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Being a "Good" Son and a "Good" Daughter: Voices of Muslim Immigrant Adolescents

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Abstract: In the last decade, a growing empirical work has focused on adaptation processes of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries who live in the West, particularly Muslim youth born and/or educated in Western countries. The current study explored how Muslim boys and girls immigrated from Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan negotiate their identity on the base of interiorized social and cultural in-group norms associated to the representation of a "good" son and a "good" daughter within the resettlement society. Participants were 45 Muslim immigrant adolescents (30 females, 15 males) coming from Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan, who were interviewed through an in-depth semi-structured interview. Thematic analysis carried out on the interview transcripts permitted to identify four themes and thirteen subthemes, revealing interesting differences based on participants' gender and country of origin. The quality of being obedient and respectful of parents' desires was a significant common topic among all participants, although it was differently articulated by girls and boys. For girls, norms and expectations were strictly modeled around staying at home and preserving heritage culture. For boys, a heavy mandate—that is, gaining educational success in order to become the breadwinner—weights on them. Implications of these gender-based challenges are discussed in relation to specific vulnerabilities experienced by young Muslims living in Western society.

Keywords: Muslim; immigrant children; gender norm; identity

1. Introduction

Research carried out in the last decades on the experiences of immigrants in Western countries unanimously recognized the complexity and multidimensionality of the adaptation processes associated with living in a new socio-cultural context (Berry et al. 2006). Additionally, a large number of factors have been proposed as being associated with acculturation and adaptation of different immigrant generations. They include socio-demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, length of stay in the host country, socio-economic status), post-migration variables (e.g., acculturation factors), and social contextual variables (e.g., perceived discrimination, social support, ethnic network) (Berry et al. 2006; Bornstein 2017; Brubaker 2001; Marzana et al. 2016; Musterd and Ostendorf 2009; Sam and Berry 2016).

The migration transition is still more complex in the cases of family reunifications. Many patterns of serial migration exist and most of them are marked by a series of critical issues, well-illustrated in the psychological (Falicov 2002; Gonzales et al. 2006; Lashley 2000) and sociological (Bertolani et al. 2014) literature. From the point of view of the children, who are the object of interest in this study, this type of migration constitutes a challenge in multiple ways. In the first place, it imposes on children a double separation: the first between the parent who migrates and the children who remain in their country of origin; the second, at the moment of the family reunification, between the children and the social network where they had been settled until that moment. This aspect is particularly important

as the children develop a referential relationship with other caregiver figures and then they have to separate from them in order to reunite with their parents (Lashley 2000). Secondly, the migration is often the parents' project and not the children's one, who must then take on the further challenge of having to adapt to someone else's plan. Finally, the separation from parents can be very long, and the reunification is not easy because over the course of time the family arrangements and bonds have changed (Falicov 2002; Gonzales et al. 2006). All these aspects inevitably affect the socialization process, which is more complex in reunification scenarios. Literature on the socialization in migration is flourishing (Vedder et al. 2009; Verkuyten et al. 2012) and has highlighted the complexity of parental task of transmitting to the young generations the values and norms of heritage culture within a new socio-cultural context. Much less is known about the children perspective. They interiorized social norms and values in their family and, as adolescents, they have to negotiate these aspects in light of the new experiences lived outside the family (peer, school, post-school activities, sport).

The present research was carried out in Italy, where the migratory phenomenon is quite recent and the policies implemented in the last two decades regarding familial reunifications have allowed a gradual process of immigrant families' stabilization in the host country. Therefore, alongside the growing number of children born in Italy (around 2/3 of the total population of foreign minors), a significant proportion of minors (especially the older ones) are immigrant children who experienced family reunification (Crespi 2014). Surprisingly, these latter represent a reality even less investigated in literature. We believe that the point of view of the children who experienced family reunification is very interesting from a psychological perspective, as they must negotiate multiple issues pertaining to their identity and to combine the feelings of belonging to their ethnic community with those of the host country. Since these aspects of negotiation become more salient and complex in adolescence, it is evident how being immigrant adolescents is an additional challenge. In adolescence, when the personal and social identity is already an object of negotiation, immigrant adolescents often live in between two different socio-cultural contexts, moreover, they have directly experienced mobility from their origin country to the host country and they have separated both from the extended family network and from their community.

In the present study, we limited our investigation to post-migration experience of reunified Muslim adolescents in order to explore how they negotiate specific cultural issues and social norms. This work employed a cross-sectional qualitative design and presents at least two points of innovation. The first one is the involvement of male participants, previous qualitative studies have indeed mainly involved female adolescents, young women, or adult women, neglecting males almost entirely. Findings from the current study revealed important aspects that have been verbalized by male participants, providing a complementary picture to that of their female peers. A second strength regards the involvement of Muslim adolescents coming from different countries: Egypt, Morocco, and Pakistan. This choice turned out to be fruitful because it sheds light on important differences among these three subgroups of immigrant Muslim adolescents. We believe it can help contrasting the outgroup homogeneity effect for whom "all Muslims are the same".

1.1. Muslim Immigrants in Italy

Despite the recent economic crisis, Italy is one of the major destinations for immigrants in Europe. The foreign resident population has increased over the years, reaching 5.9 million of individuals on 1 January 2016 (ISTAT 2016): this represents 9.58% of the total population.

Muslim immigrants and their descendants compose in Italy a large and increasing group, as in many European countries (e.g., Germany, France, and the United Kingdom; Pew Research Center 2010). In Italy, Muslim Arab, North African, and South Asian immigrants, account for approximately 20% of the legalized immigrant population (ISTAT 2016). Muslims are not a homogeneous group: in the Italian context, they comprise more than 20 different nationalities. In this study, we focused on three national groups (Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan).

