Towards a framework for understanding ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies in a multicultural environment

A food consumption perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – While it is essential to further research the growing diversity in western metropolitan cities, little is currently known about how the members of various ethnic communities acculturate to multicultural societies. The purpose of this paper is to explore immigrants' cosmopolitanism and acculturation strategies through an analysis of the food consumption behaviour of ethnic consumers in multicultural London.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was set within the socio-cultural context of London. A number of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, observation and photographs were used to assess consumers' acculturation strategies in a multicultural environment and how that is influenced by consumer cosmopolitanism.

Findings – Ethnic consumers' food consumption behaviour reflects their acculturation strategies, which can be classified into four groups: rebellion, rarefaction, resonance and refrainment. This classification demonstrates ethnic consumers' multi-directional acculturation strategies, which are also determined by their level of cosmopolitanism.

Research limitations/implications – The taxonomy presented in this paper advances current acculturation scholarship by suggesting a multi-directional model for acculturation strategies as opposed to the existing uni-directional and bi-directional perspectives and explicates the role of consumer cosmopolitanism in consumer acculturation. The paper did not engage host communities and there is hence a need for future research on how and to what extent host communities are acculturated to the multicultural environment.

Practical implications – The findings have direct implications for the choice of standardisation vs adaptation as a marketing strategy within multicultural cities. Whilst the rebellion group are more likely to respond to standardisation, increasing adaptation of goods and service can ideally target members of the resistance and resonance groups and more fusion products should be exclusively earmarked for the resonance group.

Introduction

Globalisation creates a heterogeneous and diverse composition of societies and multicultural markets (Neal *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; Janssens and Zanoni, 2014; Rossiter and Chan, 1998) and approaching customers (Gaviria and Emontspool, 2015; Riefler *et al.*, 2012; Jamal, 2003). With growing diversity becoming an integral part of large western metropolitan cities, further research on their ethnic populations' interaction with multicultural social and market institutions can offer deeper insights into how and why they adopt/avoid/resist various attributes of their ancestral, global and host societies' traditional culture and other ethnic sub-cultures in a multicultural society, 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 such, the acculturation strategies of immigrants and sojourners are of interest to diaspora and cross-cultural marketing (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2013; Demangeot *et al.*, 2015; Poulis *et al.*, 2013; Schilke *et al.*, 2009).

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. In all, 3m Londoners – over a third of London's residents – were born outside the UK. In addition to this significant number of first-generation immigrants and sojourners, London and other major western cities have many people who are born into immigrant 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 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, the UK General Election in 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/USA, which may be related to the growing cosmopolitanism in western metropolitan cities.

A cosmopolitan person is open to cultural differences and willing to engage with the "Other" (Hannerz, 1992; Cleveland *et al.*, 2011; Woodward *et al.*, 2008). The term "cosmopolitanism" is often heralded as a cultural orientation towards the complex socio-economic environment emanating from the accelerating pace of globalisation (Thompson and Tambyah, 1999). However, there is a lack of agreement on the definition of cosmopolitanism and the term remains elusive due to a lack of coherent and consistent conceptual underpinning (Beck and Grande, 2007), thus calling for further research on relevant areas. While some researchers consider cosmopolitanism as an antecedent to acculturation (Carpenter *et al.*, 2013; Cleveland *et al.*, 2011; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), further research to explore and analyse the role of consumer cosmopolitanism in the acculturation process and outcomes will be a useful addition.

Consumers' interaction in multicultural environments also demands that the scholarly debate on acculturation strategies (Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza, 1994; Berry, 1981) be revisited, as these strategies interact with and are likely to be influenced by not only the host and home country cultures, but also by other ethnic minority cultures, global consumer culture and more multinational cultures (such as Pan-Islamism). Partial understanding of the multiple directions of acculturation, transcending bi-directional analysis between host and home country cultures, can be found in the existing literature (Askegaard *et al.*, 2005). However, further research is needed to assess the nature and outcome of the multi-directional acculturation strategies.

Drawing on the above-mentioned gap in the current scholarship, this paper seeks to explore the nature and outcome of acculturation strategies in multicultural societies and develop theoretical scaffolding for multi-directional acculturation. In doing so, the paper aims to analyse the food consumption patterns of ethnic communities in London and how these patterns exhibit individuals' acculturation strategies.

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 López, 2005). Food consumption is culturally sensitive (Halkier and Jensen, 2011) and highly dependent on the socio-cultural settings in which an individual lives. Food consumption has been identified as a complex overlapping of social and communal identities (Reilly and Wallendorf, 1987; Yen *et al.*, 2018), and hence exhibits culture swapping and duality, as discussed in the acculturation literature (Askegaard *et al.*, 2005; Oswald, 1999; Jamal, 1998). Food consumption demonstrates consumers' cultural boundary-crossing and boundary maintenance behaviour (Bardhi *et al.*, 2010). 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), which makes the study's chosen context timely and appropriate.

The host culture is mostly considered in the current literature as a monolithic expression of traditionalism (e.g. "traditional English food"). As discussed earlier, large cities are increasingly becoming a union of multiple cultures, and ethnic consumers' 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 strategies within the socio-cultural and economic setting of a multicultural environment.

Our contribution is twofold. First, we argue that acculturation in multicultural environments needs to be analysed as a multi-directional phenomenon that involves interaction between members of various communities co-existing within a given society. The current uni-directional and bi-directional approach employed in analysing acculturation does not fully capture how acculturation is supported and/or inhibited by the interactions amongst the members of various communities. Within culturally pluralistic conditions consumers demonstrate multiple strategies navigating various cultural entities (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2018). Our work offers such multicultural background from which to examine acculturation effects, as opposed to the comparatively ethnically monocultural work of some other scholars such as Holt (1998), Oswald (1999), Peñaloza (1994) and Askegaard *et al.* (2005). As such our paper goes beyond the uni- and bi-directional perspective to acculturation strategies and analyses ethic consumers' acculturation in a multicultural western host environment. We argue that acculturation in these contexts does not happen only due to the push and pull between the host culture and the immigrants' ancestral culture, but rather is likely to be an outcome of the push and pull of multiple cultures of various communities with which immigrants interact. As such, we introduce a taxonomy that explains immigrants' multi-directional acculturation strategies in such contexts. Second, we embed these strategies within the dynamic inter-relationship

between cosmopolitanism and acculturation with a view to develop a robust understanding of how consumer cosmopolitanism influences acculturation process and outcomes in multicultural societies.

Our paper begins with an introduction, which is followed by an extensive review of the literature on two major streams of scholarship – acculturation and cosmopolitanism – to highlight the gaps in the extant literature. The next section covers the qualitative methodology underpinned by interpretivist philosophy, followed by the findings and the conclusions drawn from the results. The paper ends with a discussion of the implications of our findings for international marketing strategy and the food industry, study limitations and proposed avenues for future research.

Literature review

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

Acculturation and the 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 uni-directional acculturation concept is based on the assumption that ethnic minorities' home/ancestral cultural traits are gradually replaced by those of the host culture (Cleveland *et al.*, 2016). Bi-directional acculturation models on the other hand take into account ethnic minorities' different patterns of adaptation towards either forms of culture: host and home. Peñaloza (1994), for instance, suggested four outcomes of the acculturation process in the form of assimilation, resistance, maintenance and segregation. Her categorisation derived from Berry's (1981) four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. Subsequently a strong research strand (Dey *et al.*, 2017; Weinreich, 2009; Askegaard *et al.*, 2005; Jamal and Chapman, 2000) supports bi-directional acculturation strategies based on the assumption that ethnic consumers can simultaneously retain their ancestral culture and adopt the host country's culture.

