**Towards a Framework for Understanding Ethnic Consumers'**

**Acculturation Strategies in a Multicultural Environment: A Food**

**Consumption Perspective**

**Abstract**

**Purpose –** While it is essential to further research the growing diversity in Western metropolitan cities, little remain known about how the interaction between various ethnic communities promotes and/or inhibits migrants’ acculturation to cosmopolitan multicultural societies. The purpose of this paper is to explore migrants’ acculturation strategies through the analysis of food consumption behaviour of ethnic consumers in cosmopolitan London.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** – The study that was set within a socio-cultural context of cosmopolitanism facilitated data collection from close observations, followed by in-depth interviews to assess how the interrelation between multicultural environments and cosmopolitanism shape the cultural dispositions and acculturation strategies of ethnic communities.

**Findings** - Ethnic consumers’ food consumption behaviour reflects their acculturation strategies and the state of cosmopolitanism that can be classified into four groups: rebellion, rarefaction, resonance and resistance. This novel classification leads to the development of taxonomy of acculturation strategies toward cosmopolitan food consumption.

**Research implications/limitations** - The taxonomy advances current acculturation scholarship by suggesting a multi-dimensional approach to analysing acculturation as opposed to the existing uni-dimensional and bi-dimensional perspectives. Thus, a dynamic model of acculturation toward multicultural society and how that influences their cosmopolitan lifestyle is suggested. The paper did not engage host communities and hence the need for future research on co-creation of cultural identity and appropriation.

**Practical implications** - The findings have direct implications for the choice of standardization versus adaptation marketing strategy within multicultural cosmopolitan cities. Whilst rebellion group are more likely to respond to standardization; increasing adaptation of goods and service can ideally target the resistance and resonance group members and more fusion products exclusively earmarked for the resonance group.

**Originality/Value** – The paper makes two important theoretical contributions. Firstly, by being the first to suggest a four-group taxonomy (rebellion, rarefaction, resonance and resistance) that reflects the acculturation strategies and the state of cosmopolitanism of ethnic consumers’ through their food consumption behaviour. Secondly, it conceptualises multi-dimensional nature of ethnic minorities’ acculturation strategies toward cosmopolitan cultural dispositions.

**Keywords:** Acculturation, cosmopolitanism, food consumption, multicultural London, cultural hybridity

**Introduction**

Globalisation creates a heterogeneous and diverse composition of societies and multicultural markets (Neal *et al.,* 2013; Akaka *et al.,* 2013; Beck 2006; Cavusgil *et al.,* 2005), as local, national and regional migration of people continues to change the demography and socio-cultural texture of various societies. The emergence of multi-ethnic and multicultural societies in recent times calls for changes in managing organisations (Sarpong and Maclean 2015; Janssen and Zanoni 2014; Rossitier and Chan, 1998) and approaching customers (Gaviria and Emonstpool, 2015; Riefler *et al.,* 2012; Jamal, 2003). With growing diversity becoming an integral part of large Western metropolitan cities, further research on their populations’ interaction with multicultural social and market institutions can offer deeper insights into how they adopt and/or resist various aspects of the mainstream multicultural environment, which is important to understand with a view to segment customer markets, assess market dynamics and analyse the current and future trends of consumer culture (Craig and Douglas, 2006; Alden *et al.,* 1999). As Kumar and Steenkamp (2013) argue, a popular brand among an ethnic community may potentially achieve popularity amongst the wider society due to increasing interactions within multicultural marketplaces such as the one in London.

Three million Londoners – over a third of London’s residents – were born outside the UK. In addition to this significant number of first-generation migrants and sojourners, London and other major Western cities have many people who are born in migrant families. They constitute the demographic diversity of today’s Western metropolitan cities and make a significant contribution to socio-cultural and economic practices. In contrast to English villages, which tend to be of monocultural entities, London is characterised by its multicultural orientation (Demangeot *et al.,* 2015). In recent elections (e.g. Brexit, the US Presidential election in 2016, UK General Election, 2017), liberal left parties/ideologies gained more popularity in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds and some major US cities than in the rural or semi-urban UK/US, which may have co-relation with the growing cosmopolitanism in Western metropolitan cities. Cosmopolitanism is defined as individuals’ willingness to adopt other cultures and is considered to have influence on consumers’ adoption of different cultures (Cleveland *et al.,* 2011; Woodward *et al.,* 2008). Although existing scholarly works underscore the importance of studying consumer acculturation to global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2013) and host community culture (Dey *et al.,* 2017; Askegaard *et al.,* 2005; Penaloza, 1994), there is limited evidence of scholarly works on ethnic communities’ interaction with and acculturation to multicultural environments such as the one is London.

Ethnic minorities are often transient in their cultural self-identities, as they hold and exhibit values of both host and home countries (Lindridge, 2005; Bardhan, 2011; Garbin, 2005). The identities and acculturation strategies of migrants and sojourners are of interest to diaspora and cross-cultural marketing (Kumar and Steenkemp, 2013). As such, the study of multicultural market dynamics has gained much currency in international marketing scholarship (Demangeot *et al.,* 2015; Poulis *et al.,* 2013; Schilke *et al.,* 2009). While the friction (Torres and Rollock, 2007) and cooperation (Blumer and Duster, 1980) between two or more ethnic communities have been highlighted in management literature, more comprehensive work on the shaping of multicultural environments through reciprocal and iterative influence and interaction can advance the scholarship of acculturation and multicultural markets. The scholarly debate on acculturation strategies (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Berry, 1980) also needs to be revisited and ethnic communities’ dual and multiple cultural identities require further research attention. While more recent scholarly works have identified individuals’ cosmopolitanism as a predictor for consumer acculturation (Carpenter *et al.,* 2013; Cleveland *et al.,* 2011; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), we argue that further research needs to be conducted to assess the influence of the socio-cultural settings that influence cosmopolitanism and how the interrelation between multicultural environments and cosmopolitanism shape the cultural dispositions of ethnic communities.

This research aims to address this issue by analysing food consumption patterns in various London-based ethnic communities. Current literature attests the role of ancestral food habits in exhibiting individuals’ ethnic identity and acculturation in overseas countries (Romo and Gil, 2012; Verbeke and Lopez, 2005). Food consumption is culturally sensitive (Halkier and Jensen, 2011) and highly dependent on the socio-cultural settings in which an individual lives. Food also acts as a cultural link between nations and more importantly, it explains how an individual can be accepted by his/her social group/peers because it is an effective way of socialising with family and friends (Wright *et al.,* 2001). However, there is limited research in areas involving ethnic buying behaviours in relation to food consumption (Wright *et al.,* 2001), which makes the study’s chosen context timely and appropriate.

