Immigrant Nigerian women’s self-empowerment through consumption as cultural resistance:
A cross-cultural comparison in the UK

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ABSTRACT

Existing research into the consumption behaviour of immigrants is limited in its scope and generally focused primarily on male immigrants. This research aims to address these concerns by focusing on how female immigrants construct multiple identities via changing social and economic conditions along with employment, allowing them to acculturate into British White society while being expected to hold onto patriarchal values in their marital home. This conformity, this research argues, leads females to assert their personal power, towards men, through various acts of resistance manifested through consumption.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

During the preparation of this thesis, a number of papers were prepared as listed below. The rest of the thesis remains unpublished.


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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the women in my life – this is your story. I also dedicate this research to my family – all those words of encouragement have finally paid off. Lastly I would also like to dedicate this to my husband and my son – without the both of you there would be no PhD.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not have been possible to write this doctoral thesis without the help and support of the kind people around me, to only some of whom it is possible to give particular mention here.

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

The aim of this research was to answer the research question: ‘To what extent do first-generation immigrant Nigerian women living in Britain use consumption as a tool of cultural resistance against patriarchy?’

Previous research into consumption behaviour of immigrants has been criticised by its limited scope and because it primarily focuses on male immigrants. This research aims to address these criticisms by focusing on how first-generation female Nigerian immigrants residing in Britain construct multiple identities to allow themselves to acculturate into British White society, while being expected to conform to patriarchal values in the marital home. This conformity, one argues, leads to females asserting their personal power through acts of resistance, manifested through consumption, towards their male partner.

The sample group (n=40) consisted of British White and first-generation Nigerian immigrant married couples residing in Britain. The research involved two sets of interviews: initial interviews with both spouses, then the female partner separately. The decision for separate, follow-up interviews with the female participants aimed to assess to what extent their narratives changed when they were away from their male spouses. As attributed to a qualitative methodology, interpretative analyses were used. As a result interviews were transcribed, the data was coded and analysed in deriving categories and themes. Themes generated were cross-analysed to ensure reliability. From this, opposing participant profiles were generated which were reanalysed and discussed. Due to the sensitivity of the research topic a strict adherence to research ethics was undertaken.
The findings supported previous arguments that immigrant males, especially among African immigrants, view themselves as the main provider for their families. The findings of this research, however, indicate that this role was only partially accepted by their female partners. In particular, this research found that female Nigerian immigrants do not passively accept their role of the submissive housewife but instead actively challenge, renegotiate and circumnavigate the Nigerian cultural values held by their partner. This finding shows that these female immigrants negotiate power, often subversively, within the family, to achieve their own desired outcomes. This finding addresses previous criticisms of research into immigrants as being biased towards men.

It was also found that exposure to employment opportunities and interaction with British culture supported female Nigerian immigrants in their acculturation and adaptation into British White society. Immigration subsequently provided precursors for the female participants’ acts of resistance. Female participants were able to negotiate differing cultural situations through the construction of multiple identities. Previous research (Dion, 2001) argued that female immigrants may not always experience the same or comparable benefits as males; the findings only partially support this. While it was found that the female Nigerian participants experienced cultural restrictions, such as within traditional Nigerian cultural contexts, they were nonetheless able to express their opinions to their male spouses. Although the female Nigerian participants did experience acculturation conflicts, they did not experience, or at least demonstrate, psychological and socio-cultural difficulties as suggested by previous researchers (for example, Ward and Kennedy, 2001). As a result one found that the opportunities that immigration offered, such as employment and self-empowerment manifested through their resistance to their male partner’s patriarchy, countered any negative effects arising from acculturation.

The findings also showed that the male Nigerian participants demonstrated and actively sought out Nigerian cultural values to reinforce their position as head of the household. This behaviour was often as a result of their felt or experienced inferior status in British White society, i.e. racism, and aimed to help them achieve a sense of self-esteem and pride. The
home became then a secure place where the Nigerian man was able to recreate a culturally derived sense of masculinity that was then imposed onto their female spouse and children.

Conforming to patriarchy was often used as a response to shared experiences of racism and the negative consequence of racism experienced by their male partners. The immigrant Nigerian female participants acknowledged the pain and struggle of their male partners in trying to adapt and acculturate to British White culture. Their male partner’s experiences of racism led them to uphold their patriarchal position in the household. In supporting their male partner’s position these women reluctantly conformed to Nigerian cultural patriarchy as an act aimed at in protecting their male partner’s sense of masculinity.

However, our female Nigerian participants did not willingly accept this act of submission and aimed to renegotiate their power within the family. Central to this renegotiation of power was consumption. Consumption was used as a form of resistance, especially for the female Nigerian participants. Resistance through consumption took many forms from subtle acts of consumption, such as purchasing a piece of clothing, through to outright resistance, such as buying property in Nigeria. Acts of resistance then simply became a way for the female to temporarily readjust the power balance in their relationship and renegotiate their compromised gender and identity. This balance allowed the female Nigerian participants to accept and acknowledge their own psychological and socio-cultural needs, even though they publicly and actively reinforced the patriarchy they were resisting. From a Western perspective this may be deemed as prohibitive and sexist. For immigrant female Nigerian participants it was a coping mechanism to support their male partners which as result ensured the female had to compromise her needs and position as an independent women.

The findings of this research develops further our understanding of the consumption decisions undertaken by immigrants and how consumption is used to reassert a sense of pride in one’s self. This finding complements Certeau’s (1984) work into individuals undertaking everyday acts of resistance through mundane consumption. This research also gives further insight into the relationship between consumption and resistance, making an important contribution to
knowledge, in particular into consumer research into immigrants from a non-American perspective.

In comparison, in terms of acts of resistance, female British White participants demonstrated this openly. The British White participants in their egalitarian view of marriage and gender roles appeared not to demonstrate cultural patriarchy nor were the female participants willing to accept it. Compared to the Nigerian female participants, the need to resist subversively was not apparent among the White female participants.

This research has, therefore, shown that female Nigerian immigrants are not passive actors in the process of acculturation and acts of consumption. Instead of accepting their male partner’s authority this research has shown how they often hide and manipulate consumption acts to suit their own needs, and thus empower themselves. Yet these acts of resistance are based on much darker reasons. Aware of their male spouses experiences of racism, and subsequent sense of demasculinisation, Nigerian women voluntarily give their power within the family to their male spouse. By empowering their male spouse they provide him with a sense of pride and well being, in a world where he feels undervalued. An act that while voluntary, often led to the acts of resistance noted; these acts allowed Nigerian women to temporarily reassert themselves, and one could argue, support their own mental health.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the theoretical outline that this research will be based upon. It will consist of a brief overview of the research rationale and problem, taking into consideration relevant insights into past and present literature. This will then be followed by an outline of the research context and concluding with an overview of the thesis.

1.2 Research rationale

Studies focusing on consumption are often lacking in their focus on ethnic minorities, specifically from immigrant groups (Greaves et al., 1995). Previous research into immigrants has tended to be American centric, which, although useful in informing us of different phenomena, may be detrimental to expanding our knowledge in this research area. Studies that have been conducted into immigrants appear to favour the theories and methods of the Chicago School of Urban Studies, which entails looking comparatively at processes of assimilation among different ethnic groups (Waters and Jiménez, 2005). In addition to this, American-centric studies on decision making and consumption in families appear to favour using methodologies that focus on only one half of a married couple as opposed to both. This approach is disadvantageous because it fails to consider the relationship between spouses. For example, Boyd (1986) noted that early research on international migration focused mostly on the experiences of the male immigrant, resulting in female immigrants being either invisible or stereotyped. Although Boyd’s work was published in 1986, some twenty-four years later his observation is still valid. Research into the female immigrant perspective appears to be still sadly lacking.

Focusing on the internal relationship between immigrant females and their male partners, there seems to be a lack of in-depth research that highlights and discusses issues of gender and power dynamics (Dion and Dion, 2001; Kallivayalil, 2004). Research studies that have been completed, although useful, fail to discuss comprehensively the relationship between changing
power dynamics in immigrant families with regards to acculturation, cultural identity and
ethnicity (Gentry, Commuri and Jun 2003; Lindridge and Hogg, 2006). Consequently, the
voice of the female immigrant does not appear to be heard and, one may argue, not deemed
relevant.

Finally, research into immigrants and ethnic minorities in Britain tends to favour South
Asians as a minority group and often neglects other ethnic groups, such as Africans, Chinese,
and Eastern Europeans (Lindridge and Dibb, 2003; Reed, 2007). One could say that there may
be subtle tendencies in research to view South Asians as being more prominent than other
ethnic groups, creating gaps in academic research regarding the significance of other ethnic
minorities in Britain. This is important as this inference indicates a lack of knowledge and
research into other ethnic groups. This thesis will contribute to our wider knowledge of ethnic
minorities and immigrants by focusing on the negotiation of power within immigrant married
couples living in Britain, with reference to how this manifests in consumption acts. To
elaborate upon this research gap a full review of the research rationale will now be provided.

1.3 Research problem

The rationale behind this thesis rests on the lack of research on immigrant consumption
practices, particularly on the affect that consumption has on power dynamics within the
marital household. In particular, this thesis aims to give representation and voice to immigrant
women (from the married spouse perspective, as a mother, partner, worker and daughter). In
giving representation and voice to these women this thesis aims to address a number of gaps
identified in the previous research rationale. These are:

1) a greater need for discussions on the affect of culture, ethnicity and acculturation on non-
South Asian immigrant’s self-identity and its relationship to consumption;

1 The terms ‘immigrant’ and ‘ethnic minorities’ are used interchangeably in this thesis, as an individual can
belong to either of or both of these groups. The term immigrant is used to refer to people born outside of their
country of residence, whilst ethnic minorities can include both immigrants and their descendants.
2) to make visible and hear the experiences, representation and voices of immigrant women, in particular how they engage and negotiate daily interactions in everyday life and with their spouse;
3) to understand whether immigrant, married, women engage with consumption from a variety of cultural perspectives, and
4) to what extent can and do immigrant women claim, negotiate and achieve power within the family unit?

It is now necessary to identify the research problem for this thesis. The research problem lies in the lack of research that focuses on the married, female immigrant perspective of their relationship dynamics with their male partner and their wider world. In addition to this, previous research has not fully explored how immigrant Nigerian women, in a new society, assert their power in the household in terms of the consumption of goods, especially in terms of being Black African and located in Britain. This research will explore these issues through studying first-generation Nigerian immigrants living in Britain. Consequently, the research question then becomes, ‘To what extent do first-generation immigrant Nigerian women living in Britain use consumption as a tool of cultural resistance against patriarchy?’

1.4 Migration

The purpose of this section is to explore the background literature to migration and conclude with a short section on Britain’s history of immigration from a Black perspective. This chapter then will serve to provide a context to understand not only Britain’s perspective towards immigrants but also how immigrants may perceive Britain.

1.4.1 Approaches to migration

Migratory studies have attempted to consider why people migrate and these studies offer an interesting insight into this phenomenon. One perspective argues that the decision to migrate is often primarily motivated by a rationality of economic self-interest (De Haan, 1999), such as higher comparable wages in another place or country. This perspective developed further
research by Becker (1975) and Mincer (1978), who argued that a wage is a function of an individual’s human capital and, therefore, income becomes a determinant of immigration. In other words, people migrate solely on the basis of achieving a higher income.

More recent studies have criticised this approach, with Thadani and Todaro (1984) arguing that migration is often affected by social determinants. For example, Thadani and Todaro (1980) argued that migration is not solely about wages and income (which I argue is inherently a male perspective) but should also include social factors, such as woman wanting to migrate to help them have a better marriage.

Other models of migration include the push–pull model; a model that argues that (negative) push factors drive people to leave their countries and the (positive) pull factors that attract them to their new countries (Dorigo and Tobler, 1983). The Push–Pull Theory was first posited by Lee (1966), who stated that any migration is a result of push forces at the origin and pull forces at the destination. Dorigo and Tobler (1983) further formulated Lee’s theory and explained that the actual migration process is a result of a push factor and a pull factor. The push factor relates to such situations that gives rise to an individual being dissatisfied by one’s present situation, for example the lack of long-term employment prospects. The pull factors are those that are attributed to places that offer appealing prospects, for example access to free healthcare.

Empirically the Push–Pull Model of migration has long been formulated into mathematical specifications based upon Ravenstein’s law of migration, which takes into account that people mainly move for economic reasons. In addition to this, migration produces migrant movements directed towards great commercial centres (Lee, 1966), i.e. areas of economic growth where there are greater chances of well-paid employment. In relation to the Push–Pull Theory, taking a female perspective, as suggested by the Thadani and Todaro’s model (1980), the role of home-country characteristics on the decision to migrate need to be considered. For example, investment in female education in a country to improve economic productivity can
increase the propensity of females wanting to migrate to that country (Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2006).

Some theorist have emphasised that analyses is needed to incorporate both individual motives and the structural factors in which migrants operate in (Heckhausen, 1988). The structuration theory, developed by Anthony Giddens in his book *The Constitution of Society* (1984), emphasises that both individual and societal forces are influential on the constitution of society (De Haan, 1999). Most migratory studies use Giddens’s work to discuss migration push and pull factors. Consequently, to understand reasons for migration and subsequent migration experiences we need to understand how human actions are partially determined by the context of the time of immigration.

### 1.4.2 The process of migration

Since highlighting the research problem and its partial focus on immigration (the other aspect being on women), it is essential to discuss how immigration changes social structures. Immigration is undoubtedly a stressful process by which individuals or groups of individuals move from one specific locality to another. These stresses arise from migrants facing various challenges and barriers in the receiving country (Simon, 2001), such as racism.

Migration in itself can be linked to social structures, economic production, consumption patterns, household and family networks (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1987). The general consensus on migration literature appears to focus specifically on social structural and economic adjustments after migration. These changes are often brought about by the exposure to the new society, with the immigrant’s own perception of the costs, benefits and risks of their move in relation to their aspirations (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1987). That is, to put it simply, was migration worth all the effort in relation the rewards received?

Social structural changes may be designated through a change of culture, behaviour, attitudes, opinions and ideas. For example, migrants with low social capital, often in the case of women, are most likely to suffer from poor linguistic and cultural skills in engaging with their new
country, unemployment, poverty, ethnic prejudice and social isolation in immigrant enclaves, and low access to social mobility tracks in the host society (Remennick, 2005). Making reference to the emerging themes in the feminist discourse on gender, Remennick (2005) highlights the differing roles of immigrant women in society, in particular global inequalities, empowerment and relations between Western middle-class women and women in the developing world. Feminist scholars, such as Pessar (1995), have noted that immigrant women experience double jeopardy – having to work full-time as well as taking full responsibility for the home and children.

Migration may also involve changes in the economic and social roles associated with family, responsibility for financial resources and changes in status to name but a few. This can subsequently affect the way that immigrants relate and acculturate themselves into the new society, a perspective that forms the basis for this thesis.

1.4.3 Women and migration

Despite the prominence of women in migration their role in this process appears to have been neglected in literature. Houstoun et al. (1984) noted that the literature on immigration tends to favour males, in particular those that are economically motivated. However, research that has focused on women and immigration has tended to focus on women migrating to the United States. This has left a gap for the study of women migrating to Britain. Mason (1987) explained that although there has been research into the impact of immigration on women’s position and other social outcomes, such as fertility, there is a need to develop a gendered understanding of the causes, processes and consequences of migration. Pedraza (1991) explained that researching the relationship between women’s social position and migration will fill this void regarding knowledge of women as immigrants and contribute to a greater understanding of the lives of women.

Most studies on migration tend to put focus on male individuals (Reid and Comas-Diaz, 1990; Dona and Ferguson, 2004; Remennick, 2005). With this in mind the common assumption then is that it is the male that is typically responsible for making the decision to migrate and that it
is the female that follows (Houstoun et al., 1984; Pedraza, 1991). However, the decision to migrate is not only based on both males and females but also depends on the children (Houstoun et al., 1984). Houstoun et al. (1984) further explained that women generally migrate to create a family or reunite with family. It is hoped that this research will contribute to this greater understanding of the role that women play in migration.

1.4.4 Britain, Black migration and Black Africans

The African community in Britain has long economic and historical association with Britain since beyond the beginning of the twentieth century (Elam and Chinouya, 2000). African immigrants have been migrating to live in Britain for at least 500 years (Buchi, 1986)). For example, Oyetade (1993) referred to historical documentation that reveals that Africans were brought to England as far back as the sixteenth century, about the time of the commencement of the African slave trade.

More recent Black migration to Britain occurred following the commencement of World War II and Britain’s need for manpower from its colonies. The influx of Africans and Afro-Caribbeans into Britain’s armed forces resulted in many wishing to stay permanently in Britain, symbolised by the 1947 arrival of the Jamaican boat Empire Windrush carrying middle-class, professional, Afro-Caribbeans seeking a new life in Britain. By the 1950s, the population of people of African, Afro-Caribbean and Asian descent living in Britain was estimated to be 74,500; by 1963 it was 500,000 (Buchi, 1986). Perhaps more interesting is a study by Davison (1966) that noted that 87% of Jamaican immigrants felt they were British before they even migrated to Britain (largely owing to Jamaica being a British imperial colony then). In contrast, only 2% of Indian and Pakistani immigrants feeling they were British before they migrated. However, Davison’s (1966) study also revealed deep dissatisfaction with life in Britain, with 86% of Jamaican immigrants expressing discontent with life in Britain. One reason for this may have been the rise of racist incidents, embodied in the 1958 Notting Hill race riots in London (Winder, 2004, pp. 364–5):
There was street fighting involving hundreds of young whites shouting, ‘Down with niggers’ … ‘Keep Britain white!’ and waving banners – ‘Deport all niggers!’ … ‘Get rid of them,’ a speaker urged the crowd. ‘Go on boys,’ women called down from windows. ‘Go and get yourself some blacks.’

Although successive British legislation attempted to control immigration it appeared not to hinder the flow of immigrants. Between the 1950s through to the 1990s, an array of African countries experiencing political upheaval and conflict witnessed increasing levels of migration to Britain. In 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from Britain, at which point Nigerian migration to Britain increased; Nigerian immigrants largely drawn from the elite and skilled sectors of Nigerian society (Elam and Chinouya, 2000).

For the emerging middle class in Africa, a university education remains a principle component of social status (Mazrui, 1978, cited in Hunt, 2002). Education as a status symbol of prestige has been hindered and undermined by the political and economic conditions over the last two decades, a situation intolerable for Nigeria’s middle class (Hunt, 2002; Jumare, 1997). Consequently, in echoes of the earlier pull migration strategy, the most prominent feature of Black African migration to Britain has been the focus on a good university education (O’Daley, 1998).

While a British education represented a status symbol for African middle classes, it did not necessary represent a wish to remain living in Britain. In a study of West African sojourners to Britain, Kershen (1997) found that many of these Nigerian students and professionals had also been attracted to Britain to acquire sufficient capital to allow them to return home (Hunt, 2002). However, Nigeria’s faltering economy and rising political tensions (Elam and Chinouya, 2000) often discouraged return; this discouragement was supported by living in a country which shared (admittedly, imperial) historical relationships, a common national language in English and the prospect of greater economic opportunities (Adepoju, 1995; Elam and Chinouya, 2000).
On a final note, there is a need to briefly return to the issue of Black and White race relations in Britain. Although the 1958 Notting Hill riots (and the accompanying Nottingham city riots) triggered an on-going programme of positive race-orientated legislation, the issue of being Black in Britain still appears to be a problematic one. For example, Gilroy (1990) noted how British Whites inherently viewed immigrants and ethnic minorities as the enemy within. Richmond (1988) observed that Britain has an insular outlook with a population unwilling to accept any culture or group that does not fit into the image of a traditional White Anglo-Saxon population. Consequently, Richmond (1988) argued that both institutional and personal racism involves all generations regardless of their country of birth. Racism within British society led Mercer (1992, p. 427) to note that in the UK Black identity is ‘not found but made; that they are not just there, waiting to be discovered in a vocabulary of nature, but they have to be culturally and politically constructed through political antagonism and cultural struggle’. Consequently, being Black and British demands a double consciousness to negotiate the contention of racist discourses that being Black and British are mutually exclusive (Christian, 2002). To be Black in British society then appears to be problematic; this is a theme that will be returned continually throughout this thesis.

1.4.5 Immigration, ethnic minorities and Britain today

In the last twenty years, according to the BBC, immigration has contributed to half of Britain’s population growth in the past ten years, with immigration making up more than half of Britain’s population growth from 1991 to 2001 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4218740.stm). The BBC also reports using an Institute for Public Policy research study of the 2001 Census that calculated a 2.2 million rise in Britain’s population, including 1.14 million individuals born abroad (an increase from 5.75% in 1991 to 7.53% in 2001). Figure 1.1 shows figures of the migrant population of people born in other countries now living in Britain.
British census data indicates that Nigerians account for 1.5 percent of foreign nationals living in Britain, representing a population of 90,000 individuals (Census, 2001), with the majority of adult Nigerians living in the UK being highly educated and professional (Elam and Chinouya, 2000). The 2001 census also showed that there were almost 126% more Nigerian born people living in the East of Britain than in 1991. It should be noted that more precise data on Nigerians living in Britain is lacking, largely as a result of their relatively small number and the term ‘Black African’ being a census rather than a social category (O’Daley, 1998). The main reason for this categorisation lies in the Black African population being characterised by diversity, both internally and in comparison with other ethnic groups;
grouping relatively small population groups into ‘Black African’ offering a convenient category.

Although the British census does not always provide minute details of where immigrant groups live, it would appear that the London region is by far the most ethnically diverse in Britain (Census, 2001). Consider the following table, which places Nigerians as the sixth biggest ethnic group living in London:

**Table 1.1: The largest ten groups of people living in London by country of birth outside the UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Number of London residents</th>
<th>% of the London population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1     UK</td>
<td>5,230,155</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2     India</td>
<td>172,162</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3     Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>157,285</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4     Bangladesh</td>
<td>84,565</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5     Jamaica</td>
<td>80,319</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6     Nigeria</td>
<td>68,907</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7     Pakistan</td>
<td>66,658</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8     Kenya</td>
<td>66,311</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9     Sri Lanka</td>
<td>49,932</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10    Ghana</td>
<td>46,513</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Contributions

The aims and contribution of this thesis are divided into three distinctive categories these are: 1) academic contributions, 2) managerial contributions and lastly 3) social contributions.

1.5.1 Academic Contributions

This thesis primarily aims to address academic gaps in the focus on immigrants and consumption, with particular focus on immigrant women and the importance of the meanings they give to consumption acts. It is hoped that this research will address the relationship between changing power dynamics in immigrant families in relation to acculturation, cultural identity, ethnicity and consumption, thus contributing to the literature. In addition, it also hoped this thesis will contribute to this body of literature by drawing attention to the topics of culture, acculturation, ethnicity and self-identity, especially from a Eurocentric perspective.

1.5.2 Managerial contributions

Managerial contributions include discussing the commercial relevance of this study. Marketing appears to homogenise people into the same category and previous ethnic minority research show that this is not entirely the case. It is hoped that this research will ideally be used by marketers who require in-depth knowledge of relationships in ethnic minority families and how this in turn affects consumption. It is also hoped that this thesis will highlight the importance of having knowledge on these groups, providing a framework of researching into other ethnic minorities currently living in Britain.

1.5.3 Social contributions

Finally this research aims to contribute to the quality life and well being of not only the Nigerian female population in Britain but immigrants in general. By focusing on Black African women in British society it is hoped that this research will help to highlight not only their struggles of being Black and being women, but also their self-inflicted responsibility in
empowering their spouse, drawing attention to their mental health issues. In doing so it is also hoped that it will contribute to policy-relevant issues from a comparative and international perspective.

1.6 The organisation of the thesis

This thesis will investigate the subject of immigration and consumption through a variety of research themes grounded in academic theory. The research question will be answered by specifically using first-generation Nigerian immigrant families living in Britain. Particular attention will be placed upon the martial dynamics of these families, focusing how consumption acts may represent embodiments of power renegotiations between male and female spouses.

The remainder of this section will discuss the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This will provide a critical literature review addressing the research questions presented in this section. It will conclude with the identification of a number of research issues that are related to the research question but require answers from further research.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter will focus on the thesis’s methodological aims. It will look at how other researchers have approached ethnic minority research themes and provide an account of the chosen methodology, detailed methods of data collection, and reliability and validity issues. This section will also take into account the ethical factors. The following sections will discuss the sampling specifications of the participants and the selection rationale. Finally this section will conclude with an overview of the data collection process, sample group profile and data analysis.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion I: Sample group profiles

This chapter will focus on developing group profiles of the Nigerian immigrants and British White participants. Within this, I will review each participant’s life story, locating the narratives within the context of the participant’s life.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion II: Key emergent themes

This chapter will consist of a discussion of the key research findings and dominant themes that develop through the analysis of the participants. The discussion section will then pay particular attention to the way the research question was answered, including the implications for the literature as mentioned earlier.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This will summarise the research answer with reference to the research questions and how they relate to literature. The following sections will discuss the substantive, theoretical, methodological and commercial aims of the research and the extent that they were fulfilled. The chapter will then conclude with the limitations of the research and future research areas.

Chapter 7: Personal Reflections

This chapter will provide a point of self-critical reflection, focusing on the aims, limitations and experience of carrying out the actual research.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter an introduction of the thesis was made. It made reference to the research rationale, then the design of the research problem; resulting in the research question. The next chapter will focus on reviewing current literature addressing the research questions presented in this section.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter a review of the literature will be conducted based on the research question identified in Chapter One. The literature review will focus on the key areas of literature that will be used to discuss themes related to: immigration, culture, family and consumption. This chapter will also review and critique past and current research, highlighting gaps in the literature.

2.1.1 Research question and interrelated themes

After addressing the research problem, it is necessary to restate the research question that will be answered by this research. Chapter One identified the research question as: ‘To what extent do first-generation immigrant Nigerian women living in Britain use consumption as a tool of cultural resistance against patriarchy?’

To understand this research question and to provide background context, the related literature will be explored through four interrelated themes and these are:

1. Culture, ethnicity and acculturation’s affect on an immigrant’s self-identity and consumption.

   This theme explores the wider context of the relationship between changing power dynamics in immigrant families in relation to acculturation, cultural identity and ethnicity.

2. Acculturation’s affect on an immigrant’s self-identity and how this affects their consumption choices.
This theme will explore the relationship between changing power dynamics in immigrant families in relation to acculturation, cultural identity and ethnicity and their effect on consumption choices.

3. Gender and power dynamics among immigrants and how they construct their self-identity around consumption in a new society.

This theme will explore the research into the relationship between changing power dynamics in immigrant families in relation to acculturation, cultural identity and ethnicity. It will also explore how this is resolved through consumption and its relationship with culture, ethnicity and acculturation.

4. Immigrant marital dynamics regarding gender and power in consumption decisions.

This theme will explore the potential subversive meaning of a consumption act, i.e. meanings behind a consumption of a product and how this in turn affects the power dynamics between male partner and female spouses.

The literature referring to these themes will now be discussed.

2.2 Theme One: Culture, ethnicity and acculturation’s affect on immigrant’s self-identity and their affect on consumption.

This section will explore the relationship between culture and ethnicity and their affect on self-identity. The following discussion will explain their influence on consumption, concluding with a discussion on how this affects Nigerian immigrants living in the UK and British Whites.
2.2.1 Culture and its relationship to self-identity

2.2.1.1 What is culture?

Social anthropological ideas of culture are often based, to a great extent, on the definition given by Edward Tylor in 1913 (cited in Marshall, 1998), in which he referred to culture as a learned complex of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and customs. For anthropologists, such as Tylor, culture is a conscious creation of human rationality (Marshall, 1998). Rationality refers then to the state of having good sense and sound judgment; it is an ideal that humans aspire to. Culture may then be derived through human reasoning and becomes a tool to mediate human interactions by becoming an entity that can be explained through the process of human thinking, making it subjective instead of objective.

Modern adaptations and ideas of culture generated through the work of field anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, around the turn of the twentieth century, have been directed towards relativism. Relativism refers to the notion about how things appear to people, and individuals’ judgement about truth that are subsequently related to their particular paradigm or frame of reference (Gill and Leeson, 2002). Culture then is a subject to be described, compared and contrasted. This led to the development of culture representing a collection of ideas and symbols (Marshall, 1998).

Following on from the notion that culture represents a collection of judgements and reasoning, it is important to note that one of the most important issues that has arisen from literature is how to conceptualise culture. One could suggest that an under-clarified definition of culture may lead to a variety of definitions, which may subsequently lead to inaccuracies in explanations of culture. This, therefore, becomes an obstacle in cultural studies. For example, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952, cited in Lyman and O’Brien, 2004), two American anthropologists, in a seminal paper, collected, analysed and compared over 164 definitions of culture, finding the most prominent definition given by Tylor in 1913, as mentioned previously. As a result of Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s (1952) inability to find a conclusive
definition of culture, they instead described culture as being as extra-somatic and non-genetically transmissible products of human societies.

In 1974, Keesing argued that defining culture is not solely based on learning local traditions, using tools and manipulating symbols; nor can one express with confidence that culture is the heritage of learned symbolic behaviour that makes humans human. Instead Keesing (1974) explained that in no certainty can culture be explained as a shared heritage of people in a particular society; this viewpoint opposes Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s (1952) earlier work, which identified Tylor’s definition of culture as being the most widely used and perhaps the most relevant. Keesing (1974, p. 73) went on to state that Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s idea of culture is ‘too much and is too diffuse either to separate analytically the twisted threads of human experience or to interpret the designs into which they are woven. In light of this, much of Keesing’s (1974) work tended to focus on the differing definitions of culture, making particular reference to Geertz’s (1973) earlier work on culture. Geertz (1973) stated that culture is a semiotic system, an assemblage of structures of signification, which functions as an external control system for human action. A definition of culture that, not surprisingly, addresses Geertz’s (1973) argument that the concept of culture needs to be cut down to size, in turn narrowing and specialising the term to create a theoretically powerful concept.

The aim of earlier researchers to conceptualise an actual term for culture has shown to be somewhat eschewed as time has gone by. Developing on Tylor’s 1913 definition of culture, Wells and Prensky (1996) defined culture as a shared meaning and characteristics, i.e. rituals, tradition, and values that subsequently, subconsciously, affect individuals’ behaviour. Taking a psychological stance, Carlson and Buskist (1997) added that culture is actually an accumulation of common laws, myths, religious beliefs and ethical principles, as well as in thinking, in addition to approaches to problem solving. Solomon (1999, p. 377), in addition to Carlson and Buskist’s (1997) definition, later referred to culture, from a sociological viewpoint, as ‘the accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norm and traditions among the members of an organisation or society’. Culture, therefore, becomes an element that can define a human community, its individual, its social organisation, as well as its economic and
political system. While Hofstede (1980, p. 25) added that culture is ‘the collective mental programming of people in an environment’, he further noted that culture invariably is not a characteristic of individuals, but has the ability to encompass a number of people who may be conditioned by the same education and life experiences. This is similar to that of Marshall’s (1998) definition of culture, wherein culture represents a collection of ideas and symbols. It is with these definitions that a common theme arises: there is no uniform definition of culture.

De Mooij (2004), developing further Hofstede’s (1980) definition of culture, speculated that individuals belonging to a culture may be classified as products of that culture and their social groupings. This puts forward the notion that individuals may be conditioned by their social-cultural environment to act in a certain way. This argument sets up a pretence to explain how new social-cultural environments, based on the host society, may condition immigrants by influencing their behaviour. De Mooij (2004) further highlighted that it has been noted by various anthropologists that culture cannot be separated from the individual and that culture is not a system of abstract values that exists independently of individuals. De Mooij (2004) argued further that culture cannot be separated from the individual’s historical context; however, this reasoning may not be entirely the case in different aspects of an individual’s life. For instance, in the process of migration the migrating individual may feel the need to separate him or herself from their culture in order to integrate into the new society, an argument that will be developed in greater depth in theme two.

With so many interpretations of culture within the literature it is, therefore, important to note that this research does not inherently seek out a perfect definition of culture. Instead it aims to highlight the many issues, referring to, as previously mentioned, that culture is an accumulation of behaviour, beliefs and patterns. In light of this, for the purpose of this research Tylor’s (1913 cited in Marshall, 1998, p. 676) definition of culture will be used, which defines culture as ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’.
2.2.1.2 How Culture Manifests

Having provided a definition of culture, it is now important to understand how culture manifests itself through beliefs and values and subsequently affects a society or group’s identity and behaviour. Keesing’s (1974) seminal work on theories of culture argued that culture’s affect on human behaviour manifests as an ideational system: Cognitive, Structural and Symbolic. These differing systems will now be discussed in much greater depth.

The Cognitive system of culture can also be referred to as system of knowledge (Keesing, 1974). Keesing defined culture as ‘being referred to what humans learn and not what they do and make’ (Keesing, 1976, p.31). Rossi and O’Higgins (1980), developing this perspective, noted that culture is a system of shared cognitions or a system of knowledge and beliefs. Culture then is generated by the human mind through a finite number of rules or means of unconscious logic (ibid). Goodenough (1957), in discussing society, added that societal culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in, in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, such as a group or society; i.e. culture exists within a group’s cognition. For example, if we take values as a precursor of culture, the value that an individual has based on their culture provides knowledge. Culture under the Cognitive system, therefore, is not a material phenomenon consisting of objects, people, behaviours or emotions. Instead culture is an organisation of the Cognitive system, forming a model that people have in their minds for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting life’s events (Goodenough, 1957). In this way, culture consists of standards for deciding what is, what can be, what one feels about, what to do about it and how to go about doing it (Goodenough, 1957).

Goodenough (1957, p. 521), preceding Keesing’s (1974) arguments on culture, also conceived culture to be the ‘pattern of life within a community – the regularly recurring activities and material and social arrangements’. In this way, culture may be seen epistemologically in the same realm of language, whereby language is subsystem of culture (Keesing, 1974). For example, language can be seen as a subsystem of the cognitive system of culture providing, a means to bond individuals or a group together. Culture, through language, provides then a
means for a group’s culture to be transferred from generation to generation and from one individual to another (Inman et al., 2007). In this way, societies accustomed to oral traditions often rely on their language to transmit their culture through the process of cultural heritage transmission (Falola, 2001). For example, Farb (1974, p. 76), researching how individuals use language, described speech as a complex process of human interaction, ‘representing a game which both speakers and listeners unconsciously know the rules of their speech communities and the strategies they may employ’. However, Farb’s (1976) work challenges Keesing’s (1974) earlier work, stating that culture is not based on learning local traditions, nor can it be expressed with confidence that culture is the heritage of learned symbolic behaviour that makes humans human, an argument highlights the disparities in their definition of culture.

Referring back to notions on cultural heritage transmission, Falola, (2001) also critiqued Keesing’s (1974) view that in no certainty can culture be explained as a shared heritage of people in a particular society. Du Bois (2000) subsequently argued that cultural heritage transmission often involves complex systems involving common institutions, such as the family, the educational system and the media. The ability of culture to be transferred ensures that culture is not rigid but continuously changing and, therefore, its transmissibility can vary across societies. Culture remains and subsequently appears, therefore, as a framework in which people have the ability to interact with each other such as in a society.

The Structural system of culture, drawing upon earlier work by Levi-Strauss (1963, cited in Paulston, 1992, p. 118), viewed culture as a ‘shared symbolic systems that are cumulative creations of mind’. Levi-Strauss (1963, cited in Paulston, 1992) also posited that universal processes of the human mind develop diverse but formally similar patterns of behaviour (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005). Scholars, such as Levi-Strauss, viewed this structural system of culture as a scheme where the human mind contains structural elements that give rise to similar formation of myths, symbolism and social structure (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005). Keesing (1974), developing Levi-Strauss’s work further, added that the mind imposes a culturally patterned order in a continuously changing environment. For example, if we look at an international institution, such as the Catholic Church, the Church provides a
culture structured around religion, wherein religion provides a cursor for values, beliefs and behaviour. Catholicism provides also the symbols and meanings, which have the ability to culturally shape individuals into religiously orientated, acceptable, prescribed behaviours.

In the Symbolic system of culture, Keesing (1974) defined culture as a system of shared symbols and meanings. Taking this perspective, Smircich (1983) argued that culture can be viewed as the expression of unconscious psychological processes. This argument builds upon Levi-Strauss’s work (1963, cited in Paulston, 1992), which viewed culture as shared symbolic systems that are cumulative creations of the mind (Manjali, 1998). This argument assumes that the human mind has built in constraints by which it structures psychic and physical content, i.e. the mind has an unconscious infrastructure (Rossi, 1974). As a result, culture may then be argued as an inter-play between and among people, with the view that cultural systems are made up of coherent sets of fundamental oppositions (i.e. pure/impure, male/female, healthy/unhealthy, sacred/profane) (Watson and Fotiadis, 1990). Culture is observed as a network of shared symbolic systems that are cumulative creations of mind. Symbols, therefore, are a manifestation of culture, often used then in the form of gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning recognised by those individuals who share a particular culture (Chaudhary, 2003). Culture illustrates then the relationships between ideas and perspectives about how individuals are socialised and how values are formed and transmitted.

The process of symbolic culture begins through the manifestation and realisation of specific assumptions, values or behavioural norms. Cultural artefacts are created through manifestation and realisation; an artefact becomes symbolic when individuals use that symbol to make sense of an event. For example, a national flag becomes an artefact whenever an individual uses it to show their national identity. In this way, symbolisation becomes a representation of the link between meanings and artefacts through recognition of personal and social significance (Mandler, 2003). For example, if we take the context of this research topic, i.e. the interaction between male partner and female partner through consumption, an item purchased by either spouse may represent different meanings to them, both personally and socially in terms of culture. Perhaps more importantly, the symbolic system of culture suggests that an
individual’s or a group’s cultural values can manifest in the products they consume; an inference that will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

From the above discussion it has been argued that the definition of culture still remains unclear, suggesting that there are still uncertainties in the notion of culture. However, suffice to say key definitions of such scholars, such as Tylor (1919), Geertz (1973) and Levi-Strauss (1963), make use of the notion that culture represents a learned complex of knowledge, beliefs, morals and customs, in addition to structures of significance. If this view is taken to a wider context then one can believe that culture subsequently affects behaviour. It is with this view that culture and its influence remains highly important in this research.

2.2.1.3 Individualism and collectivism, and its linkages to culture

In the previous section, I discussed various cultural systems that affect the way in which culture is viewed and how it manifests. Each of these systems is relevant in that they position the individual and their group within a cultural system. This section, using the terms individualism and collectivism, develops this argument further, noting that Keesing’s (1974) three systems of culture can be used to categorise an individual, a group’s or a society’s cultural values.

Research by Hofstede and Bond (1984) into national differences in work-related value patterns in 40 countries showed that culture does not only affect psychological processes but also sociological, political and economic functioning of social systems. In particular, Hofstede and Bond’s (1984) discussion on individualism and collectivism reflects its importance to this thesis. Western countries, such as Britain and America, are often termed ‘individualistic’ (Hofstede, 1980; Wells and Prensky, 1996), while Asian or African countries termed ‘collectivist’ (Dia, 1997; Hofstede, 1980). The relevance of Hofstede’s work on culture becomes poignant as it develops on earlier definitions of culture presented and places it in reference to different cultural environments, making it worthwhile when discussing issues of
immigration. In this way, migration can inherently highlight the differences between Western and non-Western cultures i.e. individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Hofstede (1980) argued that individualistic cultures embody the understanding that people are independent of their groups. However, as we will see later, this may not always be true. Members of individualistic cultures are socialised into cultural values of independence, achievement and acquire preferred ways for how members of their culture are expected to view themselves; for example, as unique persons whose needs and rights are over that of their society (Gudykunst, Ting-Tamey and Nishida, 1996; Dia, 1997). Individualists emphasise self-reliance, competition, uniqueness, hedonism and emotional distance from in-groups (Cross, Bacon and Morris, 2000). Collectivist cultures, in contrast, emphasise the interdependence of every human and some collectives, such as family, tribe and nation over the needs of the individual (Triandis, 2001). Collectivists emphasise sociability and family integrity towards in-group members over their own individual needs (Cross, Bacon and Morris, 2000).

Drawing upon Keesing’s (1974) perspective of culture as a structural system of culture, i.e. an unconscious infrastructure (Rossi, 1974), both collectivists and individualist provide their own tools to control and govern the rights of individuals. Gudykunst, Ting-Tamey and Nishida (1996), further to this, argued that members of collectivistic cultures learn different values, such as solidarity, and also acquire different preferred ways to conceive themselves, for example as interconnected with others. From a structural system of culture perspective, collectivists view the unconscious infrastructure as being a fundamental backbone, taking into account the need and concerns of those in their society (Cross, Bacon and Morris, 2000). A collectivist society also places emphasis on the group’s rather than the individual’s needs. For example, emphasis might be placed on the family and the desire to maintain close relationships. Collectivists, in contrast to individualists, attach greater meaning to their in-groups as harmony is highly valued, therefore, conforming to preserve interpersonal relationships (Hui and Triandis, 1986).
From the perspective of the symbolic system of culture, it was argued by Keesing (1974) and others that the notion of culture represents a group’s shared meanings. These meanings may be altered when comparing individualistic and collective cultures. Individualistic cultures may favour symbols and meanings that represent uniqueness, whereas collectivist cultures may favour symbols and meanings that represent group unity (Triandis et al., 1985). Culture, therefore, becomes more than a series of expression of structures, knowledge and symbols. It should be understood from the categories of individualism and collectivism. The next section will further expand on this notion and discuss how culture plays a role in self-concept and subsequently the self.

2.2.1.4 Culture and self-concept

In the previous section, culture was discussed in relation to its various systems (i.e. Cognitive, Structural, and Symbolic systems of culture) reflected in the disparities between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. This section will now discuss the relationship between culture and self-concept and relate this to the previous discussion on individualism and collectivism, in particular discussing the individual and collective self. It is important, however, to first identify what the self-concept is. Self-concept focuses on the aspect of personality that is the expression of the individual’s image of him or herself (Wells and Prensky, 1996). It also involves the combination of an individual’s knowledge and understanding of him- or herself. Self-concept consists then of the physical, psychological and social attributes, which have the ability to influence an individual’s attitude, habits, belief and ideas. One the most influential theorists to discuss issues of self-concept was René Descartes in 1644, who wrote with reference to the non-physical self, noting the existence of the self as a thinking thing (Marshall, 1998).

In later studies, Rogers (1974) viewed the self as being the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment, describing the self as a product, developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. Purkey and Schmidt (1987) maintained that there is a basic human need for positive regard both from others and from
oneself as a means of achieving self-actualisation and development, so long as this is permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment. This view may prove to be important when discussing the extent to which immigrants are permitted and encouraged in the host environment and its resultant effect on their sense of self-concept.

Referring to Wells and Prensky (1996) explanation of self-concept, Carlson, Buskist and Martin (2000) explained that self-concept also refers to an individual’s knowledge, feelings and ideas about themselves and has three main qualities: (1) it is learned, (2) it is organised and (3) it is dynamic. Markus and Nurius (1986) added that an individual should think of themselves in terms of a working self-concept that changes as one has new experiences or receives feedback about one’s behaviour. This means that potentially the self may be dependent on one’s experience, therefore cultural changes or eventually related experiences would be expected to alter an individual’s sense of self. From this it is reasonable to suggest that self-concept resultantly affects behaviour, most specifically in the way that an individual learns to view themselves and their relationship with others.

Individuals may perceive themselves then in ways different from the way others see them. The self-concept, in this way possesses then relatively boundless potential for development and actualisation (Purkey, 1988). Most importantly any experience, which is inconsistent with one’s self-concept, may be perceived as a threat and these experiences may cause one to have a more rigid self-concept, a self-concept organised to maintain and protect itself (Hormuth, 1990).

2.2.1.5 Culture and self-identity

In the previous sections we saw the discussion of individualism and collectivism, in particular how they differ from one another. This section will develop these concepts further by exploring their relationship to self-identity.
Identity can be described as the idea one has about oneself, one’s characteristic properties, one’s own body and the values one considers being important (De Mooij, 2004). Identity then is the essence of an individual’s cultural, moral and spiritual being (Bani-Turoof, 2005). De Mooij (2004) added that this sociological definition of identity reflects the individualistic origin of the concept, i.e. the sense of self which develops as a child grows up and establishes him- or herself as an independent individual. Referring more specifically to self-identity, Stryker (1980) noted that a sociological approach to self-identity begins with the assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between self and society. Stets and Burke (2005) furthered Stryker’s (1980) idea by explaining that the self influences society through the actions of individuals, thereby creating groups, organisations, networks and institutions. This in turn illustrates the ways in which society has the ability to influence the self through shared values. This means that an individual’s self-identity becomes an avenue for expressing a society’s norms and values.

It has been argued that the self highlights the reflective and reflexive ability of human beings to take themselves as objects of their own thought (Marshall, 1998). With this perspective it becomes important to identify and understand the self within individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Individualism and collectivism, it has been argued, can influence the cultural values that individuals learn and the ways members view their sense of self (Gudykunst, Ting-Tamey and Nishida, 1996; Kashima et al., 1995). Focusing on the individualist self, a concept such as this is captured by thoughts of independence. In an early study, Geertz (1984, p. 126) summarised an individual in an individualist state as being ‘unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe … a dynamic centre of awareness … and action organised into a distinctive way and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background’. Developing this perspective further, Triandis (1989) argued that individuals in individualistic cultures give priority to personal goals over the goals of the collective.

In contrast, a collectivist self makes no distinctions between personal and collective goals (Triandis, 1980). For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) showed that Western cultures
often place emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual and have an appreciation of being different from others. In contrast, they showed that Japanese and other Eastern cultures, identified by Hofstede and Bond (1984) as collectivist, often emphasise paying attention to others and the relatedness of an individual to these others. They in turn conceptualised two further construals of the self, to reflect these cultural differences, the independent construal and interdependent construal. The independent construal emphasises the uniqueness of the self and the interdependent construal emphasises the interconnectedness of people and the role that others play in developing an individual’s self-concept (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

If we look further into individualism and collectivism in relation to the self, Triandis et al. (1985) referred to two further constructs: idiocentrism and allocentrism, labelled as independence and interdependence respectively (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Idiocentrics emphasise self-reliance, competition, uniqueness, hedonism and emotional distance from in-groups. Allocentrics, in contrast, emphasise interdependence, sociability and family integrity; they take into account the needs and concerns of in-group members (Cross, Bacon and Morris, 2000; Dutta-Bergman and Wells, 2002). In this way, idiocentrics are often characterised by those who are members of individualistic societies, whereas allocentrics are characterised by those individuals who are members of collectivistic societies.

In all cultures, there are both idiocentric and allocentric individuals in different proportions (Triandis et al., 2001). The allocentrics in individualist cultures are more likely than the idiocentrics to join groups (Sun, Horn and Merrit, 2004). The extent to which a person is individualist or collectivist in orientation will affect his or her self-concept (Verkuyten and Lay, 1998; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1984). The individual-level profile of the trait, it may be argued, is a replication of the cultural-level classification, i.e. individualist or collectivist. An emphasis on personal freedom, expression and independence characterises an idiocentric self-concept (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1984; Singelis, 1994). In contrast, an allocentric self-concept is marked by a preference for social relationships and interdependence (Miller, 1984, 1988; Singelis, 1994).
Adding to the previous discussion of individualism and collectivism, it should be noted that the individualist and collectivist categories should not be seen as homogenous but separate categories. For instance, using national culture as an example, Hofstede (1980) argued that characteristics of a national culture do not imply that every person in a nation has all the characteristics assigned to that culture, i.e. a collectivist culture. Given this view individualism and collectivism exists in all cultures. Members of individualistic cultures will learn some collectivist values and view themselves as interconnected with others, and members of collectivistic cultures will learn some individualistic values and acquire views of themselves as unique persons (Bellah et al., 1985). Triandis (1995) added that within any culture there are individuals who are more or less allocentric or idiocentric, the personality attributes that correspond to collectivism and individualism at the cultural level. As identified earlier by Triandis et al. (2001), all cultures have both idiocentrics and allocentrics but in different proportions. In collectivist cultures, for example, there will be some counter-cultural individuals who will be idiocentric and will want to escape from what they see as the oppression of their in-groups. In individualistic cultures there will be some counter-cultural individuals who will be allocentric and will want to join communes and other collectives (Triandis, 1998).

The arguments presented so far suggest that people in different cultures have strikingly different construals of the self, i.e. different dimensions of the self (individualistic, collectivistic, allocentric, etc.) characterised by cultural differences. It should be said that most studies often focus on Asian and American cultures in discussing the relatedness of the self and culture (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Dutta-Bergman and Wells, 2002; Sun, Horn and Merrit, 2004). These discussions, however, show that the independent view is most clearly exemplified in some sizable segment of American culture, as well as in many Western European cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The interdependent view is exemplified in Japanese culture, as well as in other Asian cultures, but it is also characteristic of African cultures, Latin-American cultures and many southern European cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).
Developing further discussions of the different dimensions of self it is constructive to develop some understanding and some representation of the private, inner aspects of the self. Although these may well be universal, many other aspects of the self may be quite specific to particular cultures. The self then can be construed, framed, or conceptually represented in multiple ways.

2.2.1.6 Private, public and the collective self and their relationship with culture

The previous discussion saw the explanation of individualism and collectivism related to the self. It has been established that culture has a direct affect on the self. People in different cultures, it has been argued, have different construals of the self, of others and of the interdependence between the two (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Following from these explanations it, therefore, becomes important to discuss further the premises of how an individual’s inner thoughts are motivated by their private, public and collective self. Baumister (1986) identified that a major distinction among aspects of the self exists between the private, public, and collective self. The private self refers to cognitions that involve traits, states or behaviours of a person; the public self refers to cognitions concerning the generalised other’s view of the self; and lastly the collective self consists of cognitions concerning a view of the self that is found in some collective for example family, tribe, society (Triandis, 1989). The exact content and structure of the private self may also differ considerably by culture.

Social class also moderates the sampling of the collective self. Triandis (1989) argued that upper-middle- and upper-class individuals sample the collective self less frequently than lower-class individuals, although lower-class individuals may again sample more the private self. Triandis (1989) noted that this expectation derives from reliable differences in child-rearing patterns, which indicate that in many societies (Italy, Japan, Poland, the United States) practices such as child-rearing emphasise conformity to family norms in the lower classes and self-direction, creativity and independence from the in-group in the upper social classes. Triandis (1989) further explained that in collectivism, the opposite conditions are important; hence, there is more sampling of the public self. This is particularly the case if the culture is collectivistic. In terms of individualistic cultures, these cultures tend to emphasise self-
reliance, independence, finding yourself and self-actualisation (Triandis, 1989). Practises such as child-rearing in individualistic cultures may then lead to an increase of use of the private self, i.e. more elements of the private self may be sampled and idiocentric tendencies may be exhibited, such as self-reliance.

Referring back to the nature of the public self, the public self that derives from one’s relations with other people and social institutions may also vary markedly by culture. For example, when a culture is collectivistic, then the public self is likely to be sampled. This means people act properly in terms of what is defined by society and tend to be extremely anxious that they are not acting correctly (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In this case, their private self is not significant. As a result, the private and public selves are often different. Doi (1986) discussed this point extensively, comparing the Japanese public self with the private self. Doi (1986) suggested that in the United States there is virtue in keeping public and private consistent (not being a hypocrite). In other cultures such as Japanese, proper action matters, i.e. the public self are dominant. What an individual feels about a given action, therefore, is deemed as irrelevant. Thus, the Japanese do not like to state their personal opinions, but rather seek a consensus.

Referring back to individualism, we would expect individuals to sample the private self because of their individualistic tendencies (as mentioned previously). Triandis (1989) investigated the private, public and collective self and its relationship to cultural variations (individualism/collectivism). He found that the more individualistic the culture is the more frequent the use of the private self and the less frequent use of the collective self. Triandis (1989) also goes further explain that if a person is not accepted by an in-group, there will be other in-groups to which to turn. Individualism may be viewed, therefore, by an individual not being attached to their in-groups.

Collectivism, external threats, competition with out-groups and common fate increase the sampling of the collective self (Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitiyama, 1991). In addition, Triandis (1989) also identified that cultural homogeneity resulted in greater use of the collective self. The self, therefore becomes an active agent that promotes differential
sampling, processing and evaluation of information from the environment and consequently leads to differences in social behaviour (Triandis, 1989). For instance, an individual that samples the collective self will be more likely to sample information that is collectively relevant more frequently than information that is self relevant. Consequently, he or she will assess information that supports the collective, which as a result affects their behaviour.

As argued previously the private, public and collective self are not always consistent. Triandis (1989) suggested the significance assigned to the private self’s versus the public self’s, relational aspects in regulating behaviour will vary accordingly. In some cultures, on certain occasions, an individual’s sense of significant inner attributes may cease to be the primary unit of consciousness. Instead, the sense of belongingness to a social relation may become so strong that it may make better sense to think of the relationship as the functional unit of conscious reflection, i.e. the individual switches from being motivated by the private self.

Stryker (2000), however, criticised this perspective by noting that the investigation of the private, public and collective self tends to break down the structure into subjective definitions, by viewing definitions as unanchored, i.e. open to any possibility. In this way, it fails to recognise that some possibilities are more probable than others (Stryker, 2000). For example, in individualistic cultures individuals have the ability and power to decide which in-group they belong to (Hui and Triandis, 1986). However, according to Hui and Triandis (1986), individualists have many in-groups and are less dependent on any one in-group. This may suggest that individuals conform to others in order to gain acceptance within a particular group. Although the typical view is for individuals with individualistic characteristics to frequently experience their private self, this may not always be the case. In the same way, individuals with collectivistic characteristics showcase their collective self, tending to favour those behaviours that mirror their society. However, individuals in an individualistic society tend to adopt behaviour that represents themselves as individuals. This suggests that each mode of action is dependent on how they see themselves in a particular society and consequently how they view themselves.
2.2.1.7 British White culture and Nigerian culture

Following on from the discussion of culture and the self, it is important to distinguish the differences between the two cultures of interest in this study: British White and Nigerian culture.

British culture, as noted by Hofstede (1980), is informed by history in terms of monarchy, imperialism and politics and is classified as an individualistic culture. Many values and traditions in British White culture originate from Christianity, which is the major religion in the country. British cultural influence can also be seen through the usage of the English language, British cuisine, etc. Salili (1996) suggested that for British culture family ties are not as strong as collectivist cultures and child-rearing practices emphasise more independence and permissiveness.

There has been much debate regarding the construction of British identity and culture (Carrington and Short, 1995). It is important to note that the term ‘ethnicity’ is not confined predominately to minority groups but can be used, for example, to refer to host and immigrant groups (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996). British identity then has been reformulated through the course of multiculturalism, in which globalisation and social, economic and technological change are all contributory factors. With the presence of multiculturalism in Britain there has been increased focus on the term ‘British culture’ and as result, there has been much discussion on defining what British White culture is. For example, Pfeffer (1998) noted that there has been a growing recognition of the term, White, which not surprisingly covers a diverse range of people, including people of Irish and Jewish origin. Much of the writing on White culture tends to be American-centric, exhibiting the lack of studies on White culture in a British context (Pearce, 2003). One the most prominent reasons for the lack of discussion in British-centric literature on White culture primarily relates to the fact that most White people are not accustomed to thinking of themselves as members of an ethnic group (Pearce, 2003).
Pearce (2003) explained that ideas about race in the West are inextricably bound up with the history of colonialism. Whiteness is something that defines the other but is not itself subject to others’ definitions (Bonnett, 2000). From this Pearce (2003) further stated that Whites are simply the norm: it is for others to label themselves as other than that norm. Jackson and Penrose (1993) have also drawn attention to the way in which the British, in particular, tend to be complacent about their own ethnic and national identity, and take for granted notions of race and nation. They further explained that the notion of race or ethnicity applies to other people, i.e. to minority groups. Bauman (1996) also noted that in the talk of the White Londoners he studied there is a view that there is no such thing as English culture. He found that to English people, culture was something their African-Caribbean and Muslim neighbours possessed.

Pearce (2003), however, noted that this inability to recognise one’s own culture leads to the idea that Whiteness is a neutral place from which to look at others, and thus White culture should be classified. Jacobson (1997) explained in relation to British White culture that the cultural boundary of Britishness defines as British those individuals whose behaviour, lifestyle and values are perceived as typically British. In this way, to be culturally British, according to Jacobson (1997), means:

- to be attached to the majority language, established religion and cultural heritage of Britain;
- to exhibit supposedly typical British moderation, tolerance, reserve and modesty in one’s day-to-life;
- to have knowledge of the famous people of contemporary Britain, and of currently popular modes of speech, dress and food; or
- to be familiar with the key social and political institutions of modern Britain, and the essentially rationalist, individualist norms which underpin them.

In light of these discussions, one should also note that people can assign themselves to several categories under the terms of being White and British. For example, an individual that
identifies themselves as British, White and of Polish descent indicates that this individual has classified themselves in terms of nationality, race and ethnicity.

In comparison, Nigerian culture is shaped by a multitude of ethnic groups, in fact Nigeria has over 250 languages and cultures. The three largest are the Hausa-Fulani, who are predominantly based in the north, the Igbo, who are predominantly based in the south-east, and the Yoruba, who are predominantly based in the south-west. Nigerian culture is shaped by collectivism and is a patriarchal society, where men are dominant over women, with strong emphasis on the family (Elam and Chinouya, 2000). Although it is difficult to capture Nigerian culture, due to its rich diversity (Khoapa, 1986), Nigerian culture is said to be made up of elements from the various subcultures of the different ethnic groups within the country’s borders and elements of two major foreign cultures: the Euro-Christian and the Arab-Islamic (Bisong, 1995).

Bisong (1995) further explained that Nigeria is also seen as an artefact of British colonialism and exhibits a heterogeneous population. This has led to scholars, such as Hannerz (2002), to argue that due to cultural heterogeneity and no shared indigenous language, there is no such thing as a Nigerian culture. However, contemporary Nigerian culture may seem almost overwhelmingly rich and varied in its manifestations and can be viewed as being one that consists of a mosaic of subcultures. Nevertheless, Nigerian culture can be described as one that places high value on obedience, respect and social rules (Munroe and Munroe, 1977).

2.2.1.8 Arguments presented so far

The arguments presented so far have highlighted the transparencies in the usage of the term ‘culture’, noting its impact to research. Having identified the difference between collectivistic and individualistic culture, it has also been argued that culture has a direct affect on the individual in terms of their private, public and collective self. In identifying these differences it has also been argued that the self consequently has an effect on the way that individuals behave. The next section, leading on from this, will look further into discussion of the self and
once again relate it to culture but also ethnicity. This will then conclude the literature review for theme one.

2.2.2 Culture, self-identity and ethnicity

Culture, self-identity and ethnicity are closely related in that they are largely concerned with the self. Culture, it will be argued, presents a dialogue between ethnicity and self-identity as it has the ability to determine both. In this way, ethnicity becomes important in influencing individual and group behaviour.

2.2.2.1 Defining ethnicity

Identity and culture are the two basic building blocks of ethnicity (Nagel, 1994). Nagel (1994) further explained that culture provides the content and meaning of ethnicity. It animates and authenticates ethnic boundaries by providing a history, ideology, symbolic universe and system of meaning. In this way, it is through the construction of culture that ethnic groups develop their ethnicity. Ethnicity as with culture is difficult to define clearly. Ethnicity refers to the ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures are negotiated, defined and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities (Holstein and Miller, 1993). Nagel (1994) added that ethnicity reflects the creative choices of individuals and groups as they define themselves and others in ethnic ways. Ethnicity is viewed, therefore, as being constructed out of the material of language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry and/or regionality. Nagel (1994) added that ethnicity is created and recreated as various groups and interests put forth competing visions of the ethnic composition of society, and argue over which rewards or sanctions should be attached to which ethnicities.

Further definitions of ethnicity build upon different beliefs or values held by a group, which makes them different from others. For example, Hunt (2002) suggested that religion, alongside class, gender, age, nationality and morality, is an important cultural resource in the construction of an ethnic identity. These ethnic markers may be transitory and characterised by
unfolding and developing meanings established by individuals and collectives at different times of their historical development. In this way, one may then suggest that individuals leaving a collectivist culture or society to encounter an individualistic culture or society may experience their own ethnic difference. It then can be argued that ethnicity and culture are inherently interrelated to each other. This argument is supported by Bouchet (1995), who noted that ethnicity offers a sense of identity in a society that denies the immigrant integration, in a world where traditional group identity around family and nation have broken down and where image has replaced reality.

2.2.2.2 Ethnic identity and self-identity

As mentioned previously, ethnicity refers to the ethnic identification that one has with a culture and, as Nagel (1994) posited, culture provides the content and meaning of ethnicity. In this way, one could suggest that individuals are products of their culture; thus an individual’s culture may determine their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity was defined in many ways in the literature reviewed. The fact that there is no widely agreed-upon definition of ethnic identity is indicative of confusion that surrounds the topic. Tajfel (1981, p. 255) defined ethnic identity as ‘that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’. Nagel (1994) developed this perspective further, noting that ethnic identity is most closely associated with the issue of boundaries, in terms of determining who belongs and who is excluded from particular groups of people. In light of this, there does not seem to be a widely agreed-upon definition of ethnic identity, which may suggest that there is perplexity regarding the topic (Betancourt and Lopez, 1993; Hunt, 2002). Like the term ‘culture’, this literature review does not suggest that a universal explanation will be devised; however, it will take into consideration a number of viewpoints. The literature has, however, identified that the term ‘ethnic identity’ is based on three broad perspectives: social identity theory, acculturation and culture conflict, and identity formation (Phinney, 1990). Thus, this section will discuss ethnic
identity as well as the social identity theory and identity formation. The later sections of this chapter will discuss acculturation and culture conflict, as these topics lend themselves more appropriately to these sections.

Definitions of ethnic identity tend to focus on the individual. For instance, Tzuriel and Klein (1977) considered self-identification as the key aspect of ethnicity, emphasising feelings of belonging and commitment to a group. Parham and Helms (1981), in contrast, related ethnic identity to the perspective of attitudes to one’s group, whereas White and Burke (1987) described ethnic identity in terms of shared value and attitudes. This approach, however, causes confusion over the difference between culture and ethnic identity; namely, because culture has not been clearly identified uniformly. Consequently, Phinney (1990) summarised that most researchers share a broad, general understanding of ethnic identity, but the actual specific aspects that they emphasise vary widely.

These definitions of ethnic identity focus their attention on attitudes and feelings; however, alternative definitions focus entirely on cultural aspects of ethnic identity in terms of language, behaviour and values (Rogler, Cooney and Ortiz, 1980). Hogg, Abrams and Patel (1987), as a result of this, suggested that the role of the individual in the definition of ethnic identity implies that most of these writers view ethnic identity as a dynamic product that is achieved rather than simply given by an external source, i.e. a group or society.

Discussions in defining ethnic identity have shown a lack of theoretical framework, with definitions of ethnic identity varying according to the underlying theory embraced by researchers and scholars (Trimble and Dickinson, 2005). Trimble and Dickinson (2005) explained that ethnic identity is an affiliative construct, where an individual is viewed by themselves and by others as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. In this way, ethnicity reflects a person’s orientation toward his or her ethnic origins and provides a sense of belonging. Costa and Bamossy (1995), supporting this stance, added that ethnic identity is adaptive and malleable, a product of affiliations to the past and of adjustment to present circumstances. Epstein (1978) added that ethnic identities are intimately bound up with the
social context within, providing an environment for the individual to grow up and mature in. As political or economic conditions and/or social situations change, so also do the identifying aspects of ethnicity. If an individual’s sense of ethnicity is determined by a varying number of encounters in a variety of contexts, then it can be argued that the individual’s social identity is the underlying determinant of ethnicity.

Perhaps, one of the best and most practical definitions of ethnicity is provided by Fangen (2007). Fangen (2007) explained that ethnicity is a concept variously used to mean belonging, cultural practice, tradition, religion and identity. Fangen (2007) addressed the difficulties of defining ethnicity by proposing a theoretical analysis that makes use of cultural practices and geographical belonging, as well as the thematisation of ethnic identity. She proposed that one should distinguish between the person’s more naturalised and subjective ethnic identifications. For example, naturalised ethnic identification could be expressed in statements defining ancestry, such as ‘I am a…’ It is thought by Fangen (2007) that this definition is related to the source of identity of others; for example, immigrants from the same country of origin or people from the host society. This argument is supported by Alba (1990) who noted that ethnicity represents a person’s subjective orientation toward his or her ethnic origins.

Fangen (2007), developing her definition of ethnicity, also argued that subjective ethnic identification can be expressed in sentences such as ‘I feel like a...’ In this way, an individual may identify himself or herself as a Nigerian and express, ‘I feel like a Nigerian’, although they reside in Britain. This example gives notice to subjective identifications, which point out the fluid character of ethnic identity. It is also, however, important to express that Fishman (1991) found that ethnicity is also a form of expression, which can outlive culturally derived behaviours and language, manifesting celebrations of a group’s ethnicity rather than the essence of an individual’s daily life.

One may infer from the above discussion that Nigerian immigrants in Britain undergo continual construction and challenges to their ethnic identity, which may in fact be in a state of flux and transition. For example, if we take Fangen’s (2007) opinion of ethnicity one could
query the fluidity of determining ethnicity, such as Nigerian immigrants who identify themselves as ‘being Nigerian’, although they may ‘feel British’. In this instance, individuals may, therefore, develop meanings that are either established by themselves or even the host society. Hunt (2002) further explained that there is no essence of identity that can be found since cultural identity is continually being produced and modified within the framework of similarity and difference. For example, referring once again to immigration, individuals are continuously reconstructing their identity as they try and integrate into the new society. As a result ethnic identity is constantly shifting positions, with points of difference providing multiple focuses of references and, hence, leading to changes in ideals, values and behaviour.

2.2.2.3 Social identity theory and ethnic identity

Building upon the discussion of ethnicity and self-identity, social identity, according to Tajfel and Turner (1986, p. 16) ‘consists of those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derives from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging’. Group members then differentiate their own group from other groups and evaluate their own group more favourably as a means of enhancing their self-image. This act of differentiation encourages the individual to construct a sense of self that is derived from perceived membership of certain social groups (Hogg and Vaughan, 2002). An immigrant or an ethnic minority, therefore, may derive their own sense of identity merely from identifying with other individuals who share similar ethnic affiliation. Ethnic affiliation refers to the loyalties that develop among a group of people based upon the knowledge of a shared history and common cultural inheritance (McGuire, 1988). One manifestation of this common cultural inheritance, according to Cheung (1993), is the influence of recognisable symbolic and cultural factors, a recognition that concurs with Keesing’s (1974) earlier definition of culture being a system of shared symbols and meanings.

Individuals who place emphasis on their ethnic identity have greater psychological closeness to their ethnic group, hold more positive but realistic views of their group and enjoy interacting with other group members (Phinney, 1990). In one study of African-American
college students, those students who tended to embrace a stronger racial identity within their own ethnic group had more positive sense self-esteem (Taylor and Howard-Hamilton, 1995).

The arguments so far have assumed then that an immigrant’s or ethnic minority’s sense of ethnic identity is almost consistent and/or homogeneous within affiliated groups. However, Tajfel and Turner (1979) argued, in explanations of social identity, that this is not true and that an individual has not one ‘personal self’ but rather several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership. In a later study, Turner et al. (1987) explained that different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on basis of his own personal, family or national level of self. This suggests once again that immigrants and/or ethnicity may act in specific ways based on different social context; for example, experiences of living in the host country or differing cultural encounters. This argument will be returned to when the Dialogical Model of Acculturation is discussed later in theme two.

2.2.2.4 Identity formation and ethnic identity

Phinney (1996) suggested ethnic identity formation depends on a process of exploration. This exploration is said to include questioning one’s pre-existing ethnic attitudes and searching into the past and present experiences of one’s group and its relations with other groups. In fact, this process leads to the development of one’s identity as a member of an ethnic group, as well as with an acceptance of other groups. Although Phinney (1996) examined the psychological aspects of ethnic identity, she failed to explore the cognitive structures that organise and direct information processing. Fiske and Taylor (1991), however, had previously addressed this idea, verifying that people with a greater sense of ethnic identity are much more likely to process information in their environment that have implications for their ethnicity, as compared to those with a weaker sense of their ethnic identity.
2.2.2.5 Racial identity and Black ethnic identity in Britain

Having discussed identity formation, and highlighted how it is affected by culture and social interaction, it becomes necessary to identify their relevance to Black ethnic identity in Britain. Most studies on identity formation are American-centric and, hence, are limiting in their wider applicability; however, they are still of use in understanding how Black ethnic identity is formed among appropriate ethnic groups in Britain.

In terms of cultural identity formation, Phinney (1992) identified that there is a need to distinguish race from culture, from which she developed a model of ethnic identity. Donald and Rattansi (1992) added that although race is defined as the physical or biological differences between groups, much debate surrounds its usage. They argued that no persuasive empirical cases have been made for this categorisation and hence the term becomes empty. Arguments lie in the question as to whether race exists, and that the concept of race is conceptualised as an unstable and decentered complex of social meaning that is constantly transformed (Omi and Winant, 1986). Referring back to Phinney’s (1990) argument, ethnic identity has been identified as part of an individual’s self-concept that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership. Steward and Baden (1997) referred to Phinney’s (1989) ethnic identity development as being similar to Black racial development (Cross, 1978) and minority identity development (Atkinson, Morten and Sue, 1989). This is similarity based upon the search to describe the process of conversion or developments which African-American and other minority groups are thought to experience. This theory expresses that non-White individuals possess attitudes and feelings about their own racial group membership and the ways in which that membership interacts with the dominant racial group, i.e. Whites. In this way, one could assume that immigrants possess their own attitudes and feelings of individuality in the host society. These attitudes are likely to change and develop as individuals are confronted with different experiences, such as racism.
Looking closely then at different sub-groups in Britain it is clear to see that different ethnic groups have different types of identity formation. Focusing specifically on African and Caribbean societies’ ethnic identities, these can differ significantly within the Black community. For example, West Indian history stems from slavery with many self-perceptions based on social disadvantages due to suppressed and disorganisation of African cultures through the institutionalisation of slavery (Welch, 2009). In contrast, West African culture was not subjugated through slavery, ensuring their culture survived relatively intact (Bagley and Young, 1988). This affects identity significantly, in that cultural and historical links may have the ability to determine and accentuate social structures, such as class hierarchy, i.e. Afro-Caribbeans are descendants of slaves, Africans are not. Harris (1994) suggested then that maintaining one’s racial or ethnic identity is a major challenge in a society that continually devalues Black people. In this way, Black people must be able to affirm their distinctive racial or ethnic identity to distinguish themselves in society and to sustain a positive definition of themselves (Harris, 1994).

2.2.2.6 Racism and power

In discussion the topic of racial identity and Black ethnic identity in Britain, it becomes useful to briefly highlight how this relates to racism and power. Racism, as often argued by scholars, refers to prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against someone of a different race, based on the belief that one’s own race is superior (Oxford Dictionaries, 2010). For example Rosado (2010) related racism to one group which, threatened by the perceived loss of power, exercises social, economic and political control against the other to retain their privileges by restructuring for social advantage. In this way, Rosado explained, racism can be viewed as the deliberate structuring of privilege by means of an objective, differential and unequal treatment of people for the purpose of social advantage over scarce resources, resulting in an ideology of supremacy which justifies power of position by placing a negative meaning on perceived or actual biological/cultural differences.
In essence, racism can then be viewed as a culturally defined strategy to defend the advantages of power. In the context of this research, one could then argue that British Whites in Britain have the advantage of power because of the perceived subordinated position of racial minorities. This power positioning is largely as a result of the European restructuring of the world in the sixteenth century where racism became the affirmative action for the Whites (Rosado, 2010). The continued quest for power thus leaves racism prevalent in society more than ever especially as a result of immigration.

In terms of previous discussion on culture, self-concept, identity, etc. one could easily conclude that racism has an adverse affect on these structures. As referred to earlier, individuals are shaped by society and thus have the ability to shape the roles they play, which are formed by the institutions in which these roles are played out. In this way, institutions are shaped by the needs of society as well as give structure to that society, which in turn both shapes individuals as well being influenced by those individuals that comprise society, thus showing a reciprocal exchange which is largely influenced by the specific culture of a given society. Therefore one could argue that culture influences the roles that individuals are permitted to play within an institution and the way they are able to shape society, which in turn shapes individuals and vice versa. Thus, these forces and power arrangements have the ability to shape/influence people’s lives as well as the roles and institution within society.

In this context, devaluing a race or group of people immediately deconstructs the power they hold in society, leaving them at times disenfranchise from society itself. In this way, one could argue that Black people, as a result of racism, may be perceived as having less power in British White society than their British White peers. As a result, they continuously seek ways to reaffirm or reposition themselves in a society that does not readily accept them, whether by seeking ways to effectively negotiate themselves or alternatively, as stated earlier by Harris (1994), by affirming their distinctive racial or ethnic identity to distinguish themselves in society and positively define themselves, thus obtaining a greater position of power.
2.2.2.7 Arguments presented so far

The arguments presented so far have highlighted the relevance of culture, self-identity and ethnicity, ending with a discussion on their connection with racism and power. As with the previous discussion it has pinpointed that ‘ethnicity’ addresses concepts of culture and identity, however the term still remains under contention. However, what has been presented is that culture impacts ethnicity, i.e. they are conducive to one another and subsequently this affects self-identity. One may then suggest that culture impacts ethnicity, which then impacts self-identity and, therefore, behaviour. In relation to this, one may also argue that racism subsequently impacts culture, and thus self-identity, which as a result impacts power pertaining to individuals of a society. The next section will develop this notion further.

2.2.3 Culture, ethnicity and self-identity’s relationship with consumption

From the discussion on culture, ethnicity and self-identity we have seen how it potentially affects the way that individuals behave and how they identify themselves. We can now relate this with migratory behaviour whereby individuals retain a strong sense of ethnic identity as a way to create a link with the past (Fangen, 2007). Conversely, this will also affect the behaviour of immigrants as the individual seeks ways in which to maintain their culture through consumption practices. This section will discuss these issues, commencing with an overview of theories regarding consumption and self-identity.

2.2.3.1 Culture, self-identity and consumption

Keesing (1974) argued that culture provides its members with an implicit theory about how to behave in different situations and how to interpret others’ behaviour in these situations. He contended that culture consists of shared codes of meaning but that not every individual shares precisely the same theory of the cultural code. Members of cultures, therefore, learn their implicit theories of their cultures when they go through the socialisation process. In this way,
they learn implicit theories to guide their behaviour. This guidance in behaviour may then lead to consumption practices determined by an individual’s association to their cultural group.

One of the most prominent theorists to relate culture with consumption is Grant McCracken (1986). McCracken (1986) noted that cultural meaning flows continually between its several locations in the social world, aided by the collective and individual efforts of designers, producers, advertisers and consumers. He summarised that cultural meaning is drawn from a culturally constituted world and transferred to a consumer good. Meaning is then drawn from the object and transferred to an individual consumer. Cultural meaning, therefore, becomes located in three places: the culturally constituted world, the object (i.e. consumer goods) and the individual consumer, moving in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual (McCracken, 1986). Subsequently culture becomes a tool that can manifest in many different types of behaviours that have an impact on consumer behaviour and marketing (Peñaloza, 1996).

Developing on McCracken’s (1986) work, Craig and Douglas (2006) later identified how culture causes change through the social mould, individual behaviour pattern and dynamics of social interaction. Social mould refers to the interaction between markets and consumers, and the way culture affects it. This is reflected in the core cultural values of the society, in its social institution, in conventions and rituals and its communication and language system, i.e. cultural systems that relate to Keesing’s (1974) earlier classifications of culture. In reference to this thesis, the social mould may refer to the inherent difference between Western and non-Western environments, for example Britain, a Western environment and a traditional non-Western environment, i.e. Nigeria. As referred to earlier, British society denotes an environment largely based on individualistic characteristics, conducting a competitive and uncompressing code of cultural practice, which consequently affects behaviour (Hofstede, 1980; Malik, 2002). Individual behaviour patterns then are influenced by culture, as we will see in later discussions. Culture also influences the dynamics of social interaction, the learning of social roles and behaviour and their evolution of change (Craig and Douglas, 2006). In this way, previous studies have shown a consensus that consumption practices carry social
meanings dependent upon social and cultural contexts (Appadurai, 1986; Douglas and Isherwood, 1996; McCracken, 1991). Consumption practices then act as a major source of social solidarity (Warde, 1997) and being viewed as components of selfhood and social identity (Friedman, 1990). If this view is accepted, one could then suggest that immigrants may consume products to maintain cultural solidarity and also enhance their own social roles in the community.

It has been well documented in literature the significance of culture and self-identity on consumption, with cultural values manifesting through consumer goods (Belk, 1988; Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994; Lindridge and Dibb, 2003; McCracken, 1986). Culture’s manifestation through consumption occurs because the cultural meanings a group holds are transferred to consumer goods; these meanings are then drawn from the object and transferred to an individual consumer (McCracken, 1986). McCracken (1986) further explained that these objects have the ability to carry and communicate symbolic and cultural meaning, which in turn relates back to Keesing’s (1974) of culture being symbolic in nature. In this way, based on McCracken’s (1986) work, one could suggest that goods become agents of cultural negotiation, allowing individual’s to negotiate social encounters through consumption (Lindridge, Hogg and Shah, 2004). Thus, immigrants may consume items that exhibit their culture whether it is through media, clothing, food etc, providing a means of constructing cultural and ethnic affiliations.

McCracken (1995) has also shown that culture does not only affect behaviour subconsciously but also on a conscious level; for example, in the consumption of ethno-centric goods. Ethnocentrism refers to the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one’s own culture. Goods, therefore, become a tool in exhibiting this tendency; for example, individuals who buy clothing specific to their own culture. Culture can, therefore, be described as having the ability to form an individual’s mental under-pinning in that they are able to define their ontology, motivate and select their behaviours, and judge and evaluate the actions of others (Sussman, 2000). Developing this further, De Mooij (2004, p. 26) described culture ‘as the glue that binds groups together’.
Based on the above argument, it can be argued that cultural identity can be expressed through culturally embedded, symbolic meanings placed on consumption, validating Keesing’s (1974) earlier view that culture consists of collective symbols, which have in turn transcended into goods (McCracken, 1986). Thompson (1995) added that an individual’s self-concept is a symbolic project that is actively constructed and preserved through symbolic consumption behaviour. Individuals, therefore, have the capacity to develop a repertoire of the consumption of symbolic objects that can be collectively used in the construction of their self-identity.

An individual’s ability to develop a repertoire of symbolic consumption objects can then be closely related to the earlier concept of an individual’s sense of independent and interdependent construals. For those with an independent construal, i.e. an individualistic cultural perspective, these inner attributes are most significant in regulating behaviour. Individualists may favour symbols and meanings that represent their uniqueness (Triandis et al. 1985). For example, Dutta-Bergman and Wells (2002) found that in relation to consumption, individualists were more concerned about brands than collectivists. In this way, as referred to earlier, individuals are more inclined to the private self compared to collectivists.

In contrast, the interdependence construal views the self and the relationship between the self and others as not separate from the social context but as more connected and less differentiated from others. People are, therefore, motivated to find ways to integrate themselves with relevant others, to fulfil and create obligations, and in general to become part of various interpersonal relationships (Sun, Horn and Merrit, 2004). Consumers from collectivist cultures may, therefore, be concerned about their personal appearance and about how they are seen by others or even consume goods to represent connectiveness. For example, individuals may consume products that reflect and reinforce family or group cultural values. Dutta-Bergman and Wells (2002) drew a comparison between individualists and collectivists and found that compared with collectivist consumers, individualist consumers were more satisfied with their lives, more financially satisfied and optimistic, more likely to be opinion
leaders, more innovative in terms of product usage, more fashion-conscious, more brand-savvy and more impulsive in relation to buying.

2.2.3.2 Consumption and self-concept

Having identified that culture has an effect on self-identity and can be determined by culture, it has been argued that this has an impact on consumption. That is, culture is embedded within consumption and this is used to construct, substantiate and maintain an individual or group identity. Delving further into the idea of self-identity, it becomes relevant to discuss the self-concept and its relationship with consumption. Linking with the notion that culture can manifest itself through consumption, the self-concept theory maintains that individuals will buy products that have the same image as they do (Wells and Prensky, 1996). Individuals then have the opportunity to use goods as materials with which to create, foster and develop their identity (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998).

Objects, such as cars and houses, may be valued because they reflect the cultural transitions an individual may have gone through, in this way, supporting McCracken’s (1986) view that objects have the ability to represent culture. Brands, an aspect of consumption, can also represent meanings in the form of symbols when they combine with and reinforce the way in which consumers think about themselves. They may form meaningful connections, attitudes, behavioural intentions and behaviour itself. The Image Congruence Hypothesis Theory is a prime way of explaining the way in which consumers attach meaning to products; it forms the basis of products being bought not for what they do but for what they mean (Solomon, 1999). This theory states that consumers will attempt then to support their self-concept by consuming brands or products, which will for them evoke positive product user stereotypes, while rejecting products or brands which evoke negative stereotypes. This theory is highly fitting for the objectives of this research as it may pinpoint why individuals consume particular goods. Figure 2.1 shows Grub and Gratwohl’s (1967) model illustrating how the interaction between symbolic consumption and the self-concept, and how symbols, whether in the form of brands or products, are able to reach out to the both the intrinsic and extrinsic values of an
individual’s self-concept. From this perspective these values, such as cultural values, are then expressed to the individual’s audience, such as peers. It is these same values which are affixed to the brand or product.

**Figure 2.1: The interaction between symbolic consumption and the self-concept**

Source: Grubb and Gratwohl (1967, p. 23)

Ultimately, Grub and Gratwohl’s (1967) theory allows the prediction that Nigerian immigrants may consume goods that not only represent themselves but also reflect themselves to the outside audiences, i.e. how British Whites will constitute their culturally construed world, either negatively or positively.

