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## Negotiating Masculinity and Cultural Identity in *Americanah*: An Analysis of Hegemonic Norms in Nigerian Diaspora Literature

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### Abstract

This article delves into the presentation of masculinity and cultural identity in diaspora literature, honing in on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. The study seeks to understand how cultural expectations and power dynamics contribute to the construction of masculinity within Nigerian diasporic communities, utilizing Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, it seeks to examine the impact of cultural fusion on the development of masculinity and cultural identity in male main characters in the chosen novel and to investigate how the intersections of race, gender, and immigrant background converge to influence the formation of masculinity in *Americanah*. Through a thorough examination of the male characters, the research delves into their engagements with dominant norms while striving to establish their sense of self and connection. The primary discoveries underscore the complex interplay among race, gender, and the immigrant background in moulding not only personal but also communal identities. The investigation pinpoints occurrences of defiance and rebellion against the prevailing masculine norms, while also exploring the potential for cultural amalgamation to redefine conventional ideas of masculinity. This scholarly inquiry enriches the comprehension of the intricate dynamics surrounding masculinity and cultural identification, providing valuable perspectives on the nuances of diasporic encounters and their influence on identity formation within diasporic literary works. In addition, this learned analysis creates opportunities for more inquiries into the relationships among sex, ethnicity, and individuality in contemporary literature, ultimately propelling the awareness of different plots within migrant communities.

**Keywords:** Cultural identity; Diaspora Literature; Hegemonic masculinity; Masculinity; Nigerian Diaspora.

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## Introduction

In diaspora literature, the exploration of masculinity and cultural identity serves as a lens through which authors delve into the complexities of human experience and societal expectations. By delving into the themes of masculinity and cultural identity within diaspora literature, scholars can uncover profound insights into the intersections of power, identity and belonging. The notion of diaspora covers a wide range of global movements and displacements of people towards different areas in the world. Between the years 1501 and 1867, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade stood out as a notable diaspora that brought about a substantial shift on a global scale. People were forcibly displaced from Africa to Europe and America to work as slaves in plantation fields and other ignoble jobs, and Nigerian people were no exception. As a consequence, Africans were separated from their homelands, families and cultures. The Nigerian diaspora was marked also by a voluntarily movement to the United Kingdom to improve living conditions and then to other different destinations across the globe. The dynamics of gender were also heavily impacted because of the diaspora process whether on the feminine level or the masculine level. Masculinity extends beyond biological maleness to encompass a range of societal expectations and behaviors considered appropriate for individuals identified as male. These traits are products of societal impact, being influenced by cultural standards and anticipations instead of being determined by innate biological aspects. Indeed, masculinity is shaped by societal definitions and the reinforcement of behaviors and norms that embody the concept of manhood. This creation is perpetuated through the behaviors of individuals, establishments and cultural customs.

It should be emphasized that masculinity is not a set or universally defined attribute, but a fluid and socially constructed element of gender identity within specific cultural contexts. Therefore, this exploration sheds light on the nuances of masculinity and cultural identity within diaspora literature, highlighting the ways in which gender, race and the immigrant experience intersect to influence individual and collective notions of self. Through an examination of seminal works such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, this paper aims to dissect how male characters navigate and negotiate their identities in the midst of competing cultural expectations and societal pressures through utilizing R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity which provides a significant structure for comprehending the ways in which cultural standards and power relationships influence the manifestations of masculinity portrayed in Nigerian diaspora literature. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian writer of Igbo parents, a diasporic prolific author who has published several award-winning works in the field of postcolonial feminism, like *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. The latter, which is the case study of this research, is Adichie's fourth book which was published in 2013. It is about a young Nigerian woman named Ifemelu, who embarks on a journey to the United States to pursue her educational career where she was subjected to racism. Meanwhile, her boyfriend, Obinze, stays in Nigeria where he also faces struggles with identity and belonging before immigrating to the United Kingdom where he is confronted with challenges of being an undocumented immigrant in the diaspora. This research tries to answer the following research question:

- How do male protagonists negotiate hegemonic norms of masculinity within Nigerian diaspora literature?

To answer this research question, the researchers feel the need to discuss other sub-questions, such as:

- How do male protagonists in *Americanah* navigate cultural expectations of masculinity in the diaspora?

- How does cultural hybridity influence the construction of masculinity and cultural identity among male protagonists in *Americanah*?

