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Local Engagements, Transcultural Belonging: The Lived Experiences of Second-Generation Hungarian Australian Adults through the Formation of a Simultaneous Self

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Abstract. This paper draws on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with second generation Hungarian Australian adults (aged 50 years and above) from Sydney, exploring and introducing the concept of a simultaneous self. The simultaneous self refers to both the tacit and intentional processes of identity construction as well as the meaning making practices the research participants have used to understand their diverse experiences and memberships across both Hungarian and non-Hungarian communities in Sydney. The paper argues that the research participants have formed a transcultural belonging through constructing this sense of self. In doing so, the paper will identify and analyse the factors which have informed these simultaneous self-identifications, including personal experiences of cultural diversity, level of Hungarian language competency, and active engagements with the Sydney Hungarian community. This paper will contribute to the transcultural critical and analytical perspective, by introducing the simultaneous self as a workable concept which illuminates the reflexive articulation processes and (re)construction practices involved in the research participants' transcultural belonging overtime. In doing so, it will further emphasise the importance of their everyday, local experiences within their perceptions of belonging and formations of self.

Keywords: *transcultural, second generation, identity, belonging, Hungarian, hybridization, simultaneous self, Australia*

1. Introduction

1.1 Toward a transcultural perspective

As migration processes during the 20th century have changed, international migration scholars have moved away from their initial understanding of migration as a linear trajectory to the critical analysis of migration as a set of multiple and diverse experiences which underpin new forms of migrant identities, relationships and

sense(s) of belonging (Tan et al. 2018). In early analytical frameworks, migrants were assumed to forego any previous attachments to their country of origin and demonstrate their commitment to the host society through assimilation and acculturation processes (Berry 1997; Berry at al. 2006). Accordingly, belonging and identity were viewed as singular and fixed, as migrants were expected to undergo a process of identity replacement, relinquishing their ethnic identity in favour of a new, national identity. This alteration of identity was frequently defined and outlined on the basis of changes or adjustments to both material and ideological traditions and practices, usually driven by the demands, policies, and politics of the new host nation. For instance, Australian assimilationist and integrationist policies between the 1950s and 1970s emphasised the adjustment of migrant traditions and ways of life to mainstream culture to enable social cohesion, at times leading migrants to develop an assimilated or marginalised self in response to these pressures (Bourhis et al. 1997; Phinney et al. 2001).

However, abandoning cultural practices and ideas proved difficult and unrealistic for migrants, who demonstrated that bi-cultural identities could be formed through negotiating their membership with the host culture alongside retaining elements of their home culture. Such negotiations were commonly achievable for migrants from Northern Europe and many parts of Eastern and Central Europe given their whiteness and thus, their ability to align more closely with the broader-cultural ways of life discoverable in Australia. This in turn, afforded them the opportunity to express their bi-culturalism more readily. Furthermore, the revision of the previously linear understanding of migration and belonging became evermore porous, as scholars continued to realise the complexities of the migrant and second generation experience when coupled with globalising processes that facilitated active engagements between home and host countries in new ways (Bloch 2017; Inglis 2011).

This realisation has led to the current transnational model of migration, referred to as the multi-stranded and interconnected relationships which are constructed and sustained across various geographical borders, and occurring through participation and exchange of communication, material and non-material culture and ideas. Within this framework, the migration process is multidirectional, with belonging diversified, and the self as transcending ethnic-national and host-home dichotomies. As such, this model acknowledges the continuity of culture in the migration experience and the multiplicity of identity which migrants and their

families experience between various cultural contexts and across national borders (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc 1997; Vertovec 1999). A transcultural form of belonging is prominently discussed within the broader transnational framework, as regular cross-border engagements between multiple national and cultural contexts allow for multiple cultural experiences to occur, having impacts on identity. During this process, as Vauclair et al. (2014) agues, individuals undergo a process of self-selection, interweaving and internalising their diverse cultural experiences into bricolage formation. Further, these multiple, cross-cultural experiences influence the ways in which individuals develop a sense of belonging and identity, as the self is no longer constructed of multiple, separated experiences but is an entity which understands these experiences as indivisible and therefore, whole.

