

Situating “Self” Somewhere in Between; Ethnic and National Identity of Three Generations of Turkish Cypriots Living in the United Kingdom

Lale Güvenli

Business and Economics Faculty, Business Department,
Girne American University, North Cyprus
guvenlilale@yahoo.com, laleguvenli@gau.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5945-2306>

Feyza Bhatti

Business and Economics Faculty, Business Department, Girne American University, North Cyprus
feyzabhatti@gmail.com, feyzabhatti@gau.edu.tr
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9613-5860>

Abstract

Despite their prolonged history of immigration to the UK, studies on Turkish Cypriots' acculturative processes have been scarce. Utilizing 20 semi-structured interviews with three generations of Turkish Cypriot immigrants living in the UK, this paper explores the acculturation processes of Turkish Cypriots by focusing on their sense of self, ethnic and national identity delineations. How do they identify themselves, and what do their identifications suggest about their acculturation? In an attempt to contribute to the empirical studies on the acculturation and identity of “other white” immigrant groups, we argue that there exists a bi-cultural/multi-cultural self with varying degrees of closeness to the host country, as well as hyphenated (British Cypriot), multi-hyphenated (London Turkish Cypriot) and travelling identities that are constructed through experience, time and place. Although there exist some intergenerational differences, it can be said that Turkish Cypriots have been open to the idea of integration starting from the first generation and, in general, have high acculturation, which was evident from the narratives of how they situate themselves within the ethnic and national identities.

Keywords: Ethnic Identity, acculturation, identity definition, Turkish Cypriot, qualitative data.

1. Introduction

The world has been practising global migration in recent decades (Davila, 2017). The number of people who have left their home countries to start a new life in some other countries is growing fast. According to the International Migration Report of 2022, the number of international migrants increased from 174 million in 2010 to 281 million in 2020, constituting 3.6% of the world's population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021).

The increasing flow of migrants has intrigued social scientists to expand their work on acculturation processes among immigrant communities, particularly in top destination countries like the United Kingdom (UK), the largest fifth destination country in the world. In 2020, there were 9.6 million migrants in the UK, constituting 13.8% of the total population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). Turkish Cypriots perhaps are among the smallest migrant groups, with an estimated number of around 300,000 people (House of Commons, 2011).

Turkish Cypriots, as former colonial subjects, started migrating to the UK following the intercommunal conflict on the island during the 1950s and 1960s, and then in the 1970s and 1980s after facing economic and political turmoils of the island after its partition (Robin & Aksoy, 2001). They, however, remained an “invisible population” (Robin & Aksoy, 2001:685) and a “silenced minority” (Mehmet Ali, 1985) with a very limited research conducted on them, which remains valid to date. This study, in addition to contributing to the migration, diaspora and transnational studies, and the studies on identity and acculturation, also aims to enhance the understanding of the acculturation processes of a white immigrant group.

This paper explores the acculturation processes of three generations of Turkish Cypriot immigrants living in the UK. How do they define themselves? How do they situate their ethnic and national identity between ancestral and host countries? Are there generational differences?

2. Identity and Acculturation

The question of identity comes up in various contexts each of which has developed a rich tradition of discussion. Examining an individual's identity is to ask “what makes him or her who he or she is, how he or she views and relates to himself or herself and the world, and why as a result he or she is this person and not anyone else (Parekh, 2009, p.268). According to literature research, Stryker and Burke (2000) has found different usage of identity; one refers to the culture and there is no distinction between identity, the other refers to common identification with a collectivity or social category such as social identity theory, the third one refers to creating a common culture among participants, and finally identity is made up of the meanings that people attach to the multiple roles that they typically play in the highly differentiated societies of today. However national identity refers to powerful feeling of belongingness towards one's land and has a positive relationship between person's and the attached nation (Carey, 2002). Besides, nationalities are represented by communities with common roots and heritage

(Alonso, 1994). On the other hand, ethnicity is defined as the “condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group” (Pires & Stanton, 2005) and “marker of the group identity” (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2007). Khan, Malghani and Ayaz (2020) say that, ethnic group members can share religion, language, history and culture or other social interactions, but at the same time, ethnic group can vary within the same group due to the extend of the sense of belonging. Yet, there is no sharp difference between nationality and ethnicity and hence have a bond, it would be necessary to understand people’s ethnic identities in order to understand their national identities (Akter Göktaşan & Türkmen, 2020). Ethnic identity is a complex concept that reflects different issues of identification and membership of an ethnic group (Cuellar et al., 1997). Ethnic identity and related attitudes and behaviours impact on individuals lives, connect to other groups and see the society as a whole (Phinney, 1996).