Food consumption has also been identified as a complex overlapping of social and communal identities (Reilly and Wallendorf, 1987), and hence exhibits culture swapping and duality, as discussed in the acculturation literature (Askegaard *et al.,* 2005; Oswald 1999; Jamal, 1998). The host culture is mostly considered as a monolithic expression of traditionalism (e.g. ‘traditional English food’) in the current literature. In essence, as discussed earlier, large cities are increasingly becoming a union of multiple cultures, and ethnic communities’ interaction with the diversity and its influence on their acculturation remains an understudied area, which this paper aims to explore. In so doing, our research endeavours to examine how and why ethnic consumers shop, procure and eat food items and how and to what extent such consumption showcases their acculturation to a cosmopolitan lifestyle within the socio-cultural and economic setting of a multicultural environment.

# ****Literature review****

This research is distinctive by its utilisation of two major streams of scholarship: acculturation and cosmopolitanism. We aim to assess both issues in light of their interrelationship with multicultural markets. Accordingly, the review of the literature takes cognisance of the aforementioned canons.

***Acculturation and multicultural market***

Acculturation theories explain how, why and to what extent ethnic communities retain their ancestral culture, adopt the host country’s culture or demonstrate a new culture which is different from both the ancestral and the host country’s culture. The seminal work of Berry (1980) explains four major acculturation strategies that define the bipolar continuum of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. His subsequent works (Berry, 1997, 2009; Sam and Berry, 2010) adhere to the initial model and a more positivist approach to analysing acculturation strategies. However, in multicultural contexts, wholesale acceptance and/or rejection of the host or ancestral culture is overly simplistic, as complex co-existence of ancestral and host cultures’ attributes among migrants can be found (Oswald 1999; Jamal and Chapman, 2000; Weinreich, 2009), and hence the validity of the bipolar acculturation continuum can be questioned. Furthermore, the two extreme forms of acculturation strategies, namely assimilation and marginalisation, can also be questioned (Dey *et al.,* 2017; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Gradually acculturation scholarship has moved from a unidimensional perspective toward a bi-dimensional concept which denotes that ethnic consumers can simultaneously retain their ancestral culture and adopt the host country’s culture.

Peñaloza (1994) suggests four outcomes of the acculturation process in the form of assimilation, resistance, maintenance and segregation. While the two seminal post-assimilationist articles, by Peñaloza (1994) and Oswald (1999), make some significant advancement in explaining consumer acculturation strategies, they have limitations in terms of their context-specific analysis (Askegaard *et al.,* 2005). For instance, due to distinct religious practices and restrictions, the acculturation of Muslims may be impeded in a Christian majority multicultural Western society. Hence, the contextual dynamics contributing to American Mexicans’ acculturation in the US (Peñaloza, 1994) would be different from those of Muslim migrants in the UK.

Nevertheless, the duality of cultural identities has increasingly received research attention both in consumer research and wider social science (Schwartz *et al.,* 2010). However, the host culture is often considered to be traditional culture of the country. For instance, Jamal’s (2003) study on acculturation of British Muslims considers traditional English/British culture as the host culture – which may not be the case in larger Western cities.

Askegaard *et al.,* (2005) emphasise the bicultural identities of ethnic minorities by identifying a new acculturation outcome, termed ‘pendulism’, which refers to the oscillation between acculturation and maintenance. Ustuner and Holt’s (2007) research on poor migrant women’s acculturation in Turkish cities shows collective modes of acculturation shaped by conflicting power relationships. Nevertheless, the cultural expression and disposition of ethnic communities may have dichotomy and inconsistency. Stayman and Deshpande’s (1989) empirical data suggest that consumers’ sense of ethnic identity is not independent of situations and therefore that people living in multicultural societies can have ethnic identities that are differentially salient. Also acculturation can be facilitated by the degree of similarity between host and migrant cultures (Rudmin, 2003). However, the limited evidence in the consumer culture/acculturation literature on the interaction between migrant communities warrants further research on how various migrant and host communities co-create, resist or avoid multicultural practices and societies.

Table 1 summarises some of the seminal works on acculturation and possible scope for further advancement of this scholarship.

Table 1: Summary of acculturation scholarship in marketing and possible scope for further advancement:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Authors** | **Context**  | **Contribution** | **Scope for further advancement in relation to this paper** |
| Peñaloza (1994)  | Mexican American community  | A dynamic model of acculturation leading to four major outcomes: assimilation, maintenance, resistance and segregation | The findings and analyses are often context-specific, as argued by Askegaard *et al.,* (2005). The socio-cultural and historic backdrop of Mexican Americans’ migration to and settlement in the US are significantly different from those of ethnic minorities in the UK.  |
| Askegaard *et al.,* (2005) | Greenlandic migrants in Denmark | The concept of ‘pendulism’ to denote the duality of cultural identity. Identity formation is a function of consumers’ self-reflexivity.  | More specific reasons for ethnic consumers’ movement between host and ancestral cultures need to be defined and analysed. For instance, the selective authority exercised by Muslims defines their consumption behaviour (Jafari & Süerdem, 2012). Furthermore, the culture swapping may not happen only between host and ancestral cultures, as migrant communities may interact with and learn from other migrant communities.  |
| Berry (2009) | General – concept paper (written for wider social science research) | One of the major contributions of this paper is the alignment of individuals’ acculturation strategies with larger social strategy. Multiculturalism has been described as the social strategy for integration.  | More research needs to be done to assess the interrelationship between acculturation strategies and the nature of broader society. The reciprocity between the multicultural environment and individuals’ intent for integration needs to be critically examined.  |
| Üstüner and Holt (2007) | Batici women in urban Turkey  | Formation of hegemonic and counterhegemonic consumer identity as a result of the dialectical inter-relationship between socio-economic structural agents.  | The paradoxes and dichotomies faced by individuals and their strategies to address those differences could be further analysed/investigated.  |
| Cleveland *et al.,* (2016) | Acculturation for global consumer culture (AGCC) – positivist research.  | Consumers exhibit four acculturation patterns (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation) for different product categories.  | The dynamics of AGCC are not exactly same as the dynamics of the complex multicultural environment in larger Western cities. Furthermore, interpretivist methods can be used to obtain deeper insights into paradoxes, complexities and dualities of consumer identity.  |

From the above discussion, it is evident that current literature on acculturation does not fully capture the following issues. This empirical study attempts to address this dearth in the current literature.

1. Acculturation to multicultural environments has not been properly investigated. Even research on acculturation to multicultural Canada (Berry and Hou 2016) does not consider the multifaceted expression of Canadian culture. It is deemed that the host country has a monolithic culture and/or the migrants acculturate to the more traditional version of the host country’s culture. We argue that this notion needs to be revisited.
2. Acculturation literature in consumer studies mostly concentrates on the interaction between host and migrant communities. However, there is paucity of empirical and conceptual works on how acculturation to a multicultural environment is supported or inhibited by the interaction (or a lack of it) between two or more ethnic minority communities.

