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Cultural identities among Greek Diaspora in the UK

Authors: Athanasia Chalari¹

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the ways Greek born, permanent residents in the UK (Greek diaspora in UK), experience their Greek, British and/or Greek diasporised cultural identities especially in relation to integration and social cohesion within the host culture. 30 in depth interviews have been conducted and analysed through interpretative phenomenology revealing multi-layered experience of multicultural identity through six certain and distinct ways involving constant negotiation between the: a) Greek cultural origin of homeland, b) Greek diasporised culture in the UK and c) British culture. A rather unanticipated finding relates with participants' almost unanimous hesitation in belonging or committing to British national identity which paradoxically co-exists with their undisputed active and productive contribution towards social cohesion among British society.

Keywords: Greek, British, Cultural, ethnic, national, citizenship, diaspora identity, integration

¹Visiting Senior Fellow, LSE

Identity(ies)

Identity as a sociological, psychological, political but primarily philosophical concept, which has been trying to answer the eternal question “who am I”? In order for this question to be answered several routes have been followed, including philosophical approaches on identity as the interplay between the I and the Me (Mead, 1934 and James, 1890), identity as the interplay between the conscious and the unconscious (Freud, 1899), identity formation through socialisation (Simmel 1908/1950) or identity as developmental process (Erickson, 1968). All such classical approaches (and many more) have resulted in the formation of several Identity Theories (eg Social Identity Theory; Identity Control Theory, 2009) as well as, the study of identity through several identity domains (culture, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, diaspora etc). Still, identity as a concept, involves a complex and wide combination of collective, social as well as personal identities. Each person identifies -more or less intensively- with each one of the identity domains they may experience and be (or not be) aware of. Each of those identities entail certain meaning(s) not only ascribed by each individual concerned, but also in relation to the context the individual finds oneself in (Chalari, 2017). The current study focuses primarily on identity domains of: culture, ethnic, national, citizenship and diasporised identities as it engages with the meaning making of Greek, British and Greek diasporised cultures among Greeks residing in UK.

Cultural, ethnic, diasporised, national and citizenship identity(ies) are domains of identity which are experienced simultaneously and have been studied (separately or in combination) by sociological, social-psychological and politics perspectives, commonly under the umbrella of immigration identity and multiculturalism (Deaux, 2000; Berry, 2000; Andreouli and Howarth, 2012). Although multiculturalism commonly refers to a set of policies to manage ethnic pluralism deriving from international migration ([Rattansi, 2011](#): 211), this study focuses on the ways diasporic individuals experience their own cultural identity(ies). In wider terms, personal, social and collective identities are seen as interconnected, interdependent and shaped by the social context (Turner and Onorato, 1999). Thus identity is inevitably socially constructed resulting from interactions between individuals and their social environment (Davis, 2019) and thus remains fluid, dynamic and adaptable (Chalari, 2017). Identity(ies) change as personal and social circumstances alter throughout different contexts and life span. In those cases, we refer to ‘transitions’ during active and ongoing change, acknowledging the consequential nature of change and the potential impact on both the individual and the social context within which they live (Crafter and Maunder, 2012). Perhaps one of the most characteristic

examples of identity in transition is that of diapsorised identities, as they remain continuously dynamic and actively evolving (Pelliccia, 2017). This study has focused on participants with Greek cultural heritage, residing in UK, but have not received the UK citizenship yet and therefore, cannot be identified as British nationals. Instead, they have received the EU settled or pre-settled status, allowing them permanent residency to UK and the prospect to become eligible to apply for the British citizenship. This group of participants have been identified as sharing common cultural, ethnic, diasporised, national as well as citizenship identities as they are all born in Greece, permanently residing in UK but not possessing the UK citizenship.

Cultural identity, through a sociological angle, can be understood as the relationship(s) between individuals and members of a group (eg Greeks) who share a common history, language, and similar ways of understanding the world (Kim & Ko, 2007). More specifically, culturally based identity theories (associated to Cultural Sociology), focuses on how cultural identity meaning(s) are implemented within situations that evoke them (Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, 1979) emphasising how social contexts may reveal certain identities and shape their meaning(s) (eg the meaning ascribed to Greek, British and Greek Diapsorised cultural identities, may differ within different contexts). This approach on identity is termed 'culturally performed' as emphasis is placed on the culture (eg Greek cultural identity as experienced within vs outside Greece) instead of the internalised social identity (i.e being Greek within or outside Greece) (Davis, 2019). Cultural identity entails a complex set of beliefs and attitudes that people have about themselves in relation to their culture group membership; unsurprisingly, they are more commonly surfaced when people are in contact with another culture, rather than when they live entirely within a single culture (Berry, 1999; Phinney, 1990) an occasion which becomes less relevant in the contemporary world.

Ethnic identity on the other hand, refers to the level of immigrant's (and thus diaspora's) commitment to the host society as well as the immigrant's commitment to home society' (Epstein & Heizler-Cohen, 2015); in other words it is "a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one's identity of self as a member of an ethnic group forming within the culture of origin" (Phinney, 2003: 63). Ethnic identity depends on the culture of origin and thus cultural identity; for example, in the UK context the ethnic identity of Greeks coincides with the Greek culture rooted in the cultural origin of Greeks and their beliefs of what Greekness stands for. The broader concept of ethnicity (eg what Greekness may stand for) entails communal, local, regional, national, and racial identities which are locally and historically specific, but at the same time notably fluid (Jenkins, 2008) although the essence of ethnicity

per se, includes the ways in which individuals have explored their ethnicity whether they are clear about what their ethnic group membership means to them, and whether they identify with their ethnic group (Phinney, 1996). This approach on ethnic identity is more relevant in the study of diasporas as it is relevant to groups of people with common cultural heritage, residing away from homeland. In that sense ethnic and cultural identity share common ground but should not be confused with national identity because the later comes with the territory, meaning, that being a citizen of eg Britain makes you British (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009) and at least in theory, attachment to (eg British) national identity makes naturalization (eg apply for the British citizenship) more likely (Bartram, 2020). Therefore, ethnic and national identities may or may not coincide, with the latter being the case for diasporas. British citizenship specifically, is a conception of inclusive bounded-national community; an idea of belonging although this ideal does not coincide with the naturalisation procedure or the rights/and duties of the political citizen (Favell, 2001). In fact, it remains debatable, whether the British version of naturalisation requirements (citizenship test and ceremony) is effective in leading immigrants (and thus diasporas) to embrace British national identity; nevertheless, gaining the British citizenship in this way, aims in embracing the corresponding national identity and securing social cohesion and solidarity (Bartram, 2020: 376). In broader terms, people who live within the boundaries of the nation could become its citizens although citizenship is flexible, strategic and spatially complex (Isin, 2007).