Immigrants not only acculturate but also engage in enculturation which is the learning process of one’s own culture (Schwartz et al., 2010). At the same time, immigrants still maintain strong ties to their culture of origin (Cleveland et al., 2009) and involve intragroup relationship (Jamal & Chapman, 2000). Tajfel’s (1981) categorization theory, categorise the groups as in-group (the heritage cultural group) and out-group (the host society) perspective. According to this theory, immigrants’ awareness to their ethnic identity and self, are generally dependent on social comparisons with the out-groups and resulting in a favourable evaluations and assessment of the in-group. The favourable affect towards to the in-group together with the lack of the interest to the out-group usually leads to prejudices and bias (Tajfel, 1981). Thus, the behavior of out-group members is directly related to the motive to protect and improve the self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Many studies also confirmed that identification increases if groups pose a threat to one another (Islam, 2014)

According to Jamal (2003), immigrants can move between two culture which depends on the behavior between host and the heritage culture. Consequently, immigrant may improve an unfavourable acculturation attitude and unite with their heritage culture, find partner and rising children in their heritage culture tradition (ArendsTóth & van de Vijver, 2008). Other side of the coin is that, immigrants may evaluate the host country advantages and develop the favourable acculturation attitude, recognized the importance of having the partner from the host culture and rise their children in the host culture traditions (ArendsTóth & van de Vijver, 2008). Quarasse and van de Vijver (2004) explain this according to the social psychology which give sights to psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Acculturation is the culture change (Redfield et al., 1936) that begins if different cultural backgrounds and their individual members interact with each other, and which dominant group influences the non-dominant group (Berry, 1992, 2008). Ethnic refers to shared traditions, customs and language (Cokley, 2007) whereas acculturation changes an immigrant’s way of living such as, “language, identity, social status, relationships and network systems, attitudes, values and beliefs, behaviors, cognitions, personality and cultural orientation” (Park & Rubin, 2012, p.612) through interaction with individuals, groups, and social influences from other cultures (Gibson, 2001). Personal and ethnic identity also often shifts and changes to new ones (Berry, 1992). Similarly, Negy et al., (2003) claim that ethnic identity can change over time and vary across individuals. While retaining some of their own cultural traits, immigrants will also learn the host country’s culture to change their culture into a “universal person” with a “transcultural identity” (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997). Rogers (2018) claim that being a part of an ethnically and racially dominant group has effects on young people’s identities, relationships with others and participation in society. Additionally, Benet-Martínez et al., (2002) study shows that individual who has high on bicultural identity integration identify their dual identity easily and integrate both cultures in the daily life and consider host and ethnic identity together. Children’s ethnic identity development appears to be shaped by comparison between their own group and the host country groups’. Parents build the boundaries in the mind of children which cause to separate ingroups from outgroups (Lambert, 1981) and parents are also said to foster in their children a sense of belonging to a group (Rosenthal & Cichello, 1986). However, any social network or group is likely to include members whose membership in other networks or groups may create identities that either strengthen or block broad range of forms of participations (Stryker & Burke, 2000)

Acculturation was initially considered a unidimensional and linear process (Schwartz et. al., 2010; Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). It was believed that immigrants would assimilate and have to give up their distinctive cultures, language, beliefs, and homeland ties and identities in order to advance socioeconomically in the host countries (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Even if assimilation was not likely for the first-generation migrants (Jamal & Shukor, 2013), who considered themselves as ethnic minority (Awad, Hashem & Nguyen, 2021), immigrant children were expected to be assimilated completely into host cultures since they would be less influenced by the homeland customs and values due to their weaker ties with their ancestral homes as compared to their parents (Peñaloza, 1994). Since the early 1980s, it has been acknowledged that adopting the ideas, values, and practices of the host country does not compel an immigrant to give up those of her or his home country. As an alternative to the unidimensional acculturation model, Berry (1997) developed a model of acculturation that intersect the two opposite dimensions of the initial model, and allows for variations of the acquisition of host country culture and the retention of home country culture through a) Integration (adopting the host country culture and retains the home country culture); b) Assimilation (adopting to host country culture and discarding the home

