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"RELIGIOUSLY FLEXIBLE":

A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY ON ACCULTURATION

PROCESS IN MUSLIM SECOND GENERATIONS

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Introduction

The number of Muslims in Europe has increased through migration from the Islamic countries. Muslims have a well-established presence in Western societies. There is no evidence of an "Islamization of the West", as far-right movements would have the public believe (see Ekman, 2015). According to recent estimates, 25.8 million Muslims live in Europe, accounting for 4.9% of the total European population, up from 19.5 million (3.8%) in 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Furthermore, Muslim immigrants to Europe are a multifaceted group. This heterogeneity has several reasons. First, they have left their country because they are looking for a job, want to join family members who have already emigrated, or want to escape war and persecution in their own country. Second, Muslim immigrants may practice Islam in Europe consistent with the role that it holds in their country of origin; they may follow a different Islamic tradition (Sunni, Shiite or Sufi) (Hodge, 2002). To reduce the complexity of the topic, this dissertation will focus on Sunni Muslim immigrant families that voluntarily and regularly decided to move to Europe.

The stable presence of Muslim immigrant families in Europe has opened a new scenario that includes the presence of a second generation of Muslim immigrants, that is, people born and raised in Western societies or who arrived in early childhood through family reunions. The growing number of Muslim second generations in Europe, as confirmed by recent estimates which show that more than half of the total Muslim immigrants are under age 30 years (Pew Research Center, 2017), has led scholars to investigate the questions of how these young generations integrate into Western societies (Crul, Schneider, & Leslie, 2012; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). Like all other second generation immigrants, young Muslims have to find a way to conciliate different cultural sets, including a religion different from the Christianity followed in most European countries. Second and subsequent Muslim generations find themselves torn between the collectivist values promoted by the Islamic

tradition transmitted by their families and the individualistic values promulgated by secularized Western societies (Dwairy & Menshar, 2006). For Muslims, Islam is not only a religion but also a value system that shapes their existence (Izetbegović, 1993). Distinguishing the public secular sphere from the private religious sphere, as is typical of individualistic societies, may pose a complex challenge for many Muslim second generations. One of the main concepts in the psychological literature that explains this process of cultural and religious adaptation is *acculturation*, defined as a cultural change that occurs when immigrants maintain contact with members of different cultures. While the acculturation of Muslim second generations raise a debate about immigrant integration now and in future, most empirical studies have investigated the acculturation of Muslim first generations (e.g., Anjum, McVittie, & McKinlay, 2018; Gattino, Miglietta, Rizzo, & Testa, 2016; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007; Al Wekhian, 2016). Also, few studies have compared the differences in acculturation between Muslim first and second generations (e.g., Giuliani, Tagliabue, & Regalia, 2018; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007). Furthermore, early studies on second generation immigrants (not only of Islamic heritage) were carried out in the United States (e.g., Portes & Zou, 1993; see also Ali, 2008; Amer & Hovey, 2007), while studies involving the young Muslim generation in Europe are relatively recent (see Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Lelie, Crul, & Schneider, 2012; Rizzo, Miglietta, Gattino, & Fedi, 2020). Most of the studies on Muslim second generations have investigated psychological and sociocultural adaptation in relation to acculturation (e.g., Goforth, Oka, Leong, & Denis, 2014; Oppedal & Røysamb, 2007; Stuart, Ward, & Robinson, 2016), while few focused on the conditions that favour or hinder maintenance of the heritage culture and adoption of the mainstream culture. Among the many various conditions that figure in the acculturation of young immigrants, a distinction can be made between personality characteristics, such as personality, language proficiency, religious affiliation, and life context, such as family, educational system or workplace. Being a Muslim

in a European setting implies for many young immigrants having to confront the hostility of natives that attribute them the same negative stereotypes that the first generation Muslims received because of their ethnic and religious origins (Gallup World, 2013; van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016).

Such negative attitudes lead these young Muslims to perceive themselves as discriminated because of their ethnic and religious affiliation in a variety of situations, such as when searching for a job, in the workplace, at school, or when they use public and private services. Verbal attacks, exclusion or physical attacks by natives against Muslims foster an anti-Islamic climate, known as *Islamophobia* (Allen, 2010. Since 11 September 2001, negative attitudes towards Muslims have become more frequent and have further intensified following the attacks committed in Europe by violent jihadists and the hostile political campaigns against Muslims waged by extreme right-wing political parties (Perocco, 2018). Extreme right and/or populist European parties, such as the *National Front* in France, the *Northern Lega* in Italy, or the *Party for Freedom* in the Netherlands, have implemented policies and enacted similar laws against the integration of Islamic culture: opposing the construction of new mosques or banning the production and consumption of *Halal* food or preventing women from wearing the Islamic headscarf in public spaces and workplaces (Pew Research Center, 2019). Such restrictions have led Muslim second generations to grow up in social contexts that undermine the maintenance of the heritage culture. Studies have shown that Muslim second generations are under more pressure than their parents to assimilate into mainstream culture (Kunst & Sam, 2013; 2014).

Beyond the role played by perceived religious discrimination in the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations, another essential aspect in understanding this process is their attitude towards religion or their degree of religiosity. Like all other religious minorities, empirical evidence has shown that being religious, understood as a mix of beliefs, moral

behaviours, emotional experiences, and social identifications (Saroglou, 2011), may foster the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations (see Güngor, Fleischmann, Phalet & Maliepaard, 2013). The relevance of Islam as a religion for the acculturation of Muslim second generations in Europe does not imply that all young Muslims need to follow Islamic precepts to integrate in Western societies. Some young Muslims may freely decide to follow either only the most important tenets of religion or none of them. The aim of this study is to investigate how young Muslims consider their double cultural belonging when they include Islam as a relevant part of their lives.

As mentioned above, the acculturation of Muslim second generations in Europe is complex because they have to integrate their religious traditions into a social context that does not accept Islam easily. Therefore, young Muslim need to be flexible when it comes to managing diverse aspects of their existence, for example, the inclusion of cultural elements in their lives. The adoption of mainstream culture may be promoted by the ability of young Muslims to reflect on existential issues. To investigate this aspect, a link between the construct of *flexibility in existential quest* and acculturation for young Muslims will be examined.

To summarize, the aim of this research is to investigate the acculturation experience of second generation Muslims in Europe, with a focus on diverse acculturation conditions: the role of perceived religious discrimination, the individual degree of Islamic religiosity, and the flexibility in existential quest in the acculturation of Muslim second generations will be tested. Furthermore, given the peculiarities of each European country and how the national context affects the acculturation experience of young Muslims (Güngor et al., 2013), two samples of Muslim second generations in Italy and Belgium will be compared.

This dissertation will be organized as follows. The first chapter will review the literature on the concept of acculturation, with the first part devoted to the most relevant perspectives and models that scholars have defined for the study of acculturation. The second part will deal

with the main methodological issues and criticisms of acculturation. The second chapter will look deeper into a particular theoretical perspective of acculturation, with a focus on the main acculturation conditions and the acculturation of second generations. A specific part will examine the acculturation of Muslim second generations.

The third chapter will be divided into three parts for a review of the literature on three aspects of acculturation: religiosity, perceived discrimination, and flexibility in existential quest. In the fourth and final chapter, the main results will be presented. It will be divided into two parts, including a discussion and a conclusion. The first part will focus on the two contexts in which the study was carried out (Italy and Belgium), and the second will illustrate the main findings of the analysis of the two countries.

CHAPTER 1

1. Acculturation

In a broad sense, *acculturation* is a process of cultural change that occurs over time when people arrive in a new place and come into contact with people of a different cultural mindset. Contact between two or more cultural groups is a basic human experience (see Rudmin, 2003). Although the process has ancient roots, the term *acculturation* first appeared at the end of the 19th century to describe changes in the language of Native Americans (Powell, 1880). Since then, scholars from various research fields (e.g., sociology, history, political science, and anthropology) have studied acculturation. In anthropology, an early conceptualization of acculturation described it as follows:

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, pp. 149–150).

By this definition, acculturation is principally a group-level phenomenon of cultural change. Interested in individual processes from a psychological perspective, Graves (1967) introduced the term *psychological acculturation* to differentiate acculturation into a group level and an individual level process. At the group level, acculturation refers to changes in customs, traditions, and beliefs that take place in a cultural group, while at the individual

level, it includes personal adjustments in attitudes, identities, and values that result from the acculturation experience.

Later, Berry (1990) developed the concept within a perspective of cross-cultural psychology to differentiate the acculturation experienced by the general population from that experienced by the individual. He stated that "the term psychological acculturation refers to the process by which individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture" (Berry, 1990, p.204).

With the huge migration flows of the early 20th century, people from diverse cultures came into contact with one another (see also *super-diversity*, Vertovec, 2007). One of the effects of these *plural societies* (Berry, 1997; 2006) was a proliferation of studies on the acculturation of immigrants (for a review, see Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007) and the addition of related or alternative terms to acculturation, such as *interculturation*, *multiculturalism* or *socialization* (Sam, 2006). For example, many studies made a distinction between acculturation and *ethnic identity* (for a review, see Liebkind, 2001), while others used these terms interchangeably, and still others treated psychological acculturation as a broader process than ethnic identity, which encompassed a sense of belonging to an ethnic group (Liebkind, 2006).

