth theme from the experiences of the women is learning from trainings. All the circumstances they have faced, and unbearable conditions of conflict positioned them to continue to improve the work they do through learning. They took advantage of any and every opportunity to learn and do move the work forward. Co-researcher 3 stated, “Sometimes things go right as we engage with others, but sometimes it gets to a point that we feel we cannot hold tough conversations, when we are trying to get people to think differently. I am humble to say, in such

times, I wished I was trained to do this work.” Tough situations push us to want to know and act better, with wisdom for what is necessary. In complex situations as the women exist in, there is always a dualistic tension between self and other, what is good from what is bad, and option A or option B (Chodron, 2000). It is important to create spaces for not knowing, learning and unlearning, thereby engaging adaptive capacities for tough times (Heifetz & Linksy, 2009)

Co-researcher 7 stated, “I have learned that we need to continue to evolve our culture in subtle ways. This requires people who are thinking not just about how they lose their privileges, but about how this will lead to social transformation.” According to O’Malley & McBride (2022), it is important to engage the practice of connecting head and heart in addressing tough challenges. Strain in engagement may ensue when the head is disconnected from the heart. This might be due to loyalty to an existing way of doing and knowing, legacy and even power. Losses may be encountered as we engage for the greater good. However, that happens in instances where we are compelled to exercise leadership that is authentic, pluralistic and adaptive to the ever-evolving realities of our time (Heifetz & Linksy, 2009).

As the women engage this work, they consciously avail themselves to learning, from those they agree, from those they may not agree with, and making choices based on free expression of perception of others. However, every day’s deepening of the learnings has led them to a place of knowing, where they see the work so profoundly in need of practical and concrete consequence. Co-researcher 2 stated, “We were open to training and learning how to better engage in peace building. We are called to do this work. We didn’t go to school and have become expert peace builders.” Co-researcher 6 added. “While it was an eye opener to understand from the experts what it means for women to lead, the learning we glean from everyday engagement with the community has proven to be more practical and sustainable.” Co-researcher 1 stated, “I used to see this work like, we have had one serious conversation in a day,

and it is enough to address an issue. But I have come to realize that every work we do, even if it is just holding hands with other women to pray in fellowship is connected to something bigger. I believe in chain reactions, and I believe that one piece of work I do have the potential to trigger other things that I may not have seen, anticipated or planned for. This makes us talk to each other about the intentions of any plans we have, and what could be the result we want, versus what the result could be. You know, it keeps us on our toes when working, knowing we do have control of everything. This is the best learning I have had and has helped me do this work of peace well.” This implies that the complexity of the work is perceived and treated as not just one piece of work after another, but one piece of work interconnected to multiple others (Mac Ginty, 2021).

Co-researcher 3, “You asked me how my learnings have helped us build leadership we are practicing, but I ask you too, since we are working on understanding this thing together. How do we put the peace back to the pieces? Let me answer that question. This work requires me to learn to bring the real me to a conversation. What does this mean? There is a time to be political and there is a time to be as real as it gets. It is risky work, but nobody achieves anything without risk. Work with a person who has nothing to lose, and you will see fire. Sometimes I am carried away by the thought that I have nothing to lose. I have lost my husband, my children are grown and out of this community, I have been molested by those that attacked my community, I have lost my primary source of livelihood. So, tell me, what am I scared of now that I cannot speak truth to power. So back to your question, my learnings have taught me to put peace to the pieces I find in me as a person, and those around me, including my environment. That means that I have to be ready to have hard conversations with people, engage courageously in ways that even me go dey ask me, na who be this, and also think of not what is best for me, but for the community.”