country culture); c) Separation (rejecting the host country culture and retaining the home country culture) or d) Marginalization (rejecting both the host and home country culture). Although Berry's model has been helpful in theorising acculturation processes, with emerging transnationalism and technological developments, it can be said that Berry's model remains insufficient to understand today's complex processes of acculturation since the links with ancestral homes and cultures stronger than ever (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022; van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). Later approaches highlight the complexities of "identity processes in multi-cultural contexts" and call for a better comprehension of "processes of continuing *enculturation* in such contexts" (Weinreich, 2009, p.124). The ideas of Berry (1997) that people "choose" to accept or reject one or both cultures in intercultural contexts is also at odds with the complex ethnic identity processes that might take place without complete awareness of cultures but rather through identification with cultural elements that are available to immigrants when forming a sense of ethnic identity (Weinreich, 2009).

Immigrants have a strong commitment to their place in new countries over generations, stay throughout their lives and develop their roots (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). The majority of them preserve links to their countries of origin during their integration processes into the host countries. Integration of immigrants and preserving transnational ties and behaviors are not mutually exclusive but somewhat concurrent processes that inform each other (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Morawska, 2004). Therefore, rather than picking between two dichotomous identities and cultures of ancestral and host countries, immigrants live their lives between several cultures. They situate "themselves between a variety of different and often competing generational, ideological and moral reference points, including those of their parents, their grandparents and their own real and imagined perspectives about their multiple homelands" (Levitt, 2009: p.1238). For immigrant families, cultural heritage identification essential and its importance is transferred between generations (Maene, Van Rossem & Stevens, 2021) which cause to "enculturating" second and third generation residents into their genealogical society of origin (Ferguson, Costigan, Clarke & Ge, 2016) sense of identity (Fadjukoff et al., 2005) and shaping youth identities (Syed & Fish, 2018). Therefore, "implicit in the use of the term *acculturation* is the relative diminution of the significance of heritage culture, whereas the agentic qualities of *enculturation* conceptualise the continuing incorporation of cultural elements of any available ethnicity, mainstream or otherwise, that are significant to the individual." (Weinreich, 2009, p.125). Considering acculturation and enculturation processes can allow for the coexistence of multiple identities, contemporary studies on acculturation and identity becomes particularly important to understand how immigrants from different generations situate themselves between ancestral and home identities and cultures. For example, Josiassen (2011) study shows that second generation Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands have difficulties to associate their subgroup with their host's national identity.

The studies on ethnic and cultural identity or acculturation processes of Turkish Cypriot immigrants are scarce and outdated. Available studies indicate that "Turkish Cypriots have developed a high degree of adaptability" (Bhatti, 1981, p.13) as "their chief priority is success" in the UK (Bhatti, 1981, p.8). Their experiences and ethnic formations differ from those of other Turkish-speaking communities living in the UK (Atay, 2010). Turkish Cypriot culture is situated somewhere between the island culture (both Turkish and Greek), the culture of British and Turkey and argues that the "Turkish-Cypriot population is that it is characterised by what appears – from the point of view of 'imagined community' – to be a particularly 'weak' or 'undeveloped' culture and identity." (Robin and Aksoy, 2001, p.686). They have been trying to protect their ethnic identities through cultural recollection, communication and transmission of memories to the next generations (Gökdemir Reyhanoğlu, 2014), although they are experiencing language shifts and reproducing a mixed language (Issa, 2004, 2006). Canefe (2002) examining the relationship between memory and history, also shows how power politics influence the diaspora ethnonational identities that generate hybrid and multiple identities among Turkish Cypriots in the UK.

3. Methodology

The finding in this paper based on 20 semi-structured interviews conducted between June, 2020-March, 2021. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, the interviews were conducted through online platforms, including Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger. Turkish Cypriots who are living in the UK, first, were recruited through social media websites of Turkish Cypriot communities and later through snowball sampling to be able to reach participants from different generations and genders. The aim was to find a mix of participants from three generations with equal participation of both genders. During the recruitment process, in addition to receiving help from acquaintances in the UK, the call for participants was shared on social media sites, including TCCA Haringey, ÇATI, British Turkish Cypriot Association (BTCA), Konsey-CTCA UK Community Group. Participants who responded to the call were contacted and informed about the study's voluntary nature, confidentiality and anonymity. After their consent, an appointment was made to conduct the interviews.