Acculturation comprises several *building blocks* (Sam, 2006), one of which is *contact* or a continuous and long-term interaction between cultural groups (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002). Theoretically, contact implies mutual influence between cultural groups, however, one cultural group usually tends to predominate over the other. This difference, which has economic, political, and numerical ramifications, is embodied in a *dominant* and a *non-dominant* group (Berry, 1997). Such asymmetry of power between cultural groups is the focus of empirical research into acculturation from the perspective of immigrants (see

Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012; Sam & Berry, 2016) or into the acculturation expectations of majority groups (see Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997; van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998).

Other factors besides asymmetry of power are the reason for migration and the time spent in a new place (see Berry, 1997; 2006). In the former, forced migration (e.g., indigenous people, refugees) is compared to voluntary migration (e.g., immigrants) which may engender different acculturation experiences (e.g., Udahemuka & Pernice, 2010). In the latter, different processes involve those who move permanently (e.g., immigrants) and those who are in transit (e.g., sojourners, asylum seekers; Allen, Vaage, & Hauff, 2006). While the distinction between acculturating groups occupies a relevant place in the acculturation literature, the term *immigrant* is usually used to refer to various groups comprising immigrants, sojourners, asylum seekers, and refugees. To simplify the discourse, this dissertation will use the term *immigrant* to refer to people who move voluntarily and settle permanently in a new place.

1.1 A Theoretical Model of Acculturation

Through long-term contact between members of two or more cultural groups individuals may change their attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs. This change, which psychological studies refer to as *acculturation orientation* (or *attitude* and *style*), involves the way immigrants shift their cultural preferences by adopting the dominant host culture (or mainstream culture) while maintaining the non-dominant original one (or heritage culture; Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; Berry, 2001).

Acculturation orientations can be viewed through the theoretical lens of *dimensionality*, which concerns the direction in which acculturation takes place (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004). In the psychological literature, the *unidimensional* and the *bidimensional*

model (Sam & Berry, 2016) provide scholars with a means to analyse the relationship between heritage and mainstream cultural orientations (Flannery, Reise, & Yu, 2001).

Gordon (1964) was one of the first to examine acculturation as a unidimensional process. The core of his model assumed that over time immigrants would reject their heritage culture as they assimilated the attitudes, practices, and values of the new cultural context. With this model, Gordon subdivided the assimilation process into seven progressive stages (1964; 1978). The first, *cultural assimilation*, was a "change of cultural patterns to those of the host society" (1978: p. 169). The second, *structural assimilation*, was the stage where people started to attend the networks of the host culture (e.g., neighbours, friends, organizations). Intermarriage with people from the mainstream culture, or *marital assimilation*, was the third stage. The next, *identificational assimilation*, was the stage where people considered themselves as members of the mainstream culture. The hallmark characteristics of the next two stages, *receptional assimilation* and *behavioural receptional assimilation*, were an absence of intergroup prejudice and intergroup discrimination, respectively. The seventh and final stage, *civic assimilation*, was characterised by an "absence of value and power conflict" (Gordon, 1978, p.168).

Although this acculturation process is multidimensional because it consists of multiple steps (e.g., economic, linguistic, social; see Flannery et al., 2001), the length of residence in a new place remains the most influential aspect of this *straight line assimilation* (Gordon, 1964). In other words, assimilation proceeds along a linear continuum of time from maintaining the heritage culture to assimilating the mainstream culture, while endorsement of both cultures, or *biculturalism*, constitutes only a transient mid-point in the process (Flannery et al., 2001).

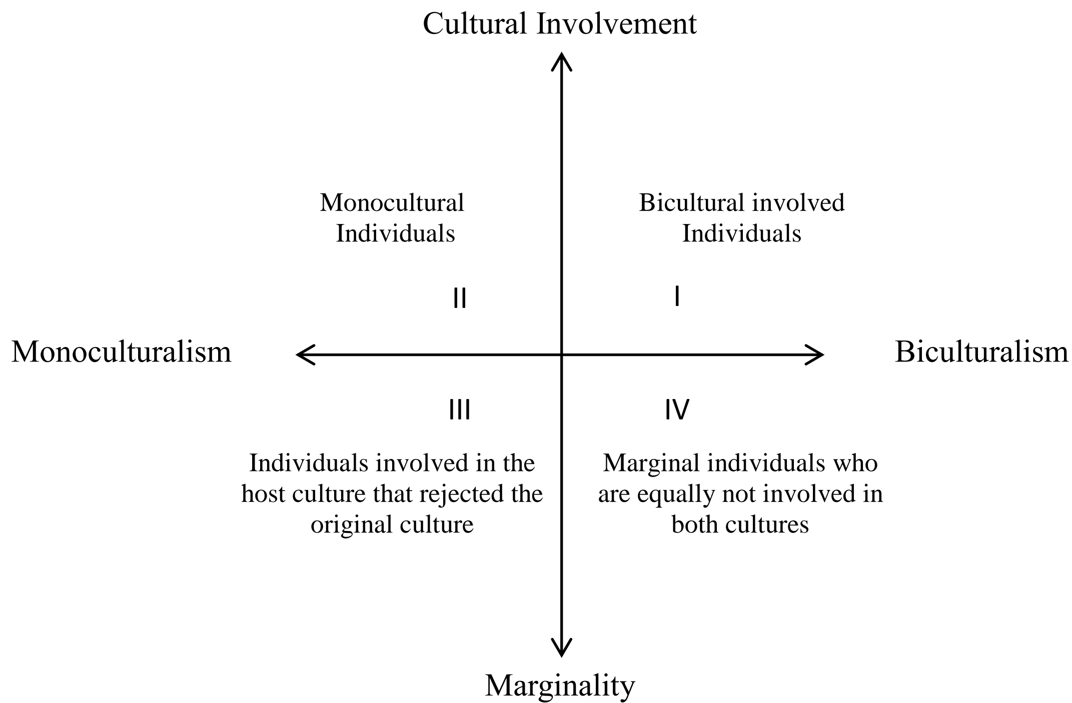
The unidimensional model received attention from empirical studies (e.g., Stodolska, 1998; Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992; Szapocznik, Scopetta, de los Angeles Aranalde, & Kurtines, 1978; Williams Jr. & Ortega, 1990), as well as criticism from theorists who pointed to the

model's oversimplification of some aspects (Castro, 2003; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Joy, 1996; Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). They considered acculturation not as being synonymous with assimilation but rather as a reversible process in which the adoption by immigrants of the mainstream culture did not necessarily mean the loss of the original culture (Flannery et al., 2001).

Several scholars proposed an alternative bidimensional model of acculturation (see Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000) according to which acculturation is a process wherein the heritage and the mainstream culture constitute two independent orientations (e.g., Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Stephenson, 2000; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). The unidimensional model as a linear time continuum was rejected and replaced by a model of acculturation based on two contemporary processes (Castro, 2003). One of the earliest models was developed by Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernández (1980) who conceptualized two bipolar and orthogonal dimensions to explain how immigrants were exposed to two cultures simultaneously: the heritage and the mainstream culture (Figure 1). The first axis describes the involvement of individuals in both cultures and ranges from *monoculturalism* to *biculturalism*; the second axis describes the individual acquisition of the skills acquired in both cultures and ranges from *marginality* to *cultural involvement* (Szapocznik et al. 1980). The intersection of these two axes creates quadrants that represent possible outcomes. People in the first quadrant (Figure 1) actively participate in both cultures, whereas those in the fourth feel marginalized because they did not acquire skills and are not involved in either culture.

Figure 1

Acculturation Biculturalism Model



Adapted from "Bicultural involvement and adjustment in Hispanic-American youths" by J. Szapocznik, W. M. Kurtines, & T. Fernàandez, 1980, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *4*(3), Figure 2, p. 362

In a later development, Berry proposed one of the best known bidimensional models in which acculturation results from the ways people approach the heritage and the mainstream culture independently (Berry, 1990, 1997; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989). Involvement of the two cultures may have four outcomes, or *acculturation strategies*, namely *assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization*. Berry's bidimensional model is described in the next section.

Besides unidimensional and bidimensional models, alternative perspectives emerged, such as the *fusion* model (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004; see also LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Coleman, 1995), which sought to explain how people define a new emerging

culture that results from the admixture of both cultures during their acculturation experience. In other words, the heritage and the mainstream cultures are not independent of or opposite to each other but rather are intertwined in a process of cultural reformulation or *hybridization* (Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

This model found relevance in contexts characterized by more than two cultural streams (see Schwartz, Birman, Benet-Martínez, & Unger, 2017). For example, Ferguson and Bornstein (2014) conceptualized a *tridimensional* model of acculturation to study Black Caribbean immigrants in America. They assessed Caribbean, European-American, and African cultures to overcome the limitation of the bidimensional model of acculturation in those contexts where more than two cultures interacted.