The exploration of Moroccan, Egyptian and Pakistani immigrants' experiences is interesting for socio-demographic, political, religious, and cultural reasons (De Haas 2007; Giunchi 2012; Hermansen 1991; Zaman et al. 2006). Their immigrant experience is related to the political and social-economic conditions in their country of origin: Morocco and Egypt are considered to be more developed and dynamic countries with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita respectively of US $3169 and of US $2724 (World Health Organization 2016a), while Pakistan is a poorer country with a GDP per capita of US $1182 (World Health Organization 2016a). Furthermore, in Pakistan the overall status of women is among the lowest in the world and secondary education rates are still low for girls (World Health Organization 2016b). All the three are Muslim societies, but, whereas reformist and modernized ideas about women's rights have spread throughout Moroccan and Egyptian societies, in Pakistan the fundamentalist Islamic tradition is still strong (Giunchi 2012).

Their migration history in Italy is the result both of the policies of recruitment for manual labor since the 1980s and of the following immigration norms about family reunion (Legge Turco Napolitano, Act no. 286/1998). The 510,450 Moroccans (71% of them living in Northern Italy), 143,232 Egyptians (67% of them living in Northern Italy) and 122,885 Pakistanis (71.2% of them living in Northern Italy) officially residing in Italy on 1 January 2016 are among the largest Muslim minorities in the country. In particular, in Italy, Moroccan group is the largest national non-EU foreign group and Pakistanis are among the fastest growing immigrant groups (ISTAT 2016). In Italy, minors belonging to Moroccan, Egyptian and Pakistani groups number respectively 161,325, 49,141 and 33,598 (ISTAT 2016). These three groups have different migratory histories and characteristics. Migration from North-Africa (i.e., Morocco and Egypt) began in the mid-1980s, whereas migration from Pakistan started in the second half of the 1990s. In comparison with Egyptians and Pakistanis, Moroccans are much more deeply-rooted in the Italian context because of a longer migratory history.

For all groups, the first migration wave was male-dominated, though this trend was gradually counterbalanced by the arrival of women and children within the scope of family reunification (Ambrosini 2013; ISTAT 2016). Nowadays, only the Moroccan group gained a balance in the gender structure, on the contrary Egyptian and Pakistani immigrants are characterized by a very large imbalance in the gender structure (about 70% of the immigrants are males) (ISTAT 2016). Egyptians have higher educational level in comparison with Moroccan and Pakistani immigrants: the 64% of Egyptian immigrants has a medium level of education (i.e., they attended high school), whereas the 68% of Pakistanis and the 72% of Moroccans completed only elementary or junior high school. All these immigrants perform principally low-skilled work (building or handicraft sector, food and service sector, agriculture sector). These groups are also characterized by different levels of participation of women in the workforce: 23% of Moroccan women and 14.2% of Egyptian women are part of the Italian labor market, the same is true for only 4.5% of Pakistani women (Ambrosini 2013; ISTAT 2016). Most Moroccan, Egyptian, and Pakistani immigrants in Italy are living in the northern part of the country: the former settled predominantly in urban areas, while the latter settled in rural or suburban areas (Blangiardo 2013).

Overall, the presence of immigrants in Italy is characterized by high level of negative views and rejection, as highlighted by Ambrosini (2013), who suggested the concept of "subordinate integration" (p. 183). According to the author, immigrants in Italy seemed to be accepted in the labor market as long as they perform low skill jobs and remain at a low socio-economical level. Additionally, Muslim immigrants experience growing prejudice and hostilities originated by Islamism and terrorism and geopolitical tensions. The role played by young Muslims and those people whom Muslim faith is assigned (i.e., riots, recent terrorist attacks in Europe) has generated an atmosphere of fear and suspicion toward them (Allen and Nielsen 2002; Pew Research Center 2016). For these reasons, in many European countries and in Italy, the issue of integration and psychological adaptation of young Muslim immigrants has become urgent in public and academic discourses.

1.2. Identity Processes and Domain-Specific Norms among Muslim Immigrants

In the last decade, a growing empirical work has focused on adaptation processes of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries who live in the West, particularly Muslim youth, born and/or educated in Western countries.

The bulk of psychological studies on Muslims youth are based on the two-dimensional model of acculturation of Berry (1997). This theoretical model aims at evaluating how immigrants are able to both navigate between their own heritage culture and the host culture, combining customs, norms, values stemming from these two cultural frameworks (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2004). Many studies carried out in Europe using this framework show that Muslim youth living in Europe—in particular, Moroccans and Turks—remain strongly attached to own cultural heritage and struggle in combining loyalty to their cultural heritage and the host society norms and values (Berry and Sabatier 2010; Crul and Doomernik 2003; Stevens et al. 2004; Vedder et al. 2007; Verkuyten et al. 2012). Serious cultural conflicts between different contradictory norms and lifestyles are particularly stressful in adolescence when children have to face the normative tasks of identity redefinition. Although studies have rarely compared male and female Muslim immigrants adolescents, some authors (Stevens et al. 2004) suggested that Muslim girls are more vulnerable and seem to experience major cultural conflicts and ambivalences between loyalty to their family and community heritage and external pressures.

The above-mentioned acculturation studies offer an overall—but also oversimplified and static—picture of post-migration identity processes faced by Muslim youth. Despite its popularity in cross-cultural psychological research, several criticisms have been moved to Berry's acculturation model. In particular, authors criticized both the monolithic view on culture that ignore the diversity within cultural groups and the too simplified view of acculturation process that do not consider multiple dimensions and factors involved in acculturation (Bornstein 2017; Ngo 2008). Therefore, whether psychological studies have the merit of vastly underlining the centrality of heritage culture for Muslim young generations, they only partially allow a glimpse of the complexity of cross-cultural negotiations experienced by them in Western societies (Stevens et al. 2004). In fact, as suggested by authors (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2004), competing cultural pressures and norms regarding specific domains need to be deeply explored. These domains are generally classified as public or functional (i.e., language, contacts, news) or private (i.e., cultural habits, gender relationship, religion). Cross-cultural negotiations may differ across these different cultural domains: public domains of acculturation are more negotiable, whereas private domains, attaining norms and values that constitute core aspects of in-group identities, are more difficult to negotiate.