Considering the recruitment methods, and online interviews, North Cypriots might be excluded, who were not members of the social media platforms or do not use the internet.

In total, 20 interviews were conducted with eight men and twelve women. Eight participants were first, nine were second, and three were third-generation. All first-generation participants lived in the UK for more than 40 years. The interviews, which lasted between 20 to 75 minutes, were conducted by the first author, a Turkish Cypriot not

residing in the UK. Being an insider as a Turkish Cypriot, and at the same time being an outsider as a non-immigrant has been beneficial in terms of allowing for distance and making the immigrant experts of their own experiences and, at the same time enabling the process of rapport-building. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, English or a mixture of both languages, as preferred by the participants. With the first generation, all eight interviews are conducted in Turkish with a Turkish Cypriot accent except for those who arrived in the UK when they were children, who also borrowed English words at times. For the second generation, all except one of the interviews were also in the Turkish Cypriot dialect. During the interviews with the third generation, one interview was conducted in the Turkish Cypriot dialect, one in English saying that has limited Turkish vocabulary and the third one shifting between both languages, particularly expressing feelings and thoughts in English.

The interviews focused on participants' descriptions of their ethnic, and national identity and belonging, their everyday use of language and mass media, social interactions, consumption and consumer ethnocentrism, and their links with North Cyprus. This article focuses only on how participants identified themselves regarding ethnic and national identities.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim in the original language of the interview, and then they were coded in Atlas. ti. English translations are done only when the quotation is selected to be included in the paper. The first round of coding involved the identification of general patterns in the interviews, and they were later refined in the subsequent rounds. All the names used in the paper are pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Ethical approval was taken before the start of the fieldwork from the academic institute that the authors are affiliated with.

4. Findings

4.1 Situating Self: Identity Definitions

When the participants were asked how they would define themselves in terms of their identity, most of the participants defined themselves with their ethnic roots, i.e. Turkish Cypriot. This answer, however was not straightforward. Most of the participants added explanations that contained “buts” and “nots” about how they feel about being Turkish Cypriot or (or concurrently) being British and carrying a British nationality. The following section reflects on how three generations of Turkish Cypriot immigrants defined their identities during the interviews.

I am “not British”: I am a (Turkish) Cypriot with a British Passport.

Most of the participants, when they were asked to define their identity, considered themselves Turkish Cypriots. The way that they situated themselves, however, varied. Some of the participants, predominantly the first generation immigrants, defined themselves with what they were not first i.e. British. Like Gönyeli (1st generation, Male, 62 years old), Taşkent (1st generation, Female, 64 years old), Yeşilyurt (1st generation, Male, 64 years old), Yedigalga (1st generation, Female, 66 years old) always see themselves as Turkish Cypriot and their Turkish Cypriot identity came first. Feeling of belongingness to the home land may show the power of national identity which cause more attachment to the nation. Akter Gökşan and Türkmen (2020) research on Turkish Cypriots in North Cyprus shows that as their national identity develop, their sense of belongingness is strengthened.

I have a British passport but never said I am British. I do not feel that way anyway. I always tell them I am a Turkish Cypriot with a British passport... I used to feel this way even when I was younger (Kaplıca, 1st generation, Female, 63 years old).

I am Cypriot [laughs]. Wherever I go, I am Cypriot. I can't say British, because I am not; I am Cypriot... When people ask, it is obvious that I am not British, I say Turkish Cypriot. They asked me whether I was born here, I say no. While filling out the forms, I say British for my nationality and Turkish Cypriot for my ethnic identity (Beylerbeyi, 1st generation, Female, 56 years old)

Although they had British nationality, they were not feeling British. They were Turkish Cypriots with British Passports. The Turkish Cypriot identity was more pronounced in the narratives of our first-generation participants, but some of the second-generation participants like Karmi (2nd generation, Female, 34 years old), Karaman (2nd generation, Male, 25 years old) and Boğaziçi (2nd generation, Male, 43 years old) also mentioned that they were not British and were Turkish Cypriots with a British passport. Although they were not British, as compared to the first generation, they felt more attached to the UK due to their jobs and economic difficulties in their ancestral homes.