Regardless of the model used (unidimensional, bidimensional, tridimensional and so on), there is consensus in the psychological literature that the acculturation experience of immigrants varies according to life domains including, among others, language skills, social relations, daily living habits (e.g., media, food, music) and general knowledge of both cultures (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Berry, 2001; Celenk & van de Vijver, 2011). For example, immigrants may try to acquire the language skills of the receiving society in working environments but not in social and family contexts. In this regard, Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2003; 2004) developed a theoretical model of *domain-specificity* organized in three levels of abstraction. In the first superordinate level, a distinction is made between the public (functional; e.g., work) and the private (social-emotional; e.g., marriage, family) life domain. Studies showed that acculturation orientations in immigrant groups varied on the basis of these two domains (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004; Hammer, 2017; Kizgin, Jamal, & Richard, 2018). For example, Romanian immigrants in Spain were noted to prefer adapting themselves to the receiving culture in public areas (e.g., political, work, economic), while maintaining their heritage culture in private areas (e.g., family, religion, social). This

difference has been explained as a response to the pressure that immigrants perceive to conform more in the public than in the private sphere (Rojas, Navas, Sayans-Jiménez, & Cuadrado, 2014).

The two other levels of *domain-specificity*, the ordinate and the subordinate, are embedded in the higher superordinate level. While the ordinate level is characterized by specific life domains such as education, language, child-rearing, and marriage, the subordinate level refers to the most restrictive, context-dependent domain for immigrants (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; 2004).

Differentiating the life domains of immigrants underlines the relevance of defining acculturation as a context-dependent process (for an example, see the *cultural frame switching*; Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). The context of acculturation (i.e., conditions and outcomes) will be discussed later in detail. The next section reviews relevant acculturation models.

1.1.1 Berry's Model of Acculturation

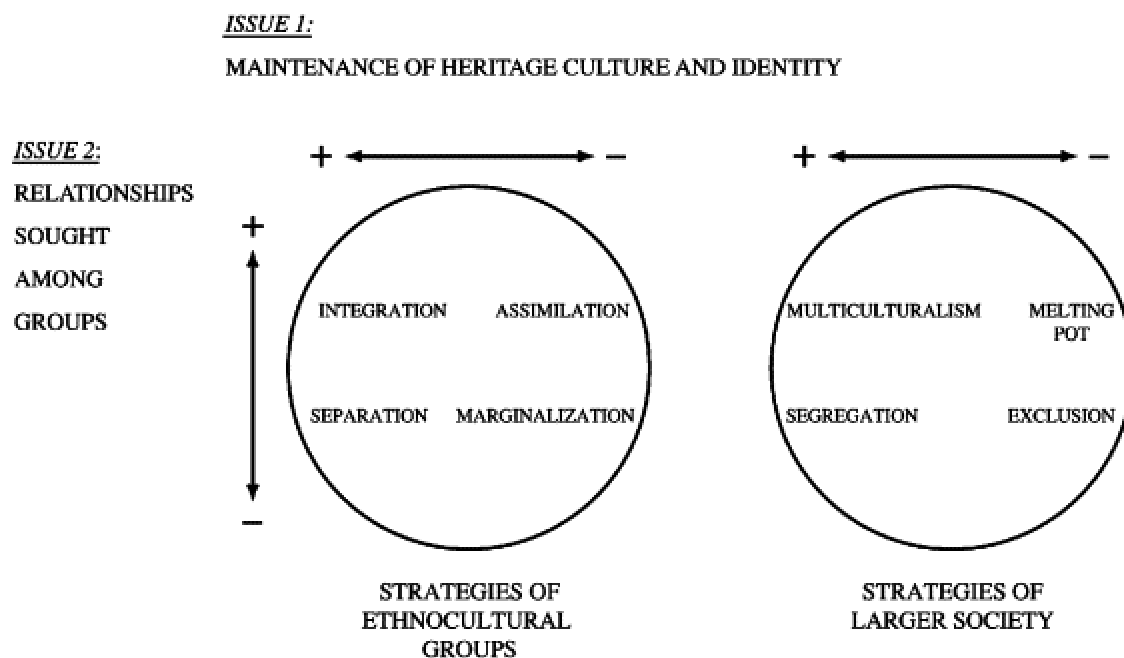
Berry's is perhaps the best-known model of acculturation (1997; 2005; Figure 2). Taking a bidimensional perspective, he suggested that acculturation, at both the individual and the group level, proceeds through two major mechanisms that Berry (1997, p. 9) defined as: "*cultural maintenance* (to what extent do acculturating people consider it important to maintain their heritage culture) and *contact* and participation (to what extent do acculturating people engage with the mainstream culture, or not)".

For these two mechanisms to work people need to adopt acculturation *strategies*. As Berry points out (2005), these strategies have two components: attitudes (the way individuals prefer to acculturate themselves) and behaviours (the individual activities related to acculturation). As illustrated in Figure 2, four acculturation strategies are possible for both the dominant and

the non-dominant cultural group. From the view point of the non-dominant group (e.g., immigrants), *assimilation* arises with an individual's willingness to embrace the mainstream culture to the detriment of his/her own heritage culture. Differently, *separation* is when immigrants tend to avoid comparison with the mainstream culture in order to preserve their heritage culture. The *integration* strategy is based on an individual's desire to maintain the heritage culture while coming into contact with the mainstream culture. Finally, loss of the heritage culture and lack of interest in other cultural groups results in immigrants adopting the *marginalization* strategy.

Figure 2

Acculturation strategies in ethnic groups and the larger society



From "Acculturation: living successfully in two cultures" by J. W. Berry, 2005, *International Journal of Intercultural relations*; p. 705

As Berry mentions (1997), these strategies are engaged when non-dominant groups are free to choose how they want to acculturate. Unsurprisingly, this is not always what happens. As shown in the circle on the right in Figure 2, a change of acculturation strategies occurs when political ideologies endorsed by a larger society constrain or reinforce certain kinds of acculturation experience (Berry, 1997; 2005). In this vein, *segregation* constitutes a form of separation exerted by the dominant group that allows minority ethnic groups to keep their heritage culture out of the mainstream of the larger society. The assimilation strategy is split into two possibilities, *melting pot* and *pressure cooker* (Berry, 1997). In the former, immigrants accept the mainstream culture to achieve goals in the larger society, such as obtaining a job. In the *pressure cooker*, immigrants are forced to assimilate under the continuous pressure of the receiving society. With the marginalization strategy, Berry explained that "people rarely choose such an option" but it might be a mix of the previous forms of *melting pot* and *segregation*, so-called *exclusion* (Berry, 1997; p.10).

The social context in which the integration strategy takes place is different. This strategy, called *multiculturalism*, is possible when the receiving society voluntarily respects cultural diversity (Berry, 2005). In this case, the State promulgates a political ideology that helps minority ethnic groups maintain their cultural features within society as a whole (Sam, 2006). Accordingly, the integration strategy may be successfully pursued only in countries that explicitly sustain a *pluralist ideology* (Berry, 2001). This was further illustrated in a study conducted in Canada, where a multicultural ideology has been enforced by law since the 1980s (Berry & Kalin, 1995). The study found that Canadians are accustomed in supporting the integration of ethno-cultural groups based on pre-conditions, such as high tolerance and low prejudice towards ethnic minorities. Similar findings emerged from a cross-country study that assessed how the acculturation process and the language Turkish immigrants use varied according to the immigration policies in place in the country where they live (Yağmur & van

de Vijver, 2012). For example, Turkish immigrants in Australia (a country of longstanding immigration with a multicultural ideology similar to Canada's) resulted more integrated than Turkish immigrants in European countries (e.g., France, the Netherlands, Germany). According to Verkuyten (2014; p.161), ideological differences between countries are probably due to the idea that "European multiculturalism is mostly seen as an accommodating gesture towards immigrants and ethnic minorities, not as something that concerns the whole of society".

Multiculturalism and its relationship with acculturation sheds light on two relevant aspects in Berry's model of acculturation. First, as mentioned, it reflects the need to consider acculturation as a process that closely depends on conditions favouring acculturation (see below). Second, Berry stated that "the contact experiences have much greater impact on the non-dominant group and its members" (2001, p. 616). Subsequently, scholars focused mainly on the acculturation of minority ethnic groups (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010), though some studies also investigated the acculturation expectations of the majority (e.g., Grigoryev, van de Vijver & Batkhina, 2018; Kunst & Sam, 2013; 2014; Miglietta, Tartaglia, & Loera, 2018; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Zick, Wagner, van Dick, & Petzel, 2001). The next section will discuss one of the most relevant models of acculturation from the perspective of the majority group.

1.1.2 The Interactive Acculturation Model

With the *Interactive Acculturation Model* (IAM; Bourhis et al., 1997; Figure 3) the authors had a twofold aim: to focus on the acculturation expectations of the majority or dominant group; and to define the outcomes of the interactions between acculturation of the dominant and the non-dominant group (Bourhis et al., 1997). Consistent with the bidimensional model of acculturation, the IAM assesses two cultural dimensions (heritage and mainstream) in

reciprocal independence. The acculturation orientations of the non-dominant group result in four possible strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization), as Berry pointed out (1997). However, the marginalization strategy evolves in two alternative strategies, *anomie* and *individualism*. *Anomie* refers to immigrants experiencing greater cultural alienation than in marginalization, as defined by Berry (1997). *Individualism* occurs when some immigrants prefer "to identify themselves as individuals rather than as members of either an immigrant group or the host majority" (Bourhis et al., 1997; p. 378). While these two alternative strategies are formally equal (rejecting both cultures), their meanings differ completely.