- How do intersections of race, gender and immigrant experience overlap to shape the construction of masculinity in *Americanah*?

### 1. Theoretical Framework: Introducing Hegemonic Masculinity

Donaldson's interpretation of hegemony in Gramsci's Marxist perspective gets deeper into the complex dynamics involved in the establishment and maintenance of power structures within societies. He argues that hegemony focuses on the acquisition and retention of power, as it is crucial to the formation of the social hierarchy (1993, p.644). It primarily concerns the methods through which the dominant class establishes and upholds its control, as it involves all aspects of domination that a particular group exercises over another. Central to this process is the capacity to define the context in which events are interpreted, and shape values and ethics. However, Stuart Hall emphasizes that hegemony goes beyond a straightforward assumption of power by a single class with a predefined ideology (Hall, 1986, p.42). Instead, Hall underscores the significance of a more intricate process wherein a historical bloc comprising various social forces is carefully constructed. This bloc aims to consolidate its dominance and secure its ascendancy within the societal framework. Gramsci's established term of hegemony has been ultimately borrowed into gender studies by the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell who developed the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

Donaldson's viewpoint regarding the term hegemonic masculinity is rooted in the idea that this concept was coined and is predominantly employed to sustain a feminist perspective on masculinity that is centered on dominance and control in society. One vital component of dominant masculinity relates to the idea that females are mainly viewed as items of sexual allure for males, which works to maintain established gender norms and power hierarchies (ibid). However, Donaldson also mentions that women may not only be oppressed by hegemonic masculinities but might also find non-hegemonic forms of masculinity restricting and may even perceive certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity as more familiar and navigable. This illustrates the complexity and nuances in how different expressions of masculinity intersect with gender relations and power structures in society. The discussion on hegemonic masculinity emphasizes the importance of thoroughly analyzing and dismantling conventional ideas of gender and power in order to advance more comprehensive and fair social frameworks.

Notwithstanding, according to Donaldson's logic hegemonic masculinity embodies societal norms around providing for one's family and the perceived essence of manhood. Hegemonic masculinity is characterized by its exclusivity, inducing anxiety, internal hierarchy, brutality, violence, and is perpetuated by societal norms (1993, p.655). While closely intertwined with systems of male dominance, not all men adhere to it, though many benefit from its existence. It manifests as a lived reality, shaping economic and cultural landscapes and relies on societal consensus for its maintenance. The negotiation and construction of hegemonic masculinity are complicated processes, developed and reinforced over a lifetime through social agreements and interactions.

According to Carrigan et al, hegemonic masculinity pertains to the examination of how specific cohorts of men assume roles of authority and affluence, as well as the mechanisms through which they validate and perpetuate the societal constructs contributing to their prevailing influence (1985, p.592). This concept delves into the complex dynamics surrounding the power structures and economic disparities that underpin the hegemony of certain male groups. Connell has reflected upon this notion in which she thinks that hegemonic masculinity is the prevailing manifestation of

masculinity in a given society, embodying characteristics and actions that are elevated and favored above others. It signifies the set of traits and behaviors that are culturally defined as the epitome of masculinity, shaping expectations and norms related to gender roles and identities in that particular social context. She argues in her book *Masculinities*, that

“Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable” (2005, p.76).

According to her logic, hegemonic masculinity is therefore changeable, as it differs from one culture to another and from one group of men to another. Consequently, in diaspora communities, cultural expectations often intersect with hegemonic norms, influencing how individuals perceive and perform their gender identities.

Moreover, Demetriou discusses power dynamics within the current Western gender order, as seen through Connell's viewpoint, which highlights the central role of men's global dominance over women. This dominance is maintained through what Connell terms as hegemonic masculinity, as individuals who conform to its norms often have influence over social, economic, political and other spheres within their societies (Demetriou, 2001, p.340). Within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, certain masculinities subordinate themselves to the dominant practice to align with the accepted norms that perpetuate patriarchy. These different types of masculinity are linked through their connection to the overarching system that continues to uphold the dominance of men over women. By defining and upholding hegemonic masculinity, men solidify their authoritative status in society and consign women to inferior positions.