Greek Diaspora

Diaspora is a well explored concept which has been described as a long-distance nationalism, emotional attachment to the homeland and a sense of diasporic obligation (Mavroudi, 2018). A diaspora consciousness on the other hand, relates with identity in relation to diasporised and non-diasporised individuals, and in relation to the homeland; for some, there is a need to find more stable and strong points of contact, whereas for others, less is sufficient (Mavroudi, 2020). Primarily, Greek diaspora has been studied through a constant attachment to the "mother-nation", whereas Greekness has been perceived as fixed, organic and homogeneous sense of belonging, prioritising language, religion, family, and kinship defined within ethno- religious and cultural boundaries (e.g. Constantinou 1999, Komondouros and McEntee-Atalianis 2007, McDuling and Barnes 2012). However more recently, Greek diaspora has been reconceptualised as a non-uniform or stable configuration. Greek diaspora identity (like the concept of identity *per se*) has been studied as constantly performed, re-negotiated and co-constructed (Angouri 2012, Christou 2006, King et al., 2011). For example, feelings

of personal and collective Greekness have been explored independently from homeland language which is not seen as a defining factor in ethno-national diasporas. Diasporic identity is therefore seen as an ongoing negotiation and a fluid process of emotional 'becoming' (Mavroudi, 2020). Through such lens, Greek diaspora is not perceived as a predefined and durable entity, but rather, a result of an ongoing, intergenerational dynamic process; as hybrid, ongoing, intercultural and adjustable concept depending on context, time and space (Pelliccia, 2017). In other words, diasporas (including Greek diaspora) are continuously and actively evolving. Consequently, identities in diaspora are re-negotiated, re-adjusted and re-learned as living away from homeland requires ongoing learning of how to be, act and belong, while they are formed in negotiation between homeland and host cultures in a hybrid form, as it is impossible to recognise where Greekness ends and 'Otherness' begins (Mavroudi, 2020, Pelliccia, 2017, Anthias 2013).

Although plenty of studies have been conducted on Greek diasporas around the globe (Constantinou, 1999; Komondouros and McEntee-Atalianis, 2007; McDuling and Barnes, 2012, King, Christou and Ahrens, 2011; Mavroudi, 2020, 2023; Pelliccia, 2017), the case of Greeks residing in UK has not been equally explored. The first references associated to the Greek diaspora in UK referred to a 'commercial diaspora' which appeared in London around the 1820s and primarily engaged with shipping. Gradually the number of Greeks in London increased due to the advancement of trade and the increased involvement of Greek shipowners in UK (Kouta, 2018). Greek shipping had ever since been based in London. Between 1955 and 1973 the Greek community in UK enlarged from 1800 to 8000 habitants (Harlaftis 1996). Since 1980s and up until the enforcement of Brexit in 2020, UK had become a favourable destination for Greek students which had been maximised during late 90s and early 2000s reaching annual registrations of 30,000 students to University programs. Thereafter, the number of students reduced gradually due to the increased UK University fees, whereas many students permanently resided in UK as professionals. People from around the globe chose to migrate to the UK primarily for better educational and employment opportunities (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). Up until 2011 the Greek-born residents in UK were 36.769. This number multiplied due to the Greek crisis and reached its maximum between 2016-19 (from 14,000-17,000 Greeks registering annually for a new NI number in UK (Pratsinakis, 2021).

There were approximately 73.000 Greek nationals residing in the United Kingdom in 2021, an increase from the 26.000 Greek nationals residing in the United Kingdom in 2008. The highest number of Greek nationals residing in the United Kingdom was in 2016 and 2018 with 74.000 nationals (Statista, 2023).

This figure is further confirmed by the SEESOX Diaspora Project reported by Pratsinakis in 2021, who argues that it is safe to claim that the Greek population in the UK comprises at least 70,000 people which is almost double the size of the population in 2011. Inflows from Greece have skyrocketed as the UK emerged as one of the most dynamic destinations of the new crisis-driven migration, second only to Germany. During the so called 'Greek Crisis' (2008-2018), a significant part of the younger Greek work force immigrated, and consequently characterised as 'Brain Drain', particularly referring to immigrated younger Greek scientists and professionals (Chalari and Koutantou, 2021). Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2017) estimate that the Greeks who settled abroad between 2010 and 2015 reach 240,000, with the UK being one of the most popular destinations, whereas at least two-thirds of the Greeks who left the country after 2010 had higher education qualifications and left Greece to find better employment conditions. According to data from the Labour Force survey in 2014, 78% of Greeks living in the UK were university graduates; a share that is double that of British graduates in the UK and that of Greek graduates in Greece. Two thirds of Greeks residing in UK are employed most of them in positions related to their qualifications according to SEESOX Diaspora Project (Pratsinakis, 2021). According to Chalari and Koutantou's qualitative study in 2021, participants (formed by Greek professionals in UK), left homeland due to Greek Crisis in search of professional and personal progression; this anticipation has been effectively achieved, as the participants of their study seemed to have been successfully integrated within the economic, social, and political environment of the UK which they have chosen over the equivalent Greek context; a finding further confirmed by Pratsinakis (2021), explaining that Greeks in UK are commonly highly-skilled and educated professionals who have also started families in UK.

Interestingly, Greek diasporised individuals did not necessarily help their homeland in times of crisis, even if they have strong sociocultural connections to it. Trying to help the homeland can be a frustrating process and can make those in diaspora feel distanced and isolated from the homeland due to their inability to find concrete ways to help (Mavroudi, 2018). In particular, young Greek immigrants in UK are concerned with their own sense of belonging beyond an ethno-national Greek identity, which expands towards their host country and the Globe as a whole (Mavroudi, 2023b). According to Pratsinakis, (2021:80) possibly most of the Greeks migrating to UK because of the Greek crisis have not received the UK citizenship (yet). Loneliness is more evident in the ages of 30-40 and 50-60 although language is not a social barrier for them; in contrast, language proficiency has assisted in their positive economic growth (Ibid). Finally, almost half of the Greeks residing in UK have experienced some short of discrimination, whereas this percentage slightly drops among London residents (Ibid, p.89).

Acculturation, Integration and Social Cohesion in UK.