From the perspective of the dominant group, acculturation involves the expectations regarding the acculturation of immigrants. As in acculturation of the non-dominant group, two dimensions are considered in establishing the acculturation preferences of the dominant group (the heritage culture of the immigrants and the mainstream culture of the dominant group).

Figure 3

The Interactive Acculturation Model

Host Community: Low-Medium High vitality group	Immigrant Community: low, medium vitality groups				
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Anomie	Individualism
Integration	Consensual	Problematic	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Assimilation	Problematic	Consensual	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Segregation	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Exclusion	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Individualism	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Consensual

Retrieved from "Towards an Interactive Acculturation Model: a Social Psychology Approach" by R. Y. Bourhis, L. C. Moïse, S. Perreault & S. Senecal, 1997, *International Journal of Psychology*, *32*(6), p. 382

As can be seen in Figure 3, the intersection of these two dimensions creates strategies similar to those that emerged for immigrants. When majority members agree with both dimensions, they support an *integration* strategy. When they accept that immigrants maintain their heritage culture without coming into contact with the mainstream culture, the strategy is *segregation*. The *assimilation* strategy corresponds to the expectations by the majority that immigrants will reject their heritage culture and fully adopt the mainstream culture. Finally, when the majority rejects the heritage culture of all immigrant groups, the *exclusion* strategy occurs. The same meaning emerged for immigrants: *individualism* is a possible strategy also for majority members.

Interaction between the acculturation strategies of the dominant and the non-dominant group results in three possible relations: *consensual*, *problematic*, and *conflictual*. When the dominant and the non-dominant group share the same acculturation strategies and expectations, the interaction is consensual. Differently, the relation becomes problematic when the two groups partially disagree on their acculturation strategies (for example, assimilation against integration). The exclusion strategy adopted by a dominant group always leads to conflictual interaction with minority members, though it is a possible outcome in other conditions (for example, integration against separation).

A relevant assumption made by Bourhis and colleagues (1997) is that these interactions are not a generalization of how dominant groups come into contact with an ethnic group. Rather, each ethnic group enters in an exclusive relationship with the dominant group, regardless of the presence of other ethnic minorities. In a study on the acculturation expectations of the majority group, Bourhis and Dayan (2004) reported that Jews in Israel preferred segregation and exclusive strategies towards Israeli Arabs, and an integration strategy towards Jewish immigrants of Russian and Ethiopian origin.

Another aspect treated in the IAM is the role *group vitality* plays in acculturation. Group vitality forms a conceptual framework for examining the strengths and weaknesses of dominant and non-dominant groups on a scale from low to high vitality. Group vitality is defined by: *demographic* variables (number of group members); *institutional control* (relevance of the group in decision-making processes in the society); *status* (the group's prestige). In these terms, groups with high vitality have more power than lower vitality groups in applying their acculturative strategies. As illustrated in Figure 3, only dominant groups have high vitality by virtue of their overall power in the society, whereas non-dominant groups can attain middle group vitality at most.

The IAM has been tested in empirical studies across various different ethnic and majority groups (Maisonneuve & Testé, 2007; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; 2004; Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000; van Oudenhoven & Eisses, 1998). Among systematic reviews of the IAM (Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sam, Vedder, 2013), a review carried out in four countries (USA, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands) as part of an international project (International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth; ICSEY) partially supported the model and showed that the integration of ethnic groups was closely related to a country's official integrative immigrant policy, as demonstrated in the context of the United States (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). IAM and Berry's model of acculturation are two of the most relevant theorizations in the psychological literature. Alternative models are discussed below.

1.1.3 Alternative Acculturation Models

The acculturation models discussed above (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997) share the main idea that acculturation results from long-term contact between at least two cultural groups. As explained by the IAM (Bourhis et al., 1997), intergroup contact may emphasize that dominant groups change their attitudes in a bidirectional or mutual process of acculturation (Horenczyk et al., 2013). This intergroup approach highlights the ways in which acculturation varies according to the attitudes that dominant groups exhibit towards non-dominant groups and *vice-versa* (Berry, 1997, 2006; Bourhis et al. 1997).

Other models of an intraindividual approach to acculturation (Horenczyk et al., 2013) have focused on the ways in which perceptions and expectations that cultural groups have toward other cultural groups can affect the acculturative process beyond the actual intergroup contact (Sabatier, Phalet, & Tizmann, 2016). Two European examples that explain this intraindividual approach to acculturation are: the *Concordance Model of Acculturation* in

Germany (CMA; Piontkowski, Rohmann, & Florack, 2002) and the *Relative Acculturation Extended Model* in Spain (RAEM; Navas, Garcia, Sánchez, Rojas, Pumares, & Fernández, 2005).

Concordance Acculturation Model. The CMA (Piontkowski et al., 2002) is a modified version of the IAM and concerns the degree of concordance or discordance between cultural groups. It seeks to explain the gap between the preferences of the non-dominant group and the expectations of the dominant group regarding acculturation. The CMA authors criticized the IAM because it "does not differentiate between discordance that arises from differences in the attitudes of the dominant and the non-dominant group over the issue of cultural maintenance, and discordance that arises from differences over the issue of contact and participation" (Piontkowski et al., 2002, p. 222).

Starting from these assumptions, and according to Berry's model (1997), the CMA distinguishes four levels of concordance between dominant and non-dominant groups, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4

The concordance model of acculturation (CMA)

	Non-dominant group			
Dominant group	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Marginalization
Integration	consensual	culture problematic	contact problematic	conflictual
Assimilation	culture problematic	consensual	conflictual	contact problematic
Segregation	contact problematic	conflictual	consensual	culture problematic
Exclusion	conflictual	conflictual	conflictual	conflictual

From "Concordance of Acculturation and Perceived Threat" by U. Piontkowski, A. Rohmann, & A. Florack, 2002, *Group Processes &Intergroup Relations, 5*(3), p. 224

While the *consensual*, *conflictual* and *problematic* interactions are conceptually similar to the IAM, the problematic outcome differs depending on the source of difficulties: the culture or the contact. In short, the relationship is defined as *culture problematic* when the difference between cultural groups in acculturation strategies revolves around the issue of cultural maintenance (e.g., situations where non-dominant groups expect integration, while dominant groups prefer assimilation). Differently, the relation is *contact problematic* when the discordance stems from issues of contact (e.g., situations where dominant groups adopt the segregation strategy, while non-dominant groups prefer integration). To test this model, Piontkowski and colleagues (2002) examined whether the concordance between the attitudes of majority members and the acculturative preferences of minority members affected the perception of threat (Piontkowski et al., 2002). The concordance supports their main assumption that acculturation is closely related to a group's perception of what the other groups desire. It was found that the greater the concordance, the lower the perception of

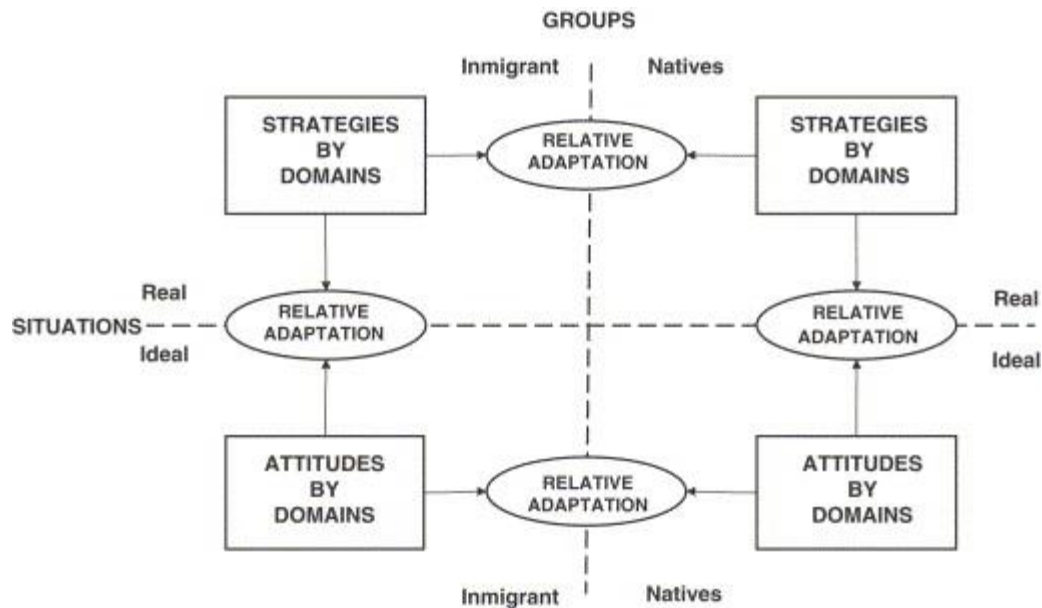
threat between cultural groups. Piontkowski and colleagues (2002, p. 228) reported that the CMA reflected “not only the attitude toward immigrant acculturation that is meaningfully related to the perception of threat but also the match between individual acculturation attitude and the imputed outgroup attitude”.

The CMA has been used to test the hypothesis of cultural and contact discordance between dominant and non-dominant groups in the acculturation process (e.g.; Piontkowski et al., 2002; Rohmann, Piontkowski, & van Randenborgh, 2008). A study comparing the acculturation attitudes of majority members in Germany with Turkish and Italian ethnic minorities found that the level of concordance/discordance was related to the perceived intergroup threat (Rohmann, Florack, & Piontkowski, 2006).