Leadership practice might require walking with others, with hand holding or not, through the darkness a crisis ferments, into the light of multiple interpretations, truths, actions,

hopes and courage (Ferch et al., 2015). Co-researcher 3 stated, “This work requires engaging different local groups to work together, and we learned how to hold dialogues, negotiate, and engage in early warning signs.” Co-researcher 5 stated that, “There is no way we could have done this work without collaboration across different standpoints. It gets tiring just trying to intervene when a conversation gets so heated, I am a woman, and there are two men bigger and stringer than I am yelling thunderously over me [laughs..]. Sometimes I just want to run away and end this work, but every time I become curious and learned new things. I learned that, in places where it feels risky and I feel vulnerable and almost powerless, I must have someone who is well respected in the community to be part of that meeting. That has been a productive intervention.”

Courage intersected with the leadership that these women practiced to advance peace in their communities. Through their learnings both in structured formats and in situ, they have been empowered to exercise leadership practices that helped them engage different perspectives, be courageous, take risk, and shift norms, while honoring the existing. Co-researcher 4 stated that, “We do not have to be violent to make peace. That is not peace. Peace is non-violent.” These women have learned to engage in non-violent ways which is orchestrated by the leadership practices they learned and understood as what works for their context.

Primary and Overarching Research Question: How does context influence emergent local leadership practices in conflict conditions?

Previous scholarly literature on the influence of context on leadership practices aligns with the study results on leadership practices in extremity (Endrissat & von Arx, 2013; Mac Ginty, 2021; Heifetz & Linsky, 2009; De Coning 2021). The women who engaged in peace leadership participated as co-researchers in this study, and they posed the significance of ensuring leadership practices reflect the indigenous culture and experiences of where it is

occurring. They emphasized the complexity between the interaction of relational aspect and the socio-political landscape as an evolving piece in the circuitry of leadership emergence. The women noted that despite the constant tension and struggle to advance what peace leadership means to them, they continue to be adaptive to their context, curious to new occurrences, and proactively engaging the necessary apparatus for progress. According to Mac Ginty 2021, everyday practice of leadership is heavily context dependent, inherent with both cultural and physical barriers.

The themes which emerged from the study on emergent leadership practices in extremity premises a new way of knowing, and wisdom for peace leadership. The study yielded themes that were applicable for the qualitative investigation into the phenomenon of leadership in times of volatility, unpredictability, complexity and ambiguity (Bergquist, 2019; Drysdale & Gurr, 2017; Lane & Down, 2010). The women recognized that they live in extraordinary times, and extraordinary times calls for extraordinary measures. In addition, they also learned and advanced the paradigm that peacebuilding work is not a one-way street, but comes with detours, interruptions, stop and go signs, the uncertainties that may happen on the road, and sometimes a safe or unpleasant journey to a planned destination. They also came to terms that the work of peace building is an evolutionary process (Loode, 2011; De Coning, 2012)), which constantly requires the interactions of socio-material elements to address the complex components in tension in a VUCA context (Barber, 1992).

The research findings described in the discussed themes culminated to inform one overarching theme of this study: *Context is a mediating factor that determines the practice or emergence of peace leadership in times of extremities.* The women's perceptions of leadership were based on a constructivist lens which weaved in all their meaning making of the context and experiences as women peace builders. They approached this study with their experiences set as a

frame and reference as we engaged through in-depth interviews. This informed how and what they described what leadership meant to them, with no form of leaning into textbook definitions, or what others say about leadership. You could see their heart in the definitions of leadership, bringing in aspects of culture and traditions, experiences in engaging with community leaders, and how all of these have impacted their leadership practices. The women stated with clear understanding that, while they can exercise leadership as a result of their experiences in peace building and a group leading peace intervention, they also recognized that without a position of authority, progress will be implausible. The emphasis on leadership as a position of authority may be borne out of the social organization in Nigeria, which reinforces social and gender hierarchy.