Kıbrıslı (Cypriot) always. Always look at Cyprus; always miss it. I do not see myself as British... However, no money [in Cyprus], it is better here. So where you belong is a tough question (Karaman, 2nd generation, Male, 25 years old).

I am a Turkish Cypriot with British citizenship...I still feel for Cyprus, but you know I worked here for a long time (Boğaziçi, 2nd generation, Male, 43 years old).

All of the participants except two had the nationality of the UK. Taşkent (1st generation, Female, 64 years old) and Yeşilyurt (1st generation, Male, 64 years old), who were first-generation immigrants, did not get the nationality. The reason for not getting the nationality was economical for Yeşilyurt (1st generation, Male, 64 years old) and his children, as the procedure would be costly. It was more patriotic feelings for Taşkent (1st generation, Female, 64 years old). She was proud of her Turkish Cypriot nationality and preferred using only that.

I did not get the citizenship [British]... Do I have to? I can stay in this country as much as I want. I still insist on going and coming with my Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) passport. British passport will enable me to come here and go to other countries as well. Do I want to live in other countries? No. Can I use my TRNC passport to come and go with a Visa? Yes. Do I have all the rights of a British? Yes (Taşkent, 1st generation, Female, 64 years old)

I am British Cypriot: Feeling and Being Both

The majority of the second and third-generation immigrants considered themselves as both British and Turkish Cypriots. They had hyphenated identities, but they also felt the need to detail how they positioned themselves between the two identities and/or cultures.

Like Görneç (2nd generation, Female, 50 years old), Bafra (3rd generation, Female, 40 years old) and Çamlıbel (2nd generation, Male, 36 years old) felt they were more British. They could not exactly identify themselves with the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus: they were living like British but also had Turkish Cypriot links. For Çamlıbel (2nd generation, Male, 36 years old) this made him a British Cypriot as a hyphenated identity (Bélanger and Verkuyten, 2010).

I would define myself as British Cypriot I suppose...I am used to the British customs but my heart is always in Cyprus. Let me tell it this way...My living style is closer to the British. Like, I use British culture, but I also use Turkish culture. I have both cultures in my life (Çamlıbel, 2nd generation, Male, 36 years old).

I feel Turkish inside, but if someone asks here I say British... I feel I belong in the UK. I have spent all of my life here. I live like a British (Görneç, 2nd generation, Female, 50 years old).

What is your ethnicity? I would say Turkish Cypriot... But I feel very British. I am going to use that specifically rather than English. Because I feel very Turkish but I feel it like the British way... We are similar [with Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus] but also not so similar... We are similar to the Turkish Cypriots who are in London... Obviously, we do share common references to the heritage in Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus but we have very different by experiences in life and that had led us to be different (Bafra, 3rd generation, Female, 40 years old).

Only some second-generation participants like Yeşilirmak (2nd generation, Female, 43 years old) could not consider themselves British and said “We may be born in England but our root is from North Cyprus”. Some others like Yeşilköy (3rd generation, Female, 43 years old), considered herself attached to both UK and Cyprus, and defined herself as a terrific Turkish Cypriot but her nationality was British.

I call myself a terrific Turkish Cypriot. [I belong] both to England and to Cyprus, I tie to both countries... but when it is asked, I am British (Yeşilköy, 3rd generation, Female, 43 years old).

Some of the first-generation Turkish Cypriot immigrants also considered themselves as both, particularly if they settled in the UK at a young age and spent a long time in the country. They, however, also felt the need to define how close they were to both sides. Lefke (1st generation, Male, 68 years old) considered himself as more British and Gönyeli (1st generation, Male, 62 years old) was 50-50 as he loved the Cypriot culture more despite being in the UK for 44 years.

I feel both British and Cypriot, but I feel more British. Because our future is here. I mean like older generations I have never considered returning back to Cyprus. When I came here, I thought it was my country now. I made my home here, I married here, I had my children here, I had grandchildren.... so, if I have to choose, I will say [I am] British... I came here when I was 18, I came here without any experience and I stayed here for 50 years. And only 18 years in Cyprus...I go to Cyprus from time to time, but this is my real country... we are from here now (Lefke, 1st generation, Male, 68 years old).