Relative Acculturation Extended Model. In continuity with the assumptions of the CMA (Piontkowski et al., 2002), Navas and colleagues (2005) developed the RAEM in which discordance between cultural groups was examined at the intraindividual and the intergroup level. To do this, they distinguished between the ideal and the real level in the acculturation process for both cultural groups (Figure 5). The ideal level concerns the acculturation strategies that non-dominant groups would choose regardless of their life context, whereas the ideal situation for dominant groups is the acculturation strategies they imagine for the non-dominant groups. The real level is composed of the acculturation strategies that the non-dominant groups claim to have carried out. For the dominant groups, this level investigates the perception that they have of the acculturative strategies implemented by non-dominant groups. Based on the distinction between private and public life domains (see Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007), the proponents of the RAEM distinguished a central domain encompassing value, family, religion, from a peripheral domain encompassing social relationship, work, economy. Based on these theoretical assumptions, acculturation is a "selective or relative adaptation where each individual devises his own cultural synthesis accepting or rejecting elements from both cultures" (Navas et al., 2005; p. 29).

Figure 5

The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM)



From "Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM): New contributions with regard to the study of acculturation" by M. Navas, M. C.. Garcia, J. Sánchez, A. J. Rojas, P. Pumares & J. S. Fernández, 2005, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29*(1), p. 27

The RAEM was applied in empirical studies on different immigrant and dominant groups (López-Rodríguez, Bottura, Navas, Mancini, 2014; López-Rodríguez, Zagefka, 2015; López-Rodríguez, Zagefka, Navas, Cuadrado, 2014; Mancini & Bottura, 2014; Mannarini, Talò, Mezzi, & Procentese, 2018; Rojas et al., 2014). For example, in a study conducted in Spain (Navas, Rojas, Garcia, & Pumares, 2007), empirical findings showed that immigrants and the majority agreed on their acculturation strategies in the peripheral and the public domain. However, the groups differed in some of the private domains of acculturation. While the immigrants preferred separation, the majority adopted the assimilation strategy. The study

findings indicate that acculturation may vary by its levels (ideal and real) and its life domains (private and public).

1.2 Measure of Acculturation

The temporal dimension is pivotal in acculturation, which is why measurement of acculturation is pursued. A vast amount of methodological research has been devoted to acculturation studies. Most empirical findings have come from quantitative studies. A popular way to measure the acculturation process is by self-report questionnaires with responses rated on a Likert-like scale from *totally disagree* to *totally agree* (e.g., Donà & Berry, 1994; Kim & Abreu, 2001; Sánchez & Fernandez, 1993). This is further illustrated in reviews comparing the psychometric properties of acculturation scales (e.g., Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Celenk & van de Vijver, 2011; Huynh, Howell, & Benet-Martínez, 2009; Matsudaira, 2006; Ryder et al., 2000). All these studies have concluded that the operationalization of acculturation measures depends on two main choices: domain and dimensionality.

Because acculturation covers a wide range of life domains, attempts have been made to develop instruments that fully encompass the multiplicity of attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge that characterize the process (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007). As pointed out by Celenk and van de Vijver (2011), the most widely used domain in the literature is the preferred language immigrants use. Beyond this, the scale of acculturation varies across domains, including the private (e.g., family and marital relations) and the public (e.g., work or school relations) life domains. Some instruments include food and music preferences or knowledge of cultural practices (e.g., history, celebrities, etc.). Given the relevance of context in the acculturation process, some scales have addressed acculturation experiences in specific

cultural contexts, such as Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States (Cortés, Deren, Andia, Colon, Robles, & Kang, 2003) or Mexican-Americans (Gim Chung, Kim, & Abreu, 2004) or African Americans (Snowden & Hines, 1999). These measures are largely limited by the impossibility to compare acculturation experiences across ethnic groups and countries. To fill this gap, some acculturation scales can be adapted for use with individuals of different cultural origins (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Ryder et al., 2000; Stephenson, 2000).

Another aspect in the operationalization of acculturation scales is the dimensionality of the acculturation model. A one-statement measurement method implemented in the unidimensional model considers acculturation as a linear process of cultural change. Such scales explore acculturation on a continuum from maintaining the heritage culture to adopting the mainstream culture (e.g., Marín, Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987; Rissel, 1997; Suinn et al., 1992). Despite its parsimony, the impossibility to measure two cultural orientations independently is the main drawback of this model. Also, the midpoint of these scales is difficult to disambiguate because it can be interpreted as both a bicultural and a marginalized choice.

Because of these limitations, acculturation measures have been developed that assess cultural orientation as two orthogonal factors following Berry's bidimensional model (Yoon, Langrehr, & Ong, 2011). Over the years, Berry himself refined a measure that directly investigated the four acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization; Berry et al., 2006). This four-statement measurement method (see also Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006, 2007) includes a combination of two statements with double-barrel items. But this method has attracted criticism because of the double negation in the same sentence that could make its interpretation difficult (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Ryder et al., 2000; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

For these and other reasons (for more detail, see Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001), an alternative to the four-statement method is the two-measurement method according to the bidimensional model (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006, 2007; Ryder et al., 2000). With this method, acculturation is measured on two parallel scales in which respondents rate their acculturation orientation in both the heritage and the mainstream culture (e.g., Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Ryder et al., 2000; Stephenson, 2000; Tsai et al., 2000). In other words, the same item is split in two. For example, "I often participate in my heritage cultural traditions" is followed by "I often participate in my North America cultural traditions" (*Vancouver Index of Acculturation*, Ryder et al., 2000; p.65). With this method the four acculturation strategies can be defined by psychometric procedures, such as the *median and mean spilt* or the *midpoint split* (for more detail, see Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006).

To clarify which measure better explains the acculturation process on the basis of its dimensionality (unidimensional or bidimensional), some studies have compared the one-statement with the two-statement methods (e.g., Flannery et al., 2001; Ryder et al., 2000). Although both methods performed equally well, findings agree that the two-statement method provides a more valid way to assess acculturation than the others, as confirmed in a study investigating the acculturation of Dutch-Turkish immigrants (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver; 2007). In addition, the findings suggested the relevance of domain-specificity in the measure of acculturation for these participants, in which a preference for assimilation emerged in the public domain (e.g., work), whereas separation was referred to the private domain (e.g., home) by these respondents. These findings suggest that acculturation may be a dynamic, individual process that can change according to a specific situation (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000). In this vein, qualitative studies investigating psychological acculturation have directed their focus on the meanings that immigrants attribute to their cultural changes (e.g., Fedi et al., 2019; Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015; Yoon, Adams,

Clawson, Chang, Surya, & Jérémie-Brink, 2017; Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003). As pointed out by Matsudaira (2006, p. 479), the use of semi-structured interviews helps scholars to understand in detail the degree of involvement that immigrants report in each culture because "interviews can elicit the ways in which individuals perceive and interpret various issues and why they respond in the manner that they do".

With the proliferation of acculturation studies, many researchers now use alternative and hybrid measures to assess how immigrants acculturate themselves. Some have tried to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies through *mixed-method* designs (e.g., Edwards & Lopez, 2006; Tsai, Morisky, Kagawa-Singer, & Ashing-Giwa, 2011), while others have used *priming* techniques in experimental studies (e.g., Lechuga, 2008), and still others have developed innovative instruments such as the *cultural day reconstruction* (Doucerain, Dere, & Ryder, 2013).

1.3 Critique of Acculturation Theory

The theory of acculturation in general, and Berry's model in particular, has attracted criticism (for a review, see Rudmin, 2003) for misconceptions regarding acculturation. Despite its complexity, most studies limit their analysis of acculturation to a behavioural perspective, such as the language that migrants prefer (see Birman & Simon, 2014; Rudmin, 2009). To overcome this limitation, the concept of *multidimensional* acculturation has been advanced to direct more focus on acculturation as a process comprising various different components. Three previously overlooked components are: *cultural values* (e.g., individualism or collectivism), *practices* (respect for traditions and history), and *identification* (ethnic or national identity; Schwartz et al., 2010). Multidimensional acculturation seeks to describe acculturation as a dynamic, individual process. In other words, immigrants may retain or

refuse some aspects of the same culture rather than be fully embedded into one or both or neither. Beyond the attempt to define in detail which components are part of the acculturation process, studies have specifically focused on Berry's model, which has come under criticism especially for its four-part paradigm (Birman & Simon, 2014; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). As pointed out by Rudmin (2003), an a priori fourfold subdivision may lead to unrealistic and partial interpretations of the acculturation process. The applicability of this schema to empirical situations has been questioned because acculturation is far more complex and fluid than would appear in Berry's categorization (e.g., Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). Beyond the general criticism directed at application of the fourfold paradigm, some researchers have focused on the specific meaning of these strategies (Rudmin, 2003; 2010). For example, it has been debated whether marginalization can be defined as a strategy (Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). Since few immigrants voluntarily reject both their heritage and the mainstream culture (e.g., Berry et al., 2006), it has been argued that marginalization does not constitute a choice. In fact, it may ensue from an aversive structural condition in the receiving society where immigrants live rather than an individual choice (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). Empirical studies using clustering methods found little or no evidence for this marginalization strategy (see Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008).