***Acculturation and Cosmopolitanism***

Current trends in the integration of markets, driven by changing political, societal and technological forces, have led to the creation of porous national boundaries and the development of standardisation of consumer tastes (Jin *et al.,* 2015). On the other hand, it has been noted that the global trends that have accelerated and have converged technology and income discrepancies are not sufficient to erode divergent consumer behaviour (Ghemawat, 2001), bridging the global and local divide, as local consumers are still influenced by their enduring cultural values. Therefore, there exist contradictions in the interacting components of national culture and global culture/consumerism (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). However, further research is required to ascertain how these contradicting cultures (i.e., national culture, global consumer culture) are transmitted in individuals’ consumption processes and influence the adoption of globally diffused cuisine.

Cosmopolitanism has been regarded as the tendency of individuals to see themselves as citizens of the world rather than of a country (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Some scholars have explained ‘cosmopolitanism’ as “a conscious openness to the world and its cultural differences” (Skrbis *et al.,* 2004, p. 117). We adopt this definition, as it distinguishes cosmopolitanism, which has an inherent appreciation for cultural diversity, from globalisation, which is characterised by a search for the same products. Cosmopolitanism amongst consumers captures the extent to which a consumer (1) exhibits an open-mindedness towards foreign countries and cultures, (2) appreciates the diversity brought about by the availability of products from different national and cultural origins, and (3) is positively disposed towards consuming products from foreign countries (Riefler *et al.,* 2012, p. 287).

The distinctiveness of the cosmopolitan consumers is in their openness and willingness to explore and learn from other traditions and lifestyles (Levy *et al.,* 2007).What sets apart the cosmopolitan consumers from expatriates and tourists who also explore and experience other cultures is their appreciation of the variety that other cultures offer and continuous indulgence in the products and experiences from those cultures, rather than their own (Featherstone, 2002; Riefler & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Alden *et al.,* (1999) argue that consumers’ purchase behaviour is also influenced by their behavioural tendencies, such as ‘cosmopolitanism’. This is because cosmopolitan consumers seek out cultural diversity in their behavioural choices and their orientation towards consumption transcends any specific foreign product or specific culture alone: rather, they are drawn to try a variety of products from various cultures (Shankarmahesh, 2006).

In this paper, we apply and assess the concept of cosmopolitanism to examine its role in defining individuals’ interaction with multicultural markets.

# ****Methodology****

The research strategy was to undertake a close observation of British ethnic communities’ food habits and lifestyle. An interpretivist approach would offer the opportunity to appreciate ‘why’ and ‘how’ they interact with mainstream culture and other ethnic communities and how that is reflected in their food habits. In-depth interviews with ethnic community members in the UK were chosen as the main methodological tool. Methodological triangulation enhances the reliability and validity of qualitative data (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In order to ensure the robust quality of the data, researcher observation was conducted in addition to in-depth interviews to provide methodological triangulation. Furthermore, hang-out interviews (Dengbuppha *et al.,* 2006) were used to complement the in-depth interviews and observation.

For this reason, the study selected the second fastest growing ethnically diverse city in the world, namely London (Cultural Trip, 2017). The population under study is British-born first and second generation immigrants in London or people who have migrated and reside in London (e.g., British–Anglo/White, Europeans, Indians Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Arab, Afro-Caribbean, Chinese, and Malay). In total, 31 in-depth interviews were conducted among people from different ethnic backgrounds, occupations and educational levels (please see Appendix 1 for detailed respondent profiles). The criteria for selection were based on ethnicity, age, gender and occupation. Maximum variation purposive sampling was used in this regard. Various London-based locations were selected for the interviews based on the convenience of the respondents. While most of the interviews were conducted in the respondents’ homes, there were also occasions when interviews took place in restaurants or respondents’ workplaces for the respondents’ convenience.

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of London’s and Britain’s values in general, cultural and religious orientations, their food and shopping habits, interest in overall lifestyle, food/brand consumption and their motivation/intention to integrate with other communities within the society in which they live. On average, each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Table 2 highlights the interview protocol for the semi-structured interviews used with our respondents.

Table 2 Interview protocol

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| **Interview Protocol** |
| Introduction – life in the UK (London in particular), migration history, comparison with other countries.  |
| Multiculturalism – Perceptions of cultural diversity in London, how they have learnt/observed/experienced London’s diversity, discussion on neighbourhood, work/social life, interaction with other cultures.  |
| Cosmopolitanism – What are their perceptions of other cultures, their level of religiosity, family influence on their level of interactions with other cultures, and their orientation to British values, lifestyle and food products.  |
| Food habit: How they perceive foods. Their eating pattern – food habits during breakfast, lunch and dinner, their interest and motivation towards food products, socio-cultural issues pertaining to food consumption, how they have learnt to cook, where and how they prefer to shop, preferences for ethnic and/or mainstream brands, restrictions on food habits, how they have coped/adapted to the local food consumption pattern. |

Researchers visited ten of the respondents’ houses and dined with them. Five other respondents were accompanied to supermarkets to observe their shopping patterns. Three respondents were met in ethnic restaurants where the interviews were held. Hence, the observations involved enquiring about respondents’ shopping behaviour, food preparation and consumption patterns, all situated within broader socio-cultural and institutional settings.

Photographs in addition to researchers’ diary notes were used to record the observations. Photos often speak volumes and complement interview responses. In the interviews held in the participants’ homes, permission was granted to take photos of their kitchens, foods, spices and ingredients and general artefacts of their living room.

Table 3: Summary of the data collection method

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| **Methodological tool** | **Description** |
| In-depth interviews  | 31 respondents, duration 45 to 90 minutes.  |
| Home visits and dining with the respondents and their families  | Ten visits, duration two to three hours. In addition to in-depth interviews, the respondents’ houses were visited to get a thorough understanding of their lifestyle, cooking and eating patterns, artefacts and other tangible possessions (photographs and show pieces).  |
| Accompanying them during grocery shopping | Five respondents were accompanied during their weekly grocery shopping over four weeks. Each time, the researchers spent an hour with each respondent following their shopping pattern. Hangout interviews were conducted during these visits as well.  |
| Diary notes and photographs | All the observations above were noted in diaries. Photographs were taken for further clarification and substantiation.  |

 Template analysis was applied for data management. The transcripts were coded using the NVivo software package. Analysis of data started with the development of a coding template and identification and classification of themes and constituting codes. In this research, two broader themes were applied – acculturation and dual cultural identity. Against each theme there were two sets of codes. While some of the codes were theory driven, others were data driven, as suggested and practiced in previous scholarly works (Chen *et al.,* 2011; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) (Appendix 2 provides a list of codes and their origins). Once the information related to the research objectives had been identified, data were analysed using a constant comparative method (Rocca *et al.,* 2014). The emergent themes were then compared with the extant literature.