I was born in Cyprus...It is very difficult to say where I belong though because I lived 18 years in Cyprus and 44 years here. Bringing up as Cypriot, and I haven't lost what my parents gave me before I came here... I took whatever I liked from the culture here and I left the others. I can say I am 50-50... But I saw the life here. I have learned everything and what is valuable here. But I can't say I love the British culture over the Cypriot culture (Gönyeli, 1st generation, Male, 62 years old).

I am British: Well...with a Turkish background

Only one of our second-generation participants, who also used a British name, defined himself as British. He preferred being fully assimilated in order to be socially accepted, recognized as well as to be valued in society. Alsancak (2nd generation, Male, 54 years old) also named two of his children with non-Turkish names and said he only mentions his Turkish background if people ask him due to his looks and the way that he speaks. In order to explain how strongly he feels about being British, he gave examples from fighting in the British army or supporting a British team. Alsancak (2nd generation, Male, 54 years old) lived most of his life away from Turkish Cypriot neighbourhoods and has observed discrimination towards/isolation of minority ethnic groups who could not hide their ethnic/racial identity. He felt the need to become “British” and also make her children British to prevent any potential discrimination. In his case, discrimination leads to adaptation and assimilation, and living away from the ethnic identity groups and lack of enforcement power of the group cause to lose bond to the culture.

I would call myself British, yeah... they say you're not English, I say yes I am, I was born here, I'm English, they don't like it, but actually you know yeah I would say...I'm British, because if people ask me you don't look British yeah, or you talk a little bit funny, I will say yeah Turkish...basically I'm British with Turkish background... If I was calling to fight yeah, if it were by British, I would fight in the British army... Eurovision song contest, or football, or Olympics, so you see that tells me I'm more towards British. If a Britian is knocked out, or the only person or team left is Turkey because North Cyprus hasn't got a team and is not recognized anywhere, then I would cheer for Turkey (Alsancak, 2nd generation, Male, 54 years old).

The above narratives reflected the complexities for Turkish Cypriot immigrants in placing themselves between the two identities but at the same time their openness to integrating to be British by situating themselves within the two cultures, even if it was at varying levels. The narratives also reflected the heterogeneity within the existing Turkish Cypriot or British identities as shown below.

Detachment and Attachments with “Turkishness”

Being a Turkish Cypriot meant being Cypriot and Turkish. These carry different importance for some of our participants. For Lefke (1st generation, Male, 68 years old), for instance, the Cypriot identity came before being Turkish. And for Koruçam (2nd generation, Female, 30 years old), although she felt Cypriot, it was important to be Turkish and therefore she obtained an identity card from the Republic of Turkey as well.

Of course, nationality is a separate issue. How you feel is another matter... Now, when I write, I write Turkish Cypriot together. This is to put more emphasis on being a Cypriot. First I am Cypriot, then I am Turkish Cypriot (Lefke, 1st generation, Male, 68 years old)

Although I was born here, I always felt Cypriot...I also have the Turkish nationality. My siblings don't have it but I have applied as I give importance. It might not be of any use, but still I got it (Koruçam, 2nd generation, Female, 30 years old).

Being Cypriot also meant not being Greek. As Çatalköy (2nd generation, Female, 48 years old) and Boğaziçi (2nd generation, Male, 43 years old) said, being from an unrecognised country made them more invisible as being from Cyprus meant being Greek for most of the people.

Almost apologizing for being Turkish Cypriot because no one recognizes us. When you say, you are Cypriot, they say you are Greek then, kalimera [Good day], kalispera [Good night]. No, no, I am Turkish Cypriot. I feel very strong on that (Çatalköy, 2nd generation, Female, 48 years old).

I was born in the UK but my feelings, my passion still belongs to Cyprus...I worry that we are becoming not to be known to the rest of the world as the Turkish Cypriot community...It saddens me really bad. At the end of the day, we have more people in London UK than anywhere else but when I say people we are from Cyprus, you are Greek, no I am not Greek, I am Turkish Cypriot (Boğaziçi, 2nd generation, Male, 43 years old).

Globalized Local Identities Created in London

Some of the participants believed that the identity was created through people themselves and Turkish Cypriots in the UK also created an identity of themselves within the multicultural and cosmopolitan environments they were living in.