In this regard, studies carried out by Verkuyten et al. (2012) on young Muslims, based on the theory of social identity (Tajfel 1981; Turner et al. 1987), highlighted the importance of the in-group for the individuals, in terms of feelings, self-esteem, belonging, and behavioural norm acquisition. Research has shown that relationships with the in-group members increase the importance of ethnic identity and of the social norms linked to it (Ethier and Deaux 1994). As previously underlined, during the socialization process, parental normative pressures to maintain the own culture conflict with external pressures of larger society. Research demonstrated that among immigrants, attempts are frequent in order to maintain their core in-group norms and values so as to experience a feeling of continuity between their own origin country and their host country and to preserve the distinctiveness of their identity (Ethier and Deaux 1994).

Qualitative studies concerning domain-specific cultural issues among Muslims living in Western countries have been mainly carried out with Muslim female participants (mostly adult women), generally considered more vulnerable than their male counterparts because of their being "custodian of tradition" and "oppressed" by patriarchal norms and religious traditions. Researchers rarely take into account male immigrants' narratives about domain-specific cultural negotiations. In general, these studies highlighted three main cultural domains where cross-cultural negotiations are more challenging: gender expectations, the question of wearing the veil, and the importance of religious practices and duties.

Gender Expectations. Muslim adolescents negotiate their identity in light of cultural and religious prescriptions concerning appropriate gender roles and gender relationships (Abu-Ali and Reisen 1999; Ajrouch 2004). Studies (Dwyer 2000; Gilani 2005; Giuliani and Tagliabue 2015) have shown that Muslim girls and women face and sometimes creatively manage gender dilemmas experienced within the host societies. The immigration process and contextual factors (e.g., perceived discrimination) often tend to reinforce in the post-migration setting the cultural pressures regarding the woman's role as guardian of cultural and religious identity. Behavioural prescriptions regard appropriate dress, mating and dating rules, and marriage. Furthermore, girls are asked to maintain a strong connection to the country of origin of their family symbolically, but this is also reinforced through parents' choice to return to the country of origin in order to celebrate marriages (Reniers 2001). The geographical proximity and the recent and growing market of low-cost trips has contributed to the simplification of mobility (Bertolani et al. 2014; Leyendecker 2011).

Wearing the Veil. Frequently investigated in literature is the norm regarding the use of the veil. The veil is considered an "identity marker" that is clearly related to Muslim immigrant women (Crabtree and Husain 2012). Recently, researchers tried to investigate the deeper meanings of wearing the veil, highlighting the complexity of this phenomenon. They suggested that several different meanings coexist: the veil is a primary part of Muslim female identity (Hopkins and Greenwood 2013), it is frequently personal the choice to use it, and it not necessarily forced by in-group members (Lorasdaği 2009). Moreover, it is a ritual act that qualifies women as practicing the Muslim religion (Fadil 2011), or it is perceived as a religious duty (Killian 2003). It is moreover perceived an instrument useful to act in a pious way when there is a temptation to engage in non-religious acts (Patel 2012).

Islamic Religious Practices and Duties. Islam provides clearly core duties and practices that permit distinguishing between being or not being a "true" Muslim (Haddad and Lummis 1987; Hogg et al. 2010; Williams 1988). Studies about Muslim immigrants have revealed that religiosity (e.g., engagement in practices, beliefs, values) is a salient component of daily life and it is highly intertwined with ethnic aspects of identity (Maliepaard et al. 2010; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). Furthermore, studies comparing different generations of Muslim immigrants on religious identity show mixed results. On one hand, some studies confirmed the importance of religious commitment and practices among different generations of Muslim immigrants (Diehl et al. 2009; Güngör et al. 2011; Verkuyten 2007). On the other hand, other research indicates a progressive weakness of the religious engagement among the descendants of the first immigrants (Maliepaard et al. 2010). Among the less negotiable norms, there is the one concerning marriage. Traditional interpretations of the Quran state that men are allowed to marry a "chaste non-Muslim woman" (i.e., Christian or Jewish). A Muslim woman, however, is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man (Leeman 2009). Besides what is dictated by religion, a main aspect of marriage management is linked to parental expectations. Research highlighted that some parents expressed strong disapproval of their daughters' marrying outside of their religion (Al-Yousuf 2006), and were more permissive with their sons' than with their daughters' marriages (Hanassab 1998). These gender differences are coherent with the woman's role and status within the household. Indeed, women are responsible for the upbringing of children and become therefore a primary means of cultural and religious continuity for future generations (Clycq 2012).

1.3. The Present Study

Although previous studies have highlighted cultural negotiations faced by Muslim immigrants in Western societies, to our knowledge, studies have rarely explored the post-migration experience of male and female Muslim reunified adolescents with respect to the negotiation of specific cultural and social norms.

Overall, the study adds to the literature in several ways. First, our focus is only on adolescent children of immigrants who experienced family reunification (foreign born children). Unlike studies where "second generation" is used by researchers as umbrella term including many different migration histories, in the current study we considered only the case of immigrant adolescent children who

moved to Italy at different age through family reunification. These adolescent immigrants have been exposed during socialization process to different social and cultural contexts and need to combine contrasting social expectations (family, peer, school, host society).

Second, we explored both males'and females' perceptions, thus adding the male voices within a literature that has mainly focused on the female perspective.

Third, we included immigrants from Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan because of their representativeness within the Italian context, in particular within Northern Italy, where our study has been carried out. The choice of this regional area is due to the fact that it is the most industrialized and productive area in Italy, where Moroccans and Pakistanis mainly reside and work.

Considering these above-mentioned aspects, this study aims at exploring, through an in-depth semi-structured interview, in-group norms and meanings associated to the representation of a "good" son and a "good" daughter among male and female immigrant reunified adolescents coming from Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan. We considered these aspects in the light of gender and countries of origin.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Forty-five immigrant adolescents participated in the current study and were recruited in the northern region of Italy using the "snowball technique". Among the participants, 30 female adolescents (11 from Morocco, 9 from Pakistan, 10 from Egypt) and 15 male adolescents (5 from Morocco, 5 from Pakistan, 5 from Egypt) met the following criteria and were thus selected: (a) the immigrant adolescent was aged 14–19; (b) the adolescent, born outside Italy, had immigrated to Italy from Morocco, Egypt or Pakistan through family reunification; (c) the adolescent had lived in Italy for at least two years. All participants identified themselves as Muslim. All participants were living in two-parent families with other sibling, the majority ($n = 43$) of mothers were housewives (except two Moroccan women employed in a full and part-time unskilled job respectively) and all fathers perform low-skilled work. All adolescents attended secondary high school. Participants demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' demographic characteristics.