1.2 The simultaneous self and Transcultural belonging

The *simultaneous self* – deriving from the personal experiences analysed - is a concept tested in this paper which can be located within a transcultural perspective. The transcultural perspective highlights the ways in individuals (re)define and (re)discover their belonging through numerous cultural experiences, understanding one's sense of self as hybrid, fluid and interactive (Welsch 1999). Following from the work of Ritcher and Nollert (2014), transculturalism focuses on the cultural components of belonging and how they overlap due to the multiple experiences one has gathered across different social groups and contexts. Therefore, this perspective emphasises the transcendence of boundary demarcations between ethnic and national identity, by interconnecting a series of material and non-material cultural elements encountered throughout various life experiences. In doing so, transculturalism results in the decoupling of identities to create a 'neo-culture', illuminating how individuals simultaneously amalgamate their belonging to demonstrate how intermeshed their cultural belonging is experienced within their self-conceptualisations (Ritcher and Nollert 2014; Welsch 1999).

The concept of the *simultaneous self* draws from this perspective insofar that it recognises that the self is a whole entity which is influenced by, and inseparable from, multiple cultural experiences. In addition, this concept similarly acknowledges the importance of cross-cultural engagements and various social contexts in the ongoing process of identity formation. In drawing on the transcultural perspective, this paper analyses interviews with members of the Hungarian second generation in Sydney who share their experiences of growing up in 1960-70s Australia as the children of forced migrants. Their accounts will highlight that they

have developed, what the authors call, a *simultaneous self*, which represents both their reflexive *processes* of identity construction as well as, the *meaning making practices* these participants have used to understand their multiple, cross-cultural engagements overtime. In doing so, this concept encapsulates both the intentional process of self-performance and at the same time, the tacit self-conceptualisations that the participants in this paper have formed from their multiple cultural engagements which have spanned across their lived experiences.

The *simultaneous self* therefore develops from accumulating and internalising a series of cultural experiences and practices which are performed across various cultural contexts over time. As such, this sense of self involves a process of hybridisation, where the sense of belonging is integral to the self. As will be demonstrated, the research participants' self-identifications have drawn from their various memberships and modes of participation in a diverse array of communities and social institutions predominately located in Sydney. The participants' level of agency is important within their sense of self, as they have reflexively engaged with a variety of cultural experiences which they deem important and have chosen to participate in both Hungarian and non-Hungarian cultural communities which they feel best represent who they are. As a result, these participants have interwoven numerous cultural experiences from these communities and internalised them, constantly revising, (re)shaping and recalling their transcultural belonging throughout various life experiences. This process of negotiation highlights that the *simultaneous self* is both intentional and tacit in its performance and construction, as the participants see it as 'natural' and irremovable from their day-to-day lived experiences.

Furthermore, the importance of 'place' and 'physicality of community' has been re-integrated into understanding the experiences of this group, as it has shaped how these participants have understood their cultural experiences and their formation of self. The research participants' transcultural belonging has not developed through migration from one country to another, but through their lived experiences; as members of the Hungarian community in Sydney, and in general, as citizens of Australia. Therefore, the participants have demonstrated that a transcultural belonging does not always require involvement(s) in more than one country but can involve participation across different cultural settings in one's local environment. Hence, the Sydney Hungarian community has provided a local platform for accessing and performing Hungarian culture within Australia for the

research participants. This platform has been of great importance for these participants, particularly during their childhood and adolescence, giving them insight into Hungarian culture and sense of their Hungarian ancestry.

2. Hungarian community-building in Sydney

The participants in this paper share conceptualisations of the Hungarian community as defined by membership in key community organisations as outlined below. The participants in this paper have participated in these community organisations from a young age and – as their stories will indicate - have created a web of interlocking Hungarian ties that they have drawn on throughout their formation of self and senses of belonging overtime. As a result of their experiences in these organisations, the participants view the Hungarian community as a material entity – as opposed to 'merely imagined' - linking their Hungarian belonging to their active participation in the community. Hence, these Hungarian community organisations in Australia have not only provided venues for Hungarian cultural reproduction for both migrants and their children who are the focus of this paper, but also facilitated in the building of social networks which help affirm their connection to their Hungarian culture.