Acculturation is a core process that diasporas encounter during their adaptation to the host country. Such process is experienced by individuals after arriving in a foreign cultural setting different from their own. Such process involves psychological and sociocultural adaptation through intercultural contact and can lead to changes in different domains (e.g., identity, language) as immigrants (in this case diasporised populations) can simultaneously commit to the culture of origin and to the culture of the new residence country (Chirkov, 2009, p. 94). Such acculturation may be experienced and accomplished in different degrees and paths for different persons associated with different combinations of degree of commitment to the culture of origin and to the residence country (Berry, 1997, 2000). Integration is seen as one out of all the possible acculturation pathways, and requires both host and migrant adaptation so that new values and identities are formed. However, such linear approach -assuming a set of homogenous norms to be adopted- have resulted in public discourse evaluations about immigrants and refugees being “successfully” or “unsuccessfully” integrated’ (Phillimore, 2012). Still, we have no clear definition of integration and no consensus as to whether we measure integration at the level of the individual, community or society (Phillimore, 2012). For that reason, it would be more helpful if we turn to social policy and look for the official definition of integration in UK. Home Office in UK has set the integration framework as: “Communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities’ while emphasising that integration is multi-dimensional, multi-directional, context-dependent and depends upon everyone’s (newcomers, communities and government) responsibility and contribution in order to work” (Home Office, 2019:11).

Notably, the naturalisation process of immigrants, aims in embracing the British national identity and secure social cohesion and solidarity (Bartram, 2020) instead of integration, although it remains unclear if this goal is effectively accomplished. Like integration, social cohesion is a multi-level concept, defined as the ‘glue’ that binds social members together and can be viewed through the experiences or outcomes of individuals, groups, communities, institutions and nations (United Nations, 2023). In terms of social policy, social cohesion has become measurable and Abrams et al (2013) report on the measurement of social cohesion, propose the adaptation of the British Academy’s (2019:27) elements of social cohesion which include identity and belonging, social economy, social responsibility, cultural memory and tradition, and care for the future. Because social cohesion is always a relational concept effective measures should further include intergroup and intragroup dimensions, people’s own behaviour and perceptions, their perceptions of their relationships with others, and; assess actual and

perceived change over time. Abrams et al (2013) clarify that is not clear at present what a 'bad' or 'good' level of social cohesion looks like, while acknowledging that qualitative and ethnographic forms of evidence are required in order to capture the meaning instead of measures of social cohesion.

Methods

Sampling

The data of this study derives from a wider qualitative project focusing on the impact of Brexit on Greek Diaspora in UK. The purpose of this study is not to produce generalisable outcomes but to explore the ways Greeks residing in UK have experienced their own cultural identity(ies); therefore, this study consists an exploratory investigation (Hoaglin, Mosteller and Tukey, 1983). Participants have been selected based on their eligibility (Greek-born, settled or pre-settled holders, permanently residing in UK) and have been recruited from across England (more than half reside in Greater London) aiming in achieving a balance in terms of age, gender, family status, educational and socioeconomic background and duration of residence in UK (arriving in UK anytime between 5 and 20 years ago). Interviewees were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study, as it is commonly deemed suitable with exploratory and non-probabilistic research designs (Ritchie et al. 2013). The sample was opportunistic; the recruitment strategy used 'gatekeepers' and 'snowballing' techniques (Maxwell, 2013).

Demographics:	Total: 30	Level of Education:	Total: 30	Specialisation:	Total: 30
Gender:	15F 15M	School graduates/Lykeio:	3	Medical	4
Ages:	22-63	College/BA	7	Academics	5
Location:	Greater London:17 Non-London: 13	MA:	9	Salary employed	10 (Managers:3, Administrators: 3, Services:4)
Years of residence in UK:	5-9yrs: 16 10-20yrs: 12	Medicine:	4	Unemployed	3
Parents:	18	PhD:	5	Teachers	4
Country of Education:	UK:23 GR: 7	Currently Students:	2	Self Employed	2
Religion:	Christian Orthodox: 26 Agnostic:2 Atheist:2			Students	2

Table 1: Demographics

Procedure of Data Collection

30 interviews have been conducted including two pilot interviews to test the appropriateness of the questions. The topic guide was based on semi-structured and open-ended questions prompts on the experiences associated to Greek, Greek diasporised and British identity formation. The study followed the ethical standards stipulated by the British Sociological Association guidelines on ethical research (BSA, 2022) concerning consent, anonymity, respect for participants, integrity, and safe data storage and has received ethical approval by the LSE-Hellenic Observatory Ethics Research Committee. Prior to interview participants have been requested to fill in a consent form informing them about the purpose and procedure of the study. Questions were formed based on the exploration of identity by trying to avoid directing participants to specific answers or options. The research questions of the larger project addressed during interviews were informed by the research literature and were asked in an open-ended format (Light, Singer and Willett, 1990; Kvale, 1996), concerned solely with personal experiences of everyday living (Baker, 1997; Roseneil and Budgeon, 2005) in relation to Greek, British and Greek Diaspora cultural identities. At the beginning of each interview participants were asked to answer demographic questions served as a prompt to initiate the discussion. All interviews were conducted by a female Greek-born researcher. They lasted between 30 mins and 3 hours. They were all conducted within March and April 2024 through the following means: face-to-face, Microsoft Teams and telephone. All of them have been audio recorded by the researcher and transcribed by a research assistant.

Reflexivity: The author has continually checked and reviewed the themes emerging from the data throughout the process. This approach was deemed effective to explore novel phenomena within a continuous interaction between theory generation and empirical observation (Charmaz and Belgrave 2015). Conscious efforts were made to remain as open and accepting as possible to different experiences participants shared, while respecting and empathising with the difficulties and challenges they have been sharing, as many of the experiences were also identified in the life of the researcher.

Premise of Analysis

In order to analyse cultural identity experiences, fragments were selected by a large pool of 30 semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Maxwell, 2013). Interpretive phenomenology had been utilised as analytical tool as it offers a unique methodology for studying lived experience. It brings to light what is often taken for granted while allowing the emergence of phenomena from the perspective of how people interpret and attribute meaning to their existence; phenomenology and more specifically hermeneutics focuses on the interpretation of meaning through lived experience. Lived experiences

are deemed incomplete while remaining descriptive; interpretation of significance for the person and contextualisation of the social circumstance is pivotal (Gadamer, 1976; 2004). This study aims in exploring meaning making of cultural identities, among Greek diasporised participants; in that sense, interpretive phenomenology offers the ideal epistemological foundation in order to describe, understand and explain the ways Greek, Greek diasporised and British cultural identity(ies) are experienced. The commonly employed technique enabling the application of interpretive phenomenology is thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) had been employed through the repeated readings of the translated transcripts of the interviews, focusing on meaningful and relevant categories and themes associated with aspects and elements related to participants' British, Greek and/or Greek diasporised identity(ies) experience. The focus remained on the emergence of contiguity-based relations between themes, revealing relations among parts of transcribed text (Maxwell, 2013). The identification of these themes allowed the emergence of patterns regarding the distance and/or proximity participants have experienced in relation to the above-mentioned cultures. Analysis has been organised according to those themes while employing hermeneutic interpretation of specific fragments, which however, are not analysed in isolation as commonly applied. Rather, the fragments are analysed in following the stream of thinking of participants during discussion based on the sequence of the questions asked. In short, instead of isolated fragments, a series of fragments are analysed, deriving from specific participants, following their considerations upon the responses to the questions asked.