People are so scattered that they all created their own identities. Everyone created their own identity, and so did we... If you ask me, I am very proud of my Cypriot identity, but at the end of the day, I count all the people of the world as one big family (Akdeniz, 1st generation, Male, 65 years old)

As Bafra (3rd generation, Female, 40 years old) also mentioned in the previous section, they felt themselves differently from the Cypriots in Cyprus. Çatalköy (2nd generation, Female, 48 years old) defined herself as London Turkish Cypriot, and Kumyalı (3rd generation, Female, 22 years old) was half Londoner and half Turkish Cypriot. Living around the multicultural and cosmopolitan environments in London had allowed them to bring and live their cultures in London. Feeling strong tie to ethnic identity is more than feeling tie to nationality among third generation, this did not show the ethnic change but living in two cultures and adopting the both. Together with their localized identities they had multi-hyphenated local identities as well.

I would consider myself as a London Turkish Cypriot. Because where I was born and where I lived, throughout my life, is important. Because London isn't an English place. It's multicultural, I have learnt so much about myself, so much about the people. But I am Turkish Cypriot. I say Turkish Cypriot because Cypriot is distinguished between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. And also Turkey and being Turkish designate a quite a lot in my own ethnic identity. So, I put myself I have an ethnic identity London Turkish Cypriot...London is more multicultural, you have different cultural friends, and sometimes you can bring your culture to that place. Haringey, Northern London, even Southern London places where Turks, Cypriots, Nigerians live. They call it ghettoization, but to be honest with you, I think it is globalisation (Çatalköy, 2nd generation, Female, 48 years old).

I think I come from London, but I cannot deny I am also from Cyprus. I am from London, south east London more specifically, because North London is so different...My life style is Turkish Cypriot, because my parents have always tried to keep those traditions and control... I feel close to both cultures. I would say it half and half. Because, I am very much a Londoner and I am still the same amount of Turkish Cypriot... I am probably like the British culture itself (Kumyalı, 3rd generation, Female, 22 years old)

Travelling identities: I am Turkish Cypriot in London and a British in Cyprus

The identity also changed as the immigrants travelled between the UK and Cyprus. The travelling identities, were defined through not belonging to one place in two ways. Like it was the case for Koruçam (2nd generation, Female, 30 years old), the identity became 'the other one' as she travelled from one place to the other. She was different than the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus and British in the UK, so she was a British in Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot in the UK.

When I fill a form in the UK, there is no option for Turkish Cypriot. Sometimes you see Greek Cypriot. It gives the options of white and white other. I always choose [white] other. If I put white, I would feel British, but define myself as Turkish Cypriot. But I realized when I go to Cyprus everyone says "You are not from here, it is obvious, in your accent that you are from England". Then I say "Yes, I am British". When I go to Cyprus I am British and when I come to England I am Turkish Cypriot (Koruçam, 2nd generation, Female, 30 years old).

On the other hand, for Kaplıca (1st generation, Female, 63 years old), who lived in multiple countries during her life and Yeşilirmak (2nd generation, Female, 43 years old), the travelling identities also meant "not belonging" to any of the two places.

I am proud of my Turkishness. I am in this country since I was 5.5 [years old] but I have never said I am British. But at the same time, I do not feel Turkish. I am proud and love my culture, and I say I am Turkish Cypriot, I say so. But really I don't feel it, because, When I go to Cyprus to see my family and friends, I also feel that I don't belong there fully. And that's the truth. I do not feel I am from one place (Kaplıca, 1st generation, Female, 63 years old).

We were born in England but our roots are Turkish Cypriot...although here we say that we are Turkish Cypriot, when I go to Cyprus I am a foreigner. I am a foreigner here [in the UK] too. Cypriots do not

consider us Turkish Cypriots. For them I have always been a Londrali [from London]. They see us differently and we are aware...I am a white person but it is apparent from my face that I am not British either. I am also a Muslim, and our cultures are different... nobody accepts me as British either (Yeşilirmak, 2nd generation, Female, 43 years old).

Yeşilirmak (2nd generation, Female, 43 years old) did not only feel like a foreigner in both countries but like many Turkish Cypriots, she had two different names on her official documents. She was carrying her father's name as her surname in the UK and a surname compulsorily chosen by her granddad in Cyprus. She said, "I even have two identities" officially.

Diachronic Identities: I have changed over time

Some of our participants, as they aged, started feeling more Cypriot as compared to before. Phinney et al., (2001) claim that as people get older, ethnic identity is understood more deeply. As Çatalköy (2nd generation, Female, 48 years old) puts forward, the way that they understand the world is changing and making them closer to their ethnic roots.