The women's experiences in conflict situations also informed their perception of leadership, where they stated that leadership should not be rigid and unnecessarily bureaucratic, especially in a volatile context. Leadership should be adaptive and engage the context in a way that informs what leadership practice is needed as events are occurring (Heifetz, 2009). They elevated a paradigm that leadership is not static, there is no rules of thumb, but an ability to quickly move from one end of a spectrum to the other, and everything in between, to make sense. A leadership style that recognizes that there is no one leadership style that fits all context (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009), and that the success of any leadership practice is contingent on the context (Osbourne et al., 2002). They believed that leadership should be constant interaction amongst all members of a group, and no one should be discriminated against by status, age, gender or position. While they all believed in distributed leadership where certain and multiple individuals are assigned roles and responsibilities (Bolden, 2011; Harris 2009). They also are fully persuaded that a power sharing model is crucial for a collaborative approach with all members having an equal input and influence on an issue (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Crevani et

al., 2007). The women's definition of leadership sums up to be "Leadership is an interactive process that engages diversity, inclusion and equity, bound to local cultures, with consideration for a constantly evolving world".

The second pivotal thing is how the sociomateriality of the context impacted on how the women practiced leadership. The exclusionary practices, the hardship and loss, the experiences of leadership, and their constant learning, all entangling to spawn emergent forms of leadership practices. These leadership practices did not happen in a day, but through iterative acts of making, in concert with their material world of norms, social structures and impact of the conflict (Ingold, 2010). According to Hultin (2019), "the construction of knowledge is a process that cannot be separated from the practices performed to enact it". The women led peace building activities through an everyday practice of leadership and learned as they engaged recursively with community members and the prevailing traditions of the community. They learned that relational practices of communication, collaboration, supportive culture and leading by example were crucial for inclusive practices. There are times when it felt really daunting doing the work that they want to give up, but thinking about what activated the desire to enact peace, they hold on to purpose and a shared vision. They ensure no one had to experience the feeling of discrimination they were subjected to, and that this can be achieved if they modelled it through their every practice. They also instituted systems for collaboration which situates shared power as an energizer that moves members to go the extra length and committing to a shared goal. In addition, they modelled what they wanted to see in leadership through relational, inclusive, and adaptive approaches, which is now a point of reference for other peace building groups in Plateau State.

Implication for Peace Building in Nigeria

The findings from this study have implication for peace building in not just Nigeria, but the African context. The continent has had considerable experience in ethno-religious violent attacks, farmer-herder clashes, political violence and insurgency. Conventional peacebuilding approaches have proven ineffective in tackling this adaptive challenge. The emphasis has consistently been on state-building, typically through top-down interventions, rather than on addressing the needs of those directly impacted by conflicts. The peacebuilding approach adopted by women in Plateau State is rooted in local initiatives and driven by community needs, emphasizing the everyday understanding of peace. They adopt a downstream approach, which holds promise for instigating systemic changes in peacebuilding efforts. Unlike previous interventionist approaches that often fail to address underlying issues, resulting in further escalation and prolonged conflicts, the women's approach offers a more sustainable solution. Plateau State has been grappling with sporadic attacks and long-standing conflict since 2001, highlighting the urgency for effective peacebuilding strategies. It takes one who has experienced something bad to know what they do not want to experience in the present and future. The women have experienced a kind of leadership they do not want, nor want to practice. These experiences informed how they approached peace building, with curiosity, honoring what is already in existence, while subtly challenging the status quo. The context is a highly patriarchal one with rigid social and gender hierarchies. However, the women engaged adaptively, utilizing what they know about the context, coupled with their lived experiences to navigate both the cultural and physical complexities. This practice problematizes peace building approaches that are disconnected from the context. Blueprints or exogenous peace strategies lack the heart piece in the narrative. There is a popular metaphor in Nigeria that states “Na who wear shoe know where e dey pain am”. This means that only the person wearing a shoe knows where it hurts. It also follows that you cannot prescribe a drug to a sick person without proper diagnosis. The

person will have to tell the nurse or doctor what is going on, and the doctor might feel, touch or look closely. Both researchers and practitioners may consider that proximity to an issue connects the head and heart elements in both practice and scholarly work.