**Findings:**

As discussed in the methodology, the interviews and observation aimed to extract the patterns in British ethnic consumers’ acculturation strategies in light of their dietary habits. It is important to mention that food preferences and dietary habits constitute a part of the cultural disposition and may often reflect the cultural/ethnic identity of an individual. However, a thorough understanding of respondents’ migration history and general perceptions and experience of British society as a whole can enable us to analyse their socio-psychological backgrounds and upbringing, which may well have links with their acculturation strategies.

When it comes to the host country’s culture, respondents have mixed opinions. With regard to values, they refer to British values: However, diversity, respect for others and openness to ideas and opinions are amongst the key aspects of British life that the respondents could identify.

Richard[[1]](#footnote-1), for instance, mentioned that he had moved to the UK from Nigeria for more opportunities and a better quality of life. As he mentioned during the interview:

*“Question: What has brought you here?*

*Richard: I came here to have a better life. Unlike the USA, the UK does not offer something like the ‘American Dream’. However, it is still one of the largest economies of the world… …. Due to its colonial relationship with my country of origin, the UK always attracts people back home.”*

Alexandro is from Greece and has moved to London as a student. His perception of London as a city and the UK as a country resonates to some extent with that of Richard. Furthermore, he considers London as a place that is diverse, multicultural and welcoming.

*“Alexandro: The UK is a Western country that used to rule the world and I think it is very much reflected in today’s Britain. People are generally well behaved, organised and respectful in this country. There is an inherent pride amongst the people with regard to the nation’s past glories. British way of life has specific values, commonly held beliefs that have been nurtured over a long period of time. However, to me London is a multicultural place. I knew about the multicultural nature of this place even before coming here. …. So, London is a multicultural city that encourages co-existence of various communities. When I came here and met people from different communities I was not surprised – it was quite expected. I have liked the multicultural environment and I have thoroughly enjoyed.”*

A similar response was also obtained from Lilly, a 33-year-old Chinese respondent who came to the UK as an undergraduate student and chose to stay. She comes from a tier 2 Chinese city where she had limited exposure to other nationalities, although she had interaction with global consumer brands such as McDonald’s and KFC, and thus had limited ideas about multiculturalism:

*“Lilly: I lived in a university student accommodation when I first came here as an international student. I got the opportunity to meet people from other countries. I came to terms with their cultures, as I started hanging out with them, observing their lifestyle, enjoying their foods. For instance, I shared my noodles and my Greek flatmate gave me her Greek style meatballs. I also had friends from India, Spain and Italy – and I saw them cooking and I tried their foods. I had no idea about Indian or Greek foods before coming to the UK.”*

The above excerpts explain that life in London not only offers growth and opportunities, but also manifests diversity and multiculturalism that can be embraced by foreign nationals. Even if migrants and sojourners have limited exposure to cultural diversity and pluralism, they can gradually adopt and adapt in multicultural London, which, from the above excerpts, appears to be seen as an amalgamation of traditional values and lifestyle with a recent inclusion of cultural attributes from other societies, countries and ethnicities. Rahul from India has recently been naturalised as British citizen and he quite liked the fact that his new British passport shows (please see photo-6 of the Appendix-3) an Indian dancer along with other important aspects of British life (e.g. the Angel of North, the London Eye, the Industrial Revolution etc.). As Rahul explains:

*Rahul: I have come to know about the history of the UK during my ‘Life in the UK’ test, which is a requirement for my naturalisation. I am quite intrigued to know about Suffragettes movement, abolition of slave trades and industrial revolution. This country has a lot to be proud about. However, I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the photo of an Indian traditional dancer embedded on my new British passport – it makes me feel a valuable part of the society.*

Not all respondents, however, expressed the same positivity, as they had minimal interaction with wider British society. Rakhi is 55 years old and of Indian origin. She is a housewife who came to the UK twenty years ago. Rakhi explained in her broken English mixed with Hindi:

*Rakhi: I normally have very limited interaction with English people. In Wembley we have a big Gujarati community and other desis[[2]](#footnote-2).*

Although Rakhi is not very immersed into the British society, she is not fully separated from the mainstream. She has learnt a bit of English after coming to the UK, her children went to school here and she has had direct/indirect interactions with the mainstream culture in many respects. Although her working class London neighbourhood has a mostly South Asian community, she interacts with other ethnic community members from time to time. As she explains:

*Rakhi: I go to a corner shop that is owned by a Pakistani. We both speak Hindi and understand each other. Often I buy fruits and vegetables from a Turkish man. My son’s friend is a Somalian boy who often comes to our house. My husband does building jobs and he works with a lot of Polish people.*

Magda is 32 years old; she works as an office secretary and her husband is a builder. Magda comes from a town called Sieradz in central Poland. Magda explains her experience of living in London:

 *Magda: We have a lot of Polish people in the place where I live (Perivale, Greenford, West London). My husband found this house through his friend and that’s how we have ended up in here. However, I have met and worked with a range of different nationalities, including Bangladeshi, Middle Eastern, Indian, Russian and Latvian. Both my husband and I have become more global after coming to this country.*

Hence, even the working class society in London entails multicultural and multi-ethnic structure and lifestyle that the migrant communities are embracing. Concurring with Aricat (2016) we would argue that cosmopolitanism is not a phenomenon that only exists and is nurtured by urban elites, as it is also becoming a part of the working class lifestyle. The phenomenon also questions the validity of separation and segregation suggested by earlier acculturation literature (Peñaloza, 1994; Berry, 1980).