	Moroccans		**Pakistanis**		**Egyptians**	
	Female	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**
Age						
Range Mean (SD)	15–19 16.72 (1.61)	15–16 15.40 (0.54)	14–18 16.55 (1.81)	15–18 16.00 (1.22)	14–19 16.80 (1.61)	14–18 15.20 (1.78)
Age at time of immigration						
Range Mean (SD)	1–17 9.36 (5.08)	2–13 9.00 (4.79)	3–14 8.78 (3.97)	3–9 6.00 (2.45)	1–12 6.78 (4.24)	1–8 4.20 (2.86)
Years in Italy						
Range Mean (SD)	2–15 7.36 (5.25)	3–14 6.40 (4.97)	2–11 7.77 (3.41)	8–12 10.00 (1.58)	3–17 10.11 (5.80)	10–13 11.00 (1.41)
Family size						
Range Mean (SD)	5–6 5.45 (0.52)	5–7 6.2 (1.09)	3–7 5.33 (1.22)	5–7 6.00 (0.70)	4–7 5.80 (0.91)	4–6 5.00 (1.00)

2.2. Procedure

Data were collected from January 2008 to December 2011 within a broader research project entitled "Women experiences in Arab and Pakistani migration" (Regalia and Giuliani 2012). The research was

granted approval by the University Ethical Committee (cod.01-14), which fulfilled ethical standards of the Italian Psychology Association (AIP, Associazione Italiana di Psicologia).

Adolescents' parents, when children were younger than 18 years old, were asked for written consent for their participation in the research under the condition of anonymity and for tape-recording the interviews. Adolescents older than 18 years old provide their written individual consent.

Participants were asked to complete firstly a brief demographic questionnaire, which gathered some personal information (country of origin, age, age at immigration, family size and condition, parental job). Then participants were administered an in-depth semi-structured individual interview conducted by two expert interviewers. All participants were fluent in Italian and all interviews were conducted in Italian.

The semi-structured interviews investigated different areas of immigrant adolescents' life: personal and family immigration history, life experience in the host country (family, school, work, leisure), parental expectations, comparisons between homeland and host country, social context and social relationship, future projects, and expectations about the future. In this study, findings from the qualitative analysis related to parental expectations and are based on participants' responses to four questions. We analyzed only the narratives stimulated by these questions. Questions 1 and 2 queried participants as follows: "What does it mean to be a good son?", "What does it mean to be a good daughter?". These two questions were designed in the attempt to explore adolescents' norms and values linked to the role of a good child. Questions 3 and 4 were posed as follows "How it should behave a good son?", "How it should behave a good daughter?". These two questions were developed to further explore the behavioral aspect linked to their representation of a good child.

The interviews took place in the respondents' homes or in public spaces (i.e., library, school), and respondents were offered a 10-euro gift certificate to a local market for their participation. The sessions were tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim in Italian.

2.3. Data Analysis

The transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed separately for gender using thematic analysis, which is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (i.e., themes) within the data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

A 5-step process to conduct the thematic analysis was used (Olivari et al. 2015, 2017). Firstly, the researchers familiarized themselves with the text by transcribing the recordings, reading these transcripts thoroughly, highlighting keywords and phrases, and then noting initial ideas. Secondly, all the three authors independently began the coding process, which involved organizing the data into themes and subthemes. The three authors first reviewed all the transcripts separately and independently to determine the initial themes and subthemes. Subsequently, they met as a group several times to review and reach agreement regarding the themes and subthemes. Agreement was reached by discussion. Fourthly, the researchers reviewed and discussed the themes by reading them again and checking their coherency and consistency with each other and the entire dataset. Finally, the research team met again to define and label the themes and their underlying subthemes and to identify key participant quotations.

2.4. Limitations of the Study

The present work has some limitations that should be held in consideration. The first regards the small number of participants, which cannot be considered representative of the populations interviewed. Furthermore, these interviews were carried out six years ago, which cannot account for either recent socio-political vicissitudes that have marked some of these countries (e.g., the "Arab Spring"), nor for some recent debates on citizen rights that are now happening in Italy (e.g., such as "Jus soli"). Additionally, the size of our sample does not allow distinguishing the experiences of reunified children in relation to their age at time of immigration. Studies have demonstrated differences in speed and modes of the integration process among different young immigrant generations, in particular

between those come in their early childhood (before 6 years old, generation 1.75) and those immigrated after a longer socializing process in the country of origin (1.25 an 1.50 generations). Further study could better investigate these aspects.

A second limitation regards the lack of detailed information with respect both to the contexts of origin of the adolescents (i.e., big city vs. rural village; specific ethnic group) and to the Italian contexts where they were living (i.e., discrimination, intergroup relationship, segregation). As widely suggested by literature (Musterd and Ostendorf 2009; Ngo 2008) these aspects play a significant role on acculturation and adaptation processes and should therefore considered in future investigations

The third limitation regards the exclusive use of interviews, which give us only the respondents' own views and may be, to various degrees, susceptible to social desirability. In order to avoid this problem, it would be important to include additional investigative tools, such as a questionnaire. Furthermore, we do not have information about the perception of integration of the adolescents interviewed, which would permit a better understanding of some facets of the aspects examined.

3. Results

Data analysis permitted to identity four main themes (Respect and obedience, Loyalty and attachment to the country of origin, Strict gender role differentiation, Strict rules about mating and dating) arising from adolescents' narrations and 13 subthemes. Each theme with its subthemes is presented in Table 2 and described below using direct quotations from the interviews. The reported quotations were translated from Italian into English, trying to respect the original verbal expressions related to the discursive context in which they were elicited.

Table 2. Summary of Themes and Subthemes that emerged from Thematic Analysis.