The work enacted by these women through the lens of adaptive leadership shows that people may be adaptive as a result of their experiences, be it pain, loss and grief, infliction of exclusionary practices, and exposure to a new way of knowing. Their collaboration with the leaders of faith and culture, who are the community influencers, and are custodians of the culture and traditions, led to a shift in some cultural practices that stood as barriers to women exercising leadership. This did not happen in a day, but through concerted efforts, every day, every season, even when it feels risky. Failure and disappointments did not deter their actions, as a shared goal and a clear vision of what they desire for their communities energized them. They continuously embraced the learnings from the work, tried out different strategies, which is a departure from what they knew as a peace building efforts as a linear process. Peace building has no template; we can just pull off a shelf and solve the problems. Social scientists may consider contextualization research in complex systems to show adaptive capacities of a specific group rather than a collective adaptation. A focus on collective may ignore specific dimensions inherent in different context, leading to path dependence, research myopia, and narrow relevance of the study outcomes. Afterall social research is meant to solve social problems. This also goes for the practitioners to be experimental, and consider alternatives, and not impose a specific template to peace building interventions. It is important to leverage the lived experiences of the people when creating interventions.

Another implication this study offered was embracing inclusive practices as everyday exercise of leadership. When members feel valued, they tend to act on that value level, and go the extra mile to contribute to a shared goal (Bellucci & Park, 2020). The women ensured that

they acted in ways that no one felt left behind. They engaged with diverse groups and cultivated voices that have been historically ignored. They grew from a few persons membership to a large group, with collaboratives representing all gender, tribe, religion and age. The work was no longer in the hands of few but engaged many hands who were committed to the goal of the group. People are motivated on both an intrinsic and extrinsic level, and act optimally when they feel their needs are met and they are cared for (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This has implication for researchers to rethink how they conduct research. The idea is to transform research away from research *on* people, to research *with* them. Some research approach may epitomize this, however, I leaned on a constructivist approach which involved the women groups in the design and conduct of research about the intersection of their work and lived experiences. I valued their different ways of knowing and making sense of their leadership practices. There should be more collaboration between academics and the people experiencing conflict and peace building work. These individuals are already grappling with emotional trauma and the hardships of their circumstances, so it would be inappropriate to treat them solely as sources of data. For practitioners, it is heart wisdom to engage inclusively. The people are not interested in how intelligent or articulate you are, but authenticity that shows connection and commitment to an issue. This means proximity to the challenge, engaging all voices representing a community or group, identifying and recognizing the diverse needs and interests, and co constructing what it means to make progress.

Another interesting theme from this research is that learning is an exercise of leadership. The women recognized that to do a complex adaptive work, it may require discarding what no longer works, and engaging in continuous learning and relearning. They no doubt approached peace building work with the intention to enact change. However, the tension between their goals, the context- culture, social norms, conflicts and rigid forms of leadership

practices, complicated their journey of peace building. In order to navigate the continuous interactions of these complexities, they knew they needed to expand their knowledge and skills. In this part of the world, when you are in a position of authority, learning may be perceived as self-deprecating. This shows a culture that believes that leadership is a position, with a trait-based orientation, and has no accommodation for failure. However, these women acted differently, they leveraged opportunities to learn, and saw failure through the lens of “another opportunity to try again, and try again, and fail, and try again”. Hofstede (1998) analysis of masculinity and femininity culture helps us understand that women are more open to learning than men. Leadership-As-Practice draws our attention from what individuals represent in the social hierarchy, to what ordinary people can do as they exercise leadership through learning. The emphasis on the importance of process and emergence creates collective reflexivity all anchored towards a shared goal (Raelin, 2016). Drawing from this, leadership researchers may consider that learning is an exercise of leadership. Exercising leadership means being curious and seeking to understand something new, bringing the extraordinary out of the ordinary. The focus of peace building research has been so insular and western centric, with sparse research on the global south. It is important to continue to deconstruct or demystify dominant theories of peace, by engaging other prisms. For practitioners, removing the expert hat, where we engage with communities displaying our intelligence and smartness is ineffectual and unnecessary. Building a trustworthy process, where practitioners meet the communities where they are, learning together and co-constructing meanings, and ways to make progress is critical.