The self-concept, therefore, has the ability to help individuals define who they are and, as a result, frequently guides their behaviour (Kotler et al., 2001). Some consumers may, therefore, find certain brands relevant to their self-concept. For example, individuals may consume luxury brand clothes to exhibit self-worth and confidence.
Developing this argument further, ethnic minorities and immigrants may have the ability to use products to express their identities, to explore their world and their newfound freedom in it and also to rebel against the authority of their society. For example, an immigrant may choose to wear or consume cultural attire as opposed to those affiliated to the host society. This behaviour relates with the previous discussion of the public, private and collective self. Individuals may then consume goods that reflect being part of the collective group, i.e. as part of a collective culture; in this way, the public self is sampled, through product or brand ownership, as a mean of communicating to their audience; for example, individuals who consume similar fashionable clothing brands to maintain group belonging. Individuals then view themselves as actors belonging to and influenced by an all encompassing group with whom they have strong social relationships (Lindridge, Hogg and Shah, 2004). Alternatively, individuals may consume goods that reflect individualism, as part of an individualistic culture, and, therefore, sample their private self; for example, in the purchase and consumption of food bought according to personal taste. How an ethnic minority individual and group may cope with potential cultural differences and arising tensions (based on power differences) will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.3.3 Culture, self-identity, ethnicity and consumption

In light of the previous discussions, it becomes clear that ethnicity and consumption is intertwined, and this inherently affects an individual’s actions. If ethnicity represents affiliation resulting from racial or cultural ties, one can predict that it can then influence consumption and, therefore, support an individual’s ethnicity. Taking the latter perspective, it is often highlighted in literature that ethnicity is viewed as a category of identity that has a strong influence on consumption decisions (Costa and Bamossy, 1995; Cui, 1997; Gren, 1999). This in turn relates to McCracken’s (1986) explanations on how culture affects consumption, which builds upon Keesing’s (1974) earlier definition of culture.
Looking at ethnicity as a whole, consumption is important in an immigrant’s relationships with the host culture (Desai, 1963). Desai (1963) explained further that ethnicity has the ability to shape behaviour and as result shape consumption behaviours. Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk (1998) argued that consumption is ethnically bound, while Douglas and Isherwood (1979) argued that ‘consumption is the very arena in which culture is fought over and licked into shape’. Taking Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk’s (1998) viewpoint, one could then posit that consumption may have the ability to shape ethnicity, viewing consumption as ethnically bound. For example, Oswald’s (1999) study on Haitian immigrants identified that individuals purchased culturally embedded goods in order to form a culturally derived identity, an argument that supports McCracken’s (1986) earlier argument of cultural meaning transcending into the consumption of goods. Although her work largely discussed the issue of cultural swapping through consumption, it interestingly gives explanations of the significance of consumption and identity formation. Referring to research by Bouchet (1995), Oswald (1999) also explained that in consumer culture, ethnicity can be bought, sold and worn like a loose garment through culturally embedded consumption. In this way, individuals consume items that exhibit their ethnicity interchangeably.

2.2.3.4 Culture, self-identity, ethnicity, and consumption from Nigerian and British perspectives

It has been identified in earlier discussions that culture may play a role in shaping self-identity and subsequently this may in turn influence ethnicity and thus consumption. If one takes the subject case of Nigerian immigrants one could then suggest that Nigerian culture may influence consumption. In a study of death rituals and the consumption experiences of consumers in Asante, Ghana, Bonsu and Belk (2003) found that bereaved Asante consumers engage in conspicuous ritual consumption in pursuit of newer social identities for their deceased and themselves. They found that individuals are able to construct their social identities through conspicuous consumption. Similarly, Hamlett et al. (2008) showed in a study of South Asians in Britain that ethnicity is a category of identity that has a strong influence on consumption decisions and this in turn is shaped by culture.
In terms of African consumption, there appears to be a lack of studies which focuses on African consumer behaviour in Britain. Therefore, this research aims to address this issue. In comparison, research into British White culture and consumption suggests a society with that is relatively materialistic and focussed on their own individual needs (Lindridge, 2004).

2.2.3.5 Arguments presented so far

This section has argued that culture, ethnicity and self-identity have an affect on consumption. Individuals have the ability to utilise their ethnicity to make consumption practice, and as a result have the ability to uphold their own culture. This behaviour also represents the self, whether it is the private, public or collective self.

2.2.4 Conclusion

Despite extensive debate on defining culture, there still remains uncertainty over its definition. It seems that literature tends to focus little on the difficulty in conceptualising the term, instead focusing on the themes that represent culture. As stated previously, by no means does this thesis intend to give a clear definition of culture; however, like most literature it focuses on the components of culture and how it in turn affects behaviour.

Culture does not solely impact on behaviour; however, the link between culture and ethnicity and its relationship with consumption tends to be discussed individually rather than in terms of their interrelationship. Ethnic identity is linked to a common myth of origin or common ancestry, as well as a collective assumption of shared culture (Eriksen, 2002). This, however, assumes that a culture is shared by a group of individuals. However, Fangen (2007) stated that in relation to culture there is a need to understand the different constituent parts of ethnicity, which are naturalised, and situational ethnic identifications, geographical belonging and everyday practice. In turn these should be distinguished in analysis in further research.
2.3 Theme Two: Acculturation’s affect on an immigrant’s self-identity and how this affects their consumption choices.

Recapping the previous section, we have seen that culture can influence patterns of behaviour, including consumption. We have also seen that social identity and self-conception have an integral relationship with culture and influence behaviour. As a consequence, this will also affect immigrants in their new host society. An immigrant’s consumption may then be affected by the individual’s cultural community and the dominant group, i.e. the host society. This explanation also applies to the dominant group, insofar as the immigrant has the ability to affect the consumption behaviour of the host society. Scholars of immigration believe that immigrants act in culturally determined ways when they keep ethnic culture or affiliation alive in new circumstances (Song and Shin, 2004). Hence this section would look at how acculturation affects identity and consumption in relation to immigration.

2.3.1 Acculturation and self-identity

In the previous theme, culture was defined and used to provide an insight into behaviours, ethnicity, identity, norms and values. It has also been suggested that culture represents a set of socially acquired behaviour patterns common to a particular group (Fairchild, 1970; Solomon, 1999), including: language tradition, customs, shared meanings, and institutions (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983). As indicated in theme one there has been difficulty in conceptualising and operationalising the concept of culture. Any discussions based on cultural change and immigration in light of this cannot, therefore, be taken as absolute. However, it can be concluded that culture is dynamic and has the ability to expand and change to reflect the environment (Wells and Prensky, 1996). This change is explained in this section through the concept of acculturation. Acculturation will be defined first and then discussed in terms of the relative theoretical models, while taking note of the variables that affect it.
2.3.1.1 Defining acculturation

Popular interest in acculturation first arose in the twentieth century when studies were largely based on the observations on the process by which immigrants arriving in America became incorporated into mainstream culture (Padilla and Perez, 2003). Such observations informed Redfield, Linton and Herskovits’ (1936, p. 149) early definition of acculturation as ‘those phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes taking place in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’. Redfield, Linton and Herskovits’s (1936) definition, however, does not imply that assimilation will automatically occur; thus the Social Science Research Council (1954, p. 474) expanded the definition by adding a psychological dimension to the acculturation process:

Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation to traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value system, the process of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the separation of role determinant and personality factors.

Drawing upon the various definitions of acculturation, it can be proposed that Nigerians living in Britain may experience cultural and psychological changes that allow them to acculturate into British society. How this acculturation may occur can be understood from applying differing models of acculturation to immigrant groups.
2.3.1.2 Uni- and Bi-dimensional Models of Acculturation

In the last three decades, various models of acculturation have been proposed; however, little attention has been devoted to a systematic comparison of the validity of these models (Kim, Laroche and Tomiuk, 1998). In the past, theorists conceptualised acculturation as a uni-dimensional process; that is, as the ethnic minority or immigrant individual progressively acquired the cultural traits of another culture, they gradually lose part of or their entire culture of origin (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007; Gans, 1979). This process is called assimilation. The uni-dimensional model conceptualises cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation as polar opposites. It implies a process of cultural change along a single dimension; a shift from maintenance of the immigrant or ethnic minority culture to full adaptation to the host culture. In this model, individuals lose their original culture as they acquire the new dominant culture, which implies a negative relationship between cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation (Suinn, Ahuna and Khoo, 1992).

Using this approach in terms of Nigerian immigrants in Britain, the uni-dimensional model assumes that migrants will automatically dispose of their culture in preference for British White culture. For example, before residing in Britain, Nigerian migrants may favour traditional Nigerian food, while in living the new British White society, however, they may disassociate themselves from their own culturally symbolic foods in favour of eating traditional British White food.

The uni-dimensional model, however, is often criticised over its simplicity as it assumes assimilation only refers to immigrants or ethnic minorities gaining new cultural values from the host culture and subsequently losing their own cultural values (Jamal, 1998). This, however, is not entirely the case, as cultural change may occur between the two parties, i.e. the dominant culture can assimilate into the minority culture’s values.

The second acculturation model is the Bi-dimensional Model of Acculturation was developed by Szapocznik, Kurtines and Fernandez (1980) in response to the previously criticised uni-
dimensional model. The bi-dimensional model suggests that maintenance and adaptation of culture should be treated as two dimensions: the behaviour and values of an individual, and how they identify with both their own traditional culture and the host society culture. Various authors view these dimensions as being independent, suggesting that increasing adaptation does not require decreasing cultural maintenance (Berry, 1997; Hutnik, 1986; Sanchez and Fernandez, 1993).

A popular bi-dimensional model is Berry’s (1992, 2005) Bi-dimensional Model of Acculturation. In this model, the two main aspects of acculturation are combined, constituting four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. The integration strategy reflects a desire to maintain key features of the immigrants’ culture, while there is a simultaneous interest in adopting elements of the majority culture. ‘Assimilation’ refers to the loss of the original culture and complete absorption in the majority culture, while the separation strategy reflects a desire to maintain the minority culture at the same time as rejecting the majority culture. Marginalisation amounts to the rejection of both cultures (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2004; Berry, 1992, 2005), while integration argues that some immigrants will prefer a combination of adaptation and cultural maintenance.

Exactly what constitutes integration in acculturation is unclear (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2004; Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). Integration can refer to an equal combination of cultural maintenance and adaptation (fifty–fifty distribution) and/or indicate that people who have access to two cultural systems can shift from the one to the other depending on the context or life domains. For example, dual mono-cultural individuals may switch between cultural maintenance at home and cultural adaptation outside. This is quite interesting as it may reflect the behaviour of Nigerian immigrants in Britain. The argument of dual mono-cultural individuals, able to switch between cultures, was developed further by Soriano et al. (2004). He argued that immigrants and ethnic minorities are able to act with confidence and acceptance of their own cultural background, while holding some level of appreciation of the dominant culture within major life domains; for example, family, school, employment and the community.
This concept is also referred to as the bi-cultural self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1993, cited in Soriano et al., 2004), self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s abilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce a given skill. It also focuses on a sense of agency and efficacy in reacting to others or simply pursuing desired ends. LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993, p. 404) added that the bi-cultural self-efficacy refers to ‘the belief, or confidence, that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups without compromising one's sense of cultural identity’. Bi-cultural self-efficacy refers then to the interpersonal and communication skills needed to navigate multicultural situations in which cultural minorities often find themselves when interacting with family, community, school, work and society.

For ethnic minorities, bi-cultural self-efficacy allows them then to develop effective interpersonal communication skills and role adjustments in two or more cultures. In this way, an immigrant family, particularly the married couple, may conduct Western-type roles outside the home; however, once in the home they uphold their traditional cultural roles. This argument is developed in greater depth by the Dialogical Model of Acculturation, discussed next.

### 2.3.1.3 Dialogical Model of Acculturation

The Dialogical Model of Acculturation was formed as a response to criticisms of both the Uni- and Bi-directional models of acculturation. This model draws upon the philosophical assumptions of social constructionism and represents a dynamic, flexible and holistic approach to viewing acculturation in an ethnic minority group or individual (Bhatia, 2002). The origins of this model lie in Turner et al.’s (1994, p. 456) recognition that ‘self categories do not represent fixed, absolute properties, but relative, varying, context dependent properties’. In this way, one may be correct in assuming that due to the ongoing process of integration, immigrants are continuously reconstituting and negotiating their identity. As a result using both the Uni-dimensional and Bi-dimensional models of acculturation becomes insufficient to
understand an individual’s acculturation process. Bhatia (2002) argued that it is important to view acculturation of diasporic immigrant children and their families as a dialogical process that involves constant moving back and forth between incompatible positions, i.e. positions that occur from culturally construed contexts and which may require some level of cultural conformity. Rohner (1984) added that incompatible mixed values often stand side by side in an individual, each being employed successfully in different situations. Bhatia’s (2002) pioneering model identifies that the process of acculturation involves multiple negotiations and renegotiations of identity, often involving political and historical practices that are linked to and shaped by the specific cultures of the immigrants’ homeland and host society (Bhatia, 2002).

In many respects, the Dialogical Model of Acculturation develops further the previously mentioned acculturation categories in Berry’s Bi-dimensional Acculturation Model and addresses Turner et al.’s (1994) criticism of both the Uni-dimensional and Bi-dimensional Models of Acculturation. The Dialogical Model of Acculturation, developing these models further, implies that acculturation and identity are both dynamic, within the ethnic minority individuals, creating multiple presentations of themselves depending on the individuals and situations encountered (Phinney, 1996). These multiple presentations allow these individuals to adapt culturally to specific encounters and allow the ethnic minority or immigrant to temporarily exist in that context.

Lindridge, Hogg and Shah (2004) in their study of South Asian women in Britain argued that in order to negotiate their daily interactions between two contrasting cultures, second-generation South Asian women lead a dual existence by projecting multiple identities in different situations, in terms of their consumption. Consumption becomes a means, therefore, to symbolically show their acculturation affiliation depending on the context of their encounters. In a similar way, one may then argue that, in order to negotiate their daily actions between two contrasting cultures, Nigerian women in Britain consume goods that represent both their cultures. These women, having been exposed to British White society and work,
find themselves in a position of empowerment, while maintaining their cultural position at home of being a wife.

2.3.1.4 The Interactive Acculturation Model

Bhatia’s Dialogical Model of Acculturation has been criticised for its unwillingness to recognise cultural barriers within acculturation, i.e. racism. Bourhis et al. (1997) addressed this important issue through the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM). The model’s significance lays in its consideration of immigrants’ experiences of racism, with this model proposing combinations of the host society, and the immigrant group’s attitude and behaviour towards acculturation. These attitudes and behaviours in turn produce consensual, problematic or conflicting relational outcomes between immigrants and the host society.

Acculturation experiences may, therefore, have a significant impact on immigrants and the host society. Immigrants’ need to define themselves and their sense of self (as discussed earlier in this chapter) within the new host country may trigger a redefinition of the collective identity of the host country, challenging its sense of ethno-cultural homogeneity. The outcome of this may be either positive acceptance or negative rejection of these new individuals, their groups and all they represent.

The IAM seeks then to integrate, within a common theoretical framework, three components of the immigrant minority and host majority relations in multicultural and multilingual settings. These are:

1) the acculturation orientations adopted by immigrant minorities in the host society;
2) the acculturation orientations adopted by the dominant host majority towards specific groups of immigrants; and
3) the interpersonal and inter-group relational outcomes, which are the product of combinations of immigrant and majority acculturation orientations (Bourhis, 2001; Bourhis et al., 1997).

Most importantly, the IAM focuses on the acculturation orientations adopted by the dominant host majority towards specific groups of immigrants, and the interpersonal and inter-group relational outcomes that are the product of the combinations of immigrant and host majority acculturation orientations.

Bourhis et al. (1997) argued that a consequence of a dominant and weaker culture acculturating are a number of relational outcomes, including: inter-cultural communication, acculturation stress, stereotyping and discriminatory behaviours in settings, such as school, workplace, commerce, housing, the police and the judiciary. Using Turkish immigrants living in Germany, Bourhis et al. (1997) argued that the inability of the Turks to acculturate into German society was less to do with their unwillingness but a greater reflection of the wider levels of racism and discrimination they experienced. In other words, the wider dominant White German population did not want the Turkish population to acculturate and integrate, preferring to keep them as a separate ethnic group. Although racism is discussed later in this theme, its relevance to acculturation requires it to be addressed here. It is, however, important to note that only a few studies have systematically investigated the attitudes of both groups toward this process of mutual adaptation (Bourhis et al., 1997).

The extent that the IAM is applicable to Nigerian immigrants living in Britain is unclear from previous research. Certainly the literature in Chapter One alludes to Britain’s failure and struggle to accept people who are not White Anglo-Saxons. It can only be inferred here that experiences of racism and potential rejection by the dominant group may lead to immigrant groups, such as Nigerians, with drawing from British White culture and society.
2.3.2 Acculturation variables

To understand further the acculturation process it is important to review the various variables that, for immigrants and ethnic minorities, affect their acculturation process. The following variables will explore and discuss their importance to the acculturation process.

2.3.2.1 National identity and acculturation

Identity gives individuals a location in the world and presents a link between the individual and the society in which they live. National identity refers then to the identity of the nation, usually discussed with reference to the majority held common culture or history (Woodward, 1997). Woodward (1997) argued that national identities can be contested and struggles between different communities may be represented by conflicting national identities; for example, the struggle presented between conflicting, incompatible and sometimes polarised national identity positions.

The strength of national identity may, therefore, influence the level of acculturation (Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999). National identity is viewed then as being derived from a multiplicity of sources, such as national, ethnicity, social class, community or gender, which may conflict in the construction of identity leading to contradictory and fragmented identities (Woodward, 1997). Immigrant ethnic minorities, therefore, may not only have to struggle with a new host society but also conflicting identities based on different values and systems encapsulated within a confused sense of national identity.

2.3.2.2 Language usage and acculturation

Ethnic and national language proficiency is usually regarded as important indicators of acculturation or lack thereof (Van de Vijver et al., 1999). As referred to previously, language is seen as a sub-system of the Cognitive System of Culture (Keesing, 1974), providing a means to bond individuals or a group, as well as providing a means to structure a group.
Culture, through language, provides a means for a group’s culture to be transferred from generation to generation and from one individual to another, facilitating communication and interaction between individuals (Fan and Stark, 2007; Inman et al., 2007).

Craig and Douglas (2006) explained that societies accustomed to oral traditions often rely on their language to transmit their culture through the process of cultural heritage transmission. This can subsequently affect the way that immigrants relate and customise themselves into the new society. This literature has found, however, that some migrants exert little effort to absorb the mainstream culture and language, even though the economic returns to assimilate are high. Lazear (1999), for example, concluded in research carried out in the United States that highly multicultural immigrants’ acculturation was not as high as was expected. This result is quite surprising and leads one to question why immigrants are in some ways reluctant to assimilate despite the improvements in communication. One view maybe, that immigrants choose to maintain their culture through the retention of their language.

2.3.2.3 Food consumption and acculturation

From the previous discussions on culture, food can be seen as a symbolic product highlighting cultural differences. Leach (1974, p. 32) stated that ‘it is the conventions of society which decree what is food and what is not food, and what kind of food shall be eaten on what occasions’. Woodward (1997, p. 33) resultantly explained that ‘it is the role of food in constructing identities and the mediation of culture in the transformation of the natural which are important in this diversion into the kitchen’. Subsequently, acculturation can affect and illustrate the changes in the food consumption patterns of immigrants after they have lived in a new cultural environment for a reasonable period of time (Jamal, 1998). Jamal’s (1998) work, although investigating the way in which ethnic minority immigrants effect the food consumption practice of the host society, primarily identified how people negotiated culturally constructed differences that arise as a result of distinctions between traditional and contemporary food consumption practices in the UK.
Using Jamal’s work, it can be argued that members of the dominant population have the ability to influence the food consumption practices of immigrants. For example, various popular supermarkets carry mainstream products and services, so when an immigrant consumer visits these outlets, they are likely to buy mainstream products and services, such as newspapers, wines, bread, cigarettes, etc. Even if an immigrant has the opportunity to buy ethnic products (such as ethnic food stuff) in a mainstream supermarket, they will do so from specialized ethnic stores. Hence there are frequent encounters between the cultural categories of the mainstream population and those of ethnic communities at such places. Often such encounters may lead to changes in the consumption experiences of immigrant consumers and, therefore, encourage acculturation into the dominant culture.

However, in explaining this, one must also identify that possible conflicts and friction may arise due to the symbolic meaning behind traditional foods within immigrant groups when adopting the consumption pattern of the host society. For example, Lindridge and Dhillon (2005) noted how Punjabi Sikhs living in Britain actively consumed alcohol to publicly demonstrate their lack of cultural conformity and to reinforce their own sense of cultural marginality. In contrast, Lindridge, Hogg and Shah (2004) noted how South Asian women compliably used food to demonstrate context derived acculturation stances. In White-dominated instances, food symbolic of White culture was bought from White-owned stores and publicly consumed and vice-versa for contexts involving South Asians.

2.3.2.4 Clothing consumption and acculturation

Peñaloza’s (1994) study on Hispanic immigrants in the United States highlighted the connection between immigrants link to acculturation to product type. Peñaloza’s (1994) study found that low-cost, high-visibility items that were absent of any language barrier, such as clothing, were most rapidly adopted by Hispanic immigrants. Chattaraman and Lennon (2008) also noted in their study of Hispanics in the United States, that consumption reflected a need to be seen to be conforming to the dominant culture. Both these examples serve to illustrate how clothing can reflect an ethnic minority’s willingness to demonstrate their acculturation.
Alternatively, ethnic minority individuals may consume clothing which reflect and support their own sense of ethnicity. For example, Lindridge, Hogg and Shah (2004) demonstrated how South Asian women used clothing to demonstrate their cultural allegiances.

2.3.2.5 Media consumption and acculturation

The relations between mass media, society and culture have been a major subject of inquiry for several decades within sociology, communication studies and British cultural studies (Spitulnik, 1993). Media itself represents an important acculturation variable because it has the power to subtly negotiate and represent the majority’s cultural identity and thus influences acculturation. For example, Kang and Kim (1998) argued that the greater the development of host communication competence the greater immigrants participation in the host society’s mass communication. Consequently, an immigrant’s successful acculturation is partially dependent on their ability to engage with and understand the language used in mass media and, with this, the subtle cultural meanings embedded within it.

In contrast, Jeffres and Hur (1980) observed that ethnic media exists for unassimilated immigrants who wish to maintain their culture. For example, Hur and Proudlove (1982) in a study of Asian-American media noted that the content placed great emphasis on news about the community and the native country, as well as cultural and entertainment news. It was concluded that this emphasis reflected the audiences need to remain in contact with their country of origin, suggesting at least some reluctance on behalf of the audience to acculturate.

2.3.2.6 Gender and acculturation

Gender influences both the process of acculturation and the extent to which cultural conflicts are experienced (Tang and Dion, 1999). Research into acculturation on the basis of gender suggests that women do not acculturate as quickly as men, owing to women not always experiencing the same or comparable benefits as men (Dion and Dion, 2001). Difficulties in immigrant women acculturating have also been noted in Lee et al.’s (1988) study of Chinese
immigrant women in Canada. They found that the adoption of Western values by immigrant women was associated with greater gender role conflict arising from potent conflicts in everyday situations. The causes of this, they argue, lie in immigrant women’s acculturation being held back by their culture’s endorsement of traditional gender roles; that is, the women being a home-maker, a mother and other related household duties. As a consequence, female immigrants may experience greater acculturation conflict arising from cultural differences in everyday situations. Sources of conflict arise from being more patriotic, conservative, conformist and concerned about preserving social harmony and promoting positive feelings among group members than their male counterparts (Eagly, 1978), and often lead to heightened levels of depression (Noh, Wu, Speechley and Kaspar, 1992).

2.3.2.7 Identity and acculturation

In the discussion for theme one, identity was defined as the idea one has about oneself, one’s characteristic properties and the values one considers being important (De Mooij, 2004). Acculturation brings about a number of changes to an immigrant’s self-identity, with immigrants becoming culturally assimilated while maintaining a strong sense of their own ethnic identity (Verkuyten and Thijs, 2002).

In the host society, immigrants may become more self-conscious about their ethnicity after migration and, therefore, present an assimilative identity in favour of their own ethnic identity. Hutnik (1991, p. 91), in a study of South Asian immigrants in Britain, referred to this as a process of self-identification in which ‘ethnic consciousness is significantly more salient in each minority group than in the English group, although on different dimensions’. Hutnik (1991) supports this by showing immigrant South Asian adolescents in Britain were more aware of their ethnicity than English adolescents, or Indian adolescents in India, because they were an ethnic minority group within British society. However, it is important to note that Hutnik’s (1991) sample group was drawn from adolescents and, therefore, the results may not be entirely representative of Britain’s ethnic minority population. Although studies such as
this have not been carried out on Nigerian immigrants, Hutnik’s work provides an important understanding for ethnic minorities self-identity experiences.

Referring back to Bhatia’s (2002) Dialogical Model of Acculturation, it was argued that acculturation and identity are both dynamic, whereby the ethnic minority individual creates multiple presentations of the self, depending on other individuals and situations encountered. One could then assume by this that Nigerian immigrants residing in Britain may exhibit multiple representations of their self in order to assimilate into the new society. For example, in the context of Bhatia’s (2002) work an illustration of this could be at a football match, a Nigerian living in Britain may feel British when England is playing, but when Nigeria are playing the same individual may have a greater tendency to support Nigeria.

2.3.2.8 Racism and acculturation

Bourhis et al.’s (1997) IAM noted how the acculturation orientations of the dominant host majority members can have a major impact on the acculturation orientations of immigrant minorities owing to the former’s control of most public and private institutions within the country of settlement (Bourhis, 2001). Using racism as a form of exclusionism, members of the host community can deny immigrants the right to adopt features of the majority host culture. They also have the ability to deny immigrants the choice to maintain their heritage culture or religion and believe that some immigrants have customs and values that can never be culturally or socially incorporated within the host majority (Barette et al., 2004).

Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2003) argued that there is considerable evidence that perceiving oneself as a target or victim of racism by members of a dominant group is one of the major acculturative strains, leading to a variety of psychological problems, i.e. acculturation stress (Dion, et al., 1992; Moghaddam, Ditto and Taylor, 1990; Pak et al., 1991; Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994). In this way, immigrants who experience acculturative stress may favour a less integrative approach to the host society and therefore opt for separation, as defined within Berry’s Bi-dimensional Model of Acculturation (1980). As a result of racism, immigrants or
ethnic minorities may actively seek to maintain their culture of origin while rejecting important features of the dominant culture. These individuals will, therefore, maintain their culture of origin and prefer contact with members of their own group, while dissociating themselves from the cultural practices of the mainstream host majority; a central finding of Bourhis’s IAM (Bourhis et al., 1997).

In an extreme case, immigrants or ethnic minorities may become marginalised, feeling estranged and alienated from both their own culture of origin and the dominant culture of the host society; a reaction identifiable with Berry’s (1980) Bi-dimensional of Acculturation Model and marginalised outcome. Marginalised individuals may feel socially and psychologically excluded from both their immigrant community and from the host majority (Barette et al., 2004). For example, Lindridge and Dhillon (2005) noted in their study of Punjabi Sikhs living in Britain, that racism, both psychological and physical, is a significant contribution to their sample groups feeling of cultural marginalisation.

Thus one could argue that, if the dominant group in the society holds the traits or characteristics of an ethnic group in low esteem, ethnic group members are potentially faced with a negative social identity. Hogg, Abram and Patel (1987) made reference to this and explained that an individual or group identifying with a low-status group may result in low self-regard. The literature surrounding this issue refers to this phenomenon as self-hatred, among disparaged ethnic groups (Banks, 1976). An alternative solution, first identified by Cross (1978) and based on the individual’s behaviour, places focus on them developing pride in themselves. The individual then has ability to reinterpret characteristics deemed ‘inferior’ so that they do not appear inferior (Bourhis et al., 1973) and to stress the distinctiveness of one’s own group (Christian et al, 1976) to address racism and strengthen their own sense of ethnic identity.
2.3.3 Acculturation, self-identity and Black identity

The previous discussion has highlighted the some of the variables affecting the acculturation process. It becomes important, therefore, to refer back to the issue of self-identity and acculturation, and relate these discussions to issues of Black identity. Mercer (1992) argued that Black identities are not just there waiting to be discovered in a vocabulary of nature but have to be culturally and politically constructed through political antagonism and cultural struggle.

Malik (2002) suggested that individuals defining themselves in terms of Blackness transcend a range of variables, such as social class, religion, gender and sexuality. Consequently, Fanon (1986) suggested that Black identity in Britain is a counter to racist images and this in turn facilitates the emergence of an identity that is free them from the mental slavery of colonial stereotypes. Agier (1995) supported this position, noting that Black identity may be viewed as a product of racialised social relations. Consequently, Black identity can be defined as searching for a different self – the Black Self – appropriating and transforming Black culture as a reflection of their difference to White culture (ibid).

Cross (1971) argued that a stable concept of self both as an individual as well as a group member (classifying one’s self as Black) is essential to the healthy growth and development of the Black self. Yet, the extent that a Black identity relates to Nigerian immigrants is unclear from previous research.

2.3.4 Acculturation, self-identity and gender

Having identified the influence of acculturation on identity, it is now necessary to understand how this process affects gender identity formation. As we will see in later discussions, gender and racism influences identity formation. However, specific literature on African immigrants, acculturation and gender is limited. It should be noted that most literature on Black identity
and gender formation tends to focus on African-Americans; therefore, generalisations cannot be made but merely referred to.

Research suggests significant differences between male and female identity development among ethnic minorities (Bowman and Howard, 1985; Phinney, 1990; Wade, 1994). For example, Bowman and Howard (1985) found that African-American males were more oriented toward equality and institutional barriers, whereas their female counterparts were more likely to be oriented toward ethnic pride and adherence to their cultural background. Similar findings were also noted by Wade (1994), who observed how ethnic minority males develop an awareness of ethnic obstacles and seek equality to the dominant group, whereas their female counterparts are more likely to develop strong ties to ethnic heritage and tradition (Wade, 1994). The reasons for this difference may lie in ethnic minority men being socialised to develop a deeper awareness of ethnic barriers and subsequently develop a compensatory sense of exaggerated masculinity, characterised by sexist attitudes, anti-femininity and aggressive solutions to disputes.

Parham and Helms (1985) work on gender and ethnic identity of African-Americans noted how gender differences were supported by African-American men perceiving their status in American society as being lower than their female counterparts. The antecedents of this behaviour lied in African-American males being more likely to have experienced negative pre-encounter attitudes, i.e. they had experienced racism through others stereotypical perceptions of what constitutes a Black man. In a similar study, Carter et al. (1997) also found that African-American men had encountered pre-encounter attitudes.

Conversely, African-American women demonstrated more advanced racial identity statuses, expressing a strong commitment and appreciation of their racial heritage (Carter et al., 1997). Phinney and Tarver (1988), in a later study, noted how African-American women were more likely to explore their ethnic background and tradition compared to their male counterparts. This suggests that women were more accepting of their ethnic identity than males, further supporting Wade’s (1994) argument that women are more likely to develop strong ties to
ethnic heritage and tradition. One reason for this is provided by Skoe and Marcia (1991), who argued that because females tend to be less competitive, they may be less concerned with equality and more concerned with interpersonal harmony. Hence, in response to racism and discrimination, African-American females may be more likely to maintain a strong adherence to their ethnic background and develop a sense of ethnic pride.

Although the research explained is largely from an African-American perspective it does offer some interesting insights into gender and Black identity. Variables, such as racism experienced by individuals, may significantly impact identity and gender status. Suffice to say, these experiences are likely to affect the behaviour of immigrants.

2.3.5 Acculturation, self-identity and consumption

As previously explained, acculturation brings about a number of changes to an immigrant’s self-identity (Verkuyten and Thijs, 2002). This section will discuss how immigrants or ethnic minorities draw upon different cultural values, involving elements of strategic cultural display within an environment characterised by interdependent and overlapping cultural domains (Song and Shin, 2004). Song and Shin (2004) added that immigrant consumption patterns must be understood by investigating the comprehensive mechanisms through which culture influences individual consumption patterns. For example, uncertainty among ethnic minorities towards the mainstream culture may result in the conspicuous consumption of products associated with the culture of residence (Solomon, 1983).

Gentry et al. (1995) suggested that immigrant consumption patterns over a period of time tend to evolve into those similar to the mainstream population, a process called consumer acculturation (Andreasen, 1990). Consumer acculturation is concerned with the phenomenon of cultural interpenetration, representing a socialisation process whereby immigrants or marginalised consumers learn the behaviours, attitudes and values of a culture that is different from those of their culture of origin (Lee and Cochran, 1998). The processes of consumer acculturation, therefore, allow immigrants to exhibit consumption patterns associated with the
host culture, their own culture or a third, hybrid combination of the two cultures (Peñaloza, 1989).

The extent that immigrants and ethnic minorities are willing to use consumption to acculturate has been widely researched. For example, Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) in a study of consumption patterns of Mexican-Americans discovered that the consumption patterns of Mexican-Americans bore little resemblance to either those of Americans or Mexicans. They argued that as a result of this the consumption behaviour patterns of immigrants was not a simple blending of the culture of origin and the culture of residence, but rather a unique cultural style. Peñaloza’s (1994) developing this perspective further acknowledged the pulls of both the host country and country of origin on immigrants’ consumption patterns. For example, some immigrants consumed products embedded in nostalgia from their past and their indigenous culture, due to their experiences of racism, or simply to maintain ties to their culture and families. In other instances, products and services associated with American culture, such as telephones, autos and financial services, were adopted by informants to maintain their ties to Mexican culture.

2.3.6 Conclusion

In this section we saw that acculturation was defined and explained in terms of its relationship with identity and consumption. It was argued that acculturation has the ability to change behaviour whether it based on marginalisation, separation, integration or assimilation. Each of these strategies may be employed by immigrants; however, an immigrant’s acculturation also depends on the host society willingness to accept them into mainstream society.

2.4 Theme Three: Gender and power dynamics among immigrants and how they construct their self-identity around consumption in a new society.

This chapter discusses the notion of gender roles, specifically how they are created and acted out in society, making particular reference to the family. It will then expand on how power is
exhibited through gender roles highlighting the various variables that affect power dynamics within families. Once these parallels are identified their relationship to consumption will be identified, i.e. how these identities are constructed in the new society through consumption. Throughout this section particular attention will be made to the theme of acculturation, culture and ethnicity and their effect gender and self-identity.

2.4.1 Gender roles

Gender is the symbolic definition attributed to members of a sex on the basis of historically constructed interpretations of the nature, disposition and role of members of that sex (Gentry et al., 2003). O’Neil (1981, p. 203) added that gender roles can be defined as ‘behaviours, expectations, and role sets defined by society as masculine or feminine, which are embodied in the behaviours of the individual man or woman and culturally regarded as appropriate to males and females’. Bang et al. (2005) developed gender roles further, stating that they are also socially constructed and provide standards, expectations and roles varying from one culture to another. Perhaps nowhere are gender roles more significant than within a marriage.

To understand the construction of gender roles between married couples, one must first understand the role of marital dynamics. Research in the 1950s and the 1960s supported the conventional model of the nuclear conjugal family, suggesting that a typical household consisted of a husband, wife and children (Dia, 1997). According to this conventional model, the male is viewed as the head of the household, insofar as he holds most of the power in the marital relationship (Yogeav, 1981). Yogeav (1981) further explained that the male is also viewed as being older and larger, more educated, his earnings are higher and his occupational status is superior to that of his female spouse. In this way, men’s gender identity is often based on being the sole breadwinner (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 1999). The conventional model also sees that with the onset of female employment and careers are viewed as violating the values and norms traditionally associated with women, such as home-maker, resulting in conflict and reduced marital happiness (Axelson, 1963).
Referring back to the previous discussions, gender can be produced in everyday activities (West and Zimmerman, 1987). However, Zvonkov et al. (1996) described the gender perspective as it is focused on how people in their interactions with others come to perceive each other and each other’s behaviours as gender appropriate or inappropriate. With this view one may be led to believe that gender, in terms of marital dynamics, is not only based on gender roles being produced by everyday activities but also perceived behaviour. Marital dynamics in a household may, therefore, be determined by perceived gender roles. As mentioned in the previous section, the definition of family is dependent on culture. In the discussion presented here, one could argue that this view of marital dynamics is largely Western centric and may not represent the definition of or marital dynamics within Nigerian culture. Nigerian families, which are synonymous to West African families, as previously mentioned by Fapohunda and Todaro (1988), are consanguine. The family structure consists of the extended family, whereby the husband is the head of the household, with the female spouse holding and being given clearly defined roles and power beyond that of their Western counterpart (Fapohunda and Todaro, 1988).

In the previous theme, we saw that gender roles are related to culture; however, what is clear from the literature is that gender roles within the family household may be fluid, i.e. as a result of immigration; and, subsequently, acculturation has the ability to reconfigure gender roles and marital dynamics. For example, feminist theories of households highlight the possible effect of migration for disrupting and changing gender relations, power and status within transnational households and the conflict and tensions that such changes engender (Pessar, 1999; Mahler and Pessar, 2001). This section then will discuss these themes further.

2.4.2 Gender role enactment

Gender, Patterson and Hogg (2004) argued, is an increasingly blurred construct, with a fluid quality that shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times. Looking further at gender roles, the literature suggests that contemporary women’s enactment of gender roles are in flux. Solomon (2004) explained this by noting that, in work and social life, women are
shown to enact masculine, as well as feminine typed behaviours. For example, at work a woman may primarily act out the role of a manager, being more authoritative and aggressive but at home pose as a traditional female, becoming more submissive (Bussey and Bandura, 1999). Eagly and Mladinic (1989) add that this behaviour is fuelled by the tendency of people to hold well-developed gender stereotypes that lead them to distinguish many traits, role behaviours, physical characteristics and occupations according to gender, and appreciate and enact more nuanced gender-related behaviours than ever before (Marcus and Wurf, 1987).

2.4.3 Ethnic minorities and gender

As we have seen, culture has an impact on behaviour, beliefs and value. In the following discussion, we will see explanations on how they are related and what their consequences are for gender relationships.

2.4.3.1 Culture, ethnicity and gender

Research argues that there is great elasticity in gender roles and traits due to culture determining the importance of biological sex on acceptable social roles (Silvern, 1977). Identifying that culture has an affect on gender roles, it is reasonable to suggest that ethnicity may also affect gender roles, as gender may be viewed as an important cultural resource in the construction of ethnic identity (Hunt, 2002). However, the cultural and sociological dimensions of gender operationalisation categorization have largely been ignored (Harris, 1994), making this an important theme to explore in greater depth.

Warikoo (2005) identified that ethnicity provided cues to family background and social status, with gender recognised as a significant characteristic by which an individual identifies and distinguishes themselves from others. Gender and ethnicity may then be considered as bio-social factors in that they combine components of biological or hereditary traits with the social or environmental influences within the same individual. In this way, Nigerians immigrants in Britain may draw from their Nigerian community for references of their culture, indicating
that the community plays a large role in supporting ethnicity. From this, an understanding of
gender roles based on one’s culture and ethnicity may be conceived (Bang et al. 2005). For
example, Bang et al. (2005) found that in Asian cultures concur the status of women are
perceived to be lower than that of men.

Clearly, gender and ethnicity are important components of one’s identity; however,
assumptions that being male or female, or belonging to a particular ethnic group will
necessarily cause one to adopt or accept prescribed gender roles may be wrong. Rathus and
O’Leary (1997), for example, noted how immigrant females often adopt a more masculine role
when in a host society in order to integrate; an argument that will be discussed next.

2.4.4 Gender, migration and marital relationships

The process of immigration offers opportunities for culturally determined gender roles to be
reconstructed in the new host society (Dona and Ferguson, 2004), although the extent that
immigration improves or undermines a woman’s ability to renegotiate hierarchical gender
relations is unclear (Moon, 2003). Noh, Wu, Speechley and Kaspar (1992) observed that the
inability of immigrant women to capitalise on the social-structural benefits of acculturation
often results in female immigrants struggling alone with multiple roles as mother, carer,
employee, etc (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002). However, migration may lead to an
increased exposure to feminist ideas and sexual liberty, as well as prejudices from the host
society (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). At the same time, immigrant women’s support networks
that were embedded in extended family and friends are reduced upon migration, leaving them
to struggle alone with their role as carer, mother, employee, etc. (Ehrenreich and Hochschild,
2002).

Previous discussions on immigration and marital dynamics have tended to focus on patriarchy
and family stage migration, where emphasis is focused on patriarchal gender relations. For
example, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) found in a study of Mexican immigrants that family
structure and relations where dependent on the stage of migration, i.e. the stage at which each
family member migrates and how it in turn affects marital dynamics within the host society. Most notably, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) found that the process of family stage migrations diminished patriarchy, and in this way patriarchy was seen as neither monumental or a static construct, even within a group sharing similar class and racial-ethnic characteristics. From this research one may then infer that the stage that at which a family migrates may have an effect on marital dynamics. This may mean that when one spouse migrates first, they gain more power within the household when the family is all together due to their experiences gained in the host society; for example, from employment.

The opportunities employment offers for immigrant women to earn money potentially creates a change in the dynamics of their relationship and the power balance or imbalance in their relationship (Helms, Crouter and MacHale, 2003). Consequently, employment enables immigrant women to gain more control over their lives (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 1999). For example, Guendelman and Perez-Itriago (1987) found that immigration was experienced very differently by working and non-working women among immigrant Mexican women. They found that those immigrant Mexican women working outside the home tended to establish cooperative roles with their male partners, sharing power, decision making and activities. In contrast, those women who did not work became increasingly dependent on their male partners. However, the issue of women having shared power may not be entirely so. Greaves et al. (1995), for example, found that women who brought more resources into the family than the male spouse were seen as unconventional, in that this resulted in a female-dominant pattern of behaviour challenging the conventional power structure of the marriage.

However, Pessar (1984) challenged the typical view that patriarchal behaviour is changed after migration, i.e. that alternations in patriarchal behaviour are due to the adoption of feminist ideology or by modern values based on acculturation, as well as women’s enhanced financial contributions to the family. Acculturation brings about changes to gender roles due factors such as employment. These changes in gender roles directly affect patriarchal behaviour in that immigrant women, as a result, may begin to assert themselves and hence challenge traditional gender roles.
Opportunities for female immigrants to renegotiate their gender-related roles often arise from exposure to feminist ideas, which results in conflict between the moral values of the old and new cultures in the realms of femininity, sexuality and fertility (Dona and Ferguson, 2004; Pessar and Mahler, 2003). Previous beliefs in patriarchy are now no longer seen as monumental or of a static construct, even within a group sharing similar class and ethnic characteristics, as immigrant women challenge traditional gender roles and renegotiate power relations between husband and wife (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Kibria, 1990). For example, Lee et al. (2007) in a study of the Chinese immigrant population in Britain found that education allowed immigrant women to exercise autonomy and negotiate conditions regarding marriage proposals, as well as greater independence and skills to find employment that would provide them with financial independence from their respective spouses.

The experience of migration may have an impact on the traditional roles and status of immigrant men and women within African communities. Traditionally, in African communities, men been regarded as providers and women as carers (Daley, 2007). The extent that migration affects gender is evident in Elam and Chinouya’s (2000) study of Black Nigerians, Ghanaians, Somalis and Ugandans living in Britain. They found that in most cases the men described their migration to the UK as a difficult process, mainly due to their experiences of unemployment, earning less than their partner or taking several lower paid jobs at once in order to provide a family wage. The original migration dream of the male being successful, wealthy and providing for his family in Britain and relatives in Nigeria was not achieved; instead being replaced by stress, depression and low self-esteem, leading to reduced social status and a perceived inability to provide for their families (Elam and Chinouya, 2000). Consequently, the man could not act as a figurehead to their family, subsequently depriving them of a culturally determined gender purpose. Instead they found their female spouses to be more assertive and less tolerant of difficult behaviours from themselves, even though these women maintained their expectant roles of caring for the family and childbearing (Elam and Chinouya, 2000).
Elam and Chinuoya’s (2000) study also showed that women also claimed social security (a form of economic power) which led men to be displaced from their traditional roles, i.e. as the sole earner for the family. Reynolds (2006) supported this idea, adding that this alone gives women higher status in the household for women shift in their favour as they are now in a position responsible to contribute towards the family finances. However, Noor (1999) noted that although immigrant men are agreeable to the idea of having female spouses that are employed, because it creates a greater family income, many are reluctant to share in household duties, leading to possible conflicts.

Conflicts between traditional values and current values based on acculturation may place many migrant women in a dilemma and this may in turn contribute to a diminished sense of well being (Noor, 1999). A prevalent study by Baruch and Barnett (1986) examined this situation through studies of migrant Malaysian families now residing in the United States. The results showed that most women did not want to challenge the status quo or to say or behave differently from what is good and desirable, and avoided showing or saying negative things in order to maintain their traditional role of the woman in the family.

It is, therefore, possible to ascertain from the above discussion that as a result of immigration, gender roles subsequently changes, with reference to immigrants. Changes in gender roles may be brought about by the different normative orientation between the immigrants’ host culture and their own indigenous culture and as a result this affects behaviour.

2.4.5 Gender, marriage and consumption

Literature on consumer behaviour within the last decades appears to have continued to grow exponentially in reference to the household. The way that family members are involved in economic decisions, the process in which decisions are made and the consequences of different family structures and decision styles are highly important within consumer research. Not surprisingly then, observations have suggested that the family is a critical functional unit for consumption in terms of major purchases, such as food, shelter, finance and transportation.
Cotte and Wood (2004) explained that the family exerts a complex influence on the behaviour of its members, with each member of the family playing a specific role within the household. The influence that individual family members exercise over each other’s behaviour can be used to determine the activities that form part of their consumer decision making (Cox, 1975). Past research on household decision making tends to focus on the family; however, most researchers make continued reference to consumers as individuals (Ferber and Lee, 1974; Ndubusi and Koo, 2006).

Research into which family member is involved in product consumption may be based on the product that will be consumed itself. Early studies on decision making in households sought to understand how products were categorised by gender in a family. Milner and Fodness (1996) for example, found that products such as alcoholic drinks and cars were viewed as profoundly masculine. In contrast, women tended to express few brand preferences and purchased only those brands their male spouses had requested. Most married women notably favoured food shopping and purchased items with the awareness of the products and brands that their families liked (Milner and Fodness, 1996). Palan (2001) also found that within the household the man was largely responsible for financial goods, which were considered as masculine. Finally, Kirchler (1989) reiterated this perspective, noting that many consumption decisions in the family were taken autonomously by one of the spouses depending on the category of the product. In other words, after forty years of approaches to gender equalisation, in terms of feminist studies, products were still genderised as masculine and feminine, and bought by their respective genders.

Following on from the above discussion, research on family-member influence in buying durable goods is more abundant than that conducted on frequently produced items. One-time purchases are likely to involve more than one household member (Palan, 2001). Davies maintains that in contrast to non-durables, purchases of durable are often precedes with a progression of interrelated decisions and activities through time. Married spouses and children during this period have more opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process. It is
important to note once again that the decision process is determined by the item to be purchased.

Spousal influence on individual family members’ purchase decisions has remained one of the most examined areas in family consumer behaviour research (Commuri and Gentry, 2000). The process of decision making in families is complex and involves disciplines such as psychology, sociology and economics, to name but a few (Xia et al., 2006). The consumer behaviour perspective of family consumption highlights the relative roles of married spouses in family purchases and may also vary with products and spousal resource allocation (Commuri and Gentry, 2005). For example, in terms of involvement in decision making, both married spouse positions vary based on the level of hierarchy (Bernhardt and Fratczak, 2005). Bernhardt and Fratczak (2005) explained that in terms of decision making each spouse unconsciously assesses how much influence he or she has, and then how much power the spouses have in various decisions. This influence appears to be determined by how gender is perceived within the marriage (Zvonkovic et al., 1996); for example, men are seen as the breadwinner, in comparison to women who are viewed as being responsible for homecare, including housework, dependent care, and attentive care and emotional labour (Hood, 1983; Thompson, 1993). From a gender perspective, Potuchek (1992) suggested that these responsibilities are not passively stepped into by spouses; rather, role taking and role making are negotiated and renegotiated throughout marital interaction as an active and contentious process of constructing gender boundaries. These interactions may be subsequently determined by immigration and the renegotiation of gender roles that occurs as a result of this may in turn affect the decisions made in the family. Scanzoni (1970) first made reference to this, explaining that the more a husband fulfils his economic duties the more the female spouse defines her status right (as) being met the more she will allow her male spouse to define the norms for decision making. He expanded further to state that she will voluntarily give him power in exchange for economic rewards and status benefits he provides for her vis-à-vis the larger community. She then becomes more motivated to ‘go along’ with him, to ‘give in’ to him, to let him ‘have his way’ to the extent that he provides maximum economic rewards.
Resources and access to them have been found to effect marital and family decision making. For example, married women have been found to lose influence over their spouses during the child-rearing stage of the family lifecycle (Blood and Wolfe, 1960). This balance in decision making may subsequently change with the onset of women working, therefore, changing the balance of decision making within the household. Role expectations are likely to be a more important determinant of marital roles during the later years. In the same way, role expectations may provide a good explanation of the general division of labour within the household as mentioned previously i.e. whether the wife is employed.

The extent that married women are willing to forgo their power in response to the providing male is highly debateable. For example, various researchers (Ferber and Lee, 1974; Davis and Rigaux, 1974; Putman and Davison, 1987) have found that individual spouses exerted influence over each other’s behaviour across different product categories. This finding is important as it highlights the need to determine the relative influence of each spouse in family consumption decisions. As referred to previously, the common accepted role structure of family consumption decisions is based on the male spouse being dominant in all decisions made regarding purchases. However, this is not often the case; it is clearly necessary to include female spouse dominated decisions, as well as autonomic decisions (where either of the married spouses is the primary or sole decision maker) and syncratic decisions (where both are influential) (Herbst, 1952).

2.4.6 Conclusion

In this section, we have seen an introduction into the explanations of marital dynamics, in particular making note to the factors that affect it. We have seen that factors such as gender role reconfiguration, multiple gender roles, and work and resource allocation have adverse affect on the interaction between husband and wife. Culture has also once again been referred to, in its ability to influence aspects of relationships, such as behaviour (LaLonde et al. 2004).
Post-migration employment also proves to be a necessity in terms of well being for women as well as the family and may bring about negotiation of traditional gender role. Research has focused on the impact on women of the cultural move from a non-Western to a Western society. Greater social openness and a greater range of occupational and social gender role possibilities in Western societies allow women greater autonomy and opportunities for work (Walsh and Schulman, 2001). This poses a challenge to traditional gender roles, particularly the argument that women are socialised to prioritise their family needs. However, it has been recognised that conflicts often arise between work and family responsibilities in busy modern life (Gutek et al., 1991). This dual pressure may results in some women prioritising their family over their career in part because societal norms continue to expect them to be the main caretakers of homes (Ginn et al., 1996). Consequently, women with family commitments often encounter conflicting interests between family care responsibilities, the need to increase household income, the desire to fulfil individual career aspirations and the need to maintain social contact with others (Doorewaard et al., 2004), although the degree of pressure may differ from one society to another (Blossfeld and Drobnic, 2001). These differing gender roles have a direct affect on family structure and the way purchase decisions are made. The negotiation between husband and wife invariably has an affect on choices made. The traditional view that the husband is responsible for purchase post immigration potentially is challenged when the wife gains more responsibility outside the home. The question arises to what extent the wife exerts her new found responsibility at home, and how this is done through consumption.

2.5 Theme Four: Immigrant marital dynamics regarding gender and power in consumption decisions.

In the previous section we saw a discussion of the family in the form of the marital dynamics between married spouses, for example regarding resource allocation. This section will explore the literature on immigrants and how power, between the genders, is renegotiated.

2.5.1 Power and marital patriarchy
One of the most important factors that has emerged from the literature on the family household surrounds the concept of power. Rottman (1996) and Shove (1993) argued that existing theories of power and their conceptualisation of controlling decision making are too limiting and lacking in supportive literature. It is thus necessary to discuss the issue of power within the household more intently. Perhaps one of the most relevant, recent, theories on power is that forwarded by Steven Lukes (2005). Lukes argued that power can be categorised into three distinctive dimensions based upon the effectiveness and level of power that an individual or their group holds. These three dimensions can be summarised as:

One-dimensional View of Power: is only concerned with behaviours in the decision making. These behaviours are considered to be blatantly obvious and typically represent subjective, personal, interests.

Second dimensional view of power: develops further the first dimension and focuses on both decision making and non-decision making. This is achieved by focussing on observable conflicts that are motivated by subjective interests.

Third dimensional view of power: argues that decision making represents a political agenda and a need to control that agenda. This control may manifest through observable, non-observable or latent behaviours representing both the subjective and real interests of individuals who feel excluded.

The importance of Luke’s theory of power was developed, from a consumption perspective, by Vogler (1998). Vogler (1998) found the importance of ideological and cultural factors, referring to Lukes’s third dimension of power, as both a cause and a consequence of allocative
systems that married couples used to organise their money. Yet as Vogler’s (1998) noted, although there have been numerous literatures relating the discussion of money, power and inequality within marriage, evidence suggests that it has failed to produce an extensive understanding of how power operates within the household. For example, research by Barker and Roberts (1993) identified gender inequalities within marriage, which assumes power plays are an important casual role; however, the concept of power is implicit rather than operationalised and investigated explicitly.

Vogler’s (1998) identification of money to Lukes’s third power dimension introduces an important factor to power and matriarchal power: the concept of money as a source of power. More specifically research on money in the household operates within an explicit concept of power but tends to be narrowly defined as decision making. Previous work by Pahl and Vogler (1994) showed a link between the methods couples use to organise money within households and power and the sense of control over decision making. However, Vogler (1998) later criticised this for not being based on a fully worked out theory of marital power, which explains, rather than simply describes, the empirical connections. Yet the recognition of the importance of money as a source of power represents an important theme that we shall discuss next.

2.5.1.1 Power, race and ethnicity

The issue of women and powerlessness is viewed as being central to discussion on gender and equality (Darlington and Mulvaney, 2003). Darlington and Mulvaney (2003) went further to state that the potency of power rest unequally on the balance of men. One may then posit that women within themselves may feel more disadvantage than their male peers. Power, then has the ability to be used against women. Women, as previously mentioned by Yogev (1981), have historically been viewed as being subordinate to men; however, later studies by Bussey and Bandura (1999) showed that women have the ability to negotiate themselves within roles that may in turn challenge the structure of power. Darlington and Mulvaney (2003), offering another explanation, expressed that, although women may generally identify with traditional
models of power domination and control, they may prefer different cultural modes of power and gender. This alternative may be implicit in the relationship between power and equality, or even mutual modes of equality in a household.

The noting of differing models of power, identified by Lukes’s (2005) attention to the question of the relationship of power to race and ethnicity will be highlighted. Using the context of this research – the family – it would be important to acknowledge the influence that race and ethnicity have on power relations; for example, the different experiences of women. Humm (1992), for example, stated that a Black woman’s family and labour market experiences may shape her economic inequality, while the family is potentially a source of collective support. It therefore becomes necessary to identify race, ethnicity and gender as interlocking systems of oppression, all of which pre-empts the possibility of multiple identities. Multiple identities, therefore, may provide a mechanism for these women to negotiate themselves in various environments. For instance, if we take into consideration the research of Rathus and O’Leary (1997) that identified how immigrant females adopt a more masculine role to integrate in the host society, one could argue that in achieving this integration immigrant women may develop, through acculturation, multiple identities. Black immigrant women may then construct various identities to navigate through differing cultural encounters in their daily life.

Following on from previous discussions of self-identity – the public, private and collective self – it is important to return to the issue of differing power structures. Darlington and Mulvaney (2003) noted that in different cultures women have historically adopted the role of child-rearing and managing the home (private self), which limits the woman’s power. However, historically men have held the ultimate authority in the home. Consequently, the woman’s power within the home remains different to power she may have outside the home (public self), or among her peers (collective self) (Goodrich, 1991). This may result in women seeking methods to enhance their power through means of self-empowerment. Considering the issue of race and ethnicity and oppression through race and gender, Black women may continuously seek ways to address their private public, and collective self through self-empowerment,
manifesting through acts of resistance. This will subsequently be examined in forthcoming discussion.

2.5.2 Power resource theory

Power resource theory conceptualises marriage as a set of exchange relations in which the balance of power rests with the partner who contributes most resources to the marriage (Ferree, 1990). As referred to earlier, Blood and Wolfe (1960) in a pioneering study found that the partner with the larger income was likely to play a more dominant part in decision making. In this way, married female spouses in paid employment may have more power than those without paid employment. The authors concluded that as the female spouse gained access to economic resources through paid employment, power relations between the married spouses become more evenly balanced. Subsequent research has supported the finding that women who go out to work have more power than those who do not (Caldwell, Kleppe and Henry, 2007).

Although power resource theory is useful, the theory exclusively focuses on money entering the household and overlooks the ways in which the intra-household economy could potentially offset or reinforce the effects of resources coming into the home (Ferree, 1990). Another problem with the resource theory is that it analyses households in isolation from wider systems of gender inequality, particularly in access to jobs and pay, which systematically affect the resources individuals are able to bring to a marriage. Most importantly, the resource theory overlooks the importance of ideological and cultural factors in reinforcing or offsetting differences in the level of economic resources men and women bring to the household and how it affects decisions made. Vogler (1998) explained that resource theorists tend to assume that the amount of money earned by the wife is equivalent to the amount of money earned by the husband; however this may not be entirely the case. Research has shown that economic resources are interrelated with, and given meaning by, culture and ideology. Zelizer (1994), however, showed that wives’ earnings did not automatically increase their power in the household. Typically men were still seen to be constructed as breadwinners who were
responsible for supporting the whole family. Vogler (1998) explained that as masculinity came
to be associated with the breadwinning or provider role, men’s economic contribution to the
household came to be seen as a greater value than wives’ regardless of how much they earned.
Wives’ income as a result of this was, therefore, viewed as a supplementary income, which
was used for different purposes and treated as less important than the husband’s wage. The
implications of Zelizer’s work (1994) suggests that as long as couples maintain the idea that
the man is the main breadwinner, the woman’s income is unlikely to significantly increase her
power over decision making as it maybe treated as different or less important than her
husbands income (Pahl, 1996). The acceptance of this behaviour, therefore, becomes a major
source of hierarchy in the marriage and prevents women’s income from increasing their power
in direct correlation with their income (Schwartz, 1994).

In contrast to resource theory, the sociology of gender focuses directly on the intra-household
economy. Looking specifically at the ways in which couples organise money within the family
and how this consequently has an affect on power, Vogler’s (1998) research on British
families showed that wives were more likely to manage money in low-income households
with insufficient money to meet the bills. This may prove to surprising in terms of immigrant
families as the common view maybe that the husband is responsible for all things relating to
money.

2.5.2.1 Patriarchal bargaining and consumption decisions

Kandiyoti (1988) argued that women undertake a process called patriarchal bargaining,
representing a set of pre-existing rules and scripts that regulate gender relations. Both men and
women accept and collude with these rules and scripts, yet at the same time may challenge,
redefine or renegotiate them, i.e. offer the potential for and specific forms of active or passive
resistance (Kandiyoti, 1988). Thus patriarchal bargaining exerts a powerful influence on
shaping a woman’s gendered subjectivity and determines her sense of gender ideology in
different contexts, such as in the family, as an employee etc. Kibria (1990) added that
traditional patriarchal systems, often displayed in immigrant families, subsequently become
challenged as a result of women possessing resources, often through employment. This process of challenging allows immigrant women to renegotiate and maximise their own power within the family unit (Kibria, 1990).

Since Kandiyoti’s work on patriarchal bargaining, other researchers have developed this theme further, exploring issues on how women deal with patriarchal arrangements in the private-as well as in the public-political spheres or women’s social role as social change agents (Herzog and Yahia-Younis, 2007).

How then does patriarchal bargaining effect the role of women in consumption decisions? Previous research has shown that men and women, within the family unit, have unequal power and, hence, ability to change the thoughts and/or actions of each other (Olson and Cromwell, 1975). Consequently, the man is widely perceived that the man has greater purposeful influence over his spouse and, therefore, ability to exert his decisions (Kranichfeld, 1987).

Power, within the family unit, is based on the skills and resources gained outside the family setting (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Ferree, 1990; Vogler, 1998). Perhaps not surprisingly, Zvonkovic et al. (1996) noted the persistence of male dominance in family decisions, a finding that may be explained by women being seen as powerless, both in the society and within the home, owing to them contributing fewer financial resources to the family (Kranichfeld, 1987). Recent research has begun to also address power from a more political perspective. For example, Green and Cunningham (1975) found that male spouses of liberal females (i.e. a family with egalitarian roles) made fewer purchasing decisions on their own than do male spouses of either moderate or conservative females. In addition, they further explained that liberal female spouses play a significantly greater role in determining the amount of money spent on purchases than moderate or conservative female spouses. Suffice, to say this rule may vary from culture to culture. Nickols and Fox (1983) added that families in which the female spouse is employed use more time-buying strategies than unemployed-female spouses. However, these studies are limited to American consumers so their appropriateness may be weak when trying to develop an explanation to countries with different cultures.
However, should women be seen as passive receptors of their male spouse’s economic resources? The notion that changing economic resources can empower women within the family unit has been shown to increase the magnitude of family power exerted by wives (Eggebeen and Uhlenberg, 1995). Changes to women’s economic status, including access to education, work, etc, has resulted in challenges to prior beliefs about the role and purchase influence of each family member (Commuri and Gentry, 2002; Xia et al. 2006). Consequently, increased power within the family unit has enabled women to challenge the family status quo through patriarchal bargaining, resulting in renegotiating consumption decision and expenditure patterns within the family unit (Lee and Beatty, 2002). What is not clear from previous research is the extent to which this challenging of the status quo within a married couple, by the woman, leads to conflict. It is important at this point to note that most literature in this field largely focuses on Western countries, mostly specifically the United States. The issues of conflict arising from female empowerment and its effect on consumption decisions will be discussed next.

### 2.5.3 Gender conflict and consumption

Existing literature on family consumption decisions has specifically emphasised conflict experiences and the strategies used to achieve a resolution (Nelson, 1988). Sheth (1974) contended that family consumption decision conflict arises as a result of differences in purchase goals and perceptions regarding decision alternatives. How these conflicts are resolved forms the focus of this section.

The issue of conflict resolution within families has been of interest for researchers for some time. For example, Davis (1976) identified five strategies that are used for conflict resolution: role structure, budget, problem solving, persuasion and bargaining; while Belch et al. (1979) identified problem solving as being more frequently used in comparison to bargaining or persuasion. A review of the literature identified three strategies used to achieve conflict
resolution: legitimate compromise, problem solving and persuasion. These will now be discussed.

The legitimate resolution strategy identifies one spouse’s attempts to influence the other through the shared belief that he or she should make the decision because he or she is the ‘husband’ or ‘wife’ (Spiro, 1983). In this way, we may see that in traditional immigrant families the male spouse is responsible for all decisions, with a general acceptance of the superiority of the man within the family. The legitimate strategy involves then giving authority to the male spouse with the specific aim of avoiding any conflict (Spiro, 1983).

Compromise, according to Qualls (1988), occurs when one spouse adheres to the preference of the other unconditionally or in return for future considerations. Consequently, the woman may compromise her needs unconditionally to maintain harmony in the family, simply because she may not wish for conflict.

The problem-solving strategy focuses on the behaviour of actively seeking and deliberating upon more information to resolve a disagreement (Sheth, 1974).

The persuasion conflict resolution strategy relies on one spouse influencing the other spouse by offering some type of reward. For example, a female spouse may attempt to influence her spouse by doing something that he would enjoy; this reward would then prompt him to behave in a manner desired by the woman. If a woman has the ability to persuade her male spouse to behave accordingly, then she herself will gain more control over the decisions made in the family unit. Thomas (1976) classified this explanation as a form of assertive conflict resolution in which one party satisfies their own concerns, while Su et al. (2008) labelled this behaviour as a form of coercive strategy.

On the basis of the ability to influence family purchase decision making, Spiro (1983) also suggested classifying conflict resolution strategies into two broader categories: passive and active. Passive strategies refer to attempts to influence the spouse for the purpose of avoiding
conflicts, whereas active strategies refer to vigorous attempts to influence the spouse. Dong and Li (2007) as a result classify legitimate and concession strategies as passive strategies and problem solving and persuasion as active strategies. Qualls (1987) argued that traditional gender role orientation, due to family members’ recognition of predetermined and traditional household roles, may lead women towards passive strategies, such as concession to resolve conflicts.

The extent that conflict resolution is evident within married couples is unclear from previous research. For example, Granbois (1971) and Spiro (1983) argued that the longer couples are married the less they argued; yet, Kipnis (1976) noted that newly married couples were more likely to have objective discussions and compromise, rather than argue. The extent that marriage and conflict resolution affects consumption decisions appears to be under-researched. However, one study by Cox (1975) does offer some interesting insights. Cox investigated the relationships between married couples and conflict resolution regarding the purchase of a car. His findings concluded that marriage, conflict resolution and car purchase decisions represented a curvilinear relationship, i.e. the level of agreement between the couples was only reached during the intermediate stage of their marriage.

2.6 Conclusion

As we have seen in the previous discussion a greater range of occupational and social gender role possibilities in Western societies have allowed women greater autonomy in the household, especially in terms of family consumption decisions. With the onset of increased economic power for women it has increased their independence. It is also important to note that this is not always prevalent. In some instances, women, although having equal or greater resources, may willingly revert back into traditional female cultural and gender roles to maintain harmony and peace, even if this entails them being subservient.

Whether or not the woman being subservient leads to or reduces conflict over the period of a marriage is unclear from previous research. However, a number of conflict resolution
strategies may be adopted, which may have an effect on consumption decisions. The extent that conflict affects marital consumption decisions, let alone for immigrant couples, is unclear from previous research.

Perhaps more importantly, research into conflict and how it is resolved for immigrant couples is unclear. We have already identified that immigration brings about economic changes to the family unit and potential economic empowerment for women. What remains unclear from previous literature is how conflicts within these families are resolved, especially from the perspective of consumption purchases or what form and what meaning is attributed to consumption within role conflict.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

After completing a review of the literature (Chapter Two) and identifying the research gaps and the research question, a research methodology is now required. Chapter Two reviewed the current literature in regards to immigration, consumer behaviour and power dynamics. The research methodology will now define how the research will proceed, and identify and measure the phenomenon. This chapter will present then the outline of the research method that will be applied to explore the relationship between consumption and power dynamics in first generation Nigerian immigrants living in Britain. This chapter, therefore, will reiterate the research problem, and then discuss the methods used and their justification, the research sampling approach, data collection and data analysis, concluding with a discussion on the methods of analysis.

3.2 The research problem

As explained earlier in Chapter One, the rationale behind this thesis rests on the lack of research on immigration and consumption practices, particularly on the affect that consumption has on power dynamics in immigrant households. Gaps in research appear within:

1) The lack of discussions on the affect on immigrants’ self-identity and how this may be resolved through consumption and its relationship with culture, ethnicity and acculturation (Gentry et al., 1995; Peñaloza, 1989; Verkuyten and Thijs, 2002).

2) The lack of research on immigrant couples wherein both spouses are researched (Houstoun et al. 1984; Mason, 1987).
3) The lack of research on the power dynamics in immigrant households (Saradamoni, 1992).

4) The lack of research on how consumption affects power dynamics in immigrant families (Ndubusi and Koo, 2006; Xia et al. 2006).

It is, therefore, necessary to identify the research problem for this thesis.

3.2.1 Defining the research problem

The research problem lies within the lack of research focusing on immigrant families, in particular research into the power dynamics between married spouses. From the review of the literature previous research has not conclusively discussed immigration with reference to how immigrant women in a new society assert their power in the household in terms of decision making and the consumption of goods (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992).

The research problem also focuses on understanding how immigration affects gender and marital dynamics and how potential gender power differences may then be resolved through the consumption of goods, even though this may not be mutually beneficial. Immigrant women from patriarchal, collectivist, cultures and living in an individualistic Western culture are exposed to social openness and a greater range of occupational and social gender role possibilities. As a result, these women have the opportunity to gain greater autonomy in the household, especially in terms of family purchase decisions. With the onset of increased power due to increased resources, for example, women potentially have to ability to undertake purchase decisions with greater independency on behalf of their self and their family.

It is also important to discuss immigrant families in Britain, owing to Britain’s continuously changing demographic profile (Koopmans and Stathams, 2000). Immigration may also have an effect on marital dynamics and, hence, an immigrant woman’s well being arising from the conflict between traditional and current cultural values. As referred to in the literature review
(Chapter Two), immigrants bring with them a set of traditional cultural values and their own cultural prefixes, which may be different to the host culture (Phinney, et al., 2001). Thus, immigrant’s culture of origin contains cultural prefixes as well as cultural traditions, all of which come under the threat of change when entering a host society (Song and Shin, 2004). Consequently, this experience may affect all aspects of life for immigrant families, whether in terms of family structure, life or existing relationships.

Some cultures are traditionally patriarchal; for example African cultures in which greater importance is placed on traditional roles of husband and wives compared to other cultures. This may have an adverse affect on their behaviour, such as consumption. The norms of an immigrant’s indigenous culture are challenged by the norms of the mainstream culture; in this way, traditional African culture may be challenged by Western culture and, therefore as a point of negotiation of identity, African immigrant women may choose to adopt multiple identities all of which may influence their consumption decisions. More importantly, immigrant women may find that their cultural adaption may result in marital conflict. The extent that this conflict is resolved or perpetuated through consumption is unclear from previous research.

The research problem will, therefore, look at the impact of immigration on power dynamics within the household and the consequent affect on consumption. It will particularly look at issues of marital conflict and how they are then resolved through consumption. In order to answer the research problem, this research will look at first generation immigrant Nigerians living in Britain.

3.2.2 Research themes

To recap, Chapters One and Two identified a number of research gaps, subsequently resulting in the research problem. From this research problem a number of exploratory themes were identified. As stated earlier these research themes are not predictive but instead were offered
to provide a greater understanding of the immigrant’s context. The themes identified then in the literature review are:

1. Culture, ethnicity and acculturation’s affect on immigrant’s self-identity and their affect on consumption.
2. Acculturation’s affect on an immigrant’s self-identity and how this affects their consumption choices.
3. Gender and power dynamics among immigrants and how they construct their self-identity around consumption in a new society.
4. Immigrant marital dynamics regarding gender and power in consumption decisions.

Since these themes have been explored in the literature, it is now necessary to attempt to answer the research question through the means of fieldwork. This section will explain the various forms of research methodology, highlighting the most suitable method. In addition, it will focus on outlining the actual chosen fieldwork and data analysis.

3.3 Developing a research approach

The section will start by explaining the possible research approaches that can be undertaken by this research study, identifying an appropriate approach for this study.

3.3.1 Research philosophies

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches tend to favour different philosophical positions and it is important at this point to identify the main philosophical assumption given to each approach. Research philosophy depends on the way that one thinks about the development of knowledge, which may affect how the research is conducted. Collis and Hussey (2003) identify that there are essentially are two main research philosophies: positivistic and phenomenological.
Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2002) additionally identified the realist position in research philosophy. The realist position can also be referred to as modified objectivist. This section will discuss these approaches further in detail as they all have an impact on the methodological approach pursued in this study.

### 3.3.1.1 Positivistic position

Positivism reflects the philosophical stance of natural sciences (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003) founded on a belief that the study of human behaviour should be conducted in the same way as studies conducted in the natural sciences (Collis and Hussey, 2003). According to positivism, data produced gives an insight to facts about the world. With this view positivists tend to focus on an observable social reality and as a result generalisations are made (Remenyi et al., 1998, cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). This research is conducted in terms of objective analysis, whereby interpretations are made from a detached viewpoint about data that has been collected. Emphasis then is placed on a structured methodology, which can be easily replicated (Gill, Johnson and Leeson, 2002) and quantifiable observations that will in turn lead to statistical analysis. In positivistic research, therefore, there is a belief that people do respond to stimulus or forces, rules (norms) external to themselves and that these can be discovered, identified and described using rational, systematic and deductive processes. Remenyi et al. (1998) explained that the main assumption of positivist research is that the research is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research.

### 3.3.1.2 Phenomenological position

The phenomenological position, also referred to as interpretivism, approaches research from the perspective that human behaviour is not easily measured in the natural sciences (Neville, 2005). Instead, Neville (2005) explained, human motivation is shaped by factors that are not always observable, i.e. inner thought processes, making it difficult to generalise findings to a
wider population. Furthermore, he explained, people place their own meanings on events; meanings that not always coincide with the way others have interpreted them.

Critics of the positivist approach argue that the social world is too complex to lend itself to theorising by definite laws (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) added that arguments raised against positivism relate to the rich insights of the social world and complexities that are lost to law-like generalisations encouraged by positivism. In this way, the interpretivist view of understanding the complexity offers an alternative research approach. Furthermore, it can be argued that because the social world is so complex it is inexcusable to generalise ones findings as it cannot portray a true picture of the phenomenon that is being studied.

Remenyi et al. (1998) also identified that the interpretivist position is often associated with the terms ‘constructionism’ and ‘social constructionism’, two approaches that follow the interpretivist position that is necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating people’s actions. In this way, social constructionists view reality as being socially constructed and that people place different interpretations on the situations that individual’s encounter. It is with this view that critics of interpretivist research note that any data is inherently inaccurate and filled with subjectivity. In interpretivist research, it is necessary then for the details of the situation to be understood in order to understand the reality or a reality working behind it (Remenyi et al., 1998). Interpretivism also emphasises relativism, in that reality is not objective but is socially constructed and contextual, with Ozanne and Hudson (1989) concluding that the knowledge outputs of positivism and interpretivism are incommensurable. An argument drawn from their conclusion from the examination of studying emotions, with interpretivists viewing emotions as self-feelings, there are feelings of and for one’s self (Ozanne and Hudson, 1989).
3.3.1.3 Realism

Although positivism and interpretivism dominate social science research, it is useful to discuss other philosophical approaches; one being realism. As referred to earlier, social constructionism recognises that people are likely to share interpretations of their socially constructed environment (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2002). Realism is a subcategory of objectivism (itself a sub-category of positivism) and is concerned with the fact that the world exists independently and innately to our perceptions of it, i.e. that a reality exists that is independent of human thoughts and beliefs. One of the main arguments for realism centres on the fact that observations are progressive in nature and that it is able to predict phenomena successfully and from this, theories may be able to provide true descriptions of the world. However, social constructivists argue that realism is unable to account for changes in knowledge and that the success of theories is only a part of the construction (Okasha, 2002).

3.3.2 Philosophical assumptions from a positivist, realist and interpretivist approach to research

In light of the previous discussion on philosophical approaches in research, one ascertains that a phenomenological (interpretivist) approach will be taken due to its focus on human behaviour specifically attributed to the acknowledgement that meanings and findings are dependent on interpretation. In light of this choice, one must also take into consideration the philosophical assumptions that support the three different paradigms as previously mentioned based on ontology, epistemology and methodology. These have been summarised in Table 3.1, which also summarises the previous discussion.

Table 3.1: Paradigm positions in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Ontological</th>
<th>Epistemology</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Naïve realism: ‘real’ reality but apprehensible</td>
<td>Objectivist; findings true</td>
<td>Experimental/surveys; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>Critical realism: reality is ‘real’ but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so</td>
<td>Modified objectivist, findings probably true</td>
<td>Case studies or convergent interviewing; triangulation, interpretation of research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ontological assumptions relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics, and the need to embrace the idea of multiple realities. As Creswell (2007) noted, researchers should embrace the different realities of the individuals being. In this way, from a positivist paradigm, reality is identified but not easily understood as a result one takes the epistemological position of trying to find the truth objectively. The epistemological assumption then allows the researcher to get close to the participants being studied; the research may be conducted in the field and where the participants live and work (Creswell, 2007). Working closely with the participants allows the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the participant’s reality. It therefore becomes important to minimise the distance or objective separateness between the researcher and those being researched, in order to gain a good understanding of the research phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 1988). This position is similarly held by realist.

The interpretive paradigm is attributed ontologically to the belief that there are multiple realities; as a result, one takes the epistemological position of explaining different positions of the truth, and so remains subjective. In identifying that an interpretivist approach will be used for this research, the methodological assumptions then will be characterised by induction as theory is emerging and is shaped through the researcher’s experience in collecting and analysing the data, as inferred to in Table 3.1.

As a researcher, it has been identified that an interpretivist approach will be considered taking into consideration the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. It now becomes important to discover, identify, describe and analyse the structures and mechanisms that may be used in the phenomena being researched. There are two main research approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
<th>Critical relativism: multiple local and specific constructed realities</th>
<th>Subjectivist, created findings</th>
<th>Hermeneutical or dialectical: researcher is a passionate participant within the world being investigated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Source:** Perry et al. (1997, p. 547)
can be used: the quantitative technique and the qualitative technique. These will now be discussed in relation to this research, giving note to the most suitable approach for this interpretivist research.

### 3.3.3 Developing a research approach

It is often useful to start in research by identifying the two most common approaches quantitative and qualitative research methods. The characteristics of these two approaches are summarised in Table 3.2:

#### Table 3.2: Quantitative and qualitative approaches to research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Characteristics</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-ordinate design</td>
<td>Emergent design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Measurement using numbers</td>
<td>Meaning using words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Impersonal, controlled, Manipulative</td>
<td>Natural, interactive, personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Theory</td>
<td>Confirming theory</td>
<td>Developing theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process and Procedure</td>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Henderson (1990, p. 177)*

The next section will now explore the differences between the quantitative and qualitative approach, making reference to relevant literature.

#### 3.3.3.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative methods express the assumption of a positivist paradigm, which holds that behaviour can be explained through objective facts (Firestone, 1987). Firestone (1987) further explained that quantitative research seeks to explain the causes of change in social facts, primarily through objective measurement and quantitative analysis. The quantitative researcher, therefore, will typically employ experimental designs to reduce error, bias and other noise that keeps one from clearly perceiving social facts (Cronbach, 1975). As seen in Table 3.2, quantitative research is also characterised by a pre-ordinate design, this allows for a structured design.
Quantitative research can be criticised for its rigidity, for being impersonal, controlled and manipulative, which may lead to inaccurate results as the researcher becomes detached from what they are studying. However, statistically derived results generated may be viewed as confirming theory, as well as being rational. As a result, they are the preferred methodologies of empirical, hypothetico-deductive and experimental psychology, which allows hypotheses to be tested (http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/Jeremy/qual_aims.htm). Within the deductive approach, the researcher commences the research with a theory and collects empirical evidence to analyse. For example, the quantitative methodology can use questionnaires administered via interviews. The quantitative approach is also synonymous with the deductive approach in which the researcher aims to prove whether pre-determined hypotheses can be statistically accepted or rejected.

3.3.3.2 Qualitative approach

Finn et al. (2000) explained that qualitative research concerns theorising taking an inductive approach, in contrast to the deductive approach. Induction then involves researching a particular aspect of a subject and attempts to derive theories from the data produced; this is called a theory-building approach (Finn et al., 2000), which aims to research how people understand their experiences (http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/Jeremy/qual_aims.htm).

The use of a qualitative approach in research is often associated with a broader theoretical critique of quantitative approaches. This critique tends to point to certain problems with naturalism. Naturalism is the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social or psychological phenomena (http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/Jeremy/qual_aims.htm). Qualitative research, therefore, provides a natural, interactive and personal setting as seen in Table 3.2. Thus, qualitative methods maybe used to explore meaning, where the investigation of issues which, for ethical, practical or epistemological reasons, are difficult to measure through quantitative methods (Punch, 1998).
In light of the discussion on the two research approaches and this research’s emphasis on wanting to understand the context of immigrant women, a decision has to be reached on what approach is most suitable. Considering the literature presented, and as mentioned previously, the interpretivist position is highly relevant in allowing one to gain a good understanding to why people behave in particular ways. This in turn follows the phenomenological approach concerned with understanding behaviour from the participants’ own subject frames of reference (Neville, 2005), which lends itself to this research study.

Also this research aims to understand the realities of first-generation Nigerian immigrant women living in Britain. As a researcher, I feel that by taking an interpretivist viewpoint will highlight the different interpretations of an individual’s reality, which may affect their actions and social interactions with others, i.e. members of the family. Actions can then be seen as being meaningful in the context of these socially constructed interpretations and meanings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2002).

### 3.3.4 Philosophical, paradigm and interpretive assumptions of qualitative research

#### 3.3.4.1 Philosophical assumptions of qualitative research

As this research will take a qualitative approach, drawing upon its origins of interpretivism, it becomes important then to identify the underlying philosophical assumptions. As a qualitative researcher, worldviews, paradigms or sets of beliefs are taken into account and these in turn impact the way the research is conducted and written. Further to this, an approach to qualitative research, therefore, involves the use of interpretive and theoretical frameworks to shape the study. Creswell (2007) adds that good research requires making assumptions, paradigms and frameworks explicit in the writing of a study.

Based on Guba and Lincoln’s (1988) work on axiomatic issues surrounding qualitative research explanations on qualitative study, there are five philosophical assumptions that have led to the choice of using qualitative research for this study: ontology (a stance towards the
nature of reality), epistemology (how the researcher knows what she or he knows), axiology (the role of values in research), rhetoric (the language of research) and methodology (the methods in the process). The choice then of philosophical assumptions deeply impact the choice of qualitative research requiring the researcher to take a stance on each of these assumptions, consequently determining the practical implications for designing and conducting qualitative research. Drawing upon these philosophical assumptions, Creswell’s (2007) table on these philosophical assumptions with implications for practice is relevant and is shown in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3: Philosophical assumptions with implications for practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Implications for Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontological</td>
<td>What is the nature of reality?</td>
<td>Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study</td>
<td>Researcher tends to use quotes and themes in the words of the participants to provide evidence of different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological</td>
<td>What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?</td>
<td>The researcher attempts to lessen the distance between himself or herself and the participants</td>
<td>Researcher tends to spend time in the field with participants an consequently become insiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiological</td>
<td>What is the role of values?</td>
<td>Researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that biases are present</td>
<td>Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical</td>
<td>What is the language of research?</td>
<td>Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using the personal voice and uses qualitative terms and limited definitions</td>
<td>Researcher uses engaging style of narrative, may use first person pronoun, and employs the language of qualitative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological</td>
<td>What is the process of research?</td>
<td>Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context and uses an emerging design</td>
<td>Researcher works with particular details before generalisations, describe in detail and the continually revise questions from experiences in the field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Creswell (2007, p. 17)

How Creswell’s (2007) philosophical assumptions are relevant to this study will now be discussed, based on this research. Ontologically, for this research it is important to acknowledge the realities that I, as a researcher, exist within. I am a British-born, second-
generation, Nigerian and with that I have to note that I have my own cultural assumptions (i.e. the way that I see the world) which will certainly have an impact on realities of the individuals that I am studying. For this reason it is important for me to recognise that I, as a British-born Nigerian, cannot detach myself from my Nigerian participants’ culturally construed sense of reality. It is necessary then to appreciate and note the multiple realities which may present themselves during this research process and will form part of my reflective chapter. For example, as argued by Bhatia (2002) in Chapter Two, acculturation is multi-dimensional and power dimension in immigrant families may be as a result of the multiple identities that immigrant women have to adopt to integrate into the host culture. In this situation, one must, therefore, remain objective.