d. Technique of Analysis

This study explores the ways certain cultural identities have been experienced. In order for this to be accomplished the analysis of data focused on the ways participants experience personal proximity and/or distance towards a) Greek, b) Greek diaspora and c) British culture. Such experiences have been revealed during discussions involved very specific but open-ended questions, in an attempt to make participants consider whether and to what extent they associate with either or all cultures. The questions started by asking *if they feel closer to the Greek or British culture*. Half of the participants replied that they were feeling closer to the Greek culture whereas the rest stated that they feel close to both or neither culture. This discussion was followed by the question *if they felt as being part of the Greek Diaspora*. Especially this question was phrased in an open format allowing personal interpretations of what Greek Diaspora stands for. Such approach enabled the participants to form three distinct definitions of the Greek diaspora. The next question asked *whether they felt at all British*.

In this question about one third responded that they partially did feel British. In case of parents, this question was followed by asking whether their children felt more or less British than themselves. In all cases participants felt that their children were more British although for few they were half and half, depending if the offspring was born and raised in UK or Greece. The last question in this vein asked whether they were going to apply for the British citizenship and just over half responded positively.

The analysis of each question in isolation (per participant), may reveal a partial understanding about the proximity and/or distance participants may feel towards the Greek, Greek diaspora and/or British cultures. However, the simultaneous analysis of all of the above questions (per participant), in a format of naturally occurring stream of thinking, reveals a more completed depiction of the ways participants are experiencing proximity or distance towards those cultures, their sense of belonging to the Greek Diaspora, their own sense of Britishness, their children's sense of Britishness and their intention to apply for the British citizenship. The analysis of this combination of responses has allowed a deeper understanding to the stream of thinking of the participants, who had been able to construct, shape and even reshape their responses during their ongoing discourse. Therefore, instead of analysing specific fragments associated with specific questions, it turned out more fruitful to focus specific, yet characteristic responses, while participants had been considering the above-mentioned questions, in real time, during each interview.

Findings

Initial thematic analysis allowed to map the semantic content of the interviews which shaped the shared meaning of: a) Greek culture - which has been depicted as the rooted link of all participants to homeland; b) Greek diaspora - which has been defined through three clearly separate ways, used loosely by different participants: i) some interpreted it as an abstract description of those Greeks residing outside Greece; ii) others, interpreted Greek diaspora as an organised community of Greeks in UK and iii) Greek diaspora was depicted through the relations/connections of participants with other Greeks living in UK and c) British culture: which has been portrayed as the different degrees of association participants have acknowledged with their host country. At the same time, hermeneutic interpretations of thematic analysis uncovered six distinct ways in which participants have experienced distance and/or proximity towards their Greek, Greek diasporised and British cultural identities: 1) Proximity towards Greek and Greek diasporised cultures only; 2) Proximity towards Greek, British and

Greek Diasporised Cultures, 3) Distance from Greek, British and Greek diasporised Cultures; 4) Explicit Proximity to Greek & Greek Diaspora culture & Implicit Proximity to British culture; 5) Explicit Proximity to British culture & Implicit Proximity to Greek & Greek diasporised culture; 6) Simultaneous Distance & Proximity to all three Cultures. Each of the above ways will be discussed separately. Although it appears that Greek and Greek diasporised cultures are treated similarly by participants, they have been represented through clear distinctions and different understandings.

Proximity to Greek & Greek diasporised cultures.

Very few participants offered responses which included consistent proximity (perhaps even attachment) solely to Greek culture. Although those responses have not been many, it is noticeable that they come from participants who have spent a significant part of their lives in UK and have created deep family and professional roots in this country. Nevertheless, they feel a stronger proximity primarily to Greek culture (homeland) and secondly to Greek diaspora.

For example, Hrisa, aged 54, Greek Café owner in Greater London, who has been residing in UK for 10 years and has 2 grown up children, explained that: “My culture hasn’t changed I remain Greek” and she adds that “I feel close to the Greek Diaspora as I work primarily with Greeks”; thus for her, this counts as involvement with the Greek diaspora. She categorically stated that “No I do not feel British at all, I am 100% Greek” (Hrisa, Greater London, 54, 10, Cafe owner). Notably, she perceives her grown up son who works in UK to be more British than her. The other child remains in Greece. She hesitates to apply for the British citizenship due to insecurity about the exams involved. Hrisa relocated to UK during the Greek crisis but at a later stage in life and can possibly be included in the ‘brain drain wave’ of Greeks immigrating during the Greek crisis (Chalari and Kountantou, 2021). It seems reasonable that her integration/acculturation may lean more towards the Greek culture and Greek diaspora and displays a rather consistent awareness of her Greek preference whereas she makes it clear that she does not want to create deeper links with the British culture.

Teris, 46 years old, resides in UK for 20 years where he relocated before the Greek crisis. He has completed a PhD and works as an academic in a small English town. Teris possibly belongs to the ‘Student immigration wave’ climaxing during 2000s who remained in UK (Pratsinakis, 2021). He has a daughter but thinking of returning to Greece. Teris explains that “in UK I am Greek and in Greece I am British” which possibly denotes a feeling of ‘in-between’ when it comes to proximity in either culture.

Teris adds that: “Two out of three Greeks reside outside Greece, so yes, I am a part of the Greek Diaspora, I am a Greek living away from Greece”. This is an additional definition of Greek diaspora that has been used by some participants and relates with the sense of being a Greek living away from Greece (Έλληνας του εξωτερικού). As the discussion unfolds, Teris emphatically states that “No I am not British I am Greek” (Teris, 46, 20yrs, Academic) while acknowledging that “my daughter is certainly more British than me”. Teris refuses to apply for the British citizenship as he perceives this process to be part of “institutional racism as the same application costs 80 euros in other countries and £1500 in this country. [...] this happens to discourage eligible applicants”. Several participants hesitate to apply due to the increased cost involved although for Teris the reason is even deeper. He feels discriminated and not treated as British and the sequence of his responses reveals a preference towards the Greek culture although in his case, it is not clear if he feels closer to the Greek diasporised culture, or to homeland. In any event, Teris displays a case of participant who is consciously leaning more towards the Greek culture and does not wish to cultivate or maintain any deeper links with the British culture.