Askegaard *et al.* (2005), however, point out that Peñaloza's (1994) work is rather context-specific. Drawing on Askegaard *et al.*'s (2005) point of view, it can be argued that due to distinct religious practices and restrictions, the acculturation of Muslims may be impeded in a Christian majority multicultural western society. Yet, they are also receptive to the idea of eating Christian majority western society food as long as it conforms to their religious belief (e.g. fish/vegetarian sandwiches, tuna/cheddar ploughman cheese sandwiches and cheese and onion pasties). Accordingly, religion, for example, in explaining food consumption, plays a significant role in consumer choice and product uptake (Sheikh and Thomas, 1994; Berkman *et al.*, 1997; Lindridge, 2005, 2009; Jafari and Süerdem, 2012), as well as shaping practices relating to broader social behaviour (Delener, 1994). Hence, the contextual dynamics contributing to American Mexicans' acculturation in the USA (Peñaloza, 1994) would be different from those of Muslim immigrants in the UK. Similarly, Jamal (2003), for example, studied ethnic minority and mainstream consumers in the UK to investigate the differences in food consumption between the two groups. The ethnic consumers maintained their original cultural identity at both the private and the public level. At the private level, they consumed their traditional ethnic meals and celebrated their cultural/religious festivals on a regular basis. Some acculturation researchers (Arends-Tóth *et al.*, 2006; Stayman and Deshpande, 1989) also revealed that immigrants prefer integration in their public life, while in their private life separation is favoured. Subsequent work by Cleveland, Laroche and Papadopoulos (2009),

Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun (2009) identifies combinations of home and ancestral cultures' influences on consumption. Accordingly, immigrants may develop acculturation patterns that exhibit their cultural dualism – as discussed below.

The cultural dualism, defined as having traits of both ancestral and host cultures, has increasingly received research attention both in consumer research and in wider social science (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010). However, the host culture is often considered to be the traditional culture of the country. For instance, Jamal's (2003) study on the acculturation of British Muslims in Northern English cities considers traditional English/British culture as the host culture – which may not be the case in larger western cities. The dyadic inter-relationship between host and ancestral cultures may not work when ethnic consumers interact with other ethnic cultures or their religious, social and business institutions. Muslims of South Asian, African and Middle Eastern origins may often go to the same mosque; Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis may shop at the same grocery store. As such, modern multicultural societies offer multi-dimensional platforms for acculturation that go beyond the dyadic inter-relationship between host and immigrants.

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

The following issues emerge from the above discussion:

(1) the academic debate surrounding acculturation is far from over;

(2) further research is needed to analyse the nature of and reasons for culture swapping; and

(3) ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies in multicultural environments need further investigation.

As cosmopolitanism entails consumers' "enthusiasm towards and capability to engage in diverse cultural narratives" (Cleveland and Laroche, 2012, p. 70), it needs special attention in acculturation studies and can address the issues identified above.

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 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. Nevertheless, there can be contradictions in the interacting components of national culture and global culture/consumerism (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). There can also be situations when global and national cultures complement each other as suggested by (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2018, in press). Further research is required to ascertain how these contradicting/complementing cultures (i.e. national culture and global consumer culture) are transmitted in individuals' consumption processes and influence their food consumption.

The distinctiveness of cosmopolitan consumers is in their openness and willingness to explore and learn from other traditions and lifestyles (Levy *et al.*, 2007; Crul, 2016; Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Mastering one culture gives a cosmopolitan person a sense of accomplishment and encourages them to further build up his or her cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). As such s/he is emboldened and encouraged to learn and experience new cultures. Cosmopolitanism can also be considered as the tendency of individuals to see themselves as citizens of the world rather than of a country (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Riefler *et al.* (2012) summarise that there are three major perspectives towards analysing cosmopolitanism – namely, moral/ethical imperative, attitude and orientation. Their taxonomy segments consumers in relation to their global/local orientation. It is important to mention that

Authors and context of research	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	Some of the findings are not 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 some of the ethnic minorities in the UK
Askegaard *et al.* (2005) Greenlandic immigrants in Denmark Oswald (1999) Haitians in US society	The concept of "pendulism" and "culture swapping" 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 could be analysed. For instance, the authorised selection exercised by Muslims defines their consumption behaviour (Jafari and Süerdem, 2012). Furthermore, the culture swapping may not only happen between host and ancestral cultures, as immigrant communities may interact with and learn from other immigrant communities. This is particularly relevant to the context of our research, which seeks to explore the interaction amongst individuals from different ethnic communities
Demangeot and Sankaran (2012) Empirical paper on UAE residents Kipnis *et al.* (2014) Conceptual work on consumer identities in multicultural environments	Taxonomy of cultural pluralism in the context of multicultural environments	We concur with both papers, as they lend themselves to the nourishment of our conceptual underpinning. However, we argue that there is further scope for advancement, in relation to analysing cultural pluralism. For instance, cultural experimentalists actively seek culturally diverse products – however, that does not explain the restrictions, limitations and enforcement people may face when they are unable to adopt other cultures despite having intentions to do so. We, on the other hand, take this into consideration, and assume a more critical perspective to analyse and explain ethnic minority consumers' cultural pluralism
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 authors (Cleveland *et al.*, 2016) allude that certain socio-cultural contexts and government policies can encourage multiple consumer identities and cultural

Authors and context of research	Contribution	Scope for further advancement in relation to this paper
	Special attention has been paid to creolisation (transmutation into distinct behaviour) as a form of integration. Culture-consumption relationship has been found to be greatest for foodstuffs	integration/creolisation. As such, ethnic consumers' interaction with other ethnic cultures and subsequent acculturation strategies in a multicultural environment could further elaborate on the nature of and motivation for cultural creolisation. Similar suggestion was also indicated in subsequent literature (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2018, in press)
Veresiu and Giesler (2018) Multicultural environment in Canada	Ethnic consumers' identity formation is a function of the communal co-existence that is shaped and characterised by institutional forces and hegemonic and colonial inter-relationships between indigenes and immigrants.	Veresiu and Giesler argue that the acculturation literature needs to appreciate the fact that the cultures of indigenes and immigrants are likely to differ in terms of their strength, their colonial/historical/political background and their commodification by various social/political/commercial institutions. While we concur with them, it is also important to analyse how individuals negotiate with the cultural diversity that goes beyond the local-global, indigene-immigrant divide and negotiates with institutional and contextual forces and develop their acculturation strategies

Table I.

localism is defined as people's orientation towards territorially defined or bounded cultures (Featherstone, 1990), which is not entirely the case in western societies, which have global culture interwoven with local cultures (Hines, 2000). While keeping a critical perspective towards this dichotomy of global and local orientation, Riefler *et al.* (2012) have operationalised and segmented different types of cosmopolitanism. Their taxonomy shows four different customer groups based on the orientation towards cosmopolitanism – pure cosmopolitans, local cosmopolitans, moderately attached consumers and alienated consumers.