Similarly, the nature of integration strategy has been debated (Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). Beyond the uncertainty that some scholars report in considering integration as the best-adapted strategy (see the *integration paradox* below), other doubts have arisen about its conceptualization. Kağitçibaşi (1997) found that the term "integration" as intended in Berry's model (1997) was ambiguous and that it did not correspond to the more complex reality of immigrants living in Western countries. Accordingly, Boski (2008) reported at least five different meanings for the term "integration" in the literature Although Berry's use of this

term is the one most commonly accepted in acculturation literature, four other meanings are: integration as bicultural competence and frame switching (see Benet-Martínez et al., 2002); integration as constructive marginalization (see Bennett, 1993); integration as cognitive evaluation resulting in a fusion of two cultural sets; finally, integration as a functional process that varies on the basis of life-domains (public and private; see Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003).

Further critiques of Berry's model have been voiced in a recent, radical field of research called *critical acculturation psychology* (Chirkov, 2009a). In the introduction of a special issue presenting this new perspective, Chirkov explained how a "new reflective, critical, cultural, and multidisciplinary approach in studying acculturation processes is required" (2009a, p.87). The main critiques from this perspective refer to the reductionist perspective through which cross-cultural psychologists approach acculturation. According to Chirkov (2009a), classical acculturation scholars are unable to investigate the meaning of culture and its relation to immigrants' way of life, since they consider culture only through measurable indicators such as citizenship, religious affiliation or ethnic origins. As Chirkov states, "the ultimate result of all these developments has been that culture, as a symbolic and negotiated reality within which people function, disappeared from acculturation research" (2009a, p. 89).

Berry replied to the proponents of critical acculturation psychology (2009) and acknowledged the relevance of the cultural perspective that these authors embraced in the study of acculturation (Chirkov, 2009b; Bhatia & Ram, 2001, 2009; Weinreich, 2009) but he stressed the importance of a universal perspective of cross-cultural psychology in the study of acculturation. In other words, acculturation studies require an integrative framework that includes knowledge of the basic psychological processes that immigrants share across cultures. In his opinion, an integrative approach to the study of acculturation is recommended

because “it allows for comparative work (based on our common membership in one species), and for work that focuses on the individual within the nexus of a single culture” (Berry, 2009, p. 362).

CHAPTER 2

2. Framework of Acculturation

Acculturation does not take place in a social vacuum but rather involves contextual and individual factors. In this regard, the acculturation literature has investigated various factors in immigrant experience across cultural groups (Berry, 1992). Acculturation has been examined from diverse perspectives (anthropological, sociological, psychological). This multidimensional view and the plurality of approaches make it challenging to investigate the process of acculturation (Olmedo, 1979). For anthropologists and sociologists, acculturation is an interpersonal process set in group relationships. From a sociological perspective, acculturation is related to racial relations and the role of the minority group in the majority society, while the anthropological approach seeks to explore the characteristics of a cultural group (Olmedo, 1979). The psychological perspective differs again to the extent that it is more focused on individual differences rather than on group relationships (Graves, 1967). A unified vision of acculturation has remained elusive, as has a set of criteria for the studying it (Olmedo, 1979).

One of the first attempts to organize the literature on acculturation into a common framework was made by Berry (1992; 1997) who summarized factors from different fields of research. Berry distinguished between *group* and *individual* level factors. Group level factors include *situational* and *societal* variables (usually approached from a sociological or anthropological perspective), while individual level factors are personal variables (typically studied in the psychological perspective). At the group level of analysis a further distinction is made between variables regarding the society of origin and the society of settlement (Berry, 1997). Aspects of the society of origin are ethnographic characteristics (e.g., language or religion) or political, economic or demographic factors. Among the demographics, the voluntariness of

migration may have a negative or a positive effect on acculturation (Berry, 1997). For example, the academic success of immigrant students is greater among ethnic groups that are strongly motivated to live in the host country (Leung, 2001).

As regards the society of settlement, immigration policies, history of immigration, and attitudes and expectations of the receiving society about ethnic groups settling there are all factors that influence acculturation. Using the dataset from the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY), Sam and Horenczyk (2012) reported that the degree of young immigrants adapting to mainstream culture increased depending on the immigration policies implemented by the society of settlement. In detail, immigrants living in Australia and the United States (termed “settler society” because of their long history of immigration) were more adapted to the mainstream culture than other recent-receiving societies such as Finland, Norway, and Sweden. *Group Acculturation* refers to the substantial changes that result from the meeting between two cultures. In this sense, Berry (1997) cited the changes in urban planning, population density, food, and religious habits as examples of the meeting of two cultures.

On an individual level of analysis, this framework distinguishes between variables that exist *a priori* the acculturation process and those that emerge during acculturation. A mix of demographic, personal, and cultural variables (e.g., gender, age, education, or socioeconomic status) moderate the acculturation process *a priori* (Castro, 2003). These acculturation strategies, the length of stay of immigrants in the receiving countries, and the social support that they receive from the majority society are only some of the factors that interact during the acculturation process (Berry, 1997).

Moreover, *psychological acculturation* is described in three patterns to explain the possible difficulties that immigrants may encounter during their acculturation: *behavioural shifts*, *acculturative stress*, and *psychopathology* (Berry, 1997). The first and the last refer to the

best and the worst outcome, respectively, in immigrants who come into contact with a new culture, while *acculturative stress* occurs when immigrants encounter problematic but controllable situations during their acculturation (Berry, 2006). They are aware that intercultural contact could create problems (Castro, 2003). Berry's conceptualization of acculturative stress highlights an affective perspective that focuses on emotion and psychological health (Sam & Berry, 2010). It is similar to the older concept of *culture shock* (Oberg, 1960), though Berry (1997; 2006) prefers to use the term *acculturative stress*. In his opinion, the term *shock* has a negative connotation while *stress* is more pertinent to the coping strategies that people implement in their adaptation process. According to the stress model developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the acculturative stress that immigrants perceive during their acculturation is a central element to understand how they face intercultural contact (for studies on acculturative stress, see Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; Goforth et al., 2014; Sirin, Ryce, Gupta, & Rogers-Sirin, 2013).

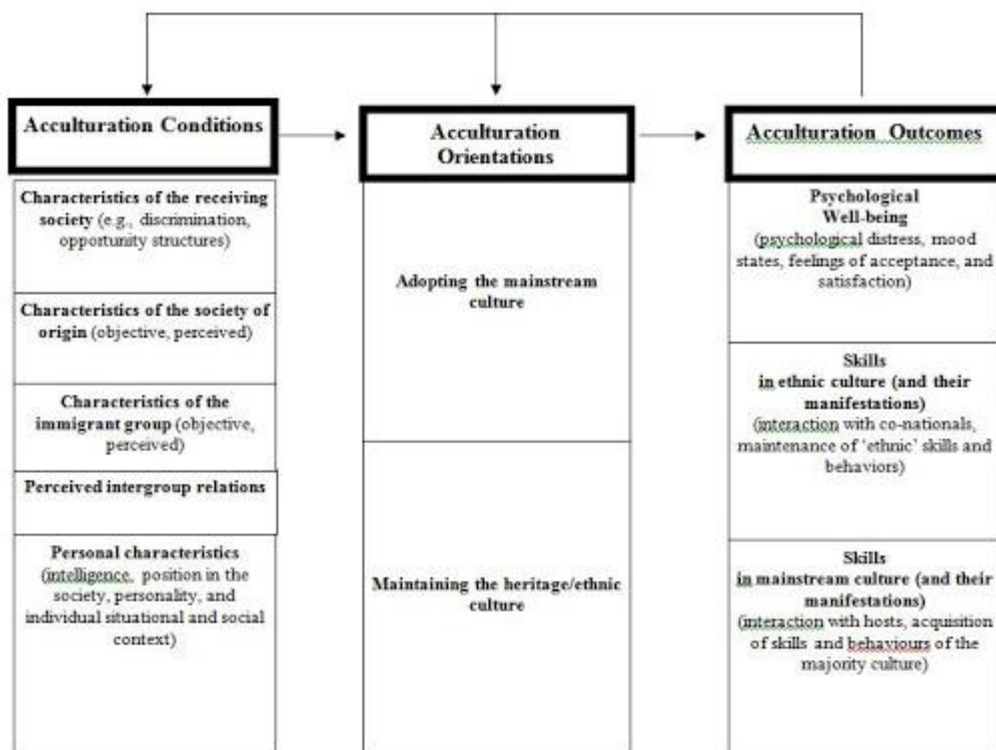
While these three approaches explore the on-going processes of acculturation, the outcome of the model concerns long-term adjustment to the new environment. According to Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001), long-term adjustment can be split into a *psychological* and a *sociocultural adaptation* or *adjustment* (see also Ward & Kennedy, 1996). The former is associated with physical and psychological well-being, such as an increase in self-esteem or identity consolidation. The second involves an individual's capacity to live and thrive in a new cultural environment through the acquisition of cultural knowledge and social skills, for example (Berry, 1997).