The Hungarian ethnic organisations which form the nucleus of the Hungarian community in Sydney were established as a result of two main migration waves from Hungary. The historical events which sparked these migration waves were the World War II and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, events which resulted in a significant number of Hungarians migrated to Australia over a timeframe of two decades (Kunz 1969). Due to repressive socio-political conflicts in Hungary in the course of these events, a number of Hungarians sought out assisted migration schemes as 'Displaced Persons' (Kunz 1989). As is common with displaced people, most Hungarian migrants lacked political, economic and social-networking resources in Australia. Due to their migrant status, many World War II Hungarian migrants developed a series of Hungarian community organisations to facilitate the building of networks sustained through volunteer work (Kunz 1969; Kunz 1989). One example includes the Hungarian Council of New South Wales which was developed in 1952 and which has continued to oversee the management of multiple Hungarian associations in New South Wales including the Hungarian Scouts association, the Hungarian community language school and dancing groups introduced in Australia in 1950s (Hatoss 2006).

These local community organisations have continued to provide significant linguistic, cultural and social opportunities for migrants, allowing them to continue practicing the Hungarian language and traditions in a communal context in Sydney. In addition, they also operated as a strategy of cultural preservation to manage the impact of acculturation.

In the course of the second wave of Hungarian migrants – the 1956-ers – the community in Australia continued growing, and membership in the Hungarian schools and Hungarian Scouts increased significantly (Jupp 1988). Subsequently, the community members introduced Hungarian cultural and political celebrations and events to Australia including Hungarian scout and language school fundraising picnics and celebrations of Hungarian national holidays such as St. Stephen's Day (Fenyvesi 2005; Smolicz 1984). These community events provided an opportunity to perform and maintain Hungarian culture, assisting migrants in the strengthening of Hungarian networks in Australia by creating physical spaces where Hungarian culture and commemorations of Hungarian history could be performed and experienced within a communal setting (Andits 2017; Cutcher 2015). However, it is also important to acknowledge that these participants, as ethnocultural Hungarians, represent only one segment of a rather diverse Hungarian population in Australia, which also includes Jewish-Hungarian, German, Slovak, Romanian and Croat ethno-minority communities.

3. The research participants

This paper draws on six semi-structured in-depth life-story interviews conducted with second generation Hungarians born in Sydney, who speak the Hungarian language and whose parents fled Hungary to Australia. The term *second generation* will be used to describe the participants in the study. The interviews with the participants – aged between 50-62 years - ranged between one to two hours and were conducted over a two-month period in 2016. One condition related to the participants having to have been members in key Hungarian community organisations from an early age. Purposive sampling was used to recruit individuals meeting the following criteria: Second generation ethnocultural Hungarian adults either born in Australia or having migrated with their parents as newborn to Australia in the course of World War II or following the 1956 Revolution. This sampling strategy, coupled with one of the authors' own positioning as an active member in

the Hungarian community, facilitated natural snowballing to occur across various Hungarian organisations in Sydney.

The sample size reflects the aim of prioritising experience and voice over access, as the purpose according to O'Reilly and Parker (2013, 192) "is not to count opinions or people, but explore them, and should be concerned with the richness of data, not its amount". The participants were recruited on the basis of having experienced socio-political changes towards a Multicultural Australia (1970s), and also times when travel and technology were not easily available for the purpose of maintaining contact with their Hungarian roots: hence, the importance of close engagement with the local Hungarian community. Therefore, the purposeful recruitment (age category and community participation) was based on seeking out common experiences, as this draws attention to the (shared) macro-economic and socio-political contexts which have impacted on the ways the self and belonging are experienced and have been performed among the research participants.

4. Transcultural belonging: a *simultaneous self?*

4.1 Acceptance in a multicultural society

Most of the research participants were approaching adolescence during the time period when Multicultural Policy was introduced in 1973 by the Whitlam Government. Hence, in their early years, the research participants experienced life in a society which was beginning to accept cultural diversity and encourage the acceptance of difference. However, it must be recognised that policies can take a long time to find their way into everyday life, and different migrant individuals and groups would have different experiences of a multicultural Australia. Overwhelmingly, the participants in this study have claimed positive experiences of multiculturalism, indicating that the ideals and actualities of Multiculturalism have enabled them positive self-identifications, providing empowerment and a vehicle for the formulation of a sense of self which belonged simultaneously to their Hungarian cultural background and the Australian society: *A simultaneous self*. One research participant, Rose describes her sense of self as the result of both the Hungarian and Australian cultural experiences and elements she has received from both the private (home) and public spheres. Interestingly, Rose attributes multiculturalism as a vehicle which facilitated her equal engagement with her Hungarian cultural heritage and Australian dominant culture, hence a formation of a self which draws from the two:

> While I do have Hungarian culture within me, the Australian culture has also shaped me, and you can't deny that. This [Australia] is where we go to school together and where [we] work together, we follow the same rules and share the same values of multiculturalism and then in addition you go home, and you learn the [Hungarian] traditions and values as well, so you can't separate the two (…) I wasn't able to say I am completely Australian or I am completely Hungarian because I had – and still have - such a blend of friends, such a mixture of different backgrounds in my friendships (Rose, 50yrs, Interview 2016).