However, we are conscious of the fact that cosmopolitanism and consumer cosmopolitanism are two different types of constructs which have been developed for different purposes. Consumer cosmopolitanism is best suited for this paper. Therefore, we follow Cleveland, Laroche and Papadopoulos (2009), Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun (2009) and Hannerz (1990) and adopt the perspective that consumer cosmopolitanism is a positive orientation towards cultural outgroups rather than the notion of global citizenship. Two concurrent phenomena – increasing globalisation leading to homogenisation of cultures and growing diversity within many societies due to migration, provide impetus for further research on the varied nature of consumer cosmopolitanism (Cleveland and Bartsch, 2018). Cosmopolitan consumers' "social world is not only geographically, but also racially and economically inclusive" (Holt, 1998, p. 13). As such, cosmopolitanism in its truest sense is an orientation, willingness to engage with the other and it encourages search for contrast rather than uniformity (Hannerz, 1990, 1992).

Nevertheless, cosmopolitans vary in terms of their inclination and behavioural expression (Hannerz, 1990), as they often negotiate with external environment and contextual requirements (Skrbis *et al.*, 2004). In terms of consumption behaviour, cosmopolitan consumers often seek variety and sophistication, and demonstrate tastes for exotic and authentic products (Holt, 1998). They can be dilatants and/or connoisseurs (Hannerz, 1990) and do not necessarily have to travel abroad (Cleveland, Laroche and Papadopoulos, 2009; Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun, 2009; Hannerz, 1990).

Over the last decade, a strong research stream has emerged exploring the inter-relationship between consumer cosmopolitanism and acculturation. Cosmopolitanism is identified as an antecedent to the acculturation to global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Cleveland and Laroche (2012) suggest that considerable research is required to clarify how and to what extent cosmopolitanism influences ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies. As such, consumer cosmopolitanism's link with acculturation strategies would enable us to analyse how individuals in multicultural environments negotiate with and adopt multitude of cultural attributes (e.g. ancestral, traditional host and other ethnic sub-cultures). Our research aims to address this issue by linking consumer cosmopolitanism with acculturation in a multicultural environment.

Methodology
Research strategy
The research strategy was to undertake a close observation of London-based ethnic consumers' food consumption behaviour. An interpretivist approach would offer the opportunity to appreciate "why" and "how" they interact with mainstream and other ethnic cultures and how that is reflected in their food purchase and consumption. In-depth interviews with ethnic community members in London were chosen as the main methodological tool. Methodological triangulation enhances the reliability and validity of qualitative data (Lincoln and Guba, 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 (Daengbuppha *et al.*, 2006) were used to complement the in-depth interviews and observation.

Sampling
The population under study is first and second generation immigrants/sojourners based in London (e.g. Europeans, Indians Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Arab, African, 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 Table AI 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. The authors used personal/familial contacts, their university students and community and religious institutions to select and reach out to 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.

Interview protocol
Respondents were asked about their perceptions of life in London, cultural and religious orientations, their food and shopping habits, interest in overall lifestyle, food/brand consumption and their motivation for and intention to integrate with British and other ethnic communities within the society in which they live. On average, each interview lasted between 45 and 90 min. Appendix 2 highlights the interview protocol for the in-depth interviews used with our respondents.

Observation
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. The observation was used to triangulate the interview responses of the respondents who were observed dining and shopping.

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 in their living rooms (Table II).

Data analysis
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, three broader themes were applied: migration history, acculturation and cosmopolitanism. Against each theme there were two kinds of codes – theory driven and data driven. 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 and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) (Table AII provide 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. For example, as stated in the appendix the relevant existing theoretical constructs pertaining to acculturation (such as integration, separation, assimilation) were codified. Simultaneously, new codes emerged from the data, such as lack of adherence, similarities in supermarket products, food ingredients, challenge to authority and flexibility/rigidity in culture swapping. We found that the existing theoretical codes either do not have evidence in the data or do not fully capture some of the aforementioned phenomena. As such, we further scrutinised and classified those codes to theorise multi-directional acculturation strategies. Finally, we sought appropriate words (e.g. refrainment, rarefaction, resonance and rebellion) to explain/capture those phenomena. Likewise, the final discussion section and the conceptual framework were structured on the bases of the themes and constituting codes.

Triangulation was a useful part of the data analysis. Triangulation of methods was used in this research to compare and contrast the data collected from multiple sources (i.e. in-depth interviews, researcher observations documented by photographs and diary

Methodological tool	Description
In-depth interviews	Thirty-one respondents, duration 45 to 90 min (18 of these 31 interviewees were also subject to the other methodological tools provided below)
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 cooking and dietary patterns, artefacts and other tangible possessions (photographs and show pieces)
Accompanying them during grocery shopping	Five respondents were accompanied during their weekly grocery shopping
Dining with them in restaurants	The researchers dined with three respondents in different ethnic restaurants
Diary notes and photographs	All the observations above were noted in diaries. Photographs were taken for further clarification and substantiation

Table II.
Summary of the data
collection method

notes) to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings and resulting claims. Following Farmer *et al.* (2006), we meticulously went through the scripts of the 18 in-depth interviews that had supporting materials (i.e. photographs/diary notes) and corroborated the excerpts with those supporting materials. For instance, the photo collected from Jignesh's kitchen supported part of his interview response, and researcher observation while accompanying Rajiv and family in the supermarket reinforced what was found during the interview. As such, the supporting materials were categorised under the relevant themes and codes and are used in support of our arguments in the following sections of this paper.

Findings
Multi-cultural hub for inter-cultural interactions
The interview reports revealed pointers and actions that suggest and/or reinforce London's attribute as a platform for many cultures that are constantly interacting with each other. Responses indicate that traditional British culture alongside global culture, engendered via global corporations and brands such as McDonalds and other immigrant cultures, actively interrelate and influence the ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies. As such, we report on our findings by segregating the two broader aspects of ethnic consumers' views and interaction with the multicultural environment in London – their views of and interaction with traditional British culture in London; and their views of and interaction with global consumer culture and other ethnic sub-cultures.

Ethnic consumers' views of and interaction with traditional British culture in London. This section discusses the first point of our findings. Richard, for instance, responded to our in-depth interview enquiry into the respondents' migration history and their experience of life in the UK in general and London in particular. Richard[1] explained 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.

The colonial relationship appears to have strong influence on migration, as nationals from former colonies prefer to migrate to the colonial rulers (Thompson and Tambyah, 1999), and this in turn has a bearing on immigrants' acculturation (Dey *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, the reference to the colonial relationship with the UK underpins the recognition and manifestation of its colonial heritage. As such, there is subtle indication that nationals from Commonwealth countries have the desire to experience and interact with the traditional British culture.

Nevertheless, large western cities now receive more diverse immigrants coming from countries that may not have historical/colonial relationships (Crul, 2016). As Florida (2007) argues, talent, although it is one of the major drivers of economic growth in today's world, needs to be developed, attracted and retained. Large western cities attract global talents. London's particular case of an expanded diverse immigration beyond those from former colonies was reinforced by Alexandro, a respondent from Greece.

Alexandro 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. 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.

Ramesh and David are of Indian and Jamaican origin. While Ramesh is a first generation immigrant, David is born in the UK. We come to know about their interaction with their neighbours and friends/colleagues who are mostly British. As Ramesh mentioned:

> I regularly visit my local pub, particularly when there is a big football match. I mostly follow cricket, but also enjoy English Premier League too. Locals in the pub know that I am a ManUnited[2] fan […] (laughs). They tease me as most of them are Chelsea supporters.

As such, we notice that immigrants in London broadly have the intention to and experience of interacting with the traditional British culture.

Ethnic consumers' interaction with other ethnic sub-cultures and global consumer culture. Our next finding highlights that as well as traditional British culture, our respondents also indicate their interactions with other cultures as well as global consumer cultures.