In terms of one’s epistemological assumption, by choosing qualitative research and wanting to adopt an interpretivist approach it is important to identify that by, being of Nigerian descent and a woman allows me to achieve closeness to the participants, as well as the phenomenon being studied.

Axiological assumptions of qualitative research argue that all researchers bring their own values to a study but as a qualitative researcher it is important to make those values explicit (Creswell, 2007). Creswell identified these values as axiological assumptions and it is these assumptions that characterises qualitative research. For example being a Black, female Nigerian and my own life experiences. For this reason it is important then to address these issues and this has been achieved through, often intense, PhD supervision and feedback, discussing issues and themes with participants to ensure the research findings and subsequent analysis are accurate.

Rhetorical assumptions in qualitative research are based on the language used in the research. Creswell (2007) explained that writing needs to be personal and literary in form. For example, Clandinin and Connelly (2000, cited in Creswell, 2007) explained that in the use of metaphors, researchers refer to themselves using the first-person pronoun ‘I’ and they tell stories with a beginning, middle and end, sometimes crafted chronologically in narrative research. Since I
will be taking a qualitative approach, the next chapter will focus on telling the participant’s stories using first-person pronouns as previously mentioned. In this way, the language of the researcher, therefore, becomes personal, based on definitions that evolve during the study rather than being defined by the researcher. How the story will be told will ultimately be determined by the findings and how best to communicate them. This in itself may bring about biases; however, this will be dealt with as previously mentioned.

In terms of one’s methodological assumption, it is important to note at this point that methodological assumptions that are evident will be discussed throughout this chapter. From this, discussions and analysis of common elements may be assembled and then compared with the chosen ideas and definitions. Data will be gathered and then collated and the results will be analysed and presented. Knowledge is developed using grounded theory allowing theory to emerge from the data.

### 3.3.4.2 Paradigms in qualitative research

Guba (1990, p. 99) defined a paradigm as ‘a basic set of beliefs that guide action’. These beliefs have also been identified as philosophical assumptions, epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). In addition to this, paradigms or interpretive frameworks have also been defined as broadly conceive research methodologies and alternative knowledge claims (Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2000).

As argued previously, a qualitative approach will be used for this research. Most specifically, it will use a phenomenological (interpretivist) position with the perspective that human behaviour is not as easily measured. As stated earlier, the phenomenological approach is particularly concerned with understanding behaviour from the participants’ own subjective frames of reference (Neville, 2005). As this research will be based on a qualitative approach, it is, therefore, necessary to discuss further the various paradigms relating to a phenomenological approach that may be used.
Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argued that all research is interpretive and is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Paradigms used in qualitative research can vary and evolve over time depending on the set of beliefs one has a researcher. As a researcher, one may also use multiple paradigms, such as constructionist and participatory worldviews (Creswell, 2007). Examples of some of the most common views used in interpretive paradigms in qualitative studies are positivist or post-positivist, constructivism, feminist, ethnic, Marxist (critical theory), cultural studies and queer theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), to name but a few. As a result, these theories inform the practice of research differently, each paradigm or interpretive framework governs the questions the researcher asks and the interpretations he or she brings to the research.

These paradigms also have multiple dimensions. For example, there are multiple versions of feminism, afro-centric and post-structural as well as specific ethnic, Marxist and cultural studies paradigms (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Table 3.4 presents a few examples of these paradigms and their assumptions giving details of their criteria for evaluating research, and the typical form that an interpretive or theoretical statement assumes in each paradigm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm/ Theory</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Form of Theory</th>
<th>Type of Narration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positivist/post-positivist</td>
<td>Internal, external validity</td>
<td>Logical-deductive, grounded</td>
<td>Scientific report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivist</td>
<td>Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability</td>
<td>Substantive-formal</td>
<td>Interpretive case studies, ethnographic fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>Afro-centric, lived experience dialogue, caring accountability, race, class, gender, reflexivity, praxis, emotion, concrete grounding</td>
<td>Critical, standpoint</td>
<td>Essays, stories, experimental writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>Afro-centric, lived experience dialogue, caring accountability, race, class, gender</td>
<td>Standpoint, critical, historical</td>
<td>Essays, fables, dramas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural studies</td>
<td>Cultural practices, praxis, social texts, subjectivities</td>
<td>Social criticism</td>
<td>Cultural theory as criticism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 24)

Referring to Table 3.4, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explained that the positivist and post-positivist paradigms work in the realm of a realist and critical realist ontology and objective
epistemologies. As such, they rely heavily on experimental, quasi-experimental, survey and rigorously defined qualitative methodologies. With regard to using these approaches to methodology, they may be insufficient. These paradigms are not able to address adequately issues surrounding voice, empowerment, and praxis (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), themes that are central to this research. These paradigms will, therefore, not be used in this research seeing that the focus of this research will be on immigrant women.

In terms of the constructivist paradigm, Lincoln and Guba (2000) adopt relativist ontology. This paradigm is orientated to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world. Constructivism also assumes a subjective epistemology in that the knower and respondent co-create understandings, and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures. In this way, Guba and Lincoln (2000) give note to encouraging experimental and multi-voiced texts.

Following on from this, feminist, ethnic, cultural studies take materialist-realistic ontology; that is, the real world makes a material difference in terms of class, race and gender. Subjectivist epistemologies and naturalistic methodologies are often employed. Empirical materials and theoretical arguments then become evaluated in terms of their liberalised implications. The cultural studies and queer theory paradigms are multi-focused, with many different strands drawing from Marxism, feminism and postmodern sensibility. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlighted that cultural studies and queer theory paradigms use methods strategically, as resources for understanding and producing resistances to local structures of domination. These paradigms are also useful for this study as the results may unfold themes of resistance, such as racism and discrimination. However as referred to earlier, this research will largely look at the experience of immigrant women and, therefore, a more feminist approach may need to be taken. This will be discussed further in the following section.

3.4 Research design
From the previous section, it was identified that a qualitative approach will be taken for this research, most specifically a phenomenological position in the form of interpretivism. Considering the aims of this research, i.e. to understand how immigrant women adapt to contrasting cultural values and resolve the tensions through consumption, an appropriate research paradigm is required. Considering the previous discussion, a feminist theory will be adopted to shape this research as it provides a suitable way to explore the experiences of immigrant women in Britain. The principles of feminism, such as self-empowerment, offer an appropriate approach to understand immigrant women’s lives, empowering them to find a voice and an opportunity to explore how, where, when and if possible how they express their cultural resistance.

In order to understand the relevance then of feminism to this thesis, it is important to understand what feminism is.

3.4.1 Feminism and feminist theory

Feminist theory may be understood by identifying or defining its key principles through examining the beliefs and actions and practices of feminist scholars and researchers. Looking at early introductions of feminist thought, Eisenstein (1983) explained that from her perspective the term feminist holds an element of visionary and futuristic thought. She further related her understanding of feminism to that of Mitchell (1971) who explained that in addition to elements of women, their condition, experiences and opportunity for social change is essential for feminism. Feminist research approaches, therefore, centre on women’s diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations, such as policy issues and social injustice.

The theme of domination prevails in feminist literature, in particular gender domination within a patriarchal society (Creswell, 2007). This theme is beneficial to this research as it enables one as a researcher to identify issues of power dynamics and marital patriarchy in immigrant family households (as identified in Chapter Two). Thus, this research provides the opportunity
for social change within the immigrant family context. Creswell (2007) explained that feminist thought also embraces post-modern critiques, which subsequently challenge modern society. For example, Luke and Gore (1992), using a post-structuralist feminist view, explained that one should refocus the opinion of deconstructing the male position to giving attention to the marginalised, such as women. Hannam (2007) also explained that feminism is a cultural as well as a political movement focusing on knowledge grounded in female experiences. As a result, the feminist approach is a complex area of inquiry with numerous frameworks all of which aims to give a voice to women (Olesen, 2005). It is important to note, however, that this section of the methodology does not aim to offer a chronological discussion on feminism but to highlight some of it key themes that apply to this research.

3.4.2 Types of feminism

Understanding a feminist approach is by no means simple due to its complexity. However, it is possible to identify some of the different types of feminist theories, such as liberal feminism, social feminism, radical feminism and Black feminism. Liberal feminism is characterised by an individualistic emphasis on equality, in which the laws of the society need to be changed and opportunities provided to allow women to become equal in society (Rockler-Gladen, 2008). Social feminism focuses on exploiting social practices, which have marginalised women (Monroe-Baillargeon, 2004). Social feminists argue that there are fundamental inequalities built into capitalist society because power and capital are distributed unevenly and, therefore, focus on redistributing power (collective change and empowerment) throughout society. Radical feminism, as noted by Rockler-Gladen (2008), is similar to social feminism. Emphasis is placed on the belief that society is patriarchal and remains unjust. Lastly, Black feminism posits that sexism and racism are linked, and that sexism will not be overcome while the system remains racist (Rockler-Gladen, 2008).

Feminism draws upon different theoretical and epistemological underpinnings, the most common being that of positivism, realism, critical theory and constructivism and, therefore, has resulted in multiple ways of constituting knowledge (Campbell and Wasco, 2000).
Harding (1987) identified three types of feminist inquiry, known as transitional epistemologies: (a) feminist empiricism, (b) standpoint theory, and (c) post-modern theories. These will now be briefly discussed.

Feminist empiricism is divided into two categories: spontaneous and contextual empiricism. Spontaneous feminist empiricism focuses on rigorous adherence to existing research norms, and the second, contextual empiricism, focuses on the influence of social values and interests in science (Harding, 1993). Feminist empiricist researchers seek to ensure their work is free from gender stereotypes, research participants are representative and results are not over generalised beyond the participants represented (Monroe-Baillargeon, 2004).

Standpoint theory claims that all knowledge attempts are socially situated (Harding, 1993). For example, Hill Collins (1998) identified the ability of social phenomena, race, class and gender to mutually construct one another. This theory incorporates post-positivist critical theory with radical and social feminism to provide a space in which to claim there is no objective truth. Nielsen (1990) explained that scholars working in this theoretical frame acknowledge that an individual’s position, in relation to the dominant group, provides them a unique understanding of reality and, therefore, one must reflect upon one’s own social status influences on interpretation.

Lastly, post-modern theories reject the notion of feminist science in favour of the multiple stories women tell about the knowledge they have. Feminist post-modernists incorporate post-positivist constructivism with radical feminism in creating a space which denounces the existence of a single truth or reality (Monroe-Baillargeon, 2004).

Feminist theory, as seen briefly here, becomes highly diverse and dynamic in nature and for this reason remains a broad philosophical category. These transitional epistemologies are not streamlined to themselves but inter-change with each other, allowing feminist qualitative work to use several or all three approaches in research. The implication of this for research is discussed in the next section.
3.4.3 Feminist research

Feminism and feminist qualitative research is highly diverse and dynamic. Evan’s (1995, p. 2) stated that:

Feminism means that we seek for women the same opportunities and privileges the society gives to men, or that we assert the distinctive value of womanhood against patriarchal denigration.

Evan’s (1995) argument of feminism is based on the inequality between men and women, and the quest for equality. However, one should note that the quest for equality may not be the yearning for women to be like men per se but to have equal rights. Once again it is important to note that this section of the research design does not aim to give a chronological account of feminism but to identify key themes that will be useful to this research.

Hannam (2007) identified three useful themes when looking into feminism. The first centres on ideas about a woman’s place in society and the varying differences between the separation between public and private space. Historically women have been identified with the family and domestics (private space) with an obvious absence in work and politics. In light of this, feminists have drawn attention to the differences in identity, contesting these ideas and disputing their exclusion in such spaces. In this way, feminists challenge masculine social beliefs in which men are clearly visible in these domains. As a result feminism asks one to challenge the contemporary view of what it means to be a man and a woman. For example, traditionally in African communities, men have been regarded as providers and women as carers (Daley, 2007). African women are, therefore, affected by the limitations of patriarchy based upon tradition (Cline-Cole and Robinson, 2005).

The second theme used in feminism focuses on the complexities between equality and difference. Hannam (2007) noted that feminists do not necessarily challenge the view that
women have different qualities and characteristics from men. Instead women have a need to exert an influence for good in the world beyond their family and, therefore, they need equal rights in politics, employment and law.

The next theme focuses on sisterhood, insofar as feminists have attempted to develop a sense of solidarity with each other, whether nationally or internationally. However, it has been argued that the essence of solidarity is continually challenged, especially when discussing class, race, nation and sexual orientation (Hannam, 2007). It is with this in mind that feminism is by no means straightforward. It is interesting, therefore, to explore whether the notion of solidarity exists in a multicultural society, i.e. the extent to which I as a Black British Nigerian woman can identify with British White women, and vice-versa: how does this affect my own feminist perspective of my world?

One of the most prominent scholars of feminist thought, Lather (1991), noted that feminist researchers see gender as a basic organising principle that shapes the conditions of lives and it is this connection that becomes important for this research. However, one needs to be aware that the shaping of gender may be constructed by a typically White male opinion of categorising gender itself. For example, considering the discussions on gender in Chapter Two it was ascertained that there is no precise meaning of gender and, subsequently, feminists argue that there may not be a precise meaning of what constitutes a woman. Alcoff (1988) argued that in this way the concept of what a woman is becomes problematic. This problem is of primary significance because the concept of womanhood is central to feminist theory and as a result it becomes impossible to formulate precisely for feminists. She further argued that as a concept it is also challenging because it is submerged within ideals of male supremacy built on the control of females.

Reflecting on this, feminism is based on knowing what women truly are; however, it may be difficult to define due to issues that have an effect on the well being of women. Inevitably our base understanding of the term ‘woman’ is influenced by beliefs and opinions generated by men, i.e. woman’s nature may be construed as being irrational or benevolent and, therefore,
weaker than men. It, therefore, becomes the aim of ideological research to correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position (Lather, 1991). There also becomes a need to address the needs of men and women of colour because gender, class and race are intimately connected (Olesen, 1998).

3.4.3.1 Feminist qualitative research

Given the nature of feminism and its diversity, there are various models of methodological and analytic approaches that can be used in research. Olesen (2005) explained that research for women should extend and amplify research merely about women, to ensure that even the most revealing descriptions of unknown or recognised aspects of women’s situations do not remain merely as descriptions. Rather, research should range from assessments of women’s lives and experiences to analyses of relationships through investigation of social movements (Klawiter, 1999).

Feminism influences and alters aspects of qualitative research, drawing from different theoretical and pragmatic orientations that reflect national contexts where feminist agendas differ widely (Evans, 2002). Bowles and Klein (1983) added that feminist methodology is different from patriarchal scholarship (male-dominated research) and it is closely related to the development of feminist theory. In addition to this, Du Bois (cited in Bowles and Klein, 1983) highlights the issue of subjectivity versus objectivity, arguing that feminist research cannot be value free and must be grounded in female culture and experience. Consequently, the use of positivist, quantitative methodology, has been criticised for not capturing women’s lived realities and as a result Mies (cited in Bowles and Klein, 1983) suggested that it is not possible to develop a useful link between women’s studies, feminism and feminist research using these techniques. However, Epstein Jayaratne (cited in Bowles and Klein, 1983) took a different opinion, arguing that quantitative methodology, as well as qualitative methodology, can and should form part of feminist research, since the former can provide information not attainable through qualitative methods.
Stanley and Wise (cited in Bowles and Klein, 1983) argued that feminist methods must take on board the necessity to challenge the power relationship between the researcher and the researched (with the former being the more powerful). In this way, a feminist qualitative researcher must, therefore, take into consideration the nature of research, the definition of and relationship with those whom research is done, the characteristics and location of researcher, and the creation and presentation of knowledge (Olesen 2005). However, having a unified voice remains to be seen as most critics of feminism, within this approach, identify that a unified voice of feminism in research may not be viable (Eichler, 1986). In this way, one could conclude that there may be no specific research method in doing feminist research. The importance must, therefore, be placed on identifying the differences and the many variants in research, with the opinion of identifying women’s diverse situations, hence generating new forms of knowledge about oppressive situations for women, giving room for further research.

3.4.3.2 Feminism – challenging the notion of sisterhood

A feminist culture based on sisterhood may easily be criticised as being a myth; a myth that is deemed integral to the women’s liberation movement in Europe and North America. The notion that feminism has one uniformed voice to critique male conduct and morality may also be viewed as dated. Much of the literature, although poignant, fails to capture the voice of the minority and, hence, cannot not be viewed as a uniformed opinion or viewed as held by all women. Suffice to say, this may become a flaw in most feminist research. As a result, the sense of sisterhood has been difficult to sustain as differences based on class, race and sexual orientation increasingly presents itself in the movement.

Feminist discussions have also been accused of being dominated by White, educated, middle-class, heterosexual women and their concerns, thus leaving a void to those women who do not fit into that category (Hannam, 2007). This has led to other groups, such as Black feminists, to challenge the claims of women’s liberation movement in speaking for all women (Hannam, 2007). Hannam (2007) further explained that in contrast to White middle-class women’s criticism of the patriarchal nature of the family, Black women are more likely to see the family
as a source of strength and support against systematic racism. Most notably, Black American writer hooks (1984) criticised the feminist movement for claiming to speak for all women when in fact it represents White, middle-class perspectives, as noted here. In her publication *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984), hooks sharply criticised feminism as being racist, ignoring the intertwined issues of race, sex, class and sexual orientation. She further explained that the common oppression of women has, therefore, ignored the real inequalities within American Society. Although hooks focuses on American society and is ultimately limited in terms of this research’s socio-cultural context, her argument is similarly held by Carby (1982), who also criticised the absence of Black women in European feminist research. This absence of the marginalised voice becomes limiting to the overall movement and, therefore, it becomes necessary to continuously highlight the plight of women that are not given a voice in this realm. Olesen (2005) noted that failure to attend closely to how race, class and gender are relationally constructed leaves feminist issues of colour distanced from feminist agendas. To address these issues it, therefore, becomes plausible to incorporate these critical points into this research study by using a Black feminist approach.

### 3.4.3.3 Black British feminism

It has been noted by a number of scholars that, historically, Western research remains largely Eurocentric, to the frustration of indigenous communities worldwide (Mohanty, 2003). Traditionally Western research has focused on explaining a situation that resultantly aims to predict and control a phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). This can also be said for feminist research in that it fails to address the issue and absence of the marginalised non-White voice (as noted in our earlier discussion). For this reason, I have chosen to adopt a Black British feminist approach to address these issues.

It must also be mentioned that although using a Black British feminist approach is highly useful for this research, by no means does this research aim to make generalised assumptions of all Black women in Britain. One’s main aim is to provide a narrative stream for a group of Black women to express their many realities. It is also important to note that although Black
British feminism provides a useful tool for discussing Black women experiences in the Britain, it is still relatively new, making it an exciting phase in feminist research.

Black British feminism was developed as a response to African-American feminism and Eurocentric feminism, all of which have been useful to the feminist movement but lacking in their advances for Black women. Black feminism in Britain is based on the historical past of post-colonialism and activism detailing the lives of Black women migrants from the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. As a theoretical and intellectual movement, Black British feminism emerged in the 1970s, having a fundamental principle that to be Black and female in Scotland, England or Wales is to disrupt all the safe closed categories of what it means to be White and British, and living in the United Kingdom. Tackling the issue of racial and gendered themes of Britishness, Black British feminism addresses the meaning of British national identity and its silent assumption of Whiteness. From this position, Black British feminism allows one to generate new realms of knowledge, challenging the White privileged and patriarchal power existing in everyday interactions.

In her seminal essay, ‘Difference, Diversity and Differentiation’, Brah (1992) explained that Black feminism in general has opened previously closed ways of thinking; for example, class and gender. Black British feminism, in the context of the globalisation of capital, places gender at the centre of the new radicalised working class (http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6004/Black-Feminism-in-the-United-Kingdom.html). Black British feminism then represents a philosophical positioning concerned with revealing the mechanisms that promote, challenge and resist racist attributes and practices in the everyday lives of Black women. As a critical social force, Black British feminism is an intellectual and activist movement that is contingent in nature, shifting, confronting and deconstructing issues of class, gender and racial exclusion where it appears, whether it is in Eurocentric and Western feminist academic discourse, but also in issues associated with Great Britain.

3.5 Qualitative approaches to inquiry
Discussions so far have highlighted the importance of different approaches to research, i.e. epistemologies as well as the choice of paradigm that will be used for this study. I have also identified that a Black British feminist approach of an interpretivist nature will be taken. It, therefore, becomes necessary to discuss the possible methodological qualitative approaches to enquiry as this will allow one to identify which method of data collection will be best suited for this study. The methodological qualitative approaches that will be considered will include: grounded theory, case studies, ethnography and narrative research. Each of these qualitative approaches will now be discussed.

3.5.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is based upon generating or discovering theory as opposed to description. It also focuses on abstract analytical schema of a process, an action or interaction (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) further explained that participants experience the analytical schema of a process and thus the development of the theory helps explain practice or provide a framework for further research. The notion of grounded theory, therefore, is based upon that fact that theory development does not instantaneously appear, rather it is generated or grounded in data from participants who have experienced the process. Grounded theory, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) noted, is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation or a theory of a process, action or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants.

Theorists of grounded theory, for example Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), hold that theory should be grounded in data from the field, especially in the actions, interaction and social processes of people. Grounded Theory is, therefore, a theory of actions, interactions or processes through interrelating categories of information based on data collected from individuals. Rather than beginning by researching and developing a hypothesis, a variety of data collection methods are used to generate theory. This method of theory building has, however, been criticised in terms of meaning and procedures of grounded theory.
Arguments have arisen based on the structure of grounded theory. For example, Glaser (1992) criticised Strauss’s approach to grounded theory as being too prescribed and structured. As a response to these arguments, Charmaz (2006) promoted the use of a constructivist grounded theory. In contrast, Clarke (2005), as with Charmaz’s (2006), noted that social situations should form the unit of analysis in grounded theory and that three sociological modes can be useful in analysing these situations: situational, social world or arenas, and positional cartographic maps for collecting and analysing qualitative data. It is because of these different perspectives that grounded theory is popular in the social sciences. Grounded theory then provides tools for analysing processes, and encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds, as well as to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from empirical materials that not only synthesise and interpret them but also shows processual relationships (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Grounded theory also presents a number of challenges which must be dually acknowledged. The researcher must reserve theoretical ideas or notion so that analytic, substantive theory can emerge. The researcher must recognise that grounded theory is a systematic approach to research with specific steps in data analysis, despite the evolving, inductive nature of grounded theory (Creswell, 2007). Difficulties then arise in determining when categories are saturated or when theory is sufficiently detailed, and as a result theory must be defended, tested and defended again, resulting in a sufficiently detailed theory.

3.5.2 Case-study research

Case-study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (Creswell, 2007). A system may be viewed as a society, corporation or group etc. Rather than using large samples and following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, case-study methods involve an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case-study research concentrates on experimental knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other
contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Stake (2005), however, explained that case study is also a choice of what is to be studied which is seen as a case within a bounded system.

Yin (2003) brought to attention that case-study research often involves the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and discussed explanatory, exploratory and descriptive qualitative case studies. Although case studies are useful in qualitative research when trying to identify actual cases, the researcher must ultimately decide which bounded system to use and consider whether it is a single or multiple cases. If a case-study method was to be applied to this research, one would identify the case as being Nigerian women living in Britain. Selecting a case requires the researcher to establish a rationale for the purposive sampling strategy in order to gather correct information (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). If this approach were to be used for this study, one may have difficulties in deciding suitable boundaries of the case, how it may be constrained in terms of time, events and processes; this may prove to be challenging.

3.5.3 Ethnography

Although grounded theory develops a theory from examining individuals who share the same process, action, or interaction, the participants taking part in the study may not be located in the same place or interact frequently enough to develop shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language. To this end, ethnographers examine these shared patterns with a greater unit of analysis of more individuals. Ethnography focuses on an entire cultural group using a qualitative design through which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007). Agar (1980) also added that ethnography is a process and outcome of research – a way of studying a culture-sharing group as well as the final, written product of that research. As a process then, ethnography involves extended observations of the group in the form of participant observations as the researcher becomes immersed in the everyday lives of the people that are being researched. Ethnography also involves the study of the meaning of the behaviour, the language and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group.
Ethnography is, however, challenging as it involves the researcher being grounded in cultural anthropology and the meaning of social-cultural systems. Collecting data is usually time intensive, involving a long time in the field which may be disadvantageous for this study. The text is usually written in a storytelling form which may also limit the audience for the work and may be challenging for authors accustomed to traditional approaches to writing social and human science research. In addition, it may take a great amount of time to analyse and understand all the data collected.

3.5.4 Narrative research

Narrative research is an approach that revolves around an interest in biological particulars as narrated by the one who lives them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Focus is on the narrative itself, whether it be oral or written. One approach to narrative research is to differentiate types of narrative research by analytic strategies. Authors such as Polkinghorne (1995) have taken this approach and distinguish between analysis of narratives using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories or taxonomies of type of stories, and narrative analysis in which researchers collect descriptions of events or happening and then configure them into a story using a plot line. Chase (2005) later suggested that researchers may use paradigmatic reasons or narrative study, such as how individuals are enabled and constrained by social resources, socially situated in interactive performances, and how narrators develop interpretations. A second approach to narrative research is to emphasise the variety of form found in narrative research practices. In this way, narrative study can be viewed as a biological study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person’s life. Examples of a biological study include autobiography, a life history and oral history, with analysis of these narratives guided by a theoretical lens or perspective. For instance, a feminist lens may be used to report the stories of women, showing how women’s voices may be muted, multiple and contradictory (Chase, 2005). In this way, a narrative research used in this study may report the experience of a Nigerian woman in Britain today.
Given the nature of narrative research there are challenges to this approach. As a researcher, information must be collected extensively from the participants and consequently there needs to be a clear understanding of the context of the individual’s life. Care needs to be taken when identifying the source material when gathering stories that capture the individual’s experience (Creswell, 2007). It, therefore, becomes important to identify the underlying experiences that explain the multi-layered context of life. Creswell (2007) explained that active collaboration with the participant is necessary and researchers need to discuss the participant’s stories as well as be reflective about their own personal and political background, which shapes how they interpret the account. Other issues may arise in the collecting, analysing and telling of individual stories. For example, Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) raised important questions such as: who owns the story? Who can tell it? Who can change it? Whose version is convincing? What happens when narratives compete? These all prove to be cautionary in using this approach.

3.5.5 Summary

From the discussion above, it is clear to see that all of the four approaches have in common the fact that all research begins with a research problem. Case study, ethnography, grounded theory and narrative research make use of data collection in the form of interviews and observations. Narrative research, ethnography and case study research may also seem similar when analysing a single individual; in this way, one may approach the study of a single individual using any three of the approaches; however, the types of data collected and then analysed would be carried out differently. Narrative research focuses on an individual and the story told, whereas ethnography focuses on the setting the individuals’ stories within the context of their culture are told (Creswell, 2007). Case study research involves investigating a bounded system, whether it be a single case or multiple cases. Cases are typically compiled to illustrate a phenomenon and detailed information of the setting is given for each case whereas grounded theory research focuses on generating theory based on the data from the field.
In light of the previous discussions, the grounded theory approach does offer an opportunity to explore a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. However, what we do not know is whether immigrant Nigerian women living in Britain express or are able to express a culturally derived sense of self-empowerment through acts of resistance. Knowing some common experiences are valuable for groups, such as immigration experiences, the grounded theory approach involves data collection which will include multiple interviews with participants. Grounded theory requires some understanding of the broader philosophical assumptions; in the case of this research, the assumption made will be based on Black British feminism.

Using the grounded theory approach enabled me as the researcher to produce an analytical interpretation of participants’ world and of the processes constituting how these worlds were constructed i.e. how immigrant Black Nigerian women potentially express their self-empowerment through acts of resistance. In essence, grounded theory allows one to investigate the phenomena and draw upon the study of several individuals that have shared a particular experience.

3.6 Sample design

The purpose of this study is to describe the experience of being an ethnic minority and an immigrant in Britain and its affect on gender and power dynamics. It will focus specifically on Nigerian women in Britain and how immigration affects consumption. At this stage of the research, the central theme will be based on the power dynamics between male and female married couples and its relation to consumption practices. It is, therefore, necessary to sample the correct population for the study. The research will involve using first-generation immigrant Nigerians living in the UK and British White participants to ensure validity and to warrant a true representation of the phenomena.

As the research themes have been identified earlier in this research, it is important to identify the group of individuals that will be used in this study. Before doing so, one must locate the possible techniques that can be used in this study. Sampling techniques provide a range of
methods that enable one to reduce the amount of data needed to be collected, by considering only data from a subgroup rather than cases. There are two types of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003).

Probability sampling is most commonly associated with quantitative research, in particular survey-based research, where inferences are made from samples about a population to answer the research question. Probability sampling involves identifying a suitable sampling frame based on the research question, deciding a suitable sample size, selecting the most appropriate sampling technique and selecting a sample, and lastly ensures that the sample is representative of the population.

In contrast, non-probability approaches may be used as an alternative to probability sampling and focuses on exploration. In-depth study is usually characterised by being focused on small groups. Table 3.5 gives examples of non-probability sampling techniques:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quota</td>
<td>Entirely non-random and is normally used for interview surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Enables one to use judgement to select cases that will best enable research questions to be answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Used when it is difficult to identify members of the desired population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-selection</td>
<td>Individuals are able to identify their desire to take part in the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Involves selecting cases that are easiest to obtain for sampling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Looking at the above table, the snowball method will be used as it will enable identification of like-for-like participants. Snowball sampling will involve contact with first-generation immigrant Nigerian married couples in Britain and their British White equivalent.

It should, however, be mentioned that problems may occur when making first contact with the participants, such as cultural norms surrounding prestige or not revealing weaknesses to others. Problems may also occur through valid representation of the population; for instance,
not all Nigerians live in one part of the country but are geographically dispersed. Considering the qualitative nature of this thesis, snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, will be used. This approach will then allow the researcher to gain greater access to Nigerian couples, through personal recommendation, who may not be willing to discuss their personal, married, lives with an outsider. Complementing this approach will be the use of purposive sampling enabling the researcher to use judgement to select participants that are deemed appropriate, such as not being potentially harmed from taking part in the research.

3.6.1 Sample group profile

British White and first-generation immigrant Nigerian couples living in Britain were recruited through personal contacts from two large multicultural conurbations in Britain: London and Manchester. A total of forty participants were selected, consisting of male and female married spouses (twenty married couples), with ten White married couples, and ten first-generation Nigerian couples achieving theoretical saturation. Participant numbers thus exceeded the ‘suggested minimum of eight for generating cultural themes and categories’ (McCracken 1988, p. 17).

The participants were predominantly professionals aged between 38 and 54, all married. Table 3.6 summarises the demographic information of the married Nigerian participants, while Table 3.7 summarises the demographic information of the married British White participants. These participants were purposively chosen to illustrate the different behaviour between individuals. It should be noted that the participants names used in this thesis have been changed to ensure anonymity.

### Table 3.6: Demographic information of Nigerian participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Married to</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Care Worker</td>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>Julian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

145
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Married to</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lynne</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Owns his own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Florist</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Semi-retired plasterer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Caterer</td>
<td>Kalvin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Account Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Reverend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Chemist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kendra</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Receptionist</td>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lianne</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Store Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Debra</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.7: Demographic information of British White participants**

3.7 **Data collection and analysis procedures**

3.7.1 **Interviews**

The role of a researcher as an interviewer involves exploring many facets of the interviewee’s concerns, treating subjects as they come up in conversation, pursuing interesting leads,
allowing their imagination and ingenuity full rein as they try to develop new research proposal and test them in the course of the interview. This method of research, therefore, supports the ideal of the interpretivist approach relating to participation in social and cultural life. The primary difference between the observation method just discussed and the interview method involves interacting factors. Interacting factors include the kind of words and acts of the people under study that the researcher has access to and the kind of sensitivity to the problems and data produced from the study by the researcher (Filstead, 1970). Filstead’s (1970) comparison proves to be useful by suggesting areas, such as in-depth interviews, to investigate motivation in consumers. There are different types of interviewing techniques that can be used in research depending on the research aims: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. These interview styles are defined by their degree of structure (Finn et al., 2000).

A structured interview involves an interview that is associated with a survey style of research, which entails answering questions on a face-to-face basis producing data for quantitative analysis. An advantage of this approach is that interviewees are able to answer the same question, increasing the comparability of the responses allowing the interviewer to take a less biased approach. Nonetheless, structured interviews take away the flexibility of the interview and the homogenous wording may inhibit natural responses.

Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility of unstructured interviews with a sense of comparability. Interviews of this nature allow for more probing of the participants narratives. However, interviewer bias may increase owing to the selection of questions chosen to probe and this may inhibit comparability of responses.

Lastly, unstructured interviews, also known as exploratory interviews, are usually associated with ethnographic research. This interview style is aimed at understanding the perspective of the interviewee and the meanings that the interviewee attaches to situations and context important to them (Finn et al., 2000). The advantage of this technique, in terms of the interviewer, is being able to respond in a flexible way to the interviewee. The interviewer’s role is minimal, in this case allowing the interviewee to express their own ideas. In
unstructured interviewing, the style is more of a conversation rather than an interview because there is no set sequence of pre-worded questions. In spite of this, unstructured interviews can also have drawbacks. The comparability of the data is greatly reduced and data analysis becomes more difficult. Data quality also depends on listening and communicating skills of the interviewer.

There is a possibility of combining interview structures, which in turn complement each other within a study. Considering this option would enable the researcher to overcome much of the disadvantages that were previously mentioned. For example, a prominent study carried out by Crotty (1998) used semi-structured and unstructured interview techniques when researching social significance during visits to the Granada Studios, Manchester, UK. The combination of both interview methods enhanced the research findings through this method and data triangulation. The approach used in this research allows the researcher opportunities to explore emergent narratives and themes that arise during the research interviews.

In terms of implementing a successful interview, the researcher needs to be able to establish a good interpersonal relationship with the potential interviewee involving trust and rapport. The interviewer must have the skill to be able to understand, be non-judgemental, sympathetic, able to empathise and be knowledgeable of the situation, and able to appreciate the interviewee’s point of view. Although the interview technique is deemed to be advantageous to this study, one of the main problems with any interview is that it involves the establishment of an asymmetrical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer has control over the topics and comes to know the interviewee. The aim of the interviewer is to fulfil the role of a researcher, seeking to minimise the conception of the social process by sharing experiences, giving personal details to solicit personal details from the interviewee, avoiding a special ‘researcher’ pose and aiming to be unobtrusive in as natural a context as possible. An interview should be seen as an open, democratic, informal, free-flowing, two-way process, involving an element of negotiation to gain cooperation with guarantees of protection of identity.
On reflection, the interview technique provides a far useful mode of data collection, as it allows for a comprehensive interaction between researcher and participant. By carrying out the interview method as a researcher, there is the ability to create a relationship with the participants and have a greater understanding of their world and experiences. It also allows a two-way interaction process which provides a means of communication in conveying across messages that are useful for this study.

### 3.7.1.1 The interview process

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among the same group, lasting on average one hour (with interviews ranging from 45–120 minutes). The interviews took place in the natural setting of the participant’s home, enabling the researcher to have private and personal insights into the individual’s world through observation, as well as allowing the researcher to be involved in the actual experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2003). Participant interviews were conducted on a sequential basis. Each female participant was interviewed twice; first the male and female spouse were interviewed together to hear their shared story about life in Britain, their consumption processes and how they consume. The choice to interview the female spouse with her partner was deliberate. As this research uses a feminist approach, it was important to identify the extent to which, if at all, the male partner’s presence affected or influenced the female’s narratives. Quite simply, to what extent did the male partner exert an oppressive force on the female? The interview was then transcribed, notes written up and then analysed.

The next part of the interview process was to interview the female spouse separately, at a later date, again using the semi-structured questions from the first interview and seeking clarification on points raised from the first unstructured interview. The purpose of this second interview was to partially note how female participant narratives changed (if at all) and to explore the reasons why. This approach allowed for the identification of any perceived cultural subservience in their relationship at home manifesting through consumption acts. All the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed in full.
3.7.2 Data analysis

Once an interview was completed, I made an extensive set of fieldwork notes. These notes focused on my own feelings, my observations of the couple, how their homes were decorated (in terms of symbolic cultural objects) and the participant’s body language. After this the interview was transcribed, making note of lapses in the spoken narrative and laughter (possibly reflecting defensive behaviours). Spiggle’s (1994) seven analytical stages were used to analyse the transcripts. Following this, the transcripts were read and then re-read allowing for the development of preliminary codes.

Template analysis was also used to create a list of templates representing the themes identified in the textual data (King, 1998). This approach provided a flexible technique whereby themes could be continuously modified creating a clear, organised account of the data. However, it should be noted that it was acknowledged that although template analysis provided suitable organisation of data analysis it can be criticised for being reduction inducing and non-theoretical. Thos criticism was accepted in this research but the benefits still encouraged its use in the data analysis.

The data was analysed with the coded data sheets, annotated to identify comparisons, metaphors and tropes in the data (Meamber and Venakatesh 2000). Finally, the data was referred back to the literature to inform the interpretation providing an empirical scrutiny for the data (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Supporting this process was a constant referral to the field notes noting participant body language, willingness to be distracted and the researcher’s post-interview reflections. This was deemed to be important because the female participants may not be willing to divulge or own how they comply with their male partner’s wishes or consequently use consumption as a form of resistance.
3.7.2.1 Discourse analysis

The recognition that female participants may be unwilling or unable to express how they address their resistance or willingness to comply with their male partner’s wishes posed a problem for this research. How could the researcher discover, let alone prove, that the female participants were undertaking acts of resistance? As mentioned previously, one of the major features of qualitative research is its focus on the natural occurrence of ordinary events in natural settings, providing an idea of how a participant’s real life is like. For this reason, discourse analysis was adopted to analyse written and spoken words. Discourse analysis is the close study of language (Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001), in terms of written, spoken and signed. The objective of using discourse analysis then is to examine the discourse, talk and conversations of the participants.

Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001) noted that one is able to identify patterns of languages and practices, and illustrate how these constitute aspects of society and the people within it. This approach allows one to also illustrate the social nature of this research especially in the study of power, resistance and struggles. Language becomes a means for participants to express certain ideas, whether they are implicit, explicit or subtle. By looking at each spoken narrative, key themes, inconsistencies interruptions, attempts to cite others to support one’s views, etc. are noted. These were themes are then collated to identify underlying themes.

However, due to its interpretative nature it was noted that discourse analysis does not provide definite answers but instead provides insight to individual’s lives. It is also important to acknowledge the difficulty in identifying interpretive repertoires. As Cassell (1996) noted, discourse analysis does not deny material reality, but focuses on the way our understandings of such practices are constructed through discourse.

3.7.3 Bias
The qualitative approach can be criticised for not being objective in its data collection methods and analysis, i.e. the researcher is inherently involved in the research process and, therefore, objectivity cannot be achieved. Hence researcher bias raises issues of research reproducibility ensuring that there is no guarantee if a different researcher carried out the same research again it would produce the same conclusions. The identification of bias within the research is important because of its affect on reliability and validity (discussed later). This section aims then to discuss how bias manifested within the interviews and data analysis.

As a researcher, one must make critical choices and judgments in what information is used and what is discarded. In doing so, I had to exercise impartiality regarding my own personal and political beliefs. However, it is difficult for any researcher to uphold impartiality in research which is highly emotive, and there needs to be an awareness of one’s own bias and not to use data collected to reinforce the researcher’s own preconceptions. Similarly, research involving interviews can be limited by practical considerations, such as the availability of the participants who may be unwilling or unable to give interviews in the course of the fieldwork. In addition to this, taking a feminist perspective, one has to be weary of the extent participants are questioned and influence in expressing the participants perspective of their reality.

Although it is one’s goal to gather data objectively, it may be impossible as a researcher to be totally objective. McGraw et al. (2000) emphasised that marriage and family research is inherently political in content and method. Researchers have values, attitudes and beliefs that no doubt influence research methods and findings. In light of this, it was important to acknowledge one’s own ethnicity and gender, and the implication that this had for one’s research and also identify the importance of being subjective and impartial to the participant response to avoid biased behaviour. As a researcher, one must also acknowledge that there may have been personally biases when the data was collected and interpreted. As identified earlier this research is based on an interpretivist approach. The research may have presented issues of gender bias. However, a gendered approach to research in marriage and the family would include more qualitative studies based on women’s experience, recognition that gender
is a socially created strategy, and commitment to design research with the aim of eliminating bias and improving the lives of women (McCammon, Knox and Schacht, 1998).

During the course of the interviews, care was taken to remain impartial to any negative experiences or narratives. For example, it is possible to be reluctant in interviewing participants who express different opinions to one’s own or whose views are extreme. One solution may have been to select easier sources; however, that would not be useful for the research, as the aim was to capture the experiences of women and how they assert personal power through consumption. Care was given to ensure that irrespective of beliefs and opinions participants were still interviewed and differences were noted. This was done by keeping field notes, in the form of a reflection diary. Regular supervision was also given to discuss findings and emotion derived from interviews.

Another form of bias is participant bias. Orne (1967) found that most participants in research strive to be good participants and wished the researcher’s experiment to be a success. Consequently, the researcher may encourage this behaviour by misleading participants in questioning during the research interview to achieve a desired result. This is referred to as demand characteristics bias. Orne (1967) consequently found that this state of affairs, motivated by participants’ beliefs, expectations and intentions could lead to systematic error that would severely hamper the interpretability of any data collected. The way of preventing this was to reduce the participants’ awareness to the proposed outcome of the study. In addition to this, as a researcher, one had to ensure that participants were encouraged to talk freely, not letting participants know what was being monitored, preventing participants from making fake responses to impress the researcher (Mitchell and Jolley, 2010).

Analysing and subsequent writing up of the participant’s stories also relied on the trust, integrity and fairness of the researcher. It, therefore, becomes important that the participants were represented correctly in their narratives and the context of their lives. As a qualitative researcher, one must also accept that data extraction in qualitative research can be used selectively to tell a story that is rhetorically convincing but scientifically incomplete (Mays and
Pope, 1995). This was achieved by constantly referring back to field notes, interview transcriptions and reflecting upon my own biases.

3.8 Reliability and validity

Although Golafshani (2003) argued that reliability and validity are rooted in a positivist perspective, its relevance to qualitative research should be noted. The aim of this section then is to explain how reliability and validity was achieved in this research.

3.8.1 Reliability in qualitative research

Joppe (2000, p. 1) defined reliability as:

> The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

In Joppe’s definition, importance is placed on replication or repeatability of results or observations. Kirk and Miller (1986) developed this need for replication further defining reliability as: (1) the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same; (2) the stability of a measurement over time; and (3) the similarity of measurements within a given time period.

From a qualitative research perspective, the idea of testing as a form of reliability is problematic. According to Stenbacka (2001), the concept of reliability is misleading in qualitative research; if a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion; the consequence is rather that the study is no good. Stenbacka (2001) added that since reliability issues concern measurements it has no relevance in qualitative research. In contrast, Eisner (1991) explained that good qualitative research helps one understand a situation that would
otherwise be enigmatic or confusing. Patton (2001) added that validity and reliability are two factors which qualitative researchers should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. In the case of this research, one must bear in mind that the research findings of enquiry are of importance.

In terms of qualitative research, reliability and validity may be viewed in terms of credibility, confirmability and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The term of reliability in qualitative research is actually denoted by the term dependability, which closely corresponds to the notion of reliability. Clont (1992) and Seale (1999) also endorsed the concept of dependability with the concept of consistency or reliability on qualitative research.

To ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is also crucial. Seale (1999, p. 266) explained that while establishing good quality studies through reliability and validity in qualitative research, the ‘trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability’. However, Fulcher (2005, p.34) argued that there is no guarantee that such reliability is possible, given that researchers are likely to differ in their ‘motivational factors, expectations, familiarity, avoidance of discomfort’. It has to be accepted then that the interpretations of the data in this report are subjective and another researcher may interpret the data differently.

The reliability of the analysis of qualitative data can be enhanced by organising an independent assessment of transcripts. Reliability was achieved by achieving trustworthiness in the transcriptions of interviews (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Trustworthiness was achieved through using ‘member checks’ to validate empirical data and transferability, whereby a specific inquiry was applied to another context or other participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This was achieved by taking the emergent themes arising from the data, such as resistance among women to their male partner wishes, through informal discussions with friends of the researcher and supervisor.

### 3.8.2 Validity in qualitative research
Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that there can be no validity without reliability and, therefore, validity is sufficient to establish reliability. The origins of validity are rooted in a positivist tradition. Golafshani (2003) explained that positivism has been defined by systematic theory of validity, arguing that validity resides among, and results in the culmination of other empirical conceptions such as universal laws, evidence, truth and fact. Joppe (2000, p. 1) develops this argument further defining validity, in quantitative research terms, as:

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit ‘the bull’s eye’ of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions, and will often look for the answers in the research of others.

In terms of qualitative research the concept and definition of validity is not fixed or universal. Winter (2000, p. 1) stated that the concept of validity is ‘a contingent construct inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects’. Qualitative researchers, such as Creswell and Miller (2000), argue that there is a need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for qualitative research suggesting that validity is affected by the researcher’s own perception of validity in the study and his or her choice of paradigm assumption. As a result, many researchers have developed their own concept of validity, such as quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Seale, 1999). Stenbacka (2001) added that the concept of validity should then be redefined in qualitative research, leading Davies and Dodd (2002) to define validity in terms of rigour in research.

Triangulation offers one approach to achieving validity, referring to data collection wherein evidence is deliberately sought from a wide range of different, independent sources and often by different means, such as comparing oral testimony with written records (Mays and Pope, 1995). In order to ensure validity in this research, triangulation was adopted in the form of comparing emergent topics in the interviews. Themes generated through conversation with
participants were readdressed to the participants at a later stage to ensure validity. This was also supported by feeding back findings to participants to assess whether the findings were a true representation of their spoken word. Findings were also discussed, as noted previously, with female friends of the researcher drawn from different ethnic groups, discussions with my research supervisor and other non-participating Nigerian females living in Britain.

3.9 Ethical issues

In any type of research that aims to explore a theme that has potential emotional implications, the discussion of ethical approval, such as privacy, consent, confidentiality, deceit and deception, is important.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) posited that ethical issues in feminist research is based on how and where knowledge is created, relating to questions of privacy, confidentiality, disclosure, informed consent and researcher power. Regarding privacy and confidentiality, care needs to be taken in gathering information of immigrant women, especially where topics of relationships and feelings are of concern. Care was taken then to identify any possible issues of deceit by fully informing the participants of the research goals, strategies and styles of this research. In terms of consent, the researcher endeavoured to obtain consent from the participants, however it was acknowledged that, as consent may fade or alter, participants were free to express curiosity, scepticism about or resistance to the research a later stage.

This research achieved through adhering to the British Psychological Society code of conduct (http://www.bps.org.uk/the-society/code-of-conduct/). Adherence to this code aimed to avoid harm to the participants (undue stress, unwanted publicity, loss of reputation and invasion of privacy), negotiating access, gathering and analysing, and writing text. Participants were offered a copy of this code, along with details of support organisations that they could access should they feel distress after the interview process. Finally, participants were not told who else had taken part in the study, even if they had recommended a couple, to ensure confidentiality.
Although feminists rarely conduct covert research, care needs to be taken in identifying the researcher as having the ability to blur personal information, or views on sex, social class, or race, which may be lost in the complexities of interactions characterised by both participants and researchers mobile subjectivities and multiple realities (Wolfe, 1996). The first is a research strategy; the latter is characteristics of everyday social life. In both cases, the lack of information may influence the interpretation of the data, how it is framed to create mutual construction of stories and representations. It was important, therefore, to have good relationships with the participants used in this research. This was achieved by openly discussing the themes or purpose of the research, ensuring confidentiality and also, when appropriate or requested, divulging information about my own personal life, such as my own marital situation.

As a researcher, I tried to produce less false, less partial and less perverse representations without making any claims about what was absolutely and always true (Alway, 1995). Alway (1995) argued that this posture rests on the important assumption that women, in specific contexts, are best suited to help develop presentations of their own lives; these contexts are located in specific structures and historical material moments. This understanding is critical to the feminist approach. This was achieved by returning to the female participants, after the initial data analysis was completed, to understand the data and offer further elaboration on the narratives, such as motivations for their consumption actions.

Other ethical dilemmas regarding researching women include the hazard of stealing women’s words (Opie, 1992), negotiating meanings with participants, validating or challenging women’s taken for granted views when they do not accord with feminist perspectives (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1997) and how to represent findings in respondents own words. For this reason, participants were continuously showed their own narratives, i.e. their transcripts, to ensure spoken words were correct and where necessary to confirm words spoken which were not their views.
Unrealised agendas also may impact the results provided, one must address issues of credibility. It was, therefore, necessary to continuously scrutinise one’s own view and practices, turning back on oneself the very lenses which one has used to scrutinise the lives of the women involved in the research, ensuring validity and reliability.

3.10 Conclusion

It has been identified that an interpretative, qualitative, approach will be used in the form of the interviewed method, taking a Black British feminist approach and using a data collection method based on the grounded theory approach. In using an interpretative approach, discourse analysis will be used as a means to identify patterns of languages and practices, and illustrate how these constitute aspects of society and the people within it. This approach allows one to also illustrate the social nature of this research, especially in the study of power, resistance and struggles. As mentioned, using this particular design it becomes important to acknowledge issues of reliability, reflexivity and biases, which will be addressed in this research.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS I – PARTICIPANT PROFILES

4.1 Introduction

After completing the research design (Chapter Three) and identifying the research methods that were used for this research, it is now important to explore the personality antecedents of the participants that will form the main research findings in the next chapter. This chapter presents the life narratives of the participants, providing an overview of their life stories, and thus the basis for the next chapter to identify the key emergent themes. This chapter commences with a discussion on three Nigerian participants, followed by a discussion on three White participant’s life stories. After which a brief summary of the remainder of each group of participants (i.e. White female participants and Nigerian participants) will follow.2

4.2 Nigerian participant’s life narratives

In order to make the data analysis coherent I will begin each participant’s narrative by introducing her life story, indicating key aspects in terms of her background and characteristics.

4.2.1 Emma

4.2.1.1 Emma and Steve – brief overview

Emma is 56 year old PA who came to the Britain thirty-one years ago. After completing her education in Nigeria, at the age of 21, she decided to travel to Britain to attend college; leaving her childhood sweetheart (now husband) behind to complete his studies.

2 An expanded analysis can be found in Appendix AII.II
Emma’s partner, whose name is Steve, is a 61-year-old recruitment manager and is also from Nigeria. At the age of 24, Emma married Steve in Britain (Steve came to Britain a year after Emma) and they now have three children (28, 25 and 23), all girls.

Emma and Steve were childhood sweethearts, coming from different tribes. Although Emma came to Britain first they maintained their relationship and eventually got married in Britain. Although married in Britain, they operate a traditional Nigerian marriage, with Steve the head of the household, responsible for most of the household decisions, especially finance and the welfare of the family. Emma is responsible for looking after the children.

When interviewing Emma and Steve together, Emma remains passive, allowing Steve to dominate most conversation topics. One topic area that did dominate was the issue of migrating to Britain. In the following extract from their joint narratives, Steve appears to dominate and control not only the flow of conversation, but also show his patriarchy through the actions he had to undertake. Consider the following exchange, especially the final quotation in which Steve seeks praise and recognition of his action through the use of the word ‘I’:

**Steve:** *When we first arrived there were many changes that we had to incur especially financially, she had to work as well as I. The income was needed to keep us afloat. You can see, as my wife told you, that things were not easy as ABC; but we got there in the end, as with most people in our position.*

**Emma:** *Yes, I worked, so we both were able to sustain the family.*

**Steve:** *In looking after the family, we had to work. I managed to make several moves to ensure my family’s well being. You can imagine the moving to a different society for the first time. I had to ensure accommodation, schools; all those things, we had to consider.*
The choice of Steve’s narrative suggests a high level of patriarchy in their household, Steve refers to his wife as ‘she’. In addition to this, when Emma makes claim to contributing in sustaining the family, something that maybe attributed to Steve’s role; Steve in fact takes full ownership of the decisions made for the well being of the family. In this, Steve shows his patriarchal dominance in their relationship. Steve’s behaviour is common throughout the interviews, and Emma remains confined to her cultural duty as a wife, i.e. subservient to Steve’s needs. For example, when they discuss responsibilities in the house, Emma demonstrates her disagreement by laughing at the end of her narrative:

Steve:  
Well, she takes care of the house; I work to look after the family.

Emma:  
Yes, that is right; I look after the house, which I am very good at
[laughs].

The marital dynamics between Emma and Steve suggest that Steve’s narrative is one of dominance, taking a patriarchal position as the head of the household while designating Emma as the subservient wife. Emma’s behaviour in Steve’s presence suggests that she conforms to this dynamic and therefore becomes oppressed. Out of this oppression we will see in later narratives her attempt to empower herself.

Becoming a secretary had always been Emma’s career aspiration, arising from when Emma was younger and observing British White secretaries in Nigeria:

You know, there would be times when I used to walk back from school and see English women finishing from work. They looked so nice, very smart, being driven around in nice cars, and I said to myself that day, ‘That I will be like.’ They were secretaries working for one of these large corporations; I just used to look at them, the way they behaved – very different, posh.
From this point onwards her perspective of the English (whom we can read as the British) was one of awe, viewing the English as being superior, sophisticated and even idolising them as an aspirational reference point to emulate.

Emma identifies herself as being British due to her length of stay, seeing Britain as a home away from home. Nigeria has a long imperial and, post-independence, political relationship with Britain. While growing up Emma was exposed to British education and values, one of which was the notion of the Queen and empire. With this teaching Emma grew up with the view that Britain was a ‘home away from home’; however, over the years since arriving in Britain this opinion has subsequently changed.

Emma had always planned to come to Britain to continue her studies and often had been told of the opportunities and ‘wonders’ waiting for her abroad from female friends and relatives:

\[I \text{ had one aunty that used to travel to Britain. Sometimes after school I would go to her house briefly to listen to her stories about her time in Britain. She always encouraged me to travel. She would show me her clothes, her new bags; every time, she would show me the new things that she has bought. She used to tell me about the people, where she had been. It was very exciting listening to her stories, yes.}\]

As a child she watched British films, and listened to stories from female relatives and friends who had travelled abroad describing cities and people they had met. She viewed Britain as ‘the land of hope and glory’ and subsequently decided to travel to the country to study. However, since being in Britain her opinion of the country and people changed. Instead of viewing the British people as being superior and sophisticated, she now realised that her ideas of Britain were vastly different to what she expected:

\[You \text{ know, when you’re young and impressionable you think everything abroad is better. Look at me, when I was young I thought this country was the be all}\]
end all, but now [laughs], if only I knew. There are good things and bad things about this country. Back when I came it was very difficult, it wasn’t like the movies I grew up watching! It was far from that. The people were not polite, very different. It was a bit disappointing really, but you just have to get used to it.

Although she is happy to be identified as British, Emma still feels drawn back to her Nigerian culture. Her view of ‘Britishness’, at the time of her migration, was one of admiration, following the notion as mentioned previously about the British Empire. However, since being in Britain her views have gradually changed to being more negative, largely due to experiences of racism, the inability of people to achieve high living standards and changes in British society, which she believes has deteriorated.

Racism featured very frequently in Emma’s narrative, especially when comparing British and Nigerian culture. She talked specifically about the racism that she has experienced in several workplaces. One poignant experience, while she was working as a secretary for an insurance company:

You know I was working there for over five years and I applied for a promotion maybe six times! My manager would always come back to me and say ‘Insufficient’ experience. Insufficient experience! What is insufficient is when I find out that a White girl whom I [elevated voice] trained apply for the same job I applied for and get it! It got to a point and I said enough is enough and I left. Do you [know] six month later that company went into liquidation, do you see how God works [laughs].

Emma’s racist experiences left her angry, but this did not prevent her from applying for further jobs. Emma used her experience of the insurance company to motivate herself to find a new job. Although she expresses that she still experiences racism she finds its manifestation becoming more subtle:
Sometimes they [British White people] speak to you condescendingly, like you haven’t been to school and you’re not educated. I just look at them and smile, and say to myself ‘You may have this white skin, but that won’t prevent me from getting where I need to go!’ It’s funny it’s them that have not been to school; this is where this society has gone bad.

Emma also recollects the number of times that she has experienced racism at work. She expresses her feelings of isolation:

Ah, I remember when I first started, it was lunch-time and all my White colleagues were organising going to lunch. Do you know not even one of them asked me if I would like to join, so I was talking to another women, who is Black to find out if that is the way they do things and you know what she said straight, ‘It is because you’re Black, they did the same to me when I came.’ I mean, what is that!

In particular, Emma notes how trying to negotiate access to work groups for socialising is often made difficult owing to her skin colour, leaving her feel uncomfortable:

No matter how you try to be one of them you are not really one of them because right in your mind, especially in a work environment and you find yourself that time will come when you find yourself, ‘Oh OK, I didn’t know that I’m not supposed to do this because of who I am.’ So that’s the way I see it.

Emma’s experience of racism is not limited just to her employment. She describes a particular one off incident when she and Steve experienced an attempted arson attack on their flat in London. Having moved from their hostel into a flat with two other Nigerian friends, one night, while they were sleeping, a gang of White youths posted a fire bomb through the letter box into their flat. Fortunately no one was injured but this incident left Emma with a mental scar.
Ever since that event she has vowed that rather than using this act of violence to become bitter, and even a victim, she would use it as a weapon to fight against racism. As a way of empowering herself and overcoming such an incident she makes every effort to interact with individuals of different races, dispelling any negative notions that they have of Black people.

Although she makes efforts to socialise with White people, as a response to racist experiences, Emma reacts at times by distancing herself from White people and becoming suspicious of them. These experiences leave her feeling like a ‘foreigner’ and not being allowed to ‘belong’ to mainstream society:

*Sometimes it makes me feel uncomfortable though to feel that you don’t really belong, but I feel that it’s part of life. If you live in a foreign country, you’re bound to experience that; but at I don’t allow that to affect my person.*

When reflecting about her identity in Britain, Emma expressed her indifference over the issue of being a Nigerian in Britain, as opposed to being in Nigeria. Since being in Britain, she has acculturated significantly, in terms of her behaviour. A good example of this was how Emma commented on how fellow Nigerians perceived her:

*When I was in Nigeria people always commented on how I speak; that I speak, you know, with a British accent. Well, I don’t mind; I speak clearly and it means that I sound posh* [laughs].

This need to sound ‘English’ and ‘posh’ was a common feature in Emma’s narrative; she viewed this behaviour as being superior, especially when she travelled to Nigeria. She explained that the reason she speaks this way was so she didn’t sound ‘local’ or be seen as low class. She identified that she makes every effort to speak ‘posh’ to show that she is educated, what she deems as belonging to the upper classes. She once again links British culture to superiority.
Her behaviour and thoughts are also expressed when speaking of the clothes she wears and her desire to ‘fit in’. She uses clothes to negotiate her identity, and also her willingness to conform to the larger, British White, society. Her need to ‘fit in’ also extends to how she interacts with White people. Emma not only sees this as being important for herself but also for the well being of her children, believing that adopting elements of British culture enables her to access wider opportunities:

*If I talked like a local person [a Nigerian], how would I get a job, how would I manage in this country? Would they be able to understand me? No, it would be very difficult; but if I talk clearly, the way I’m talking now, I can communicate with them. I can do similar things with them, converse with them, then have things in common with them.*

Emma continued in her narrative noting the importance of instilling these values into her children:

*I always tell my children to speak clearly and properly, none of the slang words. If heard them speaking like that, I would tell them off. It is important, so when they go for a job interview, people will say, ‘Yes, they’re different, they’re educated!’*

On reflection, Emma does not see her desire to speak with a British accent as being negative but something that she needs to for her social and personal well being. Emma sees this as an advantage in a society where she experiences racism, and, therefore, adapts her behaviours to protect herself, as well as furthering her children’s future. Thus she sees her way of life as more British than Nigerian:

*I don’t feel anything different because my thinking, my way of life is more of English than as a Nigerian so I’ve sort of blended or mixed. Culturally I’ve sort of... I’m leaning on the English aspect, the British way of life. As a Nigerian, I*
see Nigeria; it's not my primary board or a place that I can relate to more than England here.

Emma is proud to have three girls, but she knows that Steve wanted a boy, something that is culturally bounded within a Nigerian marriage. When interviewed with Steve the pressure of having a male child was mentioned, and it was Emma who expressed a more relaxed view of having girls over boys. In this situation, we see that gender is culturally bounded and that within Nigerian culture having a male child is more favoured by the man. This is seen in narrative when Emma discusses the pressure she felt when she did not conceive a boy:

Well, you know, in Nigerian culture there is pressure for women to have boys, but I was happy to have all girls. God is the one that gave me girls and that is what I’m thankful for. Yes, I know he wanted boys, but he is happy now; all my children are doing well and he is proud of them.

For Emma, giving birth to ‘only’ girls did not make her feel sad, but proud. She rejected the notion that having boys is better than girls, viewing it as an outdated opinion. Although their children are now adults, they still maintain their family structure; however, Emma uses the absence of her children as an opportunity to assert herself more readily:

When the children were younger I would just allow him to dictate everything, you know how men are like. Even if I did not agree with him, I would agree, just for the children’s sake – so it doesn’t come across like we’re arguing, but now things have changed [laughs]. If I don’t agree with him I say, but not in a disrespectful way. I would say, ‘Look, honey, don’t do it this way, what about this and that.’

Now that Emma’s children are older, she feels that she can assert herself more easily. No longer mother of the household she now views herself only as the wife in the household. In this way, Emma now uses this opportunity to behave more egalitarian to Steve, while
expecting this egalitarianism to be returned. This is a sense of freedom that she has found from observing, engaging with British culture.

4.2.1.2 Emma’s life narrative – being an immigrant

Emma is a very social individual and likes to surround herself with people. She has openly accepted British White culture as her own culture, and is seemingly happy about adopting the British way of life, which appears to be based on her previous notions of being British:

Well, to be frank, I don’t mind this culture. I know I said when I first came it was difficult. But you just get used to it; after all I’m a foreigner! But I gotten used to this culture and it’s part of me. It’s part of my children. No matter what, Britain will always influence who I am.

In this quote, Emma identifies that when she first came to Britain it was ‘difficult’ relating back to her comments about racism and wider issues of being a woman. Although she easily classifies herself as British and shows that she has acculturated into the mainstream society, i.e. talking ‘posh’ and wearing English clothes, she contradicts herself by using the term ‘foreigner’. It is this term that indicates how she feels that, even after having lived in Britain for a long time, she still feels as though she is still an outsider who does not belong, i.e. she is a ‘foreigner.’

Emma’s admiration for British culture is emulated on a daily basis, often identifying such things as using English as her first language:

We speak English at home, all the time. I always speak English. English the first language of the world, but I speak my local language when I attend my social club, but English is my main language; this is England, after all [laughs].

\footnote{Fortnightly meeting held by individuals from Rumuokwurusi who now reside in Britain.}
Here we see that she once again makes reference to British superiority, by identifying English as being ‘the first language of the world’. However, she also speaks her local dialect – Ikwerre at her community social club meeting in order to enhance her dialect, as an indication of personal self-improvement and also as a way of maintaining her Nigerian culture. Conversely her children do not speak her local dialect, which she explains here:

Well, I wanted to teach them, but my husband was against it. He said that we would confuse them, so they only speak English. In that aspect, I have let my children down, that’s one thing I regret.

The fact that Emma was unable to teach her children her language is something that she now regrets thoroughly and something that she reflects upon on a daily basis. She expresses that it was Steve who prevented her from teaching their children their language, indicating Steve’s ultimate power within the family unit, and both now openly express guilt over this issue as it is one element of both of their cultures that they have not taught their children. This admission of guilt suggests a deeper reawakening of her Nigerian cultural identity. Only now that her children have grown up is she reflecting on her attachment to Nigeria and Britain’s attachment to her. As a self-perceived ‘foreigner’, it would appear that Emma’s distancing from her Nigerian self is now being reversed.

Emma also expresses her enjoyment of watching British soap operas:

Well, I watch Eastenders, I think it’s out of habit. I don’t watch it all the time, but sometimes I like to know what’s happening.

Otherwise, Emma watches a wide range of British television programmes, rarely watching any shows on Nigerian television available via cable or a satellite dish.

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4 Eastenders is a weekly BBC drama about the people who live in the community in the East End of London.
Food is often an important cultural symbolism, offering reminders of roles and rituals associated with the food itself. In keeping with her identification with Britain, Emma tends to favour British food, seeing Nigerian food as different:

*Most of the time I eat... well, breakfast and lunch I eat English food. Nigerian food is too heavy. Sometimes I fancy something different, Nigerian food can sometimes be boring, you know. All the time eba and rice, it’s good to have a variety!*

Emma’s assertion that Nigerian food can be ‘boring’ and ‘heavy’ again makes the inference to British superiority over Nigeria. This is also shown the narrative that she expresses about the type of clothes she wears:

*Well, I mostly wear English, actually every day. The only time I wear traditional is when I’m going to a Nigerian event; for example, a party.*

Emma’s choices in what she wears – wearing English clothes daily, as well as wearing Nigerian clothes for Nigerian events – reflect her desires to be part of both the larger community, and her ‘local’ community. Here we can see an example of her demonstrate her willingness and ability to negotiate her culture identity.

We have now seen the reverence that Emma places on British White culture, from childhood to present day and we have also seen the way that she has been able to negotiate from Nigerian culture to British White culture through acculturation in terms of her behaviour, i.e. the way the she talks and interacts as well as the clothes that she wears.

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5 A type of Nigerian food.
In comparison to Steve, Emma is more acculturated. Steve does not see himself as British even though he has been here approximately the same length of time as Emma. Steve classifies himself as Nigerian, and does not attempt to acculturate himself to the society as much as Emma.

Developing further Emma’s need not to be a victim of her racist experiences, and reflecting her wish to acculturate into British White society, she actively engages with British White society and culture. Emma will often actively put herself in situations where she is the only Black woman, such as attending social gatherings with her (non-racist) White work colleagues. Another example that Emma is proud of was attending her spiritual meetings, which was an ‘English’, i.e. White, gathering, where she was the only Black woman:

*The group that I was with then, I was the only Black, so I really enjoyed my time. It was very good, yes, because it’s a very good way of getting away from your people and mix with other groups. You know, you have to interact with other groups of people, not just your kind. Cos, we’re living in a global world that you just don’t stick to your own people alone, you have to mix.*

Emma later returned to the issue of wanting to belong to a White group arose later on during our interview:

*Me being in their group sort of opened their eyes and they sort of relaxed and since I’ve been with them they feel more comfortable to really relate to a Nigerian like me.*

These meetings gave Emma a space where she could interact with women from culturally different backgrounds; it provided her with spiritual and emotional support, giving her the opportunity to seek advice from her peers:
...sometimes we talk about our families, and to be honest the same that goes on in my family goes on in theirs, so it really is not that different [Emma’s emphasis]. For example when my daughter was looking for a university to study in, I asked my English friend there. She was very helpful.

The meetings also gave Emma the opportunity to dispel some negative and racist stereotypes held by her White peers towards Black people:

...and because, they have this stereotype of ‘Oh this, people are like this, that that’, but when I was with them and we’re together they treat me like themselves; there wasn’t anything different.

These meetings also provided Emma with the opportunity to meet new people, expanding her social life, and even expanding her knowledge of British culture. Emma found herself adopting some of the behaviours of White church members:

So it wasn’t an issue, being a Nigerian, wasn’t an issue they just...we interacted, we mixed and we go to parties; the Christmas parties, we go and I enjoyed myself. When in Rome you behave like the Romans, don’t you? So I have to speak like them; it’s not that I speak badly, no, but there are certain slang words that I may use that they will not understand, so I have to be conscience of that.

In this narrative, it is clear that Emma lays emphasis on trying to belong to her surrounding society (British White society), expressing her felt ethnicity. Interestingly, however, she is also encouraging the notion of White supremacy, the notion that British White culture is superior to her own seeing that she has decided to behave like them: ‘When you in Rome you behave like the Romans.’ She shows here that she is conforming to them and at the same time compromising her ethnicity and her culture in order to fit in.
4.2.1.3 Emma’s life narrative – being a professional

From the time she arrived in Britain Emma has held many professional occupations, all of which have been skilled positions ranging from a nursery school teacher, secretary to a marketing director. Her passion to improve herself, and the quest for new challenges enabled her to venture into different careers.

Emma has also owned her own cleaning company, which she managed successfully for four years. After four years, reflecting on the time spent focused on her business, she decided to sell her business to focus on the well being of her family. This decision was based on her Nigerian cultural responsibilities as a wife and a mother, something that was impressed upon her on numerous occasions by Steve. Steve perceived that her responsibilities and the high level of stress she was experiencing were getting too much, and thus advised her to sell her business. Upon reflection, Emma found this decision very difficult as her business allowed her to utilise her entrepreneurial skills. Consider the following quote where Emma copes with her decision by dismissing her actions and focusing on the future, rather than on the emotional cost of her decision:

*It took me several years to set the business up. I did it by myself. It was something that one of my friends told me that I should do, so I took that advice and set my business up. But anyway that part of my life is over, there will be other opportunities. Anyway, it gave me more time to spend with my children.*

Emma’s business allowed her to have financial freedom from Steve, providing the opportunity to do something entirely focused on her own interests, providing her with additional managerial responsibilities, such as managing staff. This enabled her to utilise her professional skills but also to attain life skills, such as self-confidence, all of which she used in day-to-day activities. Emma’s business gave her the ability to empower herself as a woman and have pride in her achievement, something that she felt she had not experienced before.
Emma’s business also became a much needed distraction from the daily cultural pressures of being a Nigerian woman and being bound to a traditional patriarchal role at home. Consider the following quote where Emma expresses her sense of personal liberation from her self-perceived Nigerian cultural constraints:

My business was something for me, something to do away from the family, away from being the mother. It was like I was young again, fresh when I arrived into the country, so excited. Something for me. But then as one gets married you have other responsibilities, so you just have to change even if at first it is difficult.

Emma’s sacrifice of losing her own company to support her children produced mixed emotions. From one perspective she had relinquished the independence that this offered her from Steve, but alternatively offered her a sense of cultural empowerment and status that being a mother in Nigerian culture offers:

Yes, it was difficult; it felt like I had failed. Well, not failed. It’s like when you work really hard for something and then someone says, ‘OK, that’s it, stop right there, we don’t need that anymore.’ But being a wife and mother is more important. I didn’t want my children to not see their mother around and that was my fear.

Emma is the only child among her siblings to have gone abroad to study and so her family in Nigeria now look to her for financial support. As a result she is responsible for her extended family in Nigeria, which has been financially constraining and although she does not own her business any more, she still sends money to her family in Nigeria. These acts of sending money make her proud and fortunate to be in the position to do so. She often referred to her actions as being a ‘blessing’, allowing her to be in such a position to provide for her family, as opposed to Steve sending money to her relatives. This is a source of empowerment for her, as financially she is able to provide for her family compared to the traditional circumstance in which Steve provided financially for her family.
Three years ago, after selling her business, Emma decided to change professions to improve her lifestyle, a decision she made herself, after discussing her decision with Steve due to the possible financial implications for the family. She now works part-time as an administrator. Although her income has reduced significantly financially constraining her family, she enjoys her job. Emma’s decision to change employment was made out of self-protection, a need to look after herself, an act that also demonstrates her self-empowerment to value herself:

*To be honest health is the most important thing in life. I cannot kill myself over a job! For years I have been working, not looking after myself and it was not good. My family was suffering, I was suffering! So I just had to change my job, and it was the best choice I made* [author’s emphasis].

The reduction in the family income has often been a focal point for discussion between her and Steve, especially when considering the financial welfare of the family. Even though Steve was apprehensive over her choice, she does not feel that her decision to work part-time has been detrimental to the family. In fact, in contrast to Steve, she believes that her working hours has been beneficial to the family, in that she has her own time to herself and more time to focus on looking after her family, i.e. getting the work life and home life balance. However, as her children get older, she believes that in the future she’ll go back to owning her own business.

Emma’s sense of independence has led to conflict with Steve, arising from negotiating her duties as a wife and a professional. A conflict arising from her sense of empowerment, which she feels is her right, and supported by a White society she interacts with, and Steve’s perspective of what a Nigerian wife should be, i.e. compliant and supportive of Steve. For example, let us considering housework:

*You know, at times it is not very easy being a woman; you know, you’ve got to do a lot of things. Some things you have to do you do not like, but you have to do it...*
because it is your duty, even when you come back home from a very hard day at work.

Tensions arising from Nigerian culturally specified roles often occurred with Steve, resulting in Emma having to compromise her own needs to protect her relationship with Steve. However, as Emma notes, such compromise is often done from a position of increased awareness and need to ensure that Steve’s sense of masculinity remains intact:

*Sometimes one has to apply wisdom in these things. If I don’t agree with my husband on things, I just keep quiet just to ensure peace. It’s not easy, but it’s not good to argue. What I do is leave the issue with him for a while then later when he is calm I approach him and say, ‘Honey, why don’t you try this, or what about this, or this is why I don’t agree with that.’ With all things when trying to be a good wife you need to apply wisdom, but sometimes, to be honest, applying wisdom is not easy!*

Emma’s act of ‘keeping quiet just to ensure peace’ causes Emma to resent aspects of her responsibility as a wife, as prescribed within Nigerian culture. This resentment is additionally provoked by her awareness of how British White culture views females and their roles as wives and their husbands’ responsibilities, a culture that I have already shown Emma actively engages in and admires:

*What I have learnt from this culture, this English culture, is that women in particular have it very easy. Yes, they have it easy. You know, when you look at the way they do things, although I am not 100% sure, but what I have seen. They don’t have to do much, it’s more equal; but, as for us, we have to keep to the way that things are done, we have to look after the home, our husband, what a life.*
Emma is an active member of her church, which has a predominantly Black congregation. In addition to this, she is also a member of her Rumuokwurusi community. She attends meetings every two weeks (involving men as well as women), to discuss issues within their community, such as children, family welfare and a way to learn their tribal language. Emma’s attendance at these meetings provides her an opportunity to express her Nigerian cultural identity in terms of language and the interplay of tradition, providing an environment which reflects her village, Rumuokwurusi. She enjoys this engagement, using these meetings as a point of reference, contact and support:

*There we catch up with, with news from home and even our children within here – well, how each one of us is settling, and all that, and if there is anything at all that is happening, we sort of talk about it. Whether it’s good news, we rejoice with it; if there is any bad news, we console each other; so it’s like helping each other at the social gathering.*

In contrast, Emma also used to attend Steve’s Ibo community meetings. While attending Steve’s meetings Emma became Social and Financial Secretary, a position which Steve encouraged her to apply for. While Emma enjoyed the support of Steve in achieving this position, she often struggled with her role of being a wife/mother due to the increase in responsibilities in her role as Financial Secretary. This responsibility particularly increased when her Steve became President of the Ibo community, resulting in the community viewing her as the president’s wife within her community. At times, Emma viewed the responsibility and perception of others as an additional burden of her Nigerian culture i.e. being bound from a cultural and personal perspective. In effect, Emma was expected to become the epitome of what a Nigerian women as a wife and mother should aspire to be:

6 Fortnightly meeting held by individuals from Rumuokwurusi who now reside in Britain.

7 Ibo meeting - a monthly meeting held by individuals from his village who now reside in Britain.
Before my husband became President, I was free to do what I like without any watchful eyes. Well, the eyes were there, but not like when I was the president’s wife [Emma’s emphasis]. Ah, all eyes were on me. I had to behave like this, carry myself like that; it was tiring, too much of a stress.

This stress further arose from Emma’s role as a wife within traditional Nigerian patriarchal values, i.e. the wife’s duty bound to honour Steve. The position of President’s Wife required conformity to norms that Emma was not openly willing to reject, but ultimately internally did. A conflict arising from the position of being ‘seen and not heard’:

You see then, I wouldn’t be able to talk freely, especially at occasions. My duty was to look well-to-do and support my husband. Yes, support my husband. That was it, really. Some women would be happy doing that, but as for me, it was... it just wasn’t me, but it was something that was expected of me.

Emma was often treated as an outsider in Steve’s community, which made her feel uncomfortable. She was often told by women in the Ibo community how to behave, as she was not from their community, which created a pressure to ‘behave well’, i.e. conform. Emma consequently felt stifled and oppressed, as she was not able to freely express her thoughts and identity. After all, for the president’s wife to challenge the masculine norms of the community would not be tolerated. Instead, Emma found herself adopting a subservient female role, ‘behaving well’, contrary to her independent personality. This behaviour was a result of her wanting to keep and conform to Steve’s belief in the patriarchal structures of Nigerian culture that ensured Steve’s and other males dominance. The need to demonstrate this conformity became increasingly challenging and restrictive owing to the expectations to perform various duties. Emma infers that she increasingly resented these duties but was unable to challenge them:

Challenging because, being the wife of the president then, every occasion I had visitors, cooked, cleaned and doing this, entertaining, you know, so that was really
challenging, but it was a good experience as the wife of the president. So I, it’s my...you know, it’s a duty that the wife has to be there. Where husband goes, the wife goes [laughs], yes.

Not surprisingly, when Steve decided not to continue with his tenure as President Emma felt a sense of relief.

4.2.1.4 Emma’s life narrative – the consumer

Emma’s identification with British society, her wider sense of independence and empowerment from Nigerian patriarchal cultural values were also evident in her consumption narratives. Yet, even within the consumption arena, I noted how Emma’s ultimate conformity to Steve’s needs dominated. For example, let us consider clothing.

Emma, within keeping to her role as a wife/mother and managing the home, also buys clothes, shoes, hair products, and house cleaning products, identifying some as being British. Focusing on the clothes she wears to church, work, visiting, day to day, she opts for wearing ‘English’:

*Oh English, it’s more convenient, more attractive. It makes you belong to the system. You look elegant. Going to work, you can’t wear African clothing to work. No, it has to be corporate wear, one needs to look elegant.*

Emma views British clothes as better and wears them in order to ‘belong to the system’. Here we see her once again adopting the view that British White culture as being superior to Nigerian culture, but in this case, it has filtered into the items that she consumes. In this particular instance, she views English clothing as being more ‘convenient and attractive’ compared to African clothing. Acculturating into the society once again becomes an important issue for her and she uses the consumption of clothing to conform to the British White society.
Emma also buys Nigerian clothing, which are worn for Nigerian social events, such as parties. She also buys Nigerian clothing for Steve (which is the norm in Nigerian culture as most of the clothes are sold by women in her community), providing an act of empowerment by giving her the opportunity to choose the type of outfit he wears for these occasions. Emma finds that the reason behind the purchase of the Nigerian clothing tends to be due to Steve’s preference, and hence she conforms to her Nigerian culture where the men are the decision makers of the family:

Well, because, when he attends his meetings, he likes to wear... dress in African wear, especially when he goes to African meetings and all that. He likes to dress African, so that’s why we buy it.

In this case, Steve uses Nigerian clothing to uphold and expresses his Nigerian culture; this is important as he has not acculturated as much as Emma. In this particular case, wearing Nigerian clothing gives him a sense of identity and power, and as a result Emma inadvertently supports this notion, hence supports her own domination. So buying and choosing these clothes for Steve may therefore be viewed as act of empowerment.

Although Emma sees the relevance of wearing traditional Nigerian clothes to social gatherings, she adopts the wearing of these clothes to please Steve’s needs for them to demonstrate Nigerian cultural conformity. A consumption act that Emma feels obliged to exhibit:

It can’t be with my husband wearing African, then I’ll be wearing English. Well, certain occasions, yes; but it depends on what the occasion is. I have to wear what my husband is wearing.

In this way, she dresses to confirm to Steve’s desire, hence emulating his dominance over her through her cultural conformity. Steve indirectly asserts his power over Emma.
Emma’s purchase of traditional Nigerian clothing for Steve to wear when attending Nigerian events reflects Emma’s desire to ensure that Steve is looked after. Fears of the wider Nigerian community commenting that Emma has failed in her duties as a good wife motivated her to show the Nigerian community that she was supporting Steve:

Well, I want my husband to look good. He may not like the material that I buy but I still buy them. Don’t mind him; he always complains, but afterwards when you look at him, he looks good. That’s why I do that. I want my husband to look good! He is a reflection on me.

Emma’s desire to project self-image through Steve suggests a willingness to conform and comply with Steve’s authority; however, this is not always evident. In one example, Emma discussed how she uses clothing as a form of reasserting her authority by openly resisting Steve’s wishes. In particular, her willingness to wear English style clothing, especially when she is going to Nigerian events, suggests a heightened sense of resistance. At these events Emma knows that the wider community will not only recognise her act of non-conformity but also as a direct challenge to Steve’s authority. Considering the following narrative where Emma ‘fancied a change’:

Oh OK, there was one time when I wanted to wear something really elegant. I knew my husband would be wearing traditional, but I said, ‘Ah, let me wear something different for a change.’ That day I went to Marks and Spencer’s and bought a very elegant black dress. My husband did not know! [laughs]. The only time he saw it was when we were ready to go, he just looked at me, he couldn’t say anything! Ah, I just pretended that I did not see him; I just wore it to the event [laughs]. Funnily enough, since that day he has not mentioned anything about it!

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8 A British department store.
Wanting to be different among her Nigerian peers through wearing English clothing goes back to her identification of British White culture superiority and dismissing her patriarchal Nigerian culture. This example of using a consumption act, such as buying clothing, as a form of cultural resistance was not a sole occurrence. Emma commented how she regularly buys English clothing and wears it at times despite knowing it creates a tension in Steve. She consumes English clothing as a form of empowerment against Steve’s authority, an authority derived from Nigerian culture.

In terms of their family structure and consumption pattern, Emma is responsible for the buying of foodstuff, something that Emma chose to be responsible for. She uses this responsibility as a way to dictate what is cooked in the house. Steve tends to focus on buying electronics and newspapers, something that Emma does not mind him doing seeing that he has experience in buying these items. In terms of finances, and with both parties working, Steve is nonetheless solely responsible for the expenses in the household. This responsibility is ordained culturally and he feels that it is his role as the head of the household to provide for his family. Emma agrees with this arrangement, conforming once again to her cultural prefixes of marriage; however, she contributes to the paying of bills when she can and this in itself empowers her.