The above examples portray two participants who have a clear mind about their cultural identity as they feel solely Greeks despite the long time they have spent away from Greece and the fact that their children are more British than Greeks. Most participants though, did not have as clear views. This attitude could relate with Berry’s (1997; 2001) acculturation degree of *separation* as it involves individuals holding on to their original culture and at the same time avoiding interaction with locals, although this is not totally the case with either participant as, especially Teris, works with natives. Both participants hold on to Greek (original) culture and Greek diasporised (hybrid) culture and at the same time they refuse the rightful prospect of receiving the British citizenship and thus become British nationals. Such denial may challenge the idea of belonging as a principle of British citizenship of an inclusive bounded-national community (Favell, 2001) and Home Offices’ framework of integration depicted as ‘shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities’. The reason is that Teris won’t apply for the British citizenship as he feels he is actively discouraged due to the increasing cost while Hrisa feels intimidated by the exams she needs to undergo. Perhaps the most paradoxical (and as will be seen repeated) finding, is that despite their unwillingness to adopt a British national identity they both contribute rather actively to solidarity and cohesion (Bartram, 2020) of the British society through their professional, personal, economic and family lives as, they are part of the British labour force, they socialise on personal and professional levels with natives, they are tax payers and they have been raising British nationals.

Proximity towards Greek, British & Greek diasporised cultures

This is a category which also includes very few participants, reflecting a perhaps more equalized depiction of proximity towards all three cultures. One of them is Rena, aged 28 living in central London for the last 5 years (marginally belongs to the Greek crisis brain wave) and working as a school teacher. She states that “[I feel closer to the] Greek culture as I spent most of my days with Greeks at work” and she consequently acknowledges that “I am close to the Greek diaspora just because I am around Greeks but not for any other reason”. She moves on to add that “I do feel a little bit British because I have also made friends here and my boyfriend is British” (Rena, 28, 5yrs, teacher). She will apply for the British citizenship “once I complete 6 years in this country. It’s my right to have [the citizenship] if I am staying here”. As Rena discusses her experience, she initially says that she feels closer to the Greek culture (as she associates with Greeks) and she also feels part of the Greek Diaspora for the same reason; at the same time she feels partly British and will apply for the citizenship, because of her association with British people. As those statements are developed through naturally occurring stream of thinking in real time, they are shaped during the occurrence of discourse. In this sense, Rena begins by recognising her closer proximity to the Greek culture and Greek diaspora but as she talks about her views, she reveals a similar proximity towards the British culture; the common reason has to do with her proximity to Greek and British people with whom she has created personal and professional connections. Rena’s narrations portray a rather balanced proximity to both cultures as well as Greek diaspora which allow her to associate with both cultural identities including her belonging to the Greek diaspora. Rena feels in-between the Greek, Greek diaspora and British culture.

Thanos is 46 years old, relocated to UK 16 years ago (before the Greek crisis, and has been part of the student immigration wave), resides in North London and he is also a school teacher. Thanos explains that “In my heart I am Greek [...] but when it comes to practical professional matters, I am British” and he adds that he is a member of the Greek diaspora because “I am one of the many Greeks living and working away from Greece sharing all the concerns people like me may have”. He further explains that he feels “closer to the British culture than before; I understand better their way of thinking and behaviours, I feel familiar with this culture and yes I am part of it”. Thanos is planning to apply for the British citizenship as “after living in this country for over 16 years, part of my life is now British”. Like Rena, Thanos displays a clear proximity to both cultures without diminishing or prioritising any of the two. Unlike Rena, Thanos is not prioritising his personal or professional connections, but rather he explains that his heart is Greek and his way of thinking is British. For this very explicit reason he maintains a balanced proximity towards both cultural identities as well as the Greek diaspora. Like Rena, he feels in-between cultures.

These two participants portray isolated cases of balanced proximity to all three cultures; Rena because of and through her personal and professional connections and Thanos because of and through a very conscious awareness of coexistence between his British and Greek sides. This is the one case identified by Pratsinakis' (2021) findings in terms of feelings of proximity to both cultures, and this attitude could relate with Berry's (1997; 2001) acculturation degree of *integration* (as they have maintained their original culture while engaging in daily interactions with natives) which also aligns Home Office's framework of integration principles. Therefore, proximity to all three cultures seems the ideal case in terms of accomplished integration as set by the British government. Furthermore, the reasoning of both participants regarding their plans to engage with the naturalisation process (apply for the British citizenship) seems closer in embracing the British national identity, as well as contributing to the British social solidarity and cohesion (Bartram, 2020) through their professional and personal lives.

Distance from Greek, British & Greek diasporised Cultures

Again, very few cases portrayed a profound distance from all three cultures. Aria, aged 45 is a mother of two children and resides for 13 years in Greater London. She moved to London during and because of the Greek crisis to follow her husband who belongs to the Greek Crisis Brain wave. She claims that "I feel closer to the Greek culture compared to the British as I socialise more with Greeks" (Aria, 45, 13yrs, unemployed), although she also states that "I do not feel part of the Greek diaspora as Greeks are spread around London" denoting that she does not feel that she finds herself among an organised Greek community. She also recognises that "Maybe I feel partly British [...] although I have come closer to very few British people". She adds that "both of my children are more British than me" and that "I should I apply for the British citizenship although I would prefer living in Greece". This participant emphasises the relevance of the people she relates with, in order to portray her closeness with each culture and the Greek diaspora. It seems that she has stronger links with Greeks in UK rather than British people, yet she does not feel that she belongs to the Greek diaspora and she wants to return to Greece. So she displays a sense of unwanted distance from her Greek cultural identity as she is not living in homeland, as would have preferred. At the same time, she considers rather hesitantly her proximity to British culture while stating that she does not associate with many British people. She feels that she should apply for the British citizenship through a sense of obligation, although she does prefer returning back to Greece. Aria seems ambivalent between two cultures but she knows that she would prefer to return back home. Thus it seems appropriate to say that Aria displays distance from the British culture as well as the Greek diaspora as what she prefers is to be away from both and return

back home. In this occasion the sense of distance from both cultural identities becomes more evident which may imply a sense of isolation.