The British-born ethnic minorities also exhibit cultural duality/multiplicity. Cathy is a third generation British Chinese. Both of her parents came to the UK very young with their own parents. Due to her parents’ Hong Kong origin, Cathy can speak Cantonese and a little bit of Hakka. She maintains a parallel lifestyle at home and outside. Growing up in the UK, she has been immersed into the British lifestyle. After graduating from a reputed university, she has worked in public and private sector organisations. When she describes her lifestyle, it appears that she has embraced a more modern urban multi-cultural and cosmopolitan life. As she says:

*“Cathy: I grew up in a multicultural environment. I have had friends from all communities. But I have mostly Indian origin friends, and soon I turned out to be a ‘Chindian’* … (chuckles)

*Question: How about your adoption to the mainstream culture?*

*Cathy: Actually, we all, as in my British Indian and other ethnic friends, enjoyed and shared the common culture. We have same taste for music, similar preferences for dresses, even similar food taste. Whenever possible, I still go out with my childhood and school friends. There are so many things in common.”*

Hence, the urban British culture is neither a monolith nor a manifestation of traditional British lifestyle as described by Demangeot *et al.* (2015). In effect, it is a seething amalgamation of various cultures that create a symbiosis through co-existence and co-supporting. Hence, culture is multiple and dynamic. As Clifford (2002, p 101) suggests, culture is not “a rooted body that grows, lives, dies”, but rather involves displacement, interference and interaction. Although it is suggested that often traditional cultures are reified and reinstalled through modernity (Giddens, 1994), the above excerpts suggest that the modern British urban culture, although rooted in the traditional values and beliefs, is constituted as a multicultural melting pot.

Now we seek to analyse how migrant communities’ interaction with the multicultural and cosmopolitan urban Britain shapes their cultural dispositions. In so doing, the nature and outcome of their acculturation strategies and resulting hybrid cultural dispositions have been classified and categorised. This classification is placed in a quadrant for clarity of analysis.

1. Rebellion – ethnic consumers choose to assimilate and try to overcome the cultural barriers.
2. Rarefaction – ethnic consumers choose to adopt and retain both multicultural and ancestral aspects.
3. Resonance – ethnic consumers adopt a multicultural environment that is resonant to their ancestral culture.
4. Resistance – ethnic consumers choose to resist assimilation and exhibit more inclination toward their ancestral culture.

***Rebellion***

Ethno-religious identity can create tension and ambivalence among ethnic minority members, as they often apply selective authority to ascertain their behaviour (Jafari and Goulding, 2008; Jafari and Süerdem, 2012). However, we argue that such behaviour that discards individuals’ ancestral culture may involve rebellious intent. The word ‘rebellion’ is defined according to the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘the action or process of resisting authority, control or convention’ (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rebellion>). Respondents exhibiting intent to challenge and/or discard their ancestral cultural/religious authority, control and convention with a view to assimilate with the mainstream multicultural environment are classified within this group.

Observation and interviews identify that religious barriers appear to limit many of the respondents’ flexibility and distance them from the mainstream multicultural environment, which is more secular and materialistic. For instance, the restriction on alcohol appears to be a major issue for most of the Muslim respondents. Likewise, they also prefer to eat only *halal.* The difference between *halal* and *haram* (forbidden in religion) constitutes one of the core components of Islamic values. Most of the Muslim respondents in this research prefer to maintain this and their food preference reflects this notion. The issue is further elaborated later in this section.

However, two of the Muslim respondents in this research have different views on this. While one is British-born Iranian, the other is a first generation Bangladeshi. Both have maverick views toward traditional religious norms and their opinions and behaviour demonstrate their challenge to the authority. Raza, a 26-year-old Londoner of Iranian origin, explains his views toward drinking alcohol and eating *halal* food:

*“Raza: I was born in a liberal Iranian family. My parents came to the UK after the revolution. They are liberal but not atheist. My parents are practicing Muslims. They say their prayers, eat halal and do not drink. But my mother and sister wear Western dresses, they are not conservative…….*

*….*

*Question: So you said you drink alcohol – will your parents endorse that?*

*Raza: No, they won’t. Although they do not follow the stricter version of religion, they are very keen to maintain certain fundamental ethos of Islam and my drinking habit is not in line with those.*

*Question: So they do not know that you drink*

*Raza: They know: they were upset and angry with me. But I have made it clear that it is my life and I choose to do what I want.”*

The situation was different for Shakil, a 35-year-old first generation migrant from Bangladesh who has been living in the UK for ten years. Shakil’s parents live in Bangladesh and he lives in the UK with his wife and children. His wife does not drink alcohol and adheres only to *halal.* They often have arguments about this, as Shakil explains:

*“Shakil: She believes it is her religious duty to stop me from drinking. She does not want me to drink in the house, so that our children do not see me drinking. Most of the Bangladeshi Muslim friends and family members we have in the UK have similar views toward alcohol. So yes, I feel the tension.”*

Both Shakil and Raza show their desire to challenge authority and control. Ramesh, a 30-year-old Indian Hindu, shows strong desire to stand against the convention, as he eats beef and does not follow Hindu religious rituals. In his response, he explains his cultural orientation:

 “*Ramesh: I do not follow religion: I am agnostic. Hence, I do not have any problem in eating beef, drinking or not undertaking any religious rituals. I know this won’t go well with my parents and in many parts of India where eating beef is blasphemous. I am of course very much against such conservative and fundamentalist views of religion.”*

Rebellious behaviour also comes as a manifestation of protest against other socio-cultural norms. Eighteen-year-old second generation Malaysian Farid, for instance, cannot eat spicy food and prefers non-Asian food. His response shows that his struggle to have more non-Malaysian food in his house was eventually successful:

 *Farid: I do not like spicy Malaysian food. It’s too hot for me, and I do not like using my hands while eating. It gets messy. My parents used to insist that I have traditional Malaysian food. I have cried and shouted so many days when I was younger. [he smiles]…at last my parents understood that I have different taste and we started to have frozen supermarket food, my mom started baking and grilling. Even if my parents have hot and spicy traditional food, they will have some other items such as roast potatoes, asparagus, and grilled salmon for me. My mother is very upset about it and she thinks I am not keeping my Malaysian origin. For instance, when I took my English girlfriend home and introduced her to my mother, my mother was very angry. But she accepted her later on. I put her photo on Facebook, which made my relatives back in Malaysia very angry.*

Photo-2 of the Appendix-3 shows the picture of Farid’s kitchen that has a rice cooker and a grill machine next to each other. Photo-1 shows his and his brother’s preferred chicken roasts are served on the dinner table along with traditional Malaysian food preferred by his parents.

This desire to go against traditional cultural convention and to challenge the established authority and control hence constitutes a kind of motivation for distancing oneself from one’s ancestral culture.

***Rarefaction***

Contemporary scholarship elucidates the complexities, idiosyncrasies and paradoxes in subcultural practices (Canniford, 2011; Goulding *et al.,* 2008) as consumers in the postmodern era define their lifestyle in non-conformist communal and socio-cultural dispositions (Holt, 2002). Consumers are exposed to the interaction between various co-existing cultural attributes, and are likely to exhibit complex and multifarious identities (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007). The critical perspective toward multiculturalism explicates the ethnic consumers’ culture-swapping behaviour as a manifestation of their postmodern reflexivity (Burton, 2002). The hybridity of cultural identity and culture swapping, as discussed in the literature review, has dominated the research agenda in the acculturation scholarship (Askegaard *et al.,* 2005; Oswald, 1999).