This ideology underpins the power dynamics and gender inequalities that characterize the current Western gender order as described by Connell, as she outlines that men tend to have certain material advantages in patriarchal societies, including but not limited to higher incomes and easier access to education (2005, p.77). This phenomenon is termed the patriarchal dividend. The patriarchal dividend underscores the inherent inequalities and privileges that men often experience within such systems, while also pointing to the broader issue of gender-based power differentials that are at play in the social order (Demetriou, 2001, p.341; Carrigan et al, 1985, p.591-594)). Furthermore, Connell's perception highlights how these advantages and power differentials are intertwined with and reinforce the overarching system of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, which systematically upholds men's dominant position and women's subordination. Hence, Understanding power dynamics within hegemonic masculinity can shed light on power hierarchies and inequalities within diaspora communities, particularly in relation to gender.

Moreover, in psychology masculinity is “what men actually are” (Connell, 2005, p.69) as gender plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' identities. The emergence of some liberation movements like the gay movement and others, sustain the belief that hegemonic masculinity influences how individuals construct and negotiate their gender identities. Carrigan et al, reflect on this account, in which they claim that,

In affirming a homosexual identity, many gay liberationists embraced the charge of effeminacy and declared that the real problem lay in the rigid social definitions of masculinity. It was society, not themselves, that needed to be cured (1985, p.585).

Be it a straight man, a homosexual or heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity impacts people's sense of belonging and self-worth within their cultures or in the diaspora. Nevertheless, Connell points out that within the complex system of gender power dynamics, the dominance of men over women is not solely reliant on overt displays of authority or direct control. She highlights that in everyday

aspects like marriage, fatherhood and community engagement, men often engage in compromises with women rather than outright domination (Connell, 2005, p.79). Many men who benefit from patriarchal structures still manage to exhibit respect towards women, avoid violence, partake in household chores and contribute to the family income. This idea spotlights the understanding that hegemonic masculinity, which signifies the primary standard for masculinity in society, includes not only individual actions but also societal norms and cultural expectations that influence the dynamics between genders (ibid 65).

By focusing on how men navigate these relationships and societal roles, Connell sheds light on how hegemonic masculinity influences not only individual behaviors but also societal structures. It influences how individuals are socialized to adopt certain traits or behaviors deemed appropriate for their gender, perpetuating a system where men hold dominant positions while also emphasizing that there can be variations in how this dominance is expressed. Connell asserts that hegemonic masculinity is not an unchanging notion, but rather a versatile impact that shapes gender relationships and power systems, influencing the behaviors of males and the domination of females within larger societal and cultural frameworks. Therefore, examining hegemonic masculinity can reveal how the societal and cultural norms are reinforced, challenged or renegotiated within diaspora contexts.

Raewyn Connell claims that the interplay of gender with other social structures like race and class essentially highlights that gender cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as an integral part of broader social practices. Gender, being a fundamental aspect of social organization, intersects with and is influenced by various other societal structures such as race, class and even nationality (2005, p.75). In the context of South Africa under Apartheid, where class exclusion combined with racism, the impact was virulent due to the systemic devaluation of black labour and the reserved skilled jobs for white men. This scenario vividly illustrates the intertwining of gender with class and race dynamics, where middle-class men were increasingly associated with skill-bearing roles, reinforcing the prevailing hierarchical social order. Connell's insight underscores the elaborate and intertwined essence of social systems, underscoring the significance of investigating the intersections between gender, race, class, and other notable elements in any study. As gender is deeply embedded in social practices, its manifestations and implications are intertwined with the dynamics of power, privilege, and discrimination that also characterize race and class relations.

In diaspora literature, hegemonic masculinity overlaps with other various facets of identity, like race, ethnicity and class. Comprehending how dominant masculinity interacts with these intersecting identities offers insights into the complexities of gender dynamics and identity formation in diaspora contexts. Connell highlights the hegemonic nature of a masculinity system in which class exclusion and racism intersect, as seen in South Africa during the Apartheid era. This merging of class-based discrimination and racial prejudice yields a particularly harmful and destructive outcome (Connell, 2005, p.55). In the apartheid economy, skilled jobs were deliberately set aside for white men, while black labourers were relegated to lower-paying, unstable positions.

Furthermore, Connell argues that within this structure, middle-class men start to be exclusively portrayed as the carriers of skill. This shift is backed by a significant historical transformation within labour markets known as credentialism. Credentialism is the process by which formal qualifications, often tied to higher education, become paramount in determining job opportunities and career advancement. This perpetuates a cycle where access to education and therefore skilled positions are concentrated among certain classes, deepening the divide and reinforcing the existing

racist power dynamics. By pointing out the confluence of classism and racism, Connell sheds light on the multiple layers of inequality and exclusion that shape societies under such oppressive systems.