Dimitris, aged 54, resides in London the last 6 years and has one child. He relocated to London towards the end, and because of the Greek crisis and thus belongs to the Greek Crisis Brain Drain wave. His narration portrays a similar profile to Aria, but perhaps even more vividly. Dimitris declares that “I do not feel close to the Greek or British cultures. My homeland is where I happen to be. I feel completely detached” (Dimitris, 54, 6yrs, private sector) and he adds that “I am not feeling close to other Greeks in London and therefore I don’t belong to the Greek diaspora”. Dimitris says that “I am not British as I am not fully integrated to the British culture but I am deeply grateful to UK. They accepted me and my family during a very hard period for our homeland”. He adds that his son is “certainly more British as this country [UK] can integrate fully young people” and he is about to apply for the British citizenship because he feels detached from Greece. He very characteristically says that “you can’t call yourself Greek and let Greeks die when things get tough”. Dimitris portrays with detailed clarity his feelings about both cultures; he starts by declaring distance especially from Greece and the Greek diaspora, as he explains that he felt mistreated and forced to leave homeland because of the Greek crisis. He explains that he is not part of the Greek diaspora and that he does not feel British. His narrative depicts feelings of anger towards Greece but gratitude towards UK. And this is his reasoning for applying for the British citizenship rather than practical purposes commonly discussed by other participants. However, he is aware that he is not integrated into the British culture like his son. Dimitris testimony portrays distance towards both cultures and the Greek diaspora, as he feels detached from Greece (he was forced to leave) and not integrated into the British culture, but this detachment is portrayed in a way that works rather positively for Dimitris.

The two isolated cases discussed above, portray characteristic examples of distance from all three cultures. Aria is focused in returning to Greece (and reunite with her original culture) and therefore is uninterested in establishing proximity with Greek diaspora or British culture; Dimitris is disappointed from the Greek and Greek diaspora cultures and acknowledges that he is not integrated into the British culture. This attitude may seem to relate with Berry’s (1997; 2001) acculturation degree of marginalization (as there is little interest in Greek cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with natives, although this is not totally accurate as both participants associate with natives through their personal lives and Dimitris through his profession. Berry argues that his marginalisation type, derives from exclusion or discrimination although in the cases discussed above, no such reasons

are evident. In both cases, participants seem to have their own -mostly emotional- reasons to maintain distance between all three cultures they could associate with. Such distance cannot result into Home Office's (2019) ideal of integration as it depends upon the contribution of the newcomers as well as the community and government. In the case of Aria and Dimitris such contribution is not evident. Although, they both intent to apply for the British citizenship their reasons seem disconnected to any sense of commitment to British national identity. Paradoxically, this attitude does not prevent them to remain active contributors towards the solidarity and cohesion of British society, through their professional, personal, economic, and family lives.

The following two categories were not very popular either and share some similarities with the ones already identified. They are included though as separate categories as they hold distinct characteristics.

Explicit Proximity to Greek & Greek Diaspora cultures & Implicit Proximity to British culture.

Markos, aged 42, lives in a small English town and he is a Medical doctor. He relocated to UK 11 years ago, during and because of the Greek crisis and thus belongs to the Greek Crisis Brain Drain wave. Markos has two young children born in UK. He explains that "I don't think I have distanced myself from the Greek culture, but I have adjusted to the British culture in order to cope" (Markos, 42, 11yrs, Doctor) he adds that "I have worked and being friends with other Greeks and in this way I may be close to the Greek diaspora". He very easily refuses that he is British as he explains that "I was born and raised in Greece, I came in UK older so my personality was already formed. My accent remains very Greek. One patient told me that she thought I have just arrived from Greece because of my strong accent". When he talks about his kids, he says that "they were both born in UK and have British passports and still try to get the Greek passport – it's crazy! They will be raised here so they will become British". Regarding the application for the British citizenship Markos explains that "I haven't done it yet, it wasn't a priority but I am a foreigner in this country so I should do it to secure my employment rights". Markos displays a rather steady proximity to Greek culture and Greek diaspora as he feels that he is rooted in Greek culture and his accent is giving his origin away when he talks (a very common realisation among Greeks in UK). He seems well adjusted in UK and he acknowledges that his children will become British. He will apply for the British citizenship for practical purposes like most participants in this study. Thus Markos maintains a clear Greek cultural and diasporised identity which is not getting

in the way of his adjustment to the British culture while he is smoothly coping with, but does not prioritise.

This case portrays a variation of balanced proximity to all three cultures although Greek and Greek diasporised cultures are prioritised and British culture follows, as Markos' stream of thinking reveals. This attitude is leaning towards Berry's (1997; 2001) acculturation degree of *integration* (as Markos maintains his original culture while engaging in daily interactions with natives-although this is not his preference). This attitude includes Home Office's framework of integration principles but reduces the relevance or significance of citizenship to a purely bureaucratic matter clearly disconnected from any sense of national identity or sense belonging associated to British citizenship (Favell, 2001). Nevertheless, Markos, like all participants, seems to be perfectly capable and willing to contribute to the solidarity and cohesion of the British society through his professional (NHS doctor), personal (professional relations and friendships with natives), economic (tax payer) and family life (raising two predominantly British nationals).

Explicit Proximity to British culture & Implicit Proximity to Greek & Greek diasporised cultures

Rhea, aged 38 resides for 12 years in UK and currently lives in a small English town; she is also a Medical doctor and has two children born in UK. She relocated during and because of the Greek crisis and is another participant who belongs to the Greek Crisis Brain Drain wave. Rhea explains that she feels "closer to the British culture. Because of my professional obligations I have not maintained many Greek links" (Rhea, 38, 12yrs, Doctor) but she adds that "I will always feel as belonging to a minority in UK as I am a Greek living away from Greece" [and thus belong to Greek Diaspora]. She says: "Oh no I am not British but I have get used to the British way of life and moved away from the Greek". Her older child "feels more British than Greek but the younger is few months old". She plans to apply for the British citizenship but hasn't done it yet because it involves "too much paperwork and I do not have the time". Rhea is one of the very few participants who leans more towards the British culture as she has not maintained many links with Greece, got used the British way of life, made friends and has established her professional life in this country. However, she also feels different, as a member of a minority in UK- this is how she portrays Greek diaspora- and for that reason she cannot call herself British although her older child is more British than Greek and she is about to complete the bureaucratic process required in order to receive the British citizenship. For Rhea, getting the citizenship seems part of a

procedural process – like submitting her tax return. Such attitude shows an explicit proximity to the British culture although she also acknowledges that she remains a minority in it.

This example portrays a rather uncommon case (among participants) of proximity to British culture although in a hesitant way. Distance from Greek and Greek diaspora is more easily depicted. In terms of Berry's acculturation degrees, Rhea may seem closer to the assimilation profile, as she shows a weak commitment to the culture of origin and a strong commitment to the country of residence (Berry, 1997; 2001) as well as Home Office's (2019:11) principles of integration: 'communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities'. Interestingly, Rhea's approach on applying to British citizenship is not much different from Markos' who also perceives it as a bureaucratic process, detached from any sense of British national identity or sense of belonging associated to British citizenship (Favell, 2001). Once again through, Rhea's life -even as a minority- contributes rather actively and productively towards the solidarity and cohesion of the British society through her professional, personal, economic and family life.