While all of the different groups analysed in this research exhibit some kind of hybrid cultural disposition, we have identified a particular group who have lose relation with both ancestral and host cultures. They perceive themselves to be global and emancipatory, and are not attuned to any particular identity. The word rarefaction is used in the physical geography as the less dense part of the earth atmosphere that tends to have less gravitational force. Likewise, the rarefied individuals in a cosmopolitan society are relatively less adhesive to any particular social practice.

As mentioned earlier, Lilly enjoyed interacting with her flatmates from different countries and shared foods and recipes. While Lilly is a first generation migrant, Sarah, a British-born Ghanaian, considers that she is very open to mixing with other communities, but at the same time wishes to keep her own identity:

*Question: How has growing up in a Ghanaian British family impacted on your perception and behaviour?*

*Sarah: My sister was born in Ghana and migrated at a young age, but she has got a very Ghanaian orientation. She recently got married with a guy from Ghana, she has a child and she speaks the language. I am not like her: I can feel both my Ghanaian self and the British self are co-existing in me. I cannot speak Twe, my ancestral language.*

*Question: Is it the main Ghanaian language?*

*Sarah: Yes, one of the main.*

*Question: What else you know about Ghana?*

 Sarah*: Not much. I have been to Ghana only twice in the last ten years. But I am aware of some of the tribes. For instance, people of our tribes are very kind-hearted [she laughs] ….. I have some connection with my ancestral culture and I try to keep that going. I am attached to my parents and respect the family values. But at the same time I am open to other cultures and communities.*

Jignesh is 34-year-old Gujarati (originated from Gujarat, India) but he was born in Tanzania. The Gujarati community are very enterprising, and during the British Raj, many of them, including Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation, travelled to Africa for business and education. A large number of Indians, particularly Gujarati people, still live in a number of African countries such as Tanzania and Kenya. Although the UK experienced a huge influx of the Indian community from Uganda in the 1980s for political reasons, the migration of Indians/Gujaratis from Kenya and Tanzania in more recent time has also been noticed. Jignesh is one of Tanzanian Indian/Gujarati who came to the UK very young, as his widowed mother wanted to find a better future for her two sons. Growing up in the UK in challenging familial circumstances and having been bullied at school, Jignesh developed a pragmatic perspective on life and culture:

*Jignesh: I came to this country when I was 8 years old. It wasn’t very easy for me in the beginning. I was bullied in my school. But I gradually settled in….. My mother was always a source of inspiration and strength for me. She lives with me now. It is part of Asian culture that I look after my old parent.*

*……..*

*Question: Do you eat meat?*

*Jignesh: Yes I do, although my mother does not eat meat. I eat chicken and lamb, but I do not eat beef, because I was told by my mother in my childhood that the cow is like a mother: when there is crisis of food, cows can keep us going. More as a mark of respect toward the animal, I never eat beef.*

*…..*

*Jignesh: …Actually we have some differences from the original Gujarati culture, as my parents had already adapted according to East African culture and lifestyle. For instance, the bread we prepare is not like typical ‘chapati’, as we use a different kind of flour…*

Both Sarah and Jignesh exhibit transient cultural identity and orientation. They have limited attachment with their ancestral cultures – however their responses show that they are not willing to challenge them. Furthermore, they are willing to keep both ancestral and local cultural orientation to limited extents so that one does not overshadow the other. Photo-3 of the Appendix-3 exhibits Jignesh’ taste that includes a wide variety.

***Resonance:***

This is the opposite phenomenon to the ‘reflexive’ category, as there is evidence that ethnic minorities simultaneously exhibit inclinations to assimilate to multiculturalism and to their ancestral cultural origin. It is normal for ethnic communities to remain strongly connected to their ancestral culture. However, due to their desire to become members of the multicultural host society, they also demonstrate a strong desire to assimilate. In a more recent scholarly work on British South Asian young adults, Dey *et al.,* (2017) argue that often ethnic communities engage with the mainstream due to socio-political and historic attachment between their country of origin and their country of abode. This also concurs with the earlier works of Rudmin (2003). However, we have found in this research that ethnic communities respond to the multicultural attributes that mostly resonate with their own cultural dispositions.

Tina, a Bangladeshi respondent, is not very keen to try the British Indian restaurants, which are mostly owned and run by British Bangladeshi diaspora. She prefers hot and spicy foods, and finds Nando’s closer to her taste. She also likes the spicy bean burgers from Burger King and prefers to have Thai Red Curry.

*Tina: Actually I do not like the Indian restaurants. They do not offer the proper authentic foods that we have back in Bangladesh or in any other parts of South Asia.*

*Question: Do you go to English restaurants or pubs?*

*Tina: Yes I do, very often.*

*Question: Have you ever tried the Chicken Tikka Masala or any other form of Asian food?*

*Tina: No. If I am in an English restaurant I would rather have more conventional English or continental food such as roasted beef, lamb shank or…*

*Question: Fish and chips?*

*Tina: Yes, definitely. I am a Bengali and I love fish. So that will always be an option.*

*Question: Do you crave for hot and spicy foods when you go out and dine in a non-South Asian place?*

*Tina: Yes, I always do. Although I am very keen to try foods of other countries, I also have a strong desire for spicy foods. For instance, if I have choice, I will always prefer to have Nando’s or spicy bean burger or Mexican style spicy wraps. If I go to a Chinese restaurant I normally ask the waiter which one would be the spiciest item on their menu. I normally like Thai Red Curry. Even if I go to an Indian restaurant, I will request the waiter to prepare the item in a more traditional way.*

Photo 5 exhibits Tina’s simultaneous strong desire to adhere to multicultural Great Britain and her traditional Bengali culture. It shows Maggie chilli sauce (Indian brand) next to Heinz ketchup, Pringles and Kellogg’s (global brand) and Bangladeshi mustard oil.

Adiba is a British-born Arab. She is a university student. Her parents migrated from Lebanon. She is a practicing Muslim and she always prefers to eat *halal.* Along with her many British Muslim friends, she is very connected to the mainstream culture. However, at the same time she is a proud Muslim and adheres to her religious traditions. She wears *hizab*, prays regularly and fasts during Ramadan. Adiba’s statement shows the duality of her cultural dispositions and how she has maintained and negotiated a multicultural young British life and Muslim and Arab family origin:

 *Adiba: I listen to Western music, actually all kinds of music. I do not think that is any problem. I only eat halal and try to keep up with other Islamic religious obligations, such as praying and fasting during Ramadan.*

*Question: What do you do when you go out with your friends?*

*Adiba: I normally avoid going for pub food. I am not comfortable with the environment. However, I go to other normal restaurants, although I would have preferred a place that has halal options. But as you know, it is not always possible. So I would have ordered vegetarian or fish items.*

*Question: What about fast foods?*

*Tina: Near to my university the McDonald’s and Nando’s both do halal. So yes, I have tried those.*

Most of the South Asian and Chinese respondents said that although they prefer to shop at ethnic grocery shops, the increasing availability of their ethnic ingredients in mainstream superstores such as Asda and Tesco has encouraged them. This is further evidence of simultaneous attachment to both mainstream and ancestral culture and food habits.