To summarize, this framework provides a guide for scholars when they study acculturation (Berry, 1997). A similar attempt by Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2006; see also van de Vijver, Berry, & Celenk, 2016) was a framework of acculturation the devised to organize and distinguish the many different acculturation variables. Within this framework, acculturation is

divided into three phases: *conditions*, *orientations*, and *outcomes* (Figure 6). The acculturation conditions phase refers to the contextual features of acculturation and, according to Berry's framework, are involved in the group- and individual-level factors. The group-level factors are: the *characteristic of the receiving society*, *the society of origin*, *the immigrant groups*, and the *perceived inter-group* relations, while the *personal characteristics* are the individual-level factors (Figure 6)

Figure 6

Assessment of Acculturation



From *The Cambridge handbook of acculturation psychology* (chapter 6, p. 143), by J. W. Berry & D. Sam, 2006, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

The *acculturation orientations* support Berry's bidimensional model (1997) in which immigrants maintain their heritage culture while adopting the mainstream culture. Accordingly, the two orientations and their consequent strategies (integration, separation, assimilation, marginalization) are set in the middle of the framework between acculturation conditions and outcomes. Outcomes refer to the consequences of the choice of acculturation orientations. In Berry's framework (1997), outcomes are divided into *psychological adaptation*, including psychological well-being or mood states, and *sociocultural adaptation*, including skills in both reference cultures (heritage and mainstream).

Consistent with this framework of acculturation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; 2016; Celenk & van de Vijver, 2011), the next section discusses the most relevant conditions and outcomes in acculturation separately. The part on generational status will focus on the acculturation of the children of immigrants, the so-called second generation.

2.1 Acculturation Conditions

Psychological studies on acculturation have focused on the degree to which immigrants relate to both the culture of the country of origin and that of the host country and the consequences of adaptation to a new context (Ward et al., 2001). The framework of acculturation (Figure 6) shows that most of the literature has been focused on acculturation orientations and outcomes, while less attention has been devoted to acculturation conditions (Sam & Berry, 2010). Also, the relevance of group-level variables has been less studied than individual-level variables (Doucerain, 2018). To fill this gap, some scholars have recognized the valuable contribution of an ecological framework to the study of acculturation (Ward, Fox, Wilson, Stuart, & Kus, 2010; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). The ecological framework addresses the influence of intrapersonal or individual variables like personality traits or cultural intelligence in acculturation, (e.g., Huff, Song, & Gresch, 2014). These individual aspects are set in a broader context of group-level variables (e.g., Doucerain, 2018; Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chryssochoou, Sam, & Phinney, 2012). For example, Ward and colleagues (2010) found that acculturation was affected by family, ethnic community, and institutions (school or work environment) in the daily life of immigrants. This ecological framework stresses the central role of the receiving and the origin society in acculturation, as well as their degree of compatibility (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Shown in the upper left of Figure 6 is the role of the receiving society and the society of origin in acculturation conditions.

2.1.1 Characteristics of the Receiving Society and the Society of Origin

Beyond the specific role of institutions in acculturation (Ward et al., 2010), studies have demonstrated how broader multicultural policies (see Berry, 1997; Bourhis at al., 1997) can maintain or change cultural orientations (Ward et al., 2010). An empirical attempt to organize which factors should be included in multicultural policies was the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) project (Huddleston, Bilgili, Joki, & Vankova, 2015). This multinational project assessed a unique global tool to investigate when and how governments implemented programs that supported immigrant integration. To reduce the number of policy indicators measured across countries, eight policy areas were delineated to establish what allows and what impedes integration: labour market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination legislation. Generally speaking, good examples of integrative national policies were labour market programs targeted to immigrants' specific needs, health services in a different language or with the help of cultural mediators, and anti-discrimination laws.

Two factors that fall under acculturation conditions are the role of family and the ethnic community at large. A growing body of research has documented that acculturation varies with socialization within the family and among co-ethnic members (for a review, see Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kağçitçibaşi, & Poortinga, 2006). Families play a crucial role in acculturation, especially in maintenance of the heritage culture. A family can transmit cultural values to their children while developing a sense of family cohesion (Phinney & Ong, 2002). Members of acculturating families can also support each other to reduce the stress of living in a new cultural environment (Ward et al., 2010). A recent German study showed that family support had a positive influence on the integration of young immigrants of different cultural origins in both the maintenance of heritage culture and the adoption of the mainstream culture (Schachner, van de Vijver, & Noack, 2016).

Like the family, so too the ethnic community can provide support for immigrants in maintaining their heritage culture in a receiving society (Ward et al., 2010). The presence of a community (e.g., neighbourhoods) composed of a high-number of co-ethnic residents can help immigrants maintain their cultural values and adapt to a new cultural context (Birman, Trickett, & Buchanan, 2005). This is further illustrated by subjective *ethnic density* which refers to the perception of living in a place with high co-ethnic concentration. Perception of ethnic density helps immigrants maintain their heritage orientation and protects them against internalizing problems (for more detail, see Jurcik, Ahmed, Yakobov, Solopieieva-Jurcikova, & Ryder, 2013).

2.1.2 Perceived Intergroup Relations

Another factor in acculturation (Figure 6) is *perceived intergroup relations*. Based on the assumption in the IAM (Bourhis et al., 1997) about interactions between the acculturation preferences of immigrants and those of the majority society (consensual, problematic, conflictual), research has established a link between the quality of intergroup relations and the acculturation preferences enacted by cultural groups (for a review, see Brown & Zagefka, 2011). For instance, a German study tested the role of perceived intergroup relations and acculturation strategies in the majority society and in Turkish and Russian immigrants (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). To assess an overall index of perceived intergroup relations, the researchers used three indicators: *ingroup bias* (to what extent are people comfortable with members of their group and members of other groups); *intergroup relations* (to what extent do people positively evaluate the relationship between their group and the other groups); *perceived discrimination* (to what extent do people feel that the members of their cultural group are discriminated by other groups: this last indicator will be discussed in detail in the next chapter). The study findings showed that, according to Berry's model, integration was

the preferred strategy of the members of each group and that it was affected by the perceived positive intergroup relationship (Zagefka & Brown, 2002).

Perceived intergroup relations are also related to a *perceived cultural distance* that each cultural group keeps toward other cultural groups (Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980). It refers to the discrepancies that people subjectively perceive to exist between their heritage and the mainstream culture, e.g., a perceived difference in language, values, habits or religion (van de Vijver et al., 2016). Empirical findings showed that the greater the perception of cultural distance between immigrants and mainstream culture, the less their adaptation to the mainstream culture (Galchenko, & van de Vijver, 2007, Suanet & van de Vijver, 2009; for a discussion on academic performance as an outcome of perceived cultural distance, see Melkonian, Areepattamannil, Menano, Fildago, 2019). Among the indicators that assess cultural distance is the difference in religion between immigrants and majority society (Suanet & van de Vijver, 2009). When immigrants and non-immigrants differ in their religious affiliation, the cultural distance they perceive is difficult to overcome, as demonstrated by the religious distance perceived by Muslim immigrants and the Roman Catholic majority in some countries (Torrekens & Jacobs, 2016). Religion constitutes a complex issue in acculturation conditions and will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.1.3 Personal Characteristics

The individual-level variables make up a consistent part of acculturation conditions (Figure 6). These variables underscore the relevance of the psychological perspective in acculturation studies. People may change not only through contact with members of other cultures but also through personal (e.g., language proficiency, religious affiliation, personality) and demographic (gender, educational level, length of stay, generational status) experience (see Castro, 2003). One of the best studied variables in acculturation is acquisition of new

language skills (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009). The literature reports that knowing the language of the host country is key to adapting to mainstream culture. In this regard, knowing both languages can influence the sociocultural adaptation of immigrants and foster intercultural relationships (Masgoret & Ward, 2006; Vedder & Horenczyk, 2006; for a review, see Smith & Khawaja, 2011). When immigrants move to a new country, their ability to learn and use the language of the receiving society help them in gaining access to intercultural areas, such as education (e.g., Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006) and labour markets (e.g., Lu, Samaratunge, & Härtel, 2011). In the educational sector, learning the language of the host country is related to an immigrant's educational level (LaFromboise et al., 1993), which is a strong predictor of advancement in the acculturation process (Berry, 1997; Phinney & Flores, 2002). As Yağmur and van de Vijver (2012) point out, immigrants with a high educational level and proficiency in the language of the host country are more inclined to adapt to mainstream culture than their less educated co-ethnic peers. In contrast, immigrants comfortable with their heritage language tend to maintain their cultural traditions and contact with their co-ethnic members, which may foster their sociocultural adjustment (Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). This is further illustrated in young immigrants who, because they grew up in the receiving society, are more exposed to the host than to the heritage language (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Maintaining the language of their family is not seen as an obstacle to their integration in the receiving society but rather as a way to strengthen their ethnic roots and achieve positive sociocultural adjustment (Berry et al., 2006; Sam, Vedder, Ward, & Horenczyk, 2006).

Empirical research has also showed that acculturation orientations depend on the phase of acculturation (Berry, 1997), which is considered the period of experience in a new place. These conditions, such as length of stay and generational status, are related to the acquisition of new cultural skills, including language proficiency, which is a determinant of positive

sociocultural adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998). Unsurprisingly, the length of stay in a new country may help immigrants become familiar with the host society as a whole. This allows them to increase their intercultural contact, live following the laws of the receiving society, and access the school or work environment (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward et al., 2001). For example, an Italian study reported that the time immigrants resided abroad affected their adaptation to the new culture through a positive effect of improved proficiency in the use of the Italian language (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009).