Even though Connell talks about the importance of recognizing the differences between class and race settings, she highlights that while these factors are crucial, they do not represent the sole patterns of difference. She emphasizes that in a particular cultural or institutional setting; different expressions of masculinity can exist that are not exclusively determined by social class or race (Connell, 2005, p.36; Demetriou, 2001, p.340). This suggests that the construction of masculinity is a complex interplay of various social factors beyond just class or racial backgrounds. Connell's argument underscores the idea that hegemonic masculinity is not a singular concept within society. It is rather formed and shaped by a combination of factors that can coexist even within the same cultural environment.

In *Americanah*, hegemonic masculinity provides a lens through which researchers can understand the construction and performance of masculinity among the male characters. By examining how these male characters conform to or resist hegemonic norms of masculinity, it is possible to gain insights into the complexities of gender dynamics in Nigerian diaspora literature. For example, the protagonist, Obinze, navigates cultural expectations and power dynamics as he seeks to establish his identity in both Nigeria and the diaspora. Through examining his interactions with other characters and his internal struggles, Obinze's experiences reflect broader themes of hegemonic masculinity. By analysing these dynamics, we can uncover how hegemonic masculinity shapes the portrayal of masculinity in *Americanah* and contributes to the understanding of gender identity within diaspora literature.

Musagasa employs Mutua's concept of progressive masculinity, which posits that this type of masculinity is contingent upon the male's acknowledgment of his status as an equal human being - neither superior to, nor inferior to, his female counterpart, offspring or other males (Musagasa, 2022, p.77). Musagasa argues that within Adichie's *Americanah*, progressive masculinity is manifested as a structured womanist initiative designed to reshape Obinze's mindset by empowering him to transcend conventional male stereotypes. The primary objective of such empowerment is essentially to equip him with the ability to engage in a healthy manner with the empowered female character and coexist harmoniously as equitable companions in a gender-neutral society (ibid p.78).

## **2. Hegemonic Masculinity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah***

To analyse the facets of hegemonic masculinity depicted in Adichie's book *Americanah*, it is crucial to scrutinize the interactions between male and female characters outlined in the selected storyline, as well as the dynamics among the male characters themselves. As Connell posits in her work *Gender and Power*,

Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal social order works (1987, p.183).

Consequently, this research delves into the portrayal of the protagonist Obinze's relationships with both male and female characters in Nigeria and in the diaspora.

### **2.1.Cultural Expectations of Masculinity in Nigerian Society**

In the novel *Americanah*, various cultural expectations that Nigerian society places on Nigerian men are illustrated, both in Nigeria and overseas. One key expectation is the belief that Igbo men

should care for women exceptionally well. Moreover, there is a societal norm that suggests Igbo men ought to marry Igbo women, following the practice of intra-ethnic unions. Nevertheless, the novel showcases scenarios where some men in Nigerian society go against these norms (Adichie, 2014, p.18). For instance, some men opt to wed Yoruba or foreign women, challenging the traditional ideas of marriage alliances based on ethnic backgrounds (ibid). These departures from cultural expectations underscore the intricate nature of identity and relationships in Nigerian society, underscoring the conflicts between tradition and modernism, cultural values, and individual choices.

In *Americanah*, Nigerian men are shown to be under the need of meeting societal expectations of strength, both physically and emotionally. This is illustrated through characters like Hijioko, a cab driver, and Emeka, a security guard, who engage in demanding physical labour to make a living (Adichie, 2014, p.21). However, the portrayal of masculinity in emotional terms diverges from the expected norm, especially through the character of Obinze. Despite his physical robustness, Obinze displays emotional vulnerability, particularly in his relationship with Ifemelu. When Ifemelu abruptly ends their relationship and moves on, Obinze's emotional fragility becomes apparent as he struggles to come to terms with the betrayal. Nevertheless, when Ifemelu seeks to reconnect, Obinze shows eagerness, highlighting his emotional sensitivity and desire for reconciliation. Adichie says,

When Obinze first saw her e-mail . . . He read it again slowly and felt the urge to smooth something, his trousers, his shaved-bald head. She had called him Ceiling. In the last e-mail from her, sent just before he got married, she had called him Obinze, apologized for her silence over the years, wished him happiness in sunny sentences, and mentioned the black American she was living with (2014, p.23).