Immigrants' intention to live in London is also often influenced by their desire to embrace diversity. However, this may not be the case for Lilly, a 33-year-old Chinese respondent who came to the UK as an undergraduate student and chose to stay after her graduation. 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. She started to embrace diversity and enjoy other cultures including global consumer culture after having experienced life in London:

> 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 […].

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 immigrants. Even if immigrants and sojourners have limited exposure to cultural diversity and pluralism in their country of origin, they can gradually adopt and adapt in London: this appears to be seen as an amalgamation of traditionalism with a recent inclusion of cultural attributes from other societies, countries and ethnicities. As Sassen (2005) argues, the large western cities are increasingly emerging as "Global cities" due to their socio-economic and political importance and cultural diversity, which transcend the traditional culture of the host society.

Even if someone has limited interaction with traditional British culture, it appears that they may still be dealing with people from other ethnic communities in their day-to-day lives. Rakhi, for instance, is 55 years old and of Indian origin. She is a housewife who came to the UK 20 years ago and has been living in London ever since. Rakhi explained in her broken English mixed with Hindi:

> Rakhi: I normally have very limited interaction with English people. […].. 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 Somali boy who often comes to our house. My husband does building jobs and he works with a lot of Polish people.

Here, Rakhi's life is very much connected with people from other communities and cultures, as she finds the Turkish shop useful to her dietary habit (being a vegetarian). Her son's

Somali friend likes her *daal* and *chapati*[3]. But when her son visits his Somali friend's house, they keep vegetarian food for him. Her son's interaction with a Somali boy and her husband's work with Polish builders demonstrate how ethnic consumers' lives are inextricably connected with other community members and sub-cultures.

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.

We see that the above respondents are exposed to a multicultural environment and may gradually become open to "Others". Magda and her husband exhibit a gradual shift towards open-mindedness and appreciation for diversity.

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 London, she has had friends from different ethnic backgrounds. 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 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 of 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, London's culture is neither monolithic nor manifested only through traditional British lifestyle as described by Demangeot *et al.* (2015). Rather, the above excerpts suggest that London's culture, although rooted in traditional British culture, is constituted as a multicultural spectrum. This leads to the suggestion that a multi-directional model underpins the possible acculturation strategy involving immigrants living in London.

Now we seek to analyse how ethnic consumers' interaction with the multicultural London shapes their cultural dispositions. In so doing, the nature and outcome of their acculturation strategies have been classified and categorised. This classification can be conceptualised as follows:

(1) resonance – ethnic consumers choose to adopt the attributes of other cultures that resonate with their ancestral cultural ethos;

(2) rarefaction – ethnic consumers choose to adopt attributes of other cultures and retain their ancestral culture without having any firm conviction to any;

(3) refrainment – ethnic consumers intend to adopt other cultural attributes as long as they do not cross their perceived cultural boundaries; and

(4) rebellion – ethnic consumers' desire for assimilation towards other cultures by overcoming their own cultural barriers.

Resonance
As part of this category, ethnic consumers adopt attributes of other cultures that are resonant to their ancestral culture. Due to their openness towards other cultures, some of them may adopt attributes of those cultures. However, their adoption may be guided by the level of congruence and accordance between their ancestral culture and the chosen attributes of the traditional host culture and/or other sub-cultures. Findings suggest resonance seeking behaviour for food consumption is influenced by consumers' food taste, experience and knowledge.

We notice the taste of food remains as a strong connection between immigrants and their ancestral culture. For instance, 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 believes most of those restaurants do not offer authentic Bangladeshi/South Asian foods. She prefers hot and spicy foods, and finds Nando's closer to her liking, which is characterised by Bangladeshi food habits. She also likes the spicy bean burgers from Burger King and prefers Thai Red Curry, which matches her taste. As such, her food preference is often influenced by her taste for traditional Bangladeshi or broader South Asian foods:

> 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 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 a 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.

It is also important to mention that immigrant consumers are adopt and adapt. Tina and her family often enjoy mackerel and salmon curry and "tuna chop" (tuna mixed with mashed potato)[4] with "polau" (Bangladeshi fried rice). Immigrants' home countries' traditional cooking recipes, therefore are often appropriated in host country context with different ingredients. Therefore, we have found evidence of transformation of food consumption through both adoption and adaptation further proving that culture is not a fixed construct.

Global popularity of certain ethnic foods has become increasingly common. Ethnic restaurants serving iconic ethnic foods such as Peking Duck, Sushi and Chicken Tikka Masala are often regarded as examples of the globalisation of food culture. However, as Ritzer (2004) argues, this culture can be misleading. Although it may exhibit consumers' interest in exotic ethnic foods, it does not show the true globalisation of a local food. The Provençal foods served in French restaurants across the world are not exactly the same as those served in Provence. Chicken Madras, a popular British Indian cuisine, would not be familiar to people in Chennai (the Indian city formerly known as Madras). Additionally, Yen *et al.* (2018) suggest

that Chinese sojourners are not very fond of the typical "Chinese Takeaways" found on British street corners. Tina's comment also shows that the South Asian population do not find the British Indian restaurants to their liking. Nevertheless, a multicultural city such as London provides a wide range of opportunities for consumers who can select and choose and customise their options. As Rakesh, a businessman of Indian origin describes:

> Rakesh: Once I tried Khoresht-e-Bademjan (a Persian stew) in an Iranian restaurant. I was told it was of authentic taste. Because, in India we have different preparations of eggplants, I liked the taste. Then I found it in a supermarket which tastes quite different […] I do not quite like the Anglicised version of ethnic foods.

Holt (1998) suggests that cosmopolitan consumers may develop connoisseurship and taste for authenticity. Our findings also exhibit ethnic consumers' desire for authentic taste and cultural appropriation during their adoption and adaptation of food consumption in a multicultural environment. This is an interesting paradox, considering the fact that the cultural appropriation in the western societies has come under scrutiny in recent time as people with more knowledge, understanding and experience of other cultures seek to obtain authenticity. For instance, we can find Jamie Oliver's (British celebrity chef) jerk rice created controversy and debate[5]. Despite the debate and controversy, cultural appropriation in the form of Peking Duck or Chicken Tikka Masala encourages cosmopolitan consumers to try other cultures' products on the basis of resonance.

Most of the South Asian and Chinese respondents said that although they prefer to shop at ethnic grocery stores, the increasing availability of their ethnic ingredients in mainstream superstores such as Asda and Tesco has encouraged them to change their habits somewhat. While, their cooking style requires special ingredients and spices, religiosity also plays important role here. Asda and Tesco offer *halal* meat and ethnic spices and food ingredients. As Rajiv, an Indian respondent mentions:

> Rajiv: We normally go to our local Asda. They do have a good Asian section where we can get Indian spices, frozen Indian snacks, chapatti and rice […] In the past we used to shop separately from Indian grocery stores. But now, it is more convenient to shop from one single store, saves time. Yes, we do not always get what we want, but we are happy to do that trade off.

One of the researchers accompanied Rajiv's family during their weekly grocery shopping from Asda. His wife was unsure which chicken to choose, as there was a range of options. They found the one seasoned with Brazilian spices to be closest to their taste and picked that one[6]. This particular strategy concurs with Dey *et al.* (2017) and Rudmin (2003), who suggest that acculturation strategies are often guided by similarities between the host and ancestral cultures. We further this notion by suggesting that the similarities amongst multiple cultures in a given context encourage the consumer cosmopolitanism to appreciate and adopt other cultures.