Emma mostly buys Nigerian foodstuff because Steve only eats Nigerian food, his preferences largely dictating what is bought for household consumption. She finds that she buys these things not always out of her free will, and at times she purposely tries to vary the food that Steve eats:

Sometimes he can be boring with his food, so at times I just buy him something different. Like yesterday, I bought lamb chop and I made it with vegetables. I think he was surprised as it was different to his usual, but he needs to vary his diet. It’s not good always eating the same thing!
Emma buys, cooks and eats Nigerian food out of preference and taste. However, she does not willingly conform to Steve’s need to only eat Nigerian food, and instead also eats English food. She often finds herself eating English food when Steve is not present:

_For example, when he is at work or maybe if he comes back late, I may eat English food; but it just depends what’s at home and how much energy I have to cook. If I don’t have time or if I’m tired, I just go with whatever is in the pot: it could be rice, it could be beans, it could be spaghetti. It just depends how I feel at that time._

Sometimes she is reluctant and unwilling to purchase Nigerian foods, as some items are too expensive. As a result, she sometimes buys English food as a cheaper alternative for herself and her children, and Nigerian food for Steve:

_I buy, where do we start… Food, we buy beef, sausage, cereal, milk, spaghetti, rice, sometimes pizza, sometimes bread, cheese, canned foods as much as we can, baked beans, all those things. My husband does not eat all those things, so I just buy for myself and the children._

Steve does not particularly like the fact that Emma buys English food and often refers to the lack of nutritional value in English food. Steve sees Nigerian food as being more flavoursome and healthy. However, Emma finds Nigerian food boring and some of the dishes she finds ‘oily and unhealthy’:

_Well, not all Nigerian food are healthy, we fry a lot and use a lot of oil. I think some English foods are better. Like salads, vegetables, those type of things. Most of the shopping I do, [and so] I buy a variety of English foodstuff just so we have a varied diet._

As a point, she always includes English foods in her grocery shopping, much to Steve’s annoyance, indicating a willingness to resist Steve’s wishes.
4.2.2 Angela

4.2.2.1 Angela and Bob – brief overview

Angela is a 38-year-old nursery assistant married to Bob (44), a security man. They have three children, two boys (14 and 13) and one girl (10). Angela has been living in Britain for fourteen years. Bob travelled to Britain on a number of occasions from the age 24 and once married they settled in Britain together fourteen years ago. In total, they have been married for fifteen years. Angela and Bob met while attending school in Nigeria. They grew up as friends and later got married in Nigeria. After getting married, they decided to migrate to Britain. It was Angela’s original desire to travel to Britain. Angela always wanted to come to Britain, citing stories she heard from friends in Nigeria, in addition to the job opportunities:

*So many of my friends that had travelled boasted about England. They would say England this, England that – so many things! I used to sit and listen to their stories and say to myself, ‘One day I will get there.’*

Angela also adds:

*After graduating I found it very difficult to get a job; the same for my husband. So we decided to travel and we knew England has a lot of opportunities. We didn’t have any responsibilities at home [Nigeria], so we just up and left.*

We see from the above that Angela was excited to come to Britain, as well as about the promise of prosperity. In comparison, Bob did not share the same experience:

*Well, I would come and go to visit family. Stay one or two weeks then return to Nigeria. My brother stayed in England for a very long time, I used to visit him. There was nothing fantastic about England.*
Having travelled to Britain on several occasions Bob had firsthand experience of Britain and its culture, hence creating his very own personal experience. When probed about his initial experiences coming to Britain Bob did not wish to divulge on such information, even when approached on several occasions. He appeared to be quiet during the interviews, leading one to believe that such initial experiences may have been negative, perhaps as a result of racism. This confirmed in later conversations with Bob:

*You see, no matter what you do as long as your skin is different you will never belong to this society. That’s just it. Anyway, we’re just here for the children; let them take advantage of the opportunities here.*

From the above quote, one sees Bob indirectly refers to racism and as a result distances himself from British society even as he allows his children to take advantage of the benefits offered to them in Britain. On the other, Angela remains animated and at ease in discussing her experience in Britain throughout the course of the interviews.

Although Angela instigated the move to Nigeria, it was Bob who travelled first in order organise accommodation because he had had previous experience of staying in Britain:

*Well, he went first because he had to organise things such as accommodation, things like that, so he stayed back to until everything was sorted.*

In this particular instance, we see that Bob, as a result of his previous experience of Britain, placed himself in a position of authority; and although it was Angela who suggested the move, Bob took the position of power. As a result, we see here that Angela actually places herself in a position of subservience, allowing Bob to maintain his role as the provider. Angela thus conforms to the traditional role of a wife supporting and empowering Bob.
While Angela remained in Nigeria she resigned herself to hearing stories about Britain from Bob, adding to her excitement:

_We would talk every day. He’d tell me about all the places he went like Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace; and when he came back visiting he would have so many clothes for me, Clarks shoes, Marks and Spencer’s underwear, bags. All those things, he used to spoil me with all those things. I just used to be excited when he came back._

Here we see the build up of Angela’s excitement before migrating to Britain. Bob visits exhibited success, prosperity and wealth. As such, he displayed to Angela his ability to provide, reasserting his position in their marital dynamics, even though they were not together physically. However, later one observes that Bob’s ability to ‘spoil’ Angela changed once she arrived in Britain after a year.

On arriving in Britain Angela found that employment opportunities were not as easy as she thought, dispelling the image of prosperity portrayed to her by Bob:

_Ah, that time I came, it was very hard [Angela’s emphasis]. My husband could not get a job. Imagine my husband, a qualified accountant working in a good company in Nigeria, then over here they tell him that he does not have the right qualifications!_

Here we first observe Angela’s frustration with Bob’s misfortune of not finding work. It appears that in venting her frustration, she indirectly defends his position and status. This behaviour was mostly exhibited Angela was interviewed individually, suggesting a desire to protect his masculinity. Bob’s difficulty in getting employment in Britain had an impact on their marriage, as Angela noted during her individual interview:
Things were difficult. It was very difficult for my husband. You know, we came to this country for the opportunity, but the opportunity was not there. It was very difficult. I thank God for seeing us through.

We see from Angela’s narrative that she expresses Bob’s dejection and in turn sympathises with Bob rather than herself. One could interpret this as sympathy for Bob’s feelings of gloominess as a result of losing one of the primary features that confirms his masculinity (i.e. being able to provide for his wife). The transition from a culture where Black men are expected to be the provider, to a culture that views Black men as being inferior, and not worthy to provide for their family, was emasculating. One could deduce that Angela’s reluctance to discuss her own experiences of finding work, during their joint interview, is indicative that, in sympathising with Bob’s experience, Angela did not want to add to the feelings of failure and demasculinisation. In this way, Angela actively seeks to protect Bob’s masculinity in the presence of the interviewer.

This topic was readdressed when Angela is interviewed separately. Angela admitted that as a result of Bob failing to find employment, she quickly had to find work to support herself and Bob:

That time we had no money; in fact, we were staying with friends. I had to apply for all sorts of jobs; so, so many jobs, most were below me. I never imagine I would be in that position. There would be days when I would just go out walking with my husband looking for jobs, walking, walking, walking. It was hard for my husband, very hard.

Indirectly, it seems as though Bob’s inability to organise their economic and habitational well being added to his ‘failure to provide’. As a result, Angela became financially responsible for her family, creating a shift in power between hers and Bob. In this particular passage, we also see Angela’s dissatisfaction in having to find employment, as well as evidence that this annoyance stems from the inability of Angela being able to fulfil her role as being provided
for. We see that Angela asserts her authority in the situation and takes control in terms of ‘walking with her husband looking for jobs’, as well as finding a job for herself. One could suggest that Bob’s inability to provide caused a reversal in gender roles, making Angela the provider which in turn threatened her femininity:

*OK, you expect your husband to provide for you, but that is not always the case. This was so frustrating, so frustrating.*

However, in later discussions one observes that this dissatisfaction turns into empowerment. We further observe Angela’s frustration:

*Imagine me as qualified teacher applying for a job in cleaning [Angela’s emphasis]! Mention that I was a cleaner? Ah no, huh, no one knew, oh. Would I tell anybody? Ah, you know Nigerians, they would talk. No, nobody knew!*

In subjecting herself to working as a cleaner, which Angela views as a demeaning position, her embarrassment only added to her anger and disappointment in Bob not being able to provide for her. In addition to this, we also see the fear and shame that she felt arising from having a job that would be viewed negatively within her community.

Underlying her frustration, however, one also observes, once again, Angela’s sympathy in Bob’s attempts to find more meaningful employment as a result of losing his role as the sole provider for the family:

*Knowing my husband, I know he feels bad about me working the way I did when we first came to Britain, but the past is the past. Even now he’s still trying to go back to accounting, but it’s not been possible.*

Although experiencing challenges in employment, Angela conveys a strengthening in their relationship, expressing her relationship with Bob as ‘a blessing from God’:
When I look at my husband, I just thank God; he is a blessing from God... All my friends look at us and say, ‘Angela you have the perfect man.’ I say, ‘I know’ [laughs], but I am lucky. My friends come to me ask for marriage advice. I just say to them ask God, ask God.

Angela once again places Bob in a position of authority further supporting his masculinity. By showing her gratitude to God, ‘he is a blessing from God’, she automatically put Bob in a position of reverence.

**4.2.2.2 Angela’s life narrative – being an immigrant**

When Angela first arrived in Britain she immediately felt the cultural differences between Nigerian culture and British White culture:

*I remember when I came; the first English people that I met were just different. Especially the way that they treated the elderly! You know, in Nigeria when you meet someone for the first time, you show them respect but here they just address themselves anyhow. You know, no respect.*

Angela often makes reference to British White culture as one lacking respect, viewing Nigerian culture as superior. This superiority is based upon placing importance on respect for elders:

*When there is respect, you know, young people respecting their elders, the society becomes more organised. Everybody lives in harmony. So it is very important. Not like here, where everybody does their own thing. Look at the society today; it’s so poor.*
Although Angela views British White culture as inferior to Nigerian culture, she at times appears to contradict herself by commenting on the positive aspects of British White culture. For example:

Well, I’m comfortable here, I can do whatever I like when I like. I think that is the thing about this culture [British White culture] it makes you more relaxed. Nigerian culture you’re always thinking, ‘I can’t do this, what will this person say?’

She further mentions:

They [British White people] go out, you see them and they can dress in whatever they like, it’s nice. Like my friends at work, they like going out to bars. I’ve been out a couple of times with them, but they just drink and drink [laughs]. I don’t drink like that, but I like the fact that they know how to socialise.

In favouring British White culture in this aspect, one could posit that Angela sees Nigerian culture restrictive. Interestingly, she notes, ‘I can do whatever I like’. This appears to confirm she sees her culture as confining, and suggests at what she may have experienced in Nigeria. Angela’s opinions of Nigerian culture at times insinuate that she regards it as old-fashioned compared to British White culture, viewing British White culture as not only new and modern but more ‘freeing’ than Nigerian culture:

My children always say that Nigerian culture is old–fashioned; you know, sometime it may be true. Sometimes our culture seems a bit backwards; you know, this idea that women have to do everything – it’s not possible. We women sometimes put too much pressure on ourselves because of our culture. Sometimes it can be more simple to do things together. That’s something this [Nigerian] culture that can be very frustrating.
Although Angela uses her children as a subject case, she is really referring to herself and we see subtle feelings of disenchantment towards her culture. We also see here her discontentment with the position she hold in the dynamics of her marriage. As a result, she additionally refers to a need for a more egalitarian behaviour in the household similar to that of British White culture. When probed she revealingly explains:

\[
\text{You see, the English culture is not that bad, you just need to understand them. I have English friends and they are fine; their food is fine, the only thing it lacks is pepper [laughs]. I think we can learn some things from them. I know some people will disagree, but it's true, we can learn from all cultures. Anyway, Nigerian culture has elements of British culture! Look at the English we speak in school: we learn Queen’s English. Even the way that we drink tea [laughs], so they have good points!}
\]

Angela’s opinion of British White culture is completely different to that of Bob’s. She willingly participates within the society by acquiring White friends and allowing her children to consume English food. This willingness to participate in British White society shows the level that Angela has acculturated. Rather than distancing herself from British White culture she actually integrates compared to Bob. One may see this as an act of resistance itself.

However, in integrating into British White society, we also observe that she nonetheless maintains her culture in the form of food consumption:

\[
\text{My children always say, ‘Mummy, why are you eating that, why don’t you eat things like chips?’ or ‘Mummy, nobody eats that any more, you should eat this.’ I just look at them and laugh. I just say, ‘It’s because I like the food.’}
\]

Angela’s reasons for eating Nigerian food explained by:
Ah, I love my Nigerian food, it reminds me of home. My children, they only eat English food, maybe rice and plantain. Most of the time they complain, ‘Oh, Mummy, this food is too spicy’, ‘Mummy, why do we have to have this, it’s too pepperish!’ So I end up preparing the food that they like just to have peace.

Although Angela professes to a certain ‘freedom’ in British White culture she maintains her culture not only in terms of patriarchal roles but also in terms of food consumption:

_We eat Nigerian food most of the time like rice, eba, things like that. I like eating Nigerian rice. Well, I’ll start eating salad; at least that will make me lose weight [laughs]. Let me eat like the Oyibo⁹ women._

Acculturating into British White society, Angela and Bob express the importance of their language in maintaining their Nigerian culture. Angela and Bob come from the same area in Nigeria and speak Yoruba with each other:

**Bob:** _Language is an important factor; it is the way that we communicate._

_We are so blessed to have so many languages; it is not like this culture with one plain language. We have plenty. We speak Yoruba in the house, that’s important to us._

**Angela:** _We speak Yoruba to our children so they understand it, but they don’t speak the language. I don’t know why! My husband says that it is because they are young; I don’t think that is the case. After all, other children in the community are speaking their language._

Angela and Bob appear passionate in maintaining their culture, especially in terms of language, and seek to ensure that their children learn their language, as well. Although Angela

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⁹ Nigerian slang for White people.
appears acculturated into British White society, she still actively retains her culture. Interestingly, one sees that when asked if her children speak the language, she explained that they understand the language but they do not speak Yoruba, which infers generational issues of acculturation.

4.2.2.3 Angela’s life narrative – being a professional

After years of working in various professions that Angela deemed unsuitable, she finally got her opportunity to work as a nursery assistant:

\[ \text{I know that I’m just a nursery assistant, I’m just happy that I’m back in my career. I thank God for the opportunity. Teaching is my calling, I love working with children; I see the children in my class as my own children.} \]

When Bob was not working he would be responsible for looking after their children. In this respect, Bob has adopted the traditional Nigerian female role of being the carer, empowering Angela to make decisions. When considered with his lack of employment opportunities, it appears that he is either willing demasculinating himself or is being forced into this by his environment. Angela appears to be aware of this demasculinisation of Bob, noting her guilt about leaving the children with him:

\[ \text{For me, it was uncomfortable leaving the children with him. I wasn’t brought up in that way, but what could I do? I had to work; my husband was not working, so he supported that way.} \]

Referring back to her traditional Nigerian culture, Angela feels that she has sacrificed her cultural role as a carer to one as financial provider. This behaviour/role for women is alien to Nigerian culture, but common within Western culture. Angela’s unwelcomed empowerment did not go unrecognised within the Nigerian community. Her actions, working and financially
providing for her family, has created disapproval among members of the Nigerian community. As a result, Angela has found herself feeling increasingly isolated:

There was one day that I was at my family friend’s house. I don’t know how we got onto the topic, but anyway I told her that me husband was looking after the children. She looked at me in disgust, as though I committed a crime. I just said to myself, ‘Do I care what this woman thinks; we’re doing the best for this family.’

Her friend’s disapproval was not a rare event. It appears there was widespread disapproval of Angela’s empowerment, and her entrenchment within Western culture (whether sought or imposed on her) created a sense of exclusion. This exclusion for both Angela and Bob resulted in them both withdrawing from their wider Nigerian community. In particular, during both interviews Angela hinted at Bob’s withdrawal being linked to his sense of demasculinisation within their community:

We don’t attend all those community meetings. Anyway, the time Bob has free he wants to be with us. I tell him go to these meeting, ‘Relax because you’re always working.’ But he says ‘no’. I’ve given up on trying to persuade him.

Angela’s reaction to disapproval from her Nigerian community was to exclude herself from it. As a result of her experiences, Angela appears to be a very independent woman, with a very dominant personality and forceful in her opinions. Although she works as a nursery assistant, Angela often finds herself in the ‘masculine role’, in her household and in terms of her relationship with Bob. Nonetheless, she still fulfils traditionally female duties:

Sometimes I would say I behave very manly, like the man when it comes to the family. Well, that is my role, when it comes to my culture; but I do not mind, it is my duty you see. My husband goes out to work, so by the time he comes back he is tired; even though I work, I still have to do the thing that wives do.
4.2.2.4 Angela’s life narrative – the consumer

Angela is the main decision maker in the household, choosing to be responsible for the consumption in their home. The reason for this is attributed to Bob being too laidback:

*Ah my husband is very laidback [Angela’s emphasis], that’s why I buy everything for the house. Look at the fridge, I bought that, even the television, I bought that. Even the sofa that you’re seating on, I bought that so really anything to do with the house I buy.*

Bob gives Angela full control over the items bought for their home and themselves, allowing Angela to take the dominant role:

*Well, I also buy him clothes, shoes, even his underwear [laughs]. When I buy clothes for myself I often look for things for him. Ah, I want my husband to look good!*

While the reasons for this are attributed to Bob’s laidback attitude, since regaining the position of primary provider he has also regained his role as the dominant male, contradicting the behaviour of role reversal in the couple:

*I think he finds it easier when I buy those things, which is good for me as I can choose the way I want things.*

In providing finances, he positions himself in authority and as a result Angela appears submissive to him. Of interest was Bob’s opinion regarding consumption. During the joint interview with Angela, Bob noted that:
Bob: Well, I support my wife, so she can buy the things she wants, I trust her to buy the right things.

Angela: Yes, he supports.

Here we see Bob acting in the dominant role, ‘allowing’ Angela to buy things. However, when Angela is interviewed separately not her response to the same topic:

Well, I don’t ask him for everything, you cannot ask your husband every time you want to buy something for the house. One needs to take an initiative, so I buy the things I need to buy for the house.

In this particular narrative, Angela appears defensive and even rebellious to Bob’s control over finances and decisions to purchases; by using the word ‘initiative’, she shows that she is able to make decisions by herself. However, although Angela is empowered to buy whatever she wants for the household, Bob’s financing of the purchases nonetheless disenfranchises her. By allowing Bob to maintain this position, she in fact uses consumption as a form of resistance. Here we can see, as with other Nigerian participants, the interplay of traditional Nigerian cultural roles whereby the husband is financially responsible for his family. This is also seen when Angela discusses the responsibility for paying for bills in the house:

My husband is responsible for all that; he’s responsible for looking after the household.

However, in later narratives, Angela began to hint that she may not be as empowered as she portrays. This is evident in her narratives regarding clothes and what is worn within the context of socialising with her British White friends:
There was a time I was going out. It was my friends 40th. I bought this lovely dress from Monsoon.\textsuperscript{10} Anyway, my husband saw what I was wearing and he said, ‘Darling, are you wearing that?’ I know what he was trying to say: he didn’t like what I was wearing. As for me, I didn’t bother myself and just continued with what I was wearing. What I was wearing was appropriate for the occasion. You see, little things like that.

On this particular occasion Angela was angry with Bob’s reaction and thus decided to wear her dress even though Bob did not approve of it. Interestingly, when asked what Bob’s reaction was after she came back from the event Angela said:

\textit{I buy clothes to suit the occasion so if I’m going out to a party, I dress up. So my husband, don’t mind him; he just doesn’t want anybody looking at his beautiful wife [laughs]!}

Bob’s laidback behaviour is therefore tested by Angela’s rebellion in the clothes that she wears. Here we can see that the traditional Nigerian power dynamic is challenged by Angela asserting herself. Although Bob appears to be willing to allow Angela freedoms to express herself, ultimately it appears that some aspect of Nigerian patriarchal control is evident within their relationship.

4.2.3 Patience

4.2.3.1 Patience and Nathan – brief overview

Patience is a 36-year-old midwife of Nigerian parents; she was born in Britain but travelled to Nigeria at the age of five to complete her primary and secondary school education.

\textsuperscript{10} Ladies high fashion shop
Throughout her years in Nigeria, she viewed Nigeria as home, forgetting what Britain was like as a country to live in:

> When you are very young, everything is like an adventure, so Nigeria was like an adventure, from what I remember! England was forgotten. I remember when my dad told me we were travelling back to Nigeria I was sad, you know but then, ah, it was different. You know children, they easily forget.

After spending thirteen years in Nigeria, at the age of 18 Patience’s parents felt that the university educational system was better in Britain, and decided to send Patience back to Britain to study by herself and to ‘sort her life out’. Patience’s parents wanted her to go to Britain to complete her studies and have a career. Patience was excited at the prospect of living in Britain, as she had heard stories about the country from uncles and aunts:

> Ah, when I found out that my parents wanted to send me to England to study, I was so happy [Patience’s emphasis], so, so happy. I would have freedom! You know Nigeria is not a place where you could do anything you like! But Britain, ah, I was so happy. I wanted to see for myself what it was like, yeah.

Patience’s narrative emphasis on freedom suggests that she experienced patriarchal restrictions on women within Nigerian culture. This emphasis on patriarchy is a regular theme in Patience’s narratives. Consider the following narrative, in which Patience talks about her experiences growing up in Nigeria:

> Well, you know, boys in Nigeria are treated better, they have more freedom. Ah, they can run around no problem; as for me, huh, things were very different [Patience’s emphasis]. I could not do anything, even to go and visit friends I could not go; as for my younger brother, ah, he could do anything!
For Patience being in Nigeria meant being restricted as a woman, which encouraged her to view Britain as a place where she could be free to express herself. The notion of ‘being free’ in Britain was based upon stories that she heard from aunts and uncles.

After being schooled in Nigeria, she came back to Britain to complete her university education. On Patience’s arrival in Britain she studied midwifery at university, a profession that she had always wanted to enter. She obtained her degree and later did her Masters. In addition to being a midwife, Patience owns her own catering business and successfully manages her career, her business and her family. Her strength and desire to manage all three aspects of her life comes from her Nigerian culture and religion:

> You know, Nigerian culture is rich; we are go-getters, you know. Everything we put our mind to we can succeed. I just look at my culture and say, ‘Yes, it’s in me, yes I can do it,’ and I do it. God has given me the strength and the skills to do it, so I must do it.

As we can see from the above narrative is Patience’s identification and pride of Nigerian culture. One also identifies her motivation to succeed; this statement itself expresses her confidence in herself and her ability as a woman.

During her time at university, Patience met her husband, Nathan (42), a Nigerian who was studying economics. Although studying to become an economist Nathan became a train driver. He has been working in his position for over ten years but still has the desire to achieve his career goals. After university they immediately got married and now have three children, one girl (10) and two boys (8 and 3).

On the surface, Patience and Nathan appear to have a traditional African married relationship whereby they maintain their culturally gender-assigned roles. In discussions of various topics, there is distinct parallel between Patience and Nathan in terms of their opinions of Nigerian
culture, which is not surprising considering their passion for Nigerian culture, as revealed when they were interviewed together:

Nathan:  *Nigerian culture for me is what makes me who I am. I’m in Britain, yeah, but it does not make me entirely British. Do you understand me? My children were born here, but that does not make them entirely British. The first thing we are, is Nigerian, then all else follows.*

Patience:  *Yes, Nigerian culture is what makes us who were are. We may be living her but we’re not British we’re Nigerian, even our children.*

Patience directly mirrors Nathan’s opinion for her own, showing conformity; however, when this topic is discussed, when Patience is interviewed alone, she explains:

*Yes, I’m in Britain and I am a Nigerian, my culture is Nigerian culture, but that is not to say that I do not take elements from this culture. My kids are British so they have some of that culture in them, but they still know their Nigerian culture.*

Patience immediately contradicts her opinion given when Nathan was present in the interview, going as far as stating that her children in terms of Patience feeling she has the freedom to talk openly when interviewed by herself, thus dispelling Nathan’s opinion as her own.

This behaviour is repeated when Patience and Nathan discuss their experience of moving house:

Nathan:  *I chose the house. We have some family just around us, it’s good to be in an area that is familiar, you know, there are Black people. An area that we feel comfortable, that our children feel comfortable.*
When Nathan showed me the place and I saw the area, it was nice. It was cheap, not cheap as in bad, but something that we could afford. I liked the place, so we've been here since.

This particular instance involves a decision being made over accommodation, with Patience agreeing with Nathan and giving him the power to organise accommodation for their family. This supports Patience’s culturally embedded desire to conform to Nathan’s needs and opinions, supporting his patriarchal position in the household. However, when interviewed later, alone, Patience declares that she was not particular happy with this decision:

"Like this place, yeah, but I would have preferred to live in the somewhere outskirts. Just where they have enough space to play, you know go to park. This place there is not much things for children to do and it’s not very safe now."

How did this make you feel?

"Well, you know, men now... you need to give them the opportunity to make decision. You know what I mean [laughs]."

Here we see that Patience is aware of the patriarchy in her relationship with Nathan. However, she asserts her power as a wife, choosing to give Nathan the opportunity to make the decision concerning the house. This infers that Patience actively promotes Nathan’s dominance in the household and upholds his masculinity.

**4.2.3.2 Patience’s life narrative – being an immigrant**

Patience spent most her childhood and youth in Nigeria, returning to Britain at the age of 18 to study at university on the request of her parents. Patience’s parents wanted her to come to
Britain after finding life in Nigeria not being conducive to their daughter doing well academically:

*My parents did not like the educational system in Nigeria at that time, so they decided to send me here, thinking here would be better; and you know what, it was. Nigeria then was starting to become corrupt, you know, in the school, so they saw this and sent me to England.*

Patience was happy with the decision and saw this as an opportunity and even ‘an adventure:

*Yeah, I was excited, I didn’t say no at all! Imagine having the opportunity to travel to England; what an adventure, me travelling to England.*

Although excited and happy to come to Britain, Patience soon realised it was not ‘the land of milk and honey’ that she heard from her aunts and uncles. Instead, differing cultural norms and behaviours presented challenges to her about how to behave and adapt to British society:

*When I got to England it was fine, but very different; it was not the land of milk and honey. I don’t know what it was; but the way they do things here are different… OK, for example, when I greeted by lecturer, I did not make eye contact. The first time I didn’t realise that having eye contact means you understand; in Nigeria you don’t have eye contact with your elders that’s rude. That’s rude [laughs], you know it’s rude!*

Although looking one’s elders in the eyes is a British norm, Patience still finds it difficult to make eye contact with her elders; it is something that does not align with her Nigerian cultural values. Although born in Britain, Patience does not describe herself as British. Instead she classifies herself as Nigerian, which she explains is a result of her retaining her Nigerian culture. She, therefore, detaches herself from British White culture. As a consequence she finds it difficult to describe what it means to be British, as she explains in the following quote:
My dress, I wear Nigerian clothes, I speak Nigerian language, broken English. I speak with my African accent; I’m Nigerian first and foremost. Being British, what is being British? I really don’t understand... I don’t think much about it actually [laughs]. I don’t know why, I don’t. When someone asks me, ‘Where you from?’, ‘I’m from Nigeria.’

Patience strongly identifies herself being Nigerian even though she was born in Britain, and actively distances herself from the British culture, instead favouring Nigerian culture:

There isn’t anything too exciting about this culture; it’s just there. I can’t think of anything good, it’s boring really.

When probed why she favours Nigerian culture, Patience is unable to identify anything specific that explains this. However, interestingly, Nathan opinions about British culture are different:

I don’t find this [British White] culture bad, every culture has positives and negatives. It’s just how you cope with them that matters.

Nathan’s different opinion to Patience may lead to tension within the household. Patience’s inability to identify with British White culture is, however, selective. For example, Patience notes that for official documentation and legal reasons she identifies herself as British. An act that Patience attributes to doing when it is beneficial to her:

I always say British if I’m filling forms, but if you approach me, ‘Where are you from’, I won’t say I am British, because I don’t see myself really as a British to be honest.
Although Patience recognises that legally she is British, she has no emotional attachment to the country that she was born in. When probed over this issue Patience found it difficult to explain her opinion, instead emphasising her emotional attachment to Nigeria:

*When I came here I still had that desire to go home to Nigeria, I always keep in touch with my friends and my family. I always know what is happening back home. I may be away, but I’m really not away; it is where I grew up, so for me its home you know.*

Patience’s emotional detachment to British culture may be attributed to her emotional attachment to Nigeria, the place where she grew up, the place where her family lives and the place she calls home:

*You know home is home. No matter how long I stay here, Nigeria is my home.*

During our interviews, Patience repeatedly refers to the differences between British and Nigerian cultural values and how she identifies with the latter. When the issue of her favouring Nigerian culture over British White culture is probed further, she identifies the importance that Nigerian culture places on family, something which she believes that British White culture does not value:

*Family, too, is not very important because, I mean, I know we all abuse it; but they don’t mind if their parents stay in care home.*

Patience then poignantly adds:

*You know, the English culture in a way, there are still some people that do it, but they’re doing it, but... I don’t know, I don’t know the British culture really. I just know a bit through people at work really, because I’ve got really, maybe about two friends, English. I’ve seen the way that they act, one is like proper born-and-*
bred council flat, you know, working class, can’t be bothered to go to any, go to uni. The other one I met in uni. Uni is very important, my mum is this, my dad is that, you know so I just go by what I experienced so.

Here we interestingly see that Patience’s emotionally detachment from British White culture is based around her opinions on what she has observed from her only two White English friends. These two friends have become the basis for her observation to benchmark all cultural issues related to British White culture. As a result, Patience views British White culture lower to her own Nigerian culture, encapsulated in the phrase ‘proper born-and-bred, working class’. Patience inadvertently positions herself in a higher social class than her English White friends, by acknowledging this stereotype to generalise her opinions of British White culture. Interestingly, when probed further about her friendship with her English friends Patience dismisses the term ‘friends’ and calls them her colleagues:

*I used the word ‘colleagues’ sometimes, because we’re not that close for them to come round [laughs]. It sounds terrible.*

Patience’s narratives further highlights the distance that she feels towards British White culture; a distance generated by herself. In terms of values, Patience identifies that Nigerian values are largely based on respect, being homely, education and family. Patience during her interviews stresses her respect of elders and her husband, Nathan; values taught to her by her parents. When asked, Patience does not accept the idea that her views perpetuate patriarchy; instead she views her perspective as an extension of the core elements and of her Nigerian culture, which she practices on a daily basis:

*I practice them daily, at work at home even when I was at uni. I respect and I know sometimes if I go to my GP, I remember the receptionist. They say, ‘You’re so polite,’ and I am like, ‘What is polite?’ I didn’t really understand. I know what polite means; oh to say ‘good morning’ or ‘how are you’ means polite for*
them. And for me, it’s a normal thing because they don’t get that really, it’s respect.

Patience also highlights that marriage and being a mother plays an important role in Nigerian culture and this is why she focuses much of her time looking after and providing for her family:

*I love my culture; my family is part of my culture, so you see I love my family. I do a lot of things, but I know that my family comes first, that is it! Everything I do is for my family.*

Patience’s strives very hard for her family, something that she is happy doing, viewing her family as a key element in her life:

*But for Nigerians, a Nigerian person would want to anything for their family. You want to see what you can do, run around your family parents, you know support them.*

However, Patience admits to the self-imposed pressure placed on her to uphold Nigerian culture. This pressure she both identified in and projected onto the researcher as a perceived fellow Nigerian woman. Evident in the following narrative where Patience uses the word ‘we’ and ‘you’:

*Being an African woman, you know we have responsibilities. We can’t behave any how, especially when you’re outside. We have to respect ourselves. You know, it’s not very easy, very stressful but that [is] our culture. Sometimes I ask myself, ‘Why do I this and do that?’ But it is my culture. I have to honour my culture, I don’t know if I am making sense. I don’t know.*
Patience’s narrative notes Nigerian culture’s restrictive nature. In the above passage, Patience’s tension regarding the stress she experiences as an African woman is evident. Patience recognises how Nigerian culture has negatively affected her. She feels torn between loving every element of her culture and being able to see that at times it can be stressful and restrictive, especially in terms of her social life. It is this restriction on her social life that provides an opportunity for Patience to reflect upon the ‘freedom’ offered within British White culture. This reflection occurs when observing how British White women have more opportunities for a social life free from the cultural constraints that Nigerian and other Black African women encounter:

But sometimes I admire their [British White] culture, in terms of how women organise ladies’ evening out. They all go out, then they’ll be like, you know, ‘We’re going out to club,’ and I’m like, that’s why African women suffer, because what we do is that we keep to ourselves. We are trying to protect our own; even when you’re dying, you stay in the marriage and die, you know, but the white people will go out and enjoy themselves.

Considering Patience’s detachment from British culture, even though she works and engages with wider British White society, the reasons for this detachment remain unclear. Despite returning to the issue again and again during the interviews, she was unable to provide an in-depth, believable answer. However, the distance that Patience feels towards British culture may reflect her need for self-protection against her experiences of racism. Patience recalls a number of incidences when she felt that she did not belong to British society. One particular incident that Patience discusses was when she worked for Morrison’s,¹¹ which was her first full-time job, before she qualified as a midwife:

My dear, I just decided to leave that place [Morrison’s]. It was more than that; after seeing all your English colleagues getting promoted and you still remain

¹¹ A British supermarket chain.
stacking shelves, you then begin to see something wrong. I just left that place to focus on my studies.

This experience left Patience angry, only to suffer further incidents of racism. She notes after qualifying as a midwife that some her colleagues would treat her differently:

*Oh yeah, you know when people see that you are Black they get scared, they [British White people] don’t want to talk to you. If they talk, they make you feel like a child. I just say to myself, ‘Forget them!’*

Patience uses these racist experiences to empower herself by striving to work harder, but also uses these experiences to distance herself from British White culture. Additionally, Patience’s experiences of racism may also have attributed to her general opinions regarding British Whites. Consider this passage, Patience expresses her struggles to accept her perception of British White people’s lack of honesty:

*You know, English people can be funny; it’s not that I have a lot of English friends, but what I have observed. Some of them can be two-faced, you know. They can be all friendly, friendly in your face but later they change.*

Patience continued with this theme later in the interview, this time expressing her unwillingness to engage with British Whites. Her response to racism is in stark contrast to that of Emma in the previous section:

*I work with English people and some are nice, but others are not. You know, when you meet English people that have never talked to a Black person! I don’t understand that, this is London! But anyway I just leave them to it, it does not bother me.*
We see that Patience, due to her personal reasons, i.e. racism and her affinity to Nigeria, chooses to set a boundary to the extent that she will not interact with British White people on a personal level, which is very different to our last participant, Emma. Emma has acculturated significantly to British White society and openly expresses her willingness to learn from the host culture. However Patience does not, she maintains her Nigerian culture, using it to distance herself away from the host culture.

Considering Patience’s detachment from British White culture and her identification to Nigerian culture, how has this then reflect in her acculturation? Patience feels proud to state how she is able to negotiate and engage within both British White and Nigerian cultural contexts, an engagement that only served to reinforce her perception of Nigerian culture’s superiority:

Oh yeah I feel comfortable, funny enough I feel comfortable [in British White cultural contexts]. I am always cautious not to use the slangs we used to call them, which I’m sure they’ve got their own slangs they call us, which I don’t know what it is but I’m comfortable with them. We go out for a drink, and they like to drink too much and I don’t drink alcohol, so it’s boring for me [laughs]. English people can drink, African[s] don’t really drink like that, but anyway I go out with them; you know, behave like them a bit just to socialise with them just so it does not look bad.

Patience maintains her Nigerian cultural identity through television, music, and attending church. Television and music for Patience represents a family past-time, also a way of keeping in touch with Nigerian culture:
We watch a lot of television. I watch a lot of my Nigerian channels. It’s not like it’s BEN\textsuperscript{12} 24/7, but I try to watch it as much as I can. The kids do enjoy it and we listen to the music; they like the music, Nigerian music.

When asked whether she watches British programmes she recoils and says that, like British White culture, they are boring; however, she does admit to watching British cooking channels:

\textit{I don’t really watch much of British programmes, I find them boring. You know, sometimes I don’t understand what’s going on. I’m too busy for that, but if I have time I might watch the cooking programmes.}

Patience motivates herself to engage with British White culture through cooking as her hobby. Food and cooking provide an important space to for her to engage with British culture and is the only aspect of British culture that she admits to have acculturated to. She is excited and passionate about food, especially British food and involves herself in cooking rituals, such as the Sunday roast and Christmas Day meal. For these cooking events Patience often refers to her British White friends for advice:

\textit{I’m interested in cooking so I go on the Internet or I ask my English friends ‘OK, how do you do lasagne’, and they will tell me, though I’ll do it to my own spec, you know that sort of thing.}

This is the only space where she has adopted English culture. She uses English culture as a reference point in cooking, to develop her knowledge of cooking. Patience is responsible for most food-related purchases, reflecting her passion for cooking and often surfs the Internet for new recipes. Patience uses cooking as a way to ‘treat’ her family, a way of expressing her love:

\textsuperscript{12} A popular Nigerian TV channel.
Well, I love cooking. I like going online to get new recipes. I like cooking new things for the family. Nathan and the kids love it. I don’t know, I like it, I just like seeing them happy, showing them I love them, yeah.

One could suggest that her passion for cooking emulates her willingness to conform to her traditional Nigerian cultural role as being a wife and mother responsible for looking after her family. Patience’s passion for cooking for her family was taught to her by her mother, reflecting wider, global matriarchal values of the woman as the preparer of food for the family. Food, when Patience was growing up, was used to bring the family together, creating family unity and reinforcing Nigerian patriarchal values. Patience now adopts this cultural value for the family, wanting to bring them close together through food:

Ah, I had happy memories growing up. I remember every Saturday morning I would follow my mum to the market to buy vegetables. Then we would come back and cook for the whole family; I was 10, I think. When the food was ready we would all sit together and eat from one pot.

In this way, Patience not only uses food as a way to uphold her culture, i.e. the importance of family, but she also uses food to recreate her childhood. Even though Nathan sometimes buys food for the house, Patience usually advises him on what to buy. Her authority is in the kitchen and she often finds herself chastising Nathan for trying to do things such as cooking for the house, reinforcing the Nigerian patriarchal structure in the house:

I know he is trying but it feels strange for him to go into the kitchen to cook. I don’t mind him helping me, you buying the meat, but to cook no, no, no. For one he cannot cook [laughs]. Two, there’s no two. He just can’t cook. You know, some men do not know where to start – that’s my husband.
The majority of food that is bought is Nigerian, but she also buys English foods when she wants to try out new recipes. However, there have been occasions when she has cooked food that her family do not like:

*We like pork chops, but out of the whole family I’m the only one that likes lamb. I don’t know. They said they don’t like it, so I don’t bother; I just eat it myself. I don’t let food go to waste like that!*

Interestingly she does not speak her language to her children. Patience explains that because Nathan is from another tribe she does not want to confuse her children, thus opting to speak English at home:

*I should speak my language to my children but I don’t want to confuse them. I speak pidgin\textsuperscript{13} sometimes and they understand that, so in a way that is fine, my husband is the same. Anyway, in Nigeria they mostly speak pidgin so it’s good for them to understand that.*

Patience is also an active member of her church, which has a predominantly Nigerian congregation. Church provides a space for her to practice her Nigerian values:

*I go to church. You know Nigerians, we love our church, we love our praise, we don’t play with it. It’s a place for me to practice my culture. I don’t mess with church.*

Patience also uses Church for spiritual and emotional guidance, noting how she attends a prayer group every Wednesday. When asked why she explains:

\textsuperscript{13} Simplified English, commonly used to communicate in Nigeria.
I go to these meeting to develop my Christian life, have a closer relationship with God. Every Wednesday I go for prayer meeting, I leave Nathan at home with the children.

For Patience, church becomes a place for her develop her spirituality, to be by herself. In this way attending church acts as an escape from her daily life. One of the reasons for Patience’s self-identification as Nigerian and her lack of acculturation into British White society may also be attributed to her having mostly Nigerian friends in Britain. The reasons for this are evident in the following narrative:

Because their way, the British way of life, is different from the Nigerian way of life. All my life I have lived as a Nigerian person, so my friends, most of my friends, let’s say 95% of them are Nigerian. I don’t feel we click really [with British White people]. You know that sort of thing. Not that I don’t like them, I like them. I like the ones I know, but the culture don’t match. You know that kind of thing, so it’s a bit difficult, you know.

Patience’s struggle to identify with British White people has provided an incentive to only have Nigerian friends. Patience’s self-identification as a Nigerian gives her a sense of pride and is often exemplified by her continuous talk of going back ‘home’ to Nigeria. Her use of the word ‘home’ is important to Patience because it represents her emotional attachment to Nigeria, as well as a place to locate herself not only personally, but from a wider family, cultural and societal perspective:

When I’m here, I go, ‘Oh I miss home, I miss home,’ so funnily enough, I don’t, you know, in my mind. I don’t see this as my home because I keep saying that I miss home.
Consequently, Patience finds herself wanting to apply for jobs in Nigeria. A decision that is quickly rejected owing to her children being too young. Instead the desire to migrate back to Nigeria has taken on a future ambition:

*I am in the Diasporas. Yeah, because when they say apply for job in Nigeria, I say, ‘Diaspora.’ You know I am interested in that. I’m not saying applying now because I have not thought about it because the kids are so small.*

Patience’s reasons for wanting to go back home to Nigeria are based her previously discussed emotional detachment from British White culture:

*I know that I was born here, I don’t know why but I don’t see this as my home. It’s just something in me really, you know. Even when I first came, I always knew that I would travel back to Nigeria. England is not my home, Nigeria is in my blood, you know. I don’t know.*

4.2.3.3 Patience’s life narrative – being a professional

Since arriving in Britain Patience has always worked; a value that her father had taught her. Patience’s first memorable job was working for Morrison’s, which offered her opportunities to learn about and observe British society and culture. Patience’s found her time working at Morrison’s reflected and supported her perceptions of British Whites and how this contrasted to with her inherent desire to achieve in British society:

*When I was working in Morrison’s, my first job was in Morrison’s, and I was waiting to go into college to go and do BTEC diploma and I used to see some of the English children about my age then, and they’re not thinking of uni; like it’s not in their dictionary. It’s like, ‘What am I going to do in uni?’ ‘Why would I want to take out a loan?’ So I remember talking to one of my colleagues then, I said ‘You’re ready to take credit card, up to £5,000 credit card, but you’re not*
ready to take student loan and then pay every year [for your studies]?’ and for me I could not understand that.

For them they can’t understand that – why would you want to take loan and go and study, but for them it’s OK for them to get credit card, it’s OK for them to take loan and buy a nice car; you know, that sort of thing so for the British people. Education is not, I mean education is not important.

Patience worked in Morrison’s as a checkout operative for a number of years but decided to leave after the lack of career progression, feeling that she was not promoted due to racism (as discussed in the previous section). Undeterred by the racism she had encountered, she focused her attention on her midwifery studies, with her parents supporting her financially. Knowing that she did not want to financially burden her parents any further she decided to earn an income buying and selling clothes. Patience would buy clothes from Britain and then send them across to Nigeria to be sold with the profit generated used to pay her expenses while studying:

Oh yes those days, well what I did is that when I shopping if I see anything on sale, for a good price I would buy them in bulk, you understand. Then I ship to Nigeria to the person who would sell the products, they would then wire me the money. The money I get I used for my upkeep.

Even after qualifying and practicing as a midwife, Patience still engages in this business activity using the money generated now to support her family:

I still buy and sell clothes, you know. The small money I get I used to buy things for the house. Like yesterday the person the sells the clothes for me back home wired me the money yesterday. That money I will use to buy my children clothes.
Patience’s drive to be successful has led her to establish another business in events planning where she organises children’s birthday parties:

*I also do other things, I organise birthday parties, I cook for them, do the decorations, organise the entertainment; yeah, I do all those things.*

Patience takes great pride in her all business ventures and views them as a blessing, using her businesses to empower herself by being financially independent from Nathan’s role as a man and provider. However, while she is aware that she has financial independence, she still inadvertently conforms to her Nigerian culture by allowing Nathan to ‘look after her and her children’, as mentioned previously:

*I thank God you know, it’s a blessing. I love doing these things; I have a passion for them so I do them. I make my own money, I can support around the house, buy things for my children. My husband is there, yes, I know, and he supports me. It’s nice that I can buy things for myself and my children.*

Patience describes the relationship between herself and Nathan, as strong. They met at university and have been together ever since. Although Nathan works as a train driver, Patience also contributes to the emotional and financial well being of the family. Nathan, however, is held responsible for Patience and their children’s maintenance, i.e. paying the bills, giving Patience money to buy food and clothes, as well as paying the mortgage. Patience is quite comfortable with this arrangement; however, as noted earlier, she supports the family through her various businesses, for example paying the utility bills:

*I look after the children and Nathan organises the bills, but if I see the bills, just pay them. I don’t mind!*

This is revealing, showing how Patience openly challenges Nathan’s role as the head of the family. Although Patience sees Nathan, from a cultural perspective, as the head of the family
her actions in paying bills is a direct assertion of her financial power and position in the family. By paying household bills, Patience appears to be undertaking a direct, open act of resistance against Nigerian cultural values.

Patience is largely responsible for childcare and managing the household due to the flexibility of her various businesses and her work as a midwife. Nathan offers practical support when possible; Patience recognises the amount of work she does, but does not openly present any annoyance or regrets about this. However, Patience does admit at times that managing her job, business, and children can be exhausting:

\[
\text{I do everything! I thank God for my strength. I just have this energy so I can do a lot of things at once, but sometimes when I work too hard I get tired. Sometimes I break down and feel low and then I have to slow down.}
\]

Later in our interviews, Patience returned to the issue of how exhausted she feels at times, wanting to talk about her inability to be perfect:

\[
\text{Erm, I've got loads of energy [laughs]. I don't know where I get the energy from where; it's my energy, it's second to none. I've got loads of energy, but once in a while I do breakdown, I get very tired and then I [have a] sickness and then two or three days I have to rest.}
\]

Patience sees herself as a very social and independent person, which she attributes largely as a result of coming to Britain by herself to study. A consequence of this is her recognition of the importance of having friendships outside the home. Friendships that support and encourage Patience to ‘doing her own thing’. This involved telling Nathan that he was responsible for looking after the children, cooking their meals and other related duties. Consider how Patience rationalises this behaviour in the following narrative:
It’s like, ‘Oh, I have to cook for my husband, I have to cook.’ Yeah, you do it, but sometimes leave the kids and enjoy yourself. You know, that sort of thing. Let him do it because he goes out anyway, so you can go out. Well, it depends, everybody is different. It depends on the man and marriage, you know; so that’s how it is.

Patience attributes her sense of independence to her relationship with Nathan, and readily acknowledges the freedom she gives to Nathan to ‘do his own thing’, which also gives her the opportunity to do ‘her own thing’. In this instance, doing activities that support her businesses, while Nathan enjoys sporting events:

Patience: Well, he does his own thing, you know. Like he goes to watch Arsenal\textsuperscript{14} at the stadium, that is fine. He does that. Well, as for me, I’m not really interested in football. I do my own thing.

Interviewer: What type of things do you do?

Patience: Well, I like cooking, you know. Most Saturdays I’m doing things for the business, so maybe I will be cooking for a party or maybe I will go to Westfield\textsuperscript{15} to buy clothes to sell. So my day is like that, really.

In undertaking these activities Patience actively upholds her core Nigerian values, i.e. respect, being a good wife, and looking after Nathan and their children, while being a mother and businesswomen.

4.2.3.4 Patience’s life narrative – the consumer

\textsuperscript{14} A London football club.

\textsuperscript{15} A shopping centre.
Patience’s consumption practices are largely dictated by herself and by Nathan. In terms of buying things for the house, decisions are made jointly, especially clothing, electronics and white goods:

*We talk and say we need this and we need that, so we discuss with each other what we need, yeah.*

She actively involves Nathan in all consumption that are expensive, something that she does out of respect, and also to get his advice on things:

*If I’m buying things that are very expensive I will ask for his advice. Like when I was buying the sofas I knew that I would need to get the money from him, so I had to talk to him to get his opinions. That one I don’t play with. I don’t want any problems later him saying that I spent too much money; you know, that kind of thing [laughs].*

We see that Patience uses Nathan as a reference for her consumption decisions, especially of the products are capital intensive. Patience shows that by discussing these decisions, she respects Nathan’s opinion, seeing that he is paying for the item.

In further conversations with Patience, we also find that most purchases made by Patience, even when buying things for the family, are made by herself. She remains the lone purchaser:

*Ah I don’t wait for him to go shopping, I’ve got my car I go myself. If I wait for him, I’ll be waiting all day. I don’t have that time.*

Patience uses this time not only to do the shopping needed but also to buy things for herself that Nathan is not aware that she is buying:
When I’m by myself I can take my time, buy things for the house. Also buy things for myself [laughs]. Sometimes I might find shows that I like, I got this nice pair of shoes, really nice pair from Faith, they were having sales. I saw them and said, ‘Ah, I better buy these, if not by the time I come back they will be gone,’ so I bought them.

Patience later returns to this topic, explaining the reason why she sometimes buys things without Nathan’s knowledge is due to him not being happy about the amount of shoes that she has:

Patience: Well, it’s not that I hide my shoes from him really [laughs], but if I see a good deal, of course I will buy. If he sees them at home I just tell them they are a very old pair of shoes that I have been keeping for a special occasion.

Interviewer: So how do you think he feels when you buy your shoes?

Patience: Ah, my dear, I don’t bother myself with that. After all, when I’m wearing my outfit he will be the one complimenting me, saying ‘Darling, you look nice’ [laughs]. Sometimes when you work hard, you want to treat yourself.

Patience uses the opportunity to buy shoes to treat herself, and in treating herself she objects to Nathan’s concerns furthering her consumption choice, which creates tension. Patience unconsciously empowers herself by not conforming to Nathan’s wishes instead favouring her own. Interestingly, Patience also admits to buying these items with her own money:

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16 A British shoe shop.
Oh, yeah, if I’m buying clothes or shoes for myself, I use my own money. Nathan buys me shoes sometimes as a treat or he gives me the money. Clothes, huh! He doesn’t buy me clothes; he wouldn’t know where to start!

In further conversations Patience recalls how some consumption choices have created tensions between her and Nathan. One particular incident involved Nathan’s choice in buying a car for Patience:

We had a small car to begin with, and I was complaining my husband that the car was too small, so we discussed about buying a new car; you know, especially that the kids were getting older. Nathan wanted us to get one of these Renault space cruisers, one of those big ugly family cars, but I said, ‘No, it’s too long.’ Imagine trying to part park that thing! So I said to him that a Jeep would be better; you know, a good brand like Mercedes. Ah, he was complaining, it’s too expensive, this and that. Ah you know us women we buy our time very carefully [laughs].

Anyway, two weeks before we were supposed to be buying the Renault, we find that the guy at the car shop had misquoted the price and we found out it was even more expensive than the Jeep. You see how God works [laughs], so that is how I got my Jeep. Ah, how can I go and drive that sort of car [Renault]? Me! People would be saying, ‘Ah, Patience, what kind of car be this, I thought say you’re husband be big man.’

Patience looks to Nathan to buy a car for herself and the children, showing her acknowledgement of Nathan as the head of the household. In doing so, she gives Nathan the power and authority to choose the type of car that is bought. We also see the underlying tension between Nathan’s initial choice of a Renault, which is cheaper than Patience’s choice

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17 Pidgin English with Nigerian slang, inferring that her male spouse is not able to live up to his reputation.
of a Mercedes, which is notably more expensive. Patience conforms to Nathan’s decision, thus
empowering him, but events cause Nathan to buy the Mercedes for his family. However, we
also see that Patience seems to be conscious on the brand of car that is bought for the family.
We see an element of conspicuous consumption, although not having bought the car herself,
she shows that she uses the car to display her income and her status in her community:

It’s not that I’m trying to show off, but we work hard and it is nice to be able to
spend it on something good, and saw people that we’ve made. I like the Jeep, it’s
nice!

Patience is responsible for buying the food for the house, maintaining the cultural patriarchy in
her house. However, she often cites that with regards to food consumption she does not ask for
Nathan’s opinion as he is very relaxed with what he eats:

If it’s small, small, things like food, I won’t ask Nathan. I don’t need to. I know
that anything I cook he will eat.

Although Patience makes reference to Nathan’s relax nature in the food that she prepares, we
later see this is not entirely the case:

Some days my husband likes to eat his native soup, so that day I have to go to
this one market where the man sells the native ingredients. I have to travel all
the way to North London; imagine the long way for a few ingredients. I always
complain to my husband that the place is too far.

However, as referred to previously, Patience and Nathan are from different tribes and Patience
travels a great distance to buy ingredients for Nathan’s native soup. Patience adopts a
submissive role to Nathan as his wife in order to please him:
I complain to him about the distance and he just says, ‘Honey but you know I like that soup’ [mimicking Nathan], and, my dear, that is how I have been driving to that place since [laughs].

Considering the extent that Patience identifies with Nigerian culture it is not surprising that the products she consumes reflects this. Most of the items she buys are used to express her Nigerian culture:

I buy clothes, I buy snack, I eat Nigerian food. I go to the restaurant, I go to Nigerian restaurant, erm, I buy snacks from the African shop; you know, meat pie and stuff.

She feels happy about buying these items as it allows her to maintain her culture and remind her of home. We see Patience’s strong emotional attachment with the items she buys to remind her of Nigerian culture:

Well, I like buying these things [clothes, snacks, and Nigerian food], it’s part of my culture and it reminds me of home.

In discussing the things that she buys, she expresses the opinion that English products are better than Nigerian products:

In general, I would say that English things are better like Nigerian things, like the shoes, some clothes. But Nigeria doesn’t produce many things, only food. The food is better I would say, but English culture has a variety of foods, some are better.

However, this belief may have more to do with her upbringing insofar as she was often told from a young age that British product were of higher quality to Nigerian products. One can deduce that this may have been a result of post-imperialist ideologies:
You know, when you’re young you are always made to believe that English things are better than Nigerian things, even though I was born in England and went back home. Everybody would always like the English things, when aunties came to Nigeria from England, we would always say, ‘Aunty, what did you bring us from England?’ Yeah, so that is how it was.

In terms of consumption, Patience did not exhibit cultural resistance. When discussing purchases that had caused tension between herself and Nathan, she explains:

*We don’t argue per se on things we buy. We talk about, there is no need to argue. We have discussions about maybe something that is bought but it’s never been bad. It’s about understanding each other, you know.*

Even when the topic is returned to on several occasions:

*If we disagree about things to buy – well, actually, I can’t think about the last time we disagreed per se. We just talk about it. If we find that we don’t need a particular thing, we do not buy it. OK, if Nathan does not like the fact that I buy something, then we talk; most of the time he is not bothered [laughs]. Unless it’s something major, but that has never happened.*

Here we see that Patience does not give examples of cultural resistance, apart from purchasing her shoes; however, this is not to say that there were not any more, only that they were not openly expressed by Patience. Nonetheless, things bought for the house were often discussed with Nathan in this way, exhibiting a more egalitarian behaviour towards decision making, thus contradicting Nigerian cultural values.

**4.3 Brief overview of the other Nigerian participants**
4.3.1 Selina and Ben

Selina is a 38-year-old housing officer and has been married to her husband, Ben (45), an accountant, for fifteen years. Selina came to Britain to join Ben six years ago and has three children, two boys (13 and 10) and a girl (12). When interviewed together Selina appeared submissive, placing Ben in a position of superiority. This behaviour appears to be based upon cultural values, giving note to power differences. In maintaining her cultural values, Selina seeks ways to express her ethnicity and cultural pride through consumption and also teach her children her native Nigerian language, Yoruba. Her passion for Nigerian culture sees her placing herself, out of choice, in a subservient role to Ben, who actively positions himself as the head of the family. Thus, Selina and Ben conform to the patriarchal system of Nigerian culture. Interestingly, in discussions Selina does not appear to exhibit acts of resistance only acts of conformity to the protocols of being a Nigerian wife.

Outside the home, both Selina and Ben view British White culture as being of low standard compared to Nigerian culture. Most notably these views were a response to racism and feelings of not belonging, and have resulted in them partially withdrawing from British White society.

4.3.2 Nicola and Edward

Nicola (49) is a full-time administrator working for her local council. She has been married to Edward (52), a businessman, for twenty-five years. They met at church in Britain. They have three children, two girls (23 and 21) and a boy (18). Nicola and Edward’s relationship follows a relaxed traditional patriarchal structure. Work and financial independence provided a means of cultural freedom, which emulated itself in terms of behaviour and opinions of British White culture. Nicola sees British White culture as being more progressive compared to the patriarchal restrictions of her Nigerian culture. This opinion is not held by Edward. Although being comfortable within British White culture, Nicola expresses experiences with racism;
however, this does not deter her from engaging with British White society. Edward, however, uses his experiences to distance himself from British White culture.

Interestingly, however, although Nicola is relaxed with British White culture, she behaves differently when discussing her children, insofar as she places emphasis on her daughters learning her culture and places the same Nigerian cultural restrictions onto her daughters. In this way, Nicola appears to revert back to her cultural prefixes in order to maintain her culture, a culture which she is responsible for passing onto her children. As a result, she returns herself back to the cultural role of a wife and mother. There is a distinct relationship with Nigerian culture and restriction. Consumption decisions are largely made by Nicola; however, they tended to be genderised consumption. This enables Nicola to gain power in household purchasing decisions, using her consumption as a means of empowering herself.

4.3.3 Edna and Chris

Edna is a 49-year-old administrator and is married to Chris, a 50-year-old college lecturer. They have been married for twenty-four years and have three children, all girls (23, 21 and 15). Edna and Chris came to Britain twenty-four years ago. Edna and Chris maintain traditional patriarchal Nigerian power structure. In terms of interaction in British White society, Chris remains comfortable compared to Edna. Edna positions herself higher than her British White peers. Chris also expresses the need to shield his wife from the negativity of British culture by maintaining Nigerian cultural values. This indirectly has influenced Edna upholding her cultural values, especially in terms of child-rearing. Her cultural obligation as a wife and mother has become a response to her experiences of racism.

Edna exhibits prejudice to other ethnic groups – in particular, West Indians – creating a hierarchy of people of different ethnicity. She actively identifies herself as being African and, therefore, different; as a result, she separates herself from other Black ethnic minorities. However, intergenerational acculturation issue creates tension between herself and her children, and she actively imposes Nigerian culture onto her children.
As a way of maintaining her culture, Edna attends weekly prayer meetings allowing her socialise with other Nigerian women. Her prayer meetings offer her a space where she is able to interact with other women with similar cultural backgrounds, allowing Edna to exhibit her Nigerian identity. Edna also uses food and clothing as means of retaining her culture. Chris remains dominant in terms of consumption decisions, however, and at times this creates tension. Edna subtly indicates that she does not necessarily agree with all Chris choices but conforms, maintaining her cultural role as a wife. However, Chris does not have full control of decision making with regards to home purchases; Edna is able to reassert her own position in purchases that are governed by her needs, such as clothing. In this way, Edna appears to be submissive and docile in the presence of Chris, but in reality is able to assert herself in making consumption decisions. Even so, some of these consumption actions created conflict and as a result Edna appeases Chris by increasing his ‘dominance’ in the household by not challenge his position of power.

4.3.4 Sarah and Larry

Sarah (38) and Larry (41) have been married for fifteen years. They have three children, two boys (12 and 8) and a girl (10). Sarah is a nurse and Larry is a security man. They both came to Britain ten years ago, in order for Larry to study for his post-graduate degree. Focusing on Sarah and Larry’s initial experiences in Britain, Larry has experienced more hardships based on racism compared to Sarah. As a result, Larry expresses negative opinions about British White culture. However, Sarah is almost accepting over her experiences of racism. Interestingly, she did not appear to be troubled by her experiences, rather motivated to succeed. She uses her experiences to empower herself. As conversations continue, one finds that although living in Britain both Sarah and Larry seek ways to maintain their culture. Emphasis is placed on the importance of the Nigerian collective, using it as a form of support. Tension between Sarah and Larry arise as a result of differing acculturation techniques.
Sarah’s consumption behaviour is based on her family. This in itself is not uncommon in Nigerian couples; however, her consumption is genderised. Larry also plays an active role in purchase decisions indicating egalitarian behaviour; however, this is often determined by the price of the item. Consumption, at times, proves to be a space where conflict arose. These conflicts are frequently solved by Sarah becoming subservient to Larry. The issue of dominance and restriction in itself is challenged by Sarah but subtly. However, this is not based as a response to repression but out of personal desire. This in itself challenges the notion that Nigerian women are repressed in their cultural position as wives and mothers.

4.3.5 Samantha and Jeremy

Samantha, a care worker (45), and Jeremy (49), an accountant, have been married for twenty-five years. They have three children, two boys (24 and 22) and a girl (15). They came to Britain twenty-two years ago for economic reasons. Samantha made the decision to migrate. Samantha and Jeremy operate traditional Nigerian cultural roles, with Jeremy as the head of the household and Samantha subservient to him. Jeremy’s dominance extends across to their children and related decisions. This dominance, however, is selective.

Samantha and Jeremy distance themselves from British White society as a result of experiences of racism. Samantha sees British White culture as being substandard. Samantha’s passion for Nigerian culture encourages her to maintain the patriarchal dynamics in her relationship with Jeremy. In keeping with her culture, Samantha attends fortnightly community meetings with Jeremy. By attending these meetings, she provides herself and Jeremy with a cultural haven further enhancing her sense of Nigerian ethnic identity. This membership also reinforces her cultural role as a woman, providing opportunities for her to negotiate her Nigerian and immigrant identities.

Samantha is aware of the power dynamics in her relationship with Jeremy, something which she openly accepts as being part of her Nigerian culture. However, in accepting this element of culture she uses methods to empower herself namely through consumption. Consumption practices in Samantha and Jeremy’s household are largely dedicated by the needs of the
family. Samantha sees herself as the woman of the house, responsible for the purchase of food, fulfilling her Nigerian cultural role. In effect, Jeremy becomes dominant; he becomes the leader, the provider, following his duty as the head of the household. Consumption acts only further reiterate Samantha’s subservient role in the household. Interestingly, Samantha also uses the consumption of cultural goods as a means of empowerment to British White society. This only serves to reinforce her distancing from British White culture.

4.3.6 Carol and Bradley

Carol is a 51-year-old housing officer and is married to Bradley (64), a semi-retired lawyer. They have been married for thirty years and have five children (29, 28, 25, 20 and 16), all boys. They maintain a traditional patriarchal structure. Carol takes the role as the nurturer, the mother and the wife. Racism once again appears to influence behaviour, and Bradley often refers to not belonging to British White society. As a result, he has used education in empowering himself subsequently further empowering himself in the family context. In comparison, Carol finds solace in friends with a similar background to herself.

Employment is a forum for the power struggle between Carol and Bradley. Bradley wanted his wife to care for his children, whereas Carol stood firm in her decision to work, in turn empowering herself. Working provides an important change in the dynamics between Carol and Bradley. Her identity as a professional also gives her the opportunity to explore British White culture. Carol uses her workplace as a point of socialising. In terms of purchase decisions, Bradley remains dominant and Carol takes the traditional role in being responsible for purchases for the house. Carol remains passive in buying capital intensive items, thus positioning Bradley in a role of authority. However, in terms of food consumption Carol uses food to empower herself and resist patriarchy, by buying her own preference of brands.

4.3.7 Julia and Julian

Julia (51), a midwife, has been married to Julian (64), a doctor, for thirty years and has five children, four boys (25, 24, 23 and 20) and one girl (18). When reflecting on her marriage, she
continuously makes reference to ‘working at it’. Many of her feelings come from her husband behaviour; he is a traditionalist and believes sternly in Nigerian values. His sternness is based on his experience of British White culture and racism. Julia adopts a more relaxed attitude to British White culture often creating an arena for tension between Julian. This tension exhibits itself when discussing friendship groups. Julia regularly socialises with her British White peers, often making Julian uncomfortable. As a result, she indirectly challenges Julian’s patriarchal hold on her, thus empowering herself. This behaviour extends to consumption behaviour where Julia often purchases items without informing Julian.

4.4 British White participants

4.4.1 Larry

4.4.1.1 Larry and Kalvin – brief overview

Larry (39), a caterer, and Kalvin (41), an accountant, have been married for twenty years and have two daughters (20 and 19). Larry and Kalvin were long-time friends before they got married, attending the same high school. When referring back to their past they both talk of their relationship starting off as a brother–sister relationship, which evolved into a romantic relationship. Although Kalvin often works away from home they often describe their relationship as a partnership. On observation, they appear in synch with each other, often finishing each other’s sentences, showing evidence of their close nature. Larry and Kalvin annually take holidays together with their daughters and attach great importance of family time.

Larry and Kalvin share the same opinions on family lifestyle:

Larry: We both have the same philosophy or what family life should entail. Family is really important for us and we try and spend as much time together as possible. I know most of the time we’re busy, but there’s
nothing more important than being with the family and holding them close. I think as one gets older it becomes more important.

Kalvin: I think that’s certainly true for us. I mean, we both grew up in a family with strong values and it is something that we want to pass down to our children.

From the above, it becomes clear that family is important to both Larry and Kalvin and they hold the same opinions, which illustrates their partnership in their relationship. This is seen in further narratives:

Larry: Family life is very important to us. We both spend a lot of time working and the kids are off at university, so we try every so often to have family time, whether it’s going away on holiday or just having a family get together.

Kalvin: Yes, exactly. For us, it’s very important to spend time together especially now the girls are much older; I mean, it’s hard enough to keep up with them, so we always try to make time for each other.

Larry and Kalvin clearly reaffirm their belief in family values and spending time together as a family, depicting their unification of their values. Even when interviewed individually, Larry reiterates the same opinions, once again reaffirming their common belief:

We always find time to get together, no matter what. Even if it’s for Christmas, I always make sure we have all the trimmings. It’s a time for all of us to catch up. It’s important to us.

Here we see that that both Larry and Kalvin attach great importance on the family and this is denoted by terms such as ‘we’ and ‘us’. They view the family as a collective, similar to our
Nigerian participants, and depict the family as a unit. We also see that their views on family life, their relationship seems to signify equality. This is governed by the synchronised nature of their dialogue and the similarity in their opinions. In holding the same position, one can infer that they do exhibit power struggles, particular to this discussion. As a result, in holding the same values they may hold the same power positions in their marriage.

4.4.1.2 Larry’s life narrative – culture

Larry and Kalvin were very animated when talking about British White culture and seemed very relaxed in their expressions compared to other British White participants. Consider the following; here we see that Larry asserts that British culture implies female empowerment. We see from the below passage that Larry focuses her comments entirely on women, firmly positioning women at the forefront of British culture:

*English culture for me is about freedom, being liberal, but for women; well, comparing this culture to others, I would say it’s got something to do with freedom, equality.*

However we interestingly observe Kalvin’s own comment straight after Larry’s narrative:

*I think English culture is more of the history, the way that we behave. That’s not to say that we behave better than other culture, but differently. When I think of English culture I think of the gentleman in an old bowler cap, the monarchy. I think those are elements of English culture. Although now I think it’s changed slightly; celebrities have changed the way that British culture is viewed as.*

Here one observes that rather than reaffirm Larry’s opinion, he introduces another definition, therefore contradicting the unanimity previously portrayed in previous discussion on family. Kalvin, in this particular discussion, reasserts his position, masculinising his definition of British culture. In this particular incident, one can see that the level of equality varies.
When analysing Kalvin’s words further, one also observes that he appears almost apologetic in terms of his definition, and one may deduce from this behaviour that he responds typically from post-imperialist perspective adding to his felt ethnicity towards myself, the interviewer. This results in him appearing almost distanced in his expressions. When probed further, Kalvin explains:

*I don’t know what it is in this country, but people are so caught up with fame and people think what they see on TV is reality. I will never forget we were working on a contract – actually it was for a Chinese firm – and I was discussing with one of my colleagues, who is Chinese, and we were having this conversation about Big Brother\(^{18}\) or one of those type of programmes and we were having a debate as to whether these shows depict what it’s like to be in Britain. Now, of course, all those programmes are edited, etc., but he thought that British culture was like that, so do you see what I mean? It’s a bit wishy-washy\(^{19}\) now.*

Kalvin identifies similar elements of British White culture to those identified by other British White participants. For example he identifies the monarchy, the language and humour as elements of British White culture. He also comments on the way that British White culture has changed and inadvertently views British White culture as being substandard, due its focus on celebrity culture:

*I think people ultimately assume that English culture is what you see on TV and I think that’s where things have gone wrong. What is depicted on TV is far different to what happens in reality. It’s far different from what I grew up knowing.*

\(^{18}\) A British TV reality show.

\(^{19}\) British slang, meaning ‘vague’.
Kalvin appears to distance himself from he views as the portrayal of British White culture. In an almost nostalgic manner, he appears to be out of sync with modern society, adding to his distancing. As a result he finds it difficult to define British culture.

However, in comparison, when discussing British White culture with Larry individually, she is able to discuss British White culture, but from an informal perspective:

Yes, English culture or British White culture, they’re both the same anyway, it’s all about equality. I think there is a certain embarrassment when people identify themselves as British, especially when you look at the news now and see headlines about the BNP\(^{20}\) taking seats in councils and stuff like that; so some people tend to avoid the topic altogether and I can understand that.

This comment is interesting as it highlights the inner turmoil that Larry feels as being identified as British and White. In the above, Larry relates being British with racism and the BNP, which she openly identifies as being wrong. She distances herself from the subject of the conversation by using impersonal narrative, never relating it to herself. Instead she talks about the ‘other’, i.e. using such terms as ‘some people’. She distances herself from the threat as being classified as racist. Larry indirectly removes her association to British White culture in favour of emphasising the issue of equality:

In other cultures women are treated lower than men, and that’s really different to English culture. Women are seen as equal to men. I know it’s not always the case, but it’s better than other cultures anyway.

\(^{20}\) BNP – the British National Party; an extreme right wing political party that claims to represent the interests of indigenous British Whites.
In Larry’s emphasis on equality, she specifically focuses on gender, giving note to the differences in other cultures. As she expresses herself, one infer a sense of pride; she is proud in the sense that women are treated more equally to men than other cultures.

4.4.1.3 Larry’s life narrative – the professional

Larry is a professional caterer. At the age of 15, she started working in her uncle’s café and then went to catering school. By the age of 28, Larry had become a professional caterer. When discussing her career Larry’s passion in her profession is evident:

> I always wanted to go into catering, I don’t know what it was, but it was something to do with combining the elements of cooking, management and customer services, which I love. I don’t know what I would do otherwise.

For Larry cooking is not only her profession but also her hobby, she spends most of her free time devising new recipes:

> In my free time, this may sound really boring, but I look through cookery books; actually, I’ve got a pile of them by my bedside. I’m always looking for a new recipe or two!

It becomes quite evident in discussions with Larry that she very committed in her career as a professional caterer. Having children was a priority for Larry and when the time came she felt ready to be a mother. Although in the infancy of her career, she felt confident enough to have children while maintaining her career:

> Well, I decided that I wanted children quite early; I was actually in a point of my life where it was the best time to have children. He was working most of the time, and I was working part-time, due to no fault of my own, by the way! The job role changed and I was in a way forced to change my hours, which was annoying and
frustrating at first but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It gave me plenty of opportunity to look after the kids, but the negative side was that we relied heavily on his salary. It was fine, though; we made ends meet.

Although Kalvin first introduced the idea of having children, Larry placed herself in a position of control in choosing when to have children, even though she identified financially that herself and Kalvin were not comfortable. During this time period, Kalvin supported her. In this way, Kalvin took his position of provider for the family and hence reinforced his position as head of the family. We see below evidence of Kalvin reinforcing his position below:

Yes, well, he had the idea and we discussed it. We both decided together that this would be a great thing to do... although it has been stressful at times. We’re quite lucky that we can easily talk together. I think most couples these days, they do not communicate well. I’m not saying that it’s been a bed of roses. It’s not; it’s about understanding and communication.

Larry once again reaffirms the importance in equality although not directly. She emphasises the need for communication, something that she regularly mentions doing with Kalvin. However, we later find that between communicating and having children she expressed times of difficulty especially in relation to work and family life balance.

Courses, training events and unsociable hours attributed to her work, often caused Larry to spend long periods away from home. As result she often reports of finding this period of her career as being challenging:

I remember going away on a catering course and I was away for four days. That was really tough because the children were still young; so Kalvin had to look after the children for me, which was handy. I think I found that aspect of my job quite challenging, being away from home for long periods of time.
So we see in this particular narrative that Larry found it tough to leave her children for the purpose of work and throughout the interviews she expressed the hardship she faced in balancing work and family life, often talking about the sacrifices she made in order to further her career:

Well, whenever I had to go on long trips like that Kalvin took over. He was very good at that. It was very handy. There were periods of time when I would say to myself, ‘Am I doing the right thing? What about the girls?’ But later I would dismiss those thoughts. Thankfully, they turned out well [laughs]!

Here we see that Kalvin goes from reinforcing his role as the head of the household to being the caregiver of the family and in this instance the role reversal takes place. We also see the emotional turmoil that Larry faced in trying to balance career and her family. Larry credits her success in balancing work and family on her marriage:

When you have two people working, the dynamics of a marriage changes; marriage then becomes an issue of compromise, so communication becomes very important and that’s something that we’re very good at.

In discussing childcare and work issues, Larry and Kalvin further explain:

Larry: Well, I was also quite lucky that my mother lived quite close to us – actually she still does – she would come over and stay with us when the children were young so I could go out to work. Well, in the beginning I took the normal time off work, but when the children were a bit older, I would take the children to my mother’s. Amber and Irene would tell me wonderful stories of what they got up to at Nana Judy’s house. They would go on and on about all the games they’d play and all the food they ate.
Kalvin: You got a bit jealous then didn’t you, if I can remember.

Larry: Well, yes, I did, actually. I mean for women, especially at that time, it’s quite hard to leave your children. You feel almost as if you’re missing out on the most important things in their life. Well, I knew that I wasn’t really because I still saw them every day, but I couldn’t help thinking of that. He was fine, because it was a same routine with him. He would come back from work, spend about two hours with them a day till the weekend.

In these particular narratives we see that having let her mother look after her children, Larry still bears feelings of guilt. From a feminist perspective, one could deduce that as a woman she may have felt displaced, especially if her previous of perception of womanhood was based in the home. This leaves Larry to acknowledge her emotions, reaffirming her belief and value system of the role that a woman plays in caring for her children. As a result Larry was left feeling out of place, further adding to Kalvin’s position in the household.

Kalvin appears to acknowledge Larry’s feelings of displacement; however, despite outwardly supporting Larry’s career choices, he subtly reinforces the role that Larry should have played in caring for their children. By behaving this way, Kalvin inadvertently undermines Larry’s position. As a result we see that Larry used consumption as a way of compensating her children. She did this by buying her children gifts, something that displeased Kalvin:

Larry: Well, I wouldn’t call it buying their affection, but I always felt that since I wasn’t really there, then there was another way to make them feel happy, so I did that.

Kalvin: And what happened, you ended up spoiling them.

Larry: Anyway it’s OK now, they’re much older now.
This exchange evinces Larry’s guilt and this is confirmed by her perception of using consumption as a means of demonstrating her love. Further, the guilt that Larry displays is evidence of the tension that arose between her own empowerment through work and her attempts to negotiate within the realms of socialisation and what it means to be a woman. In one way, Larry believes that traditionally women are responsible for the care of the children:

When I was younger I was always led to believe that mothers should look after their children no matter what. There’s a way that children bond with their mothers and it’s very important to nurture that. And sometimes when I look back I feel that I’ve missed out on those tentative years.

However, as a young mother, Larry also sought to balance the responsibility of being the caregiver with being a professional. As a result, both her role as the caregiving-wife, and Kalvin’s role as a providing-husband had to be renegotiated.

4.4.1.4 Larry’s life narrative – the consumer

In discussing purchase decisions in the household, consumption decisions appear to be made jointly; however, this was dependent on the items that need to be purchased:

Well, to be honest, it’s not like everything we buy we sit down and have a conversation. If it’s something really major then yes I would mention that to him, but that’s not because I have to. It’s really to get his advice on something.

Larry appears to show an element of power in consumption decisions that differs to that of her Nigerian peers. From the above, one could assume that Larry pre-empts some of the questions asked during the interview, and responds defensively with regard to acts of consumption. As a result, she portrays herself as having full control over the act of consumption and suggests that decisions about making purchases are not dependent on Kalvin’s input. That is, she
approaches Kalvin for purchasing advice not purchasing permission; this is relayed strongly in the above narrative, and reiterated below.

If I’m buying something that I’m not sure about I just give Kalvin a buzz or text for his opinion. That’s if he’s not around, mind you, but usually I just buy what’s needed. He doesn’t get so much involved with all that stuff, which is fine by me!

Interestingly, what this reveals is that Larry’s purchasing authority does rely on Kalvin’s opinion when buying items. This may appear to contradict her earlier assertions of equality within their relationship, as Kalvin appears to play a more decisive role in purchases compared to Larry.

Later discusses reveal that Larry tends to be responsible for purchasing items for the household when Kalvin travels away for work and adopts the traditional role of being responsible for the household. When asked about her responsibilities in regards to the household Larry expressed:

I’m really used to buying all the stuff for the house; it’s just easier for me. For example, if I’m shopping for ingredients for work, I just do all that shopping for the house all at once. It’s much easier, that way I don’t have to wait for Saturday. It makes life a lot easier.

When Kalvin is asked about his contribution to purchases and decision making, he openly acknowledges Larry’s control over what is bought for the house, such as furnishings. Note Kalvin’s narrative below:

Kalvin: Well, Larry buys most of the things in the house, I can’t think of what I’ve actually bought by myself in this house. It’s really difficult for me to think of something. That sounds bad, doesn’t it? She bought the
sofas, the table the pictures. In fact, it’s looking like everything [laughs].

Larry: Well, it’s not your fault you’re busy, and it’s far more easy for me to sort all those things out, especially now that I’m free most days.

In this particular exchange, Kalvin appears nonchalant over the things that are bought for the house. It appears as though he does not attach importance on household purchases, pushing the responsibility to Larry. In this way, one could argue that he maintains his power in the household by reasserting Larry’s position in the house, i.e. her responsibility to look after the household. Larry, too, supports Kalvin’s patriarchal position by sympathising with his responsibilities as a provider. Larry, compassionately, takes responsibility of the purchases for the household and further positioning herself in compliance with the traditional, patriarchal role of a woman.

One also observes that in handing responsibility of the purchase of household items to Larry, Kalvin reasserts his power by focusing on sentimental yet financially substantial purchases, such as their family holiday:

Every year I make sure we go on holiday. It’s so important for us as a family. Sometimes it’s easy for us to get carried away with work and sometimes it’s easy to forget those things that are most important to you, so yes, I’m responsible for that. I haven’t chosen where we’re going this year, but I reckon it will be somewhere hot. I want to surprise my wife and my daughters this year.

Interestingly this is the only purchase that Kalvin appears to make without consulting Larry. When Larry was probed about her feelings she explained:

It doesn’t bother me, really. I know that he likes to get away every year, but I know family holidays are important for him. He never had that as a child, so he
wants to give our daughters the opportunity to travel, which I love. So him sorting out the holidays every year does not bother me; I find it exciting because I never know where we’re going to travel next!

Larry remains content in Kalvin’s decision to organise their annual holiday. One can also deduce from both their behaviours that Larry, although appearing stronger, gives her purchasing power voluntarily to Kalvin as a way for him to assert his power, thus supporting his sense of masculinity. Larry understands that by indirectly supporting Kalvin’s quest for family happiness, she also allows Kalvin to contribute by organising the family holiday which supports his role as a provider.

As with the above narrative, much of the discussion about consumption centre on items purchased for the house. One finds that the purchase of the majority of items bought by Larry appears to occur when Kalvin was not present. For example, when Larry redecorated the house:

*It was only last year we had this place redecorated. I chose all the furniture, even the tiling, actually, everything. I just felt we needed a change; sometimes it’s nice to change things up. Anyway, I just got the builders in, told them what I wanted and that was that. Obviously it wasn’t that easy [laughs], but it was simple enough.*

Here, Larry uses Kalvin’s absence as a means of empowering herself, when asked about Kalvin’s opinions on her purchases she replies:

*Well, he couldn’t say much really as he wasn’t around, but he knew what I was doing and it turned out really well. He couldn’t fault me! Who says women are not organised!*
In the above, one observes that Larry’s active quest for approval from Kalvin may imply a lack of confidence in her decision. One could then deduce that in her aspirations for approval she desires to be seen as a woman even though in previous situations she may have compromised her role (i.e. the organisation of childcare). In terms of Larry’s consumption behaviour, we find that she takes charge of purchases solely on when Kalvin is not present signifying her reliance on Kalvin and although she remains financially independent, she appears to put herself in a position of inferiority, favouring to support Kalvin’s position of superiority in the household.

As a result, Larry subtly exhibits acts of resistance. For example, when discussing buying presents for her children when they were young:

\[\text{I always used to buy things for the children when they were young. Anything they liked, I’d buy; and, yes, it may looked like I spoiled them, but who cares! You only live once!}\]

What is interesting is that the quotation above was expressed when interviewed alone. As a result, we see that Larry buys her daughters presents as a way of showing affection to compensate for the periods that she may not have fulfilled her role as a mother (as seen above). In making these purchases, she actively resists her husband’s authority and power by not informing him of her purchases. As a result one then observes the subsequent tension between Larry and Kalvin:

\[\text{Kalvin has this knack}\textsuperscript{21} \text{ of making a person feel guilty for overindulging. It was only yesterday that I decided to myself by buying some perfume for myself. As soon as Kalvin saw the bag, he started questioning the price I paid for it. I just thought to myself, Well, I haven't bought something nice for myself for a while,}\]

\textsuperscript{21} Slang term for habit or ability,
so why not. He’s always like that, but that doesn’t bother me. Actually, tomorrow I’m going to buy another perfume that I have my eye on!

In this particular account, Larry notes that ‘treating herself’ places herself in the position of power in that she purchase in item without Kalvin’s input. By behaving this way she relinquishes her need for Kalvin’s approval in favour of focusing on her needs. As a result, Larry empowers herself through her consumption behaviour.