In Nigerian society, there exists a significant social norm where men are expected to fulfil the role of providers by demonstrating care and assistance to their families (Adichie, 2014, p.26), all the while working towards ensuring their welfare and safety. Financial stability is highly valued, reflecting the importance placed on the welfare of the family unit. This theme is prominently illustrated in the novel *Americanah* through the character of Obinze, who embodies the role of provider by working diligently to support his wife Kosi and child Buch. His wife relies on him to take care of the family, evident in her consistent inquiries about his job and the stability of their life. Obinze's dedication to his provider role is evident in his efforts to uphold their standard of living and ensure their happiness (Adichie 2014, p.27). This portrayal emphasizes the significance of provider roles in Nigerian society and sheds light on the pressures and duties that men face in fulfilling this role, even amidst evolving societal norms and shifting gender dynamics.

## 2.2. Power dynamics and gender relations

In *Americanah*, several passages illustrate power dynamics and how they intersect with hegemonic masculinity. In the novel, Obinze's journey to becoming a successful businessman in Nigeria and later in the UK symbolizes the link between hegemonic masculinity and the access to social, economic and political power. His progress in the corporate realm enhances his standing within his local community and also empowers him to exert influence over individuals on both a local and global level (Adichie, 2014, p.32-33). By adhering to the traditional norms and expectations of masculine behaviour, Obinze gains privilege and advantages that come with conforming to these dominant stereotypes of masculinity. This connection underscores how societal perceptions of masculinity can shape one's opportunities for success and impact their ability to wield power and authority, just like the character Chief (Adichie, 2014, p.30). Obinze's trajectory

in the novel serves as a commentary on the intricate relationship between masculinity, power dynamics and the opportunities available to individuals based on their ability to embody and uphold hegemonic ideals of masculinity.

Throughout the novel, Ifemelu's reflections provide insight into the power dynamics and inequalities prevalent within Nigerian society. She keenly observes how men exercise power and control over women, highlighting the pervasive influence of hegemonic masculinity in reinforcing existing power structures. By delving into the intersectionality of gender, race, and class, Ifemelu underscores how these facets are interconnected and contribute to shaping individuals' experiences and opportunities within society (Adichie, 2014, p.5-80-93-204-205). Her keen insights highlight how hegemonic masculinity magnifies and sustains power structures, thereby deepening inequalities and divisions among various social factions. Ifemelu's examination of these complex dynamics serves to underscore the multifaceted nature of power relations and the profound impacts they have on individuals' lived experiences and social standing within Nigerian society.

In *Americanah*, Obinze's relationships with women, such as Ifemelu and his wife, offer a nuanced portrayal of power dynamics within intimate relationships. The dynamics discussed illustrate the ways in which dominant masculinity can impact and shape the relationships among people, thus playing a role in sustaining gender disparities (Adichie, 2014, p.460). Obinze's relationships exemplify the complexities that arise when societal expectations of masculinity intersect with personal interactions, oftentimes resulting in imbalances of power within these intimate connections. The novel examines the effects of hegemonic masculinity on interpersonal connections, shedding light on how conventional ideas of masculinity can shape interactions, choices and the overall relationships between individuals of differing genders (Adichie, 2014, p.557-558). Through Obinze's interactions with Ifemelu and his wife, the narrative sheds light on the ways in which ingrained gender norms and power structures can impact and sometimes disrupt the equilibrium within intimate relationships. This exploration adds depth to the novel's discussion of gender roles, shedding light on the intricate interplay between personal relationships and broader societal expectations related to masculinity and power.

### **2.3. Resistance and Subversion of Hegemonic Masculinity**

Regarding Obinze's portrayal in *Americanah*, Adichie highlights how her character pushes back against stereotypical expectations of masculinity. By showcasing emotional vulnerability and sensitivity, especially in his interactions with Ifemelu, as it has been mentioned before, Obinze challenges the conventional beliefs about stoicism and emotional detachment often associated with dominant forms of masculinity (Adichie, 2014, p.39). His openness in expressing vulnerability stands in stark contrast to prevailing gender norms, emphasizing the nuance and layers present in the construction of masculinity. Additionally, Obinze's equitable attitude towards relationships, where he shares power and decision-making responsibilities with his partners, notably his wife, goes against traditional patriarchal standards that prioritize male dominance (Adichie, 2014, p.36). His approach underscores a departure from the norms of hegemonic masculinity, which typically value control and authority over cooperation and support. In essence, Obinze's portrayal serves to dismantle the rigid expectations of masculinity, illustrating a more inclusive and diverse understanding of what it means to be a man in contemporary society.