When I was younger, I used to feel more Londoner, now more London Cypriot because your perspective becomes a little more open as you get older. You have more knowledge, you are more understanding of the world and people. But for me, but if you are asking about a place, like where, that's different. If you are asking ethnicity-wise, like where are you from, who are you? How would you perceive yourself? I say again London Turkish Cypriot. Turkish Cypriot from London because I am Turkish Cypriot but I was born and raised in London (Çatalköy, 2nd generation, Female, 48 years old).

Intergenerational Differences

In the study, the first generation could be categorized into three different groups based on the reason for their arrival to the UK; those who moved for a better life in their adulthood, arrived as a child, and arrived for the education purposes as an adult.

For those who moved for a better life, ethnic identity is not that can be easily changed over time; it remains unchanged and it is the "de facto" characteristics. It shows unbroken and unmelted loyalties, continuation of the *ethno-ethnic identity* and connection to the home land country, i.e., North Cyprus, the more connection to the home country, the less acculturation in the host country but still well integrated to the British culture. Those who have arrived to London for education, identified themselves both Turkish Cypriot and half British. Assimilation cannot be mentioned for this group since especially one of them willingly works for the next generations to preserve the culture but feels more adopted to the host country culture rather than that of Cyprus.

For those who arrived when they were children, considered themselves as Turkish Cypriots with British passports, they considered English as their first language and were highly integrated to the host country culture.

Majority of the second generation defined themselves as Turkish Cypriots, but most also explained themselves with their national identities as well. This created hyphenated identities like British Cypriots or multi-hyphenated identities like British Turkish Cypriots or London Turkish Cypriots. Second and later generations are not immigrants anymore as they were born and raised in the UK. The host country became their home country and most of them did not see themselves as foreign. A sense of nationality turns to British, and ethnic identity remains as Turkish Cypriot with varying degrees of integration into the host country's culture.

With the third generation, although they mentioned their Turkish Cypriot roots, they felt they were distancing away from their North Cyprus roots, and feeling closer to the British nationality and the culture.

Identities defined reflected their sense of "belonging" therefore most of the second and third generations felt closer to both identities with varying degrees of closeness to the national and ethnic identities. They practised dual ethnicity by mixing their ethnic and national/local identities.

The above findings suggest that the identity was rather complex, heterogeneous and non-static for our participants. It was difficult to talk about single ethnic and national identities as the identities blended with how they felt, interpret and experienced the host and ancestral countries. All linked themselves with being Turkish Cypriots but most were also British and/or Londoners at the same time.

5. Conclusions

Contributing to the discussions on the complexity and diachronic nature of identity among immigrants (Levitt, 2009) and empirical studies on acculturation and identity, this study shows the complexity of ethnic and national identity formations during acculturation processes among immigrant communities living in the UK. By showing how three generations of Turkish Cypriots define their identity and situate themselves between ethnic and national identities, we show that identity involves “nots” and “buts” particularly for the first generations of immigrants. Participants also identified themselves and their identity through distancing from the host country’s culture and ancestral roots. There was no clear-cut categorization of identity, it was rather hybrid and involved different formulations of hyphenated/multi-hyphenated identities, particularly among the second and third generations, who had difficulty defining themselves only with one identity. Their narratives reflected that they have been blending, harmonizing and living with and within several cultures available to them in both the local, host country and ancestral environments. Additionally stories, experiences and surrounding shape their identity. Immigrants’ naturalization process starts if they identify themselves with both the host country and country of origin or only the host country which is the prerequisite of integration and acculturation (Maehler et al., 2019). These findings, therefore, have also suggested a high level of integration of our participants from second and third generations to the identities available to them in the host country (whether as British or Londoners) and narratives of how our participants situated themselves between their British and Turkish Cypriot identities.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the participants for taking the time to participate and for sharing their experiences and insights into their lives.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

There is no funding for this research

Ethics

Qualitative section questions of this study has been approved by Girne American University Faculty of Business Ethnic Committee dated on 15.06.2020 with Ref No: 2020-21-Fall-0060

Data availability statement

Due to the nature of this research, participants of this study did not agree for their data to be shared publicly, so supporting data is not available

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