4.4.2 Kendra

4.4.2.1 Kendra and Jeremy – brief overview

Kendra (38) is married to Jeremy (56). They have been married for fifteen years and have three children, two boys (20 and 17) and a girl (5). Although marrying late, Jeremy and Kendra have been together for over twenty years. Kendra is a qualified primary school teacher, while Jeremy is a plumber who works for himself. Over the last five years, they have been planning to move to Spain, citing better lifestyle opportunities; and although their children are still in education, they feel that it is the best option for them as Jeremy has family based in Spain. Kendra has always had dreams of travelling, but felt that she was unable due to family responsibilities. She had her first child at 18, so at times she feels as though she has missed out on her youth, which adds to her determination to start a new life in Spain.

Kendra purports to having always wanted be a primary school teacher. She explains that it was a profession that she wanted to do even as a child:

*Well, when I was younger I always wanted to be a teacher. I remember always bossing my sister about and even pretending to give classes. I’ve always had that passion for teaching, it’s just in me.*
Jeremy actively supported Kendra’s passion in teaching and often recalled the times when he used to pick Kendra up from work:

*I remember those days when, after a job, I would pick her up from her school. You would just see all the children just surrounding her. She makes a good teacher, you know!*

Jeremy talks of Kendra in admiration, showing his affection throughout the course of their interviews together; and although they have completely different careers, Jeremy makes every attempt to support Kendra:

Kendra: *I know that Jeremy is always there for me, even when there was a time when I wanted to stop teaching. I was having a few problems with the school that I was working for, but he always made the effort to cheer me up and make me feel better. Didn’t you?*

Jeremy: *Well, that’s what husbands are for isn’t it!*

Kendra: *Aren’t I lucky, then!*

The affection that both Kendra and Jeremy have for each other is very evident throughout the interview. Kendra refers to Jeremy on several occasions as her ‘support’, ‘guardian’ and ‘best friend’. Kendra makes various efforts in her narrative to show her appreciation for Jeremy individually, as well as when interviewed together. Jeremy, on the other hand, remained generally reserved in his emotion, only opening up when prompted by Kendra. Their strong bond stems from their relationship that they have with each other. They actively express a partnership and togetherness perpetuated by the length of time that they have been together:
Kendra: The way that I look at marriage is like a partnership all about understanding. It’s an equal partnership, which is formed through understanding.

Jeremy: I think some couples feel that marriage have to be perfect, but it not really like that. People are not perfect, so how can marriage be that way? Just understanding his needs.

4.4.2.2 Kendra’s life narrative – culture

For Kendra, we see that discussing British White culture comes quite comfortably for her, although she does not discuss the culture itself:

*British White culture is a number of things. It’s difficult to answer because everybody has their own perspective. It isn’t identified with one particular thing. It could range from the language to how a person behaves. I think it’s more to do with the way that people behave. I don’t what it is; it has something to do with the humour as well. There is this dry sense of humour.*

Even though professing to know what British White culture is, she seems unable to identify one particular thing, adding to the confusion in its identification. Similarly, Jeremy finds it difficult to express his thoughts of the subject. One finds that rather than directly identifying what British White culture is, they both found it easier to compare British White culture to other cultures, as though to distance themselves from any possibility of appearing prejudiced. Consider Kendra’s narrative:

*I think in other cultures things are more restrictive. You know, in other cultures sometimes women are not treated well. They are often treated as second-class citizens. I mean, I can’t understand that; there should be a level of equality. I*
don’t know what makes it right to do that, I don’t think I could stand that even if it is part of my culture.

In this instance, Kendra sees other cultures as lower than her own in terms of gender inequality. It is interesting that she indirectly states that women should be viewed as equal to men. We also see this opinion when she refers to her Asian colleagues:

I have Asian colleagues, married, so sometimes we end up talking about married life, you know stuff like that. Anyway, we had this big conversation about arranged marriages. I couldn’t understand it myself; I couldn’t imagine getting married to someone I didn’t know! It just seems strange, but that’s culture for you; everyone’s different.

Here we see Kendra disagreeing with elements of other culture, especially in terms of the position that women find themselves in. Kendra sees herself as empowered and subsequently does not understand why other women, especially those that reside in Britain, are not:

In this country, things are so relaxed and people are laidback, so stuff like arranged marriages I can’t understand, really. After all, this society does not force it, but that’s their culture; who am I to criticise it [laughs]? 

When discussing other cultures with Kendra individually, her passion for Spanish culture is clear:

I don’t know what it is about Spain, but I love it! I love the food, I love the language. Every year we travel to Spain with the kids and really it’s like their second home. When we move there it will be great – the sun, the sea. I can’t wait.
Spanish culture appears to be Kendra’s adopted culture; she expresses her love for the language and often talks about her experiences of travelling. More so she views Spanish culture as better than British White culture:

*The people are far friendlier; you have a friend everywhere. They’re very relaxed and always willing to help. Anything goes. I just like the people. I just cannot wait to travel.*

Notice how Kendra contradicts herself in her response previously to British White culture. Immediately, she inadvertently puts down British White culture in favour for Spanish culture. We also see that her opinions are not shared by Jeremy:

*Well, Jeremy is not so keen, but I’m talking him into it! [laughs] He’ll change is mind, don’t you worry!*

In her passion for Spanish culture we see that Kendra refuses to bring Jeremy’s opinion into consideration and thus maintains her control of moving to Spain.

### 4.4.2.3 Kendra’s life narrative – the professional

As mentioned previously, Kendra is a qualified teacher and has worked the majority of her life in education. She always wanted to be a teacher and as soon as she entered into the profession she achieved her goal:

*Becoming a teacher was everything to me. I mean, that feeling you get in imparting knowledge to a child is so special.*

Similar to other participants, work brings about other concerns in Kendra and Jeremy’s relationship, especially in terms of childcare:
I mean, going to work, finishing work, hurrying to pick up the children from the childminder, then going home to fix dinner. All those thing could make any woman crack up [laughs], but you keep doing it because you want to ensure the best for your kids.

Here Kendra reveals her position on motherhood. She takes responsibility and positions herself as the primary caregiver; and although she has made this choice, she finds it difficult:

_I think most women find this as an issue, trying to juggle your career while trying to be a mother. There’s this pressure for you to multitask and be able to do everything and it’s not possible sometimes. We can’t do everything, so I was lucky enough that have a Jeremy there to support me. My hero [laughs]._

One observes that Kendra relies on Jeremy for help at those times when she feels unable to cope with the multiple roles that she had to play, as mother, wife and provider. As result Jeremy is seen as the ‘rescuer’.

**4.4.2.4 Kendra’s life narrative – the consumer**

In terms of consumption, both Kendra and Jeremy equally share decisions on purchases in the household. Although Kendra remains responsible for food shopping, Jeremy supports her:

_Well, I buy all the food, of course [laughs], but that’s only because I do most of, no, all of the cooking. Jeremy can’t cook you see! Last time he tried, he broke the cooker; after that, I decided to take over. A woman’s job is never over [laughs]. I leave him to do all the other stuff that he’s good at, like the plumbing [laughs]._
Kendra takes control over her domain in the kitchen and assumes her role as a wife and caregiver, whereas Jeremy assumes his masculine role as a plumber. Although they appear traditionalist in this respect, they often interchange in roles:

Well, I know I don’t allow him in the kitchen often, but he does a mean roast. I mean, I don’t know how he does it. He spends the whole day in the kitchen and the food comes out like it was done by Jamie Oliver22 [laughs].

Kendra also takes great pride in being able to buy Spanish food and cook Spanish meal:

Every Friday I make a Spanish meal, like paella. We love paella!

As with other participants, Jeremy’s involvement in purchases was dependent on the items being bought. He is responsible for the more masculine items, such as the car, and computer was bought solely by himself:

I leave him to buy all that stuff, mostly because I don’t have time to look for all those things. Actually, it’s because it’s so boring [Kendra’s emphasis]. I just leave him to all that stuff.

We find that Jeremy’s responsibility in purchasing these items largely relies on his prior knowledge of the product being bought; and although Kendra remains aloof over these purchases at times, she exhibits some resentment over specific items:

I preferred him to buy a desktop for the house because it much easier for us to use, especially for my youngest daughter. Sometimes I can just go on the Internet and download some games for her, so I said it was far better for use to get a desktop, but he was insistent on buying a laptop. So what happened? He

22 A famous British TV chef.
did, and no one ended up using it properly. Anyway, I’ll still get him to buy the desktop.

In this particular passage, we see that Jeremy uses his position in the house to buy an item which Kendra disagreed with and, as a result, although Kendra appears disappointed she remains determined to correct Jeremy’s purchase. She also discusses issue of being left out in these purchase decision and also as a result this gives her the opportunity to buy her own things:

Sometimes I’m there with him to buy things for the house in Spain, but half of the time he buys all that stuff by himself. I just end up going another day and buying the things I want that’s all [laughs]. I have the freedom! So maybe one day I’ll buy the furniture; maybe the next I’ll buy the cutlery.

We find that this in itself empowers her; she cites her freedom in purchasing a variety of items. In this way, Kendra is able to reassert her power over the purchase of items for the household. She also positions herself in power by being responsible for choosing their property in Spain, demonstrating the extent of power that she exerts in the household:

I actually chose the house, it was between two. One that I had picked and one that Jeremy picked. In fact, I decided that the one that I chose was the best one. Actually, Jeremy didn’t have a say in the matter [laughs]. Well he did, but I like to think it was me that had the overall decision [laughs].

Kendra actively boasts of her influence in taking control of purchase and positions herself in a role of superiority compared to Jeremy. This may seem surprising because we saw previously that he was responsible for the more masculine products. In spite of Kendra’s influence over the purchase of their house in Spain, Kendra nonetheless implies that Jeremy did actually have an influence of what was bought for the house, solidifying his position in the household.

4.4.3 Michelle
4.4.3.1 Michelle and Lee – background

Michelle (50) and Lee (64) have been married for thirty years. They have four children, all girls (29, 25, 24 and 20). Michelle is a full-time florist while Lee is a semi-retired plasterer. They met thirty-one years ago when Michelle was working in her father’s flower shop. After being together for one year, they decided to get married and although they viewed themselves as being young at the time they have a successful marriage. Lee is semi-retired and now spends his time looking after several properties which he has acquired over the years, while Michelle continues to work in the florist that her parents built. Their children are all away at university and only visit during the holidays.

Michelle spends most of her time working and now that her children are older, she actively tries to find ways to occupy her time. Working as florist allows Michelle to interact with a variety people on a daily basis, adding to her confidence. Being a florist has also allowed her to continue her family business:

I always knew that I’d go into the family business. It was part of me even when growing up. I grew up working in the shop, so it was only natural for me to follow suit.

In comparison, Lee was a plasterer by trade and they met while Lee was working on Michelle’s shop:

How we met was very funny, actually. He was working on the shop and he came in and bought me a bunch of flowers. It was so funny.

After twenty years in his occupation, Lee decided to retire early and he now spends most of his time looking after their properties in Britain:
OK, now I just use my time to look after a few flats that we have. Sometimes I go there to do a bit of work here and there so that keeps me busy most days. If you don’t find me doing that, then I’m usually rummaging through the garden.

In this particular narrative, we see that Lee takes the more masculine role in looking after their properties.

4.4.3.2 Michelle’s life narrative – culture

British White culture proves to be a contentious topic for both participants. When talking about British White culture Lee appeared too aggressive in his opinions. This may be attributed to his passion; however, Michelle appears to be made uncomfortable by his responses:

Lee: Well, English culture has changed so much; you only have to put on the TV to find that out. Mosques here and there – it’s never used to like that. Such a pity.

Michelle: Lee, it’s not that bad. Everything changes, it’s not unusual.

Lee: Well, it’s different; that’s all I’m saying.

In this particular exchange, we clearly observe the tensions caused by Lee’s comments. He appears to feel displaced by other cultures and in response to him expressing these opinions Michelle appears to be uncomfortable. Even when probed further, Michelle remains reluctant to express her opinions in Lee’s presence. When interviewed separately Michelle explains:

I think British White culture is to do with our history. Everything related to the origin. I may look different to you, there’s nothing wrong with that; it’s good to
learn from different cultures, it only enhances our own culture. I find it so interesting.

Michelle exhibits a more laidback view of British White culture and she appears to be open to other cultures compared to Lee. Lee’s distance to other cultures may be a result of past negative experiences; however, this is not something that he discussed directly when interviewed.

4.4.3.3 Michelle’s life narrative – the professional

Michelle has followed the family tradition of becoming a florist, something that her father and mother used to do. She spends most of her time running their business. Michelle often talks about the time she missed in her children growing up as a result of running the family business:

> Sometimes I look back at when the girls were younger and think to myself that I should have done more; you know, spend more time with them, but I know they understand.

When referring back to the period when her children were younger she notes of the difficulties of trying to manage work responsibility with motherhood:

> During those days, if your mother wasn’t around it was quite difficult to find good childcare. I mean, there were nurseries, but they always felt wrong for our children. I never got a chance actually to go searching for good nurseries so I ended up using a childminder which was very expensive on our part, but we didn’t have so much of a choice, did we? I needed to go back to work just to support financially.
Lee:  
*No, we didn’t. I think the childminder was a good idea, because it gave you a chance to go back to work. I think she was one of your friends, wasn’t it?*

Michelle:  
*Yes.*

In this particular exchange, we see that Lee supported Michelle’s choice to go back to work, and although Michelle found it difficult she felt that it was in the financial interests of the family to go back to work. Michelle positions herself equally in the household and we see that her financial contributions to the household are evidence of the egalitarian role that is exhibited by both spouses. In addition to this, she is also financially independent from Lee, which gives her power to make decisions in the household.

Although Michelle has this power, she does not feel the need to assert her position, as her position has already been set by her culture. For instance, from her expressions of guilt over not being able to look after her children, one could deduce that this guilt is based on her beliefs of what a mother should be, i.e. a person to care for her children, which she feels she was unable to fulfil:

*Well, I had in mind that when I had my children I’d be lucky enough to be in a position where I wouldn’t have to work. I know we’re now in a position where I don’t have to work, but now the children are older doing their own thing, so it’s a bit late now. Work keeps me busy, anyway.*

Michelle, although financially independent, uses work to preoccupy herself; she uses work as a way of socialising, similar to the Nigerian female participants. Work also provided a means of self-improvement:

*You know working for a family business has its ups and down. Yes, I know I’ve got on the job training and everyday it’s a learning curve, even as old as I am*
[laughs], but I also look to the future, other opportunities. Don’t get me wrong; I love what I do, but sometimes I like different challenges. I mean, Lee is now managing our properties so I might go into that. Who knows!

In addition to working as a florist, Michelle also does voluntary work at her church which offers opportunities to contribute to society:

Well, I do voluntary work at church; maybe I’ll help out with the flower arrangements or even paperwork; it depends what they need, really. I’m always there to help out. It gives me something different to do. I also use it as a way of catching up with old friends. Sometimes it’s good to do something different away from the daily hustle and bustle of day-to-day life.

From the above narrative, one can see that Michelle uses her volunteer work as a means of contributing to the society. It offers her an outlet to be herself and relax, as well as giving her ‘something different to do’. In doing so, she expands her social life, giving her a different space to act. She is able to socialise with her friends, therefore, exerting a different self:

When I’m with my friends, we just chat over coffee; just a little natter, really. You know us women, we like a little bit of gossip; there’s no harm in that, is there [laughs].

So here we see Michelle confirm, or portray, a different self; she is not only a mother, wife and worker, she is also part of a collective and she uses this opportunity to be with her friends, her collective. We can see this in the use of the work ‘us women’, denoting a group and a collective, something away from the men.

4.4.3.4 Michelle’s life narrative – the consumer
In talking with Michelle, it becomes evident that she is responsible for most purchases in the household:

> Well, I tend to buy what I think is needed for the family; you know, the general shopping. Lee doesn’t bother with that, he’s too busy. If he needs anything he lets me know… but most of the time I responsible for the shopping, he’ll only come if we need to buy something that is complicated.

This behaviour is confirmed by Lee in earlier discussions:

> I don’t go shopping with her on a Friday; though, have you been to Asda on a Saturday? I can’t stand it, especially the queues. I don’t see why they don’t just put more tills out, those self-service ones. Mind you, how many people know how to use it properly! Plus, she ends up buying more than what she went there for. Why do women do that?

In the above narrative Lee actively expresses his dislike for going shopping. However, one later observes that Lee’s dislike of shopping only stretches as far as products that are not deemed masculine. Michelle expresses this by explaining the responsibilities shared with Lee in purchasing items that she views as being ‘complicated’, when probed she explains:

> Sorry, not ‘complicated’. You know, stuff like when we bought the TV, the car – actually, he bought the car – things that we might both discuss, things that are expensive, we both make the decision. I wouldn’t want to buy something like that when he’s not around.

Here Michelle suggests that items that are expensive are usually discussed as a couple rather than bought individually. In this way, they invoke an egalitarian method in making decisions

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23 A supermarket
where both parties are involved. Interestingly one observes that the items bought together are usually those that are more expensive or those items that are viewed as stereotypically male-orientated products, such as electronics. In addition to explaining their joint involvement in making decision, Michelle indirectly lowers her position in decision making, by displaying a lack of confidence in buying such items without Lees’ presence:

_You know anything to do with electronics and all that stuff I leave it for Lee to sort out. That’s his area [laughs]. I’m OK with it, but sometimes I can’t be bothered with all that [laughs]._

In this way, one may infer that Lee holds a position of power over Michelle, in terms of technological purchases. However, one observes in later discussions that this is not entirely so. Consider Michelle’s explanation below:

_Well, there have been times where I’ve had to buy things like that when he’s not been around, like the cooker. I also bought the lawnmower. I’d been complaining to Lee that I needed a new cooker because the one that I had was so old. It was one of these old gas cookers, it’s as old as my youngest, and he’s 25 [laughs], but anyway he kept on saying that he would change it – now that was over ten years ago – so what I did was, I had my eye on an electric cooker, so I bought it._

It appears that, when necessary, Michelle takes control over the decisions involving large purchases which Lee indirectly supports. One also observes that in making these decisions she places herself in a higher position of power in the household. She actively seeks to make more decisions with regard to what is bought in their household, contributing to her already growing role. In doing so, she appears to be very assertive and confident in discussing issues surrounding consumption.
One also observes that although her consumption role goes as far as buying clothes for Lee. These particular purchases she especially feels proud in doing:

You know, before I got married to Lee, I would always complain to him about his clothes. I mean, you would never imagine that he’d ever worked as a manager before. You should have seen the type of clothes that he usually wore. Awful, just plain awful, so when we got married, I took the opportunity to revamp his wardrobe. Anything that gave me the chance to shop [laughs]!

Clothes shopping proved to be a theme that provoked a number of issues, especially in terms of expenses. One found that Michelle had a passion for buying shoes, something that Lee always complained about:

You know, a woman cannot not have enough shoes. You know, you need shoes for every occasion. I mean, I work hard and I deserve to treat myself once in a while, don’t I [laughs]? I should say Lee is not a lover of shoes, he hates it when I get a new pair; but it doesn’t bother me, really, because he’s never there to see me buy them [laughs]? Anyway, I don’t complain when he spends money on his cars!

Also note:

Well, once in a while a woman has to treat herself and what other better way to do so than by retail therapy. Anyway, I pay for it myself. I think I deserve a treat at times. Isn’t that right?

One observes that the purchase of shoes becomes a way for Michelle to ‘treat herself’ and although she knows that Lee does not like her purchasing those items she continues to do so, thus asserting her power in the situation. This right to assert herself comes from her role within the household. Where Nigerian females are constrained by their cultural role as wives,
Michelle remains free in her choice, even if Lee does not agree with this. Michelle also indicates her independence, and the individualist nature of their marriage, whereby Michelle is able to treat herself without considering Lee as a result of Lee spending money on his cars. This behaviour appears throughout conversations of purchases with Michelle. Michelle is able to assert herself quite easily compared to her Nigerian peers.

4.5 Brief overview of the remainder of the British White participants

4.5.1 Louise and Jeremiah

Louise (41) and Jeremiah (56) have been married for twenty years. They have twin girls (15). By profession Louise is a qualified secondary school teacher, while Jeremiah is a chemist. Louise appears to be a social person, which can be mistaken for dominance, and takes great pride in her job. Both individuals share equal responsibilities in childcare due to work responsibilities. Jeremiah is self-conscious in discussing British White culture; however, in comparison, Louise is comfortable in discussing British White culture, but only impersonally. In talking about British White culture, one finds that Louise appears very receptive to other cultures exhibiting her level of acculturation, i.e. eating ethnic foods, having friends of different ethnic minorities. She often referred to British White culture as being boring; in fact, it appears that she almost distances herself from British White culture. Although Louise identifies that Jeremiah supports her in household duties she also demasculinates him in various discussions.

Jeremiah quite easily adopts his wife’s role as a mother; in this way, it appears that traditional gender roles have been reversed. Louise appears to adopt a more masculine role in terms of household decisions. In particular, purchase decisions tend to be governed by Louise, even though Jeremiah earns a greater salary. Louise’s control over purchases stretches as far as buying clothes for Jeremiah, actively asserting her authority. Louise is also in control of the family finances, adding further to her power hold.

4.5.2 Justine and Luke
Justine (54) is married to Luke (59). They have been married for fifteen years and have two children, two boys (15 and 13). Justine is a full-time administrator in a law firm while Luke works as an accounts manager. Justine is solely responsible for childcare, since Luke travels often. Justine and Luke remain equal in their relationship; this is often seen in their interactions. They have the same interest often enjoying various hobbies together, such as golf. Although Luke and Justine share an equal relationship, at times Justine appears to be dominant in conversation. This may be due to Justine’s independent position when Luke travels. She subsequently becomes the head of the household. This adoption of a more masculine role extends to consumption behaviour, where tensions that arise are solved through active negotiation. Culture, as with the rest of the British White participant, presents itself a contentious issue. Most often Justine and Luke did not appear comfortable in discussing British White culture.

4.5.3 Lynne and Nathan

Lynne (50) is a secondary school teacher and she is married to Nathan (55), who owns his own business. They have been married for twenty-four years and have four children, three girls (21, 18, and 14) and a boy (17). Lynne and Nathan exhibit an egalitarian relationship, in which decisions made regarding the family are made jointly. This often extends to purchase decisions; however, it would appear that Nathan holds greater power when purchasing items that are viewed as masculine and highly capital intensive, e.g. their car. Lynne does, however, show evidence of using consumption as a form of resistance, namely in the purchase of items that Nathan did not agree to, e.g. chocolate and clothes. These purchases are often made when Nathan is not present, adding to sense of empowerment and an assertion of a separate identity from Nathan.

Perhaps most revealing, and not unique to Lynne and Nathan, is their difficulty in describing British White culture, possibly because as British Whites these participants are living and socialised within in British White society. Consequently, they may not be aware of how British White culture is affecting their behaviours.

4.5.4 Debra and David
Debra (36) is married to David (49). They have been married for ten years and have two children, two girls (6 and 4). Debra works as an administrator at her local college and David is an accountant. They both share the same interests, especially in terms of recreational activities and a passion for camping. David is largely responsible for the household duties, something that he is comfortable in doing. Debra supports him when she has time. Finance plays an important role in their marriage and is a theme that runs through their interview together. Debra plays a significant role in the organising of the finance for the household; and although David by profession is an accountant, Debra is able to navigate herself in this role, asserting her position in the household and adopting a responsibility that the Nigerian female participants attribute to the male role.

Debra and David are uncomfortable answering questions pertaining to British White culture. They often redirect the question to another topic. Both Debra’s and David’s consumption patterns are based on partnership, common to the other British White couple participants. They actively spend time discussing purchases.

4.5.5 Monica and Joshua

Monica (59) is married to Joshua (61) a clergyman. They have been married for twenty-nine years and have three children, two girls (27, 24) and a boy (25). Monica was a qualified teacher, but now is an active member of the church. Monica inadvertently conforms to a traditional family structure; although this is through a sense of empowerment rather than cultural responsibility. As with most of the British White participants, Monica and Joshua appeared to have pre-empted feelings of discussing British White culture. While Joshua fulfils his role as a minister, Monica is able to form her own space, attending and organising women’s church groups, such as making and selling crafts; she is socially and financially independent from Joshua. With regard to child-rearing, Monica is the authoritarian, while Joshua plays an almost submissive role. Monica’s authority extends to purchase decisions and tensions that arise are usually governed and resolved by her.

4.5.6 Lianne and Marcus
Lianne (51) is married to Marcus (59). They have been married for thirty years and have four children, all boys (29, 25, 21 and 18). Lianne is a librarian by profession, while Marcus is a store manager. Both Lianne and Marcus share a passion for books. Since working part-time, Lianne finds that she has more time to spend on herself and during these periods she enjoys attending her weekly yoga classes. Lianne uses this opportunity to socialise with other people as well as ensuring her wellbeing. Lianne boasts of being a cultured person; she has a number of friends from different ethnic minority groups. She views British White culture as boring. Her love for different cultures extends across her daily life and even choice of clothes and food. Marcus’s opinions of British White culture are more positive than Lianne; he appears proud of his culture. Marcus is also receptive to other cultures and takes great interest in experiencing different cultures.

Observations of Lianne and Marcus find that both appear relaxed in terms of their consumption decisions. Purchases are made on the impulse and do not necessarily involve a decision-making strategy, such as those seen in Nigerian participants. Choices are made on the egalitarian basis and often appeared more open than other participants, i.e. Lianne usually informs Marcus of her purchases and there seems to be no subtle acts of resistance. In addition, purchases are also made on the basis of who has the most knowledge on the particular item.

4.5.7 Irene and Stephen

Irene (45) is a primary school teacher and is married to Stephen (49) an engineer. They have been married for sixteen years and have two children; two boys (14 and 16). Irene trained to be an engineer and decided to go into teaching to fulfil her lifelong dream. She has recently qualified as a primary school teacher and now works full-time in her local primary school. Stephen works offshore and is usually away for long periods of time. While interviewing Irene and Stephen, Stephen appears subservient to Irene, whereas Irene takes control over most of the conversation.

It appears that Irene has taken the role of the head of the household due to Stephen’s absences for work. As a result, Stephen appears to have adopted the female role at home. In discussions
with Irene, one finds that Stephen’s behaviour at times causes tensions which tend to be resolved by Irene taking control of the situation.

British White culture and its description appear to be hard for Stephen to discuss. Irene is quite open in her opinions of British White culture and as a result appears free in discussing British White culture. Most of the consumption practices are made by Irene especially in regards to the goods bought for the household. This is not due to culturally defined roles but due to convenience.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS II – EMERGENT THEMES

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented twenty informant narratives regarding their life experiences, their lives as professionals in employment and their consumption practices. The aim of this chapter is to undertake a cross-case analysis, comparing all twenty participants’ narratives (Fournier, 1998; Mick and Buhl, 1992). This chapter, therefore, will be based around five themes. First, I will explore the themes behind migration, as well as the dreams and traumas involved in relocating from Nigeria to Britain. I will then explore the realities of living as a migrant in British life focusing on the realities of being different and/or a woman and how this compares to the British White participants’. I will go on to offer an insight into the themes that emerged in this comparison. This final section will explore these themes in terms of the conflict, tensions and resolution that arose as a result of acts of consumption resistance among the female Nigerian immigrants living in Britain and the extent to which these behaviours are shared by British White women.

5.1.1 The process used to form the analysis of themes in the participants’ narratives

McCracken (1995) noted how culture does not just affect behaviour subconsciously but also at a conscious level. The narratives of the twenty participants were first read and then re-read a number of times as part of the cross-case analysis approach. This allowed for the identification of a number of emergent themes and complied with the inductive approach to qualitative research. One such theme exists in the stories surrounding migration that dominated the research interviews, both when the Nigerian participants were interviewed together and when the Nigerian women participants were interviewed individually. These stories cover varying aspects of migration, sometimes positive and a lot of times negative. The difference being, as I will argue, was how participants’ gender appeared to dictate what story was told. The second stage involved deductively using the existing literature regarding migration, acculturation, gender and consumption to understand the emergent themes. The literature then allowed for
the refinement of the emergent themes. An approach supported by Denzin (1989) and one that allowed me to understand the participants’ stories and more importantly understand the female participants themselves and their worlds.

The analysis of the empirical data was conducted through initial thematic coding, which was suggested by four pieces of research, two from acculturation theories, one related to power and one from consumption. The acculturation theories used in this analysis were drawn from Bourhis et al.’s (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) and Bhatia’s (2002) Dialogical Model of Acculturation (DMA). These two models provide important theoretical assumptions to understanding the data. The IAM argues that the country hosting a migration population will, to varying extents, be hostile and reluctant to allow migrants to assimilate. The most extreme outcome of this process is racism. Bhatia’s (2002) model represents a perspective that migrants and ethnic minorities are able, willing and do deliberately adapt their self-identities to comply with the cultural context they exist within. Acculturation, it was argued, can and has the ability to create marital tensions so it was important to recognise that this process leads to power renegotiation. Although Chapter Two provided a broad range of literature discussion on gender and power, it is Lukes’s (2005) three dimensions of power that seemed most appropriate. The rationale for this lies in his argument that power in decision making is often determined by a political agenda. The literature presented had already noted how acculturation conflicts were often based around power. As this thesis takes a feminist perspective it seems appropriate that the issue of power be considered in the initial thematic coding. Finally, the consumption theory was drawn from the works of Grant McCracken (1986) owing to his recognition that culture flowed to and from products onto individuals. Products become a symbolic embodiment of an individual’s, a group’s or a society’s culture. Furthermore, McCracken’s work lends itself to Keesing’s (1976) symbolic system of culture. With the identification of these four pieces of research the data was analysed.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the data findings were discussed with both the female participants and Nigerian friends, living in Britain, of the researcher. This allowed for further clarification and confirmation of the analysis.
The data analysis identified five themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis using the iterative inductive and deductive analytical approaches. These themes will be discussed in greater depth, along with related sub-themes that are part of and contribute to that specific overall theme. These five themes are:

1. Dreams, traumas and other migration stories
2. Who are you calling Nigger? The trials of acculturation
3. Are my children Black, British or what?
4. It’s important to be a good wife
5. Consumption

These themes shall now be discussed separately.

5.2 Finding 1: Dreams, traumas and other migration stories

_I always thought England was the land of milk and honey even since I was a child. It was something that we were brought up into to thinking, so when I came the excitement was there, but then reality came._

Patience

Migration was most commonly found to cause changes in connection to social structures, economic production, consumption patterns, household and family networks; these changes as a response to exposure to the new society. These changes although appearing to be beneficial mostly resulted in negative experiences. These changes will now be discussed further.

5.2.1 Onward to the land of milk and honey – the origins of migration

5.2.1.1 New hopes – wealth or freedom?
Findings

For the majority of the participants the decision to migrate was determined by the husband’s belief that migration would offer them opportunities for educational and economical empowerment. The need for the male Nigerian participants to empower themselves was inherently linked to their beliefs of what a man should and should not be. In all the interview material, what being a man entailed is made evidently clear: he is the provider of the household; provided the meat for the family table, which his wife would carefully and lovely cook in appreciation for his efforts.

Equally important for these male Nigerian participants is the need to be seen to be succeeding in the wider family and tribal context. Although the concept of tribes and tribal allegiance from a Western context is often misunderstood, in Nigeria the tribe represents a sense of identity, belonging and ethnicity. Migration is seen as a privilege, an honour bestowed on a chosen few and not to be ridiculed. Consequently, male participants often comment on how they had felt chosen, how their tribe’s honour rested on their shoulders. Migration represents a moment in their life, a calling in which they could demonstrate their skills and achieve their potential from a grateful British society.

Pre-migration trips to Britain only served to support the Nigerian males’ perceptions of Britain as a land of unlimited opportunity and wealth. For example, Angela comments on how her spouse, Bob, would tell her about the places he had visited, which she had only heard about. More importantly, on his return to Nigeria, Bob would provide symbolic goods of his achievements and success in terms of British products, such as Clark’s shoes; this type of narrative was shared with other male Nigerian participant. For example, Nathan and Kalvin both purchased football shirts and designer brand shirts for their initial return trips to Nigeria. They both viewed purchasing these items as a way of showing their achievements.

In contrast, the female Nigerian participants experienced migration very differently. The majority of these participants migrated with or shortly after their spouse. While in the presence
of their spouse, not one of the female Nigerian participants say that it was their decision to migrate; however, in later one-on-one interviews they reveal a very different migration story. In some instances, for example Edna and Samantha, it is the woman who claims she suggested migrating to Britain. In other instances, such as Sarah, their husband made passing reference to migration, which they eagerly endorsed. This endorsement, achieved through encouraging and cajoling their spouses into making the decision to migrate, was motivated by their own inner needs – a need for cultural freedom.

Although having already lived a number of years in Britain at the time of the interviews for this thesis, the majority of the female Nigerian participants, such as Selina, Edna Patience and Emma, discuss their desire to return to Nigeria, which contradicts their original motives for migrating. Post-colonial Nigeria was, for these female participants, a culturally oppressive society, a society where women were expected to be subservient to the men in their lives. For example, Nicola commented how Britain represented a sense of freedom to express herself, hence her desire to migrate.

Discussion

In wanting to provide for their family, the male Nigerian spouses claimed to have made the decision to migrate, consequently exhibiting Vogler’s (1998) view of masculinity derived from providing for the family. Migration for the Nigerian male participants offered them the opportunity for financial empowerment; this finding is consistent with the economic self-interest argument provided De Haan (1999). Yet economic interest was not the sole reason for migration. Supporting Lee’s (1966) Push–Pull theory, these men travelled to Britain also for educational reasons, believing that Britain offered a superior education system, and with it, career progression. The need to seek a British education is consistent with Mazrui’s (1978) finding that a university education remains a principle component of social status within the Nigerian community.
It would appear that a significant variable in the decision to migrate was the role and consumption of stereotypical British goods, such as Clark’s shoes. The display of these goods, as indicators of symbolic wealth, appeared to be an important influence in the decision to migrate. The Nigerian male, by delivering British products as gifts to his spouse back in Nigeria, demonstrated his economic strength and superiority over his spouse. While this finding is reminiscent of Mehta and Belk’s (1991) work on economic migrants, i.e. Indian workers moving into the city, our finding suggests more fundamental power being exercised. The displaying of goods serves two purposes in power negotiations between the couple. First, the goods are given as gifts offering a promise of a better life, which can be partially identified with the work of McCracken (1986, 1991). Secondly, using Lukes’s (2005) one-dimensional view of power, the Nigerian male presentation of gifts was exercised as a symbol of his power and his invitation to migrate to Britain. Making this invitation allowed these men to position themselves in authority, thus conforming to Elam and Chinuoya’s (2000) view of African male dominance in migration. In this way, the Nigerian female participants appeared to be powerless in their male spouse’s decision, not wanting to challenge the status quo of maintaining their traditional role of the wife (Baruch and Barnett, 1986).

Yet the idea that the female Nigerian spouses were disempowered by their spouses and their shared embodiment of Nigerian patriarchal culture is disputed by our findings. Instead of being disempowered, we must understand the role of these women in the migration process.

Immigration offered Nigerian female participants the opportunity for freedom, individuality outside the patriarchal constraints of Nigerian culture. Migration allowed these women to utilise their idiocentric self-concept of freedom and expression (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Instead of willingly being submissive to their spouses, it would appear that these women actively encouraged, both subtly and blatantly, a powerful influence over the decision to migrate. In contrast to their male spouses, these women appear to be using Lukes’s (2005) third dimension of power; that is, they had their own political agenda and attempted to control that agenda. Migration then offered them not only greater economic and academic opportunities, but also increased gender empowerment.
Some of these women view their completion of their education in Britain as a way of improving economic productivity. This need is also reflected in their desire to earn money and subsequently increase their power in their marital relationship. This need to use migration to achieve empowerment reflects previous research on power resource theory (Ferree, 1990). By earning money, these women knew they would be able to counter their spouses’ dominant role in the family, reflecting earlier work by Blood and Wolfe (1960). Although not apparent in this finding, this earning capability was used to assert their power, thus challenging Vogler’s (1998) perspective that earning does not enhance a woman’s power in the marital relationship.

It is important, however, to note that not all the Nigerian female participants behaved in this way. Those who travelled separately before getting married, for example Nicola, were in a position of independence, having been financially responsible for themselves. This finding challenges Houstoun et al.’s (1984) and Pedraza’s (1991) argument that women represent secondary migrants, following on from their male spouses’ initial migration. These women appeared to be more independent in their decisions, having been financially dependent on themselves; these women also tended to yield more power than their peers, supporting Caldwell, Kleppe and Henry (2007) view of resources and power. As a result, these women chose to migrate to Britain independently due to economic reasons, as well as having the opportunity to create a family, supporting Houstoun et al. (1994).

This discussion thus makes a number of important contributions. By focusing on the Nigerian woman’s story of migration, it has addressed Houstoun et al.’s (1984) recognition that migration research tends to favour the male. The recognition that the Nigerian females willingness to migrate is based upon, to varying extents, a need for empowerment develops further and addresses Mason’s (1987) and Pedraza’s (1991) call for further research in this area.

Finally, the question then arises – to what extent did these Nigerian men know that a power game was being played by their female spouses? From one perspective, the answer is not at
all; the Nigerian male typically made a suggestion to migrate (either prompted by or not his spouse) and his spouse supported it. Nigerian men believe they made the decision alone and that the women subtly influenced them. However, it is also important to consider to what extent the wife knowingly engaged with the idea of migrating with aim of empowering herself. While ultimately the Nigerian female participants did view migration as an empowering act, it does not appear to have been from the perspective of feeling disempowered as a woman living in Nigeria, in this particular instance. Instead, migration was an adventure and it would appear that the need for and achievement of empowerment and renegotiation of patriarchy within each couple’s marital relationships only emerged after they arrived in Britain.

5.2.2 Britain as the mother land – do you love me now?

Findings

A myth formulated by the British to justify the country’s status as an imperial power was the inherent belief that Britain was the mother to a broad range of eclectic countries, united in their gratefulness of their mother’s benevolence (Winder, 2004). Not surprisingly then Britain’s imperial and post-imperial connections to Nigeria were a key motivator in the participants choice of country to migrate to.

The perception of Britain as the motherland was one held by the majority of participants based upon various inferences. For example, Emma, Carol and Angela reminisce on being taught British history in their Nigerian schools and even aspiring to travel to Britain. This colonial view was often used as a means of distancing the participants from Nigerian culture, effectively relegating Nigerian culture to a lower status than British culture.

Of particular interest was how our participants, on the basis of gender, viewed Nigeria and Britain. For all the female Nigerian participants, with the exception of Patience and Julia, Britain was viewed as superior culture, and one that represented an ideal to be emulated,
copied and cherished. This is evident in Emma’s narrative of emulating a British accent, or to be more exact her desire to achieve the Queen’s English, reflected this desire, and Angela recalling stories of how wonderful Britain was from her Nigerian friends who had recently returned from trips when she was young. This desire to emulate and aspire to belong and be accepted into British White society effectively contributed to our female Nigerian participants’ wishes to migrate. Perhaps naively, they see themselves as welcomed and appreciated by British Whites for recognising their submission to the ‘superior’ culture. This was a culture, as Emma noted, in which women dressed beautifully in skirts and white shirts when they went to work in Nigeria. What was not visible to the Nigerian women before they migrated was that these same British White women were serving their male bosses in a similar subservient manner.

In contrast, the Nigerian male participants, such as Steve, Julian, and Bradley, often ridiculed their spouses’ assimilation into British culture. For these men, British White culture was not seen as the dominant or superior culture, but instead an alien, restrictive culture that only served to offer them opportunities for its own benefit. The reasons for this were not immediately clear but tended to focus on a reaction to perceived negative stereotypes of the Black man. The male Nigerian participants had been socialised in Nigeria and Britain to subjugate themselves to British White men, to emulate a model that their own tribal socialisation did not offer.

**Discussion**

One observed instantly the initial opinion of Britain as a surrogate home for both the female and male Nigerian participants. The post-colonial opinion of Britain and all its glory appears developed and devised by a colonial past and the indoctrination of British superiority. The view held by the immigrants was commonly associated with the perception of the West as the superior other, and Britain as the land of opportunity and virtue. This view is discussed by Lee (1996) in his Push-Pull Theory. Colonial history often played a significant influence on views of migration. British ideologies were taught to these Nigerian nationals at a tender age, which
led to a preconception of Britain being the superior society, which they were then driven to explore. This finding supports Adepoju’s (1995) earlier recognition of the links between Britain and Nigeria.

In light of this, as seen from the findings, there was a significant difference in the opinions of male and female Nigerian participants. The women, being confined by patriarchy-dominant Nigerian culture (Elam and Chinouya, 2000) viewed Britain in adoration. However, it is important to mention that during the course of the interviews, these opinions at times were contradicted. Their romanticisation of British White culture led them to see Britain as a yardstick against which to measure their own individuality and freedom, attributed by its individualistic society (Hofstede and Bond, 1984). This finding develops further our understanding of migration and migration narratives surrounding the women from one who follows her male spouse (Houstoun et al., 1984; Pedraza, 1991) or is motivated by the need to have a family (Houstoun et al., 1984) to one seeking a reconnection to a mythical motherland.

In comparison, the Nigerian male immigrants viewed Britain as a place for financial empowerment and the opportunity to provide for their family, thus achieving their gender identity as the provider, and patriarchal position as the head of the family (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 1999). One could argue that this view of patriarchal positioning in terms of Nigerian male patriarchy may be derived from British colonial rule.

5.2.3 Is this it? The shock of arrival

Findings

The combination of aspirational dreams of emulating a superior culture in a prosperous motherland (for the female Nigerian participants) and the belief that wealth and success was there for the taking by the clever Black man (for the male Nigerian participants) has important consequences on each Nigerian couple’s arrival in Britain.
The male Nigerian participants struggled to deliver the promises that had underpinned their migration fantasies. Rather than a land of milk and honey, many of the participants struggled in low-paid jobs, often working three or four jobs in a day. Edna’s description of her spouse Chris every day doing ‘work, work, work, work’ was common among the male Nigerians interviewed, such as Nathan, Julian and Jeremy. Qualifications obtained in Nigeria, were viewed as unsatisfactory in Britain. Degrees from British universities, rather than offering opportunities for well-paid executive jobs, were ignored; the taint of racism was evident to all our participants.

Yet in this moment the male Nigerian participants still clung on to their cultural beliefs as the provider. Chris talks about how he had ‘bought my house’ (author’s emphasis) for his family, while Ben describes his need to ‘get things organised for her and the children’. In these and many other examples, these participants actively seek out consumption experiences not only to justify and validate the reasons for migration, but more importantly to support and perpetuate their cultural belief in themselves as the provider. Regardless of how many jobs they undertook or how low paid it was, they felt they were providing for their family and, consequently, fulfilling their cultural duties.

In contrast, the female Nigerian participants’ dreams of prosperity, with their male spouses freely providing them with products, were soon met with the realities of living in Britain. Their spouses struggles in gaining employment often forced the female Nigerian participants to seek employment. To their spouses, this action, besides representing the economic realities of living in Britain, also represented a deeper sense of shame, based upon not being able to fully provide for their families, such as Sarah, Angela and Selina. For the majority of our female Nigerian participants, employment offered them the freedom they sought, and in many cases, and had been the antecedent for their migration. As Nicola comments, regarding having to seek employment, ‘when that option was there I took it!’ This perspective is shared by a number of our female Nigerian participants, such as Selina, Carol, and Emma.
Yet migration and the freedom sought by these Nigerian women came at a price; the reality that migration meant not only the freedom offered through employment but the realities of having to manage the home as well as full-time paid employment. Realities of migration often involved walking miles back home with the shopping (Emma) or managing household chores after a long day at work (Julia).

Yet, even at these difficult moments, the realities of migration brought together the participants. The decision to migrate combined with the economic realities encouraged, coerced and required them to work together as a unit. The female spouse, rather than protesting at the difficulties of living in Britain, now had to support and encourage her spouse. As Edna notes, returning back to Nigeria would represent a betrayal of their migrationary dreams – “When I discussed this with him, he said ‘Ah, how can we go back with nothing achieved, impossible!’ This belief is shared by the majority of our Nigerian participants, such as Emma, Patience and Angela. It would appear that migration brought with it closeness in their marital relationships through their support of the partners.

Discussion

The shock of arriving in Britain proved to be disappointing for the Nigerian male participants and in contrast to the excitement experienced by the female Nigerian participants. Faced with the colonial opinions of the motherland, Nigerian male immigrants were swiftly disillusioned, which was attributed to British White racism.

Perhaps one source of strength for the Nigerian women was their ability to work (one of the reasons for their migration). From the female perspective, the onset of employment enabled them to get closer to their aspirations of individuality and freedom from the confinement of Nigerian culture, which confirms Walsh and Schulman’s (2001) argument that immigrant women seek opportunities in Western society. However, the realities of employment and migration left these women working, running a home and, often, bringing up a young family, reflecting Ehrenreich and Hochschild’s (2002) finding of immigrant women undertaking

Consequently, the Nigerian female immigrants’ work experiences offered opportunities that indirectly and directly led to cultural identity change, especially in terms of gender. As a result of employment, gender roles and boundaries were redefined and renegotiated, supporting Potuchek’s (1992) earlier observations. As a result of initially gaining employment, these women, although bringing income into the family, have yet to claim their financially backed power status, which is instead viewed by their male spouse as supplementary; this complements Vogler’s (1998) view of power and resources.

The violation of the cultural values and norms traditionally associated with women has not resulted in reduced marital happiness as posited by Axelson (1963). Rather, the male spouses, with their reduced sense of self, were supported by their wives who seek to assuage their feelings of shame. The women, in supporting their partners and fulfilling their position as wife, reaffirm their gender roles based upon Nigerian cultural patriarchy (Daley, 2007). This finding contributes to our understanding of migrant women and the sacrifices they make in supporting their family.

5.3 Finding 2: Who are you calling Nigger? The trials of acculturation

*I mean, what is the saying? ‘When in Rome you behave like the Romans’, don’t you? ... That’s what one has to do to survive in this country.

Emma

The title of this finding, it is hoped, is as challenging for the reader as the acculturation experiences were for the Nigerian participants. This finding is also challenging in its complexity, inherently linked into wider issues of identity (discussed separately in the next finding) and the longitudinal nature of acculturation, i.e. how long our participants have been living in Britain, and their changing and evolving experiences.
5.3.1 ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’

The use of the eighteen-century anti-slavery slogan ‘Am I not a man and a brother’ seems an appropriate title to describe the acculturation experiences of the male Nigerian participants. The slogan, often shown with a Wedgewood plaque of a Black African man in chains, subjugated and looking upwards for this freedom, is both a powerful symbol and an equally powerful metaphor to summarise the acculturation experiences of the men that participated in this study. This section will explore these emergent themes in greater depth.

Findings

5.3.1.1 Who are you making monkey chants at?

The location of racism as the opening finding in this section on acculturation issues experienced by the male Nigerian participants reflects its dominance, both stated and implied, in their narratives. All of the male Nigerian participants repeatedly returned to this subject, expressing in varying degrees of anger, in the case of Bob, Bradley and Nathan, or resignation, for Steve and Edward. Racism appeared to be so endemic within our male Nigerians’ narratives that it was often difficult to assess whether it had reduced in their daily experiences over the decades they had lived in Britain. For instance, Julian recalls on his first bus journey as a newly arrived university student to London being puzzled at whom a group of White teenagers was making monkey sounds, while Jeremy describes the regular taunts and potential violence from his White neighbours.

Racism was also prevalent in employment opportunities, a main reason why they had migrated in the first place. University degrees earned at prestigious British universities are largely deemed worthless in the employment market, as prejudice began with writing the participants’ surnames on applications and thus revealing they are not of Anglo-Saxon descent, as experienced by Nathan. Only one participant, Chris, could name a British White person who
had helped them get into the employment. Otherwise, more mundane jobs awaited them, such was the case for Bob.

It is important to consider in these lived experiences and narratives to what extent these participants saw themselves as victims. This is difficult to determine, because to categorise these participants as victims is to acknowledge their pain and sense of defeat in their lives. Certainly these participants acknowledged the pain of racism in their lives, their anger and at times resignation to it. Yet, an outcome of this was to be more resilient in asserting their Nigerian identities. This finding is explained in the following sections.

**Discussion**

The experiences with racism are perhaps not surprising. Gilroy (1990) recognised that British Whites see immigrants as the enemy within, reflecting Britain’s insular outlook (Richmond, 1988). The participants’ narratives supported this perspective. It should be noted that while many of these narratives refer back to their initial time of migration, all the participants, to varying extents, still feel that Britain is a racist country.

The consequences of racism on the Nigerian participants were numerous. Barrette’s et al.’s (2004) earlier observation that racism has the ability to deny an immigrant their heritage, culture and religion was supported by the findings. The experience of racism left the male Nigerian participants with a sense of disempowerment (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003), leading to a wider sense of cultural marginalisation and withdrawal from British society. While Lindridge and Dhillon (2005) noted this among Punjabi Indian Sikhs living in Britain, who resorted to alcoholism, the participants of this study simply withdraw from British White culture.

Racism then aims to erode immigrants of their sense of identity – as men, as Nigerians, as fathers, relating back to Baumister’s (1986) categorisation of culturally derived self-identities. In this instance, the Nigerian male’s sense of public self, how he wants to be seen, is directly
challenged. Unlike Triandis (1989), who argued that the middle classes are less likely to access a sense of collective self, the Nigerian male participants were more likely to access this through wider community links. Hence, this finding adds to our knowledge of how the collective self is accessed among immigrants.

Linked to the above point is how racism helps to reaffirm a sense of ethnic identity, reflecting Hogg and Vaughan’s (2002) and McGuire’s (1988) work on cultural affirmation through group affiliation; that is, the context of racism in their daily lives.

A consequence of racism was the need for these Nigerian male immigrants to redefine themselves; to empower themselves and offer tangible evidence to support their decisions to migrate in the first place. For example, buying a house not only reaffirmed their position as the man providing for his family, it also reasserted his ethnic identity and masculinity (Thompson, 1993). Consequently, for the Nigerian male migrants, the house takes on a far more symbolic meaning than being simply a house. Using Lukes’s (2005) power dimensions, the house purchase comes to symbolise not only a sense of economic achievement (offering tangible proof to support their reason for migration) but more importantly a political stance – ‘I’m Black and I ain’t going nowhere’. This political stance identifies with Lukes’s (2005) third dimension of power and, perhaps more importantly, reaffirms Christian’s (2002) argument that being Black in British society represents the need to construct an identity arising from political antagonism and cultural struggle.

While the issue of racism is prevalent for the Nigerian female participants, its significance in their narratives is less dominant. Although racism is experienced, such as in the context of their places of employment, the emphasis of racism in their narratives focuses on supporting their spouse. While this reaction to racism does not appear to have been reviewed in the literature, the actions of these women are a direct consequence of the experiences of their spouses. In other words, the woman sacrificed and minimised her own experiences to support her male spouses’ position in the home. The woman’s burdening of her own and her spouse’s
experiences of racism then appears to reduce the acculturation stress noted by Ward and Kennedy (2001).

5.3.1.2 Demasculinisation

Findings

A consequence of racism is demasculinisation, defined as the removal of masculine characteristics or qualities. The inability to achieve meaningful employment, irrespective of skill, racism in their daily lives and the realities of migration all appeared to have contributed to demasculinating the male Nigerian participants.

It should be noted that this theme is not openly discussed or owned by the male Nigerian participants, but is instead implied through their narratives and observable during the research interviews. Behaviour interpretation, and to this I mean interpretation of body language as well as conduct, is highly subjective, but with this caveat the theme of demasculinisation will be discussed.

During the interviews with each set of Nigerian immigrants, as a married couple, it is apparent that the male Nigerian participants either embellish or assert their sense of masculine identity. This sometimes manifests is a need to assert what the role of a married women was in the family home, typically reflecting the high Nigerian cultural value placed on the submissive wife, as in the case of Edward and Bradley, or the apparent need to dominate certain conversation topics, such as Steve when talking about his and his spouse’s, Emma, initial experience of arriving in Britain, or Edward when talking about his hardship in finding work.

Discussion
The issue of demasculinisation for the Nigerian male participants reflects an interesting finding. Daley’s (2007) description of the African male being the proud head of his household is directly re-emphasised within the findings of this thesis. The origins of this demasculinisation lie in broken migration dreams and subsequent experiences of racism. The response to this, as shown by the Nigerian male participants, is supported by Wade’s (1994) and Bowman and Howard’s (1985) research into how males in ethnic minority groups develop an awareness of ethnic obstacles and actively seek equality to the dominant group. The sense of demasculinisation felt by the Nigerian male participants is also similar to Parham and Helms’s (1985) recognition that African-American males see their standing in American society as being lower than their spouses.

The findings presented here add then to our understanding of the Black male migrants’ experiences of migration, as well as our understanding of their sense of ethnic identity development.

5.3.1.3 Stress, depression and broken dreams

Findings

During the process of the research interviews, it became apparent that the male Nigerian immigrants suffer more from acculturation stress than their spouses. This typically manifests through feelings of not belonging, which are heightened by their experiences of racism. The notion of travelling to Britain in the quest of financial empowerment, thus providing for their family, was quickly dispelled. As previously stated, these men, often on the basis of British colonial ideology, viewed Britain as the land of opportunities. They viewed Britain a place to achieve their career and financial goals. Britain was the ‘new world’ for them, a place for them and their families to carve out their own unique space. Britain ultimately was seen as a place where anything was possible. The preconceived notions of Britain only served to inflate their expectations and, as a result of the racism they experienced, these expectations were swiftly dismantled by the realities of British White society and culture. As a result, these men were
left resentful, disappointed, frustrated and suspicious of British White society, as evidenced by Bob’s frequent discussions of the hardship and frustration he faced while trying to find work and understand the culture.
Discussion

The Nigerian male participants’ experiences of racism in the workplace and in British society at large threaten and undermine their gender identity; a key contributing variable is their struggle to gain meaningful employment. While not openly discussed, it is inferred from their narratives and behaviours that these experiences have left lasting psychological scars. This observation supports earlier findings into the psychological impact racism has on an individual’s well being (Dion, et al., 1992; Moghaddam, Ditto and Taylor, 1990; Pak et al., 1991; Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994).

Another key determinant of these participants’ stress levels was the difficulty in achieving their migration dreams of opportunities. While De Haan (1999) and Mincer (1978) have noted migration is often motivated by the promise of higher wages, these participants struggle to achieve this. Compounding this inability to achieve their dreams is the difficulties of simply feeling welcome in British society; itself producing challenges and barriers, as noted previously by Simon (2001). In contrast to Remennick (2005), who argued that migrants with low social capital suffer on arrival in their new host country, our findings suggest that even when the migrants had high social capital (in terms of speaking English, having an education based on the English system or having a British university degree) they still encountered social structural challenges that held them back.

Consequently, our findings develop further Christian’s (2002) perspective that British Black identity is not found but made, by recognising the stress that the migration process produces.

5.3.1.4 Why should I change? The journey from acculturation to separation

Findings

The majority of our male Nigerian participants have been living in Britain for the more than twenty years, with the exception of Nathan who has been in Britain for 15 years. The length of
time spent living in Britain has provided opportunities to reflect upon their narratives in relation to how their acculturation narratives had evolved and changed over this period of time.

Initial migration stories reflect the willingness and desire to assimilate into British culture; after all, Britain was the motherland. No matter how reluctant the participants are to admit to this, their desire to succeed requires, to varying extents, assimilation. There was often talk during the interviews of ‘the joy of speaking the Queen’s English’, ‘opportunities to study at good universities’ and ‘high standard of living’. However, unbeknownst to them at the time, these goals were slowly attacked by racism.

Unlike their female spouses, as a result of racism, these Nigerian men have found it difficult to acculturate. British White society’s perceived unwillingness to accept them as equals has led to reactionary responses, with the men increasingly relying on and identifying with Nigerian culture. Nigerian culture becomes a means of emotional and psychological support, manifested though keeping their culture in terms of language, food and media consumption. One also finds that they adamantly maintain their cultural views on the family and often view British White culture as the ‘evil other’, in terms of family structure. For example, Bob often talks of the depravity of the British White family. In this way, rather than acculturating, these men have relied on their Nigerian culture as a protective mechanism. This is not to say that they could not navigate themselves among British White society; all of the participants speak English at home and engage with British White people on a regular basis. However, this was done for their own benefit, such of career progression. Julian and Steve often talk of their British White colleagues as ‘acquaintances’, removing the emotive value from the relationship. In doing so, these Nigerian male participants are able to protect themselves through the process of separation rather than integration.

The outcome of this is the male Nigerian participants have gradually shifted from wanting to acculturate to wanting to separate, which is reflective of Berry’s (1980) acculturation outcomes. While these participants have never fully wanted to assimilate into British White
culture, the sense of rejection they felt was evident. For example, Bob describe their disappointment and resignation at not being accepted into British society. The identity of being a migrant now becomes one that was self-prescribed for them, as Steve and Chris blatantly acknowledge themselves during their interviews.

**Discussion**

The gradual shift from wanting to acculturate to wanting separate is reflective of two acculturation theories: the works of Bourhis et al. (1997) and of Berry (1980).

The sense of rejection experienced by our Nigerian male immigrants is reflective of Bourhis et al.’s (1997) Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM). In this model, Bourhis et al. (1997) argued that acculturation was not determined as much by the immigrants’ willingness to acculturate but the majority’s willingness to allow them to acculturate. Britain’s relationship with immigrants has already been noted in this chapter (for example, Christian, 2002; Mercer, 1992; Richmond, 1988). In the findings presented here, the consequences of racism followed the IAM.

The findings here also show a powerful and relevant connection of the IAM to Berry’s (1980) Bi-dimensional Model of Acculturation (BMA). Where the IAM provides the identification of the consequences of acculturation, BMA provides an identification of the outcome – separation. In this case, this separation leads to the reaffirmation of a Black identity, separated and unapologetic, reflective of Agier’s (1995) and Fanon’s (1986) observations that Black identity is formed as a counter to racist images.

**5.3.1.5 From now on all things will be Nigerian**

**Findings**
A consequence of labelling themselves as migrants is the reversion back to a Nigerian ethnic identity. As noted earlier, Nigeria is a construction of British imperialism in Africa that forcibly created a country out of a diverse range of tribes. Yet all the male Nigerians describe themselves as being Nigerian and not British; perhaps more interestingly is their lack of identification of themselves on the basis of a tribal identity, a practice that is common in Nigerian society for men to publicly state to others. The reasons for this appear to be a reaction to racism and their wider acculturation process. An acknowledgement of their tribal identities to other Nigerians would be divisive; a form of publicly separating yourself from a shared sense of unity, away from the collective. This perspective was supported by comments made by Steve, Ben and Bradley.

An outcome of this shared identity is a heightened sense of cultural identification with Nigerian cultural values, especially patriarchy. Narratives surrounding what a man should provide for his female spouse and children are numerous and expressed with a heightened sense of belief and self-righteousness, as demonstrated by Bob and Julian. Suffice to say these men place themselves in a position of dominance over their spouses, a position they never felt was inappropriate or oppressive, merely a reflection of their Nigerian cultural values being acted in their home.

In addition, these men, in their quest for reassurance, have sought ways to re-intertwine themselves with Nigerian culture. In this, they have found solace in attending community meeting, such as Steve and Ben. In attending this meeting, they are able to engage in the Nigerian community reinforcing their cultural identity. In doing so, they are able to substantiate themselves as men.

Finally, the issue of being Nigerian raised further issues of what it means to be Black in British society. The term Black, as noted earlier, is used to define people who do not identify themselves as White and who do identify themselves as having African or West Indian origins, symbolising a wider unity in the face of oppression. It was interesting to note that the concept of being Black is not evident among our participants. Instead, there is a clear
demarcation of how they identify themselves as being Black, i.e. African, versus everyone else. In particular prejudices against African-Caribbean are clearly evident; Steve and Bradley portray African-Caribbeans using negative stereotypes, such as ‘trouble maker’. The issue of what constitutes being Black reflects wider in-group prejudices and possibly the realities of being a minority in British society. Quite simply, seeing yourself as a victim of racism may be alleviated by seeing others as inferior to yourself.

Discussion

The discussion regarding this finding is inherently inter-linked with the previous discussion on acculturation. Also, the discussion on the need to affirm a Nigerian identity has been discussed in the previous sections and only requires a brief discussion here.

The finding that the Nigerian male participants do not view themselves on a tribal but national identity basis, i.e. Nigerian, is particularly interesting. Identifying themselves as Nigerian provides these men with a sense of closeness to their compatriots, which adhere to Phinney’s (1990) argument national identification creates a sense of psychological closeness with an individual’s ethnic group. The need for this psychological closeness is also reflective of Fangen’s (2007) discussion on ethnicity as reflecting a sense of belonging. The issue of a tribal identity serves no purpose to these men existing in a society where they were not valued. Tribal identities are only relevant when one is in the majority; hence for these participants, this aspect of their identity is only emphasised when they return to Nigeria.

A consequence of racism, for these men, is the emergence of in-group prejudices. The term ‘in-group’ is given here to refer to the Black diasporas, per se. In the findings the issue of prejudices is evident in the men’s narratives regarding African-Caribbeans. This latter group, whose ethnic identity is embodied in its history of racism (Welch, 2009), has lost aspects of their original African culture. In contrast, Nigerian culture, with its many languages and cultures, is something to be proud of, to be cherished. The origins of this in-group prejudice lay in a response to the racism that the Nigerian males have experienced themselves and a
sense of pride in their Nigerian culture and identity as it provides a means to counter the perceived devaluing of their culture by British society. This finding supports Harris’s (1994) earlier observations of a need for ethnic minorities to distinguish themselves in society and sustain positive definitions of themselves, which is sought even though it is detrimental to other Black diasporas.

This discussion then provides further insights into what constitutes and how we understand Black identity and, this challenges Malik’s (2002) explanation of Black identity as transcending a number of variables, including social class, religion and gender. Instead, it would appear that racism and its consequences in creating in-group prejudices needs to be included in any explanation of Black identity.

5.3.2 ‘I’ve got life, I’ve got my freedom, I’ve got life’

The closing lines of Nina Simone’s song ‘Ain’t got no/I’ve got life’ represents the tensions in the narratives of our female Nigerian participants. The findings illustrate a sense of freedom that migration offered these women; however, what begins to emerge from their narratives is how compromised this sense of freedom has become. Initial joys of migration have been replaced with the economic and social realities of living in Britain. This section aims to explore how acculturation has affected these women, how their relationships with their male spouses encourages and forces compromises from these women, and concludes with how this culminates in their everyday lives.

5.3.2.1 Racism does not make you a victim

Findings

Although all our female Nigerian participants had been confronted by racism from walking down the road, as for Emma, Edna, Sarah and Nicola, to their working life, as far Patience, Angela and Carol, how they experienced and dealt with these encounters differ markedly from
their male counterparts. Unlike their male counterparts, who accept racism as part of their employment, as in the case of Steve and Nathan, these women appear to be stronger and more resilient. When Emma experienced racism in the guise of the denial of an employment promotion she resolved her angst in the knowledge that the employer eventually went bankrupt. Although she credits this to an act of God, her need to seek understanding and absolution was absent from her male counterparts.

Alternative strategies towards countering racism have been to actively undertake to reaffirm and demonstrate their self-worth to themselves and others; for instance, Emma and Patience both established their own businesses and have been successful.

Where their male counterparts resolve their experiences of racism by withdrawing and feeling hostility towards Britain, Emma, Angela and Edna instead revert back to the colonialist ideologies of what it means to be British. Racism, thus, becomes a small aspect of a small part of British culture. Ironically, the racial politics that underpinned Britain’s imperial occupation of Nigerian has not been recognised by them, instead they justify their overall experiences of living in Britain and focus on the more positive experiences of daily life. For example, Emma and Julia express their career opportunities in Britain and their relaxed nature in being classified as British.

It is interesting to observe how the female Nigerian participants manage their spouse’s experiences of racism. In some instances, the Nigerian women express anger towards their spouses’ experiences, by imposing a sense of pragmatism into their narratives. For example, Edna reminded her spouse that his story of a White colleague helping him was more fantasy than reality. At other times, participants simply held their spouse’s stories of racism, offering verbal support and physical support in the form of touch.

For the women, the colonial perspective of Britain as the land of opportunity was a dream but the reality produced something completely different. Racism took precedent over their dreams; their hopes and aspirations were realised as disappointment, hardship and, at times, despair.
Some of the women noted the hardship that they faced, not only for themselves but also their spouses. However, as a result, rather than becoming victims to their situation, they resolved to try to find ways to improve their situation. This saw them venturing out to claim their dreams of freedom, individuality and success for themselves. Where their male spouse have resigned themselves to their experiences of British White society, these women are far more determined to achieve their goals; for example, Carol, who identifies her adaptation of her behaviour in order to achieve her career goals.

**Discussion**

Although racism is viewed as hindering to the Nigerian male participants, it only acts to motivate the Nigerian female immigrants. The origins of this resilience are unclear but may lie in a belief that racism is a small aspect of living in Britain, which is countered by the benefits of empowerment. As Cross (1978) noted, one way of dealing with racism is to take a pride in oneself, something that all our Nigerian female participants expressed. Although they have all experienced racism at work, and the difficulties this brought, unlike the problems facing women immigrants proposed by Dion and Dion’s (2001), these women keep fighting and becoming stronger.

While Christian (2002) talked about Black identities in Britain having to be born of struggle, these women have used their employment opportunities to reassert their views of not being victims and as a result they appear stronger and resilient. As Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford (1999) noted previously, employment enables these women to gain a sense of control over their lives, and if this means experiencing racism than that is a price that has to be paid.

Our findings, thus, reveal an important difference between the genders and their ways of addressing racism. While the men appear to engage in actively detaching from experiences of racism and removing themselves from situations in which racism is possible, their spouses actively engage with different contexts. Racism is deemed to be a fact of life, unpleasant but not one that they are going to be held back by.
5.3.2.2 Change and adapt, but never lose sight of who you are!

Findings

Acculturation for the Nigerian female immigrant appears to be far easier than for their male counterparts. A greater sense of freedom arises from migration and resilience towards racism has enabled these women to submerge themselves in British White society. British White culture is viewed as equality-driven; even though these women have suffered from racism, they have been able to negotiate themselves along the parameters of British White culture in order to achieve their goals, i.e. individuality and freedom. For example, Sarah, Patience and Carol all note issues of racism; however, they do not feel that it has prevented them being successful in terms of their careers. Even within the family unit itself, these women are able to distinguish their own identity from that of the family, in terms of home versus work life, a distinction that their male spouses struggle to achieve.

Acculturation is simply another means of adapting to and succeeding in British society. The majority of the female Nigerians (with the exceptions of Nicola and Carol) willingly discussed how they consumed, adapted and used aspects of British life. For example, the Nigerian women engage in watching British television, such as Edna, Selina and Samantha, dressing in western clothing, such as Emma, Carol and Selina, and cooking British or European foods, such as Emma, Patience and Carol).

This active, cultural engagement with British White society has not necessarily reflected in the participants’ sense of national identity. For example, when Emma identifies herself as British it is reflective of her desire to live in Britain before she migrated. In contrast, Nicola and Selina actively engage in aspects of British culture but inherently identify themselves as Nigerian, while Patience identified herself as part of a diasporas.
Any sense of national identity is possibly explained by these women’s ability to successfully culturally negotiate disparate contexts, i.e. by constructing multiple identities, a negotiation that their male counterparts struggle to achieve. The construction of multiple identities can be divided into two categories: one that emulates traditional Nigerian culture and another that emulates British White culture. In creating multiple identities, the Nigerian women are themselves able to circumnavigate the boundaries between Nigerian and British White culture. As a result they are far more acculturated than their male partners in terms of food consumption, media usage, clothing, and even their outlook on gender. Consequently, the female Nigerian participants are more willing to engage in the wider White community in order to integrate. For example, Emma and Angela are aware of their cultural identity and seem very comfortable in themselves even while they endeavour to ‘explore all that Britain had to offer’. In this way, they want to be seen as being able adapt into mainstream society; they did not want to be seen as ‘local’.

Interestingly the issue of national identity also reflects a marked difference in tribal identities among the Nigerian female participants. Where their male spouses often downplay their tribal identities, the women often express it. This expression, often in the form of mockery, is only expressed in the one-on-one interviews, without their spouse. Stories include how certain behaviours, such as eating specific types of Nigerian food, are stereotypical of that spouse’s tribe. For example, Emma comments on her spouse’s preference to eat fish on a regular basis as opposed to meat as typical of the Ibo tribe. This behaviour, when explored with the participants, is explained as loving examples of marital humour. An alternative perspective is to explain this mockery as a power advantage arising from acculturation. By reducing her spouse to tribal stereotypes, the Nigerian woman effectively distances herself from a wider Nigerian cultural perspective, suggesting her acculturation has empowered her in her own sense of identity.

Engagement with Nigerian culture is utilised a means of support and identification purposes. Yet even in these engagements, the female Nigerians are selective in how they engaged; for example, Patience is willing to attend community meetings but only if she can dress as she
wants to. Selina, Julia and Sarah all appear proud of their culture and have found ways to exhibit their culture in mainstream society, whether by wearing traditional clothes, as Selina does, or by eating traditional Nigerian meals, like Patience.

These women’s ability to engage with Nigerian culture is equally matched by their ability to engage with British White culture (with the exception of Emma who described herself and behaviours as recognisable to British Whites). More specifically, at times the Nigerian women talked reflectively, using British White women as a reference point to identify how their own behaviours emulate them and how they differ. This reflection does not represent a need ‘to become White’, rather it observes the rules and codes of conduct required to engage in British White society; this is evident in Carol’s narrative on attending work social events as a means of fitting in with her work colleagues. The need to fit in is often reflected in the Nigerian women’s consumption behaviours. For example, the cloths that Emma, Carol and Angela purchase or Angel, Edna and Carol drinking alcohol; the consumption of these products are generally frowned upon within the Nigerian community in Britain.

It is important to note, however, that some of the Nigerian female participants, such as Patience and Selina, do endeavour to find ways to move away from the ideologies of colonialism and, unsurprisingly, behave in ways that separate themselves from mainstream society. In this way, they are not resolutely confined to their cultural positions, instead they are resolved to adopt roles that put themselves in positions of authority, challenging the notion of the British White superiority, thus empowering themselves. This is evidenced by Selina when talking about and discussing her culture at work.

**Discussion**

The Nigerian women appear to handle racism in different ways to their spouses.

Interestingly, one difference in their acculturation experiences is their sense of national identity. While they saw themselves, to varying extents, as either British or Nigerian, or
British and Nigerian, the importance of these identities appears not to be as significant as for their spouses. This is evident in how they use humour to describe their male spouses on the basis of tribal identities. This finding illustrates either a stronger sense of identity (in not needing to state their Nigerianness) or not feeling as committed to their Nigerian community. A lack of commitment to their Nigerian identity, and thus community, may be identified with Tzuriel and Klein’s (1997) argument surrounding ethnicity and self-identification.

The origins of this recognition of their ethnic identity, or lack of it, may be connected to their acculturation style. Unlike their male spouses, who tend to favour a separation strategy, these Nigerian women’s acculturation reflects their ability to construct multiple identities. Multiple identities, an acculturation outcome identified by Bhatia (2002), is evident in their narratives, reflecting a wider renegotiation of the hierarchical order. For example, their employment offers opportunities for culturally assigned gender roles to be renegotiated (Dona and Ferguson, 2004), as the women become a source of family income. Although these women do hold multiple roles, unlike the earlier findings of Noh et al. (1992) and Ehrenreich and Hochschild’s (2002), these women do not complain. After all, employment has offered them an opportunity to gain control over their lives, supporting Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford’s (1999) findings. This control directly challenges and shows how far marital relations have changed from Axelson’s (1963) association of the woman as the homemaker.

5.3.2.3 The myth of returning home

Findings

All the Nigerian participants, regardless of gender, express an equal desire ‘to return home’ and live in Nigeria. This desire is expressed by all of our participants as a form of resolving the acculturation tensions they feel and as means of securely distancing themselves from British White society. By returning home, participants would be able to justify the hardships of acculturation and return to Nigeria triumphant in succeeding.
Yet, when this topic was queried during all the research interviews, only two couples (Emma and Steve, and Julian and Julia) have actually made any reasonable, practical and tangible plans. For the remaining participants who talk of returning home to Nigeria, it appears to remain a fantasy.

**Discussion**

The myth of returning home to Nigeria represents a number of interrelated themes that have been discussed so far. The use of the words ‘home’ and ‘Nigeria’ are ones often used by the Nigerian participants. It is also this use of words that reveal the meaning behind this need. The discussions so far have continually illustrated the destructive role of racism on the Nigerian males, and the subsequent sense of not belonging or being valued within British White society. To return home to Nigeria to live represents a need to conclude their migration story and reflects their original reasons for migrating, such as opportunities and increased earnings.

This need also represents a defence mechanism for the men to cope with the acculturation stress noted earlier. The idea of returning serves to protect their psychological well-being, reflecting Ward and Kennedy (2001).

Yet this need to return home represents a myth. As noted in the previous findings, only two couples have made any serious effort to re-establish themselves in Nigeria. It appears that the Nigerian women are less keen on returning to Nigeria. This finding is reminiscent of Lukes’s (2005) third dimension of power, with the women’s political agenda being identified as not wanting to go back to the cultural confinement of the patriarchal structure of Nigeria.

**5.3.3 What does being British mean to me? I really don’t know and I was born here**

The purpose of this section is two-fold. First, it presents the narratives of the British White participants on their perceptions of their own cultural identities. Secondly, it offers a reflection of the similarities and differences between the two sample groups. This reflection will
illustrate the differences that are apparent between being born into British White culture and an immigrant living in Britain.

5.3.3.1 That’s a tough one, what does it mean to be British?

Findings

The concept of what exactly constitutes being British was a topic that all the White participants find perplexing. Indeed, raising this theme reflects a wider struggle to identify with being British. For some, it means not being Irish, Scottish or Welsh (the three other countries that form the United Kingdom with England) and thus when asked about Britain, Larry, for instance, instantly refers to being English. Beyond this the British White participants struggle to identify what it means to be British; this is typified by Kendra, who admits that she struggles to even think of an answer to the theme.

What does emerge from the interviews is the related theme of what it means to be British in terms of racism. Interestingly, this topic is prompted by the participants themselves and not the researcher. Larry associates the term British to having connotations to the British Nationalist Party and subsequently to issues of racism. The association with a British identity and racism is also indicated by Justine and Luke, who both admit that being proud to be British might be seen as ‘prejudiced’ or racist. This confusion over what a British identity means and associations with racism is shared with other participants, to varying extents.

The extent to which racism being raised as a theme, along with a shamefulness associated with being British, was induced by the interviewer being a second-generation Black Nigerian woman is unclear. From one perspective, these participants may feel guilt over their own knowledge of racism in British history and society; admitting to these associations may be a way of addressing White guilt (over slavery, imperialism, Britain’s racist history to immigrants and so on). Alternatively, participants may feel comfortable enough with the researcher to admit to this aspect of British identity objectively.
Discussion

The difficulties that the British White participants have in identifying what constitutes British White culture is, perhaps, not surprising. For example, De Mooij (2004) speculated that individuals are part of a culture and, therefore, asks if the dominant majority would be aware of their culture. After all, as the majority they have not had a need to question their cultural identity because it is never challenged. When it is challenged, as the narratives show, the tendency is to return to the issues surrounding racism. This finding reflects the earlier discussions on exactly what constitutes British identity (such as Mercer, 1992 and Richmond, 1988).

An alternative to the British White participants’ inability to categorise British culture may be because of perceived ethnicity. Quite simply, during the interviews, the British White participants were talking to a Black female researcher, which may have made them consciously aware of their ethnicity. If so, this may explain their apparent hesitation in their responses to this theme during our interviews.

5.3.3.2 British culture is all about equality, isn’t it?

Findings

Unlike our Nigerian participants who can easily describe British White culture (in negative terms for male participants, and both positively and negatively for female participants), the White participants struggle. Justine is a good example of this, as she struggles with this whole topic.

The most dominant theme that emerges to describe British White culture is equality; this word is explicitly used by Kendra and Larry, as women, to describe their perceptions of British culture. This observation of British White culture as based upon equality is drawn upon by
comparisons to other countries. When they asked which specific cultures they are comparing Britain to, none of them can offer a clear answer and instead favour vague descriptions of countries. (Considering at the time of data collection Britain was undergoing a long and difficult discussion in its relationship to Muslims, it is difficult not to make assumptions about who they were referring to.)

Other definitions of what constitutes British culture tend to rely on more symbolic representations. Nathan’s explanation of British culture as being tangible through symbols, such as black taxi cabs, is a typical example.

This need to refer to British White culture in tangible terms is also reflected and connected to a need to reminisce about British culture of the 1950s, as seen with Joshua. While such relating may be explained by the fact some of the participants are in their sixties and this is typical reminiscing, it could also be argued that this time period was before Britain experienced mass immigration from its former colonies. None of the participants directly acknowledge British White culture as being racist, although Larry does specifically reference to the BNP, however, the topic is always present during the interviews.

When racism is touched upon, it tends to diverge along the basis of gender. For men, such as Joshua and Marcus, racism is implied in comments on how British White culture is being impinged upon by others, creating a sense of fear. In contrast, the women, such as Louise and Michelle, attempt to reduce the topic of racism by exploring and justify the benefits of multiculturalism and what can be learnt from other cultures. Compared to their Nigerian counterparts, it appears that both groups of men are apprehensive about differing or changing cultures, perhaps perceiving it as a threat to their identities. In contrast, the Nigerian women’s willingness to engage with British White culture is almost reflected in their White equivalents to explore different cultures.

**Discussion**

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The British White participants focus on British culture being based around equality is reflective of individualism. Individualism, noted earlier, is described as encouraging individuals to see themselves as unique individuals (Bellah et al., 1985). By identifying a sense of equality the British White participants are also reflecting on the individual as seen as answerable only to themselves. This finding reflects the earlier discussion on the private self (Triandis, 1989), unlike the collective self evident in the Nigerian participants.

The description of British culture in terms of symbols, such as black taxi cabs, is reminiscent of Keesing’s (1974) symbolic system of culture. An interesting finding is that none of the participants describe British culture in terms of its language, which would be identifiable with Keesing’s (1974) cognitive system of culture; or by its institutions, such as the Queen, again identifiable with structural system of culture. Yet the identification of racism as a feature of British life echoes the Nigerian participants’ discussions on British culture and its perspectives on difference.

5.4 Finding 3 – Are my children Black, British or what?

As soon as they step through the door they are Nigerian. It doesn’t matter if they speak with an English accent, they’re Nigerian!

Patience

This finding aims to explore how acculturation tensions began to emerge between the Nigerian couples regarding culture and socialisation of their children. In many respects, it interlinks with issues of acculturation covered in Finding 2. This finding’s inclusion here, as a separate topic, reflects the wider tensions that were noted during each couple’s and subsequent one-on-one interviews. Chiefly, the question that arises is how the children of Nigerian immigrants should be socialised in a society that their parents have conflicting view points on.

5.4.1 The child must be taught to thrive in British society
Findings

The tensions of how the Nigerian participants viewed British White society are evident in their perspectives of how their children should be socialised. These children, second-generation immigrants, or 100% British citizens depending on their parents’ perspective, is a recurring theme in the interviews.

The notion of Britishness, and the need to create and perpetuate this in their children, is a view held by the majority of the female Nigerian participants (with the exception of Patience and Sarah who sought ways to further encourage their culture). In our discussions, most, if not all, of the participants are able to pinpoint the influence of British White culture on their children. For example, Selina discusses her children’s love for British food, while Sarah describes the British soaps her children watch. The need to socialise their children into British White culture is seen as a natural evolution of the family’s migration and acculturation. They have completed the first stage of this process, migration, and now their children are to achieve the next stage, achieving their parents’ ambitions that have been denied to them, owing to racism.

The extent to which the female Nigerians are willing to socialise their children into British White culture manifests itself not only in social manners but through consumption. As mothers, these women are only too willing to please and deliver food to suit their children’s tastes. This process represents a cultural reproduction of British White culture within their homes. For example, consider Patience and Selina, who cook British food for their children, or Angela and Sarah, who actively encouraged their children to engage with British media, such as children’s programmes.

This type of socialisation is not discussed openly in the couple interviews and when it is, it is often the male Nigerian who raised it. When this aspect of their children’s socialisation is discussed, it is the male participants who express their anger and disgust at their children’s perceived submission to British White culture. In these instances, the female spouse offers only a few words of defence to their children’s socialisation. In contrast, when interviewed
separately these same women are animated in their defence and determined that their children are taught to adapt to, fit into and succeed in British White culture.

**Discussion**

The extent to which the Nigerian female participants, actively or passively, support their children’s socialisation appears to reflect a wider indication of their own acculturation into British society. This is particularly evident in the consumption of food. Food, Leach (1974) argued represents the conventions of the society an individual exists within; while Woodward (1997) argued that food is actively used in the construction of one’s self-identity. The Nigerian female participants, by entering into food production (purchasing, preparation, cooking and serving), symbolically reinforce their children’s acculturation into British society.

Media consumption also reflects an endorsement of British White culture and its related values. As Kim (1988) noted, access to the dominant majority’s media requires an understanding of the cultural meanings embedded within it. For example, the Nigerian female participants willing endorsement of their children watching television soap operas, which often involve under-age pregnancies, drug abuse and extra-marital affairs, to some extent encourage the acceptance of these behaviours.

As the findings note, it is the Nigerian male participants that express their dissatisfaction with their children’s acculturation through food and media. The reasons for this lie in the previous discussion, but can be summarised using themes of racism, separation and, in response, a desire to assert a Nigerian cultural identity within the home. The resultant tensions between the Nigerian couple are indicative of the wider acculturation tensions also noted previously and to be discussed in greater detail in the next finding.

**5.4.2 The children are first, second and always Nigerian**

**Findings**
Female Nigerians desire to instil a sense of Britishness into their children’s socialisation is largely met by equally resistant behaviours by their spouses. This opposition is held by some of the male Nigerian participants, such as for example Jeremy, Steve and Bradley, as a reflection of their wider sense of cultural separation within British society. This separation is also reflected in how they want to socialise their children; at times they appear forceful in insisting their children adopt their own cultural values. For example, for Patience and Selina, British White culture is defined as corruptible and, therefore, undesirable. Thus it was almost irrelevant to a child’s socialisation.