Rarefaction
We define rarefaction as an acculturation strategy demonstrated by loose connection with both ancestral and other cultures (such as traditional British culture, other ethnic sub-cultures). While all of the different groups analysed in this research exhibit some kind of cultural hybridity, we have identified a particular group who have loose relations with both the culture of their ancestral origin and those of other ethnic and host communities. They perceive themselves to be global and emancipatory, and are not fully committed to any particular identity. The word "rarefaction" refers to loosening density. The term is used in physical geography for the less dense part of the Earth's atmosphere, which tends to have less gravitational force. Likewise, 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 immigrant, Sarah, a London-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.

The above excerpt shows that Sarah has a loose connection with her Ghanaian origin. However, she is not fully immersed into British culture either. She is proud of her familial origin and ethnic cultural values while remaining open about the other cultures. As she responds:

Sarah: […] 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.

In response to a separate question, Sarah said:

Sarah: I like my mom's jollof rice[7]. If I were given an option between my mom's jollof rice and fish and chips or Sunday roast – my mom's jollof rice any day for me.

Jignesh is a 34-year-old Gujarati (originating 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 times has also been noticed. Jignesh is a 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 western part of London in challenging familial circumstances, 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 "chapatti", as we use a different kind of flour […].

When Jignesh invites his friends and colleagues from other communities to his place, he mostly prepares fusion or multicultural foods such as vegetable noodles, pasta and mild chicken curry. However, their family events are mostly enjoyed with very traditional Gujrati foods. Hence, Jignesh is more of cosmopolitan with his friends and colleagues than when he is with his family members. Both Sarah and Jignesh exhibit transient cultural identity and orientation. They have limited attachment to their ancestral cultures; however, their responses show that they are not willing to challenge their ancestral cultures. Furthermore, they are willing to keep both ancestral and local cultural orientation to a limited extent so that one does not overshadow the other. Exhibits Jignesh's taste, which is wide and varied.

Hafiz, an Arab from Iraq, is married to an English lady. He has been living in the UK for almost 30 years. His response also shows that individuals can opt to adopt various cultural attributes without being too fixated with any of them:

Hafiz: I like Middle Eastern and Persian foods. From East London, I go to Ealing and Perivale (West London) to buy shawarma and Middle Eastern bakeries (baklava). However, my wife and I also enjoy pub lunch on Sundays. Both of us love steaks.

Question: Any other ethnic foods? Indian/Chinese/Thai?

Hafiz: Indian food is a bit spicy for me. But I like Thai.

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 and Laroche, 2007). The evidence presented above exhibits this behaviour as part of their acculturation strategies. Again, it would be relevant to mention that a higher level of cosmopolitanism leads to a rarefaction strategy, as the above cases exhibit a strong desire to keep an open mind and willingness to adopt other cultures.

Refrainment
This acculturation strategy involves stronger attachment to ethnic consumers' ancestral culture and leads to careful and conscious behaviour within the stricter boundary of their ancestral cultural values and norms. We have found that despite some ethnic minorities' regular and/or infrequent interaction with the traditional British and other ethnic sub-cultures, there is evidence that their behaviour is strictly restricted within their ethno-religious boundary. As mentioned earlier, food has close associations with ethnic, religious and familial lives, and thus reflects the evidence of refrainment quite profoundly.

Muhammad is a 42-year-old British Pakistani. He has been living in the UK for around 15 years, first in Bradford and now in Southall (a South Asian populated area in the western part of London). He enjoyed his life in Bradford, which has a big Pakistani population. 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 Asians 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].

It was revealed that Muhammad can have British and/or other non-Pakistani foods for up to three or four days, but he has to have his ethnic food thereafter. Hence, Muhammad has a threshold point within which he can adapt – but in the longer run he needs to get back to his ancestral diet.

Peter from Poland also shows that when it comes to food habits and lifestyle, he and his partner, although they enjoy working and living in multicultural London, prefer to have traditional Polish meat that can only be found in East European grocers. They think Polish meat tastes much better than British:

> 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.

Peter works as a builder and has mostly Polish colleagues. However, he has improved his English since coming to England (as was noticed during the interview), as his employer and customers are not Polish. Despite his desire to remain within the Polish circle, he is required to interact with the wider society.

Meeta, a Tamil (a linguistic group from South India and parts of Sri Lanka) Brahmin, comes from a family that 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. As Meeta states during her interview:

> Meeta: Being a vegetarian, it is very difficult for me to eat fish. I never did it in my life before. I cannot put up with the smell. However, I somehow managed, but I would have never had meat.

While refrainment refers to a measure or condition that stops someone and controls their behaviour, it is important to mention that people set their own threshold point or red line that they choose not to cross. People apply their judgement and make adjustments to ascertain what suits them best within that boundary defined by religiosity or communal/familial values. Meeta could only go as far as eating fish, which in itself was a bold decision for her. However, she still assumes that she is very much within her own cultural boundary.

Berry (2005, p. 705) defines separation as the situation when individuals "turn their back on involvement with other cultural groups, and turn inward toward their heritage culture". The rarefaction strategy applies for the individuals who do not completely isolate themselves from other cultures and interact with other community members despite the fact they would have preferred to remain within their cultural boundaries. Although they have low level of cosmopolitanism, they make appropriate adjustments (e.g. not eating meat/fish for Meeta, not interacting with non-Polish people for Peter) due to health/economic-related realities.

Rebellion
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/

familial/communal cultural/religious authority, control and convention with a view to adopting "Other" cultures fall in this category.

Observation and interviews identify that religious barriers appear to limit many of the respondents' flexibility and distance them from the 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.

However, two of the Muslim respondents in this research have different views on this issue. While one is a London-born Iranian, the other is a first generation Bangladeshi. Both have maverick views towards traditional religious norms and their opinions and behaviour demonstrate their challenge to the authority and control of their religious norms. Raza, a 26-year-old Londoner of Iranian origin, explains his views towards 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 is different for Shakil, a 35-year-old first generation immigrant from Bangladesh who has been living in London 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.

However, Shakil's wife's protests do not stop him from drinking. He goes out with his colleagues from time to time and enjoys his drinks. As he mentions:

Shakil: I went out with my colleagues and had a few drinks. My wife could smell it when I returned home and she was furious. I actually had to be bold to continue with my lifestyle.

Both Shakil and Raza show their desire to challenge authority and control of their religion and family members. As such, the scope of interaction with members of other communities enables Shakil to challenge his religious/familial restrictions. Ramesh, a 30-year-old Indian Hindu, shows a strong desire to stand against 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 socio-cultural norms other than religiosity. 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.

Plate A2 shows Farid's kitchen, which has a rice cooker and a grilling machine next to each other. Photo 1 shows his and his brother's preferred roast chicken served on the dinner table along with traditional Malaysian food preferred by his parents.

Ethno-religious identity can create tension and ambivalence among members of ethnic minorities, as they often apply selective interpretation of religion to justify their behaviour (Jafari and Süerdem, 2012). However, we argue that such behaviour, which disregards individuals' ancestral culture, may involve rebellious intent. The rebellion strategy demonstrates consumers' endeavours to push the boundary and exhibits their cosmopolitanism at a maximum level.