Simultaneous Distance & Proximity to All Cultures

So far, we have discussed five unique but characteristic ways that participants have adopted in order to negotiate their proximity and/or distance towards the Greek and British culture. However, over half of the participants, described their experience of cultural identity as an ongoing negotiation involving both distance and proximity to both cultures. Those cases have been more complex as they display an explicit ambivalence but not in an unsettling manner. The following three examples portray characteristic aspects of such inconclusiveness.

Marina, 54 years old, resides in Greater London and works in a central London University as administrator. She had lived 14 years in UK, relocated to Greece and returned to remain in London, where she now lives for 4 years. Some participants have re-settled in UK after trying to live in Greece but, mostly because of the Greek crisis, they have decided to return to UK. Marina explains that "I think I have distanced myself from the Greek culture so that I can adjust to the local [British] culture" (Marina, 54, 18yrs, Higher Education officer). This statement gives a sense of a person who actively combines two different cultural experiences. However, as the discussion moves on Marina adds: "I don't feel any proximity with the Greek diaspora. I don't know who they are or what they do. But I do

work with Greeks every day". Here Marina-like many other participants- refers to an organised Greek diaspora community which they feel is absent in UK but she acknowledges that she has a daily contact with them. At the same time, when asked if she feels at all British, she responds: "Not at all! I may seem British in my professional life, but I have a Greek way of thinking which makes me different". Marina, like many participants, is planning to apply for the British citizenship "because of the uncertainty surrounding EU, and because I hate the immigration queues". Like for many, Marina's intention to apply for the British citizenship does not relate with proximity to the British culture but rather relates to practical reasons. Marina's responses denote a rather ambivalent cultural identity which signals both distance from the British culture as she does not feel British at all, distance from the Greek diaspora as she does not know who they are or what they do, but at the same time she works daily with Greeks and has a British way of thinking. It seems that Marina is trying to maintain some distance, as well as proximity towards both cultures by maintaining a realistic attitude towards both of them.

A similar case is that of Simos, 56 years old, living in Buckinghamshire; he had spent initially 4 years in UK as student, returned to Greece and then relocated again to UK during the Greek Crisis. He has two grown up kids and is employed as a Senior manager. He explains that "I feel closer to the Greek culture but I am trying very hard to become part of the British culture" at the same time he distinguishes himself from other Greeks by saying that "I don't feel part of the Greek diaspora because I don't feel I am sharing all the negatives of the Greek culture that made me leave Greece" whereas he adds that "I am not British but I do share some things in common with British people" (Simos, 56, 11yrs, Senior Manager). He is about to apply for the British citizenship for "practical professional benefits" and he feels that "maybe my older child is more Greek than British whereas the younger is half and half." Both children have spent significant part of their growing up in Greece contrary to most parents of this study declaring that their children are British as they have been raised in UK. Simos seems to negotiate distance and proximity between the two cultures as he is feeling closer to the Greek culture but not to the negative aspects he identifies and at the same time he feels that he shares some common ground with British people, but this doesn't make him British. This example depicts a participant who feels both proximity and distance towards both cultures but in a non-conflicting way, and this is a rather repeated motive among several participants.

Paris, aged 46, who is an academic moved permanently to UK 11 years ago, during the Greek crisis although he had also studied in UK. He resides in Nottingham, and has two children. He very

characteristically says that “ I do not belong to either culture for different reasons (...) I only adopt the best of each but this makes me wonder where do I belong” he moves on by saying that he is a member of the Greek diaspora because “I did vote in the last Greek elections through postal vote. I follow the Greek news but I also follow the British news” when asked about feeling British he said that he feels “partly British and partly Greek”. He is not sure if his children are more British than Greek as they are too young but he is certain that he will not apply for the British Citizenship because as he says: “the time, money, the idea that I will have two passports, all that procedural process has nothing to offer me; but then again you may ask, why do I follow the British and the Greek news? I don’t know”. This is another fruitful example of a narrative that reveals the consideration of the participant during naturally occurring stream of thinking. Paris’ responses seem more as a way of ‘thinking out loud’ while he is processing the answers. Although he begins by declaring that he does not feel proximity to either culture he explains that he does follow the news of both countries and somehow hesitantly acknowledges, that he is partly Greek and partly British although he won’t say the same about his children, nor attempting to have two passports. It seems that the sense of proximity and distance or even a degree of belonging to either or both cultures is a concern that Paris has not resolved yet, but he is certainly actively engaging with both prospects.

The above last cases offer a different understanding to the ways participants negotiate their cultural identity(ies). It depicts a more complex and less straightforward stream of thinking which entails contradictory considerations and understandings about oneself. Such ambivalent depiction of their cultural identity involves both distance and proximity with Greek, Greek diasporised and British cultures the participants engage with. Yet, such a complex perception of cultural identity does not appear as problematic but rather as a dynamic, multi-layer cultural identity, continuously under negotiation. Such depiction cannot be categorised within Berry’s acculturation degrees or Home Office’s framework of integration, however, without contradicting them. Like many participants, Marina and Simos are planning to apply for the British citizenship for bureaucratic purposes, unrelated with any sense belonging associated to British citizenship and/or British national identity (Favell, 2001). Paris though, is refusing to apply altogether as he cannot see any benefit by receiving the British citizenship and thus remains disconnected from any sense of belonging to the British national identity. Once again though, all three participants remain productive contributors to the solidarity and cohesion of British society through their professional, personal, economic and family lives.

Notably, such identity portrayal seems to depict more clearly than any other, the ideal depiction of 'transition' identity(ies) as they adjust to change of different contexts and life span. Such 'transitions' are experienced during active and ongoing change, and such understanding of identity, acknowledge the consequential nature of change and the potential impact on both the individual and the social context within which they live (Crafter and Maunder, 2012). In that sense, identities are seen as socially constructed resulting from interactions between individuals and their social environment (Davis, 2019²) and thus remain fluid, dynamic and adaptable (Chalari, 2017). Especially within the context of diasporas, this approach further reinforces relevant literature representing Greek diaspora identity as constantly performed, re-negotiated and co-constructed (Angouri 2012, Christou 2006, King et al., 2011), as a process of emotional 'becoming' (Mavroudi, 2020) and lastly as they are formed in negotiation between homeland and host cultures in a hybrid form, as it is impossible to recognise where Greekness ends and 'Otherness' begins (Mavroudi, 2020, 2023, 2023b; Pelliccia, 2017; Anthias, 2013). Consequently, this last way of experiencing cultural identity would be best described through Pelliccia's (2017) term as 'hybrid' diasporic identity which, in accordance with all above ways of experienced multiculturalism, does not indicate any commitment or attachments to British national identity but contributes actively towards the solidarity and cohesion of the British society.