Perhaps nowhere is this tension more prevalent than over the issue of language. All the Nigerian participants speak an indigenous Nigerian tribal language or dialect, yet the extent that their children could speak their parents’ language is a contentious issue. The majority of the male Nigerians (with the exception of Nathaniel and Larry) have attempted to encourage the use of their indigenous language not only in the home but also in their children’s education. This need tends to be publicly endorsed by their female spouses, with the exceptions of Selina who feels there is no need to pass on their language. When the success of this need is reviewed, none of the participants are able to claim that their children can fluently speak their parents’ indigenous language, instead they only understand it. This need to instil language awareness by these Nigerian men appears to represent a deeper need to be heard, valued and respected by their community. The latter point, although not explicitly stated, is made all too apparent when, during the interviews, I admitted that I could not speak my father’s indigenous language. Carol, Emma, Nicola, Edward Steve, Julian and Larry made little effort to hide their shock or to express how disappointed that my father must be to have a daughter who was becoming White – ‘Oyibo.’

The other area that showed tension and conflict between the Nigerian married couples is over the topic of their children dating. While the Nigerian men interviewed struggle with but ultimately accept the need for their children to succeed in British society by fitting in, itself representing a triumph for the majority of female Nigerian participants, they nonetheless place
a very high importance on whom their children date. In Finding 2, the issue of racism led to an acculturation stance of separation; this is reflected in the expectations the Nigerian men had for their children to take a similar stance when dating. In other words, children should obey their parents’ wishes, i.e. their father’s opinions, and date Black Nigerian men or women only. Furthermore, these men or women should ideally come from respectable families whose tribal identity culturally and historically is allied to the father’s tribe. This perspective was communicated in many forms during the interviews, either directly, as with Julia and Julian, or subtlety. The latter would often emerge by the male Nigerian tactfully enquiring after my own marital status and, having confirmed I was married, asking whether I met my father’s wishes and married within his cultural criteria. This line of enquiry was then followed by a discussion on the implications of my actions and how he wished his children could emulate similar behaviours. Emma and Steve are good examples of this, as they spent considerable time analysing the cultural, historical and social intricacies of my marriage.

When this same level of probing was reflected back the tensions between the Nigerian married couples emerged. While the male spouses do state, often at length, what they expect of their children and, ultimately, how his children have failed him by dating White people, the female spouse almost always responds back. In one particular instance, Julia and Julian discussed their youngest son dating a White girl. While Julian claims that the time will come when his son will do the honourable behaviour and break the relationship and begin seriously dating a suitable Nigerian girl with the aim of marriage, Julia interjects that of course their son will do the right thing, but adds that in the meantime he should be allowed to ‘enjoy his life’. From Julia’s stance, although heavily coded in subtlety and reassuring words, it appears likely that their son is seriously contemplating marrying his White girlfriend. Julia seems aware of the likelihood of this outcome; she responses by both reassuring her spouse and at the same time preparing him for the potential marriage. Although this particular situation is unique to this couple, the circumstances are shared with all the Nigerian couples, except for Patience. Julia and Julian both shared a detachment from British White society so their reluctance to see their children dating White people is not surprising.
However, in some cases, in seeing their children acting like British Whites, the Nigerian women quickly adopt a more patriarchal role in bringing up their children. These women are more likely to attend community meetings, thus seeking ways to maintain their culture.

**Discussion**

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this finding is the apparent blurring of gender roles within the couples’ socialisation of their children. Daley (2007) noted how African men are regarded as the providers and the women as the carers. Yet, in the findings, while the male tries to assert his authority, in many instances his spouse defends her children from accusations of becoming too British White in their behaviour. This tension is important because it shows the blurring of gender roles and power dynamics; the female spouse supports her children in contradiction to her spouse’s wishes.

It is worth noting, as seen from the findings, that children play an active role in the process of acculturation in addition to helping their parents to maintain their Nigerian culture. However, as the traditional bearer of culture (Inman et al., 2007), some of these women actively seek to ensure that their children maintain their Nigerian culture. This need to instil a sense of Nigerian culture into their second generation children is supported by the literature. For example, Carter et al.’s (1997) and Wade’s (2004) research into minority women identified that minority women are more likely to explore their ethnic identities. However, the need to undertake this socialisation may also be reflective of wider patriarchal issues. For example, Skoe and Marcia (1991) noted how minority women are more concerned about interpersonal harmony, in this example within the family. Quite simply, reinforcing a sense of cultural identity in their children serves to reaffirm the father’s wishes to live in a Nigerian, culturally orientated, home. This finding is reflected in the previous discussions.

**5.5 Finding 4 – It’s important to be a good wife**

*Some things you have to do you do not like, but you have to do it because it is your duty.*
The tensions evident in how Nigerian children should be socialised represent the emergence of wider themes over gender role conflict. This was perhaps not unexpected. After all, the previous themes have indicated the divergence between the Nigerian married couples in terms of their own sense of identities, as well as how their children should be socialised. This section then explores this theme focusing on the roles and how gender is constructed from both the female and Nigerian perspectives. Emerging sub-themes will be explored before a discussion on British Whites concludes this section.

5.5.1 The woman’s perspective

The purpose of this section is to explore the female Nigerian participant’s perspective of what constitutes being a good wife.

5.5.1.1 It’s important to be a good wife

Findings

The notion of being a good wife is often associated with maintaining the cultural patriarchal role, both inside and outside the home. In particular, it is expected that the female spouse be subservient to their culturally empowered male spouse. While this position is almost proudly declared by the male Nigerian participants (as will be discussed later), it is interesting to note how their female spouses respond to this perspective. During the couple interviews, the wife publicly endorses the male spouse’s position on the importance of and the maintenance of patriarchy within their marriage. For example, consider Emma agrees to her spouse’s declaration that the role of the good wife is to be dutiful; however, she later contradicts this position by expressing how she views herself as an empowered, free woman.
The issue of what constitutes a good wife is returned to in the one–on-one interviews with the female Nigerian participants. In these interviews, the majority of the female Nigerians repeat their support of their spouse as the head of the household. When this issue is discussed further, all the participants repeat the need for themselves to support their spouse. When the contradictions of this position are reflected back to them, in terms of supporting the very structures that perpetuated the cultural patriarchy that had encouraged them to leave Nigeria, they simply reply it was their duty to support their spouse.

Perhaps the most prominent example of this need to support their spouse is evident in their food consumption and purchasing. Food, as a cultural metaphor, has been widely researched and it is apparent to the Nigerian participants that food is hugely symbolic. What is interesting is how food purchasing becomes genderised. All the participants, except Carol, adhere to the responsibility of food purchasing. The purchasing of vegetables and other household goods are completed by women, while the purchasing of meat is done by the men. The latter is particularly symbolic. Meat, in Nigerian culture, is symbolic of status and wealth. Allowing the male spouse to purchase meat for the family’s consumption is shared by all female participants except Nicola. The importance of this purchase lies in its symbolic value of being expensive, sought after and a luxury. In allowing the man to purchase the meat, the female Nigerians indirectly, or directly, reaffirms the male spouses position as the provider of the most sought after food commodity, i.e. meat. While links can be made to the hunter/gather concept, the cultural significance of this consumption purchase effectively endorses and supports the Nigerian man’s position within the household. When this was reflects back to the female Nigerians, the reaction is the same – it’s the man’s right to purchase meat and provide for the family.

Discussion

Cotte and Wood (2004) argued that the family exerts a complex influence on the behaviour of its members. Certainly the role of the Nigerian women as a spouse is reflected this complexity. Certainly the finding that the Nigerian man is allowed to purchase the family’s supply of meat
contributes to our understanding and knowledge of gender and product purchasing (Kirchler, 1989). Indeed, purchase acts serve also to illustrate the power of patriarchy within the Nigerian participants’ homes. By purchasing the meat, the Nigerian females are empowering their spouses to take on a specific and symbolic role. Food has already been identified as symbolic of each culture (Leach, 1974; Woodward (1997) and, as Zvonkovic et al. (1996) noted, these roles are negotiated between marital partners. It appears then that the Nigerian female participants allow and give their purchasing power to their spouses to make this symbolic gesture. This finding develops further our understanding of constructing gender boundaries and they are negotiated (Potuchek, 1992).

Scanzoni’s (1970) research is also worth considering here; in particular, in terms of noting how the more the male spouse fulfils his economic duties, symbolic here in the purchasing of the meat, the more the woman feels her needs are being met. This transfer of power is both negotiated and given by the woman. Yet to what extent did our Nigerian female participants willingly give their power away? The answer to this lies in the wider context. The previous discussions have already suggested that the Nigerian woman finds ways to empower her spouse, with the aim to reaffirm his identity to combat the experiences of racism. It appears then that allowing the male spouse to purchase the meat is merely an extension of this behaviour practice.

5.5.1.2 Worker, mother, wife and economic resource

Findings

In this section, I will discuss the role of employment in empowering women, the origins of this and the consequences of this in terms of financial power.

The acceptance of the Nigerian man’s right to purchase the family’s meat for consumption suggests that their female spouses are happy to be completely subservient to their spouses’ needs, i.e. submissiveness to their patriarchy. However, such assumptions would be
misplaced. It should be noted that the female Nigerians also actively purchased other food and other home-related products (discussed in the next section), with the meat purchasing willingly given out to their spouses. Yet, even with these narratives from the female Nigerian participants, suggestions of their submissiveness and acceptance of their spouses’ patriarchy is challenged by the narratives of the female Nigerians themselves; in particular, the economic power and liberation that employment has brought to Nigerian women.

Freedom from patriarchy was a key motivator for migration for the women, as discussed in Finding 1, with employment representing a sense of freedom, even though the realities of achieving employment were problematic (Finding 2). However, employment brings with it empowerment and, more importantly, financial resources in the form of wages, providing a means of renegotiating power within the family home. For instance, Samantha’s narrative explores the sense of liberation and empowerment that a wage brings to the family home. This narrative is shared by all the female Nigerians, who note how being a financial resource has provided a means of negotiating and achieving influence within the family home. For example, Patience and Selina note how on regular occasions they have paid household bills, something typically paid for their spouses.

Ultimately the narratives of the Nigerians reflect an inherent sense of tension regarding their roles as mother, wife and economic provider. This tension is evident in most of the participants, except for Carol who appeared happy to accept their spouses’ patriarchal position. What is interesting is that although these women are publicly endorsing their spouses’ position of patriarchy, they are also able to ask for support. Suprisingly Patience and Nicola both share times when they publicly asked for support. This support ranged from childcare to household duties, such as cooking, but the symbolism lies in publicly asking for support.

Discussion
Pessar (1995) termed the phrase ‘double jeopardy’ to capture the multiple roles that immigrant women have to engage within their lives. However, while this double jeopardy is evident among our participants, as Pessar (1984) noted in an earlier paper, migration also brings about the reduction of patriarchal influence within the family unit, which arises from the woman gaining employment. Consequently, as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) and Kibria (1990) noted, this leads to the renegotiation of gender roles. This is evident, for example, in Patience’s and Nicola’s requests for assistance in household chores from their spouses. While this behaviour is not widespread among our Nigerian participants, it was evident, it does challenge Noor’s (1999) argument that immigrant men are reluctant to share in household duties, leading to possible conflicts.

5.5.2 A man’s role is to provide for his family and be provided for

The purpose of this section is to explore the male Nigerian perspective of how they use the role of their spouses to support their, culturally derived, patriarchal position as head of the family.

5.5.2.1 The grateful wife

Findings

The Nigerian male participant’s role within his marriage and family is that of provider. Steve, Edward and Larry, for example, all publicly declared in front of their spouses, to the researcher, their role is to provide for their spouse and children.

Yet, the realities of this patriarchy are challenged by the economic realities of their spouse working. During the couple interviews, a number of Nigerian males, including Ben, Jeremy and Edward, attempt to excuse their spouses paid employments as a mere insignificance. This narrative, while clearly upsetting their spouse in terms of being publicly subjugated, serves to demonstrate the man’s assertion over his family, including his spouse.
Discussion

Being a good wife consists of maintaining the patriarchal assumptions of Nigerian culture, i.e. gender identity. In this, the Nigerian male participants attempt to reaffirm their role as a provider and head of the household. As a result, the Nigerian immigrant female spouse is often regulated to the inferior role of the ‘wife’. In some instances, this positioning of the female spouse to the role of the subordinate is merely an extension of Nigerian and African patriarchal values (Daley, 2007). Indeed, in some instances, this role allocation is perhaps welcomed, reflecting Baruch and Barnett’s (1986) earlier observation of women accepting these roles so as not to disrupt the status quo in the relationship.

While this may ultimately be true, the extent to which these positions are accepted by the Nigerian women is debateable. The previous discussions have already shown how these women are empowered through employment and assert their power within their marital relationships, by, for instance, ridiculing their male spouse on the basis of tribal stereotypes.

It is also worth considering why these Nigerian men even need to comment on the employment of their wives. On reflection, this need to state their role appears to suggest that they themselves feel their position within the family threatened, hence their need to verbally assert their position. If this is true, especially considering the previous points, then this research provides further insight into Baruch and Barnett’s (1986) arguments.

5.5.2.2 One has to think of one’s position in the community

Findings

The need of the Nigerian man to subjugate his spouse is also reflected in his need to ensure that his spouse reinforces their cultural and social position within the wider Nigerian community. For example, Steve comments on the need for a good Nigerian wife to be seen to
be supporting her husband in the wider Nigerian community in Britain. This suggestion is common among all the male Nigerian participants.

The importance of community appears to be critically important for the male Nigerian participants. Indeed, when Steve was successfully elected to President of his local Nigerian community, he subsequently required his spouse, Emma, to behave in a conformist manner. This expected behaviour was not only to reflect admiration and gratitude for her spouse being in her life but also to demonstrate behaviours that reinforced her public subjugation. Although this example is unique, the underlying themes are evident in the majority of the Nigerian participants, excluding Carol.

**Discussion**

The role of community and self-identity has already been discussed and does not require further elaboration here. However, the importance of the community in reinforcing and endorsing the Nigerian male’s sense of masculinity and cultural identity does.

Purkey and Schmidt (1987) argued that there is a basic need for positive regard from others and from one’s self. It has already been noted what the psychological effects racism had on the Nigerian male participants; perhaps it is not surprising then these men seek positive confirmation from their own community. One aspect of Nigerian culture is the need for community recognition, which is reflective of collectivist cultures’ need to maintain harmony in their in-groups (Hui and Triandis, 1986). For the majority of our Nigerian participants, this manifests in a collective self-identity (Triandis, 1989), wherein recognition is actively sought from their Nigerian community.

**5.5.3 It’s your turn to wash the dishes, love**

**Findings**
British White participants appeared to take more egalitarian roles in the house, with Lynne and Luke and Nathaniel and Justine being good examples. In their narratives, they openly reflect upon the importance of equality in their relationship and how stereotypical roles have little or no relevance to their lives. This narrative is replicated in all the British White couples; however, the extent that this equality is actualised is questionable. Certainly, Monica and Lianne talk about having equality, but their narratives also include bearing heavier childcare and house responsibilities than their husbands, which strongly suggests that equality may be talked about but is not entirely present in their relationship.

What is interesting is how these couples also maintained traditional gender roles, such as paying bills. Here one finds that it is the males who have this responsibility, with female spouses contributing only marginally. When confronted about these arrangements, the female spouses explained these actions with regard to how their family is structured, as seen with Monica and Louise. This action clearly locates the male spouse in the traditional role of the provider, even though they proudly declare having equality in their relationship, such as expressed by Joshua, David and Lee. The allocation of certain roles to the male spouse ultimately leads to the female to take a complementary position. For example, Monica, Michelle and Irene talk of being better skilled in cooking, or having more time to care for their children. In effect these women subconsciously reinforce their gender roles within their relationship, and do not demonstrate any desire to change the status quo in terms of responsibility. Instead, they portray themselves as having control over their responsibilities and when they are unable to fulfil their responsibilities, their male spouse can easily take over. As a result, roles appeared more equally shared in the household.

One aspect of this perceived equality is the ease at which these women are able to negotiate across the realms from motherhood, to professional, to friendship, etc. Arguably, this ease is facilitated by British White culture, which has striven, successfully or not, to not be restricted by strict cultural patriarchal values. This cajoling with different identities often leaves these women in a reflective mood, and they seek new ways to empower themselves. For example, Monica, although classified as a housewife has sought ways to organise community support
groups for her spouse’s church, all of which she leads. In addition to this, she is also responsible for some of the finances in the church parish.

**Discussion**

Following on from Salili’s (2004) opinion of British White culture and emphasis of individual independence, British White participants are seen to exhibit individualism. However, it is surprising to observe that they also maintain some traditional gender roles, which in turn conforms to Dia’s (1997) conventional model of the nuclear conjugal family. Here one observes that British White females adopt what seems to a patriarchal traditional role as a wife; however, these women are freely able to switch their positions, unlike the Nigerian female participants, who are confined to their cultural boundaries. Here the British White participants are able to maintain their cultural identities with relative ease.

**5.6 Finding 5 – Consumption**

*I have my outfit already sewed, he saw it and started complaining about the style, saying the outfit was too tight, it was too revealing – any nah wah for him, I am wearing the outfit, after all I paid for it and he is not even coming.*

*Jane*

Consumption of Nigerian items is often a way of remembering home, something that brings back the nostalgia of being in Nigeria. Nigerian foodstuffs are also purchased for cooking, especially in terms of cooking for the family. Most specifically, it is the women who take control of what foodstuffs are bought in the house. One may view this as being empowering; however, it appears to be a means of conforming to traditional patriarchal culture, as the men are often indirectly in control of the items bought for the house.

In light of purchases made in the household, the female participants also shows hidden tensions, especially in the choice of food. On numerous occasions, there is debate over the
beneficial elements of Nigerian food compared to the view that British White food is unhealthy. As a result there is an interplay of power between both spouses wherein the Nigerian women in protest of their male spouse’s opinions brings home British food for their own pleasure and children, so rebelling against their spouse’s opinion. This rebellion is seen as a result of acculturation.

In addition to this, in not being able to work or finding himself embedded in the problems associated in not generating resources for the household, rather than acting to discredit patriarchy and gender hierarchy the male spouse seeks to further support it. This can be seen as a result of the female spouse’s response to this situation. What is clear is that finding their spouses in this situation only adds to the Nigerian women’s support of gender hierarchy as a way as protecting their husbands and their husbands’ masculinity. This in turn disputes the previous notion of the generation of resources as a means for men to maintain both patriarchy and gender hierarchy in the household. In addition, it also reaffirms the notion that the family system, i.e. in which the woman is viewed as the nurturer, is a major structural arrangement that ensures male domination within the household. One observes that the female spouses provide emotional support and partnership to her spouse thus encouraging his dominance. In this way, the males gain greater authority and responsibility in the household than women. With the emergence of a career, the Nigerian women have ability to generate an independent income for the family; the woman may therefore be involved in decision making and therefore have a consumption role.

For these women consumption proves to be a way of exploring their individuality and their freedom from the potential restrictions of their culture. They use the purchase of goods that are most commonly assigned to their male partner to show their independence. For example, purchasing items such gardening tools puts these women in a position in which they do not need to rely on their spouse. Another way that these women challenge their role is by purchasing items which their spouses do not necessarily agree to. For example in, often one sees that clothing and the choice of style proves to be an arena where tensions are played out. Most notably some of the male spouses appear not to feel comfortable with their female
spouse wearing revealing clothing, citing it as too ‘Western’ and as a result subtly object to their female spouse from wearing such things. However, even though their husbands disapprove, the women remain intent on purchasing these items. When these issues are probed these women often refer to wanting their individuality, and wanting their freedom to enjoy their life. Talk of freedom is very common, especially in reference to their children being grown up. These women, having financial freedom, and some having reduced parental responsibility, appear to use this opportunity to find themselves and in so doing they venture into consuming goods, such as clothes, to reflect this.

5.6.1 This is what I want – the Nigerian man’s perspective of consumption

Findings

Consumption from the Nigerian man’s perspective has been largely discussed within the previous discussions. For example, the issues surrounding food as a metaphor for acculturation demonstrate marital tensions between the man, who wants a Nigerian culturally dominant environment in his home, and the woman, who wants her children to acculturate into British White society. It is also noted how the female spouse actively encourage the man to go and do the shopping for the family’s meat supply. This consumption act aims to reaffirm his domination of the family household.

Most notably, some of the male spouses, for example, Julian and Steve, appeared not to feel comfortable with their female spouse dressing to revealingly or too ‘Western’, and, as a result, subtly if not blatantly object to their spouses wearing such things. The motivation for this reflects their desire to project a certain image within the wider Nigerian community of a man in control of his family.

Not surprisingly, the Nigerian male participants are responsible for what they see as typically masculine items, such as the car, television and electronics in the case of Kalvin, Julian, Bob and Nathaniel. This responsibility is typically given to them by themselves, with their spouses
apparently reluctantly accepting this. Only in some instances is the female spouse involved in making decisions that usually arise in the absence of their male spouse, or as a result of the man’s lack of knowledge.

In some instances, the narratives reveal the man’s inability to dominate the consumption process. This sometimes arises from being over-committed at work and not having the time to make the purchase decisions, a good example being Emma taking it upon herself to get house repairs done because her spouse did not have time. Other reasons stem from simply the man giving the woman the authority to purchase something on his behalf. In both these instances, the Nigerian man’s delegation of power to purchasing on his behalf is a reluctant one.

**Discussion**

From the Nigerian male participant’s perspective consumption represents an extension of his own cultural and patriarchal power. This finding reflects earlier works by McCracken (1986, 1991) and develops further our understanding of Keesing’s (1974) symbolic system of culture.

It is also worth noting that although the Nigerian female participants provide economic resources to the family unit, their spouse still feel empowered enough to state that he is head of his family. This finding contrasts with power resource theory, to some extent, in that those people who provide economic funds are also entitled to a share of the power. From the Nigerian male perspective this is given in allowing the woman to fulfil her cultural duties, i.e. preparing and cooking food. From their perspective, this is not a negative role and instead simply represents a role embedded within the cultural and patriarchal system they adhere to.

In terms of power, Lukes’s (2005) one-dimensional view of power is exerted. When this is applied to patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti, 1988), it appears that the female spouses are actively engaged within an existing set of Nigerian culturally derived rules. In doing so, the Nigerian male participants feel a sense of legitimacy in their actions. This finding supports,
from the Nigerian males’ perspective, Spiro’s (1983) legitimate resolution strategy that the man makes the decision because he is the ‘husband’.

5.6.2 I’m not following orders – the Nigerian woman’s perspective of consumption

The Nigerian woman’s perspective, in terms of our participants, is complex. The role of consumption within acculturation has already been noted and does not require further discussion here. Also, consumption of British products has been shown to be a motivator for migration to Britain, as it was seen to represent a better life. What this section aims to explore is how consumption manifests in the marital tensions, arising from acculturation.

In some aspects, the Nigerian females consume products that reflect their Nigerian culture, ranging from food to clothing. Consumption of these items is often a way of remembering home; something that brings back the nostalgia of being in Nigeria. For example, Patience, Emma and Samantha talk of purchasing Nigerian foodstuffs for cooking for the family. This decision to cook these foods arises from their own need to assert a sense of Nigerian identity and is not imposed on them by their spouse. Yet, these same women, in particular, Nicola, Patience, Emma and Sarah, also purchase British food to satisfy their children’s requests; and although these women are not happy about this, their only concern is the happiness of their children. The tensions of being a mother are culturally difficult to manage at times.

In other instances, tensions arise over symbolic consumption. For instance, clothing becomes an issue for many of the female participants, as cultural symbolism manifests. For example, when Jane is determined to wear clothes and certain materials that she likes, even though her spouse fervently disagrees. This story is not unusual and expresses one of the many different ways these women found to assert their identities as empowered women.

For these women, consumption proves to be a way to exploring their individuality and their freedom from the potential restrictions of their culture. They use the purchase of goods that are commonly assigned to their male partner to show their independence. When these issues are
probed these women often refer to wanting their individuality, and wanting their freedom to enjoy their life. These women have financial freedom and, for some have reduced parental responsibility, and thus appear to use this opportunity to express their freedom and in so doing so, have ventured into consuming goods, such as clothes, to reflect this.

Perhaps the most important finding is how these women appear to resist their spouses control over consumption. This ranges in varying types of actions, from paying a utility bill, as Selina does, although it is normally the role of the man as the head of the household, through to deliberately purchasing a wrong product on behalf of their spouse to obtain the store’s credit refund voucher, as Sarah did. While these actions may seem trivial, they must be understood within the context that they occurred within – a patriarchal Nigerian home where the man expects his voice to be heard and his needs met.

In some cases, these acts of resistance went to extremes, including the coercion of the female spouse’s sister and a deliberate rejection of their male spouses’ needs. For example, Emma purchased a lawn mower without her spouse’s pre-approval, because she could not wait for him to make a decision. However, it was Emma’s purchase of a house in Nigeria, and plans to do so again, that involved support from her sister, making this the most extreme example of this resistance. It was an act of such magnitude and power that Emma was unable to tell her male spouse about her purchase; the words ‘her purchase’ being particularly resonant here.

**Discussion**

Consumption for the Nigerian female participants appears to represent a balancing act based around their acculturation stance, i.e. one of creating multiple identities. Products are bought and consumed based upon their needs to fit into a specific cultural context, supporting Lindridge, Hogg and Shah’s (2004) findings.

In terms of consumption acts, the Nigerian female participants’ behaviours reflect a careful negotiation of power. While their male spouses dispute that their female spouse earning have
changed the woman’s position in the household, for the Nigerian female participants this is not true. Employment offers economic power and they use it to purchase products for themselves and their children; this finding supports Blood and Wolfe’s (1960) observation of employment and female empowerment.

Yet these women have to negotiate their power within a Nigerian cultural context, i.e. their male spouse. While their male spouse can be said to use Spiro’s (1983) legitimate resolution theory, these women tend towards using either Quall’s (1988) compromise strategy or Thomas’s (1976) persuasion conflict strategy. These strategies take on various forms of passivity through to active strategies, reflecting Spiro’s (1983) argument that resolution strategies can be applied in many different ways. From the perspective of Lukes’s (2005) research into power, these women actively use the third dimensional view of power, i.e. using power to achieve their own political agenda; in this case, asserting their power within the home and their marital relationship.

Kandiyoti’s (1988) argument that women undertake a process called patriarchal bargaining; representing a set of pre-existing rules and scripts that regulate gender relations, is evident from the Nigerian female participants’ narratives. Yet, in engaging in this process, Kandiyoti (1988) noted the opportunities to challenge, redefine or renegotiate these relations, i.e. offer the potential for and specific forms of active or passive resistance. Resistance is a key form of expression for the Nigerian female participants, and consumption is the most tangible outcome of this.

Although none of the Nigerian female participants openly used the word ‘resistance’ their narratives clearly demonstrate and explain how they reclaim power in their marital relationship through consumption. This act represents the culmination of their struggle to assert their acculturated identities within their marriage.

5.6.3 Oh, we agree on everything – the British White’s perspective of consumption
Findings

Both White female participants and their partners explained that their purchases are made on the basis of joint decisions. For example, take Michelle’s comments into consideration:

>You know, stuff like when we bought the TV, that we bought together. We both had an idea which one we liked. I was going for something stylish, while he was going for the specification. But at the end of the day, we came to a decision that we both liked!

The notion of joint decision making is commonly seen with the British White participants suggests an egalitarian family structure. However, it is important to acknowledge that although equality is portrayed, these British White females also hold the subtle views regarding gender roles and the genderising of products. For example, looking once again at Michelle:

>...the car. Actually, he bought the car; we both discussed it and we made the decision that we needed a car... I wouldn’t want to buy something like that when he’s not around.

From one perspective, these women have equality in purchase decisions; however, this is dependent on the type of product being consumed. As a result, one also sees these women elevating their male spouses’ role in making purchase decisions.

Yet these women also offer some indication of resistance to their husband’s patriarchy. Instead of undertaking subtle or hidden acts of resistance, these women openly own and joke about it with their spouse being present. This resistance often appears to be a light-hearted reaction to their male spouse’s sense of detachment. For example, consider Justine’s statement, which reflects many of the other participants:
**Discussion**

Unlike our Nigerian participants, the British White participants’ narratives surrounding consumption express a sense of equality. This is not surprising as perceived equality has been a continual feature of their narratives. From this perspective, their consumption decisions reflect a more shared sense of patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti, 1988), with the man having the final decision on the purchase. This style of decision making reflects Quall’s (1988) compromise strategy and Thomas’s (1976) persuasion conflict resolution strategy. Consumption is not, for these couples, a source of conflict. This is perhaps not surprising as British Whites represent the dominant culture, and if there was to be a marital conflict it may well be over more significant disagreements.

Unlike their Nigerian counterparts, from whom acts of resistance are hidden, the British White females openly joked about how they resist their spouse’s control and power. Products do not share the symbolic cultural meaning argued by Keesing (1974) and McCracken (1986, 1991). Considering this, power is openly shared and discussed, reflecting Lukes’s (2005) one-dimensional view of power. This finding reaffirms how British Whites share power in their consumption decisions and supports Lindridge and Dibb’s (2003) earlier observations.

### 5.7 Overall conclusion

The aim of this final section is to try and understand the findings. This will be achieved in two subsections. The first subsection will conclude the discussion on British Whites and this will then be followed by a section on the Nigerian participants.

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24 A woman’s clothing shop.
The inclusion of the British White participants in this study was to provide evidence that the findings based on the Nigerian participants’ interviews do not reflect universal values. From this perspective, this has succeeded. Not surprisingly, British Whites struggled to identify exactly what is British culture; however, their recognition of British racism provided an insightful understanding of their awareness on this issue. This is not to classify British culture as racist, at least not all of it. Instead, issues of equality emerged, especially from the female participants, who feel that British culture empowers them to seek equality in their marital relationships.

The extent that equality exists in the British White participants’ marital relationships is debatable. From one perspective, couples joke with each other about their domestic chores and who does what. At face value, and certainly when compared to the Nigerian participants, these couples appear to demonstrate equality. However, closer examination reveals a subtle but visible patriarchal hierarchy, in which the man is at the head of the family, which these women appear to actively endorse.

The purchasing and consumption of products reflect this patriarchal hierarchy. Low-cost products, such as food and sometimes paying bills, are allocated to the woman, while more expensive purchases are supposedly joint decisions. Yet in these expensive purchases, the decision to purchase ultimately lies in the man’s final say. It is probably this sharing of decision which stops the levels of resistance noted among their Nigerian counterparts. It would appear then that although equality is evident in these marital relationships, it is only to a point.

In contrast, the Nigerian participants demonstrate varying levels of cultural affiliation to British culture and society. Particularly interesting is how this affiliation is genderised and appears to diverge between the couples the longer they had spent in Britain. For example, in terms of the issue of migration, the findings are not only supported by these women but, at times, actively encouraged. On arrival, while their male spouses suffered from racism and responded by withdrawing from British White society, these women combat racism by engaging more.
This response to racism is reflected in both spouses’ acculturation behaviours. While the male spouse resort to imposing a sense of Nigerian cultural identity on the home, the wife encourages greater participation within British White society. For example, food becomes an area of conflict for many, with the man demanding Nigerian food be prepared and cooked, while the woman cooks Western food to please the children.

Yet, at times, the female spouse imposes a sense of Nigerian cultural values on their children, without the spouse demanding it. The origins of this behaviour are complex and seemingly contradictory to the behaviours these women show elsewhere. One perspective is that this behaviour reflects their need to maintain the status quo within the family unit; in other words, to restrain the children’s Britishness to keep their male spouse happy. Yet this explanation seems weak and devalues the women as simply responding to their spouses control issues. A more likely explanation is these women simply feel they are Nigerians living in Britain and this requires their children to be socialised in a certain way, to ensure their successful integration. This integration will hopefully bring them success, but at the same time will never deny them their Nigerian identity.

Unlike their British White counterparts, the Nigerian couples’ marital relationships do not appear to demonstrate high levels of equality. Indeed, the acculturation outcomes of the couples ensure this would not occur, with the male spouse imposing his cultural patriarchy and the female spouse, to varying extents, accepting it. Yet this level of acceptance by the woman is not unilateral or willingly given away. After all, the reasons for migration were based, often, on their needs for freedom and the empowerment that life in Britain offered them. When interviewed separately, these women, mildly but certainly, ridicule their male spouses, as evident in their stereotypical comments about their spouse’s tribe. While this may seem trivial, the symbolism is not. Nigerian culture is identified as patriarchal with the man demanding and expecting respect from his spouse. This type of act of defiance is one of many.
The need for these Nigerian women to show defiance ultimately lies in the acculturation tensions they experience in their daily lives. By day, they are expected to multitask a number of duties – mother, employee, manager – and at night, they are expected be the subservient, happy, wife. Their existence in two very different cultural worlds creates stress, although they never own or explicitly state it, as this would indicate weakness and a failure to demonstrate their cultural duties. But it is nonetheless evident through the use of jokes, silences in answering questions and sudden changes in body language e.g. readjusting their posture or facial expressions.

Perhaps nowhere is this stress more evident and the need to reinforce their own identity within their marriage more clear than through consumption. Consumption becomes a means wherein purchasing of food and other products offers an outlet for their power to be asserted. This ranges from cooking Western food, to wearing particular types of clothes or materials, to secretly purchasing property in Nigeria. The last example represents a purchase that the Nigerian woman’s sister colluded in, but which was excluded from her spouse’s knowledge. The use of consumption as a form of resistance is perhaps not surprising. De Certeau (1984) noted how objects can become sites of resistance, with resistance often manifesting in the most mundane aspects of an individual’s life, such as cooking. Consumption then appears to offer Nigerian women an outlet for their oppression.

If these were women are oppressed, why should they use consumption as a means of reasserting themselves and not, instead, just speak up? The answer to this question partially lies in the nature of cultural patriarchy. Yes, these women have used migration as a means of empowerment, but they have still been socialised and existed in a community in which patriarchy is not just the norm but expected. However, another perspective lies in their partner’s experiences of racism. The previous discussions have noted how racism affected the Nigerian men and the psychological effects endured. It is my belief that the willingness of these Nigerian women to give their power to their spouses is deliberate and premeditated. Such acts are motivated by the need to protect their spouses’ pride and sense of identity in a society that neither values nor respects him. In doing so, these women sacrifice their own
needs and wants to protect their spouses. Acts of resistance, manifesting through consumption, are thus a means for these women to temporarily reclaim their authority and, in doing so, protect their own psychological well-being.

Does this then make the act of these women being submissive acceptable? From one perspective, we need to understand these actions using structuration theory (De Certeau, 1984) that argues that both individual and societal forces are influential on the constitution of society (De Haan, 1999). In effect, these women are the product of a particular historical moment in time in which Britain’s Empire was disappearing and the economic insecurities of post-war Britain were being felt across the Empire. These Nigerian couples, in many respects, were Black pioneers, arriving in a new country that were unable to comprehend or even accept anyone who was not White. This position explains a large part of their narratives, which often reflect upon their past experiences of racism, rather than their current experiences. For the men, in particular, the pain of migration was a daily lived event.

Another perspective to consider is how these women should be judged. One of the methodological aims of this research was to take a Black feminist position to this research. AS such, these women should not be judged on the basis of being subservient; that is, we should not apply White middle-class women’s values here, as Hannam (2007) and hooks (1984) argued. Instead, we should view these women as thriving pioneers, challenging their world to conform to their needs. Central to this challenge is the need for support, which Hannam (2007) noted, for Black women, comes from the family as a source of strength to wield against systematic racism.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a holistic overview of the thesis, followed by a discussion on the research contributions made by this thesis. This will then be followed by a discussion on the marketing, managerial and social implications of this study. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

6.2 Summary of the thesis

A summary of this thesis has already been provided at the beginning of this thesis. However, it is useful to reiterate the salient points here.

The aim of this research is to answer the research question: ‘To what extent do first-generation immigrant Nigerian women living in Britain use consumption as a tool of cultural resistance against patriarchy?’

Previous research into consumption behaviour of immigrants has been criticised for its limited scope and for primarily focussing on male immigrants. This research aims to address these criticisms by focusing on how first-generation female Nigerian immigrants, residing in Britain, construct multiple identities to allow themselves to acculturate into British White society, while at the same time being expected to conform to patriarchal values in the marital home. This conformity, one argues, leads to females reasserting their personal power through acts of resistance, manifesting through consumption, towards their male partner.

The sample group (n=40) consisted of British White and first-generation Nigerian immigrant married couples residing in Britain. The research involved two sets of interviews: initial interviews with both spouses, then the female partner separately. The separate, follow-on interviews with female participants, aimed to assess to what extent their narratives changed
when they were away from their male spouses. As attributed to a qualitative methodology, interpretative analysis was used. As a result, interviews were transcribed, the data was coded and analysed in deriving categories and themes. Themes generated were cross-analysed to ensure reliability. From this, opposing participant profiles were generated, which were reanalysed and discussed. Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, a strict adherence to research ethics was undertaken.

The findings supported previous arguments that immigrant males, especially among African immigrants, view themselves as the main provider for their families. The findings of this research, however, indicate that this role is only partially accepted by their female partners. In particular, this research found that female Nigerian immigrants do not passively accept their role of the submissive house wife, but instead actively challenge, renegotiate and circumnavigate the Nigerian cultural values held by their partner. This finding shows that these female immigrants negotiate power, often subversively, within the family, to achieve their own desired outcomes. This finding addresses previous criticisms of research into immigrants being biased towards men.

It was also found that female employment opportunities and exposure and interaction with British culture help support female Nigerian immigrants in their acculturation and adaptation into British White Society. Immigration subsequently provided precursors for the female participants’ acts of resistance. Female participants have negotiated differing cultural situations through the construction of multiple identities. Previous research (Dion 2001) argued that female immigrants may not always experience the same comparable benefits as males; the findings here only partially support this. While it was found that the female Nigerian participants have experienced cultural restrictions, such as within Nigerian cultural contexts, even in these situations they are able to express their opinions to their male spouses. Although the female Nigerian participants did experience acculturation conflicts they have not experienced, or at least do not demonstrate, the psychological effects of socio-cultural difficulties as suggested by previous researchers (for example, Ward and Kennedy, 2001). As a result, one found that, for the female participants, the opportunities that immigration has
offered, such as employment and self-empowerment manifested through their resistance to their male partner’s patriarchy, serve to counter any negative effects arising from acculturation.

The findings also showed that the male Nigerian participants demonstrate and actively seek out Nigerian cultural values to reinforce their position as head of the household. This behaviour is often as a result of their felt or experienced inferior status in British White society, i.e. racism, and aims to help them achieve a sense of self-esteem and pride. The home then becomes a secure place where the Nigerian men are able to recreate a culturally derived sense of masculinity that is imposed onto their female spouse and children.

Conforming to patriarchy, on the part of the female participants, is often used as a response to shared experiences of racism and the negative consequence of racism experienced by their male partners. The immigrant Nigerian female participants acknowledge the pain and struggles of their male partners in trying to adapt and acculturate to British White culture. Their male partners’ experiences of racism have led them to uphold their patriarchal position in the household. In supporting their male partners’ position, these women conform to Nigerian cultural patriarchy as an act that aims to protect their male partners’ sense of masculinity.

However, the female Nigerian participants do not willingly accept this act of submission and further, they strive to renegotiate their power within the family. Central to this renegotiation of power is consumption. Consumption is seen to be used as a form of resistance, especially with the female Nigerian participants. Resistance through consumption takes many forms, from subtle acts of consumption, such as purchasing a piece of clothing, through to outright resistance, such as buying property in Nigeria. Acts of resistance simply become a way for the women to temporarily readjust the power balance in their relationships and renegotiate their compromised gender and self-identity. This rebalance allows the female Nigerian participants to accept and acknowledge their own psychological and socio-cultural needs, even though they publicly and actively reinforce the patriarchy they are resisting. From a Western
perspective, this may be deemed as prohibitive and sexist. For immigrant female Nigerian participants, it is a coping mechanism to support their male partners. This admittedly ensured these women had to compromise their needs and position as independent women.

The findings of this research develops further our understanding of the consumption decisions undertaken by immigrants and how consumption is used to reassert a sense of pride in one’s self. This finding complements Certeau’s (1984) work into individuals undertaking everyday acts of resistance through mundane consumption. This research also gives further insight into the relationship between consumption and resistance, making an important contribution to the knowledge of immigrant consumption, and in particular into the consumption practices of immigrants from a non-American perspective.

In terms of acts of resistance, the female British White participants demonstrate this openly. The British White participants, in their egalitarian view of marriage and gender role, appear not to demonstrate cultural patriarchy nor are the female British White participants willing to accept it exists. Compared to the Nigerian female participants, the need to resist subversively is not apparent among the White female participants.

This research has, therefore, shown that female Nigerian immigrants are not passive actors in the process of acculturation and acts of consumption. Instead of accepting their male partners’ authority this research has shown how they, often hidden, manipulate consumption acts to suit their own needs, thus empowering themselves. Yet these acts of resistance are based on much darker reasons. Aware of their male spouses experiences of racism, and subsequent sense of demasculinisation, Nigerian women voluntarily give the power gained via their financial contributions to the family to their male spouse. By empowering their male spouse, they provide him with a sense of pride and well being in a world where he feels undervalued. This act, while voluntary, often leads to the acts of resistance, as noted; yet it is these acts that allow the Nigerian women to temporarily reassert themselves and, one could argue, support their own mental health.
6.3 Contribution to knowledge

The aim of this research is to explore the extent that married female immigrants, through acculturation, use consumption as a means of empowerment by asserting their self-identity within a society that values gender equality. It has additionally sought to also illustrate how acculturation tensions experienced by female immigrants arise and are resolved through consumption. Specifically, these tensions may have arisen from being expected to be in and empowered by full-time employment in White society while at the same time expected to be culturally subservient to their male partners in their own home. In addressing these themes, the research has made a number of contributions to existing theory.

This thesis, in contributing to knowledge, addresses academic gaps in the focus on immigrants and consumption, with particular focus on immigrant women and the importance of meanings they give to consumption acts. By investigating immigrants, this thesis addresses Greave et al.’s (1995) call for further research into immigrants and, using first-generation Nigerian immigrants living in Britain as the central focus, it makes a small contribution to addressing the American-centric nature of existing research.

This thesis unashamedly focuses on the experiences and voices of women: both first-generation Nigerian immigrant women living in Britain and British White women. In doing so, we show how Nigerian women were not passive receptors of culture but instead intuitive, creative and successful. This finding addresses Boyd’s (1986) observation that female immigrants were treated in research as either being invisible or stereotyped.

Acculturation, not surprisingly, is a central theme throughout this research and dominated all aspects of our findings. While our research supports Bhatia’s (2002) Dialogical Model of Acculturation in how the female Nigerian participants have constructed their identities, the findings also reflect darker issues, i.e. racism. Unlike their female counterparts, male Nigerian immigrants appear to have struggled to adapt to British society, reflecting behaviours that are almost identifiable with Berry’s (1980) bi-cultural acculturation category of separateness. The origins of this separateness appear to lie in experiences of racism, both physical and
psychological, reflecting Ward and Kennedy’s (2001) findings. Consequently, this finding sadly contributes to existing research on immigrants and ethnic minorities experiences of racism (Dion, et al., 1992; Moghaddam, Ditto and Taylor, 1990; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003; Pak et al., 1991; Sandhu and Asrabadi, 1994).

This is not to say that female Nigerian immigrants have not experienced racism, or do recall stories of their own experiences. Instead, the female Nigerian participants view racism as a fact of life, they acknowledge that it exists but insist that one has to get on with one’s life. In many respects, this finding reflects Barrette et al.’s (2004) argument that immigrants accept that the dominant culture will never accept their customs and values and neither will they ever be culturally or socially incorporated within the dominant culture. Unlike their male spouses, the female Nigerian participants in this study actively have sought ways to incorporate their cultural identities into both British White and Nigerian cultural worlds. Although this requires numerous reconstructions of their identities, echoing Bhatia’s (2002) previous arguments, they have nonetheless sought actively to make their identities work for them. The perceptions of their own identities, for these women, is reflective of Mercer’s (1992, p. 427) earlier observation that Black identities in the UK ‘have to be culturally and politically constructed through political antagonism and cultural struggle’. This thesis then contributes to our understanding of how Black women, as a minority, construct their identities.

The findings reveal how gender and power dynamics between immigrant married couples have been acted out, addressing previous calls for greater understanding of this research area (Dion and Dion, 2001; Gentry, Commuri and Jun 2003; Kallivayalil, 2004). In doing so, this study identifies how acculturation led immigrant Nigerian women to challenge, conform and accept varying degrees of cultural patriarchy. By recognising and exploring the wider acculturation antecedents (such as culture, ethnicity and self-identity), it shows the inner-most thoughts and actions of immigrant Nigerian women in negotiating often difficult situations within their family unit. These findings, therefore, support and develop further previous research (Lim, 1997; Tang and Dion, 1999; Wakil et al., 1981).
In addressing power dynamics within immigrant families, one perhaps, make the most
important contribution to research. Drawing upon the work of McCracken (1986) and others,
this thesis has shown how culturally laden products and other more general products are
actively used by the Nigerian immigrant women as a means to reassert their identities. This
reassertion arose from the Nigerian patriarchal culture that their male spouses had imposed in
their homes. Consequently, consumption becomes a contested area, where power was
negotiated, renegotiated and sometimes claimed outright by the Nigerian women. As a find it
develops further our understanding of previous research that aimed to explore how individuals
exerted influence over their spouse’s behaviour across different product categories (Ferber and
Lee, 1974; Davis and Rigaux, 1974; Putman and Davison, 1987). It also develops our
understanding of immigrant marital dynamics from the perspectives, developing and applying
Lukes’s (2005) theory of power.

Thus, this finding further adds to our understanding of Kandiyoti’s (1988) theory of
patriarchal bargaining. From one perspective, the findings show how immigrant Nigerian
women accepted, challenged, conformed and renegotiated patriarchal bargaining through
consumption. Yet another, perhaps a more important, perspective is how they appear to accept
their male spouse’s need for patriarchy. By identifying this behaviour, we support previous
arguments that ethnic minorities, in this case married immigrant men, reinterpret those
characteristics that they perceive as inferior so not appear inferior (Bourhis et al., 1973). This
is done through the imposition of Nigerian patriarchal values within the home. The aim of this
is to stress the distinctiveness of their Nigerian culture as a means of to addressing racism and
strengthening their own sense of ethnic identity. Although this finding supports Christian et
al.’s (1976) previous arguments, the findings presented in this thesis go further in identifying
the role of consumption in this process.

Finally, by encouraging empowerment, this research contributes to understanding the quality
of life and well-being of not only the Nigerian female population in Britain but immigrants in
general. By focusing on Black African women in British society, it has put a spotlight onto a
population frequently left out of consumer research. By highlighting not only their struggles of

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being Black and being a woman but also their self-inflicted responsibility for empowering their spouse, it also draws attention to issues of mental health. In doing so, it is also hoped that this research will contribute to policy-relevant issues from a comparative and international perspective.

6.4 Research implications

This section will explore the implications of this research from three perspectives: consumer research, marketing and social.

6.4.1 Consumer research implications

This thesis gives an example of consumer research on ethnic minorities. As referred to earlier, research into consumer practices of ethnic minorities in Britain is clearly lacking, especially with the focus on Black immigrants. Although this thesis does not aim to make sweeping generalisations of all Black immigrants in Britain, it is hoped that this research will provide a platform for further research; most particularly, in the field of research on Black ethnic minorities in Britain.

This research has namely shown that Black Nigerian female immigrants are not passive receptors of consumption but active members. This thesis shows how these women actively negotiated, accessed and engaged with resources to consume. This has important implications for our understanding of Black immigrant women.

This research has also shown how Black Nigerian female immigrants construct multiple identities to acculturate into British White society, which subsequently has an affect on their consumption. This develops further our understanding of the consumption decisions undertaken by immigrants and how consumption is used to reassert ethnic identity. Mostly importantly this research also adds to our understanding of how immigrant women use acts of resistance in the form of consumption to empower themselves.
Overall, the implications for this research in relation to consumption lies in the platform this thesis provides for understanding how immigrants engage with consumption from a cultural perspective to negotiate and achieve power.

6.4.2 Marketing implications

This thesis is an example of how immigration can influence gender roles and behaviour in typically under-represented groups, in order to provide empowerment for women through consumption. The number of Black immigrants entering Britain has increased significantly over the last decade, attributed mainly to the promise of financial well being. The implication of this is that businesses, especially in the area of retail and services, may want to re-examine their diversity initiatives more thoroughly in view of capturing this market.

Findings from this research offer a number of important marketing implications for business and management. As seen from the research, focusing solely on cultural differences in context of consumption is simply not sufficient to adapting marketing strategies. One could posit that female immigrants, in this case female Nigerian immigrants, do not act as passive actors in the process of acculturation and acts of consumption. Rather, these females instead of accepting their male partner’s authority they manipulate consumption acts to suit their own needs. If we look at this behaviour, one may assume that targeting this group may be difficult for a marketer. One might presume that it would be important to appeal to the immigrant male’s need of authority in the matrimonial household, seeing that they are viewed as the financial provider for the immigrant household. This would be a wrong, as it would only act to hamper the position of female immigrants in terms of consumption. Using marketing to reinforce a man’s patriarchal role, within the family unit, raises important ethical issues. One needs to consider the extent that one, as a marketing practitioner, has in coercing or supporting an immigrant culture undergoing the acculturation process. Adopting this approach could seriously be seen as perpetuating cultural values that, from the dominant culture’s perspective, is in itself is oppressing.
It would rather be more beneficial for marketers to acknowledge the differences in behaviour of women and their spouses and involve developing marketing strategies that appear to support the power structures within the immigrant family unit. For example, sales promotions targeting female immigrants may benefit from involving the husband and vice versa. In this way, such communication may act to reinforce the male spouse’s patriarchal position, yet appeal directly to the wife. As a marketing practitioner, one should focus on encouraging acculturation by empowering women not to be subversive in their consumption acts while maintaining chosen elements of their own culture. A marketing practitioner could then use marketing tools to empower women, use such things as advertising to impart knowledge to male spouses on sharing household duties and so on. While marketing alone cannot bring about positive changes in an immigrant’s acculturation process, it is important for the practitioner to recognise marketing’s contribution to this process.

6.4.3 Social implications

This thesis presents a number of important findings that have wider social implications. The repeated narratives of participants around racism serve to illustrate its destructive nature. The findings presented in this thesis show how male Nigerian immigrants appear to be withdrawing from British society and this is likely to have negative effects on their own children. This thesis suggests then future Government legislation and research should aim to encourage and explore how greater inclusion could be encouraged within British society.

6.5 Limitations

On reflection of this thesis, it is important to note the various issues that have had an impact on conducting the research, which was in itself limiting. With respect to the analytical side of this research, one may scrutinise this research in view of the reliability of the analysis. For example, to what extent are the research findings presented here unique to this sample group? Do all immigrants from patriarchal cultures exist in marriages wherein the female spouse actively complies and resists at the same time? These limitations stem from the interpretive
research strategy used, with the results being founded on my own interpretation; consequently these findings cannot be entirely objective.

The size of the sample group is also limiting as it may not give a true representation of the wider population. The sample group used was one based on convenience and recruited through a snow-balling technique. In addition, the sample was drawn from a church-going, population, introducing religion into sample group. However, due to time constraint and resources, it was unfeasible to find an alternative, i.e. non-religious, sample group. Yet, this approach can be justified insofar as every effort was made to match Nigerian participants with the British White participants, in order to achieve construct equivalence, i.e. the participants were matched according to socio-demographic profiling, ensuring any differences could be attributed to acculturation etc and not other uncontrollable variables. However, in practice, construct equivalence was not entirely possible due to accessibility and the consent of participants; hence it has limits to its applicability.

In addition to this sampling limitation is the issue of classifying the Nigerian participants as ‘Nigerian’. Nigeria has over 255 tribes and it was not possible to investigate each of these tribal groups, due to accessibility, resources and time. Further, the categorisation of these people as ‘Nigerian’ is, from one perspective, reminiscent of British colonialism and the creation of the state of Nigeria.

Data collection, using interviews, although very useful for this research, may also have been limited to the outcomes, as the data refers primarily to post-migration experiences over present-day life. There may be discrepancies between Nigerian participants’ responses to the research questions and their actual experiences, evidenced by an element of research demand characteristics appeared in the interviews; it is possible that the participants told the researcher what they thought was expected. This in itself would have been difficult to monitor and control, and thus has an adverse affect on the overall research.
The subjectivity of this research has to be recognised, as the findings ultimately reflect my own cultural beliefs and values. As a result, the data may have been unintentionally biased.

Through the process of data analysis, error is also inevitably introduced in the process of codifying or quantifying interviews for the purpose of comparison. This, in addition to the time lapse in interviews, analysis and writing up and the threat of not portraying accurate descriptions of the cultures may also be limiting to this research.

This research also only looked at first-generation Nigerian immigrants, which although significant to research, remains limiting. Although second-generation Nigerian immigrants were taken into consideration initially, accessibility proved to be a problem while trying to recruit from a similar demographic, as most of whom were either cohabiting or single, and due to time constraints.

One also has to readdress the issue of validity and reliability. As this research was cross-cultural, the demographics of this research may have limited the generalisability of the outcomes. In addition to this one also has to take note of the emic–etic dilemma and the influence one has as a researcher on the research itself. Although great care was taken to address this issue, it would be impossible to suggest that one is able to remain completely objective in the field.

6.6 Directions for future research

This research offers the potential for a number of future research studies.

Future research may lie in undertaking longitudinal studies of other ethnic minorities in Britain. For example, looking at the Afro-Caribbean community in Britain, this provides fertile ground for exploring these current issues. The Afro-Caribbean community has a longer history in Britain and, therefore, may have different albeit more extreme case of acculturative factors affecting their consumption. One could also focus on other African immigrant groups.
Africa consists of fifty-four countries, so it would be interesting to investigate cultural difference and its subsequent affects on consumption. Research possibilities could extend as far as on other immigrant groups, for example, Asian immigrant women and Eastern European immigrants, to investigate the consequences of these acts of resistance and how they negotiate marital power structures within the immigrant family unit.

Methodologically, although this research is qualitative in nature, it would be useful to acknowledge alternative methods of collecting data. A quantitative technique maybe used as a means of reaching a larger sample group, adding to reliability of the data generated through this research. Subsequently, this may enable a researcher to produce generalisable data and gain a better understanding of the research phenomenon. It may also be useful to incorporate an ethnographic method into the study as it would enable one to account for the complexity of group behaviours, allowing one to reveal interrelationships among multifaceted dimensions of male and female spouses, and provide context for behaviours.

It would also be interesting to investigate further the issue of social class and behaviour cross-culturally. Although social class was taken into consideration when choosing participants, it was difficult to gain access to these different groups. Focusing on social class differences would be interesting to investigate how power is distributed, owned and earned.

Future research into the role of religion would also be useful in consumer research, especially in terms of the role religion plays in perpetuating patriarchy among immigrant women. This issue is briefly touched upon in my research interviews with the Nigerian participants and, although not part of this study, does suggest a future research topic.

Research into first-generation Nigerian female immigrants that makes comparisons with second-generation Nigerian female immigrants would also be of great interest, as it would highlight the differences in intergenerational patriarchal behaviour and subsequent consumption acts. For example, do second and third generations of immigrants share the same resistant behaviours and to what extent are these related to similar or not cultural, historical
and social influences? Critical to this research path would be identifying how acculturation changes from generation to generation, with the second-generation Nigerians living in Britain, such as myself, having been born in Britain.

In addition, identifying the role of children in perpetuating patriarchy would also be of interest in further research, adding to the body of literature on family decision making. My research findings hint at how children have been used, willingly or not, by the participants as accomplices in their parents’ power struggles. The issues surrounding their involvement demand further investigation.

Finally, it would also be useful to investigate the role that men play in perpetuating patriarchy. Although this research suggests that, in some cases, married men are aware that their spouses resist their behaviours, this topic has not been explored sufficiently.
CHAPTER 7: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As I sit here trying to write this section of my thesis I am left pondering over the definition of empowerment, in particular my personal understanding of empowerment. As I type, looking at my husband of two years, and am I actually empowered or am I disempowered? Evidence suggests that I may be disempowered, but how can that be? Yes I was born in Britain, I was born into the Western ideology, an environment that is continuously defining what it means to be a woman, with the view that all things should be equal between husband and wife, and yes women should have control of their lives, women should be able to go out to work and share child-rearing responsibilities with their spouse. I’m left here thinking is that what it means to be empowered, should everything be equal, should I behave with such awareness. But then I stop and look at my culture, my sweet rich culture, which I am proud of. I’m proud to be a Nigerian, and yes I say Nigerian because that is what I am. Yes I was born in this country and on occasion I do fancy eating the odd fish and chips, while watching Eastenders, but at the end of the day I am Nigerian. And why might one ask, why do I feel this way? Well as with most of the Nigerian women that I interviewed, Britain appears and is a home away from home a view that I have as well, a view that this society portrays, after all I am viewed as a Black second generation ‘immigrant’.

As a result I have found myself rethinking some of my key beliefs of what it means to be a Black British Nigerian, second generation immigrant woman (what a mouthful!). It is clear that in this society Black women still face a number of challenges, one that cannot be dismissed as gentle whispers of unrest. It is then of no surprise that these women choose to respond by empowering themselves with their own culture against the pinnacles of British White culture.

Notwithstanding as my understanding grows of Nigerian culture, I have found that we as women once again find ourselves embroiled in a world where there is further oppression, one
that indirectly seeks ways to curtail the position of women in the household. That is the western view speaking within me. However it would not be fair for me to say that women are passive in this treatment, we at times find ourselves consciously reverting back to our cultural standards as a way of reaffirming our position in a society that does not readily accept us as equal.

We as Black women find ourselves, in this society, in inferior roles compared to our White counterparts and tirelessly find ourselves working significantly harder to reach the same position as our White peers. You only have to look at the academic or business arena to see evidence of this. However, this does not make me bitter, after all this is a British White society and I am second generation ‘immigrant’. So what then do I have to fall back on when the outside world tells me that I do not belong? Isn’t it my Nigerian culture? And yes, by adopting my Nigerian culture and conforming to, what one would say as a subservient role, this only acts to show my conformation to my Nigerian culture, my collective. Yes if I adopt the western view that this Nigerian culture is oppressive that would be great, but there is one major flaw, it is a western viewpoint, a western viewpoint which is position on White culture. So how do I then say with conviction that these Nigerian women are oppressed, am I not playing into the role of promoting Western white values by doing so? That certainly was not the aim of this research. One of the most important things learnt from this study is that these Nigerian women not only see themselves empowered through British White culture but in most cases by their own culture, and yes it may be viewed as disempowering, but whose opinion is that? Who has said that it is disempowering, isn’t it based on a White perspective? What’s not to say that we ourselves, as researchers have not empowered ourselves or are we still restrained in our White perspective of what is right and what is wrong? These Nigerian female participants on reflection may not be disempowered but in fact empowered.

The fact is that it will take a far longer time to resolve these issues but one has to be hopeful. Women of all races are faced with issues surrounding culture, this PhD is only a glimpse of one particular group and it is within this group we see how these challenges. I myself on the
other hand am faced with the dilemma of how much one should conform to their culture of origin while navigating themselves in the realms of more ‘liberating’ society.

I find that I am empowered by my Nigerian culture, I have the strength from being a Black woman and I should not be viewed as a victim because of my values attributed to my Nigerian culture. I wrote this thesis thinking that I would give a voice to these ‘oppressed’ Nigerian women but really I have found that they are not oppressed but I am oppressed in my thinking – my western way of thinking, which is not the supreme thinking. I have fallen into the trap of thinking in a western centric way, which I believe can be, and at times flawed. I believe we have to adapt our thinking to that of the environment, but not in a way to change our being but just to improve our understandings we should not fall into the trap of imposing our views and beliefs, to situations that we do not fully understand.
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APPENDIX I: Map of Africa showing Nigeria

Source: http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.munoz-group.net/pics/map_africa.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.munoz-group.net/research_ctry_africa.asp&h=502&w=500&sz=95&tbnid=ou-92J3Im48YcM:&tbnh=130&tbnw=129&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmap%2Bof%2Bafrika&zoom=1&q=map+of+africa&hl=en&usg=__LhpFWWNPy8CedSwLjPrdvvU5W3o=&sa=X&ei=JSWETJ-xCZWTjAeBl8s28Dg&ved=0CC0Q9QEwBg
APPENDIX II: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

AII.I  Nigerian Participant Profiles

Selina

Selina and Ben – an overview

Selina is a 38 year old housing officer and has been married to her husband, Ben, 45, an accountant, for 15 years. Selina came to Britain to join Ben six years ago. Selina has three children, two boys (10, 13) and a girl (12).

Selina during the course of the interview with Ben appeared to be quiet in nature, often allowing her husband to speak on her behalf. It appeared as if Selina gave Ben the opportunity to take responsibility for their narratives, placing him in a position of superiority. Consider the following narrative on the discussion of:

    Ben:  She had to come later because I wanted to get things organised for her and the children.

    Selina: Yes.

    Ben:  I had to organise where they would be staying that was very important.

In most instances in their joint interview, Selina remained passive often concurring with Ben’s opinions and decision further adding to the power difference between herself and Ben. Selina often made references to her behaviour as a means of making her feel secure and safe. Interestingly Selina does not object to this role, rather she support them in favour of maintaining her culture in Britain.
Selina and Ben’s reasons for migrating to Britain were explained by Selina:

*Ok, my husband came to England first he came to work as an accountant. He had been given a job to work for the Nigerian Embassy in London so he came to Britain, I joined after.*

Ben with his new job as an accountant in Britain used the opportunity to accustomise himself to Britain in order to assess the environment for Selina and their children. As Ben explains:

*Well I had an idea of how Britain operated, in terms of housing, employment and education because her coming to Britain with the children was very important, and I didn’t want them to come here and not be settled.*

Ben’s behaviour as the head of the household represents a patriarchal role of the provider, the leader and thus the head of the household. While Ben was in Britain Selina was working in Nigeria as a bank teller, offering her opportunities for financial empowerment. However, although Selina was working in Nigeria, Ben supported his wife financially, continuously sending money to Selina and their children from Britain. The reasons for this lied in Ben felt that this was his duty as a husband to do so:

*I would send her money every month just for her up keep so she would not have to worry about finance. I know she was working but I did not want her to stress herself.*

Ben’s self-appointment as the caretaker of his family represented his conformity to the patriarchal system of Nigerian culture. In response although Selina was working, and financially buoyant, she remained confined to her cultural position as a wife. When probed individually about this, Selina expressed:
Well I was working and my husband supported me, he was providing for his family. It’s part of our culture for the men to provide for their family. That’s normal but we woman can also contribute, which I did.

Ben’s adoption of typical Nigerian gender roles as the provider for his family only reinforced Selina’s subservient position. However, even though Selina financially provides for the family she openly reiterates her position as a wife and Ben’s position as a husband, a provider, a man:

Yes he was working and provided for us, I thank God for him. I didn’t have to worry over little little things.

Once settled in Britain Selina later joined Ben, feeling secure and happy that everything was organised. A satisfaction that arose from knowing that Ben had reaffirmed his role as the head of the household:

Well when I came everything was organised. I didn’t have to worry about anything. Lucky for me my husband had already had everything so I didn’t have to worry over.

Selina’s life narrative - arrival

Migrating to Britain proved to be a life changing experience for Selina. In Nigeria she had rarely encountered British White people, and those that she met where attending her local church. Upon arrival in Britain, with her children, she noted unfamiliar behaviours:

When I came to England, the people here speak so fast. I could not understand one word that they were saying. I’d just smile; they would talk to me in a raised voice as if I didn’t hear them. It’s true I didn’t hear them [laughs]. Speed at which they spoke was tremendous; it took a while for me to understand. The children were fine; you know they pick things up very easily.
Selina’s lack of prior in-depth knowledge into British White culture and its people resulted in initial difficulties in understanding her new society. A difficulty that was compounded by Selina being solely dependent on Ben both financially and emotionally:

You know being away from home you do not have anybody. You have your family of course, but you don’t have any friends so at first it can be very lonely.

Selina’s initial loneliness and possible isolation in a new country without her extended family and friends made her more reliant on Ben:

He was lucky because he would go to work. I would be with the children. There was nowhere for me to go as I didn’t know my way round so it very difficult, all I would do is watch my children and TV, very boring.

Selina also talks of this challenging period and its subtle affects on her marriage in terms of her freedom and space:

It was a bit difficult at first, but you know women when husband is away we have freedom [laughs] but seriously it was slightly different when I came to England to be with my husband. Ok an example, I like my house to be very tidy, but my husband is very relaxed so things like that used to annoy me [laughs], but anyway you get used to it, such is life.

In the above narrative we see first the Selina seeks the reaffirm her opinions of freedom, with me, the interviewer, and creates a unifying voice of all women in the use of the term, ‘we’ (we denoting all females). By using the term ‘freedom’, she also implies restriction created by Ben, thus Nigerian culture. Selina also gives a glimpse of the challenged that she found over her personal space. She gives ownership of the house to herself, claiming her responsibility but also indirectly challenging Ben’s ownership, it’s her house and her possessions.
When analysing British culture, Selina views British White culture as completely different to her own:

*English culture, I don’t really know it that well. It’s just different really, different to African culture. I wouldn’t really say that the English are cultured, no. Not like African culture. Look at our people, our language, the way that we behave. It’s just different. You see we Nigerians have a way of doing things; we tend to show everybody respect. We respect our parents, our aunties, uncles. We respect people that senior us, but here I find that it’s not like that. Children behave this way, adults behave that way, things are just spoiled in this country.*

Although Selina’s observations about English culture are one that is a lower standard to Nigerian culture, she still hopes to remain in Britain until her children are older:

*I think we’ll stay here until the children are older, until they finish their university at least. Let them take advantage of the educational system. I would like to go back to Nigeria.*

In keeping with her culture, she ensures that she teaches her children their language, Yoruba. She sees this teaching as a means of empowering her children:

*It is very important for my children to learn our language, so when they go home they can fit in. Plus it is important for example when I’m out we can communicate with one another, maybe of I want to tell them something that I don’t want everybody to know, I can speak my language. This is important to me, when they are outside they speak English, but at home they must speak the language.*
Language is culturally important for Selina allowing her to separate herself and her children from British White society.

Although Selina does not watch a lot of television, she mostly spends her time watching religious programmes. However, we also see that Selina is familiar with British soap operas, but her opinions of them are very low:

*I don’t really waste my time watching all these soap operas. None of them carry moral stories, all are negative, like Eastenders, all those type of programmes the messages that they portray are very bad. I don’t allow my children to watch them either. Some of these programmes are based on society so watching them sometimes makes me feel angry as they depict so many negative images.*

Selina’s identification with Nigerian culture also affects her choice of clothing. During her solo interview Selina often discussed her pride in wearing Nigerian clothes, especially to her colleagues:

*When I go to work I usually wear Nigerian clothes, especially in the summer. When I go to work my colleagues say, ‘Selina that dress is gorgeous, oh Selina you’re looking so colourful this morning’ [laughs].*

Selina symbolically wears Nigerian clothing to express her ethnicity and cultural pride. We also see that in doing so, she sees herself as different. Even in terms of her behaviour she talks of behaving differently to her peers:

*In the way I carry myself at work. I think I behave differently. Even my English colleagues say that all the time. I just give people respect, by manager is always saying ‘Selina you’re so polite’, as if I were strange. I just think to myself, polite, what is being polite I’m just respecting my manager that’s all. I think that’s the difference between our culture and theirs, the level of respect.*
Selina’s partial withdrawal from British White society may be attributed to racism. In interviewing Selina, although probed on numerous occasions in-depth issues of racism were not mentioned. This is not saying that they did not occur but such occurrences were not expressed by Selina; she never verbalised directly her experience of racism, but made references. One could therefore believe that this may be due to subject being to distressful to discuss, or that she chose not be a victim of her experience. This behaviour is also exhibited by Ben, Ben explains:

*When you live in this society you tend to get used to racism, I guess that’s the sacrifice that we pay for leaving our country to come this place. In daily occurrences we are reminded that this is not our country but that does not make us bitter, no. We just strive to become better people.*

Selina’s experience of racism prompted her to send her children to a school where she felt they were less likely to experience racism. Like Selina’s earlier comments about her need to cloth her children and over-riding Ben’s wishes, the same situation arises in school selection:

*When we first came to this country I wanted my children to be comfortable in their environment so I started looking for schools in this area. I wanted schools where there were Black children, so they would feel comfortable but my husband wanted to send them to a school far away, where I doubt if they would have ever saw a Black person. My husband couldn’t understand why I chose that school, but I wanted them to be in environment where they would meet people of similar cultures. Sometimes he can say ‘Oh Selina why did you behave this way, why not put them in a school with more English people, so they’re able to interact with them’ but I look at that and say, ‘Do I want to put my children through that?’*

As Selina had her children in Nigeria she was determined to ensure that her children maintained their culture by attending a school that had pupils of similar cultural background.
The decision over their children’s schooling while taken ultimately by Selina can be seen from a number of perspectives. One perspective is Selina is simply fulfilling her Nigerian cultural role as the protective mother. Another, more credible perspective is the context needs to be considered. In Britain Selina was willing to disobey her husband’s wishes to achieve what she felt was best for their children; an act of cultural resistance, which reflected aspects of her empowerment in British society but also a reflection of her own experiences of racism.

**Selina’s life narrative - being a professional**

Working in Britain has given Selina many opportunities to understand the culture. Initially when she came to Britain her knowledge of British culture was based only on Ben’s opinions as well as her attendance of an English church group:

>When I came to this country I didn’t really know what was like. It was only my husband that would tell me about this place; this is one of the reasons why I wanted to work. When you work you are able to better understand the culture.

We see once aging Ben is in a position of power, in that he has initial control over Selina’s opinions of British culture. This made Selina motivated to work, not only for the possible financial independence but also the opportunity to learn about British White culture and society, facilitating her integration. Immediately after arriving in Britain Selina immediately took control and responsibility for finding work:

>When I got here, I know the children were young, I decided that I must look for a job even if it was part time, I had to work. I couldn’t imagine myself being at home all the time doing nothing. Back in Nigeria I was working.

However, on migrating to Britain Selina encountered difficulties in achieving employment:
When I came here I thought that it would be easy for me to find work. I had no idea that it would be difficult. Even my husband thought it would be easy for me, we were both wrong. I used to see jobs and apply for them but I would never get any response. It was very disheartening. I remember the days when my husband would come back from work; I would just complain and complain to him.

I remember myself and my husband would spend hours trying to write my CV. Every night, ‘Have you tried this, have you tried that, why not this’. It got to one point when I thought to myself, ‘Why bother with all this, back home I was happy working’ but then I look at my children, look at my husband and just remove my mind from what was happening. I knew that God would provide for us.

Selina’s request for help from Ben further added to the imbalance of power in their relationship. An imbalance that Selina was not happy with:

*I was just not used to not working, just being able. It wasn’t for me. Some women like that but me, uh huh. I have to work!*

Selina’s difficulties in finding she inferred may have been due to racism. When discussing the reasons why she was unable to get work she angrily explains:

*Sometimes it could be my name. A person may look at my name and say, ‘Hey this is not English’, then put my CV to one side or it may be my accent, they, when hearing me over the phone they will immediately use that as an opportunity not to employ me.*

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25 CV for curriculum vitae is a two page document summarising your education and employment history, typically used during the employment recruitment process.
Now working Selina expresses great pride in herself getting employment and is keen to minimalise the influence of racism in her past. She is happy working for her company and having the opportunity to improve her skills:

\[
\text{This place I’m working, I’m so happy here. It’s given me the opportunity to improve my skills. I’ve been able to take courses, go for training. All sorts of things. The people here are nice, very friendly.}
\]

In the place of her employment Selina is the only Black woman in her office, however this does not faze her, instead it makes her more determined to succeed:

\[
\text{I know that I am the only black person in the office, but that does not bother me.}
\]
\[
\text{I just use it to my advantage. As my colleagues know, I’m not scared to express myself or my culture [laughs].}
\]

When probed further she explains:

\[
\text{You know I’m proud of my culture, when I’m at work I talk to them about my culture. For example my English colleagues may talk about the way they do certain things, and they would say, ‘Selina in your culture how do you do this’ so I would explain to them they way things are done in Nigerian culture, and they are happy to listen. They are always asking so many things about my culture.}
\]

Selina still retains responsibility of caring for her children, something that she comfortable in doing, accepting this as part of her role as a wife and mother. Of particular interest is how Ben supports her:

\[
\text{He helps when he can, he is very supportive. Those times when I come back late he has already made food for the house and helped with the children. I know he}
\]
helps, but sometimes I feel bad, you know, it’s not easy for him always working all these unsocialable hours only to come back home to look after the children but it’s very helpful to me, we women can’t do everything [laughs].

**Selina’s life narrative - the consumer**

Selina’s consumption revolves around her family needs. Decisions are made jointly with Ben, with Selina responsible for the purchasing of food, with Ben buying of meat. Selina explains that Ben often buys the meat for the house and cites this as his role:

*Well I usually buy the food stuff but sometimes my husband will support me to buy meat. He has the car so it’s easier, yeah.*

In this particular prose we see the power that Selina gives to Ben in buying the meat for the household. The meat becomes a symbol of power and Ben becomes the provider hence exhibiting his patriarchal dominance in the household. Selina also reverts back into a submissive role allowing Ben to ‘support her’, comforting herself with the fact that is ‘easier’ for him to do so, when in fact it may not be. It also shows here that both Selina and Ben also give themselves roles, something which has been guided culturally. In reviewing her position Selina asserts that she is comfortable with the arrangement, perpetuating Nigerian patriarchy:

*It’s not that we discussed who was responsible for what; it is just easier for my husband to buy the meat since he did it back home. Like I said, he has the car so he can buy the more heavier things, so yeah. You know back home men are responsible for buying the meat so here we adopt the same.*

Selina in her consumption focuses much of her attention on buying Nigerian items especially in food consumption. Selina uses this consumption as a form of maintaining her Nigerian culture; a value that is not commonly shared in her home:
I mostly buy Nigerian food ingredients as we mostly eat Nigerian food so most weekends I go to the market and buy all the ingredients but in terms of the children I cook Nigerian food for them, but I also buy English food you know sandwiches, all those kind of things, I don’t eat them. It’s just the children.

When Selina is asked about purchasing British White food she explains:

Children when they’re young they like to belong so I think that when they go to their friends house they see them eating this type of food and so they want to eat it, so most of the times I just buy it for them, but they also eat Nigerian food!

Selina’s narratives reflect an interesting generational difference. In the first instance Selina enjoys eating Nigerian food; however in terms of the children she is more comfortable in buying English food. Food purchases that she believes will assist her children’s need to integrate into British White society, empowering her children. When probed in relation to this consumption behaviour she explains:

Well children are different, they are sensitive to their environment, they do not want to feel like they do not belong so at lunch time they want to have the same packed lunch as their friends. That’s children for you, but I make sure when they are home they eat Nigerian food.

As noted earlier, when purchasing clothing Selina mostly buys traditional Nigerian clothing. These items are largely bought by herself, highlighting her lone process of decision making. Selina does not consult Ben over these purchases seeing that Ben does not have knowledge in her preferences:

Well I don’t tell my husband I’m buying this or that. I think he almost expects me to buy my traditional outfits regularly. He doesn’t mind at all, you know men they are not very fussed, just as long as their wife looks decent.
In this instance Selina becomes responsible for purchasing her own traditional clothing, however Ben has an indirect influence on her choices, he become a reference point to her decisions over the type of clothing bought, i.e. Selina having to look ‘decent’. In addition to this Selina once again shows her conformity to Ben by identifying his expectations of her in terms of buying traditional outfits, i.e. his expectations of her as his wife. Selina buys all of her clothes by herself, noting only a few bought by Ben as a present. Discussing her purchase of traditional Nigerian clothing she notes the reason behind her purchases:

Well I like my culture, so I want to wear Nigerian clothing. I wear them to work and people are so inquisitive over my outfit. I don’t mind, I like telling them of my culture. Every month or two I get one of my family friends to buy some material for me so I can get a tailor to sew them. I buy maybe 3-4 clothes.

What we have seen in discussing consumption behaviour with Selina is that she does not actively seek to consume goods to signify her retaliation to oppression. She did not give inferences of even being oppressed though given several opportunities to discuss these issue, thus they were not presented in her narrative. Selina showed the least amount of cultural resistance among all our Nigerian participants. This may have been due to her conformity to her cultural duty as wife, her motivation to retain her control in mainstream society, and the fact that she has been in Britain the least amount of time compared to the other participants. What was observed is that Selina uses every opportunity to conform to the protocols of being a Nigerian wife

Nicola

Nicola and Edward – overview

Nicola, 49 is a full time administrator working for her local council. She has been married to Edward (52), a businessman, for 25 years. They met at church, in Britain, by being introduced
to a family friend and now have three children, two girls (23, 21) and a boy (18). Both Nicola’s and Edward’s relationship in discussion appears to be based on traditional African cultural values, however Nicola and Edward remain relaxed about the duties they share in their individual roles.

Nicola came to Britain during the 1980s, by herself, to join her sister. Her original plan was to go to America, but it was her sister who convinced her to stay in Britain, by expressing the number of opportunities there were available for her to take advantage of:

*It was my sister that told me to come to England, she told that there were so many opportunities, some many things to be done. I had intentions of going to America because I thought there were more opportunities there.*

Nicola came to Britain at the age of twenty-one and quickly found out that the reason why her sister wanted her to come to Britain was to help her look after her children. She was very disappointed over what her sister had done to her. Having no choice, due to her respect for her elder sister (conforming to her Nigerian culture), she spent most of her time looking after her children:

*Imagine I came to this country thinking of all the adventures that I could have, instead I ended up looking after her children! I was not angry after all she is my elder, I was just disappointed but that is just the way it was. When I got a job it became easy, I just saved money to get my own place.*

Nicola’s reference to her sister as her ‘elder’ is in accordance with her Nigerian culture, i.e. showing respect to her elder sister. Nicola’s interest in going to America stemmed from early childhood images of America through film and music. Over the years she has reflected back at the possibilities that America may have had for her:
To be honest there is something about America; it seemed more progressive than this country, more opportunities but anyway, it was not meant to be, and here I am!

Sometimes I wonder where I would be now if I was in America. Maybe I would be living in a big house rather than this small house?

Soon arriving to Britain and finding that she was there to look after her elder sister’s children, Nicola found herself restricted and often referred to herself as ‘feeling like a house girl’. Rather than seeing herself as a victim of cultural constraints, Nicola demonstrated her first act of cultural resistance by undermining her sister’s wishes:

It was not easy, I was only young and here I was looking after my sister’s children. I just said to myself I didn’t come to this country to do this, as of that day I decided that find myself a job.

Being determined to find her own house and have her independence, Nicola eventually found a job working as a secretary. She recalls the day she got the job:

Wow, when I got back home my face was like this! I couldn’t contain my happiness. Lucky for me my sister’s husband knew someone that was working there and he was looking for someone to help them. I applied and that is how I got it. I was so happy.

As a result of her working and becoming financially independent Nicola saved enough money to rent a flat, which provided her with a sense of cultural freedom. Shortly moving to her own flat, she met Edward at church and this led to a relationship and then marriage. Once married Nicola moved into Edward’s house, something that she found difficult at first:

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26 House maid
Oh that time was difficult; imagine I’d only being staying in my flat for less than a year when I met my husband, so you can imagine how hard it was when I had to move into his house. Things were so different, you know I’m a very organised person, but my husband HUH, that is another issue it itself! But I’ve been lucky because my husband always travels so I have my freedom [laughs].

Nicola found that once again she was restricted in terms of independence; she was now a wife living under Edward’s house, with its implied loss of freedoms. Nicola’s narratives expressed a subtle undertone of tension, which derived from freedom that experienced in her job and being unmarried. In the same narrative we see that Nicola is indirectly aware of her restriction easily identifying the freedom that she has when Edward travels to Nigeria for business.

Nicola’s experience of her loss of freedom is evident in how she talked about having to do things Edward’s way, because he is the head of the household, and she respects this, thereby revealing the Nigerian patriarchal structure within their relationship:

Well he likes things done in a certain way, you know. For example he likes the living room to be arranged like this. Sometimes I ask myself why, what for? I just do it because I know the following week he will probably travel to Nigeria [laughs].

From the above narrative Nicola conforms to her culturally derived submissive role as a wife in Edward’s presence. However, in the same narrative Nicola’s reveals her resistance to this patriarchy, only conforming to Edward’s demands when he is present. However, it is also Nicola’s choice to comply with Edward’s requests, which is something she sees as her cultural obligation, as a wife, therefore supporting her own domination:
Well I do everything [laughs] but that is because I want, it’s not that my husband tells me to do this then do that. I just know that as a wife I must look after the home. I don’t know if you understand me?

Nicola’s protecting and accounting for Edward’s behaviour is not enforced, rather it is what she perceives is expected from her, culturally as a wife:

Well Nigerian culture dictates that men are the head of the household so I give him that respect by consulting him in certain things, you know if I want change things in the house, or if I’m buying something for the house and I need money. It’s a respect him really.

Nicola’s choice of words are interesting, using such words as ‘dictate’ and ‘respect’ once again implies patriarchal restriction. When these inferred self-imposed restrictions are reflected back to Nicola, she recalls that her conformity is attributed to her Nigerian culture:

Well obligated yes, I am responsible for things in the house because that is my role, as a wife and mother, so for example I am responsible for the cooking, but that doesn’t mean that my husband can’t help me with the children. It’s just based on the understanding I have with my husband.

Nicola’s continual struggle with her subservient nature compared to her freedom is exasperated further by engagement with British White society:

Sometimes I find myself asking the question-‘ah I’m a professional woman, in Britain. I have all these skills, yet when I’m home I have to behave a completely different way’ so you can see where frustration can set in for some people, but then I look at and say, ‘Well in bible the Lord God said thou should honour you husband’. I have that constantly in my mind.
This struggle is exemplified by Nicola’s observation of her English friends at church. Nicola attends a multicultural Methodist church and has a number of English friends who are couples and thus uses them as a reference point, often comparing her relationships to theirs. A comparison that allows Nicola to identify her frustration with Edward and inadvertently the frustration that she has with Nigerian culture:

\[
\text{You see that is what I like about English people, things are more equal. I think}
\]
\[
\text{so anyway. I always tell my husband you need to wine and dine me, take me out.}
\]
\[
\text{I say look at that English couple but you Niaja men are the bothered with that!}
\]

In contrast Edward places little importance on this as his views of English people are negative:

\[
\text{English people, till this day I still do not understand them. To be honest I don’t}
\]
\[
\text{have time for them.}
\]

The way that Edward responds is aggressive and leads one to believe that he may have had a negative experience with English people. Edward clearly shows his detachment to British White society but when probed about this, Edward did not want to discuss this issue further.