In Rose's mind, her belonging in Australia is the result of her participation in the Australian education system and workplace alongside holding shared national values of multiculturalism. In addition, her appreciation of the cultural diversity which she attributes to living in Australia has allowed her free and active engagements with her social environments and friendships, facilitating not only an acceptance of self, but an active agency in such an acceptance. Interestingly, whilst Rose appears to list distinct factors which inform her belonging to Australian and Hungarian culture, the values and diverse friendships Rose has gained from the various areas within her life in Australia including; school, dancing and Hungarian scouts have influenced her reluctance to perceive her self in separation, understanding it as an amalgamation of both Hungarian and Australian cultural engagements and relationships. In particular, Rose's experiences of ethnic diversity during school helped her view her participation in Hungarian cultural activities and traditions positively, positioning Australia as the backdrop where Hungarian performances were welcomed, stating, "I think mixing with [people of] other nationalities helped me accept and embrace my background and heritage (…) I didn't have to downplay [my ethnic background]". Therefore, Rose's experiences indicate how her 'mixing' among diverse nationalities in a multicultural context provided her with the ability and means to combine her ethnic and national identities and merge them on equal footing in a *simultaneous self.* Interestingly, five of the six interview participants identified living in a multicultural society as important in influencing their sense of self, providing them with a sense of cultural diversity. This subsequently provided a means of integrating Hungarian cultural belonging – that of their family and home – with the cultural diversity they experienced during their upbringing, proving that cultural diversity was integral to the formation of the self. In particular, they referenced their friendships with other students from diverse ethnic backgrounds as critical in shaping their self:

> There were a lot of Greek kids there [at school] and I usually did make friends with the Greek kids because there was a mutual understanding of what it was like to have migrant parents, and that you spoke to your mum in one language and you spoke to your friends in another. That was just quite normal for all the kids to do and it made me feel normal (Natalie, 50yrs Interview, 2016)

Similar sentiments were also shared by Michelle:

> Well when I was in Primary it was very multicultural, a lot of Greeks, Maltese, Italian. I don't even remember having been bullied. I mean I got called four eyes, but it had nothing to do with being Hungarian (laughs) (Michelle, 52yrs Interview, 2016).

The positive experiences of cultural diversity expressed by these participants has been to some extent, influenced by the diverse friendships and cross-cultural exposures they experienced as children in their schooling community. This community can be considered to provide multiple, cultural socialisation opportunities, as frequent contact with students of different cultural backgrounds impacted on their evaluations of self and normalising cultural behaviours such as speaking a second language. As such, the experiences of the research participants at school allowed them to understand their Hungarian heritage as normal and accepted, given that their friends, as Natalie stated, "also had migrant parents and could speak a second language" like she did. The positive experiences of diversity expressed by these participants can also be attributed to their advantaged positionality or otherwise, their assimilability, as blending into the dominant culture with little resistance (Voloder and Andits 2015). This assimilability affords individuals, such as the participants in this study, with the ability to move 'between' various cultural contexts with ease, allowing them to accept their belonging to both their Hungarian and non-Hungarian groups in their lives and view them as 'normal'. This is because their Hungarian ethnocultural background is not generally identifiable, nor "intrudes upon their day-to-day experiences" as Doane (1997, 378) has previously suggested.

Therefore, the positive experiences of acceptance and inclusion outlined by the research participants gave them the opportunity to exercise their reflexive talents and engage with their peers from Anglo-Australian backgrounds on equal basis. One participant George alluded to this reflexivity stating that he "could play both the Anglo card and the ethnic card" in the context of negotiating his self according to the given environment. Similarly, Maria shared that she often had to emphasise her ethnocultural belonging to friends and colleagues, who otherwise

would not have recognised her Hungarian background, stating that "people were surprised [when I would say I was Hungarian] because I don't look ethnic or Hungarian, I mean even I don't know what a Hungarian looks like (laughs)". Maria's experience thus reveals the intentional element of her self-performativity, as she often felt the need to announce having a Hungarian background for recognition. These experiences highlight the role their whiteness has played in easing the participants' effortless movements between communities whilst also influencing their intentional performances to affirm their Hungarian cultural background. Additionally, the importance of acceptance and role of agency is also highlighted in their experiences in terms of facilitating the construction and maintenance of a simultaneous sense of self, due to their various engagements and cross-cultural exposures within Sydney coupled with minimal experiences of discrimination.