One of the researchers accompanied Vinita during her weekly grocery shopping from Asda. She was unsure which chicken to choose as there was a range of options. She found the one mixed with Brazilian spices to be closest to her taste and picket that one up.

***Resistance:***

This is similar to what Dey *et al.,* (2017) describe as acculturation by constraints. However, our findings offer a different perspective on ethnic minorities’ intent for interaction with the wider community. We have found that despite ethnic communities’ regular or infrequent interaction with the mainstream multicultural society, there is evidence that ethnic minorities try to resist adopting the mainstream culture. As mentioned earlier, food has close association with ethnic, religious and familial lives, and thus reflects the evidence of resistance quite profoundly. Hence, this group has stronger attachment to its ancestral culture and tends to maintain that by resisting or not adopting the mainstream culture.

Muhammad is a 42-year-old British Pakistani. He has been living in the UK for around fifteen years. In his response, we can see that deep down there is a desire to retain his identity and maintain his ancestral lifestyle and food habits:

 “*Muhammad: I live in Southall, which has an overwhelming majority of South Asian and also a sizeable Muslim community. I have mosque and Asian grocery store in close proximity.*

*Question: And biriyani shop? [researcher laughs.. so does Muhammad]*

*Muhammad: Of course, there are couple of good Pakistani biriyani restaurants in that area……. I cannot live without my food. Once I went to a conference and my wife packed lunch for three days [he laughs again].*

*…..*

*Muhammad: It is very important for me that my children learn my ancestral culture. They understand and can speak a bit of Urdu. They get religious lessons. My wife does maintain Islamic dress code and that’s another reason I choose to be in a place that accepts and embraces diversity.”*

Peter from Poland also shows that when it comes to food habits and lifestyle, he and his partner choose to maintain their ancestral culture, although they live and enjoy working in diverse London.

*“Question: After living in this country for so many years, do you think that you have now adapted to the British way of life?*

*Peter: No, I do not feel like to be a British – I cannot be. Yes, I like this city, the people, although many in this country have voted for Brexit, but people in London are different. I am very much Polish and my partner and I maintain that well. We hang out with Polish friends, go to Polish shops and like Polish food.*

*Question: So you shop from Polish groceries?*

*Peter: Yes, because they sell proper Polish meat and they are also cheap.”*

Rakhi from India, as discussed earlier, is a vegetarian. Being a Gujarati Brahmin, she maintains strict adherence to her ethno-religious origin, culture and lifestyle. While Rakhi represents a working class ethnic minority, young professionals such as Meeta, a Tamil (a linguistic group from South India and parts of Sri Lanka) Brahmin, also follows a strictly vegetarian diet. However, recently her doctor advised her to eat more protein, as she was unwell for a while. That put her in a very difficult situation. She can never eat meat for religious reasons and also due to habit. As a last resort, Meeta started to eat fish. But she is still not comfortable with the smell of fish.

**Discussion**

We divide the discussion section into four broad components. First, we define and analyse the multicultural environment of London and how it differs from traditional British culture. Then we reflect on the empirical data to develop a taxonomy of the cosmopolitan state of migrant communities in the UK. Then we analyse the acculturation process that leads to the formation of this cosmopolitan state and finally we spell out the theoretical contribution of this paper.

***Multicultural London:***

Although our findings suggest that the multicultural composition of Britain receives significant recognition from various quarters and is also much supported by government and various social and commercial organisations, it is still not entirely different from the traditional British culture. Multicultural urban Britain is the upper and external layer of UK urban culture and holds the platform for various communities to intermingle and blossom as co-existing entities. Together, they co-create the lifestyle, ethos, and values. London and other metropolitan cities, as some of the respondents suggest, work as a packaging of Great Britain and showcase the celebration of diversity and cosmopolitanism at home and abroad. When the respondents choose to go out for a meal with people from other communities to an Indian, Thai or Chinese restaurant, have food and drinks in a pub, or watch football matches or movies, they interact simultaneously with other ethnic cultures (which may or may not be in their purest forms), traditional British culture and global consumer culture. Hence, acculturation is not unidimensional or bi-dimensional, but rather is a multi-dimensional process. This is also motivated by the pursuit of individuals to be part of diversity and cosmopolitan environment that large cities such as London offer.

The multicultural London is contextualised within the socio-historic bedrock of Great Britain. The history and dynamics of migration in the UK are different from those in the USA. The colonial past and the historic relationship with the colonies shaped, constituted and determined the composition of ethnic minorities in British society. As we can observe, the first generation migrants from Commonwealth nations express the perceptions of Britain back in their own countries. UK’s being part of the EU also triggered migration from the Eastern European countries. Nevertheless, we can notice that an organic development of the multicultural environment and a symbiotic interrelationship between the minority ethnic communities’ cultural attributes constitute and perpetuate its exposition in a dynamic and dialectic manner.

***Taxonomy of cosmopolitan state – the four Rs:***

Current acculturation literature (Peñaloza, 1994; Berry, 1980) provides an insightful account of the acculturation strategies of migrant communities. Their classifications analyse the intent and actual behaviour of ethnic communities through a quadrant matrix. The underlying assumption is that migrants respond to the tension created by the pull towards their host and home countries and they have four strategic options accordingly. While these classifications constitute basic theoretical scaffolding for conceptualising migrant communities’ acculturation strategies, we choose to further the understanding to explicate the ever-changing dynamics of migrants’ interactions in large multicultural cities. In so doing, we replace the pull towards the host country with a pull towards a multicultural society. As discussed above, this multicultural society is different from traditional British culture and it is important to acknowledge this difference to achieve a better comprehension of what actually motivates or impels migrants to integrate. Figure-1 exhibits the taxonomy.

Our findings concur with Dey et al., (2017), as we argue that absolute assimilation and absolute separation are becoming increasingly rare in the context of the city of London. When an East African-born British Indian whose grandparents left Gujarat more than fifty years back still speaks Gujarati at home, we cannot ascertain that longer migration history can lead to assimilation. Or, when a young British lady of Ghanaian origin retains latent respect for her ancestral culture we can see that it is very hard to disown one’s own roots. On the contrary, another Indian lady, despite limited proficiency in English, maintains interaction with wider society.