**Nicola’s life narrative - being an immigrant**

Nicola’s opinions of British culture were based on friends who had travelled, giving her the impression that Britain was a country of opportunities. Although she is fully accustomed to British culture one of the things that surprised her initially about British culture was the level of racism:

\[
\text{You know when growing up in Nigeria we saw a lot of English people and we}
\]
\[
\text{treated them with respect, so when I got here I was so surprised how rude they}
\]
\[
\text{were to me. Maybe I was naïve then, but it was very shocking at that time.}
\]
When interviewed together Edward and Nicola share very similar opinions about British White culture although Edward expresses himself subtly as being more dominant:

Edward: *Well English culture is very relaxed; they are not bothered about anything. Anything is accepted, and I’ve noticed since I’ve been here that the way that they respect people is bad. I’ll give you one example; you could be struggling to find a job in this town and it very rare to find an English person to help you, very rare but in Nigeria, ah, things are different. Everybody is your brother.*

Nicola: *That is true, people do not have respect in this society, you see small children being so rude to the elderly, so rude. Nigeria you would be sure someone would chastise the child.*

Once again see reference to English culture having lack of respect, opinions held by Nicola and Edward. Both Edward and Nicola share similar experiences, however we later find that Edward’s experience of English culture becomes very critical when discussing his first experience of coming to Britain:

Edward: *You see when I came to this country I was very excited, but when I really experienced this place my excitement went. These people are so bad sometimes, so bad. Imagine when a person wants to do business, you go to the bank and this Oyibo27 man declines your application for a business loan. I just say ‘ah! Why waste my time, I’ll just do business at home [Nigeria]. Look at me God has blessed me and I’m doing well!*

Nicola: *These White people are bad.*

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27 Slang term used to describe a White person
Here we see one of Edward’s negative encounters; being discriminated in terms of business opportunities, as a result he retaliates over the experience and uses it as and opportunity to better himself, something that he finds empowering. From the above narrative Nicola clearly is in agreement with Edward. However, interestingly Nicola’s experience becomes largely different to Edward’s experience when interviewed alone, suggesting Nicola’s restriction in behaviour. Rather than seeing her negative experiences as a means to assess and benchmark all English people, she dismisses them:

*In life we go through many experiences but the main aim is to not let it affect one’s life. You just have to ask God for wisdom and a forgiving heart. People are different and they behave different when they are unfamiliar with other people.*

Here there are two things to highlight, one that Nicola’s narrative becomes extremely different when Edward is not present, suggesting a possible power struggle, this becomes relevant as it infers a level of restriction in opinions that Nicola has when Edward is present. Secondly, that Nicola rather than using discrimination as a point of distancing herself from British society, she uses it to come close to the society. She also uses religion to help her do so. Nicola’s expression of shock about being treated differently was evident in her search for employment:

*I was so excited when I got my job; it took me such a long time to find work. You know you would go to interviews and as soon as they see you they automatically say the job had been filled. Meanwhile you see it advertised the next day. Those days were not funny!*  

Rather than allowing these experience to disempower her she instead classified them as being ‘funny’, removing any emotional attachment to this experience. On finally finding employment, working as a secretary, Nicola became aware that she was different:
Working in an all White establishment back then, I soon learnt that I was different. You know when people stare at you with that look of ‘What are you doing here?’ Well I just closed my eyes to that and continued working. That was their problem.

Even with experiencing racism, Nicola still finds herself wanting to stay in Britain:

I think that is why we are so relaxed here, things are always at hand. Ok we know we have to pay bills but that is compensated with what we have. Nigeria, the accessibility of things would be lacking.

Nicola also goes further to express:

I like the fact that this country provides women opportunities, yes it’s true. There are so many doors that are open to women in this country which is very refreshing compared to Nigeria. Also we have access to so many things like healthcare.

This narrative is poignant as it shows that Nicola looks towards British White culture as being more empowering than her Nigerian culture. She is also able to identify both advantages and disadvantages of both cultures. Nicola views Nigerian culture as a tool of instructions, or rather a book of instructions on how one behaves:

Well culture is important; it is something that we all need as individuals. It is the language, the fashion, the style, what we look like, you know things like this. It’s even the food. Nigerian culture is very rich. When you’re away from home you tend to appreciate your culture more.
In comparison she sees British culture being liberating in terms of socialising. For example going to out with friends to restaurants, being able to socialise freely, something that she would not have done if in Nigeria:

> We usually go to restaurants. You know when I was in Nigeria there was no time for that. I wasn’t able to go out and do anything, my parents were so strict, so in a way I am thankful that I am here.

Nicola notes that she has a wide group of British White friends:

> Yes, I have English friends; most of them are from church. Some I’ve known for years, I go and visit them from time to time. Oh yeah, sometimes we meet up for coffee, things like that. Actually last week I went to a barbeque, it was nice.

Nicola’s White friendships suggest she is more acculturated compared to Edward, using her friendships as a way of learning about different cultures, which she views as an advantage:

> Well I don’t have exclusively Nigerian friends, I’ve never had really. Since I came to this country I have always had friends from different backgrounds, and I am thankful because I have learnt so much from different cultures. I don’t want to be one of those women that only can socialise in Nigerian circles, that’s not me. I work with a variety of people from different backgrounds so it’s good to have those skills.

In these particular narratives Nicola distances herself for socialising only in Nigerian circles, she openly seeks to find different social groups. One could infer from this that as a result her restriction and oppression in her culture she seeks of ways combat her situation by seeking solace outside her cultural group. Her attitude towards British White culture also shows the level of restriction that she has with Nigerian culture:
Today it does not work like that, especially if one is a career woman. This culture makes you see things as more equally. It’s not that our culture is bad, but it is just different. You can take the good things and apply it to yourself.

Nicola identifies the importance of being able to relate with people in society and being ‘flexible’ in forming relationships. This flexibility is attributed to a belief in equality, something that Nicola does not experience at home, adding to her sense of oppression. Nicola’s focus on being flexible is a result of her wanting to acculturate into the society; distancing herself from isolation:

In this society one has to be flexible as oppose to isolated. If not you find that you’ll find it difficult to progress in this country. I find that some Nigerians I work with find it difficult to relate with other people and end up sticking to themselves. It’s wrong; it doesn’t tell well on us a people. When English people think that, they will probably conclude that we do not want to be involved, I make a point not to behave this way, it’s good to socialise with different types of people.

Nicola in her prose indirectly identifies her isolation and her determination of being flexible to ensure her social well being. Nicola views herself as being different and unconsciously better than her Nigerian peers, adding to the distance she feels to Nigerian culture. However, her relationship with her English friends does not extend to them coming to her house when Edward is present. When probed further she explains:

It’s not that I don’t want them to come over but when Edward is around he behaves differently, like he is uncomfortable, so I only invite them when he is away.

However, her opinion of Britain has changed over the years:
You see this society; well the culture is not rich, as it used to be. I remember then, people were so polite and respectful but these days, no such thing! Maybe it is because people have lost their culture. To be honest I don’t even know what English culture is. I have been here for over 25 years and I still do not understand it [laughs] but it is not rich as our culture.

Nicola views Nigerian culture as being richer than British White culture, she distances herself away from British White culture by professing that she ‘doesn’t even know what English culture is’, contradicting her earlier narratives about the opportunities offered to women in Britain. However these opinions are only raised when Edward was present, further indicating her restriction.

Nicola’s focus on Nigerian culture is also expressed in the form of discussing her children:

I always tell my children, the girls in particular that if any of their friends are visiting they must respect my rules and one of the rules is that they must dress appropriately in my house. Yes. What they do outside is one thing but when they are in my house they must respect the rules. They should not come to my house looking like somebody that has not come from a good home. You know this British culture it can spoil children.

Interesting, we see that although Nicola is relaxed with British culture, she behaves differently when discussing her children, especially the girls. Here she places emphasis her daughters learning her culture. Nicola is very willing to acculturate into the mainstream society adopting various behaviours, however in terms of her children, her daughters in particular; she becomes adamant that they should learn her Nigerian culture. In this particular instance we see that she sees the importance of women teaching their children the culture:

It’s important for the girls to know their culture; they don’t know what house they will end up living in...when they get married. It’s good for them to know
how to speak their language, cook, respect their husband, all those things. To show that they come from a good family.

We see in this instance that Nicola completely contradicts her previous narratives and behaviours, by placing the same Nigerian cultural restrictions onto her daughters.

Nicola also indicates how genderised elements of her Nigerian culture are expressed in the family, i.e. girls are responsible for learning Nigerian culture by placing importance of girls respecting her rules, but inadvertently not her son, who she does not mention:

Look at our girls today, they want to follow this western way of behaving, drinking, dressing inappropriately, getting in trouble with the police, promiscuity, the list goes on, and for what? To be like their white counterparts, ahh I thank God I did not bring my children up like that. If there is something I see my children doing that is not right, that will bring embarrassment to the family, I nip it in the bud. This is why this country fails children and allow them to do what they want. As for me this is a Nigerian home as soon as my children step through the door they know that they must abide by my rules, forget what they've learnt outside!

Nicola’s contradictions are evident when the topic of her daughters being old enough to date is raised. Considering Nicola’s need to instil Nigerian values in her daughter, she then describes how she is willing to allow them to have a relationship with other people from different cultures:

Those things do not really bother me. If we’re talking about a relationship that is fine. This is the modern world; as long as the man treats the women correctly it doesn’t matter. I know some may not agree with that but as for me I’m fine, if my daughter wanted to date a English man I would be fine, as long as he treats her well if not there will be problems.
Here we see that Nicola adopts a relaxed view when discussing the potential for her daughters to marry an ‘English’ man; however this viewpoint changes when discussing her son:

You see that’s different, he’s a boy. Well I don’t think my husband would like for him to marry English. I want him to marry a Nigerian girl, just so I have someone, you know someone to have a conversation [laughs].

Nicola once again reverts back to her Nigerian culture, one that gives preference to men and for this reason she places importance over her son, importance in him retaining Nigerian culture by marrying a Nigerian girl. Nicola appears then to revert back to her cultural prefixes in order to maintain her culture, a culture which she is responsible for passing onto her children. As a result she once again reconfines herself back into the cultural role of a wife and now mother. A view not expressed when talking about her daughters. Nicola’s willingness to allow her daughters to have relationships with White men may be derived from her own experiences of White people.

Nicola’s life narrative - being a professional

Shortly after graduating with a degree in economics Nicola came to England. While looking after her sister’s children, she was adamant in finding a job; a job which allowed her to save for a flat. While trying to find work, she was rejected countless times when faced with an interview:

I went for so many job interviews and as soon as they saw me they rejected my application.

Her experience of rejection gave her an initial glimpse of racism, but rather than this deterring her, she found herself even more motivated to find work in order to save for a flat. This drive,
as referred to early, was based on her need to have her freedom, her independence, and her
own place.

Nicola’s first job was working as a secretary for a small law firm. She recalls the day she got
the job:

Wow, when I got back home my face was like this! I couldn’t contain my
happiness. I couldn’t believe it! Lucky for me my sister’s husband knew someone
that was working there and he was looking for someone to help them. I applied
and that is how I got it. I was so happy.

Nicola spent three years there, during that time she got married. In her fourth year she decided
to leave the company due to a lack of career progression, she felt that she had spent too long at
the firm; giving the level of education she had attained (i.e. degree level):

I just got frustrated, one day there would be job openings the next day it would
be gone. All the time I saw fresh faces, I just got tired of it. Imagine they needed
an accountant, I applied, nothing. I mean I have a degree in Economics!

These experiences made Nicola frustrated and she often complained to Edward. Nicola’s
decision to leave her employment was discussed with Edward and they both decided that it
was best for her to leave. While looking for employment, Nicola decided to do a Masters
degree on Economics part time, something that Edward encouraged and paid for, which took
her two years to complete. At first she recalls how Edward being hesitant of her returning to
university:

He was supportive, but sometimes, you know Nigerian men, they want their wife
to be lower than them. That may sound harsh, maybe not lower, I can’t think of
the word now. I think he was scared how I was going to cope with our daughter
at the time. I was thankful that God gave me strength that time.
Nicola identifies clearly here, although using the third person, the subservient nature of her relationship with Nigerian culture. Nicola’s insight into Edward’s psyche, in terms of his fears for her being able to cope with looking after the children, inadvertently enforces a genderised role for Nicola as the care-giver. In the two years of her Masters, Edward was still travelling and Nicola was responsible for childcare which she found challenging. At a point she decided to use a nanny, something that Edward did not agree with:

Well lucky for me they stayed with a nanny, although my husband objected! But I used a nanny just to help me look after and feed them [her children]. If it was up to my husband it would have been me at home, but I just decided it was better for them and me, so when my husband’s back was turned I just organised childcare and do you know it was the best decision I made.

Here we see clearly that Nicola challenging Edward’s decision, in fact she rebels against Edward’s desire for her to be the sole carer of their children. Nicola’s rejection of Edward’s opinion in favour of her own, even goes as far as comparing herself to other women, indirectly viewing herself as empowered compared to them:

Some women would not have done that; instead they would have taken the decision to stay at home but as for me I had a choice, and when the option was there I took it [laughs].

Although Nicola supports Edward’s power in the household, interestingly we see that Edward also contributed to looking after their children when they were younger as a way to support Nicola. This behaviour was surprising as it suggests that the household is not always patriarchal. An observation that Nicola discussed much later in the interviews:

I think in our culture some men automatically believe this should be done like this. You see I believe that women should look after the home, but I also believe
that the husband should help in some ways. I'm not saying that men should go into the kitchen to go and start cooking but there should be some level of understanding.

In this narrative Nicola identifies the positive nature of adopting more egalitarian roles in the household, hinting at acculturation within their relationship.

The antecedents of renegotiation of gender roles within their relationship may lie in Edward spending most of his time travelling to and from Nigeria. Rarely does he have time to help her with household work, much to her frustration:

*He's here but then not here, sometimes it can be frustrating but, well I have got used to it. Not it's fine.*

Although Nicola indirectly notes that Edward helps at home, this tends to be from a very dominant patriarchal position; a position that Nicola encourages, feeling that it is her cultural duty to be a subservient wife. However, in doing so she becomes more frustrated with the situation:

*Help me! Huh my dear he travels, he travels! Most of time when he’s back the last thing he has on his mind is to help around the house. I try to encourage him but nothing. I don’t bother myself anymore; I’m used to doing it now. If I finish the housework, I finish, but I don’t, well I don’t worry myself. If he complains, I just smile at him, after all what does he know he is not around ALL [emphasis placed by Nicola] the time [laughs].*

Nicola also discusses experiences when Edward is back from his business trip, which is at times a source of tension. When Edward arrives back from a business trip Nicola expresses a feeling of being displaced in that her overall control of the household reverts back to Edward:
When he comes back from his trip ah all things change everything goes back to normal you know. He does his things and I do my things so that’s it really.

Nicola identifies one particular incident with Edward, which tested her submissive nature as a wife:

I remember one time I made the mistake of serving him spaghetti [laughs]. Oh I never heard the last of it, ah he complained. My dear I just packed the food and ate it myself. Typical Niaja man28 [laughs]. I mean by the time I get back from work I’m just too tired to cook, so I look for something quick to prepare. He complains and gets angry. You know men but I don’t bother myself I just serve what I can cook and say ‘Honey I’m sorry the meat shop was close today so I couldn’t make soup today’. You know I have to talk in a sweet voice [laughs].

We see in this particular incidence Nicola’s defiance and empowerment in her behaviour, not conforming to Edward’s wishes. When probed she goes further to explain:

Interviewer: And what does your husband say?

Nicola: He doesn’t say anything, he may complain but he’ll eat. He has no choice in the matter [laughs].

The shift in power between Nicola and Edward illustrated in the previous narratives, is evident from the use of the term ‘Niaja man’; a mild insult in this particular case. Nicola’s actions expresses the empowerment that she received by eating the food that she cooked for Edward. The fact that she dismisses Edward’s complaint and then eats the food herself is empowering act of defiance.

28 Nigerian slang for Nigerian man
For Nicola there is a distinct relationship with Nigerian culture and restriction. Although great emphasis is placed on the importance of Nigerian culture, she often reveals the restrictiveness of Nigerian culture:

*I love my culture, but sometimes to be honest at can be annoying for women. Imagine I have to do this I have to do that and my husband just sits there and relaxes* [laughs].

**Nicola’s life narrative - the consumer**

Consumption decisions are largely made by Nicola since Edward travels, enabling Nicola to have power in household purchasing decisions:

*Well, when he travels I become responsible for buying all the things for the house. The children are adults now so they look after themselves.*

When Edward returns home he automatically becomes responsible for the consumption decisions in the household, ultimately putting Nicola into a position of inferiority:

*Ok when he’s back, he takes over he buy the things needed for the house. He buys all the major things and I’m responsible for the food.*

In return Nicola reverts back to the role of dutiful wife, leaving most of the decision making to Edward. However, in terms of food purchase, Edward gives Nicola money to do the shopping:

*He gives me money every Saturday to do shopping, so I go to the market buy meat, vegetables, you know things like that.*

The fact that Edward gives Nicola money, even though she is financially independent adds to Edward’s dominance in the house. An act that ensures he gains more power and in turn leaves
Nicola restrained under her role as a wife. When asked about her feelings over the change in roles Nicola responds:

*I don’t bother myself with that really, to be honest I actually like it that way, at least I can focus my time shopping for the house. If he goes shopping it takes him the whole day, you know men they get confused* [laughs].

When probed further, Nicola supports Edward’s position, adding to his dominance. When asked about the reason for Edward giving her money to do shopping, Nicola explains:

*Well he is my husband; he is supposed to look after myself and the children. He is supposed to look after the household.*

Once again we see Nicola reverting back to her Nigerian cultural prefixes, following the traditional role of husband and wife. When probed further to find out why she doesn’t use her own money she became defensive:

*Well I use my money to buy things for the house, but he still gives me money. The reason why he works so hard is to provide for his family, which he is doing. He doesn’t really like me spending my money, so most of the time I just save and buy things for the children, but not all the time, if not my husband will complain!*

Although Nicola is in a financial position to contribute to home, it is Edward’s decision not to ‘allow’ her to contribute, in favour of her saving her money or using it to buy things for the children. Edward once again shows his dominance in the home. However, Nicola does not always appear to be so compliant to Edward’s needs and wishes. On discussing her role as a mother, Nicola revealed her tension with Edward in reference to buying things for the children:
You know when the children were younger actually even till this day I like to spoil them. Every month or so I would take my daughter out clothes shopping, you know just to treat. You maybe we’ll go to Oxford Street go to the shops there, or Westfield. We would just spend one day of shopping. We’ll come back with so many bags! There was this time when we came back very late, my husband was waiting for us, he was so angry that we spent the day shopping. Ah that day is told me my whole life story [laughs]. I just thought to myself, this man he works all the time, instead of treating the children he uses the money to invest into more business so I said to myself if he will not do it I will do it instead.

This particular is poignant in Nicola’s narrative regarding consumption. We clearly see the tension that is present when Nicola goes shopping with her children. She uses shopping as a way of treating her daughters and when Edward becomes aware of this he is not happy:

He was just complaining they I spent too much money, why did I have to spend money on buying clothes, this and that. To be honest my dear I can’t remember everything, I just said to myself no matter what I will always treat my children.

We see that rather than conforming to Edward’s wishes, she rejects them in favour of the happiness of her children. This is also seen in later narrative:

Ok, I bought my son this Nintendo DS for Christmas. If you ask me what it is, I don’t know. I just went to the PC World one day and they were having sales. I just saw it, I think it was reduced to £100 so I bought it; it was actually one of the sales people that said I should get it for my son; he said it would be something that his age group would like.

29 Westfield is a shopping mall in West London.
In this particular incidence we see Nicola uses these opportunities to make individual purchase decisions for the purpose of buying things for her children. She does not take Edward’s opinions into consideration, so rather than restricting herself in terms of conforming to Edward’s wishes, she instead makes her own decision and uses her consumption as a means of empowering herself. However, interestingly she uses her children as way of doing this.

In terms of identifying specific items each person is responsible for purchasing, Nicola explains that Edward is responsible for buying the electronics, paying the mortgage and bills, and car maintenance:

*My husband ensures that bills are paid, like the mortgage. He also paid for the Television, the stereo, actually all the electronics he is responsible for. Urm, I can’t think now, yes also the maintenance of the car.*

As we can see, the products are genderised, something that Nicola does not acknowledge. When probed as to why Edward is responsible for these items, she explains:

*Well he has a higher income [laughs], why shouldn’t he pay for these things! Actually come to think about it I bought the Television, I remember he bought the previous one! I had to replace the old one, it was just too old, even my children were embarrassed over the old set, so I just said to myself, ‘Let me just buy a new one for the house’ and I’m glad I did, it’s so much better.*

In later narratives we find the Nicola did not inform Edward of this purchase and as a result Edward was not happy with the amount of money she spent on the Television:

*When he came back you should have seen his face, he was not impressed at all! He started asking me about the price, the place where I got it from. In fact there were so many questions. Men! [laughs] I didn’t say anything: he’s enjoying the television now though!*
Nicola takes the opportunity while Edward is away to purchase a television, something that she knowingly did not discuss with Edward. She used this opportunity to purchase the ‘masculine item’ with her own money, an item that Edward would normally purchase. As a result she empowers herself not only by buying the television, but also unconsciously sensing the tension caused by her purchase and not using the situation to cause further conflict. Nicola in her reaction adopts a subservient role ‘by not saying anything’, but in fact empowers herself knowing that Edward is indirectly happy with her purchase. This experience also shows evidence of Edward’s disempowerment in not being able to purchase an item that he would have been responsible for if he were present. One could then posit that this purchase by Nicola was a direct challenge to his manhood.

**Edna**

**Edna and Chris – brief overview**

Edna is a 49 year old administrator and is married to Chris, a 50 year old college lecturer at a college. They have been married for 24 years and have three children, all girls (23, 21, and 15). Edna and Chris came to Britain 24 years ago. It was both their decision to come to Britain as they had both finished university and wanted an adventure. On observation, Edna is very outgoing and dominates throughout the interviews when with Chris. She appears to be in control of Chris, while Chris remains quiet. However, subtly during their joint interview Edna’s dominance did reveal recognition of Chris’s authority. Consider the following narrative, where Edna’s willingness to take shared ownership of a decision to settle in Britain:

Edna: *Both of us talked for a long time about coming to England. We always wanted to come to England. There was more things we could do here. That is what we agreed.*
Chris:  *I chose England because of the opportunity; I thought that is would be a good country for us to set ourselves up so it was something that I saw would be beneficial to the both of us.*

Edna:  *Yes that is right; my husband was the one that informed me.*

Chris excises his dominance in his decision to travel to Britain with Edna in this narrative. In effect Edna gives Chris ownership of the decision made to travel to Britain. However, when Edna interviewed separately she explains:

*Well it was my husband’s decision. I trusted his opinion about coming to England, knows what’s best for the family. That’s why I married him* [laughs].

Edna’s willingness to sacrifice her opinions in favour or Chris suggests that she may not feel confident enough in expressing her own opinions in their relationship’s decision-making process thus showing an element of her restriction. In most of the interview with Edna and Chris, Edna remains verbally loud but quite docile in her opinions, often agreeing with everything that Chris says. Consider this example, where the narrative reflects their choice on where to live:

Edna:  *I choose this area [London] because of the good schools back then that’s one of the most important things you look for in any part of London.*

Chris:  *This area that I chose provides so many things that is why after seeing all the other properties I bought my house.*

Edna:  *Yes it’s true.*
Edna’s reliance on Chris appears to be based on their initial experience of coming to Britain as well as cultural conformity. When they first arrived in Britain Chris worked two jobs, his first job was a cab driver during the day and the second, a security guard, at night. Edna exhibited sadness over Chris working two jobs:

*It was not funny. Every day he would work, work, work, work. Imagine my husband graduating in economics and look at the menial job that he was doing. Ah I felt so bad, every day I would encourage him and I couldn’t work as I was pregnant. Everything was on my husband, everything, I thank God for his strength.*

Edna appears to be protective over Chris and indirectly becomes submissive in her prose, reflecting her gratitude that she has for Chris. This has, as a result shaped her behaviour and she uses every opportunity to express her appreciations of Chris, something that affects her daily decisions. Even when in his presence while being interviewed she is very supportive and submissive, she indirectly supports and elevates him to make him look more dominant, something that he appears to be unaware of.

Chris eventually ‘found’ his way into lecturing with the help of his English friend Jeremy. He met Jeremy at a work training event. Chris has now known Jeremy for over ten years and it was Jeremy that suggested that he should go into teaching, even went as far as getting an application form for Chris. As a result Chris got a job working as a part time lecturer at a local college. Chris boasts that Jeremy is the only English friend that he has:

*The only English person that I bring close to me is my very good friend Jeremy. I’ve known him for over ten years. He was the one that got me into teaching even going to the length of getting me an application form. He is the only English person that has been genuine to me.*

Interestingly Edna responds:
Edna: *Jeremy? Which Jeremy, is that one you met at that training event? My dear I always warn you of English people, they will use you, ah! Look at what happened when the both of you wanted to go into business. Look what happened, you see, you have to be careful of them!*

Chris: *He treated you badly but that was in the past, one has to move on from that.*

Chris identifies his only English friend, something that Edna dismisses showing her own discrimination although it was never mentioned within the interview about reasons behind the breakdown of Chris and Jeremy’s relationship. It seems from this response Edna’s view of English White people are low. When probed with Chris present she chooses not to continue with the conversation which may suggest that she may be conforming to Chris’s needs and overall outlook of his experience.

It also becomes clear that Edna and Chris’s reaction to coming to England is jointly shared. They hold a close bond together which they account as a result of them coming to England together and having no family to support them:

*Coming to England brought us closer together; we didn’t have anybody, all our family were in Nigeria. We had nobody to support us, we just supported ourselves, so we really became very close, that is what allowed us to be married for this long. I thank God.*

Soon after arriving in Britain Edna and Chris struggled financially, putting pressure on the both of them. Imagined stories of arriving and being successful in Britain were soon finished for Edna:
When we arrived it was very different to what we expected it to be. It’s not that we were not prepared. It was just difficult, there weren’t many jobs available and those jobs available were very menial. I said my husband had to work two jobs. As for me I couldn’t work, my documents were not ready.

Edna talks of this time as being very challenging especially in terms of her role as a wife:

*When you take that vow for better or for worse, it truly means for better or for worse. You know there would have been women that would have left their husband in favour of finding someone with money but I said ‘No!’ God put me in this situation for a reason, and so that is how we survived, with God. I remember there would be times when we would come back from work so tired. I would feel so bad for him.*

In this particular narrative Edna instantly positions herself in a higher position compared to her peers, elevating herself which in turn gives her confidence in the dynamic of her relationship with Chris. It is interesting to note that under the circumstances (Chris’s experience of working) Edna remains helpless, expressing regularly a ‘feeling of guilt’ or ‘feeling bad’. She also goes as far as saying:

*There were times when I would speak to my husband and say, ‘Honey is this the right thing, should we be in this country, should we go back to Nigeria?’ But my husband was adamant in staying in England. I think sometimes that may have been due to the shame of going back without accomplishing anything.*

This sense of guilt becomes a powerful topic for Edna and Chris, the issue of shame and embarrassment from not succeeding in British society motivating them to achieve. Consider Edna’s narrative:
When I discussed this with him, he said ‘Ah, how can we go back with nothing achieved, impossible?’

In this particular situation, Edna shows Chris’s authority and dominance as the main decision maker for the family. This decision, evident from the next narrative, illustrates the manifestation of this guilt within Edna regarding Chris’s plight:

I just wanted the best for my husband, seeing him coming back from work so tired was not easy for me, it was very stressful for me to observe but we got there in the end!

Edna’s need to support Chris appears to reflect wider changes arising from immigration:

You know men can be funny, do you know that when we were in Nigeria I was free do whatever I wanted, go and visit friends, socialise just be free, but when I came here all those things changed, my husband was so protective over me. I think he wanted to shield me of any hardship. You know the things that he went through he didn’t want me to go through. I remember there would be times that I’d want to go out by myself, he would say, ‘Be careful of this, be careful of that, don’t go there because it’s not safe’. He was only trying to protect me which was fine, but it was just different that’s all.

Chris’s need to shield his wife from the negativity of British culture imposed a control over Edna, forcing her to conform to his patriarchical rule. Edna’s conformity was indicative of Nigerian culture and patriarchal dominance. Although Chris did not openly discuss his experiences, his actions imply that those experiences may have been based on racism encountered resulting in his protectivist behaviour towards his wife.
The fact that Edna was so reliant on Chris, seeing that she did not have family and few friends may account for her behaviour especially in terms of her submissive nature to Chris. This is inferred from Edna’s boasts about not having many friends:

*Well I don’t keep many friends, those that I do have as friends I’ve known them for a VERY [Edna’s emphasis] long time. Anyway keeping many friends is not good especially in marriage.*

Edna explains further:

*Some friends can come into a marriage and make problems, that sort of thing. They can be a person’s friend then all of a sudden they can change, so my dear sometimes it’s just better to be careful.*

In this way we see that Edna isolates herself in her marriage, something that she does out of choice. Edna’s lack of friends dispels the opportunity for her to have a social network, thus alleviating the temptation of empowerment, creating a world with Chris at the centre with her children. Edna often compared her marriage to people within the community, expressing the risk of having many friends and how some women personality changes, causing problems for their marriage. This fear of problems in marriage is further heightened when she found out that her close family friends were getting divorce:

*Ah, when I heard this person was getting divorce I was surprised. It’s such a shame. I think they were married for 25 years, imagine 25 years and they want to go separate ways. It’s a shame, they have children as well. This English way of doing things is bad, back in Nigeria you rarely here of people getting a divorce, rarely. It’s only in this side.*

Edna’s attribution of divorces with English culture, compounds her negative views of English culture, encouraging a greater sense of detachment. Edna’s reaction is also reflective of her
spiritual beliefs. Edna is a devout Christian who does not believe in divorce. As a result of this divorce, she holds her marriage as something sacred:

*Marriage is sacred, no matter what the problems are between husband and wife, what God has put together let no man pull apart. This is what myself and my husband believe. I know that marriage is not easy, but a couple should work at it. Sometimes I just think divorce is just an excuse, you know.*

In this way Edna and Chris look to each other for support, support in a society that does not readily accept them as individuals:

*Well I look to my husband for support, you sometimes you come back from work after a horrible day. Or you just feel down, you can’t move forward to progress, this society stifles you. Sometimes you just get tired and you just need support. That’s what marriage is about. It’s about partnership.*

Edna’s willingness to accept Chris’s patriarchal control, however, was not consistent. During our one to one interview, Edna commented on how she found this behaviour restrictive, resulting in her rebelling against Chris’s control:

*I know he was protecting me but if you don’t experience things you don’t learn, so my dear I started doing things without him knowing [laughs], and as God would do it I was fine!*

Although appeared to be protecting Edna, this left her feeling restricted, and as a result she rebelled and sought ways to investigate her new environment. In this particular incident Edna empowers herself and rejects Chris’s over protectiveness, in effect gaining a new identity for herself. After a short period of time Edna had became familiar with British culture and society, gaining her independence. Consequently, tensions between herself and Chris appeared:
I remember I used to attend a catholic church just near the house when we first came. You know I didn’t know what churches were like in this country, so when my husband had gone to work I went. It was very different than Catholic Church at home, very boring. I told my husband and all he could say is ‘Eh so why did you go there?’ [laughs].

However, in experiencing her ‘new environment’- attending a church, in Edna’s recollection it appears that Chris is insensitive to her experience showing an element of discontent.

**Edna’s life narrative - being an immigrant**

Living in Britain for Edna has brought her more in touch with her sense of Nigerian culture; an experience she believes helps her to maintain her cultural identity:

*Nigeria is in me, even though I have been here for so many years my culture is my culture. It makes me who I am, it’s the language, the people, it’s the food. You cannot take that richness away. What I would also say is culture is like a set of instructions on how to live your life. It could be how to speak, what to wear and even what to speak. People may think it is weird but it isn’t to us, we are proud of our culture.*

In keeping with her culture Edna makes use of her native tongue ensuring that she speaks her tribal language (Yoruba) to Chris and her children. However, her identification of her Nigerian identity through language is not always shared by her family. Edna mentioned in her solo interview how she often has to force her children to speak the Yoruba:

*My language is important to me. It is important for me as a mother to impart that knowledge to my children, so they have something to pass down to their own children. So often we see children born here of Nigerian parents not knowing their culture and behaving like these West Indian children, it’s very bad.*
Edna’s need to impart Nigerian culture onto her children is interesting, as she clearly identifying this as a gendered role, i.e. it is the mother’s duty. This is her cultural obligation as a wife and mother to impart her culture onto her children, which in turn becomes a way for her to respond to her experiences of racism. As a result Edna contributes to the collective nature of Nigerian culture.

In addition to this we get a glimpse of her prejudice towards other ethnic groups, in this particular case West Indians. When probed further she explains:

Well they don’t have any culture I don’t think. You hear a lot about their boys getting into trouble with the police.

In this particular incidence Edna uses her experience to create a hierarchy of people of different ethnicity and as such she exhibits here own prejudices to people of West Indian origin. Edna positions herself in her narrative to show superiority, this could be as a result of racism, and she shows evidence of this in the following narrative:

Every time you watch the news and it’s the Black on Black crime it’s always these West Indian people, so that means when white people look at as they all think the same but it isn’t. We’re not like that at all.

From Edna’s narrative one could assume that by categorising herself as being different to people of West Indian descent she is at the same time distancing herself from the overall collective of Black people. She identifies herself as being African and therefore different and as a result she separates herself, putting herself at a closer position to White people than West Indian people, all of which are a result of racism.

Focusing on retaining her culture and transferring it to her children Edna also talks of encouraging her children to learn about their Nigerian culture:
They have to learn no matter what, it’s their culture. I always tell them, even though you were born here and grew up here, you are still Nigerian that is number one.

That fact that it appears that she may force her children to learn her language shows evidence of inter-generational acculturation issue. One could speculate that since Edna’s children were born in Britain they have a greater infinity to British culture than Nigerian culture, something that potentially causes tension in the household. We see evidence of this in later conversations with Edna:

One day one of my daughters started joking to me that Tosin, my eldest daughter had a White boyfriend. I said ‘What! Never, ah Tosin with Oyibo\(^{30}\), I said to her ‘She better go and leave that one in university, as for me I won’t take that!’

Edna’s reaction shows that she clearly expresses her dislike for white people and as noted earlier this may have been a result of her own negative experience in White society, i.e. her experiences of racism. During the cause of our interview Edna had become very despondent over the potential of her children marrying a man from a different ethnic background:

Well I would be happy at all; I want my girls to marry a good Nigerian man.
After all I am training them for that [laughs].

We see that in this particular scenario Edna reverts to her traditional Nigerian patriarchal role as a mother, the bearer and teacher of her culture, thus imposing her ideologies onto her daughters. One may deem her behaviour as contributing to her own daughter’s restriction. Edna’s experience of racism and not belonging to the mainstream society appears to be prevalent here, in that she acts in a way that seems as though she is protecting her children when in fact she is restricting them. As Edna’s behaviour is based on past experiences her

\(^{30}\) Slang for a White person
behaviour may hamper her children’s experience of growing up in Britain even though the society may have been completely different to when Edna first arrived in Britain.

In keeping with her perceived Nigerian cultural beliefs, Edna attends weekly prayer meetings at her church, which has a Nigerian only congregation Edna uses this opportunity to praise and worship but also to socialise with other Nigerian women:

\[I \text{ go to my prayer meeting every Thursday; it is just a group of women that come together for praise and worship.}\]

Her prayer meetings offer her a space where is able to interact with women that have a similar culture, allowing Edna to exhibit her Nigerian identity:

\[You \text{ know sometimes you need that support, people that understand you, what you’re going through. We can discuss, we can laugh, we can cry, we can eat, so I go there not only to socialise but also for support. It is good for us women to support ourselves together in the community.}\]

One sees from the previous narrative that Edna uses these meetings as a form of Nigerian female collective. It becomes a space where she is able to be a woman among her peers, a place where she is free to be herself away from the responsibilities of home and the external experience of living in a host society. Here we see from her prose the indirect need for support inferring to her needs, something that Chris may not provide. Where in previous narratives Edna referred to not wanting friends- “Well I don’t keep many friends…Anyway keeping many friends is not good especially in marriage.” one clearly sees her need for support, which maybe as a result of patriarchy. Her friends become a means for her to have support and a form of maintaining her culture.

Edna also uses food and clothing as means of retaining her culture. Food becomes a way of expressing her culture also a tool for teaching people of her culture:
I cook Nigerian food always, everyday in fact Eba, Gari, rice, plantain. All those things. We eat Nigerian food every day, every day. I can’t eat English food it’s so bland. Maybe if I have to for breakfast I eat English, but that is just it. English food is very boring and bland, no sense of taste. My husband is the same, he only eats Nigerian food. I always cook Nigerian food for him.

Edna taking the traditional, Nigerian, wife’s role of cooking Chris is one that she takes apparent pride in. When asked whether Chris cooks for her, her response is:

Chris cook [laughs]! Does he even know how to cook? That is why he got married, he’s even lucky that I am a good cook, can’t you see his stomach [laughs]. I’m the only one that cooks in the house my dear.

In Edna’s narrative Chris once again occupies the patriarchal role as the husband, something that Edna appears to be comfortable in encouraging. As a result of her belief in this Nigerian cultural value, Edna takes ownership of being the food. Yet this food preparation is solely aimed at perpetuating a sense of Nigerian cultural identity. As previously noted Edna loathes English food. Edna recalled an incident when her daughter cooked a meal for herself and Chris:

It was Tosin I think, or even Tolu. Yes, Tolu decided to makes us an evening meal as a surprise; this was when she was quite young, 15 or so. Anyway she made something like salad and this smoked salmon. My dear I could not eat it [laughs] it was so bland I don’t think she seasoned it well. You should have seen my husband’s face. That evening he was complaining that I wasn’t teaching the girls how to cook well! Every day the girls are with me in the kitchen learning

31 A form of Nigerian food
32 A form of Nigerian food
how to cook. I think Tolu was experimenting that day. What an experiment [laughs].

Here we see how food and cooking are used to see the extent her children know their culture. Culturally we also see the role designated to Edna and her daughters, one that is subordinate to the man, the father of the household Chris. We see Chris’s influence on the family by him chastising Edna for Tolu’s attempt to cooking English food, as result Chris blames Edna for Tolu’s cooking failure. Chris’s response does not faze Edna instead she disregards his comment satisfied that she has taught her daughters how to cook. In this particular incident see elevates Chris to dominance, at the same time she defends her skills as a mother. We see here the symbolic use of cooking as a mean of asserting power dynamics in a Nigerian household.

Edna’s life narrative - being a professional

Previous to finding her job as an administrator it took Edna a long period of time to find work. This was profoundly due to unsuccessful interviews and a lack of experience, all of which Edna viewed as being attributed to racism. She viewed this period as a time where she felt low:

Being out of work has never been easy. You spend time looking for work, but it just does not come. I used to get so down so any time, I’d pray to God to deliver me. Just thinking about all the things to pay for, the children’s stuff, bills all those things. It was not easy for my husband, not at all. My husband had to do so much, but I thank God for his strength.

Edna’s role as a dutiful wife, showing her appreciation to Chris, during this period led Edna to portray herself as being guilty for not working. In effect she was effectively punishing herself for not being a good enough wife in supporting Chris. Edna often talked of feeling down, of not feeling as though she contributed to the family; a feeling that motivated her to find work.
Her first job was a voluntary role, a role that her husband helped her find through a church member. Edna explains:

I remember the first job that I got, it wasn’t paid though. It used to be working with Oxfam. That place really taught me a lot about this English culture! [laughs]. My first day I got, I had no idea of what to do, did I even understand what they were telling me! I just used to smile. Even the way they behave, so loose.

Edna’s perception of herself being different from the people that she worked with reflected her earlier portrayal as British White people as being negatively different. In the above narrative Edna, in the use of the term ‘loose’ infers that British White people are promiscuous and are too viewed as inferior to Nigerians. Edna’s experience of working brought about many personal obstacles, with work experiences only serving to highlight not only cultural but personal:

The way they do their things are different. We Nigerians are direct, at work if something is not done the correct way; we say so at the minute but in this society they have quarterly appraisals and start to bring out everything that you’ve done wrong for the past three months. How does one remember those things! I don’t know?

Edna goes further in discussing her other work experiences in Britain; experiences that only serve to reinforce her perception of British Whites:

I’ve worked in an office where people, they just treat you differently. It’s like you’re something from a different planet. I just warn my children that they must work ten times harder than the English people. If you rely on their smile alone the person will just fail. That is what I have learnt.
Once again Edna exhibits a ‘me and them’ scenario whereby she feels distanced from the society, encouraging and perpetuating a greater sense of detachment. This detachment is perpetuated through her retaliatory and protective response in terms her warning her children of ‘English people’, something that she professes to do often. Her early experience of racism in the work place has dictated her behaviour towards White people:

*I’m very cautious over White people, sometimes I can be friendly with them, but really I don’t have anything in common with them to be honest. I find them very dry. My husband has English friends but I don’t, I don’t know, I don’t really understand their culture* [laughs].

When probed further, Edna explains:

*This may seem bad, but it is what I have observed. I notice that they keep themselves to themselves, sometimes you go to the coffee room and they are all drinking their tea, when you walk in they just look at you like you don’t belong. It’s so bad, my dear when I see that I don’t bother myself.*

Edna’s experience of segregation illustrated by her colleague’s failure to socialise with her is also reflected in the possibility that Edna herself does not want to socialise with them. Instead, Edna uses this opportunity to socialise with her own kind’, i.e. other Black women:

*How did it make me feel? Obviously like I did not belong but you just manage, I just would just do my own thing. Lucky for me there was another Black woman in my office so at least I had someone to talk to. She was from Trinidad.*

Edna’s use of her Black colleague for support, in the form of comradely, serves only to distance herself from her White work colleagues; a behaviour that reflects her wider detachment from White society.
Edna’s life narrative - the consumer

During the interview with Edna and Chris it was apparent, in terms of consumption; Chris remained dominant in regards to the items that were bought for the house. During this interview Edna remained passive and used most consumption opportunities to ask for Chris’s advice in buying items for the home. When Chris’s dominance was queried by Edna in her solo interview, she responded by:

Well he is my husband and it is something that I was brought up to do. The only thing that I don’t ask him about is [pause]. Think it’s only the food; yes it’s the food, I think. I don’t need to bother him with that.

Edna’s continued subservience to Chris, in this instance in terms of consumption, was discussed in greater depth. When this dominance was reflected back to Edna, she reverts back to her culture and her childhood as a point of reference:

As girls we were to that we must respect our husband. Now I know that sometimes this may be difficult but as a wife it is our duty to respect our husband and that is what I do, so when it comes to buying thing, then I just run it past him, you to check whether he needs something.

Edna’s narrative is interesting as she subtly indicates that she does not necessarily agree with Chris but conforms, maintaining her cultural role in the relationship. Edna willingness to allow Chris to make consumption decisions, thus assigning him power over the consumption decision, maybe as a result of her feelings of being indebted as referred to in earlier narratives. However, on reflection to the interview question Edna added that:

I don’t ask him about everything, not every. Like food I don’t ask what food to buy. He doesn’t know where to start, I just do that myself. It’s quicker for me to do the shopping for the house. You know us women were good like that!
Edna’s admittance that she takes fully responsibilities in regards to buying food for the house, serves only to reinforce her own sense gender bias, i.e. she genderises the act of shopping for the house, a woman’s role. However, as the solo interview progressed Edna revealed her wider responsibility in buying things for the house:

Well I bought the chairs in the living room, yes. While my husband travelled one of the chairs went bad. You know children, they like to jump and play. I don’t know what happened, one of the seats went bad so I went to one furniture shop and bought two chairs to replace the bad ones.

When asked how Chris felt about this purchase, Edna revealed a subtle glimpse of the reality of how they purchase products:

Oh ok, he did not say anything really, he just asked where I got them from. I told him, he was not happy, he doesn’t like the shop but I was thinking to myself well they were having a sale and the price was good, so I bought and they look nice.

Edna’s revealing illustrated that Chris does not have full control of the decision making with regards to home purchases. When this purchase was probed further, Edna asserted her opinions and decision was based on a consumption rationale that suited her:

Ok, I paid with my money I saw them and decided to buy them. You know when you see these things on a good offer it is good to buy them!

Edna’s revealing that she made purchases for her home, and not involving Chris is important. Edna’s narratives had been dominated by her need to perpetuate Chris’s culturally derived patriarchal position; however consumption provided an opportunity for Edna to reassert her own sense of personality. Edna interestingly went further in her solo interview, noting several circumstances when she had purchased items for the house without Chris:
Well, ok let me think, you know there are not many things [laughs]. Ah I cannot think that garden set, the table and chairs I bought that, it cost be £150 so cheap! So cheap!

When probed about Chris opinions to Edna’s apparent open and continual challenging of his patriarchal position, she noted that the purchase had been made and that her decision was final. Consider the following narrative, where Edna returns to the topic of the chair purchase:

You know he couldn’t say anything [laughs] because by the time he came back it was there, so I think he liked the seat.

Edna’s justification for her over-riding Chris’s opinions, when she purchases products, is justified through the notion of ‘getting a good bargain’. Consider the following narrative:

Ah I bought this very expensive laptop for my daughter for university. She was complaining that her old one went bad so I saw one on offer from pc world, it was on a very [emphasis by Edna] good offer, from £500 to £250, very good quality. You even to this day she still uses it.

When asked about Chris’s opinion for this purchase, Chris appears to demonstrate similar behaviours to the previous chair purchase:

[laughs] well my husband was not happy at all. He started complaining that I had spent too much but I knew that it was a good price after all it was a good quality laptop and it had last.

Of particular interest in Edna’s narrative is how being conscious of price provides a justification to dismiss Chris’s opinion. Edna reaffirms then her confidence in herself, through being able to make consumption decisions without Chris’s permission. This revealing by Edna
was followed by a wider discussion on how she makes consumption decisions for the whole family:

> Well if I’m buying for myself, I don’t need to bother my husband. Even in terms of the children there’s no need to consult him, after all I’m capable.

When asked about her feelings over these consumption actions when Chris was not present, she explains:

> Well the decision I made was fine, even though my husband behaved that way. I am happy I those things.

Towards the end of the solo interview Edna revealed that being married was akin to playing a game; a game where the wife had to curtail and support her husband’s needs. Most importantly, this game was consciously done suggesting that Edna actually felt that she was the stronger and more powerful partner in the relationship:

> You see men, you have to play the game [laughs] it’s true! Do you think that being married is as easy as 1, 2, and 3? You have to compromise, maybe your husband won’t be happy about particular things, but you have to pet them, and say, ‘Honey this, honey that’ [laughs] you have to sweet talk them you know!

Edna’s narrative shows how she appears to be submissive and docile in the presence of Chris but in reality is able to assert herself in making consumption-decisions. Where these decisions created conflict she appeases Chris by increasing his ‘dominance’ in the household so as not challenge his position of power, but only after she has made the consumption act. Consumption acts encouraged Edna then to assert herself because she has her own income allowing her to independently provide for her children and herself.
Perhaps most importantly, this final narrative reveals that even though Edna culturally supports and perpetuates Chris’s position in the family, Edna sees this as part of a wider power game. A game that she feels she holds power and is allowed only to manifest through acts of consumption.

Sarah

Sarah and Larry - overview

Sarah (38) and Larry (41) have been married for fifteen years. They have three children two boys (12 and 8) and a girl (12). Sarah is a nurse and Larry is a security man. They both came to Britain ten years ago, for Larry in order to study for his post graduate degree. Previous to coming to Britain they spent one year in Malta working. Leaving Nigeria, for the both of them, was a very exciting period in their life, as expressed by Sarah:

You know in those days everybody wanted to come to abroad, it was the main place to go. You know you would have friends who would come back and say, this and that, telling you how thing are like, you know the opportunities, things like that so really all those things give you that zeal to travel.

On initial discussion Sarah becomes very animated over the reasons for her wanting to come to Britain. However, Larry is more reserved, his view of coming to Britain was one of financial empowerment:

The opportunities in England were the thing that attracted us. Nigerian then, there were jobs, but not like, the opportunities are good here to do business,
work, and it has a good environment to bring up children. Nigeria is good but we were given the opportunity to travel and that was the perfect time.

Larry reasons behind travelling to Britain were based on the opportunities given to him, and as a result he took the decision in discussion with Sarah to travel. However, Britain was not their first destination. They decided to go to Malta to ‘prepare themselves’ for Britain. Larry explains:

Well we went to Malta first; I got the opportunity to study my masters there, so we lived there for a year, it gave us a chance to prepare the way for Britain, so we stayed in Malta, the twins were born there.

So Malta became the first destination for Sarah and Larry, due to opportunity to study. Their period in Malta was difficult financially for them, seeing that Larry was in full time education and Sarah was unable to work. As a result Larry had to take an evening job as a security man. Sarah in later interviews describe this period of time as being difficult:

Yes it was difficult because my husband would go to school all day and then come back to go to work. As for me, I could not work because of the children, so it was difficult, I would be alone with the children, it was lonely but we managed, God helped us.

Here Larry takes it upon himself to work to provide for his family, while Sarah took care of the home. When probed further about this period, we find that Sarah decided not to work due to her not speaking the language, adding to more isolation:

Speak the language, ah me work, I could not work I could not speak the language so that is how it was. The language was very difficult; I didn’t have the time to learn anyway.
Sarah, here, shows that although she was restricted in not learning the language she was resilience, she did not find importance in learning the language. We find the reason behind this decision was due to her having a social a social network that did not require her to speak the language:

Well all my friends were Nigerian, so we speak our language. And we speak English, so my dear there was no need [laughs]. Why bother myself [laughs].

So we see that socially her friends provide a space where she can express herself and thus speak her own language, something that will be explored in later analyse. Focusing on both Sarah and Larry initial experiences in Britain, we find that Larry has experienced more hardships based on racism compared to Sarah. As a result Larry expressed negative opinions about British White culture:

Britain when we first came was different, it was difficult English people not liking you, being refused jobs. Ah I remember applying for so many jobs. At one time I almost told my wife to pack up all our things and go back to Nigeria but on second thought I said, ‘no’ the children are young

When probed about his experience of racism Larry expresses:

This is not the country that we were born so some of these things we knew of them from back home but even with that, when people see you they immediately have a negative opinion of Black people, it’s bad. Imagine when I first came I would go to the job place and ask for work, they just look to me as to say I was not supposed to ask them that question, or the one where you apply and when they see you they reject the application.
Examples of these experiences of racism shaped Larry's view of White English people, and this is regularly seen in his narrative. However, Sarah is almost accepting of her experiences if racism:

*Well it’s normal in this side, so long as you are not born in this country, even if you’ve been here for a very long time. They will always see you as an outsider but I don’t bother myself with that, I just live my life.*

Here we see that Sarah accepts that there is racism, something which she infers that she has experienced. Interestingly, she does not appear to be troubled by her experiences but motivated to succeed. One could posit that rather than being the victim she empowers herself by moving forward and ‘living her life’.

**Sarah’s life narrative - being an immigrant**

Coming to Britain was seen as a new adventure for Sarah and Larry; they both had finished their studies in Nigeria; Sarah in nursing and Larry in economics to further their careers. They first decided to move to Malta for Larry to study for a degree in business:

*Well after myself and Larry finished our studies in Nigeria we decided to leave, Larry got a place to study business in Malta so we used that as a perfect opportunity to travel. Plus I already obtained my nursing degree so finding a job would have been no problem.*

In arriving in Malta they were in the position of not knowing the language, so immediately they felt isolated:

*You know we arrived I we couldn’t speak one word of their language. It was very difficult, luckily after a while we were able to meet some fellow Nigerians so they were able to guide us of what to do, places to go all those kind of things.*
Here in narrative we see firstly the reliance on the Nigerian community offering a place for them to belong. This in turn provided them with support. On entering Malta Sarah found that she was unable to practice nursing due to her qualifications, and due to not being financially buoyant Sarah was unable to enhance her degree to practice in Malta:

*For me it was very depressing and lonely because you I had worked hard for my degree and you know going there and finding you could not work and back then my husband was not allowed to work, so money was very tight. We had to rely on our savings.*

In this instance we see Sarah although being empowered in terms of profession was immediately disempowered on arriving in Malta. She often talked of this period of being depressing and lonely as Larry would attend university everyday while remaining at home:

*You know imagine you’re qualified, you’ve spent those years studying, all the anticipation to practice then someone says you can’t of course you’d be disappointed. I was very disappointed.*

After Larry had finished their course they both decided to move to Britain for Larry to study for a postgraduate degree. In both cases one observed that Larry spearhead both moves showing his firm position as the head of the household.

When they arrived in Britain Larry immediately noted the issues of racism:

*When we were in Malta we didn’t really experience that much racism I think that was because we were surrounded by Nigerians but when we first came here is was very different. Everything was Black and White. To point I started question myself whether it was the right decision to move but as time went by it got better.*
One observes that racism was apparent when they first arrived largely because of the felt ethnicity. Both participants often talked about not belonging and feeling different. From the above narrative one becomes aware of Larry doubt in his decision for his family, showing a sense of weakness. Here we see that Sarah responds by supporting Larry’ decision:

*Well it was the right decision look at where we are now, look how far we’ve come.*

Although Larry did not appear comfortable able talking about his initial experience of arriving in Britain and the prejudices they both faced, Sarah appeared to be more forthcoming:

Sarah: *I remember all the time we would go shopping and every time we entered people would stare at us. That is when we lived in a White area. You know that type of things. You go out and people look at you as if you don’t belong. That used to have so many times but after you just get used to it and carry on with your life.*

Larry: *Yes it’s true, after a while I decided to move the family elsewhere.*

In this particular instance once again we observe how Sarah and Larry coped with being different and as a response Larry chose to move them from that situation. In this instance we observe that not only does Larry provide but also behaves as the protector.

As conversations continue one finds that although living in Britain both Sarah and Larry seek ways to maintain their culture. In particular they use friendships to maintain their culture:

*We mostly have Nigerian friends, you know when you’re here it’s good to keep in contact with your people. You just tend to understand yourselves. You can*
talk, you can joke around, you know catch fun. I think that’s one thing I like about London it’s very multicultural.

In this instance one observe the importance of the Nigerian collective, it appears that Sarah uses this as a form of support. This support may come as a response of not being able to integrate into British White society as seen from the comment below:

Sometimes you just realise that you do not belong to this society. Just one it just clicks and you say ‘Ok, so that is the way they do things here’. You don’t agree with but you just accept it for the time being as you want to get ahead in this society.

In being made to feel different Sarah, rather than playing the victim, uses her experience to empower herself. Accepting not inferring Sarah appeared docile, but acceptance in the sense that she viewed it as not be able to change. One sees here that Sarah busies herself in attending church which has a large congregation of Nigerian people:

I don’t socialise like going out for drinks and all those things but I go to church at least three days a week. I can be free there, I can be myself. It just feels comfortable. That’s for me anyway!

In this sense church becomes a form of support, however it must be noted that Larry does not join her so indirectly one could assume that since Sarah does not get support from her husband due to work she uses church as means of comfort.

Sarah’s life narrative - being a professional

Sarah as mentioned previously is a nurse. After training and living in Malta, she found herself in a position where she could not work. As a result she found this period difficult:
It was the boredom really. I wanted to work but the qualifications that I had then was different. I was very frustrating, imagine with the work you’ve put in and then you can’t work.

Here we see Sarah in a position of empowerment, unfortunately confined to not working as a result of Larry’s dream of bettering himself. One finds on discussing it further she was forced to stay at home, not being able to work and the language barriers. As a result of her idleness Sarah sought for ways to better herself by taking part in volunteer activities. This provided her a means of ‘being herself’:

When I wasn’t working I found taking part in volunteer activities, like I worked in the church, really helped me to better myself. Plus it gave me something to do. It gave me the opportunity to learn about Maltese culture.

Sarah takes control of her situation and finds ways to empower herself by taking part in social activities. Rather than being comfortable in playing the house wife she took control of her life and sought to empower herself in other ways just as finding voluntary work.

Once in Britain she gained further qualification and was able to work. She explains:

It was frustrating that I had to sit a few exams but it was worthwhile as it enabled me to work.

So in starting work she was able to be financially dependent from Larry, threatening his position to provide. In gaining financial independence one notes Sarah’s struggle with childcare:

My job gives very unsociable hour, like now I only work nights so during the daytime I sleep while the kids are at school. When they’re back I make their
dinner the go to work. My husband is there so I also make him food and keep it for him.

So here we see Sarah take her position once again as the mother and the wife, in her role she is the caregiver. She manages her role seemingly easily in terms of navigating her identity.

Sarah’s life narrative - the consumer

Sarah’s consumption behaviour is based on her family, as common in Nigerian culture she focuses her consumption on what is needed for the family. In light of this she exhibits a tendency of purchasing items as an individual as oppose to purchasing with her husband. This in itself is not uncommon in Nigerian couples:

Well you know most times my husband is working so it is up to the woman to buying things for the house. The fridge should not be empty, though at times it cannot be helped [laughs].

Here we see that her consumption is genderised in that she takes the responsibility in purchasing items for the house, for the family. Her willingness to take this decision ascertains her role in the house as a wife and a mother, common with her duty of being a Nigerian woman and wife. When discussing purchases that she makes for herself, she commonly identifies items such as clothing, jewellery, perfume, things commonly associated as feminine. When asked over the consumption made by herself that she considers being her husband’s responsibility she explains:

Ok he may help me with a few things, say if I come back from work late he can help with buying foodstuff for the kids and other things for the house.

We can see here that Larry is also responsible for buying things for the house, so it is not entirely correct to identify that buying foodstuff for the house is entirely associated with the
woman. When probed further we find that Sarah and Larry are unilateral in their consumption behaviour, in this particular instance the purchasing of Nigerian food- Gari:\footnote{Nigerian food}:

\begin{quote}
It’s either he buys it for us, or I buy it. It just depends who is available. Sometimes it’s easier because he drives the car.
\end{quote}

The purchase of foodstuff, whether it is by Sarah or Larry becomes a marker of egalitarian roles, however each participant sees this as a duty to the household:

Sarah: \textit{Sometimes I buy food, or my husband. It just depends who has the car on any day.}

Larry: \textit{She buy the food sometimes, sometimes I buy food. It’s like that at times.}

Focusing on other consumerables we also see household goods which are bought equally between Sarah and Larry. What we see that most consumption is based on convenience, which out of the couple are free to purchase the items. This is largely due to the working pattern that both husband and wife experience i.e. Sarah and Larry shift pattern.

The contentious issue, however arises when discussing major items which warrant large expense for the house, although these decisions are made in the form of discussion between Sarah and Larry, we first see the underlying tension between Sarah and Larry. The first example of this appears when discussing the purchase of the family car. Here we see that it was Larry that instigated and purchased the family car:
The car I would say he was responsible for that; I just left him to it. You know men are good at those things [laughs]. We women do not bother ourselves with that, so long as the car moves [laughs].

Here we see that Sarah clearly resides with the fact that men are responsible for being good at buying cars. This not only shows her own positioning of males and females, but also how it relates to what is bought in or for the household; one my then view Sarah’s behaviour as self-oppressing herself from the possibility consumption opportunities. This behaviour is also seen when Sarah discusses their process of buying their Television:

Ok the TV my husband bought the TV. My dear one day I came back from work and then it was there!

So we see in this instance Sarah was not involved in this particular decision of buying the Television. When probed of her feelings of this particular purchase made by her husband she explains:

Well it didn’t bother me, what do I know of buying a television!

Sarah appears not to be particular bothered by her husband’s decision, seems accepting of her husband’s purchase even though she was not involved in the decision-making process. However as we continue to discuss consumption decisions we find that Sarah’s behaviour is not reciprocated from her husband:

Sarah: That day I bought something for the house, yes we were decorating that day and I had to buy something like containers for the house. Now tell me where would I start [laughs]? I just went to B&Q and picked up anything. Ah I was just tired, after finishing work then going out to buy a container, my dear I just picked up anything.
Interviewer: How did your husband feel about this?

Sarah: Well I don’t think he was interested, but he wanted me to buy a certain one but that one was a bit expensive.

This suggests the possible power dynamics between husband and wife. Here we see that Sarah in the pressure she faces at work, relaxes in her task to buy something for the household out of which Larry inadvertently viewed this as inappropriate. Out of this that Larry in this particular situation plays a somewhat dominant role, one that Sarah resisted in favour of her own well being. This behaviour is also seen clearly when Sarah is tasked in buying school clothes her children:

Sometimes my husband can behave funny, very particular. When I am being school clothes for the children he complains that I do not spend enough on the clothes! Imagine other husbands complain that their wife spends too much, but my husband complains that I spend too little.

In this particular situation the children are the subject case, Larry places emphasis on the importance of the appearance of his children. In this particular instance, Sarah becomes more cautious of the price than the clothing itself:

You know children; they grow out of their things very quickly so it’s no point spending a lot of money on their uniform. Look at Daniel yesterday he came back with a whole in his jumper, you see. Sometime one has to be wise with money, so things like that.

As a result we see the subtle interplay of the way the resource allocation and decision making. Here we see that Sarah makes the decision to purchase items for their children cautiously being aware of the price. Subsequently her decision is criticised by Larry.
Throughout discussions with Sarah we also find that items that she purchases for herself, predicatively are decisions made by herself, especially in terms of clothes consumption. These items tend to be bought by Sarah solely, with her own resources. Often when making these purchases she buys these items for herself, for her own well being, ‘a treat’:

_Sometimes it is good to treat yourself, yes, you have to now. You know if I go shopping and there are sales I might buy one or two things. Nothing too expensive._

Sarah shows here that price becomes the main factor when purchasing items, she indulges herself but it is dependent on price. We later find this consciousness is based on her family and her consumption. As a result we see that the family is at the forefront of her decision, with her own indulgences restricted by price. When probed further about Larry opinions of such purchase, she explains:

_Well my husband does not entirely know about them [laughs]. If he sees them he complains momentarily but nothing serious. We have to treat ourselves once in a while._

Once again we see this notion of the Nigerian female participants referring to ‘treat oneself’. This implies or even confirms the restriction, restriction based on cultural assigned roles. In this instance although Sarah and Larry share decision making there is an undertone that denotes that Larry is actually the more dominant force in the household. Although this is not openly expressed by Sarah, we see this in some of the prose that Sarah uses especially when discussing that is some Nigerian women experience. The issue of dominance and restriction is in itself challenged by Sarah herself. Sarah does not view her consumption as a form of challenging her husband’s wishes:

<My husband knows that I treat myself. It is fine with him, we both work and sometimes one has to treat oneself, so he understands that. I treat him also, if I
see something that I feel will look good on him. I will get it, no problem. I don’t necessarily by things I secret, it’s not like that. Most times I buy these things, by husband is not too bothered with them, so there is no point in telling my husband of EVERY [Sarah’s emphasis] that I buy [laughs].

We now see that this type of consumption is not based as a response to repression but just out of personal desire. This in itself challenges the notion that Nigerian women are repressed in their cultural position as wives and mothers. This view is seen when Sarah discusses food consumption once again:

Well I’m responsible for buying the food but that is my responsibility as a wife that is not to say my husband will not buy anything. He buys foodstuff but I think in Nigerian culture we are taught at a young age that we need to be responsible of the house, so you grow up on that teaching. And I prefer it that way, that is our culture so my husband looks after his responsibilities as do I.

Here not only to we see Sarah openly suggest that she is prefers this ‘arrangement’ but it is something that she chooses to practice as a part of her culture. Here we can see that she is not repressed herself, she becomes empowered by keeping to her cultural practices in a society that is not her own.

Samantha

Samantha and Jeremy – overview

Samantha, a care worker (45) and Jeremy (49) an accountant, have been married for 25 years. They have three children, two boys (24 and 22) and a girl (15). They came to Britain 22 years ago for economic reasons but it was Samantha who spearheaded their migration to Britain:
Yes because I always had it in mind that I wanted to have my children here, which I did. The system here was much better than Nigeria back then. The Nigerian system was good at one point, but all that has changed. Changed like that.

Jeremy also equally had intentions to migrate to Britain:

Well Britain as I knew back then was the land of opportunities. We Nigerians always had the drive to come to this country. There were more jobs, more opportunities, plus good healthcare. These things were important. Ah, Britain was good back then; you would see so many Nigerians back home wanting to come to England. It was nice.

When discussing themselves, both Samantha and Jeremy operate traditional Nigerian cultural roles, with Jeremy as the head of the household and Samantha subservient to him. A relationship model that both of them view as respecting their Nigerian culture:

Jeremy: I love my culture, everything about it, the language, clothing, food, in fact everything. You only have to look at this culture to know that we are blessed.

Samantha: It’s true, Nigerian culture to us is very important. The way we practice it makes us who we are.

We see from the above narrative that Samantha automatically agrees with Jeremy, showing her level of conformity to her husband. Although Jeremy talks of himself, indicating his superiority, we see that Samantha talks in the plural in reference to her family.

Although Samantha and Jeremy have been in Britain for a number of years they still identify with their own culture, suggesting that they distance themselves away from mainstream
society. When discussing the difference between Nigerian culture and British culture, Jeremy explains:

*British culture, should I say is more relaxed you know it is very, how do you say, democratic [laughs]. To the English man things are very unilateral, anything goes, he is not bothered. Whereas Nigerian culture, we care for ourselves, there is respect. We have this unity, we’re one. No matter what tribe we are from we all see ourselves as Nigerians.*

Jeremy highlights the collective nature of Nigerian culture and in fact uses this opportunity to distance himself from the host culture. This is also seen when he refers to the ‘English man’, showing his detachment. In expressing his opinions, Jeremy also appears to show discomfort by his laugh. We see the same comments from Samantha, when interviewed alone:

*English culture, I don’t know it exactly, but what I’ve seen is that they do not place importance on the family, which is bad. I see women that let their children behave anyhow, women divorcing their husbands, lack of respect. I’m glad, I’m proud of my culture.*

Samantha also distances herself from the mainstream culture, preferring her own culture; she sees British culture as substandard. We also see that Samantha positions herself, through her criticism, in the traditional Nigerian role as a wife, she openly adopts her position as a woman as a caregiver and one that respects her husband, compared to ‘English women’. An opinion based on her experiences and observations while being in Britain.

**Samantha’s life narrative – arrival**

On arriving in Britain Samantha and Jeremy’s relationship changed as Samantha notes:
In Nigeria I was a nurse, so I was working most days, while my husband was working for a bank, so really we had two separate incomes coming into the family, independent from one another. For me I always wanted to come to England. I think it was because of the opportunity we had as a family. Nigeria was good but we felt that we could do better in England. When I first arrive, ok I was filled with so much excitement. I had a plan that as soon as we got settled I would immediately continue my work as a nurse but things changed though.

Samantha and Jeremy’s plans changed after she found out that she became pregnant with her second child:

Ok I became pregnant with my second so I could not do that. When my son got older I started to apply for work.

While Samantha was pregnant and later had given birth to a son, the family relied solely on Jeremy’s income, and although they had savings they found that they were constrained financially until Samantha found work. In this particular incidence, Samantha becomes restrained in her freedoms owing to being a mother and her inability to work:

Well it was difficult back then, because we didn’t have a lot of money. I remember the kids used to ask me, ‘Mummy how come we don’t have this, how come we don’t have that’, I used to say, ‘We will have those things, but we just don’t have it yet’. Sometimes I would find myself going to charity shops to buy clothes or even look for their uniform, just to save money. My husband never liked me doing that, but you know as a mother you do anything to ensure that you provide for your kids.

Samantha found the period immediately post-migration hard, yet she endeavoured to provide for her children, even if it meant upsetting Jeremy. In her frustration and the pressure her expectations and need to provide for her children directly challenged Jeremy’s authority to
provide for ‘her’ children. An act of empowerment that challenged her traditional role as wife; a changing of roles that Jeremy was not happy with as Samantha notes:

\[
I \text{ think, like with most men its pride. Pride in a sense that he doesn’t want to be seen as not providing for his family but really I don’t see it like that as I just see it as a way of saving money, you know.}
\]

Both Samantha and Jeremy’s financial constraints, as a result of having one income, also put pressure on their marriage. When asked of their initial experience in coming to Britain and the things that they found difficult, the underlying tensions that existed between them became apparent:

Jeremy:  \text{ When we first came here we were not financial buoyant, do you understand? We had savings but we really did not want to dip into them especially having a child so we endeavoured to find work. She in nursing and I in accounting.}

Samantha: \text{ We wanted to use our savings at first, but we later decided no it would be better to find work first.}

Jeremy: \text{ She wanted to use the savings but we later discussed it, I had to explain to her so that was one of the things that we found difficult.}

In this narrative Jeremy illustrates his power in this particular situation. His use of the words ‘she’ and ‘I’ suggest a patronising superiority over Samantha. Samantha in this particular incidence did not respond to Jeremy’s patriarchal position in his presence, however when interviewed by herself she returned to this discussion, expressing a narrative which inferred his need to be heard:
I think it would have been better for us to use some of her savings just to support ourselves initially when we came because we really had to struggle with everything. Maybe we would have been able to do more things for ourselves, who knows but anyway the past is the past. You just move on.

So, we see that Samantha’s frustration about Jeremy not having taken her opinion over their decision not to use their savings, although this opinion is not voiced in Jeremy’s presence. Samantha’s unwillingness to critique Jeremy in his presence may reflect the constraints within her patriarchal role as a wife. Rather than expressing her own opinion, Samantha reverts back to being loyal wife, supporting Jeremy even if she does not agree with his opinions:

In marriage you have to respect your husband, in our culture it is a must you know. Of course there will be times that you don’t agree with him and that’s fine. There are ways that you can combat that [laughs].

In this particular narrative, Samantha’s choice of words e.g. ‘have’, ‘must’ inadvertently shows that she feels ‘forced’ to respect Jeremy. We can see that although Samantha does not entirely conform to this position as a wife, through her previous actions, she remains respectful, even though she may feel uncomfortable (evident from her laugh). It can also be noted that Samantha is aware of the power dynamics in her relationship with Jeremy, something which she openly accepts as being part of her Nigerian culture. However, in accepting this element of culture she uses further methods to empower herself:

With my husband when he talks I just listen, I don’t agree always with him, but at that moment I’m with him but after maybe when the situation is passed, I approach him and say, ‘Honey, why don’t you do this, how about doing that’, you know sweet talk him [laughs]. You have to do that my dear; it’s the things that we learn from our parents that is how they were able to sustain their marriage.
Samantha’s narratives make a reconciliatory approach to Jeremy’s actions. In this way we hear the sacrifice that Samantha makes as a woman to nurture her Jeremy’s masculinity, masculinity she supports in order to ‘sustain their marriage’.

Jeremy’s dominance extends across to their children and related decisions. This dominance, however, is selective, as Samantha continually makes reference to Jeremy disciplining the children; we see that Jeremy plays the authoritarian role in the household, common in Nigerian families:

\[
\text{You know children once you threaten them with their father they soon stop what mischief they were doing [laughs].}
\]

Although Samantha is able to assert herself in the buying of clothes for her children, she reverts back to her traditional role as a mother, with Jeremy becoming the authoritarian role in the household and within their marital dynamics.

**Samantha’s life narrative - being an immigrant**

Samantha’s initial experience of Britain was not pleasant, recalling specifically the racism that she experienced:

\[
\text{I would say racism. My dear I never knew what racism was until I came to this country and it's a pity because from when I was a very young girl, I always wanted to come to this country. I used to hear so many things about this country but when I came to here it was completely different! All of my friends even complained about it, but you know when you’re young with all the excitement you forget all about the warnings.}
\]
Samantha’s initial experience of Britain was disappointing, primarily due to the racism she experienced. Samantha recalled how British White individuals used to stare at Jeremy and her, making her feel uncomfortable and different, something that she was not used to:

*You would walk into shops and they [White people] would stare at you. At times you would see security guards monitoring you in the background. Or you would go on the bus, a packed bus and the only seat available is there and the person [White person] would put their bag on the chair, so that’s it my dear, that’s what we went through but thankfully things are better now.*

The racism that Samantha experienced shaped her personality, making her weary of White people, as well as teaching her children the same thing. As a result she has detached herself from mainstream British White culture, creating as sense of them and us:

*You know with English people you have to always be on you guard. No matter how long you’ve been in this country you will never be true British. As long as I am Black and they are White there will always be a difference. Don’t get me wrong some of them are good, but even then you have to be open-eyed.*

Samantha shows evidently that the detachment that she feels and also creates for herself has indirectly ostracised herself from mainstream society, and as result she does not view herself as British adding to her reliance on Nigerian culture. However, even after experiencing racism, Samantha and Jeremy did not use this as an opportunity to victimise themselves but accepted that racism occurs in a foreign society:

Jeremy: *What is the point of us getting angry after all isn’t it their country. The only thing I tell myself is to achieve what I need to achieve in this country, ensure that my children are stable and when the time comes go back to my own county!*
Samantha:  *It’s true, why waste time getting down about these situations no matter what; no matter how long you have been here you are still a foreigner, although it is better now. That belief is still there.*

Both Samantha and Jeremy distanced themselves from mainstream society as a result of racism but use their experience to empower themselves. These experiences left them motivated as opposed to angry. When interviewed by herself, Samantha’s mentioned:

*You see it all comes down to the fact that no one’s better than one’s own culture. Everybody has a particular infinity to their own culture which makes them unique and sometimes if you lose that uniqueness you lose yourself.*

Samantha’s reaction to racism is to heighten the importance of Nigerian culture in terms of its richness compared to English culture:

*Culture is first and foremost, without culture you have nothing. Nigerian culture is so sweet, there is nothing like it. Look at the food, look at the language, look at our traditional wear. It is beautiful. You know it’s something to be proud of; it’s a shame that these days you don’t find it celebrated. Too many of our young people tend to forget where they come from. They want to adopt this, this English culture…what for, I ask! Although we have so many types of tribes one thing is for sure that there is this sense of pride. You don’t get that with English culture.*

In her work environment Samantha was able to observe and learn more about English culture; an environment that only served to perpetuate her negative opinions of British White society:

*You know these people, I don’t understand them. With all the money they have they put their parent’s in a nursing home. I can’t imagine that God forbid. It’s a curse. You just see them just wasting away while their children are off on luxury*
holidays. Nigeria you would never find that, at all! I just pity those people that I care for.

Samantha expresses her sympathy over her patients at the same time chastising English people and generalises or observation as indicative of English culture. Samantha once again uses this to view British culture as being substandard. When probed further, we find that these experiences make her even more appreciative and protective of her culture:

That’s why I love my Nigerian culture, we care for our people, we have respect for our elders. Even if our parents our old we just take care of them, not place them in a home.

Samantha’s passion for Nigerian culture may be the sole cause for her maintaining the patriarchal dynamics with her relationship with Jeremy. As with other Nigerian participants we also see this common view of Nigerian culture being better than British culture and thus the view that Nigerian culture is superior to British culture and this may resultantly account for the Nigerian women participants rejecting English culture in favour of conforming to their culture or guidance. We also see the collective nature of Nigerian culture with Samantha’s constant referral to ‘we’, and in light of Jeremy’s dominance she is proud of her culture.

In keeping with her culture Samantha attends fortnightly community meetings with Jeremy. By attending these meetings, it provides herself and Jeremy with a cultural haven:

You know when I’m there I feel like I’m back home. We talk our language, we talk about things that are happening back home in things happening within our community. When our children were younger we brought them to socialise with other children, learn their culture, so every two weeks we attend, sometimes we have events, like next month we have the women’s fundraising event, actually I’ll be cooking on that day.
Samantha is an active member of her community, able to socialise with in a space that provides cultural support. Her membership to these communal gatherings further enhances her sense of Nigerian ethnic identity. This membership also reinforces her cultural role as a woman, providing opportunities for her to negotiate her Nigerian and immigrant identities:

*I have to go to my community meetings, I can be myself. None of this fake, fake stuff. We talk, we eat. It is something for us to do rather than sitting at home watching television.*

Samantha tends to only engage with Nigerian social activities, however in the past she has attended mother and baby parents groups which was made up of predominately White women:

*The only thing that I can think of was attending one of those mother parent groups. I was the only black person there.*

When asked how she felt she explains:

*Well what could I do, I wanted my children to socialise, you know learn to relate with other children. I just had to manage as usual, they kept themselves to themselves. I think some of them were scared of me, you know I’m quite loud [laughs]. I was just by myself I didn’t let it bother me.*

Samantha’s position of feeling isolated only served to further distance herself from English people.

**Samantha’s life narrative - being a professional**

Samantha’s history of working in Britain was challenging for her. She often talked about experiences of feeling undervalued and disappointed with the lack of prospects she first faced when arriving in Britain:
I came here with so much energy and excitement. I was the one that even convinced my husband to come to England but getting a job was not easy like that. You know I was a nurse back in Nigeria, and me in my naivety thought it would be easy to work as a nurse over here. I was wrong, I was told in one place your qualification does not account for anything. Can you imagine hearing that when you’ve time studying and qualifying for a nurse.

Samantha’s experiences left her disappointed and to some extent guilty about migrating to Britain, especially as she felt as she was the one that encouraged Jeremy to come to Britain. Over the course of her solo interview Samantha talked about the difficulty she experienced in applying for jobs:

I must have filled out some many applications for hospitals; I even did additional courses which they offered back then, still no joy. It was only when I happened to meet one of my friends from back home that got me into contact with a woman she knew that had a care agency. It was an English woman actually, so she was looking for experienced nurse and that’s how I got my job.

After spending long periods looking for a job it is interesting that although Samantha had this distance with British White people she has been able to form relationships with them in order to further herself. When asked about the English woman that helped her get a job she explains:

Oh ok, her name was Mary, very nice woman. Actually out of all the English people I know, there are not very many though I can count them on one hand, she was the only one that gave me an opportunity. She explained to be how to fill out forms, how to go for interviews. All that type of thing, very nice woman.
Samantha’s relationship with her colleagues appears to be dominated by working with non-Whites, perpetuating her sense of self-exclusion from British White society:

*All the people I work with, well anyway the shift that I work on are Nigerians. We get on very well; even some of our children are friends. I work with a few Asians as well. There really are not many White people per se. The White people there are managers and they don’t really relate with us. I remember when I started working there I used to thinks, ‘What is this!’ but now it does not bother me to be honest I’m used to that.*

Although working and earning an income Samantha continued to follow her Nigerian traditional role as a female, i.e. submissive and subservient. In this way Jeremy remained the key decision maker; a position that she indirectly encouraged due to cultural conformity. Even when questioned with her in regards to her financial responsibility within her household Samantha explains:

*Well my husband is responsible for everything. He pays the bills, everything. I contribute when I can but my responsibility is looking after my family.*

Samantha remains comfortable with this arrangement and does not use the fact that she is working to change the balance in their financial responsibility:

*Men in Nigerian culture are supposed to provide for the family, my husband is very good at that. It does not worry me because I know that I am doing my own bit, maybe some people will view this as being wrong but this is my culture. My culture is not British culture.*

**Samantha’s life narrative - the consumer**
Consumption practices in Samantha and Jeremy’s household are largely dedicated by the needs of the family. In this way decisions are made equally, but although decisions are claimed to be made equally, it is Jeremy who takes the lead role in deciding what is bought for the house. Samantha highlights this quite openly in the interview:

*I would say I buy whatever my husband wants me to buy. That’s in general though but when it comes to food, things like that I would say that I am in charge of that.*

Samantha sees herself as the woman of the house, responsible for the purchase of food, fulfilling her Nigerian cultural role. However, Jeremy takes responsibility buying the meat. When discussing the significance of Jeremy buying the meat for the house, Samantha explains:

*I don’t know, but most of the times he buys the meat I think it’s because he usually the meat market is close to his workplace so every Saturday he buys a large quantity of meat for the family. You know men they like meat [laughs].*

When asked about her feelings in her husband buying the meat even when she is responsible for buying the food stuff she says:

*Well I don’t have a problem with him buying those stuff. It’s easier for me really, that way I don’t have to travel that long distance to buy meat. That place is very cheap, so I just let him buy it.*

Rather than Samantha taking the responsibility for buying meat for the house, she gives that responsibility to her husband. She’s later asked about her husband’s opinion of buying meat for the family and says:
He doesn’t mind, after all isn’t he the one that’s going to eat the food [laughs]. My dear please, its fine, that’s the only foodstuff that he helps me buy for the house. He knows the type of meat to buy I’m thankful that he does that! In Nigeria he bought the meat for the house, sometimes he would stop by after work at the local market and buy meat, so it’s something that he’s used to doing.

Samantha’s identification of purchasing the meat as a ritual insinuates that she may not have the skills to buy the meat. Alternatively, it could be argued that by allowing Jeremy to buy the meat, she encourages and reinforces his role as the dominant male, i.e. the hunter, gatherer. In effect Jeremy becomes the dominant party; he becomes the leader, the provider, following his duty as the head of the household. This act of consumption only further reiterates Samantha’s subservient role in the household.

Further into Samantha’s solo interview Samantha noted that she spends a lot of her spare time shopping for Nigerian material to sew traditional garments, something that she views as a hobby:

Ahh when it comes to buying my traditional Nigerian material, I don’t waste time [laughs]. I love being lace, Chris\textsuperscript{34} or those type of stuff. At times when I have time I sew clothes so every weekend or so I buy material from this lady from the community and the saw them for myself. My husband is always complaining, ah ‘Darling why did you buy this now, ah ah you have plenty and you still want to buy more’, I look at him and say ‘Yes, I’m a woman, isn’t it important for your wife to look good, ah ah you’re my husband you are supposed to ensure that I look good. Let people know that you are treating me well!’ [laughs]

\textsuperscript{34} Nigerian dressing
Samantha’s purchase of Nigerian material not reflects her hobby but it also shows her relationship with Nigerian culture. Jeremy’s dissatisfaction in her purchases which is in turn dismissed by Samantha in favour of looking good represents an act of empowerment as Samantha continues to buy these items, much to Jeremy’s frustration.

The importance of Nigerian clothing to express Samantha’s ethnic identity and her femininity is also evident in Samantha buying clothing for her son’s graduation. A consumption act that raised and reflected wider inter-generational acculturation issues:

Two days before my son’s graduation I decided to buy a skirt and blouse from one of my friends. As soon as I told my son I was wearing traditional he has like ‘Oh mum, wear English, you can wear traditional another day, wear English’. I said ‘Me wear English on my first son’s graduation, they must be joking’. Even my husband was telling me to wear English! I said ‘No this is what I am going to wear’ and do you know on that day so many English people were coming up to me and saying, ‘Oh, I love your outfit!’