Theme	Subtheme
Respect and obedience	• To respect and to obey to parents • To respect adults in general
Loyalty and attachment to the country of origin	• To be proud of your origin • To be emotionally linked to the country of origin • To maintain the mother tongue • To observe religious practices • To wear the veil
Strict gender role differentiation	• To gain educational success (bread-winners) • To stay at home
Strict rules about mating and dating	• Prohibition to hang out with <<bad companies>> • Prohibition to hang out with a partner • Prohibition to hang out alone • Arranged marriage

Theme 1—Respect and Obedience. Among immigrant adolescents, respect and obedience to parents and adults appeared in general to be crucial and this aspect strongly emerged across all national groups. In particular, this aspect declined in two different ways: "*to respect and to obey parents*" and "*to respect adults in general*".

The first subtheme "*to respect and to obey parents*" is common to boys and girls from Morocco, Pakistan and Egypt: obedience is a highly valued norm that governs family relations. In this regard,

both boys and girls describe parents as older and wiser persons, who decide in the best interests of their sons and daughters. For our participants, parents are perceived as role models and final reference points for any choices and decisions made by the adolescents. According to our narratives, to be obedient also means not having any secrets from parents: all boys and girls believed that total self-disclosure is important in the parent–child relationship.

Males paid much importance to the rules that parents impose on them. In their representation very often these rules are aimed at preventing adolescents from getting into unpleasant and difficult situations, such as spending time in bad company or getting into trouble. Males recognized that these rules are difficult to follow, but they believed that their parents recurred to them because they are trying to keep them safe.

> You have to follow what they say to the letter, even if this goes totally in opposition to what you would like to do in life, unfortunately. (Moroccan boy, 15 years old)

> He has to respect his parents, he must obey, and then he must not go to trouble. (Pakistani boy, 15 years old)

As with boys, females gave importance to obedience to their parents and believed it was essential to try to take their perspective in order to better understand their rules and decisions. According to the female narrative, this perspective taking seemed to play an important role in guiding the females' way of behaving. Understanding their parents' point of view frequently led them to conform to their parental choices and desires. Besides this attempt to assume the perspective of their parents, girls considered it important to try to negotiate their choices with their fathers and mothers by expressing their opinions and their judgment. For them, obedience also meant to help and sustain their parents both practically and emotionally.

> I have to obey to my parents, because, according to me, children must have a model in their parents. (Moroccan girl, 18 years old)

> Listen to what parents tell her ... and if she does not agree with something, she does not have to do what she wants but she needs to understand why her parents want that thing and not what she wants. (Egyptian girl, 14 years old)

> You have to know how to listen to your parents and know how to support them when they are in a crisis. (Pakistani girl, 16 years old)

It is also interesting to note that males believed that females should listen to their parents more than males. Males recognized themselves as having a more "transgressive" role, but they do not grant it to females. In contrast, females do not report differences in gender.

> It is the same as for males, but they have to listen to their parents a little more than boys do. (Moroccan boy, 15 years old)

A second subtheme emerged strongly across Pakistani girls and that is "*to respect adults in general*". For Pakistani girls it appeared to be very important to show respect and to be polite with adults and in general with elder people (for example, an elder sibling), because their culture and religion suggest it. As the following quote suggested, Pakistani girls have formal ways of talking to their parents and elder family members as an expression of respect and good manners. They highlight the importance of respecting age and generational hierarchies, in familiar and extra-familiar contexts. They believe that it is essential to be nice and kind with older people, to address to them with respect by using formal ways to talk, as an expression of respect and good manners.

> First of all the respect for the other, be it Muslim, Italian or Pakistani. Many times I've seen my dad that ... there's a very nasty old man to whom I'd like to answer in a bad way, but then my father says: no, he's an old person, even if he doesn't respect you, I have to respect him. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Theme 2—Loyalty and Emotional Attachment to the Country of Origin. From the adolescents' narratives, it emerged to be very important to keep alive and carry on the traditions of their countries of origin. According to the participants, loyalty and attachment to the origins are traits that are highly desired by the parents of Moroccan, Pakistani and Egyptian girls. Girls perceived that parents count on them for transmitting values, rules, habits and traditions to the next generation, in order to maintain a tight bond with their past and with their countries of origin. A strong connection with the country of origin and its culture takes a wider range of forms and meanings among girls in comparison with boys: a feeling of ethnic pride and emotional attachment to the country of origin, maintenance of the mother tongue, retention of traditional habits, engagement in religious practices, and wearing of the veil. The following quotes illustrate these aspects.

From the girls' narrations, it emerged that they felt it is important "*to be proud of your origins*". This means that it is essential not to only remember their country of origin, and its traditions, but also not to be ashamed of it.

> The important things are those that, well, being foreigners living here, we don't have to be ashamed of being like this, in fact we have to be proud of it. So never forget your own origins. And also don't erase them, 'cause erasing them is a horrible thing. And so there are people who have lived in Morocco and come to live here and if you tell them like "Where are you from?" They answer "I'm Italian", not even telling you they're from Morocco . . . that's awful according to me. (Moroccan girl, 15 years old)

> People should not be ashamed of their origins and culture, and should keep and maintain them across time. These aspects must be transmitted to heirs. If people are ashamed, a part of the transmission is interrupted, and then disappears at the end of centuries, these traditions disappears completely. (Egyptian girl, 15 years old)

> As a daughter, the parents tend to not let you forget the culture of your country... there is a pull and spring between parents and children ... sometimes you tend to have some behaviors like the peers who live around you, and parents on the other side tend to make you understand that we have another culture. (Egyptian girl, 17 years old)

> The girl is expected to follow the tradition; the male is expected to remain always close to them. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Girls feel it is important "*to be emotionally linked to the country of origin*" and its traditions and customs, as following quotes suggested.

> I do not want to leave all the things that bind me to my country. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> I want to go to Pakistan because I want to help people in trouble. This is my parents' passion... they want their children to do something for their country, for their own country. So if this identity does not save us, I do not think anyone else can do it. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Another aspect connected to generational mandate is "*to maintain the mother tongue*". Language is a salient marker of identity and many girls talk about the importance of preserving it as way of keeping connected to their cultural roots and heritage. Girls specified that frequently their parents asked them not to speak in Italian when they are at home, preferring the use of the Arabic, or that they are requested to watch television selecting and tuning on Arabic channels.