Hence, we argue that the state of being cosmopolitan is not monolithic and uniform. Rather, it can take different shapes and forms, as migrants tend to appropriate their cultural dispositions, as argued by Weinberger (2015). This is even more prevalent and visible in their food consumption. We have found four forms of this adjustment – rebellion, rarefaction, resonance and resistance – which simultaneously exhibit their food habits and broader cultural disposition. The classification also explains the motivation for and the nature of the cosmopolitan state. For instance, the rebellion group normally have the desire to challenge authority, and in so doing, they choose to go against their ancestral traditional norms. One way in which they can do so is to adopt food habits of other communities; they might also choose to avoid or discard their ancestral food patterns and may disobey religious restrictions. This rebellious attitude has not been properly analysed in the existing acculturation literature.

We have found in our research that some of the respondents exhibit limited attachment to their own and other cultural traits. We have termed this group as rarefaction. Young students and professionals who enjoy hanging out with their friends, try out different recipes and learn from each other’s cultural practices in a reflexive manner exemplify this category. The term ‘marginalisation’, as defined by Berry (1980, 2009), does not fully capture and may give a negative connotation. The group termed as rarefaction are not marginalised or socially excluded – they are very much part of the mainstream society despite having emancipatory nature of their lifestyle. The concept of ‘pendulism’ (Askegaard *et al.,* 2005) can be further divided into two categories – resonance and rarefaction – which offer more specific and clearer understanding of cultural hybridity.

We have also found individuals with a strong desire to maintain both their ancestral culture and that of their multicultural host city. Similarity and closer links between the two enable them to maintain and adopt both. Major supermarkets in Greater London have ethnic sections targeting South Asian, Chinese and Polish customers. Often people falling into this category tend to find other ethnic communities who share broad similarities. For instance, Muslims from different parts of the world go to Arab halal butchers’ shops or Bangladeshis get frozen fish from South Indian groceries. This phenomenon extends the concept of ‘maintenance’. Finally, the concept of resistance remains similar to Peñaloza’s definition. As the name suggests, it is also close to the concept of separation described by Berry. However, we can still observe that despite their strong desire to adhere to their ancestral culture, the minorities do not entirely remain confined within their own community.



Pull towards ancestral culture

Pull towards multicultural environment

Figure 1 Taxonomy of acculturation toward cosmpolitan food consumption

***Acculturation process and outcomes***

Further to the existing literature on the acculturation process, we have identified additional components and factors that drive this process. First of all, we believe that the process is continuous and iterative in nature, and that ethnic cultural identity, the state of being cosmopolitan and the multicultural society have mutual and reciprocal influence. They shape each other and should be studied as components of a process – which has not been clearly explicated in the current literature. The lifestyle and food habits of ethnic communities in London are not exactly the same as those practised back in the migrant communities’ ancestral societies. Indians having more rice instead of chapatti (Indian bread) and Malaysians using Chinese sauce show that ethnic lives are influenced by other ethnic communities as much as by the host country’s brand and culture (e.g. Saxa salt and Tetley tea). Global consumer culture (Kellogg’s, McDonald’s), as defined by Cleveland and Laroche (2007), and internationalisation of communities (e.g. Pan-Islamic culture) or global diasporic culture (Bollywood culture), also influence the acculturation process.

We argue that the acculturation process leads to the state of cosmopolitan culture and shapes the nature of multicultural society. While Berry (1980) aligns integration with the broader social strategy of multiculturalism, we argue that regardless of direct or indirect policy intervention, acculturation can support the organic development of multicultural society. Figure 2 demonstrates the process and of acculturation toward multicultural society and how it impacts on cosmopolitanism.

**Cosmopolitanism**

**(Rebellion, rarefaction, resonance, resistance)**

Nationalism

Familial and communal bonding

Religion

Global consumer culture

Traditional culture

Interaction between ethnic culture and mainstream multicultural

Figure Acculturation to multicultural society

**Conclusion**

We address the research gap discussed and analysed in the literature review and develop the following contributions:

First, acculturation needs to be assessed as a multi-dimensional process that involves interaction between all different communities co-existing within a given society. The current uni-dimensional and bi-dimensional approach to analysing acculturation is not adequate to understand how acculturation is supported and/or inhibited by inter-community interactions.  Second, we have further classified and analysed cultural duality and hybridity, thus advancing the current scholarship.  Although in existing literature cosmopolitanism is identified as an independent variable for acculturation, we have presented and analysed the iterative relationship between ethnic culture, the state of being cosmopolitan and multicultural society. In so doing we choose to establish the dialectic and spiralling nature of inter-relationship between the three components which has not been fully explained in the current literature.

Regardless of international marketing approaches (adaption or standardization), the essence of the brand values cannot be compromised, otherwise the brand loses its essence (Balmer, 2013). Hence, marketers found that not only it is difficult to predict the ‘new consumer behaviour’ within this environment but also to assess how all cultural and ethnic values in one location/city fit into a homogenized marketing strategy of a corporation in a growing ethnically diverse city such as London. Our research offers useful marketing implications in this regard.

While our research findings have direct implications for food industry, we can also extract significant understanding for other sectors including fashion, fast moving consumer goods and travel and tourism. Cobra, Kingfisher and Tiger although having their identity rooted in certain ethnic community have become popular across the board. These brands could be popular among ‘rarefaction' category who appreciate multicultural ethos without being too rebellious against their own culture. Ikea over the years have tried maverick advertisements and controversial messages which can attract the ‘rebellion’ group mentioned in this research. Furthermore, when it comes to standardization vs adaptation debate in international marketing, rebellion group are more likely to respond to standardization, as they prefer to adhere to multicultural and global identities. However, increasing adaptation of goods and services (eg. Halal McDonald’s, Sharia banking) can ideally target the group ‘classified’ under ‘resistance’ and ‘resonance’ who have high attachment with their ancestral cultures. Finally, more fusion products linking and exhibiting social and cultural similarities will be able to attract the ‘resonance’ groups. As it has been seen in this paper, ethnic customers appreciate the ethnic food sections in supermarkets.

## Limitations and future research:

The research did not engage with the most vulnerable and marginalised members of British ethnic communities, and hence this paper is unable to explain their cultural identities. Furthermore, host community influences the acculturation of the ethnic minorities. This paper has not engaged host communities and hence is unable to explore their roles in the acculturation and formation of multicultural society.

We have particularly identified two areas for future research: one is co-creation of cultural identity and second cultural appropriation. Our paper offers useful indication for both nascent topics that can further advance and enrich relevant scholarship.

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1. All respondents have been given pseudonyms [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Desi refers to the people from Indian Sub-Continent [↑](#footnote-ref-2)