4.2 Transcultural exposure within Sydney

A transcultural belonging develops from the process of interpreting and internalising a diverse array of experiences and interactions from a myriad of cultural contexts. This often occurs on a transnational level, where cross border engagements create an interwoven sense of belonging which spans across cultures. However, as this paper shows, a similar sense of belonging can occur through the numerous cross-cultural experiences individuals accumulate throughout their lives in Australia. In particular, the participants in this paper spent most of their socialisation from childhood to adulthood in Australia due to various political and socio-economic constraints which made transnational engagements difficult to pursue and maintain. As a result, the participants in this study were encouraged to participate in various Hungarian organisations by their parents from early childhood, whilst also participating in extra-curricular activities after school:

> You just didn't even have to think about it, it was just my life. I came home from school and we got in the car and did the activity of the day like piano or dancing. So that routine became so natural for me. It would be the same for the weekends, I'd wake up, go to Hungarian school and Hungarian scouts and come home. The week would be how I always knew it to be. It was all the same to me (Natalie, 50yrs, Interview 2016).

According to Natalie, no real distinctions were traceable between the activities she undertook at school, extra-curricular activities after school, and life at home. Whilst some were labelled Hungarian, all activities nevertheless were part of

the everyday, with Maria claiming that she "didn't know any differently" and that she "didn't even have to think about it", life was 'normal'. Hence, one can argue that Natalie did not view her self as that of two distinct cultures, but one whole self, where belonging to Australia and Hungarian culture became routine and performed simultaneously throughout her everyday life. These simultaneous understandings have also translated into definitions of home, as Michelle explains:

> Australia, regardless of anything else is home. This is where I was born, and I enjoy that there are Hungarian things to do in Australia. I live here, I work here, I've gone to university here and my lifelong friends from the Hungarian community are here. I'm both [Hungarian and Australian] (Michelle, 52yrs, Interview 2016).

Michelle's experiences have highlighted the interrelated relationship she has formed between her Hungarian and Australian culture. In particular, Michelle's description of home accentuates the simultaneous quality of her self, as her belonging to Australia is partly the result of participating in the Hungarian community and culture which is located *in* Australia. Therefore, the opportunities Australia has provided for Michelle to engage with her Hungarian culture and friends through the Sydney Hungarian community are irremovable from her every day lived experiences, influencing her claim of identifying as 'both' Hungarian and Australian. Such sentiments are similarly expressed by Maria, who combines favourable elements from both Hungarian and Australian culture;

> I feel Hungarian because I love the [Hungarian] language, the food, the Hungarian community here, and I feel Australian because I love Australia as a country, I love that we have such freedom. I wouldn't like to live in Hungary even though I love being Hungarian. My Hungarian and Australian friends are here (Maria, 52yrs, Interview 2016).

Maria, like Michelle, claims to be simultaneously influenced by her Hungarian culture and community, as well as Australian friends and the broader social value of freedom she enjoys in Australia. Furthermore, Michelle stresses that her Hungarianness is clearly situated within the Hungarian community *in* Sydney – her place of birth – rather than relating it back to the State of Hungary as might be the case for her parents. Therefore, the Hungarian community (in Australia) is central to her sense of self. The importance these communal friendships have also played a pivotal role in forming the *simultaneous self*, as evident when Michelle discussed a case of contention with her cousin who had accused her of speaking too much about her Hungarian belonging:

> A few years ago, one of my cousins told me to get a one-way ticket back to Hungary and she said that I am not to talk to her about anything Hungarian. I sat there thinking 'hang on, I was born here!' and I'm talking about my life and when people ask what I've been doing I say 'oh well I've been doing this with the Hungarian scouts and Hungarian this and Hungarian that', and it's because my friends here [in Australia] come from the Hungarian community (Michelle, 52yrs, Interview 2016).

Therefore, a relationship of simultaneity; belonging to two cultures, can be detected in the accounts given by both Michelle and Maria. Both conceptualise their sense of self and belonging as members of the Hungarian community and firmly embedded in Australian society and culture. Furthermore, such embedded-ness was not only based on sense of belonging but facilitated by fluency in Hungarian.