Furthermore, Adichie reflects on Connell's idea of providerhood when illustrating Obinze's role as a parent in *Americanah*, where she underscores the significance of his involvement in raising his daughter and fostering a caring and affectionate bond with her. This depiction challenges the prevailing belief that childcare is exclusively the duty of women by showcasing Obinze as an active



and engaged father. Adichie describes his treatment towards his baby girl in which she says, “Buch-buch! Daddy’s Buch!” He swung her up, kissed her, nuzzled her neck, and, because it always made her laugh, pretended to throw her down on the floor” (2014, p.27). His commitment to parenting goes against established gender norms, which often assign childcare and nurturing roles primarily to women, thus emphasizing the necessity of shared parental duties in a family dynamic. By actively participating in the upbringing of his daughter, Obinze subverts traditional gender expectations and encourages a more balanced and equal distribution of parenting responsibilities between partners. This portrayal serves as a powerful narrative that highlights the value of mutual involvement in childcare, ultimately advocating for a more inclusive and progressive approach to parenting that transcends traditional gender stereotypes.

As a whole, the author's portrayal of Obinze shows his progressive stance against the entrenched patriarchal structures prevalent in Nigerian society. Obinze's critique of patriarchy is evident through his outspoken criticisms of gender inequality, misogyny and the restrictive nature of dominant masculine traits. By articulating his dissenting opinions on these issues, Obinze emerges as a character who questions the status quo and refuses to conform to societal expectations that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and inequity (Adichie, 2014, p.37). His willingness to challenge oppressive systems of power underscores his commitment to dismantling traditional notions of masculinity that perpetuate harmful attitudes and behaviours (Adichie, 2014, p.555). Through Obinze's narrative arc, Adichie explores the complexities of patriarchal norms and emphasizes the importance of pushing back against regressive ideologies that undermine gender equality and social justice.

#### **2.4. Intersectionality of Masculinity and Identity**

When Obinze arrives to the United States, he encounters racial stereotypes and biases that intersect with his identity as a Nigerian immigrant. He faces discrimination and aggressions based on his race and nationality, which shape his experiences of masculinity and cultural identity. Obinze, for instance, faces racial profiling and suspicion from law enforcement officials, thereby underscoring the racialized aspect of his immigrant journey and its influence on his self-esteem and feeling of acceptance. Upon moving to the United Kingdom, Obinze confronts additional challenges as an immigrant navigating the complexities of British society (Adichie, 2014, p.342-343-344). He deals with challenges related to fitting in and adapting to a new culture, along with the demands to adhere to societal norms of masculinity in his unfamiliar surroundings. Obinze's experiences of marginalization and alienation as an immigrant intersect with his gender identity, influencing how he perceives himself and interacts with others. Adichie says,

Obinze was still reeling from what had happened to him in England, still insulated in layers of his own self-pity, and to hear Nneoma’s dismissive question—“Are you the first person to have this problem?”—upset him (2014, p.28).

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the exploration of masculinity and cultural identity in diaspora literature, as exemplified in *Americanah*, has shed light on the complexities of gender dynamics within transnational contexts. Drawing upon Connell’s theory in analysing hegemonic norms, cultural expectations, resistance and intersectionality, the study has uncovered the nuanced ways in which masculinity is constructed, negotiated and performed by characters like Obinze. From his immigration experience to his interactions with Ifemelu and others, Obinze's journey illuminates the intersections of race, ethnicity, immigration status, and gender identity within diaspora communities. By examining specific passages and instances from the novel, the researchers have

observed how hegemonic masculinity intersects with other axes of identity, shaping individual experiences and perceptions of masculinity and cultural identity in Nigerian diaspora literature. Obinze's emotional vulnerability, challenges to traditional gender roles, and navigation of power dynamics highlight the complexities of masculinity within diaspora literature, offering insights into the broader social, economic, and political forces at play. The implications of this analysis extend beyond the pages of *Americanah* to contribute to a deeper understanding of masculinity and cultural identity in diaspora literature. In essence, the current examination underscores the importance of critically engaging with representations of masculinity and cultural identity in diaspora literature, recognizing the multiplicity of identities and the fluidity of gender dynamics within transnational contexts.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

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