Discussion

This study analysed examples of characteristic participants' narrations, by following their stream of thinking, while they had been considering the questions and shaping their responses. The advantage of analysing simultaneously the responses of a series of specific questions, instead of isolated fragments, relates with the opportunity participants utilised to consider interchangeably their cultural identity(ies), in terms of proximity and/or distance between three different pillars: Greek, Greek diaspora and British cultures. The questions were phrased in a way to enable their reflexive engagement with their sense of proximity and/or distance with each one as well as all of them. As it has been shown, most participants had been negotiating their sense of cultural identity by offering different kinds of answers:

- Greek culture has been associated with the proximity experienced with homeland in various forms: through personal, professional, intimate connections with other Greeks; through the 'Greek way of thinking' primarily associated with emotional roots and has been commonly

² Davies, D. (2019) 'How Sociology's three Identity Theory Traditions clarify the process of entrepreneurial Identity Formation' *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 27(4): 355-384.

used to describe the context within which the participants have been raised. Such depiction of Greek culture portrays the cultural origins of Greek ethnic identity as experienced and negotiated by immigrants residing away from home (Kim & Ko, 2007; Epstein & Heizler-Cohen, 2015; Phinney, 2003). Although it appears that Greek and Greek diasporised cultures are treated similarly by participants, they have been represented through clear distinctions and different understandings.

- Following and further reinforcing the dynamic and hybrid definition of Greek diaspora (Mavroudi, 2018, 2020; Angouri 2012, Christou 2006, King et al., 2011 and Pelliccia, 2017) this study has contributed three main ways that Greek diaspora has been portrayed by the participants: i) as an organised Greek community (similar to brotherhoods in Australia and US) which has been reported as absent in UK; ii) as the feeling of belonging to the group of Greeks residing and working away from homeland (Ελληνας εξωτερικού) and iii) as the relationships and connections participants experience with Greeks who also reside and work in UK. Such adjustable, as well as meaningful depiction of Greek diasporised identities in UK is best depicted as “hybrid Identities” (Pelliccia, 2017).
- British culture has been portrayed through the proximity to a ‘British way of thinking’ primarily followed within professional settings; professional, personal and intimate connections with other British people and through the participants; engagement with a different way of life. Such depiction reflects a clear distinction between the participants’ Greek ethnic identity (Jenkins, 2008) and (potentially) British citizenship identity (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009; Isin, 2007) as participants clearly disassociate their engagement with the British national identity. Participants’ proximity or distance towards the British culture had been portrayed independently from the acknowledgement that British culture is the dominant culture of the participants’ children, indicating (possibly anticipated) different levels of integration/acculturation between parents and their offspring. Furthermore, proximity or distance to the British culture is not necessarily associated with the potential willingness of the participants to apply for the British citizenship as it has been shown that the British citizenship does not contribute towards participants’ feelings of be(coming) more or less British.

Hermeneutic interpretations of thematic analysis uncovered six distinct ways in which participants have experienced distance and/or proximity towards their Greek, British and/or Greek diasporised cultural identities: 1) Proximity towards Greek and Greek diasporised cultures only; 2) Proximity towards Greek, British and Greek Diasporised Cultures; 3) Distance from Greek, British and Greek

diasporised Cultures; 4) Explicit Proximity to Greek & Greek Diaspora culture & Implicit Proximity to British culture; 5) Explicit Proximity to British culture & Implicit Proximity to Greek & Greek diasporised culture. Especially the sixth way of experienced cultural identity: 6) Simultaneous Distance & Proximity to all three Cultures, has not been associated nor contradicted by Berry's degrees of acculturation and/or Home Office's principles of integration within British culture. However, it represents the most complex, multi-layered experience of cultural identity best portrayed through the concepts of *transition* and *hybrid* diasporised identities as it involves constant negotiation between the Greek cultural origin of homeland, the British culture of the host country, along with the Greek diasporised culture. This portrayal of diasporic identity(ies) share common ground with Mavroudi's (2020) depiction of diaspora consciousness and identity which emerges in relation to diasporised and non-diasporised individuals, and in relation to the homeland; for some, there is a need to find more stable and strong points of contact, whereas for others, less is sufficient.

The findings have offered a multilayer of ways Greek diasporised individuals experience primarily their cultural, ethnic and diasporised identities and secondarily, their national and citizenship identities. Participants have been sharing common history, language, and similar ways of understanding the world (Kim & Ko, 2007). Consequently, they have been sharing common ways of exploring their ethnicity (through distance and proximity towards their multiculturalism) whether they are clear about what their ethnic group membership means to them, and whether they identify with their ethnic group (Phinney, 1996) which has been identified as their Greek culture of origin and ethnicity. In accordance with relevant literature (Mavroudi 2018,2020; Pelliccia, 2017) this study has shown that participants have experienced diaspora identities as dynamic, adjustable and evolving. National and citizenship identities - both depending on the territory of residents (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009) have been depicted in a rather peculiar way by the participants, as their intention and reasoning about exercising (or not) their right to apply for the British citizenship varies, although their hesitance in committing or belonging to British national identity prevails. Such attitude contradicts the purpose of British citizenship as an idea of belonging and as a conception of inclusive bounded-national community (Favell, 2001) as well as any sense of links established between the naturalisation process (or intention of it) and British national identity argued by Bartram, (2020) although it does not challenge the possibility that attachment with national identity may increase after the completion of naturalisation process (i.e. receiving the British citizenship). A comparative study with Greek born naturalised British citizens would have shed light in this critical question. Even more importantly though, there seems to be the universal observation that participants' personal, professional, economic and family lives contribute rather actively and productively towards solidarity and cohesion of the British society

(Bartram, 2020, Abrams et al, 2013) as almost all of them are part of the British highly skilled labour force, they socialise on a daily basis professionally and personally with natives, they are reliable tax payers and they effectively raise British nationals, although they are not British themselves. Such contribution may be unintentional or even unconscious, nevertheless, it remains obvious, vibrant and certainly meaningful. Such realisation questions the necessity of the cultivation of any sense of integration aiming into national identity uniformity. Instead, it offers an excellent alternative of British multiculturalism, by strengthening the core principles and values of solidarity and cohesion instead of the vagueness of integration aimed through the naturalisation process.

This last form of cultural identity, may indicate an emerging need to explore, study and understand identity beyond the concepts of integration or belonging to clearly defined social, cultural, ethnic, national, citizenship groups but rather, through the changeable proximity and distance among each and any identity domain individuals may negotiate with, in daily life. The example of Greek diaspora in UK, may serve as an opportunity to reconsider identity as a concept, beyond identifiable affiliations and towards experienced transitions in the forms of distance and proximity.

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