4.3 Bilingual language proficiency

All the research participants are bilingual, fluent in both Hungarian and English. As members of second generation migrants, they were brought up speaking Hungarian at home with their families and in the Hungarian community and speaking English in school. Earlier accounts in this paper indicate how the research participants moved effortlessly between Hungarian and non-Hungarian cultural contexts and their bilingual language capacity would have been essential in easing such 'movements':

> It's a subconscious switch, like you know exactly who you're going to talk with, so you simply talk to them in that language, whether that's English or Hungarian. It's just automatic. It's just who I am (Natalie, 50yrs, Interview 2016).

Maria also refers to this 'switch', or transition:

> There wasn't a conscious transition like I never even thought about it. I didn't know any different, that's just what I had to do (Maria, 52yrs, Interview 2016).

This experience was also supported by John:

> I didn't think about it. When I was in school, I don't have to think in Hungarian and translate that to English, or vis-à-vis. It just happens, it's just natural [laughs] (John, 62yrs, Interview 2016).

Transcultural belonging as argued by Vauclair et al., "develops out of the necessity to process multiple cultural experiences and to engage in meaning-making of different cultural forms as well as possible cultural conflicts and inconsistencies" (2014, 12). Together, the experiences expressed by the research participants

highlight that in light of their common experiences related to speaking Hungarian at home and English at school, their bilingual skills have helped them to not only respond and participate within various Hungarian and non-Hungarian groups with ease, but also have, in the process, become tacit performances due to how often situations arose where bilingualism was required. For example, Michelle's kindergarten experience provides a unique insight into both the tacit and embodied nature of her bilingualism and its role in the formation of her *Simultaneous self* which merges both her Hungarian and Australian cultural belonging:

> I'd be speaking English the whole day at school and then when I'd go home, I'd have to speak Hungarian but that was natural to me (…) My kindergarten teacher was the one that marvelled at it when I'd be talking to the teacher in English and then in mid-sentence I'd turn towards my parents and I would switch to Hungarian (Michelle, 52yrs, Interview 2016)

Therefore, in considering their bilingual capacities, this group's effortless movements between English and Hungarian have allowed them to view their communication with various groups and settings as a combined and embodied, rather than separated performance which enables them to live in-between or rather, in a space of simultaneity (Gilsenan-Nordin, Hansen and Zamorano-IIena 2013). The research participants' belonging to both Hungarian and non-Hungarian communities and social groups since childhood have enabled them to exercise their reflexive bilingual skills within their everyday lived experiences, to the extent that these performances became natural.

4.4 Belonging to the Hungarian community

It is evident, that the research participants considered the Hungarian community as vital for developing both a sense of belong and sense of self. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the participants in this study attended Hungarian language school and scouting throughout their childhood and adolescence and have actively continued their adult membership through upholding volunteer roles and attendance at fundraising and cultural celebrations. The friendships these participants have formed from childhood in the Hungarian community have also continued into adulthood and have served as a form of social capital that they have drawn on throughout their lives. The Hungarian community – i.e. intentional participation in the community and a place which provides a sense of belonging – is evident in George's story;

> I was previously married to someone else who was not as interested in my Hungarian identity and that's why I withdrew from the community (…) I drifted back when I remarried to a supportive partner and I reconnected with my Hungarian ties and I got more involved [in Hungarian scouts] again. When I was less engaged [in Scouts] I was less happy with myself because my identity is tied to what I do, and the community was a big part of who I was (…) Reconnecting with the community gave back a part of myself which I had temporarily lost (George, 50 yrs, Interview 2016).

George's experience highlights the importance of the community in the maintenance of a Hungarian belonging and sense of self, as it relies heavily on community engagement and active membership. In particular, re-instating his previous role as a scout leader helped him reclaim ties with Hungarian friends he had known from a young age, demonstrating the intentional performances which help develop and maintain the *Simultaneous self*. Further to his community engagements, George's experience can be related to those highlighted by Fortier (2006, 67) who has argued that "as a site of reassurance, the cultural community operates as a scene for performing and referring collective belonging". This is because George has reflexively drawn upon his membership to the community and used it to rediscover his belonging when attachments to Hungarian culture were weakened by external factors or life changes.