Discussion

As the extant literature testifies, contexts can contribute to theorising the distinct nature of certain consumer phenomena (Tian and Belk, 2005) and the interaction between under-investigated consumers and their spatial and temporal conditions (Crockett and Wallendorf, 2004). We are mindful of the fact that over-emphasis on the context (London and its multicultural environment) may diminish the strength of the contributions to relevant theories and concepts. As such, the epistemological stance for this research is neither extremely phenomenological in terms of emic descriptions of contextualised and fragmented phenomena, nor is it an endeavour for grand social theorisation on a more aggregate level. We attempt to take both into account, as suggested by Askegaard and Linnet (2011), by paying attention to the "contexts of context" (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011) in the form of social, institutional and historical issues that define consumers' contextualised responses. Hence, whilst this research investigates a contextual phenomenon, it simultaneously seeks to make a meaningful theoretical contribution.

As such, we analyse the context and background of this research in the first place, by discussing ethnic consumers' experience in multicultural London. Then we reflect on the empirical data to develop a taxonomy for ethnic consumers' multi-directional acculturation strategies in multicultural environments. Finally, we endeavour to analyse the cosmopolitanism's influence on the acculturation process and outcome, as illustrated in Figure 2.

From our findings, it appears that London attracts immigrants because the city is well packaged with its economic and historical importance and its celebration of diversity. As such, it provides a platform for members of various ethnic communities to intermingle and blossom as co-existing entities. London not only hosts the traditional British culture and heritage, but also offers a good mix of diverse ethnic sub-cultures. The ethnic diversity and multicultural environment enable immigrants to interact with a wide range of different cultures which influence their acculturation strategies. As some of the respondents suggest, when they 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 sub-cultures (which may or may not be in their purest forms), traditional British culture and global/international culture. In doing

so, ethnic community members in a multicultural environment interact with and/or adopt multiple cultures and are not left only with an option to choose between the ancestral and the host community's culture. Hence, acculturation in multicultural environments is not uni-directional or bi-directional, but rather is multi-directional, and can involve interaction with and adoption of a multitude of e.g., as shown in Figure 1. This is also motivated by individuals' efforts to be part of the diverse and multicultural environment offered by large cities such as London. Our taxonomy of multi-directional acculturation strategies is exhibited in the following section.

Taxonomy of multi-directional acculturation strategies: the four Rs
We could not find strong and convincing evidence of assimilation and separation, as defined by Berry (1981), or maintenance, as defined by Peñaloza (1994). Our findings rather reveal cultural hybridity, as suggested by another group of scholars (Oswald, 1999; Askegaard *et al.*, 2005; Dey *et al.*, 2017). For instance, one of the respondents, East African-born British Indian whose grandparents left Gujarat more than 50 years ago, still speaks Gujarati at home. Also we noticed 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 roots. As such, we could not find evidence of assimilation. On the contrary, another Indian lady, despite her limited proficiency in English, maintains interaction with wider society. Hence, she is not fully separated. Our taxonomy, therefore, focuses on ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies, which demonstrate their cultural hybridity emanating from their interaction with and exposure to a multicultural environment.

We have found four acculturation strategies that exhibit cultural pluralism – rebellion, rarefaction, resonance and refrainment – reflected in the food habits of the respondents.

We have gathered evidence of consumers' rebellious behaviour against religious, familial and communal authority and control, which may often create a major impediment in forming cultural pluralism at the individual level. The concept of rule-breaking behaviour has gained a lot of currency in the existing literature. Rule-breakers choose to avoid or discard their ancestral food patterns and may disobey religious restrictions (Lindridge, 2005). Freedom is
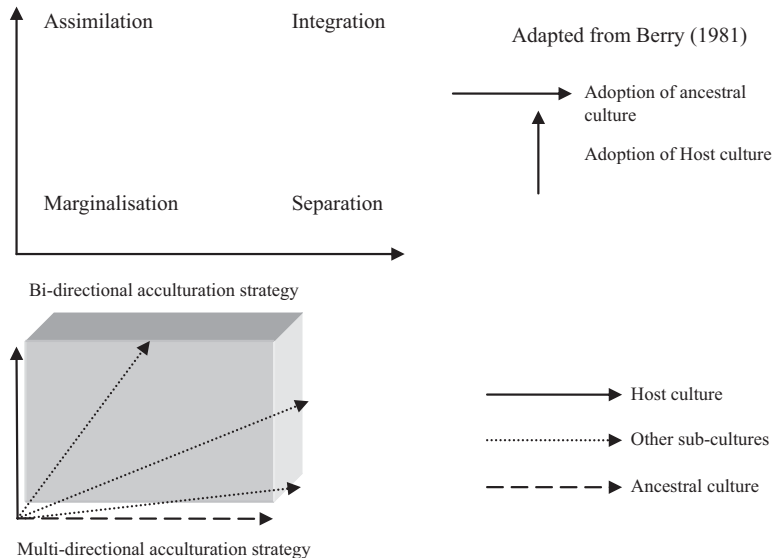

Figure 1.
Bi-directional and multi-directional acculturation

an important motivation behind individuals' desire to challenge the institutional rules (Belk, 1988). As such, consumers are led to a dialectical process of expression (Gentina *et al.*, 2017). Cultures with high power distance in particular may impose authoritative and protective measures on younger members (Yang and Laroche, 2011). When younger generations grow up in a multicultural environment, they may choose to rebel against the authority and control of their family/religion/community. It is important that this behaviour is recognised in consumer acculturation and identified as an expression of acculturation strategy.

This rebellious behaviour and underlying motivation are not same as situational ethnicity (Stayman and Deshpande, 1989), culture swapping (Oswald, 1999) and "pendulism" (Askegaard *et al.*, 2005). We try to project and explain the complexity surrounding ethnic consumers' tension between the authority and control by their own religious/communal/familial rules and their desire to adopt cultures of other communities. While rebellious behaviour chooses to challenge and discard such control and authority, many ethnic consumers may choose to apply refrainment. The refrainment strategy defines their red lines and choice to acculturate up to a point that does not cross the red line or seriously contravene the fundamental ethos of their own community/family/religion. That red line can be in terms of abstaining from drinking alcohol, only eating halal/kosher or vegan foods. In other words, refrainment prevents one from rebelling against their ancestral familial/religious/cultural norms. The concept of refrainment combines the concept of "separation", as defined by Berry (2005), and "authorised selection", discussed by Jafari and Süerdem (2012).

We are suggesting that ethnic consumers who apply the refrainment strategy do not adopt certain practices from other cultures if those practices fall outside of their red lines. However, they may accept other attributes of those cultures as long as those are within the "red line". It may also be case that they remain very rigid about one aspect of culture, while showing flexibility on other aspects, as we noticed for Peter in this research. Here, the choice of cultural adoption is not always based on public/private spheres of life, as mentioned by Jamal (2003).

We have also found individuals with a strong desire to maintain both their ancestral culture and those of other communities residing in the 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. While Peñaloza's (1994) description of "maintenance" strategy amongst certain Mexican Americans denotes their desire to adhere to a much purer version of their ancestral culture, we can see that ethnic consumers from a certain regional or religious group tend to assemble under a broader identity on the basis of "resonance". Broader institutional boundaries and businesses (e.g. South Asian grocers, Caribbean and African food shops, East European grocers) enable them to posit those identities that reflect a feature of their acculturation strategy.