Recommendations for Further Research

There were interesting areas of discussion that were developed from this research, which opens up curiosity and potential for future research throughout the qualitative process. The women groups enunciated that even amongst women collectively working on peacebuilding,

there are some power dynamics that needs to be understood. One would think that this is a challenge with working with men only, particularly in patriarchal society. Groups dynamics is a topic that is rarely studied (Cronin et al., 2011), as much as we want to understand the barriers to groups working dynamically, It is crucial to examine the driving forces behind collective progress, particularly within complex contexts. Secondly it would also be interesting to study collective adaptivity in crisis situation. The women groups came in with their different capacities, informed by the lack of proper organization for determining composition of the group. All they cared about is working together, no matter what, to make progress on peace building. It is assumed that collectively the groups were adaptive as a whole, but it would be interesting to know how individual adaptive capacities may influence the whole. This is informed by the fact that individuals have differential experience of the impact of conflicts and show up based on their level of adaptiveness. In addition, I believe it will be interesting to understand the place of agility in crisis situations, like peace building, as most research focuses on health and medical fields. What implications may this have on leading successful and effectual collectives in conflict context?

Thirdly, as I engaged in this study, I often wondered how generational differences impacted the collective agency of the women. Many studies are unable to distinguish between ‘generation’ and ‘age’ as possible drivers of value differences (Parry & Urwin, 2011). I say value differences because of how it varies per national context, and other factors like cultural practices and ethnicity. In every workplace or community group, it is often suggested that people come with different values and preferences, based on age. The older women are more prone to be rigid with social norms and are agents for the continuity of culture and tradition (Bernal, 1994; Dasgupta,1998). It would be interesting to understand the tensions that might play out in inter-

generational exchange and engagement processes. How did it impact the leadership practices of the women, and progress on peace building?

Lastly, the research topic focused on women, but I am curious on research that may explore how gender and identity issues may influence leadership approaches and practices in peace leadership. With shifting perspectives on gender identities, it's conceivable that there will be increased manifestations of adaptability in leadership practices within the framework of evolving gender identities. This has the potential to redefine research focused on adaptive leadership theory, Leader-As-Practice, and Everyday Peace.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide (Semi-Structured)

Duration- 60-90mins

Research Title: Emerging Leadership Practices in Extremity: Case Study of Women Advancing Collective Enterprise in Peace Building Processes in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. It will take 60-90minutes of your time, and at any point you feel like taking a break or quitting please let me know. Please seek further clarification on questions that may be asked but may need more information or explanation. Note that it is going to be recorded and documented as a resource for the study.

Interview Guide

A)Demographic Information

Name:

Tribe:

Level of education:

Marital status:

Religion:

Ethnicity:

Age:

Level of Education

B) Content Mapping Questions

- A) How did different contextual factors (differences in ethnicity, religion, leadership orientation, gender and age) impact leadership practices in peace building efforts in Plateau State?
- b) How do community groups define inclusion, and its influence in the exercise of peace building process?
- c) How did these women group experiences influence and evoke emerging leadership practices for sustainable peace?

Content Mining Questions

- A1) What factors are key to participants when negotiating how, when and who to engage in community peace building
 - A2) Why did participants choose to engage in peace building in their communities
 - A3) What conditions could make peace building efforts less complicated in your communities?
 - A4) How did patriarchy affect the progress of women-led community peace building?
-
- B1) What are participants specific expectations when engaging groups in peace building processes
 - B2) How do you perceive community receptiveness to women led efforts in peace building

B3) How do your identities come together and allow you to consider taking a risk? Are there some contexts that make it easier for you to take a risk as compared to others?

B4) How would you describe your level of tolerance of others as you navigated community peace building?

C1) When do you decide it is time to strategize and explore other approaches in peace building engagements?

C2) Did the approaches you adopted perceived as defiant to community social norms? If yes, why did you choose these approaches?