> [My father says:] you can take everything from me, but I want my kids to know Arab. (Moroccan girl, 14 years old)

Finally, a prominent aspect and this is common to both boys and girls, independent from their provenience, is "*to observe religious practices*" in order to stay connected with their country of origin. All the participants define themselves as Muslims but girls described religious duties and practices in a more detailed and intense way than males.

> My grandfather told me: Live the day as if you were the queen, but remember that Allah (that is, God) is with you. This phrase is valuable because it suggests how people should live. (Moroccan girl, 16 years)

> I go to the mosque once a week, on Friday, when I'm feeling like. If I finish school early on Fridays, there's usually the prayer, but I don't go every week, it depends on the school's schedule and if I manage to arrive on time, anyhow I sometimes pray at home.... (Egyptian boy, 18 years old)

An aspect that is linked both to the desire of keeping alive the traditional and religious habits is "*to wear the veil*". Modest dress code and veil are issues that emerged transversally in the girls' accounts, regardless of their ethnic origin. Egyptian, Moroccan and Pakistani girls described different experiences with the veil. Among the Egyptian girls, it seemed to be quite common to try to use the veil before deciding to use it forever. Moreover, it emerged that frequently parents sent their daughters in Egypt in order to get them used to it.

> At the beginning of high school I'll wear the veil [...] because I had tried to wear it for a few days this year and there were some that just did not talked to me anymore ... [...] My dad never talked to me about the veil, my mum yes because I had to wear it by 10 years. [...] My mom [...] told me in the sixth grade ... so ... in sixth grade, I wore it ... and this year I took it off, then I will wear it again in ninth grade and I think I will not remove it. (Egyptian girl, 14 years old)

> Before I didn't want to . . . I didn't have it in Egypt . . . here after one year . . . my dad told me to put it on but I didn't want to . . . I put it on in front of him at home . . . and when I went out I took it off . . . then I talked about it with my mum . . . I came back to Egypt and I chose by myself 'cause everyone had it there . . . and I was the only one . . . (Egyptian girl, 16 years old)

From the Moroccan girls' narratives, it emerged that the use of the veil is not so common, even if it is perceived as a sign of their religion. It seemed that Moroccan parents left their daughters free to decide whether to use it or not, without pressuring them.

> Then there's the thing of the veil that anyway is part of our religion. But my parents let me choose, also because if my mother told me: you must put it on, I would answer her: but if you don't have it yourself! (Moroccan girl, 18 years old)

> I appreciate my parents for they do not oblige any of us to wear the veil . . . So nobody wears it. (Moroccan girl, 17 years old)

On the contrary, for Pakistani girls the use of the veil seemed to be a sort of prescription coming from parents, from the family and from older people. There appears to be less space for negotiation in deciding to use it or not, and Pakistani girls conformed frequently to a habit that is strongly linked to their culture and religion.

> For example, when I was 16/17 I was in Pakistan, my parents didn't force me to put on, my uncle forced me. Because he said, because he, my two uncles are religious, they talk about politics, they pray, they stay in a group where they talk about politics, and like this, and so he didn't want he said that: 'no, you are a girl, you have to put on. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> Yes, there's a lady who, since we had been very open-minded, bothered us a bit with putting the veil on, then we understood she's saying it also for our good and we listened to her too! (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Among males, only Egyptian adolescents described the importance of the use of the veil: some of them described it as a dictation, others as a personal choice.

> Do not wear the veil it would be a problem. Yes ... because if you do not wear it, it means that you do not respect your religion. (Egyptian boy, 14 years old)

Theme 3—Strict gender role differentiation. From the narratives of immigrant adolescents it strongly and transversally emerged that males and females have different family roles: boys have "*to gain educational success in order to become the breadwinners*", while girls have "*to stay at home*". Boys' and girls' narratives are similar in these two aspects and their narratives seemed to reflect each other.

Boys emphasize their future roles as the main family breadwinners. With the aim of financially sustaining and supporting the family, boys and their parents placed a high value on school and study.

> Going to school . . . I do it also for me, I do it also for him, for my family, because I'm the only one left that goes to school, apart from my younger sister, so everyone's counting on me to find a job and so on . . . (Moroccan boy, 15 years old)

> I have to study . . . I have to look forward, to my future . . . (Moroccan boy, 16 years old)

> In order to be a good son you have to make your family happy of you. You have to do something important to make you family feel good. You have to work, to earn . . . if your family wants you to be a lawyer, for example, you have to do it and give this happiness to your family. (Pakistani boy, 18 years old)

Also girls, in their narratives, recognize this role for their male peers.

> A good son must respect his parents, help them out, go to work, to earn, to lend a hand, to help them and the whole family. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

According to participant narrations, the female role, on the contrary, is bound to the domestic context. Within the domestic walls, girls are deputed to carry out daily domestic care, to care for younger siblings, and to help parents in their work, sometimes being "language" brokers in extra-family relationships.

> A good girl stays in the house. (Egyptian girl, 16 years old)

> Somebody says I am a prisoner in my home. I do not think in this way. I am not the only one. Too much freedom is not a good thing. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Also boys, in their narratives, recognize this role for females.

> Women shouldn't work. (Egyptian boy, 14 years old)

From participant narratives, it emerged that females are also requested to study and to attend school. There is not a clear project involving a future job for girls and studying is only aimed at an increment of their knowledge and personal self-fulfillment that is unrelated to future professional engagement.

> It's my dad who wants us to study and I feel a bit like . . . being a girl, in my country the man is more valued, since he's stronger, but I don't like it, I want this to change and then for this reason my dad wants us to study, at least you don't face a situation in which you can't do anything. At least you have studied, that's the only thing you have, that is... knowledge, which no one takes you away. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> A girl is different, if her parents don't want her to study and that she stays home, she cooks, respects her parents, it's alright, if they want her to study, then she has to study. (Moroccan boy, 18 years old)

Theme 4—Strict rules about mating and dating According to immigrant adolescents', in their family experiences, the management of peer relationships is based on several prohibitions around mating and dating. These norms could be differently divided according to gender and partially to the ethnic origin of participants.