Rarefaction is different from resonance. This group exhibit limited attachment to their own and other co-existing cultural traits. 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 terms "marginalization", as defined by Berry (1981, 2009), and "alienated consumers", as discussed by Riefler *et al.* (2012), do not fully capture this phenomenon. Both terms may give negative connotations. The group termed as rarefaction are not marginalised or socially excluded – they are very much part of the mainstream society despite their lifestyle having an emancipatory nature. Resonance and rarefaction offer more specific and clearer understanding of cultural hybridity and extend the

concepts of cultural experimentalism (Demangeot and Sankaran, 2012) described in the current scholarship. Likewise, rebellion and refrainment provide more specific features of consumers' boundary crossing and boundary maintenance behaviour, as described by Bardhi *et al.* (2010).

Cosmopolitanism and acculturation
Figure 2 illustrates how ethnic consumers' cosmopolitanism influences their acculturation process and strategies in multicultural environments.

Large metropolitan cities host the globalised version of various ethnic sub-cultures, which, as Ritzer (2004) argues, may not represent the true version of those ethnic cultures. However, we have found that cities such as London also offer a wide range of options and enable consumers to assess authenticity (particularly for foods). When Muhammad wants biriyani from Southall and Rakesh is disappointed by the Persian stew sold in a supermarket, we can see that their perceptions and tastes in food are not always led by Anglicised versions of ethnic foods. This is where cosmopolitanism – in this case driven by their individual desire to experience and adopt other cultures – influences their acculturation process and defines their acculturation strategies. Cosmopolitanism can also be driven by socio-economic factors and realities. As Peter wants to secure his job, and Rakhi wants to buy vegetables conveniently, they interact with and adopt other cultures. On the other hand, preparing South Asian fish curry with local fish or shopping from halal stores, and performing religious duties in a multi-ethnic religious place, exhibit
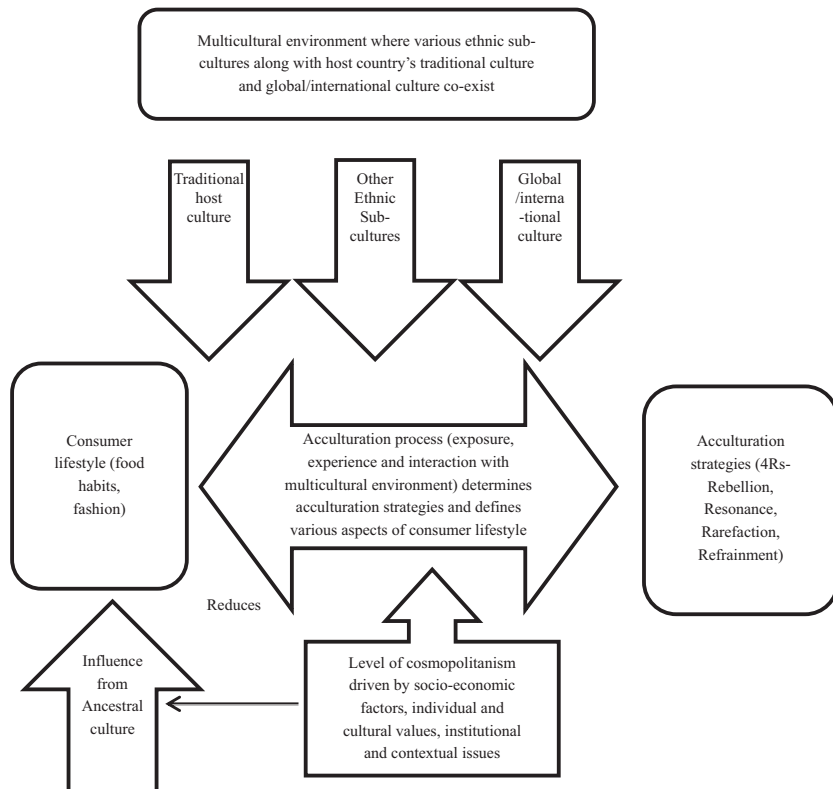

Figure 2.
Cosmopolitanism and multi-directional acculturation strategies

cosmopolitanism driven by institutional facilities. The extent to which an individual will push or be influenced by their ethno-religious boundary depends on the level of cosmopolitanism and is reflected in their acculturation strategies, as discussed in the previous section.

Our findings concur with those reported by Cleveland *et al.* (2013) and Cleveland and Laroche (2012), as we can see cosmopolitanism being an integral part of ethnic consumers' acculturation process in a multicultural environment. Beck (2002) suggests that for cosmopolitans, cosmopolitan values subordinate their national values. This is not always the case for some of the respondents in our research: as we noticed, people may exhibit cosmopolitanism for health reasons, economic reasons and/or social reason (as discussed in the section on refrainment). Cosmopolitanism spans across the social strata. While for the educated elite, it may provide opportunities to learn, experience and enjoy meeting people from other nations, trying their food and celebrating diversity, for the working class it may create collective and communal bonding that supports their livelihood and maintains their ancestral food habits (e.g. buying vegetables and halal food from ethnic shops). As such, consumer cosmopolitanism in multicultural environments may work as a supporting and complementary catalyst for acculturation strategies. Multiculturalism, although it encourages the co-existence of various communities and their cultures, may not promote and support cross-community interaction. Rather, communities may well be separated like mosaic boxes. Consumer cosmopolitanism on the contrary may well enable and encourage people living in a multicultural society to inter-mingle and adopt each other's cultural practices. Our paper analyses the paradoxes and intricacies that facilitate and/or inhibit these practices through a taxonomy of multi-directional acculturation strategies and their interaction with cosmopolitanism in a multicultural environment.

Theoretical contribution
We take the opportunity to decipher one of the original contribution of this paper – it is noticed that London's ethnic consumers have options and opportunities to interact with (and thus, adopt the culture of) the traditional British (host) culture and also a multitude of cultures of other ethnic communities. As such, their acculturation strategies in London are not characterised by a continuum between the host and the home culture, but rather are shaped by a multitude of cultures and can move in multiple directions. We have termed this a multi-directional acculturation strategy that has not been properly highlighted in the existing acculturation literature.

Furthermore, we have also presented and analysed the influence of cosmopolitanism on the acculturation process and strategy. While it has been well established that consumer cosmopolitanism is an antecedent to acculturation, we have explained how different levels of cosmopolitanism can lead to varied acculturation strategies (i.e. the Four Rs). Ethnic consumers may still acculturate and exhibit cultural pluralism with low levels of cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion
In this paper, we have made an original contribution to the acculturation literature and scholarship by introducing and conceptualising a taxonomy of multi-directional acculturation strategies. We have also analysed the role of cosmopolitanism in the formation of acculturation strategies and cultural pluralism. We conclude with a range of marketing and societal implications and offer indications for future research. Our findings have potential for relevant implications for marketing strategy as they provide a firm foundation for further research that will describe various patterns of behaviour of cosmopolitan consumers.

The rebellion group are likely to respond to product and brand standardisation. Ultra-liberal advertisements of the likes of United Colours of Benetton[8] and Ikea[9] could also attract rebellious behaviour. If all ethnic consumers were rebellion against their familial/cultural/religious norms, KFC would not have required vegetarian or *halal* items. Taste for ancestral culture, as discussed earlier also has influence on resonance group. Therefore, increasing adaptation of goods and services can ideally target members of the refrainment (e.g. preference for *halal*) and resonance groups (e.g. taste for ancestral foods). Chicken Tikka Masala is increasingly becoming a part of pub menu in the UK. Vegetarian and/or halal options are also available in many pubs. This could help the refrainment behaviour of Muslim young men, who do not drink alcohol, but still may want to enjoy a football match over lunch in a pub with colleagues and friends. Again, more fusion products (for instance, Prawn Cocktail flavoured Pringles crisps, Heinz Chili Sauce) are exclusively earmarked for the resonance group and trendier global brands to address the needs of the rarefaction group. Global alcoholic beverages (such as Guinness), soft drinks (Coca-Cola) and fast food chains (such as Taco Bell) will attract the rarefaction groups. Branding strategies could further benefit from our acculturation taxonomy. For brand endorsement, companies can use local and global celebrities for rebellion group. Celebrities from ethnic consumers' home/ancestral countries (e.g. Bollywood and Cricket stars) along with global and local celebrities are likely to have influence on rarefaction, refrainment and resonance group.