C3) What type of methods or approaches made more impact in community peace processes? Are they new to participants or it has been a tradition?

If it new, how did participants mobilize around uncertainty and risk of not knowing? What do you consider before taking risk and charting an unknown path?

C4) How was partnership built amongst individuals and groups?

C5) What aspects of peace building efforts did participants do differently? And why?

C6) How would you describe decision making amongst the group work? What made it effective or not?

C7) What made the team dynamics work and how did you experience the challenges? Did it create space for others to be included?

C8) How would you describe the impact of the approach women groups engaged with others in your community? For whom & what level of impact do you believe it made?

C9) Can you share an experience of when you were faced with a challenge, and describe how you made progress on it, either individually or collaboratively, and explain why you made that choice/whether it was the only choice available.

C10) Can you describe a situation when you think you or your group may have done something new/experimental. What happened? How? And how did it progress?

B) WRAP UP

Thank you for spending time to be part of this interview and sharing your experience working in peace building in your community. If there is a need for further information, you will be contacted to be interviewed again.

Appendix B: Research Debriefing Statement

Project Title: Emerging Leadership Practices in Extremity: Case Study of Women Advancing Collective Enterprise in Peace Building Processes in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Principal Investigator- Anisah Ari, Leadership Communication Program, aanisah@ksu.edu

Thank you for participating in this study. It is crucial to share with you the purpose of the research, how it will be conducted, the reporting, and how it may be used after completion.

What the study really is about

In Nigeria and most part of Africa, women are soft target and suffer disproportionately in crisis situations including experiencing exclusion in peace building processes. Leadership practices that is inclusive and participatory is often stymied by cultural practices and dominant narratives that privilege patriarchy. This research focuses on understanding the alternative practices that served as mediating factors in advancing peace leadership in Plateau State. It is crucial create visibility and advance knowledge and practice building on the milestone success attained by a group of women expanding cultural boundaries despite the challenges they encounter. Focus will be on the role of context and process in effecting peace processes that negotiate cultural norms and practices in peculiarly extreme conditions. With the permission of the participants, data collected from this study will help inform the aforementioned, with specific mentions of real-life stories/testimonies.

Taking part is voluntary

Although you will be asked to consent on participation, your involvement throughout the process is still voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw the data you provided prior to debriefing, without penalty. Withdrawing your submission will not adversely affect your relationship with the researchers, or any of our affiliates.

Phases of Debriefing

- i. **Post data collection & analysis:** Participants will be debriefed after analysis to ensure that their voices are accurately captured and represents their lived experiences.
- ii. **Completion of research report:** Participants will be debriefed on the outcome of the study and how the report will be disseminated and used.

Privacy/Confidentiality

If you agree to allow us to use your data, here is how we will maintain confidentiality of the information. We will seek consent to state your name or otherwise use a pseudonym, your affiliation or specific statement or testimonies shared. The data will be stored on cloud, and only people granted permission may have permission to access.

The main researcher conducting this study is Anisah Ari, a graduate student at Kansas State University. If you have any questions after the interviews or the study has been completed, please you may contact, Anisah Ari at aanisah@ksu.edu, or +234803844289, or the faculty advisor , Dr. Brandon Kliewer at bkliewer@ksu.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at the website comply@k-state.edu or call 785-532-3224

Please sign below if you do, or do not, give permission to have your data included in the study:

I have been debriefed by the Research team, and I understand the true intent of and the purpose of my participation in the study title “Emerging Leadership Practices in Extremity: Case Study of

Women Advancing Collective Enterprise in Peace Building Processes in Plateau State, Nigeria”. I agree that the data collected during the study may be included for the purpose of the study.

I have been debriefed by the Research team, and I understand the true intent of and the purpose of my participation in the study titled “Emerging Leadership Practices in Extremity: Case Study of Women Advancing Collective Enterprise in Peace Building Processes in Plateau State, Nigeria”. I DO NOT give permission for the data collected during the study to be included for the purposes of the study.