A transversal subtheme, common to all boys is the "*prohibition of hanging out with <<bad company>>*". Boys are requested by parents not spend time with peers who can put pressure on them to behave in a risky or deviant way. These parents strictly prohibit some occidental habits, such as smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

> To be a good soon you must avoid hanging out with smokers ... people that may affect you in a negative way [...] people who steal—they are always males and teens—so avoid people who steal cars and motorbikes and affect you negatively. (Egyptian boy, 16 years old)

> To be a good soon I do not have to do certain things, I shouldn't disappoint my parents ... I shouldn't drink, smoke, let them worry. (Moroccan boy, 16 years old)

> Boys shouldn't go around, they shouldn't do bad things. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

A transversal subtheme, common to all girls is the "prohibition of hanging out with a partner". Girls are requested by parents not to spend time with boys. Female adolescents should not have male friends or spend time with them. According to the girls' narrations, their parents do not want them to have any romantic relationship until their arranged marriage. Above all girls are prohibited to have sexual intercourse before marriage.

> [A good girl] shouldn't go out with boys, and if she goes out, she shouldn't have intercourse. (Moroccan girl, 18 years old)

> The engagement must be official. So, the two sides do not get around. Engagement is already a promise of marriage, in the sense that you cannot go back. (Moroccan girl, 19 years old)

For Pakistani immigrant females only, these strict rules extend to the "*prohibition to hang out alone*". Pakistani girls in their narratives explained that, according to their culture, girls should not go out without being accompanied. Frequently Pakistani girls have the possibility of seeing their female friends only in the presence of their parents or other adults.

> I like to stay with friends, to stay with my friends, to go to the park, but when I go out, I do it with my parents. (Pakistani girl, 14 years old)

> I could not go out in the night, I could not go around when my friends, no! (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

Dating norms are related among Pakistanis to the subtheme "*arranged marriage*" that is transversal and common to boys and girls, but mainly reinforced by girls. It is shared among them the opinion that arranged marriage last more than "romantic" ones, because in the latter love can end. Adolescents are requested not to have any romantic relationship until their parents chose a wife or a husband for them. Marriage is the responsibility of parents who act in the best interests of their daughters or sons.

> One thing about my country which is not bad is that a girl cannot choose their husband. I cannot say it is good or bad, because I do not want to be the one who chooses: my parents must choose for me, because they love me. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> You should not believe in love. I read that it is such a drug. It last only for a while. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

The choice of the parents frequently is directed toward cousins (consanguineous marriages) or Pakistani friends from the country of origin. It is frequent that marriage is celebrated in Pakistan. Then, the spouses come back to Italy or stay and live in Pakistan. In the last case, marriage means that immigrant Pakistani girls have to leave Italy and return to live in their country of origin.

> I do not have a boyfriend. Not out of my family circle. I think I will marry one of my cousins. Or maybe my parents will let me marry a boy I have always known. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> For my parents it is important the culture of origin. I do not think I could marry an Italian boy, nor an Egyptian one. In my country, parents look for a fiancé, we do arranged marriage. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

> I think my parents will choose for me a spouse. They will choose it in Pakistan. The family of the boy will decide to let him to come to Italy or not. If I have to move to Pakistan and live there it will be a little difficult for me. Because I lived here and to settle down again in Pakistan could be difficult. But I think is ok also to move to Pakistan. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

The appropriate age to get married is also strictly codified for Pakistani boys and girls.

> The other day I talked to my dad and he says: "Now, from the age of 18 to 25 you have to create your future, you have to study, you have to put yourself into the job world, so when you're 25 we find an agreement, we talk. Than we say to the girls who we are interested in, I do not say that I will choose and you will not say anything, but we will decide together who will be good for you. When you will be 27/28 we will make you marry". This is what he said to me. (Pakistani boy, 18 years old)

> The right age to get marry is 22. (Pakistani girl, 16 years old)

Girls describe a possible space for negotiation with their parents about marriage. Fox example, once the family has chosen a partner, boys and girls can express their opinions about it.

> They (parents) start to see and meet a boy they believe is compatible with me. Then, they come to ask to their daughter if she wants to marry him, and they let the boy and the daughter see each other. It depends on the girl to say yes or no, they cannot force the girl, if she doesn't want. (Pakistani girl, 15 years old)

> The parents choose the fiancé, and they ask you if you like it or not. I you don't they say that they will look for another one. (Pakistani girl, 15 years old)

> The parents cannot force you to decide, because it's your life. They simply do not want that you fall in love or love someone before getting married. (Pakistani girl, 18 years old)

4. Discussion

The aim of the current study was to explore through in-depth semi-structured interviews, in-group norms and meanings associated to the representation of a "good" son and a "good" daughter among male and female immigrant reunified adolescents coming from Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan.

Our study focused on the immigrant children who, during developmental age, had to leave behind their community of origin and to move to Italy through family reunification, directly experiencing mobility from one country to another. Secondly, we were interested in contrasting males and females'

perceptions, adding the male voices within a literature that has mainly concentrated its attention on the female perspective. Thirdly, we were interested in exploring three of the main Muslim immigrant group residing in Italy (Morocco, Egypt and Pakistan).

Thematic analysis carried out on transcripts allowed us to identify four main themes and thirteen subthemes. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of the interviews allowed us to highlight both recurrent themes among reunified Muslim adolescents and specific ones based on participants' gender and country of origin.

Overall, these themes revealed that some in-group cultural and social norms play a significant role in identity processes of Muslims adolescents living in Italy. As suggested from previous studies (Ajrouch 2004; Maliepaard et al. 2010; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007), the contents of these norms are highly interconnected, revealing an intersection between the dimension of gender identity and religious and ethnic dimensions. Moreover, the transcript analysis documented specific cross-cultural negotiations that participants face within Italian society when they meet with Western cultural models and values.