Furthermore, as argued by Sayols (2018), when undergoing a process of transculturation, individuals experience a series of losses and gains, selecting and rediscovering the self through a variety of cultural experiences. Collectively, both Sayols (2018) and Fortier's (2006) arguments are clearly visible in the case of George's lived experiences of belonging, as the absence of Hungarian cultural experiences impacted on his sense of self. In addition, his decision to reinvigorate his links with the Hungarian community demonstrates this process of intentional cultural rediscovery, with the Hungarian community occupying a space of reassurance which can be engaged with reflexively to maintain the *simultaneous self*. The importance of life events in the negotiation of belonging and the reflexivity of the simultaneous self was also highlighted by John:

> When I was young, I felt more Hungarian and then I went through a stage where I left [the] scouts and didn't really associate with Hungarian friends and got more into the Australian way of life, and that was when my mum suddenly passed away, I was still speaking Hungarian with Dad, so I never lost my Hungarian identity, but it took a backseat for a while. Then I went overseas to visit my family and my Hungarian

> identity re-energised having met my relatives and realising that I have that Hungarian culture within me (…) Then I met my Hungarian wife and it only strengthened as I re-entered the Hungarian community with her in Australia and we built up really close friendships. So since then, I feel Australian but also Hungarian (John, 62yrs, Interview 2016).

John's and George's collective experiences highlight that cultural attachments are fluid in the self and require intentional performances. As such, the Simultaneous self can be (re)shaped according to life experiences. John's experiences are demonstrative of this, as his movement toward Australian culture was deemed the result of an intentional distancing from the Hungarian community, similar to the experiences expressed by George. This reveals the importance of community and social networks in sustaining Hungarian cultural attachment, as isolation from other Hungarians lead to a revaluation of John's Hungarian belonging, coupled with the loss of his mother and experiences in Hungary. In addition, the community, as a static social infrastructure in Sydney, serves as an ethnocultural resource which can be reflexively drawn on to respond to life changes and for the purposes of reinforcing the simultaneous self. John's experiences also begin to shed light on the relevance of transnationalism during adulthood as reinforcing a transcultural belonging for this generation, who are better resourced to engage in transnational practices at this period in time. As such, whilst John's experiences reveal that transnational experiences in the form of VFR travel - visiting friends and family (Lee, 2011) - can lead to the reproduction of Hungarian belonging, it can also encourage the re-investment of cultural efforts and engagements back into the local community, continuing the efforts to maintain the simultaneous self at home in Australia (Welsch, 1999).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the second-generation Hungarian-Australian group from this paper have constructed a *simultaneous self* which has enabled them to perform and maintain a transcultural way of belonging. This analytical concept has provided insight into how this group of second-generation adults have (re)constructed their self-identification and articulated their diverse cultural engagements throughout their lived experiences. The *simultaneous self* that has been internalised by this group comprises of distinct, self-defined Hungarian and Australian cultural elements

and experiences informed by their local community engagements in Sydney. Their experiences of multiculturalism, bilingual language competency, and participation within the Hungarian community in Sydney have been pivotal to the development of their simultaneous self. The participants learnt the Hungarian language at home, practice Hungarian traditions with their families and have also reinforced these practices within the Hungarian community through the relationships that have stemmed from their membership. Their local engagements have also drawn from their participation in the education system, workplace and development of both Hungarian and non-Hungarian relationships. For this reason, this group of participants have developed a transcultural belonging overtime through their multiple, cross-cultural experiences and social networks predominately situated within Australia, highlighting the significance of local engagements in their identity construction processes.

These local experiences are considered to have provided sufficient performative opportunities and exposure to Hungarian cultural elements, especially during childhood and early adolescence, where social, technological and financial restrictions on transnational practices made these engagements difficult. Positive experiences of diversity during formative years of socialisation have also influenced the transcultural belonging of this group, positioning Australia as the broader context within which their simultaneity was accepted and performed. As a result, this article aims to contribute to the transcultural framework, introducing the *simultaneous self* as an analytical concept to illuminate the ways in which second generation Hungarian Australians construct and (re)produce their belonging to both Australian and Hungarian cultural frameworks over their life experiences and at the same time, develop an identity which draws from and is the resultant of, these diverse attachments. Therefore, the *simultaneous self* may be applied to other second generation groups to understand their identity formation and how they at once, construct and internalise their lived experiences to absorb and maintain a transcultural way of belonging overtime.

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