Developing inter/intra-cultural management training programmes centred on the diversity of market segments within cosmopolitan societies due to the variety of acculturation strategies for marketing managers and frontline staff can enable them to adjust their marketing strategies accordingly. Given the diversified acculturation strategies identified, cultural sensitivity awareness ought to be a constant feature in civic and marketing education to improve cultural sensitivity among the public and hence foster social cohesion. Including acculturation outcomes as an additional basis to classify cosmopolitan societies will enable social policy-makers and service providers to provide better targeted campaigns and foster socio-economic development within multicultural societies. Using one single denomination such as religiosity or ethnicity will not be useful to segment ethnic consumers.

Policy-makers and community workers should appreciate that there is similarity amongst various ethnicities across the board, while there are differences within particular ethnic groups. The "resonance" category can be used to find commonality amongst various groups to promote social integration. Bollywood combines numerous Asian countries, Afro-Caribbean and African communities have broad historical and cultural links, and Middle Eastern and North African communities have linguistic and religious attachments.

It is important to mention that the findings and theoretical contribution of this research need to be validated through quantitative enquiries, which can be considered as a limitation of this study. While this research has provided detail account of food habits and cultural traits, it does not provide much insight into how people eat, their daily routine and familial/collegial/communal interaction pertaining to food habit. Future research can address these issues. Future research can also undertake a comparative analysis among ethnic consumers' interaction with traditional host culture, other ethnic subculture and global/international culture to ascertain similarities and paradoxes in ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies toward different cultural groups they come across in multicultural settings. One pertinent question can be – does ethnic consumers' limited interaction with traditional host culture lead to stronger bondage with other ethnic community members and their cultures?

From the findings, it appears that each of the respondents by and large falls into one of the four acculturation modes. We could not find any evidence to suggest that same individual demonstrates multiple acculturation strategies for their food consumption behaviour. However, we can neither come to a conclusion that their mode and strategy for

acculturation would remain same throughout their lives. It has appeared that significant change in circumstances have enforced some individuals to make adjustments in their consumption behaviour (e.g. one of the respondents had to start eating fish due to health reason). Hence, it would require longitudinal study to ascertain how and to what extent ethnic consumers' acculturation strategies change over the course of time.

This research has not analysed the differences between the demographic profiles and social status of cosmopolitans and locals. Future research can also be conducted on the demographic profiles and comparative analysis between globals and locals in multicultural environments. We also concur with recent scholarly works (Kizgin *et al.*, 2017; Dey *et al.*, 2017; Ogden *et al.*, 2004) and recommend studies in various contexts to examine acculturation strategies. Furthermore, we believe that the categorisation of the host community in relation to our taxonomy will also reveal interesting and useful empirical findings and contribute to conceptual underpinning.

Notes

1. All respondents have been given pseudonyms.

2. Manchester United.

3. Daal – Indian dish with pulses. Chapati – bread.

4. www.banglarrannaghor.com/blog/tuna-chop

5. www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/aug/20/jamie-olivers-jerk-rice-dish-a-mistake-says-jamaica-born-chef

6. Collected from researcher's diary notes taken during the visit.

7. A special kind of fried rice popular in West African countries.

8. www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/benettons-best-advertising-campaigns

9. www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/history-advertising-no-122-ikeas-gay-commercial/1334185

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(The Appendix follows overleaf.)

Appendix 1

Respondent's pseudonyms	Age/Gender	Occupation	Location	Ethnic origin	British born (Y/N)
Richard	35–40 (M)	Engineer	North London	Nigerian	N
David	18–25 (M)	Student/graduate	West London	Jamaican	Y
Alexandro	18–25 (M)	Management trainee	West London	Greek	N
Lilly	30–35 (F)	Marketing/customer service	West London	Chinese	N
Magda	30–35 (F)	Office administration	Hammersmith	Polish	N
Vivek	30–35 (M)	Self-employed	Surrey	Indian	Y
Meeta	30–35 (F)	Marketing/sales	South London	Indian	Y
Cathy	30–35 (F)	Free lance	East London	Chinese	Y
Rahul	35–40 (M)	IT professional	South London	Indian	N
Olga	30–35 (F)	Customer service	East London	Polish	N
Shakil	35–40 (M)	IT professional	North London	Bangladeshi	N
Sarah	18–25 (F)	Student/graduate	East London	Ghanaian	Y
Farid	18–25 (M)	Student	West London	Malaysian	Y
Peter	30–35 (M)	Builder	Hammersmith	Polish	N
Faiza	25–30 (F)	Lecturer	West London	Pakistani	Y
Amira	25–30 (F)	HR manager	West London	Pakistani	Y
Adiba	18–25 (F)	Student	North London	Arab	Y
Catherine	18–25 (F)	Student	West London	Chinese	Y
Muhammad	40–55 (M)	College teacher	West London	Pakistani	N
Ramesh	30–35 (M)	Doctor	South London	Indian	N
Rahima	25–30 (F)	Housewife	East London	Somalian	N
Raza	25–30(M)	Lawyer	West London	Iranian	Y
Hafiz	50–55 (M)	Retail services	East London	Arab	N
Rakesh	45–50 (M)	Self-employed	West London	Indian	N
Jignesh	25–30 (M)	Marketing	West London	Indian	N
Hassan	35–40 (M)	Accountant	South London	Turkish	Y
Tina	35–40 (F)	Office administration	West London	Bangladeshi	N
Irina	55–60 (F)	Self-employed	West London	Pilipino	N
Rajiv	50–55 (M)	Property business	North London	Indian	Y
Michael	25–30 (M)	Government service	North London	Jamaican	Y
Rakhi	50–55 (F)	Housewife	Wembley	Indian	N

Table AI.
Demographic and ethnic profiles of the participants

Appendix 2. Interview protocol

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.

Appendix 3

Themes	Codes (bottom up/inductive)	Codes (top-down/deductive)
Migration history	Reason and motivation, historic attachment, perception of London, multicultural environment	–
Acculturation	Resonance (similarities in supermarket, food ingredients, brands), rarefaction(lack of adherence), rebellion (challenge to authority, disliking ancestral culture, going against family), Refrainment (flexibility/rigidity)	Religiosity, national identity, family influence, motivation to integrate, integration, separation, assimilation, maintenance, marginalisation pendulism, authorised selection
Cosmopolitanism	Interaction with other communities, shopping patter, travelling pattern, desire for food, interest in other countries' brands	Desire to interact with others, adoption of other cultures, appreciation for globalisation

Table AII.
List of the themes and codes used in this research (not all applied in this paper)

Plate A1.
Farid's diner table – fried chicken for Farid is kept with rice and spicy curry

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Plate A2.
Farid's house has got
rice cooker and grilled
machine next to
each other

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