Irrespective of the participants' gender and country of origin, the qualities of being obedient and respectful of parents' desires were significant common topics among all interviewed adolescents. All participants depicted parents as role models and final reference points for any choices and decisions. This result is interesting in light of the migration history of these families, who lived a series of critical events (separation and reunification) affecting the quality of family relationships (Falicov 2002; Gonzales et al. 2006). For them being a "good" son and a "good" daughter mean first of all respecting and conforming to parents' desires and expectations. The emphasis on obedience and respect towards parents is a well-documented aspect in cross-cultural research distinguishing between collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Hui and Triandis 1986; Vedder et al. 2009). Within the collectivist culture, family needs precede individual needs. Interdependence and obedience are core values that are needed to maintain harmony, solidarity and loyalty between family members. In this regard, many studies have shown that first generation Muslim immigrant parents strive to defend their own cultural roots when they encounter individualistic values (e.g., independence, self-sufficiency, self-confidence) in Western societies and actively negotiate choices for their children (Gilani 2005; Giuliani and Gennari 2014; Killian and Johnson 2006). Women in particular are the ones who have the responsibility of keeping the family together, even at the cost of the happiness of their individual members. Our data clearly showed that in a post-migration context where these adolescents are being raised, obedience to parents is the main internalized value, which all participants talked about. Nevertheless, they also mentioned some possible spaces for negotiation within the family.

Several differences emerged in relation to participant gender. Firstly, it is worth noting that narratives of girls are articulated than male pairs. In fact, a wider richness of themes emerged from the females' interviews when compared with males' ones. Overall, girls also seem more engaged in norm negotiation processes within their family. It is likely that balancing tradition and "modernity" results a more challenging task for them than for males (Stevens et al. 2004).

Secondly, norms and expectations around being a "good" child are strictly modeled around gender-based specific contents, as widely documented in many studies that focused mainly on female perspective (Ajrouch 2004; Dwyer 2000; Gilani 2005). For girls this implies staying at home and preserving heritage culture (i.e., feeling of ethnic pride, maintenance of the mother tongue, wearing the veil), while for boys gaining educational success in order to become the bread-winner is key. In turn, these role mandates are linked to specific gender-based norms concerning extra-familial relationships. For girls, to different degrees dating and marriage norms regulate their heterosexual relations, while for boys there is a prohibition to engage in deviant activities (i.e., spending time in "bad company", smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs). Our findings about girls are consistent with previous studies that frequently documented that not only that first generation Muslim women take on a fundamental role in intergenerational transmission of culture (Abu-Ali and Reisen 1999; Giuliani and Tagliabue 2015), but also that a similar task is frequently assigned to younger female generations (Dwyer 2000; Gilani 2005; Killian and Johnson 2006). It is also apparent in our findings that

educational concerns related to their future goals was the main normative issue for male participants. Success or failure of the family migration project seems to depend on males' school performances: they have to perform well at school in order to be able to assume financial responsibility towards family members in the post-migration context. Indeed, it seems to emerge the presence of a heavy mandate weighting on these male adolescents that confirms their future role as a breadwinner.

Migration, with the mentioned gender-based specific challenges it brings about, could result in an increased vulnerability for adolescent Muslims living in Western society. Girls are engaged in conflicts and negotiations between competing cultural models, as previously suggested by some studies (Sirin and Fine 2008; Stevens et al. 2004). They maintain a strong attachment to heritage culture but they also inevitably encounter Western models of female independence and self-fulfillment. Data showed that girls actively negotiate these issues with parents and family members, sometimes gaining small concessions, other times experiencing family conflict and ambivalence. For boys, the mandate on educational success is not negotiable and is particularly hard for them, as recent educational figures suggest (MIUR and Fondazione Ismu 2016). These children tend to leave school earlier than both native peers and second generation immigrants born in Europe. In Italy, like Spain and Greece (Aparicio 2007), immigrant students are more likely to leave school. Almost thirty-five percent of immigrant children living in Italy (versus 14.8% among native peers) fail to go beyond the level of compulsory education, they frequently do not obtain high school or vocational training degrees. Moreover, leaving school early is a more frequent phenomenon among males than females (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop 2014). Research focusing on males is needed because of the risk of these male adolescents experiencing feelings of frustration and failure is high, taking into account the current precariousness of the Italian labor market, the economic and professional marginality of immigrants in Italy, and the negative prejudice towards Muslims (Ambrosini 2013).

Our data partially allowed pointing out some differences with respect to gender and cultural norms based on the participants' country of origin. One of the main ones concerns the dating and marriage norms that Pakistanis talked about. As other studies showed (Erricchiello 2011; Gilani 2005), the issue of arranged marriage—along with strict norms about extra-familial relationships—is common to Pakistani interviewed boys and girls who refer to parents the main decision-makers with respect to this choice. The value of arranged marriages (frequently with a cousin living in Pakistan) is particularly reinforced by girls who shared the opinion that they last longer than "romantic" ones. Girls imagined some possible space for negotiation with their parents about the choice of husband, but they also prefigured—not having a say in the matter—the possibility of leaving Italy and to go back to living in Pakistan if their future husband decided it. As for marriage, in our study Pakistani girls seem to experience stricter rules (i.e., about mating, dress and veil, religious duties, staying at home) in comparison with Moroccan and Egyptian ones. Certainly, the Pakistani post-migration experience reflects a more recent migration history in comparison with Moroccans and Egyptians who form ethnic communities with a longer history of stabilization in Italy (ISTAT 2016). Pakistanis' acculturation experience probably reflects also several cultural specificities linked to provenience areas of participants.

Finally, the current study clearly showed that the cultural mandates that immigrant adolescent experience in a post-migration context are mostly focused on a unique task, that is, maintaining and defending the integrity of own religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural roots. No quotations referred to family pressures to participate in and open towards the host society and mainstream culture. It is likely that migration transition and current post-resettlement contextual factors (e.g., conflictual intergroup relationship, perceived discrimination and prejudice) intensify in-group needs, in particular group cohesion, identification and conformism to in-group norms (Ethier and Deaux 1994). While this mandate is easily understandable as it safeguards in-group identity, on the other hand, the overall imbalance towards the heritage roots undermines a real process of integration of heritage and host cultures.

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