Samantha’s determination and stance in wearing traditional Nigerian clothing reflected her pride and love for her Nigerian culture. Jeremy’s encouragement for Samantha to conform to an English style of dressing, only served to reinforced her distancing herself from British culture.

Samantha’s pride and need to reinforce her Nigerian identity is also evident in other forms of Samantha’s purchasing behaviour:

Ok at work every Friday we all take turns to buy food for those working on the shift. You know most of the people I work with are Nigerian so we buy Nigerian food, lucky for us there is this small Nigeria restaurant, just by the home, so every Friday that’s how we all bring food. We have White managers, so one day one of them came that complaining that her was getting choked, that the spices
was getting into his eye, you know White people they can exaggerate, ah this man was always complaining to the extent said that we could not bring food to work anymore. We said to ourselves, don’t mind the man, so rather than bringing food to work every Friday we bring it every Saturday when he’s not working [laughs].

Here we see another example of how Samantha first uses consumption as a way for reinforcing her Nigerian culture and offering some level of cultural resistance. Samantha’s manager may have complained due to him not actually liking the smell of food, or it could be more ominous it that he inadvertently tries to restrict his workers (Nigerian workers from practicing their rituals), as a result this causes Samantha and her colleagues to protest in the form of empowering themselves by continuing their consumption ritual. Nigerian food thus becomes a tool for empowerment.

**Carol and Bradley - brief overview**

Carol is a 51 year old housing officer and she is married to Bradley (64) a semi retired lawyer. They have been married for thirty years and have 5 children (29, 28, 25, 20 and 16), all boys. At 21 she got married to her husband, a wedding that her family arranged for her. At first she was very unhappy about getting married, seeing that she had intentions of finding someone for herself. However her father wanted her to get married to someone from their tribe and later sought for an eligible bachelor, Bradley. From the moment she met Bradley while working as a secretary in Shell, she did not like him due to his ‘arrogant nature’, but the soon became friends, something that she intimately describes in the presence of Bradley:

Carol:  
*Ah when I saw him he was so arrogant, honey you were arrogant then.*

Bradley:  
*Well in Nigeria you have to show that you are confident, that you have something up there.*
Soon after marriage Bradley travelled to Britain to study law. Studying in Britain while Carol was in Nigeria, Bradley found this period of his life hard:

It was quite difficult, imagine I was a young man, I just got married but then I had to travel to study but I know that my wife understood that.

Carol, additionally, when interviewed with Bradley comments on this period of time:

Well it was difficult, I was a young girl my husband was away, but I had to support him. It was his desire to study abroad. I managed.

When probed about this period of her life, without Bradley being present in the interview, she interestingly says:

I didn’t expect to be by myself so soon into the marriage but that is what we women have to do, we have to support our husbands be a good wife.

Here we see the initial pangs of gendered role structure in their dynamics. Carol mentions how she ‘had’ support her husband, she expands on this and reverts a traditional Nigerian perspective of a woman ‘being a good wife’. We see this is in other Nigerian woman narratives in the form of ‘being a dutiful wife’. When probed about what it means to be a good wife in initial interviews with Bradley, Carol says:

Carol: Ok to be a good wife, I know my husband is here [laughs]. Honey what do think it takes to be a good wife?

Bradley: [pauses for 2 sec] well the wife should be respectful to her husband, loving, supportive, look after the family, look after the house.
So here, indirectly we have Bradley placing emphasis on traits that he expects his wife to have. Something that we later see is challenged by Carol in her behaviour. When Carol is interviewed by herself, when asked the same question she says:

*Ok to be a good wife, well to me it’s all about understanding. It’s not always about cooking and cleaning, looking after the house. No. Those things are irrelevant really. Being a good wife is to work in unison with God’s word in loving, supporting and nurturing ones husband.*

So here we see Carol taking the role as the nurturer, the mother, the wife. This is also highlighted in discussions between Carol and Bradley on the topic of returning to Nigeria:

**Bradley:** *I am thankful that my children are all mature now, so I don’t have to worry about them. It’s time for them to worry about us after all! It is our time now, I always tell my wife, our time in investing in our children is over.*

**Carol:** *Ah my husband what about the youngest ones, they still need guidance.*

**Bradley:** *Of course they do, but they know the difference from right and wrong, so our job is nearly over.*

**Carol:** *Our job is never over darling.*

**Bradley:** *You understand what I am trying to say? Don’t mind my wife she still sees her children as babies. They’re men!* 

**Carol:** *Well no matter how old they are, they are still my babies.*
Bradley:  *Look at this woman!* [laughs]

Carol:  *Let me be, I’m a woman and a mother, I’m allowed!*

Here we see the tension between Bradley and Carol when discussing going back to Nigeria and the care of the children. Bradley completely dismisses Carol nurturing and motherly emotion, inadvertently criticising her behaviour. However Carol does not submit to Bradley’s opinion, instead she classifies her behaviour as ‘woman’ and a ‘mother’. By doing this she restricts herself into these two roles which her husband only sees her fit doing:

*My wife, she can be funny she wants to do everything. That time when I was studying she wanted to work but she couldn’t now because of the children. I think I remember you mentioning that you wanted to get your cousin to come and look after the children then but I looked at the set up and said no; after all she was capable of looking after the children. There was no need.*

Bradley begins his explanation condescendingly when referring to Carol as being ‘funny’, so already he’s placed her actions/ views lower than his own. Bradley in this situation exerts himself as the husband, the decision maker of the family. Carol had the ability of becoming financially independent from Bradley, but Bradley had prevented her from doing so. From this Bradley, exerts himself as a man. One may also posit that the threat of Carol working may have challenged his masculinity, especially within the prefix of Nigerian culture where men are responsible for providing for their family, something that is regularly in their interviews together.

Moving onto Bradley’s experience of coming to Britain he talks of his hardship and his experience of racism:

*I remember when I came first, I just started do my training for law. I was the only Black in my class, so you can imagine the reception I got the first day. Very*
hostile, funnily enough it was one of my White lecturers who made things comfortable for me. We used to meet up during the lunch time to discuss issues relating to Nigeria, you see he had worked in Nigeria for 5 years before coming back to England to teach. He was a very interesting man, Professor Jacobs, he’s late now but he was a very brilliant man, very brilliant. He taught me a lot about this culture.

Although Bradley experience racism he found comfort in his lecturer, in it was this comfort that gave him the motivation to finish his studies. He also reflects upon the isolation he felt for being Black:

No one would even talk to me, I’m sure most of them felt, and ‘what is this Black man doing here’ [laughs].

Even though Bradley has been in Britain, he is motivated to go back to Nigeria:

Well, this society, this country, well it’s just time to go back, we’ve been here for over 30 years. Home is home, this not our home, when I first came to this country I knew that this was not my home, do you understand? My original idea was to come here to study, then go back to practice but it wasn’t so.

From this is clear to see that Bradley does not feel as though he belongs to his society. He still has a fantasy of going back home to Nigeria. This feeling of not belonging may have been due to the racism that he experience:

We are foreigners in this country so belonging is not the issue. We manage with it, take advantage with what is around us and use it to better ourselves. Nigeria is always home.
The notion of not belonging is also referred to again with the use of the word foreigner. Bradley resides himself with the fact he is actually benefiting from his situation by taking advantage of the society to better himself. One of the way he has done this is through education, thus empowering himself in a society that restricts him.

But we also see that Carol had a key role in him staying in Britain:

*After I finished she came over and we just decided that it was better for us to stay for a while. She decided that she wanted to do further and have the rest of the children here, that’s how it started. Time just went but now is the right time, the children are all married, it’s now our time to enjoy* [laughs].

So it is possible to suggest that Carol in this particular incidence had sufficient power to dictate this decision. When asked in by herself, without Bradley being present, she says:

*Well I just wanted to have the rest of the children here. I looked at Nigeria and said; ‘No I can’t have them there’ after all I’m already in England. Why stress myself travelling back.*

Viewing Carol’s narratives what becomes clear is that her husband plays an authoritative role in the household maintaining Nigerian cultural prefixes i.e. men being the head of the household. Although Carol asserts herself, it is largely in a subtly way compared when she is interviewed by herself where she is illustrative and confident in her opinions. This suggest that there may be a patriarchal structuring between Carol and Bradley’s relation, thus restricting Carol asserting herself dominantly in her husband’s presence.

**Carol’s life narrative - being an immigrant**

Soon after marriage her husband, Bradley travelled to Britain to study, she found herself ‘on her own’. Her husband flew in and out of Nigeria regular but only for short visits. She quickly
became pregnant with her first child but disappointingly for her, her husband was not present during the pregnancy and the birth, something that she feels sad about till this day:

You know when you have your first child you expect your husband to be there, so it was difficult him not being there.

Once her son was born, her husband wanted them to live their life in Britain, something that she was unsure of, but later agreed to:

Well he wanted to study here, so what could I do. I just followed him; after all he’s my husband [laughs]. I was happy in Nigeria!

From this we see that it was actually her husband’s decision to come to Britain and from the way she expressed this narrative there is a hint of resentment –’I was happy in Nigeria’. Carol portrays that she was forced; she had to go to be with her husband something that may have been done in order to fulfil her cultural ‘duty’ as a wife. While in Nigeria she had heard negative stories from friends about Britain and so was always put off by travelling adding to her initial resentment:

My brother was based in Nigeria and he warned me to stay back. He always said the place is cold, the people are like this, they behave like that, and that things were so expensive, so I didn’t have a good opinion of England really, you know when you’re young you only listen to the negative stories.

While she was in Nigeria by her own she still maintained her secretarial job at Shell and supported herself and her children while her husband was studying abroad. When asked how she supported herself financially she explains:
Well I kept my job at Shell, although we had savings. I just wanted to work, I enjoyed my job. David and Joshua [Carol’s sons] were young and I had help. So I could go and work. The money I made I used it for our general upkeep.

Carol finds pride in being able to work as well as look after her children. In later narratives she often refers to this period as ‘being a single parent’. She often reflects on the difficult times when she was on her own:

Well back then I was young. I wasn’t used to being by myself, I mean the first time he travelled it was for business, he travelled to Katsina. I was very lonely back then, I didn’t have any family there with me so it wasn’t funny. Being that young, I was very excited about being married but I was not prepared for being at home alone, but I had to manage, I made friends and I worked which kept me busy, but it wasn’t the same. I think it was the loneliness that was very hard.

She talks about ‘managing’, showing her motivation and strength, rather than focusing on the negative side of being by herself she flourishes on her own. Carol used this period of time to enhance herself:

But as time has gone by it has become much easy. I just get on with it, I just do what I want [laughs]. I used that time to do courses, you know do my own thing and that kept me busy. Even now when he travels I look for things to do. You rarely catch me at home on the weekend. I need to keep myself busy; when you reach my age it is now time to focus on oneself. I am still young and I don’t want to get too old too quickly.

She refers to this period as time when she can ‘do what she wants’, indicating the potential restrictive nature of her marriage with Bradley. This is seen once Carol arrived in Britain. While in Nigeria she felt that although at times lonely, she had her freedom to do things.
However, when she was in Britain she became totally reliant on her husband because she could not work due to the lack of childcare:

> When I came to England everything changed for me. What my brother had been saying was true. You have to do everything by yourself. You know in Nigeria you have support, extended family but here you are forced to do every little thing yourself, so how could I have worked when there was nobody to look after my children. We just had to manage like that.

Carol found herself in a highly frustrating situation, because she had always worked and now she found herself unemployed looking after the children. She felt that she was not using herself to her full potential:

> Looking after the children was no problem, but not working was very difficult for me. You know someone that always work, when you tell them they have to stop they become idle.

Carol mentions periods of time when she used to get depressed and felt isolated, something which she discussed with her husband, but her husband did not understand, adding to her frustration. When probed she did not wish to discuss further on the matter, showing signs of tension. She later found solace in friends, friends who were in the same position as her with similar backgrounds.

**Carol’s life narrative - being a professional**

Carol when arriving in Britain started her career as a secretary working for her husband:

> [laughs] working with my husband? Um where should I begin? It was good to be honest with you I gained a lot of skills. In Nigeria you work definitely, you know the culture is different.
When probed further:

*In Nigeria everything is laidback, we take our time in doing things but here things are different! Everything has to be swift and efficient. I know my husband was always frustrated with me, he tried* [laughs].

Carol indicates the difference in Nigerian and British culture, being forced to adapt to British culture. Carol being able to work was exhilarating for her; it gave her the freedom to venture out of the house. We see that Carol’s life transforms from mother to professional. This transformation gave her the opportunity to be independent of her husband both physically and financially:

*I found working a good experience it gave me the opportunity to be free from the children* [laughs].

Although Carol found her experience freeing, she also refers to the adjustment she had to make for childcare:

*Working was very good for me but it was also difficult in terms of looking after the children. Both myself and my husband were working; even though I was doing part time I still need someone to look after my children so I decided to ask a family friend to look after them.*

Even though this gave Carol the opportunity to work, Bradley felt that Carol should have stayed at home to be with her children:

*My husband wanted me to stay at home with the children but I felt they were old enough, and it was important for me to work. I’ve never been without work you know that type of thing.*
Here we see for the first time the importance of working for Carol. In this particular instance work becomes a forum for the power struggle between Carol and Bradley. Bradley here, as explained by Carol, wanted his wife to care for his children. He shows his dominance and his standing as the head of the household. Whereas Carol stands firm on her decision of working in turn empowering herself. When asked about Bradley’s opinions of this decision, she explains:

*He was not happy at first; I think he was just concerned about the children and their welfare but they were fine. It gave them a chance to socialise with other children.*

Working provided an important change in the dynamics between Carol and Bradley. Where Carol was financially dependent on Bradley, she now found her financial freedom, as she describes her opinions of working:

*Working gives me the opportunity to do things other than being a mother and a wife. Sometimes it is good for us women to have something different to do. We can look after the children, husband and house, fine but it is good for the women to have another activity, something for herself.*

We can see here that work provides an opportunity for Carol to adopt an additional identity, one that is important for her well being. Her identity as a professional also gives her the opportunity to explore British culture and unfortunately racism:

*Working really taught me a good lesson of what it is to be black in this country. Yes. It is very funny, all throughout my time in Britain before I started working I was always surrounded by Nigerians. Throughout all the period I have been working it has been the same. Working in this country really opens your eyes.*
When asked of her experience working in Britain, she gives an example:

*Ok, I remember one instance. I will never forget this day. I went for an interview with Barclays bank. This was over 15 years ago now. I got there, got to the room for the interview, even to the point that I sat down and had the interview. The interview went well and I felt very positive, but as I was leaving the room I heard one of the interviewers say, ‘We can have someone like that working for us’, I just looked at the woman. She could not even look at me, I left that place thinking, ‘Ahh I see, this is how these people operate’. From that day I said to myself that I will be more cautious of English people.*

This experience led Carol to change her opinions of English people, so we later see that this experience shaped her relationship with English people:

*English people are funny, they behave one way in front of you but behind your back it is something else [laughs]. I’m an open person, but sometimes when you observe these things it makes you questions this whole society and country.*

We can see that her experience of working has paved the way for her to be defensive about the way that she relates with English people, to the point that she becomes apprehensive about English people. Interestingly, we also find that Carol uses her workplace as a point of socialising.

She has been working as a housing officer for over 10 years, a job that she expresses that she thoroughly enjoys. Her husband continuously complains that she far more qualified than the position that she is working at. Carol does not take this on board as she loves her job. She sees her job as doing something to better the community, something that she is proud of. She places great pride in her work and expresses that since she started she has always given her best:
I love my job, it is something, it is like I have found my calling. It is not perfect, but I’ve worked myself into a position that I am comfortable. It hasn’t been easy and there has been a lot of hardship but I did not let that phase me, at all. I always tell my children that if they want to get far in this country they must work ten times harder than the white man, and the fact they are boys they have to work very hard. It’s important.

Carol is able to identify the hardship that she has faced and use to her own benefit, making herself successful. She uses her experience to empower herself, also to empower her children, by being able to identify and teach them the importance of working hard. Her actions are based on her experience of racism.

**Carol’s life narrative - the consumer**

In terms of purchase decisions one finds that Bradley is responsible for buying most things in the house apart from food. Carol remains passive in the buying capital intensive items.

*If I’m buying anything that I think my husband would be unsure of, I discuss it with him before buying that thing. I respect his opinion.*

Once again we see Carol position Bradley in a role of authority. We also find that in terms of purchasing things for the house, Bradley gives her money as ‘upkeep’ or ‘allowance’ and to his position of power and authority:

*Well he does give me money like an allowance but that’s to support in the house and buy things for the children.*

In discussing what she buys she often talks of purchasing things for Bradley and her prose appears to be passionate as if she is trying to impress. We mostly see this behaviour when discussing the food that she buys for the family:
On Saturday I always go to the market to buy meat. You know my husband always eat a lot of meat so I go every Saturday to ensure I get a good bargain. You know a way to a man’s heart is buy food!

Here Carol indirectly uses food to nurture her relationship with Bradley in addition to conforming to her role as a wife. She inadvertently submits to her husband adding to his masculinity.

On further discussions of food consumption one also finds that Carol prefers to buy English food for herself:

I buy things like salad, cheese, bread, all those things from Asda. I prefer English food at times because it’s lighter. My husband always complains but I don’t bother myself because it’s me buying it as well as eating it. Let him eat his food and I’ll eat mine [laughs].

This response is revealing as it shows first Carol’s level of acculturation and secondly Carol’s independence and resistance to Bradley’s position in the household. Rather than conforming to their cultural food and Bradley’s wishes, she uses food to empower herself and resist patriarchy. She shows her financial independence:

Sometimes what I do, don’t laugh. I secretly buy English food and pack it in the deep freezer so maybe for lunch I’ll take it to work and eat [laughs]. It’s just easier for me!

In terms of the particular action we see that Carol not only does challenges Bradley’s opinions as the provider, and buys her own food; but she also empowers herself by consuming the items

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35 A supermarket
she wants. Consumption once again becomes a form of resistance to her husband. However even though she takes pleasure in this resistance she still conforms to her position in the house by buying and cooking his food.
Julia

Julia and Julian - brief overview

Julia is a 51 year old midwife. She has been married to Julian, 64, year old doctor for 30 years and has five children, four boys (25, 24, 23, and 20) and one girl (18). Julia met her husband at the age of 21 in Nigeria. She was a patient at the clinic where he was practicing. After finishing university it was her husband that advised her to study midwifery, although her intentions were to travel. She felt pressurised by her husband to study midwifery and succumbed to his wish:

Well I didn’t really want to studying midwifery at first; I wanted to go into to dressmaking but it was my husband who encouraged me to do it. He talked of the opportunity in finding work and things like that so in the end I just decided to do it.

We later find feelings of resentment in her narratives when this topic is readdress again in interviews:

Sometimes I look back and think what could have been. I’m successful in my career but I still have regrets especially in the pressure I faced with my husband but he was just looking after my best interest.

When reflecting on her marriage she continuously makes reference ‘working at it’, seeing her marriage as a mountain that she is climbing, thus insinuating that her marriage is hard work. Much of her feelings come from her husband behaviour, he is a traditionalist so believes sternly in Nigerian values. His sternness is based on his experience of English culture. Before he came to Britain to stay he regularly visited, on both occasions he experienced racial incidences. One occasion Julia remains hopeful that she will be able to travel now that her children are older.
Julia’s life narrative - being an immigrant

Her relationship with her husband has been tested on a number of occasions, especially in terms of career. She sees herself as sacrificing her happiness for the suit of the family, always talking about how she had to look after her husband and children- something that she loves but found hard at times to do. Her motivation came from her children, especially when they were younger. She found herself isolated from the outside world; all she did at that time was provide for her children as her husband was studying. She remembers that period as being very lonely, a time which she felt that her husband did not understand add to her frustration. Julia recalls seeking solace in her friends, friends that her husband at times did not approve. As a point she kept close to her friends as they provided her with support. Her friends provided a social realm to discuss emotional issues; it was also a way for her to project her culture. She makes a point to meet up with her friends on the weekend, but rarely invites them to her house. Her friends are English, something that her husband is not happy about. However she makes every effort to go for their coffee meetings for a chance to socialise. She met her friends at work, and regularly goes out with them.

Julia’s perspective of what constitutes culture represents an interesting aspect. When this topic is raised with her spouse, they comments:

Julia:  What is culture? Well culture is something that everybody has, it something within you that was taught when one was younger but it is very important because it gives an individual and identity, something the can relate to. You see, like our culture, it is the language, the food, what you are and even how you behave. It is very important, my dear.

Julian:  You see like my wife has said culture is very important. Nigerian culture, well Nigeria is my home and my culture allows me to live a
Nigerian life. If I want to I can speak my language, cook my food, dress is my clothes. These are some of the elements but it is the foundation for us Nigerians, it is our pride. Without that we are nothing as a people.

Julia: You see this is not my home, so this is not my true culture. English culture or whatever you call it (laughs) is not a substitute. We came here for a reason and yes we have been here for years it does not mean that we have forgotten our culture. We may act like them at work but at home we are Nigerian. I speak my language I eat my food; that is the way we live.

However when Julia was interviewed without Julian she appears to discount the earlier conversation on culture:

Well culture is important but we should also learn from other cultures. Yes Nigerian culture is good but it is not perfect, we can still learn from this culture. I think there are ways that we as a people can adopt certain styles of this culture. For example, the way that we speak, yes the way that speak. Sometimes we tend speak Pidgin English and it ruins our English. I always warn my children not to speak it.

Julia (without her husband) when probed further:

The English language when spoke well sounds very proper. I’m not talking about the English that you hear on soaps but the real English, the English that the older generation speak. The Queen’s English, you see back home this is how we were taught, so it’s something that we should adopt especially when working, I find it embarrassing, yes embarrassing when hear women speak pidgin English at work. It makes someone look very local.
Julia’s life narrative - the consumer

Julia’s initial comments around consumption reflected her general role as a home maker and purchasing food etc that supported Julian’s perception of what a Nigerian home should have. However, after a considerable period of time Julia began to explore how little acts of consumption were performed that didn’t meet Julian’s needs. For example, in ingredients used in cooking, certain types of food she bought. An example of resistance that she was only too happy to admit to:

You see there are times when I do things that my husband is unaware of, not all things have to be shared with my husband [laughs] you’ve got to be smart my dear. You see when I’m buying things for myself my husband doesn’t have to know! Does he tell me everything that he buys, no, so that is it.
AII.II British White Participants

Louise

Louise and Jeremiah - brief overview

Louise (41) and Jeremiah (56) have been married for 20 years. They have twin girls (15). By profession Louise is a qualified secondary school teacher while Jeremiah is a chemist. Although Louise originally was chemist she decided to go into teaching as a way of contributing to society. Louise and Jeremiah met in university and later became friends; they later got married after finishing their degrees. Louise appears to be a social person, which can be mistaken for dominance, and takes great pride in her job. Both individuals share equal responsibilities in childcare due to work responsibilities.

Louise and Jeremiah share a common interest in Pharmacy and although Louise chose a different profession they still remain passionate about their interests:

Louise: Well I have to say that I still love Pharmacy; maybe that’s why I became a chemistry teacher. It’s not the best topic to teach but I love it. Not too sure what my pupils think though!

Jeremiah: Actually it must be one of the worst topics to teach so I give Diane credit [laughs]. I remember when we went to school, that was a very long time ago now! But we always had that old eccentric teacher that was fascinated on blowing things up that had to be the Chemistry teacher [laughs] but Diane not’s like that, are you?

Diane: No I’m a bit boring, but I do some exciting experiments, well I try to [laughs].
Here we see Jeremiah showing his respect in her role as a teacher. When discussing her career Louise portrays her passion and often talks about her pupils in discussions. She refers to her pupils as her children, adopting a motherly role:

*My pupils are like my children. I want them to do well and I’m very passionate in seeing them achieve their goals no matter how hard it seems. I never had that when I was growing up; teachers were always so authoritative and never really showed any passion in their work, so I vowed that once I became a teacher I would be different.*

In comparison Jeremiah views his profession as just a job, and rarely shows passion in what he is doing:

*My job is a job. I used to get excited over it but I think it gets to a point when it becomes a chore [laughs]. Don’t get me wrong, I like what I do, but it gets like that in all jobs, you just have to bite the bullet and get on with it! Bills need to be paid.*

From Jeremiah’s narrative, he expresses indirectly his lack of job satisfaction. However Jeremiah maintains his position and role by implying that he pays for the bills. Louise appears to have job satisfaction making her appear more content and more jovial in her narratives.

**Louise’s narrative – culture**

Once again one finds that when interviewed about British White culture there tends to be a distancing. When probed on several occasions both participants appeared reluctant to give their opinions of British White culture. Louise poignantly says:

*It is difficult to describe what British White culture is, but it’s easier to describe what it’s not! Ok British White culture is not about racism or prejudice. It’s not*
about the BNP or anything like that. It’s about tolerance. I think it all to do how we behave, the humour, the language. Knowing that all things can be solved over a lovely cup of tea [laughs].

So we can see here that Louise remains comfortable in discussing British White culture but only on the ‘surface’ level. She did not appear comfortable in discussing British White culture in depth and always seemed to add humour to her narratives. In talking about British white culture one also finds that Louise appears very receptive to other cultures, to the extent that she appears acculturated into other cultures:

_I love watching Bollywood movies, one of my friends got me hooked on them. I love the music and the way that it’s films. It’s just fun, it beats sound of music any day of the week. Once a month I meet up with some friends and they take me to the cinema, sometimes they have to translate but that’s ok that adds to the fun of it. All the dancing, all that is great. It makes English culture look boring!_

In terms of her social circle Louise boasts of having friends from different ethnic backgrounds and makes certain that she expresses this when talking of British White culture:

_Well I have a variety of friends from different backgrounds. I have Asian friends, Polish friends, Turkish friends, African friends. Just a variety and their culture is so different to English culture, it’s so interesting to find out how other cultures work, it’s fascinating. For example, one of my friends whose from India was explaining to me about how certain colours are worn to signify different things? Like they wear white when they are mourning and red when they get married, to me that’s fascinating. Here we just wear whatever we like! There’s no meaning behind it, it makes us look a bit boring doesn’t it!_

Here we see Louise’s receptiveness of other cultures as well as her fascination; she remains quite accustomed to other cultures than her own, which is different to the other British White
participants. In her fascination one sees her viewing her culture as ‘boring’, subtly implying British White culture as being less exciting than other cultures. In fact she almost distances herself away from British White culture.

Louise’s narrative - the professional

On observation Louise and David relate with each other very well. They appear to have a very close relationship. Louise and David went to the same university and hence have a long history together:

Louise: *We went to university and even studied the same course, although we took different career routes there’s still that chemical connection* [laughs].

Jeremiah: *Louise left Pharmacy for teaching, which sometimes I can’t understand to tell you the truth, but everybody is different* [laughs].

Louise: *Yes I loved Pharmacy but I fancied something different something more rewarding and teaching was it! He says he can’t understand but he knows how passionate I am about teaching.*

From the above narrative we can see that David appears to be disapproving over Louise’s career choice and in so doing Louise reasserts her choice to go into teaching, favouring her career aspiration. We observe Louise’s overall determination and power in making her own decision to change careers. When interviewed individually Louise explains:

*Teaching was something that I looked to do, although it took me a few years to get into it, which was not easy because of the kids, I got there and in the end thanks to my husband’s support I got there!*
So although Louise made her choice individually to go into teaching we find that in her assertive and individualistic nature she still needed support from David, this giving him a role in her decision-making process. When probed further Louise explains:

_David was really understanding, in fact he became a mother to the girls when I was busy studying, but don’t let him hear me say that! There were times that he’s sort the girls out when they were younger. Prepare their dinner; make sure they did their homework all those kind of things and that was really helpful for me because it allowed me to focus on my training. It was really helpful._

In identifying David supporting her, she also desmaskulate him her prose adding ‘he became a mother to the girls’. In doing so she indirectly classifies David into a more feminine role. This is also seen later in other discussions:

_David used to look after everything quite a bit, which was helpful so when I’d get back home I’d find that everything had been done, so at times I kind of felt displaced. I’d come back home and say, ‘Oh the girls are in bed, oh ok’, so it was a bit difficult for me at first to get used to that._

One found that David quite easily adopted the role of carer for their children. He explains:

_David:  It was far more easier for me to look after the kids. I would get from work say around five, by that time they had after school classes, which was a blessing! So I’d pick them up from there, get home prepare their dinner and stuff like that. It was and still is quite fun. I know Louise must have felt displaced sometimes which is only natural, but you got over it didn’t you?_

_Louise:  Well yes but it was a bit difficult at first, wasn’t it?_
David: Yes it was, but we’ve got into a routine now which I think works for all of us and it’s much easier now that the children are older.

From the observe narrative one can see that David quite easily adopts his wife’s role as a mother, in this way it appears that the tradition gender roles have been reversed. Louise appears to be adopted a more masculine role, a position that David quite happily adopts. In addition to this one also observes Louise’s subtle feeling of being displaced in terms of her gender role, something that David easily acknowledges. By identifying Louise’s displacement one could then assume that David and Louise may have their own gender role prefixes which govern the way that they behave i.e. David and Louise may view the role of a woman as the main caregiver, however in this particular situation Louise does not uphold her role resulting in her feeling displaced. One could then posit that in David adopting this more feminine role it in turns increases Louise’s power position in the household and this behaviour appears throughout discussions with Louise. For example:

Louise: Jeremiah doesn’t like going out and all that stuff, neither do I. We like to stay in on the weekends, open a bottle of wine and just relax.

Jeremiah: Yes we open a bottle of wine and just relax.

Louise: So every weekend we do that maybe once in a while we go out but not that often, we don’t mind.

One observes in her dominant position Louise takes control, allowing David to appear submissive although subtly.

**Louise’s narrative - the consumer**

Purchase decisions in Louise and Jeremiah’s household remain solely on Louise. Louise takes full control on what is bought for the house, and although Jeremiah has a higher income than
Louise, she remains responsible for most of the purchases concerned with the household. Once again as found in other participants, control of specific purchases are based on knowledge, so in this particular case Louise appears to be knowledgeable of most things concerning the household. One may view this as her reasserting her role as a wife:

* I actually buy the majority of things for the house, that’s only because I know what is needed. Jeremiah helps out once in a while [laughs], once in a blue moon but doesn’t bother me at all. He’s not really the shopping type anyway; he’s great in other things like looking after the girls, but going shopping that’s not his forte. I think women are better at all the stuff anyway. We’re just programmed to be better shoppers! *

Louise in discussing purchasing behaviour once again reverts back to the stereotypical role of being a woman, although it appears that she wields more power in these actions than Jeremiah. She openly assigns shopping onto the role of women but additional takes a dominant position in her role at the same time ridiculing Jeremiah. Louise’s control over purchases also stretches as far as buying clothes items for Jeremiah:

* I buy all our clothes, in fact all the way to Jeremiah’s underwear [laughs], but don’t tell him that I told you! He’s a very lucky man; he doesn’t need to lift a finger in the fashion department because I take care of that. Most women won’t bother with that but I love doing it and he doesn’t mind, so why not! *

Louise’s dominance over purchases stretches as far as buying Jeremiah’s clothes and one may deduce that Louise is involved in ‘shaping’ Jeremiah thus exerting her dominance over him. In addition to this, this could also infer that Jeremiah maybe be unconsciously demasculinated adding to Louise’s power in the household. One also observes that Louise also is in control of the family finances:
When it comes to the finances in the house, we have a joint bank account which I opened up for us when we got married. I mean yester I decided to switch our savings account to one with a higher interest rate because it's much better for us, so I did that by myself. I literally spoke to a few bank advisors to find out what rates were being offered, I also asked around. I didn't really need to discuss it with Jeremiah because he leaves me to do all that stuff.

In this particular discussion we see that Louise takes control of choosing bank account and thus finances which is typically associated as a masculine role identified in our Nigerian participants. This shows Louise’s level of control in the household. By taking control of her family’s finances she actively asserts her authority. This also seen in later narratives:

When we bought this house, actually I chose the house come to think of it [laughs]. Well it was important to me to have a say as it was a big decision. I mean luckily I had an input because the house that Jeremiah had his eyes on was terrible [laughs]. I mean it’s somewhere we’re going to live so definitely I had to have a say in the matter, that’s certain!

So once again we see that Louise takes control of purchases in the household as well as thing that involve or affect her family, she firmly exerts her position in the household as well as marriage. Although Jeremiah has an input in some of the decision we find that these are subtly done. What one observes once again is that Louise is able to openly assert her influence and control on purchase decisions compared to her Nigerian female peers and has a result she appears to harbour more power giving herself more authority in the household.
Justine

Justine and Luke - brief overview

Justine (54) is married to Luke (59). They have been married for fifteen years and have two children, two boys (15 and 13). They met through friends fifteen years ago and got married after six months. Justine is a full time administrator for a law firm while Luke works as an accounts manager for a food packaging company. Justine is solely responsible for childcare since Luke travels often. On observation Justine and Luke remain equal in their relationship, this is often seen in their prose. They have the same interest often enjoying various hobbies together such as golf.

On having conversations with Justine it appears prominently the importance that she attaches to marriage often citing the hardship that couples face:

*Marriage is a work in progress people just have to work hard at it. I always wanted to get married but I also knew that it would be hard work. I think the problem these days is that people don’t want to work hard at it anymore.*

She goes further on to say:

*Well I personally believe that some couples don’t want to work hard in their relationship anymore. There’s this belief system now that ‘I can go and get one better elsewhere’ [laughs] well it’s true. Some men think why have a Ford Escort when you can have a Mercedes convertible [laughs]?*

Although Luke and Justine share an equal relationship at times Justine appears to be the dominant party often leaving Luke vacant in conversations. One observes throughout the conversation Luke almost appears submissive to Justine especially when viewing is opinions:
Luke: I think people’s responsibilities have changed quite a bit but I think that’s because society is changing. It’s inevitable isn’t it?

Justine: Well I think it’s got something to do with family responsibilities, who’s responsible for what in the household. Couples are working all sorts of hours to survive; they don’t have time for themselves or their children. We were lucky that we had a lot of family to support us, there was much less to worry about. Now you have mortgages, bills, all these type of things, not to think about the family itself.


So here we once again observe Justine’s dominant behaviour in her prose and Luke appears submissive. This was often observed throughout the interview with Justine and Luke. When interview alone we additionally observe that her dominance goes as few as being critical about Luke’s opinion. For example when discussing bring up their children:

_Luke always said that we should get a nanny for the children, when they were growing up but I decided that I didn’t want that, what would be the use of paying good money for the nanny. Anyway the children were fine._

So we see once again Justine taking the dominant role in the household. This behaviour appears throughout the interviews.

**Justine’s life narrative – culture**

Culture as the rest of the British White participant presented itself a contentious issue. Most often Justine and Luke did not appear comfortable in discussing White culture and as we see again they appear too cautious in appearing prejudice:
Justine:  *Well I personally don’t want to come across too patriotic that it may seem that I am prejudice. Everybody has different opens and that’s entirely up to them but I think British culture is very accepting. I think historically we’re known for our stiff upper lip, but I think that’s changed a lot now. I think we’re happy go lucky and we love a cup of tea, I know I’m stereotyping here [laughs] but it’s true.*

Luke:  *It’s true, I think it’s difficult to answer without sounding somewhat prejudice to be honest.*

In their interviews together Justine and Luke seemed somewhat uncomfortable and this topic was not probed further. However individually Justine seemed more relaxed and consequently was able to expand on her previous answer:

*I think British culture encompasses a lot of things really ranging from the language to the people, so I really can’t pinpoint one thing to be honest. It’s just very eclectic to be honest and that’s what I like about it. It’s not solitary it’s a combination and that’s what makes it exciting it’s continuously evolving. When I was younger I was always fascinated with other cultures so I can’t really say what English culture is to be honest!*

Justine in reminiscing of the past infers the level that she has acculturated to other culture and therefore is unable to identify with British White culture. She does not present this in a way of negativity but positivity in expressing her interest in other culture. We find that she actively involves herself in other cultures in term of holidays they take:

*Well usually we like travel to Thailand as we have an apartment there so we go there once a year. I love the Thai culture and the people it’s so different to here. A lot of our Thai friends live in London so we meet up there, so we always get together at each other houses, it’s so fun.*
So here we see Justine and White having friends of different culture and integrate themselves into Thai culture.

**Justine’s life narrative - the professional**

Justine has been working as an administrator for a law for 10 years. In those 10 years she expressed the trials and tribulations that she experienced:

*I think working in an all male environment makes you tougher, you end up being one of the guys and they see you as the same. Although there are times when they treat you as a woman you still know where you stand with them. Whereas working with women it’s a bit complicated. I prefer working for guys [laughs].*

We see Justine in talking of her employment favouring working with men, referring to the ease of socialising with them. This is no surprise and explains her dominant behaviour but surprisingly so; we see firsthand her distancing towards other women. When asked the reasons behind this she narrates:

*I don’t know that’s a good question but they seem petty, and a bit two-faced. Men are more direct and I personally know where I stand with them. Maybe it’s because I grew up with four brothers [laughs].*

So in professing to working with men, she infers that she understands their behaviour and so it is not surprising that she adopts a more masculine behaviour in the household. In fact it would almost appear that they behave parallel together compared to the Nigerian participants and although she appears to dominate Luke they actually equally in their decisions. For example, when discussing the issue of childcare when her children were younger she expresses:
At that time I know Luke had a few ideas of how he wanted the kids to be looked after but to be honest I just took the lead, after all I know my kids but later I decided to discuss it with him, it was only fair. Since I was working it also affected him, so we sat down and came to a decision that was best for all of us.

We observe Justine’s behaviour and dominance, but contradictory to this we see that she adopts a more feminine role in looking after her children. In fact she maintains her role as a wife, however a dominant wife.

**Justine’s life narrative - the consumer**

In her dominance Justine remains responsible for purchasing most items in the household and although it would appear that Luke as an element of responsibility she has the final say so:

Justine: Well, a month ago we needed to replace our washing machine so we both went to Curry’s to look at a few machines. Eventually Luke found one, I think he already knew which machine he was going to buy. He knows all the lingo for stuff like that, I just sit back and watch [laughs], well anyway he bought the machine.

Well I’d like to think that it would be a joint decision…but maybe there would be times when that would changed, like if Luke was not around I still have a say in what to buy, if not he might end up buying the wrong thing!

Well, yes buying something as expensive as a cooker, I’d definitely want to consult with him just to get his opinions on the type I want to buy. It would give us the opportunity to share ideas with each other.
Yes, but it’s not as though I’d have to get his permission, but I feel that it would be better if we both decided together.

Interviewer: Better in which way?

Justine: Better in the sense that, it’s a joint decision where we can both input our ideas, which is important in terms of marriage but if it were the issue that he was unable to get his opinion then I would make the decision myself then tell Luke about it afterwards, he’d probably like to know all the details of the cooker, like the price...things like that. I don’t think he’d have a problem with it, all the same I think with things that involve a large amount of money there’s a need if possible to consult with your husband. Basically it all the women’s stuff he’s not really bothered but all the men’s stuff, he definitely has a say so. Well you know, items that women tend to take the decision over, like buying furniture, buying food sometimes...urm, you know if I wanted to buy a certain kind of fabric softener [laughs] this sounds really bad.

Lynne

Lynne and Nathan - brief overview

Lynne, 50 is a secondary school teacher and she is married to Nathan, 55 who owns his own building company. They have been married for 24 years and have four children, three girls (21, 18) and a boy (17). Lynne comes from the North of England (Manchester) and moved to London at the age of 21 after her university studies. While at university she studied teaching and specialised in secondary education. It was at university that she met Nathan. Nathan however left university early take over his father’s building business, which he has grown in size to now encompass three offices throughout Britain.
When interviewing Lynne and Nathan together both were equally active in conversing, they appeared to be united when discussing and conveying their equal partnership. At no point did it appear that one spouse was more dominant than the other, unlike some of the Nigerian participants. The egalitarianism in their marriage was based on their belief of what marriage should be like:

Nathan:  *Well for me, I don’t know if it was the era that I was born in, but I was always taught that marriage is a partnership, so it’s not necessarily the way that our parents experienced, so I think it works well that way, it’s more of a partnership.*

Lynne:  *Yes that’s true it’s not to say that, ‘Ok I’m a wife and I have to do all the wifey things’. No! I don’t think that works really well. I think it comes down to what you’re good at, who’s good at what and things like that. Marriage is really a partnership.*

Lynne’s belief in the format of marriage is actually contradictory to her upbringing, reflecting wider social changes in her life and lifetime:

*During our parent’s time you’d definitely get the women staying at home looking after the children that was the thing to do. Although this is debatable now, I think in this day and age you find that these types of roles are interchangeable for men and women. In some families you find that women stay at home, in others you find that the men stay at home.*

Marriage as identified by both of the participants as a partnership, a message conveyed throughout the course of the interviews even when Lynne is interviewed by herself. In later discussion Lynne reiterates this ‘partnership’ in discussing the responsibilities of house duties:
Ok, things in the house, well we just think who’s good at what, then we split it. It’s always been like that, so sometimes I may do all the cooking, or Nathan would help me. It just depends whose free or better still who’s in the mood to cook.

In this particular example on observed that the action of cooking becomes a responsibility for Lynne and Nathan, whereas with the Nigerian participants this responsibility solely laid with the wives. The action of cooking in this particular scenario does not warrant gender role assignment.

**Lynne’s life narrative - culture**

Culture was not a key focus in the interviews, possibly because as British Whites these participants were living and socialised within in it. Consequently, they may not have been aware of how British White culture was affecting their behaviours nor had opportunities offered to the Nigerian participants to reflect upon on it. When British White culture and what it constituted was discussed in the interviews, British White participants appeared to be uncomfortable. Lynne and Nathan could not openly identify what British White culture was:

Nathan: *Well I really can’t say what it is. I think it’s a variety of things. The language of course but I think you know if you look at history British culture is exactly that, the history the monarchy. I think it is becoming harder to define what British culture is.*

Lynne: *You could look at all types of things and say that they are British, black cabs, royal guards, the Queen, the food. I think it’s easier to classify what is British.*

Nathan: *Yes that’s true.*
During this conversation it became clear that Nathan became uncomfortable in expanding on his response and as a result, Lynne had to respond for him. This may indicate his sensitivity of no wanting to offend the interviewer as a Black woman or feel that they were in any sense racist. After all, Lynne’s intervention appeared to intentionally rescue Nathan from a difficult place and as a woman; Lynne may have expected a sense of reconciliation with the interviewer, i.e. woman to woman. Perhaps most revealing, and not unique to Lynne and Nathan, was their difficulty in describing British culture and this may reflect a more inherent sense of racism in British society. While not apparently racist themselves, their omission and discomfort on what constituted British White culture in terms of values suggests a much deeper, undisclosed, awareness.

Lynne apparent need not to offend the interviewer became very prominent during the discussions on British White culture in stark difference from the Nigerian participants. One manifestation of this was Lynne and Nathan ease in discussing other cultures, always discussed in a complementary way:

Nathan: *I love Indian food; I can’t get enough of it. Actually every Friday night we always go for a curry at my friend’s restaurant. The food makes your mouth water; I can’t get enough of Indian food.*

Lynne: *He’s obsessed with Indian food; you’d think he was born there the amount that he eats.*

Nathan: *Well I can’t help if my friend cooks the best curry this side of London.*

Lynne and Nathan’s ease at talking about different cultures, in terms of food, was easy because it was impersonal, but in terms of personifying different cultures this became difficult for them to express:
Lynne: **Well I don’t think that a man being the head of the household...did you say that? No, sorry, I mean the breadwinner is typically and English thing but you could say that history has an influence, I think it is indicative of all cultures but as I see it, things like this are changing. At times I do prefer it this way. I find that women who behave any differently tend to look as though they are competing with their husband. You always need someone to stay at home to look after the children, just to ensure that everything is going smoothly.**

Nathan: **During our parent’s time you’d definitely get the women staying at home looking after the children that was the thing to do. Although this is debatable now, I think in this day and age you find that these types of roles are interchangeable for men and women. In some families you find that women stay at home, in others you find that the men stay at home. I always wonder how these men find that. I wouldn’t know where to start, it just depends on the couples. Although I think women are better at that, I’m terrible with that, us men always are [laughs] it’s not our fault! Maybe it’s our biology.**

**Lynne’s life narrative - being a professional**

Lynne from the time she was young had always wanted to be a teacher. Her passion came from her mother who was also a teacher, suggesting a deeper, emotional, bond. Lynne had previously discussed her strong identification with her mother; a mother, who she saw as strong and assertive, demonstrated in her role as a teacher:

*I always remember my mum coming back from school with all her books that she had to mark. I was always so fascinated over all that. I don’t know why, where most kids wanted to a nurse or doctor, I wanted to be a teacher. I think my*
parents knew that I wanted to be a teacher; my dad always said that I’d be in a job where I could boss people about!

With her dreams of becoming a teacher she took several courses to improve her chances of going to university to study education. Having got into university Lynne realised that she wanted to teach secondary education:

I don’t know what it was but I always got on better with teenagers, back then it was exciting, not like now that there are so many rules and regulation you can’t teach the way that you want to, I don’t know, I guess things are destined to change over time.

In discussions Lynne happily explained her responsibility as a teacher; working as a teacher for over 15 years and attributing her success to the love that she has for teaching:

There is a certain level of satisfaction that you get from imparting knowledge onto children. It’s like a sensation that I get from seeing the faces of my pupils once they understand something.

While in her third year of university she met Nathan who was in his third year of studying business administration. That same year Nathan left university to join his father’s business. When asked about this period of time Lynne expresses:

Well to be honest I still can’t think of a reason why Nathan left uni early considering he was going into his final year, but he did alright for himself! [laughs]…when he first told me I thought he was crazy, you know having a rebellious moment but later I knew he was serious, so I left him to it.

When both spouses were interviewed together and we see the unity in their responses:
Nathan: Well it wasn’t a decision that I took likely. It took me ages to come to a decision, and I thought well, I don’t really need a degree, I already had the practical experience and they really weren’t teaching me anything that I didn’t know really, so that was it I just took the leap. It paid off don’t you think?

Lynne: Well yes it did. I never thought I’d be saying this but it’s one of the best decisions that you made [laughs].

In this particular scenario one Lynne’s support for Nathan in his decision to leave university and going into work, and although Lynne shows that she firmly supports education and achievement she puts this aside to support Nathan. In further discussions this type of support throughout discussion on the topic of Nathan expanding his father’s business:

Well I always support him in his business ventures. Sometimes he’ll come to me for advice; it could range from the colour he wants to paint the offices to how many builders he wants to employ for a particular month, so we always discuss things like that, and vice versa. If I need advice on a certain thing he helps me out.

In discussing her responsibilities we first get a glimpse of how she combines work and family life:

I think it’s important to separate work from family life. I think that’s very important, it’s not easy always. Sometimes you get home and you just want to talk to someone about your day but at the same time you just want to forget everything and get on with family life.

When probed further about managing motherhood and childcare when her children were younger:
I just believe it's down to the couple itself. It's all based on understanding one another, knowing your partner and being completely honest. Everybody has their highs and their lows but it depends on how the couple comes together to resolve their problems. Don’t get me wrong we’ve been through our share of highs and lows but yes, marriage is a journey.

Although Lynne values her career as a teacher, she also is able to identify her role as a mother and the importance of communication. We can observe that Lynne already has gender role prefixes but due to work she had to make sacrifices in terms of the time spent with her children. In addition to this, she able to differentiate work time from family time, something that herself and Nathan are able to do. As a result she sees marriage as a partnership of understanding.
Lynne’s life narrative - the consumer

In terms of buying behaviour, Lynne remained responsible for most of the items purchase due to Nathan’s busy nature. These purchases included:

As Nathan is always busy, I kind of take over. It’s much easier that way because I know what needs to be bought. It’s not that he’s not involved it’s just that he’s so busy. Anyway it gives me an opportunity to buy what I want to buy [laughs].

When probed further to find what items she buys without Nathan knowing, Lynne explained:

Nathan doesn’t like buying cakes and all those stuff. He’s not really a sweet person but I love them so I always stock up on them. I have a little cupboard of goodies where I keep my supplies. You’ve got to see it. Nathan doesn’t know mind you, or maybe he does know but he doesn’t say anything [laughs].

Lynne cupboard of ‘goodies’ offers her a means of rebelling against Nathan and treating herself, although Nathan may not be aware of these purchases. These purchases are often made when Nathan is not present adding to sense of empowerment and her assertion of a separate identity from Nathan.

In terms of food consumption Lynne remains responsible, a role which appears to be similar to our Nigerian female participants. Lynne opts for this responsibility due to her experience and her knowledge of the house, interestingly conforming herself to the traditional role of a wife. Nathan on the other, Lynne noted, how only to some food decisions, but only when he cooks the Sunday roast:

I think the only food he buys is when he cooks the Sunday roast, that’s all I think.
The ritual of cooking of the Sunday gives Nathan and Lynne the opportunity to reverse their roles in the household. We also see a variety of strategies used by Nathan and Lynne to make decisions regarding purchase particularly large items for the house:

*We tend to buy all the major stuff together. Ok an example, we bought the set of sofas together. I think even the TV, yes the TV.*

Lynne and Nathan’s joint consumption decisions appear to be less than the equal, contradicting their earlier narratives. Where we see in the Nigerian participants, the husbands being dominant in large consumption items, we see with Lynne and Nathan assume equal responsibilities, further suggestion an egalitarian structure in the household. Even in terms of seemingly masculine purchase items we see that these consumption decisions are either purchased together or discussed between them:

*I think with most things we buy we discuss with each other, especially if they are expensive. It’s not that ask his permission [laughs], we just discuss in terms of our finance or budget.*

From the above prose we observe that firstly Lynne and Nathan share equal responsibilities in purchase decision. Secondly we also that Lynne finds it somewhat uncomfortable even thinking of asking her husband for permission to make purchase, an action that we have seen with some of the Nigerian female participants. Instead we see that Lynne has a firm influential role as a wife; whereas in the other Nigerian female participants’ narratives we find that it is the husbands that play a dominant role in purchases.

As consumption decisions with Nathan and Lynne’s household appear to be more equal there appeared to be no evidence of consumption being a tool for empowerment as form of resistance. What we do see are consumption decisions made out of personal choice and free will. Although probed on numerous occasions Lynne appeared free to make purchases for
herself, and even though some or purchases were made without Nathan knowing, we see that these purchase were done out of desire than out of resistance:

*If I’m buying things for myself I don’t HAVE [Lynne’s emphasis], I need something I just buy it. Nathan is not too bothered about what I buy, I think he’s got other things to be worried about. Anyway I’m not one for clothes.*

Lynne not only has financial independence from her husband but in terms of purchases she is also independent. We see that she shows her power if not dominance in the household, where she is able to purchase items at of her own free will, and goes as far as mentioning that Nathan is not concerned over these purchases further adding to the power she has in the household.

**Debra**

**Debra and David - brief overview**

Debra (36) is married to David (49). They have been married for ten years and have two children, two girls (6 and 4). Debra works as an administrator at her local college and David is an accountant. They met over 12 years ago being best friends at first then becoming husband and wife. They both share the same interest especially in terms of recreational activities, having a passion for camping. Every summer they plan camping trips for the whole family. As an administrator Debra spends a lot of time in the office, as a result David looks after their children as he works from home. Most occasions David is responsible for the house duties, something that he is comfortable in doing. Debra on the other hand supports him when she has time.

Debra describes the moment when she got married to David:

Debra: *Well it was a very small wedding with a few friends, nothing too extravagant. I really didn’t want anything to flamboyant. I’m not like*
that really neither is David. Just simple, we didn’t want it to cost and arm and a leg, so we just got the whole family together and each did their own bit.

David: *Debra didn’t really want a big wedding that was fine by me! You know when you’re starting out you really don’t want to spending so much on one day, do you!*

Debra: *That’s true.*

We see that Debra and David share the same opinion in terms of the expenses used for their marriage. Finance plays an important role in their marriage and is often a theme that runs through their interview together:

*David is an accountant so he looks after all the finance stuff in the house. That’s not to say that I don’t play my bit! Every month I’ll update our spreadsheets just to make sure that we’re ok. I think it’s good for families to have that side arrange, so many families out there get caught out these days.*

Debra plays a significant role in the organising of the finance in the household, and although David by profession is an accountant she is able to navigate herself in this role. One could deduce that Debra is asserting her position in the household and adopting a responsibility that in comparison to our Nigerian female participants is attributed to the male role.

This behaviour is also seen when discussing issues of housework and maintenance. Debra expresses:

*Well I’ve always been taught to do things by myself. I wasn’t told ‘a women should be like this, I woman should behave like that’. I think it’s because I was*
brought up in an all boys household so was never really into to those girlie things.

In this narrative one observes that Debra stirs herself away from her position as a woman in favour of adopting a more masculine role. This view is noted in her behaviour and verbal responses in that she behaves more dominant than David. When probed further Debra later expands on this my stating:

When I was growing up I wasn’t a girly girl, all my friends were boys. Actually I was a tomboy really [laughs] so I’ve never really been into all those things. I’m a hands on person, I like getting mucky. I’m not into all that make up and fashion stuff. You’ll never catch me wearing a dress. My eldest daughter always complains and says, ‘Mummy how come you don’t skirts like other mummies’ and I just say, ‘Darling it’s because mummy doesn’t like wearing skirts.’

Here one observes Debra’s view of herself and her preference of a masculine role. In fact as expressed in her narrative she actively tries not to conform to her gender role prefix, seeming to rebel against it:

Just because you’re a woman doesn’t mean that you have to adopt a victim role. To me that makes me feel uncomfortable. I mean I work with a lot of women, not out of choice mind you [laughs] actually come to think of it I prefer to work with me. It’s far more simpler.

Debra when interviewed with David and individually actively tries to distance herself from the stereotypical role of a woman. This may largely be due to her growing up with brothers. She openly favours and feels more comfortable in a male environment adding to her masculine character. David in fact supports this indirectly and adopts a more feminine role:
David does most of the cooking actually, he cooks better plus he’s at home most times, he works from home. He does the cleaning, actually all the stuff in the house. That sounds really bad doesn’t it [laughs] but he likes doing it! If I try helping him he only complains that I’m not doing it right!

In this particular instance we see that David openly and happily adopts a more feminine role in the household taking charge of the things that are stereotypical viewed as his wife’s responsibility. Although Debra at first feels bad about this, she resides herself in the fact that David is more equip than herself.

Debra’s life narrative – culture

When interviewing Debra and David together it was often difficult to discuss issues of culture with them, especially in term of discussing British White culture. Both individuals appeared uncomfortable in discussing these issues in fair of not cause offence:

Debra:  
British White culture. To be honest I think it would be difficult for me to answer that. What is British White culture? I mean you could say its people who come from England and are White or, I don’t know really, The Queen, the language, stuff like that. What do you think David?

David: Yes I think it’s all those things really, like you said. British White culture. Let me think of that for a while, no one’s ever asked me that question before!

In this particular incident both Debra and David became uncomfortable in answering questions pertaining to British White culture. They often redirected the question to another topic or asked to answer the question at a later period. This was quite common with the interviews with the British White participants. However when discussing culture in relation and
comparison with other cultures Debra appeared to be receptive in discussing British White culture in this perspective. Note the following narrative:

Interviewer: *In Nigerian culture it is common for women to look after the household while their husbands provide for the family. What are your feelings about that?*

Debra: *Well over here it’s different; maybe in the past it was like that but things then to be more equal. I think in the context of this society I actually don’t think it can work that way. Both parties need to be able to contribute equally to the family. I’m not saying it’s wrong but it’s different that’s all! I don’t think that would work for us. All marriages are different really.*

So here we see subtly the difference view that Debra has of British White culture compared to Nigerian culture. She is able to differentiate between the two cultures rather identifying equality as being attributed to British White culture. However one could not get true opinions of what Debra and David felt about British White culture.

**Debra’s life narrative - the professional**

Debra gave up her previous job as a secretary to become an administrator. The reason behind this change in career was due to working hours:

*I found all that time working left me in a position of not being able to look after the girls so I thought to myself that I needed to find something more flexible, so here I am working in this role and to be honest it was the best decision on hindsight.*
Debra clearly considers her children when finding a job, and the fact that she chose her job based on her children’s welfare. Working flexible hours allow her to continue her responsibility in caring for her children, so as a result we see her to continue her adopting the traditional stereotypical role of a woman. This role was nurtured by David who actively encourages Debra to find a position that suited her. We also find that by being in control of her career Debra expresses her ability to gain confidence in herself and her work, this explains her assertive nature. In Debra focusing on her role, David became responsible at times for their children adapting a more feminine role, and although she adopts this position the remains masculine. David adopts the role quite easily:

*It is easier for me to look after the children when I’m free like after school, because I’m usually at home. Don’t worry Debra does help me with them. I think we’ve got a routine going on which works for is anyway.*

Anthe and David appear to have an arrangement which is convenient for them, and although David appears to indirectly acknowledge that he is fulfilling part of Debra’s role he in turn supports her position and hence adds to the power that she maintains in the household.

**Debra’s life narrative - the consumer**

Both and Debra’s and David’s consumption patterns are once again based on partnership, common in the British White couple participants. They actively spend time to discuss what needs to be bought for the house:

*As always we always discuss what needs to be bought in the house, even to the food. It easy for us to do it that way because at least we know where we are in terms of what needs to be bought in the house. Also it allows us to budget on certain things.*
In budgeting Debra and David often spend time compile spreadsheets depicting the finances of the family, which is Debra’s responsibility:

    Well I usually sort out all the finances for the house, even as far as choosing the type of bank we bank with. David doesn’t mind it’s one less thing for him to do [laughs]. It’s really quick and easy and it beats David having to sort out all the paperwork!

Although David is responsible for most of the finances we see Debra help with organising the finances, in this way she exerts her power in the household even as far as choosing the bank used for their finances. However in the same prose we also see that she may do this to help David which indirectly may seem as though she is supporting his masculinity.
Monica

Monica and Joshua - brief overview

Monica, 59 is married to Joshua a clergyman. They have been married for 29 years and have three children two girls (27, 24) and a boy (25). They met when Joshua had not been ordained and Monica was working as a teacher. Before they got married and Joshua entered priesthood he worked in a number of companies at senior level roles. After opting for a career change he decided to work for a church and during that period he became an ordained Anglican minister. Once ordained his position caused him to travel around various parts of the world with his family.

Monica was a qualified teacher and taught until she became pregnant with her first child after which she gave up teaching:

\[ I \text{ taught until I had my first child then I gave up teaching so I suppose that was around the same time he went into the ministry. } \]

When probed further we also see that in terms of giving up her employment she was not forced, but it was her choice, this showing her power in decision making:

\[ \text{Actually I think in those days actually we had a lot more choice, your question implies that actually I chose to do it, well, that I, it was a positive choice. Whereas actually, I’d always, when as a child if anybody asked me, ’What I wanted to do when I grow up’, I’d go ’I want to be a mummy and have a family’, erm so actually I was free to do that.} \]

However, interestingly we also see that Monica inadvertently conforms, vocally to a traditional family unit, where she is responsible for looking after her family:
I think it’s because I’m actually self motivated and creative and I’m practical, very practical. I enjoy doing stuff, making things and being domestic. I don’t like routine stuff but I like the creative side of it erm and I like kids, I’m a self starter, so actually you know tied my hand with the baby woppee, there are all sorts of things that I could do.

So we see she proudly identifies that she enjoys her position as wife and mother and being ‘domestic’. On the other hand what we do see later in her interviews that she contradicts her role of being domestic in favour doing her own thing with her children in tow:

The other thing to point out was that my life wasn’t totally focused around the children cos I think some people stay at home mums, everything they do is child centred. I did my own thing, but my children came with me. It sounds a bit selfish [laughs].

Although not wanting to appear selfish we see that Monica though conforming to a traditional role of a wife actually is an empowered woman, so where we see some of the Nigerian participants confirm to their cultural duties as a wife, we see that in Monica’s narrative her conformity is out of her own feel will, thus she is empowered. She is able to negotiate herself quite easily between motherhood and her interests:

I was involved in women’s groups at the church so I did quite a lot of that. I did a lot of, you know and art. I did crafts fairs in Camden, make stuff and go and sell it erm what else did I do?

Monica’s life narrative – culture

As with most of the British White participants Monica and Joshua appeared to have pre-empted feelings of discussing British White culture with the interviewer. For this reason
discussions were expressed as third party in some cases. One first observed that Monica and Joshua have seemingly similar views on British White culture. These were expressed below:

**Steve:** Well one could see it as British culture encompasses things like oppression...the English culture is being lost and was in the 1950s and 60s, that sort of, the cultured English gentleman that you still see around from time to time and that used to optimise the best of English culture - C.S. Lewis.

**Monica:** Yes you’re right; you can see it that way.

On observation of behaviour they expressed similar opinions. Then probed further we find that Monica seems reluctant to express her views of British White culture compared to Joshua. Joshua seemed very animated in his descriptions. Monica appeared to be distant in her responses compared to Joshua:

*You can kind of say, ‘Well English culture was’ but I don’t know what it is now.*

She appeared quite distance in discussing British White culture and often reluctant to expand even when interviewed individually. However she does give a poignant description of British White culture after being probed intensely:

*The biggest characteristic of British people is that they are actually tolerant. To a point that is actually bad as well. Tolerate the bad and the good, so they tolerate the things that you think are completely wrong.*

She goes further to express:

*What I do is my own business and therefore they have that attitude for themselves, ‘You know it’s up to me how I have in my castle and in my land’ but*
then they don’t also, they will not complain about somebody doing something next door or on the street. They’d be quite slow to say ‘Hey you pick up that litter’; it’s out of their patch, community.

Here we see Monica observing British White culture and in a way the negative aspects of that culture. She uses the word ‘tolerate’ which may imply discomfort and addition to identifying the issue of individuality instead of collectivism. In this way it would appear that Monica does not view her culture with pride, instead identifying the flaws of British White culture. Joshua interestingly views this the same way:

\[
\text{If somebody speaks with a cultured accent or an upper class accent, now it’s slightly looked down on, which is really sad but that was a breed of English gentlemen that epitomises a stiff upper lip, not complaining and getting on with the job and the spirit of the Blitz, 1940s and all the sort of stuff and ‘We got through the’, and we say ‘We hate the Germans’ and ‘You know if one falls in our field we’d give them a cup of tea’. You know that’s the sort of British.}
\]

Joshua almost talks in a manner that could be described as reminiscent and as result identifying the flaws in British White culture:

\[
\text{But now I think what’s happened, what’s happening is that different cultures are impinging on the British culture and so somebody may walk down the street, like here in curry mile and the kind of feel somewhat uncomfortable, ‘This is not very British, you know this is actually...mmmm, but we’ll allow this because you know’, you know they’d probably think that...}
\]

So in this narrative we poignantly see the fears and experience of Joshua.

**Monica’s life narrative - the professional**
While Joshua was fulfilling his role as a minister, Monica was able to form her own space attending and organising women’s church group, as making and selling crafts. Monica was socially and financially independent from Joshua, showing her freedom. We see that not only in action but also in verbalisation with Steve supporting and even promoting his wife’s achievements:

_You started women’s groups in church, then you would take them away for the weekends and stuff, you’ve just come back from a weekend away haven’t you, with the women’s group here._

In later discussions with Monica, although professing not to work we find that as the children became older she decided to return to work:

_Monica: Well it just kind of happened really, I found myself organising home groups[^36] and it started from there really._

_Joshua: It was called coffee plus, wasn’t it? or something like that, I can’t remember and then that group grew and grew and grew and everywhere Monica has been she’s started a group like that and it’s been really helpful._

Once again we see the way that Joshua supports and promotes his wife in the same narrative. Because Monica and Joshua worked they decided to use a childminder, but that did not stop Monica from fulfilling her role as a mother:

_Even if I’ve been out working and they’d been at the childminder all day, when we both got back in the evening I think I would still have more input because it_
would come naturally to me because I would enjoy putting the kids to bed and reading stories and making things with them, whereas.

In comparison we see that Joshua’s role in the house in terms of the children was mainly focused on play, much to Monica’s frustration:

Yes well it wasn’t quite so natural with, we would play, I was quite good with the playing element with the kids but that meant I would wind them up and then she’d have to calm them down to get them to go bed so we would always, you know we’d mess about together, but the time we would have together would not be generally long and I suppose quite often I would have to go out and do something.

In this instance that Monica appears to be the authoritarian, where Joshua almost plays the submissive role, a role that he was happy to play due to the lack of time he spent with his children:

I mean I would have brave intentions but not always being quite able to deliver but the time that we had was fun and I think the kids always feel that I’m the dad that they have fun with, but they really wanted, if they really wanted to know how to do something they would ask Monica and she was more practical and more sort of there, I think.

However she also identifies the issues women face trying to make the decision to look after their children:

Whereas now I think, you know, you’re stuffed if you go back to work because you’re made to feel guilty and if you do go back to work, yeah, if you go back to work you’re made to feel guilty about leaving your child. If you don’t go back to work you’re made to feel as though you’re not contributing.
We see from the above narrative that Monica expresses the pressure face in trying to work and look after their family. Here we see the turmoil that most modern women face, something that Monica was about to make a decision for the sake of her family. We find that her decision not to work while having children is something that she reflects as part of her culture:

_Well actually there was no question that I wasn’t contributing or that I had taken a better [job]. It’s just in our culture to not work. None of my friends did and none of the people [I know did not work]._

Although Monica appears confident in her decision not to work, we see that in the same sentence she reassures herself by referring to the culture and her friends. Monica also expresses how free she felt not working during this period of time:

_It was quite freeing, some of them did go back to work, but it was actually quite freeing to, you know, not, and don’t feel guilty._

Monica views the opportunity of not working freeing and the fact that she does not feel guilty about the experience infers her status and power are higher than some of the Nigerian participants. We also see this level of power when Joshua agrees with Monica’s decision:

_I think you’re exactly right, because, like now, you feel that you have to even if you have children in some way, maybe, I think now you have bills, everything is so much more expensive now, so you feel like you have to work. Even if you have children it doesn’t mean, you don’t have the option of staying at home and looking after the children, it’s not possible now, which is a shame to be honest._

As a result Joshua and Monica lost an income, however Joshua did not find this period difficult:
It was actually amazing because you would have thought that a) giving up working for not, having had a baby and dropping a salary would be quite hard but in fact it was fine because I think erm, part of it was because, it was quite nice to be out of the rat race, because previously your salary reflected your status in society and your competence and being in the ministry your salary is low but it doesn’t reflect how you’re doing as a person if you’re on a very basic amount of money and that is actually freeing up in some ways and actually we have enough to live on.

So not having an income initially did not faze Joshua and Monica, in fact they profess to being comfortable in their situation. Monica goes further to explain where their income came from that point:

When my aunt died she left me exactly the right amount to pay off the mortgage, so then we rented it out and had a small extra. It wasn’t great because the house kept falling apart but it was just a little bit extra.

Here we see Monica using money left from her aunt to pay off the mortgage, this act itself is a form of empowerment. Where in Nigerian couples the husband is responsible for paying bills, Monica in turn has taken charge of this role. We can first see the difference in Monica’s behaviour to the Nigerian women. In this particular situation she has more resources at hand and thus more power.

Monica’s life narrative - the consumer

Monica is responsible for most of the household shopping, which Joshua fully supports. One notice that in terms of decision making as with most of British White participates, decisions made between the couples were based on knowledge i.e. whoever was knowledgeable about a particular product would spearhead the purchase, so in this particular case Joshua was largely responsible for the more masculine products:
I think I’m more into it you know. I mean or that sort of stuff interests me. In terms of how I buy things my nature is happy, cheerful, ‘Yeah I’ll buy that, that’s good’ and then I think ‘Ahh, should I have done that?’

One sees in terms of consumption he appear blasé about making decisions compared to Monica. Monica appears more authoritative in her decision-making process often overseeing what Joshua purchases:

Sometimes Steve will come back with all sorts of gadgets which usually have nothing to with the thing that he was going to buy, so what I end up doing is buying it by myself, or following him to shop just to ensure he gets the right thing.

Here we see Monica in a position of authority and it is Joshua that is placed by Monica in a subservient role. We find further evidence of this structure when Joshua discusses their banking:

As soon as we got married we only ever had one bank account and all money was ours whereas I know a lot of other couples actually maintain the two bank accounts and his money is his, and her money is hers. Well you know we always thought of everything that we own as being ours, rather than, that’s his and that’s mine, what’s yours is mine so Monica sorted all that stuff.

So once again we see Joshua placing Monica in a position of authority appearing somewhat laidback the control of finances, as a result Joshua demasculinates himself. Even then Joshua is in a position to contribute it is Monica that allows him to do so:
Well if I’m buying anything let’s say the cooker for instance I may make the choice but I give him the last say, so it’s like for me actually kind of letting him lead.

In this incident we see Monica exert her power, thus empowering herself and as a result we observe Joshua asking Monica for approval when purchasing large items:

This is a lot of money, are we being stupid, no I think it’s a sensible buy. It’s that kind of, I didn’t go ahead and just do it, I needed to have her. I have no say because I have no taste. She has all the taste; she says I don’t know about colours.

As a result we see that Joshua is aware of his shortfalls in terms of opinions and buying things for the house and in fact shows the level of demasculination.

Lianne

Lianne and Marcus - background

Lianne (51) is married to Marcus (59). They have been married for thirty years and have four children, four boys (29, 25, 21, and 18). Lianne is a librarian by profession while Marcus is a store manager for store manager at a bookshop. Both Lianne and Marcus share a passion for books and met at a university social. Although Lianne is a graduate of history and has worked in research, she had to change profession due to ill health. As a result she now works in a library part time and although she is comfortable in her profession she yearns to go back to research. In comparison, Marcus is a store manager at a bookshop and often spends his spare time reading.
Lianne has not always been a librarian previous to her current job she worked as a publisher for 10 years. During that period she became ill and decided to look for another job that was less stressful:

Well that year I found out that I was suffering from MS\textsuperscript{37}. I used to get tired every now and then, then all of a sudden it got worse, so I went to the doctors one day and they diagnosed me with having MS. I was shocked at first obviously, it took me a bit of time to get used to it but I’m lucky that I have a supportive husband right there.

Lianne and Marcus talk of this period as being very emotional and understandingly did not want to dwell on Lianne’s illness:

Lianne: I tend not to not to dwell on the negative, only on the positive, it’s there I’ve got it but it’s not the end of the world. It hasn’t affected me so far touch wood. I just take each day as it comes, there’s no point worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will sort itself out!

Marcus: That’s Lianne always a fighter [laughs].

Lianne in the narrative above appears to be nonchalant over her illness suggesting that she does not see herself as a victim, which is confirmed by Marcus.

Since working part time Lianne finds that she has more time to spend on herself and during these periods she busies herself with recreational activities such attending her weekly yoga classes:

\textsuperscript{37} Multiple Sclerosis
Every Wednesday I go to yoga, that’s my time to relax. I can get fit while having a natter with some friends. I find it’s better than staying at home and getting bored. I don’t want to be one of those women that just wither away into oblivion, so every Wednesday I try to get down there if I’m not tired.

We see that Lianne uses this opportunity to socialise with other people as well as ensuring her wellbeing, her yoga classes provides a means of enhancing her social circle other than being at work.

Lianne and Marcus also spend a lot of spare time with each other now that their children have gone to university. Every month they travel to their holiday home in Devon:

Marcus: We have a holiday home in Devon so if we feel like we just need to get away we just go there for the weekend. It’s really lovely down there, so peaceful and serene.

Lianne: Yes it is, I love going down there. It gives us both time together, away from the stresses of city life.

In addition to their holiday home in Devon they also travel abroad yearly, something that Marcus arranges. When interviewed individually Lianne expresses:

Marcus organises and pays for all of the holidays. I don’t get involved. Partially because I want it to be a surprise. Like a second honeymoon [laughs] so he does all the arrangements and I just turn up!
Lianne’s life narrative – culture

Lianne boasts of being a cultured person, she has a number of friends from different ethnic minority groups which she keeps in contact with:

Well I have friends from all different culture. I love learning about different cultures and histories. I think it’s got something to do with my general interest in history.

Her love for different cultures extends across to her daily life and even the choice of clothes and food:

I think my wardrobe consists of an eclectic array of clothes. My taste extends across to the food I eat. Sometimes I like to cook sushi and maybe other times I’ll cook a Sunday roast. It just depends what I feel like eating at that moment but I find ethnic foods far more interesting.

One finds that Lianne interest in other cultures also is a result of her travel abroad. Lianne appears to be acculturated highly to other cultures, something which she is proud about. In so doing she views British White culture as uninteresting:

Lianne: Well I don’t know what British White culture is to be frank. Could you answer that Marcus?

Marcus: Let me think about that one!

Lianne: Some might say it’s the overall social history of Britain ranging from The Queen to a cup of tea. There is not one profound element that depicts British culture; it is an accumulation of things. I think if you look at it you’ll find that there is no such
thing as British White culture. British culture is an accumulation of other cultures to be precise.

Here one once again observes the difficulty for the British White participants to identify what British White culture is. Now may have been due to a genuine lack of knowledge of how to describe the culture or due to an element of uncomfortably. As a result we see that Lianne has a profound affection for other cultures than her own, when probed about this she responds by:

*Sometimes when you travel you sometimes see how boring we English are compared to the rest of the world. Anyway that’s why I travel; I like to learn about other cultures and their histories.*

In comparison Marcus, although passive, has a different opinion in regards to British White culture:

*Well if we go back historically British culture reflected the queen, yes that part of it is true but it was more than that. It was the empire, it was the behaviour, it was the etiquette, even the humour. British culture is all and more of those things but, unfortunately, it has been clouded by negative stereotypes and that is unfortunate.*

In this way we see that Marcus’s opinions of British White culture is more positive than Lianne and in a sense he appears to be proud of his culture although inferring that the elements of his culture has changed. When probed further he remain reluctant to expand, which may have been due to the ethnic of the author. In light of this, we also observe that Marcus is also receptive to other cultures and takes great interest in experiencing different cultures:

*Well we love to travel, last year we went to Goa and it was lovely, the people were so nice and very friendly everything was so cheap. We’ll definitely go*
again. It was wonderful, a great location for a holiday. The warm weather did Lianne good as well.

Lianne’s life narrative - the consumer

On observations of Lianne and Marcus one finds that both appear relaxed in terms of their consumption patterns. There appear not to have a set role of behaviour which is attributed to one particular individual. Instead purchases are made on the impulse and do not necessarily involve decision-making strategy. One finds that as Lianne and Marcus children have left home so most of the purchases are made equally:

_We don’t actually have a discussion procedure really; when it comes to buying things it is just dependent who is in the position to buy an item. For example, ok like the TV I know that Marcus sorts that out because he knows the right one to buy and I would by the paintings for example because I like them. I think I would say that we buy things that we know each other will like. Marcus knows my taste so it really isn’t that hard and I’m not a picky person. I like things to be simple. That’s me._

From the above narrative we see that Lianne and Marcus have a laidback method of make decisions in regards to purchases. Purchases are largely made on the basis of who in the couple has the most knowledge on the particular item and although either spouse maybe responsible for certain items it does not prevent the other spouse from purchasing them:

_I’ve tried on a number of occasions to buy the right fittings for the wardrobe but to no success. I even went to Homebase[^38] with the instructions of the wardrobe and took it to customer services for advice but they did not know either, so I just left it to Marcus to sort out since he’s used to buying all those things._

[^38]: A DIY Store
However once again one observes that the items bought by Lianne and Marcus individually are genderised products, typically attributed to stereotypical or traditional gender roles:

_**I would be responsible for buying all the food, if I leave it with Marcus I’d only come back with steaks and cuts of lamb, that’s all he eats! Erm I also sort out the range from anything to do with the car to DIY stuff, that’s mostly him really. Furnishing the toiletries, the clothing but that’s not to say that Marcus does not have an input, by all means he has a say. He buys some of these things by himself; I’m just talking in general. In terms of Marcus he’s responsible for everything else.**_

From the above narrative we can clearly see that the purchases are genderised and Lianne appears to be comfortable in this set up. One also finds that on probing Lianne further about her consumption behaviour it becomes apparent that due to her financial independence she is able to govern what is bought for the house. Consider Lianne’s prose in the following narrative:

Lianne: _As soon as I get paid I pay towards some of the bills of course but anything else I may buy stuff for the house. I’m really into decorating at the moment so I’m buying a lot of things for the house. I got some lovely vases from Goa which I’ve put in our kitchen. I just need to buy a few more things then I’m done, I’m sure Marcus is breathing a sigh of relief [laughs]._

Marcus: _Sometimes I don’t know why you need all those stuff; they are not at home anymore so there’s no need to go overboard [laughs]._

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Lianne: *I just want the house to look nice, there’s no harm in that is there. Anyway you’re always commenting on how nice the house looks [laughs].*

From the above narrative one observes the subtle tension between Lianne and Marcus in terms of her purchase behaviour. However instead of Lianne conforming to Marcus’s concerns, she reasserts her decision adding her desire for the house to ‘look nice’. When Lianne is interviewed individually this is once again observed in her narratives:

*Myself and Marcus are different in certain aspects when it comes to shopping. If I see something I like I just buy it, whereas Marcus procrastinates on things. Where I would spend 2 minutes to make a decision Marcus may spend a day [laughs]. I’ll give you an example for instance. I can go into a shop and pick something for me to make a meal out of in 2 minutes, Marcus on the other hand gets lost in his own world [laughs].*

So here we once again observe Lianne asserting her ability to purchase items for the household compared to Marcus. However, once again these purchases are based on knowledge rather than gender role. Lianne, compared to her Nigerian peers situates herself in a position of authority; she openly reasserts herself and her position in the household and although she takes responsibility for genderised products this does not put her in a position of subservience but power.
Irene

Irene and Stephen - brief overview

Irene, 45 is a primary school teacher and is married to Stephen, 49 an engineer. They have been married for 16 years and have two children; two boys age 14 and 16. Irene and Stephen met while working together. Irene is an engineer by profession and decided to go into teaching to fulfil her lifelong dream. She has recently qualified as a primary school teacher and now works fulltime in her local primary school. Stephen on the other hand works offshore and is usually away for long periods of time.

While interviewing Irene and Stephen, Stephen appeared subservient to Irene, where Irene took control over most conversation. Stephen remained passive throughout the interviews allowing Irene to show her dominant side. Consider the narrative below:

Irene:   *Well when he’s away I kind of take over I go into the role that I’m comfortable in. He doesn’t mind, do you?*

Stephen:  *No not at all, you’re better with all that stuff than me. I just help when needed.*

Irene:  *That’s right, I just take over.*

In observation it appeared that Irene took the role as the head of the household, this may be due Stephen being away for long periods of time. As a result Stephen appeared to adopt the female role at home, something that throughout the interview remained comfortable in. In discussions with Irene one finds that Stephen’s behaviour at times causes tensions which tended to be resolved through Irene taking control of the situation:
Well, Stephen can be very laidback at times, so sometimes I just have to take over if not things will not be done. Bless him he does try but it’s not quite the same. I’m just one of those people that like to be in control, that might be anal retentive but that’s me.

So in this particular narrative we see that Irene can easily identify her power within the relationship and the household, and with this power she is able to steer the decisions made in the household. If in welding this power Stephen seems comfortable in the position that has been given to him by Irene and confines himself to the role that Irene sets out for him:

Well she like things done in a certain way and it’s easier for me just to do it like that, I’m a simple man me [laughs].

Irene’s life narrative – culture

British White culture and its description appeared to be hard for both Stephen and Irene to discuss. Irene was quite open in her opinions of British White culture and as a result appeared free in discussing British White culture:

I think answering that needs a bit of time as culture always changes. I’ve never been asked that question before so it’s really putting me on the spot but I think British White culture is based on the history of Britain, we’re looking all the way back in history, starting from the Vikings, Romans, Tudors and Stuarts. It compasses as number of things but I think the most important element is acceptance. No matter where you are from you’re guaranteed that the British will always accept.

Irene goes further to express:
That’s one thing I love about this culture is acceptance. Some people may criticise this as being negative or too liberal but that is just prejudice. Our belief in individuality is so unique and remains rich to this culture.

From Irene’s prose she clearly is proud of her culture and interestingly so she appears to focus her views on not appearing prejudice which may have been a result of the interviewer being Black. In doing so it appears that Irene may have pre-empted the questions and in a quest to not look discriminatory she use this opportunity to express these views. In this way one cannot conclude on Irene’s actual view of British White culture.
Irene’s life narrative - the professional

Jessica was an engineer for ten years before changing profession to become a teacher. Irene talks of the reason why she decided to change careers:

> Sometimes it comes to a point when you say enough’s enough, something has got to give. I think I just lost the passion in my role and by then I had already made up my mind on leaving. My only concern was financially how would we cope with one salary? But fortunately everything went well and I wasn’t out of employment for a long time.

Since making a career move Irene has found fulfilment and although she had to take a substantial pay cut in her salary she is expresses job satisfaction, something that Stephen supports. Following their wedding

Irene’s life narrative - the consumer

Most of the consumption practices were made by Irene especially in regards to the goods bought for the household:

> Well to be honest I buy most things in the house, which is fine by me as I have more time on my hands. But he helps out on the weekend which is great as I’m able to do other things!

So here we observe that Irene takes control of the purchases in the household, which she assigns to herself. This was not out of cultural defined roles but due to convenience. One also observes Stephen’s willingness to take part in purchases in order to support Irene. It becomes clearer in later narratives the equality in purchase decisions:
We always take turns in buying the weekly groceries in the house. It just becomes a matter of convenience. It’s not I say ‘right I have to buy this, you have to buy that’. That does not really work for. If I’m free, which is most cases I just buy what we need.

So, in the above narrative, we can clearly see the egalitarian behaviour exhibited in their consumption patterns. This not only reflects food purchase but also large items such as buying furniture for the household. But interestingly, once again one observes that traditional roles still play a part of purchase behaviour and well as decision making. For example when both of the participants talk about their recent purchase of a car:

Irene: Well it was Stephen that chose the car, I really didn’t have a say did I?

Stephen: Yes you did, you chose the colour didn’t you! [laughs] So you has as much input as me!

In this particular instance this purchase become genderised, in that Stephen became responsible in the choice of car. Here Stephen acknowledges his position but delegating an inferior input i.e. colour choice to Irene. Here we see him taking dominance in terms of purchase choice over Irene, and Irene quite comfortably conforms. This behaviour is also seen in the purchase of other genderised products such as electrical goods (TV, DVD player etc.). So although Stephen may appear submissive to Irene, he in fact remains dominant in purchase decisions.

1 Nigerian dialect