Like the length of stay in a new place, the role of generational status (first, second, third, or later generation) suggests that acculturation is an on-going process (Ouarasse & van de Vijver 2005). Generational status refers to an immigrant's place of birth (Padilla, Alvarez, & Lindholm, 1986; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Briefly, the first generation is the family that migrates to a new country, while the second generation is the children who were born in and/or grew up in the receiving society; their children will become the third generation and so on. A more detailed explanation of the distinction between generations will be discussed in the next part of this chapter. Empirical findings have demonstrated a significant role of generational status in acculturation preferences and adaptations, with later generations portrayed as more adapted to mainstream culture and less tied to their heritage culture than the previous generation (Arpino & de Valk, 2018; Glikman & Semyonov, 2012; Schiefer, 2013; Wimmer & Soehl, 2014). However, these results have been debated in studies that portrayed the second generation of immigrants as more stressed and less adapted to their environment than their parents (Di Thiene, Alexanderson, Tinghög, La Torre, & Mittendorfer-Rutz, 2015; Salas-Wright, Kagotho, Vaughn, 2014; Svensson & Haquist, 2009; Tonsing, 2014). This pattern has been widely recognized as the *immigrant paradox* (García Coll & Marks, 2012; Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008; Sam et al., 2006; Alvarez

Valdivia, Schneider, & Villalobos Carrasco, 2015), which emerged from the counterintuitive findings that first generation immigrants attain better academic achievement (Aretakis, Ceballo, Suarez, & Camacho, 2015; Crosnoe & López Turley, 2011) and display less problematic behaviours than second generation immigrants (Schwartz et al., 2013).

Other demographic variables besides length of stay in a new place and generational status can influence acculturation orientations. For example, studies have found different patterns of acculturation for men and women (e.g., Güngör & Bornstein, 2013; Kim, O'Neil, & Owen, 1996; van Leeuwen, Rodgers, Régner, & Chabrol, 2010). The difference probably derives from the gender-role values that are culturally embedded in biological differences. As Idema and Phalet (2007; p.77) state, "biological differences between men and women are at the origin of differential socialization goals and practices, teaching boys and girls to accept and perform distinct gender roles. However, gender roles are by no means determined or fixed across cultures". Accordingly, the encounter with a new culture can force immigrants to reflect about their gender-role attitudes (e.g., masculinity and femininity), as is the case of Arab immigrants arriving in Western countries (Hofstede, 2001). For instance, in a study involving Turkish-Belgian adolescents, Güngör and Bornstein (2009) found a gender gap in the acculturation experience of young immigrant boys and girls. While both maintained their heritage culture, the girls were more involved in adopting the mainstream culture than the boys. The authors explained this gender gap in reference to the different challenges that young men and women immigrants face. Specifically, young boys were more conservative about gender roles than young women and displayed a pattern similar to that of their fathers. Differently, young girls growing up in a society with a more egalitarian attitude toward gender roles had a point of view that contrasted the more traditional view of their mothers. This awareness led immigrant girls "to embrace egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles of the Western receiving societies more than men" (Güngör and Bornstein, 2013, p. 181).

Finally, in addition to social factors and sociodemographic variables in the experience of acculturation of immigrants, a growing body of research suggests that dispositional characteristics and individual knowledge may also influence acculturation (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Padilla & Perez, 2003). Each immigrant seeks his/her way to approach a new culture according to their personality traits (Kosic, 2006; Ward et al., 2001). van der Zee, Benet-Martínez, and van Oudenhoven (2016) reported that while some immigrants can see acculturation as an opportunity to come into contact with other cultures, others may perceive the experience as a threat and shun any intercultural contact.

The literature on the relationship between acculturation and personality has been organized along the lines of *self-orientation* and *other-orientation* factors (Kosic, 2006; see also Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). The former refers to the degree of self-awareness that immigrants report in their process of acculturation. Indicators in psychological research demonstrate that high levels of self-orientation can help immigrants adapt to the new context. High levels of *self-efficacy*, or a general positive self-evaluation, are related to successful integration and healthy adaptation (e.g., Kim & Omizo, 2006). Consistent results have emerged for immigrants from different cultural groups (e.g., Eisenberg, Puhl, Areba, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2019; Sam & Virta, 2003). Another example of a self-oriented factor is the predictive role of *locus of control* in acculturation, i.e., the degree to which an individual believes he/she has control over a situation. Studies have shown that an internal locus (conviction that outcomes are determined by one's actions) affects the adaptation of immigrants, whereas opposite outcomes emerge with an external locus of control (conviction that outcomes are determined by outside forces; e.g., Roncancio, Berenson, Rahman, 2012; Valentine, Godkin, Doughty, 2008; Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

Studies have also noted the influence of a general *cognitive rigidity* in acculturation, which refers to mental closure, the search for absolute answers in life, and an intolerance towards

ambiguity (Webster and Kruglanski, 1994). Immigrants with a high cognitive closure tend to maintain their heritage culture and to reject the mainstream culture (e.g., Kosic, 2002; Kosic, Kruglasnki, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004). The opposite condition is *cognitive flexibility*, which is an individual predisposition to being open towards new experiences (Martin & Rubin, 1995). Unsurprisingly, immigrants with high cognitive flexibility are willing to accept other cultures (Christmas & Barker, 2014). An application of cognitive flexibility in the acculturation process will be discussed in the next chapter in relation to the concept of *flexibility in existential quest*, i.e., the willingness to confront existential issues (van Pachterbeke, Keller, & Saroglou, 2012).

Among the second-order factors influencing acculturation are the other-oriented factors that stem from the assumption that people shape their identities in social contexts, as explained in the *Social Identity Theory* (see Tajfel, 1981). Certain individual skills, such as sociability or empathy, may prove useful in contact with other cultures; however, cultural differences between immigrants and the majority in values and traditions could complicate this socialization in some cases (Kosic, 2006). When immigrants seek long-standing relationships and/or are willing to communicate with members of the host culture, the success of their acculturation process becomes highly possible (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986). It has also been demonstrated that a positive acculturation adaptation can be predicted from an individual's ability to control the relationship in social contexts, so-called self-monitoring (Kosic, 2002; for a review, see Kosic, 2006).

Some attempts have been made to integrate the self and other-oriented factors in the acculturation process (van der Zee et al., 2016). In this regard, the personality traits of the *Big Five Model* (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Openness; Costa & McCrae, 1992) have been tested to understand which traits influence acculturation preferences (e.g., Ryder et al., 2000; Roesch, Wee, & Vaughn, 2006; Zhang, Mandl, &

Wang, 2010). A study involving immigrants in Australia and Singapore showed that high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and low levels of neuroticism helped participants to improve their psychological adaptation (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004).

These are only an example of the many relationships between personality and acculturation (for more detail, see Kosic, 2006). As van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez (2015; p. 50) point out, "the long list of potential personality predictors has not been researched thoroughly enough to identify a set of key variables".

2.2 Acculturation Outcomes

In a broad sense, adaptation implies the changes individuals or groups make in response to environmental necessity (Berry, 1997; Castro, 2003). In acculturation studies, adaptation is usually viewed as a long-term change that comprises the cultural changes that individuals or groups enact after a period of adjustment in a new context (Berry, 1997). As Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2006) point out in their framework (Figure 6), acculturation outcomes can be conceptually divided into two complementary areas: *psychological* and *sociocultural* adaptation. This subdivision originates from the *ABCs of Acculturation* (Ward et al., 2001), which categorises the vast amount of empirical findings in acculturation and adaptation in three perspectives: *affective*, *behaviour*, and *cognitive*.

In the affective perspective, the stress and coping framework is operated to highlight how well individuals and groups change in psychological terms, such as well-being or state moods. This perspective expands the acculturative stress as intended by Berry (1997) which, as explained above, takes into account that some internal conditions, such as depression and anxiety, may occur during acculturation. In response to the conflicts that arise in the first phase of intercultural contact, immigrants will seek coping strategies to deal with stressful

situations such as a sense of cultural loss or uncertainty regarding their adaptation (Berry, 1997). Alternatively, Ward and colleagues (2010) focused on the affective outcomes more than the stress of the first phase of acculturation. These outcomes, or psychological adaptation, are consequent to the coping strategies that immigrants adopt during their acculturation.

The behavioural perspective is embedded in the cultural learning approach. Inspired by the S*ocial Learning Paradigm* (Argyle, 1969); scholars working from this angle suggest that immigrants acquire cultural skills and knowledge as a consequence of their acculturation process. Within this perspective the behavioural outcomes of acculturation are grouped under sociocultural adaptation, such as cross-cultural communication or learning of cultural norms, rules, and conventions.

The affective and behavioural perspectives reflect psychological and sociocultural adaptation, respectively, while the cognitive perspective explores the way immigrants identify themselves in their intercultural contacts, as conceptualised by the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981). Cognitive outcomes help immigrants to form their cultural identity and also their behavioural attitudes (see Padilla & Perez, 2003).

2.2.1 Psychological Adaptation

Acculturation studies have reported the way acculturation can impact psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Much of the research has focused more on psychological than on sociocultural adjustment, as illustrated in literature reviews that examine the numerous indicators that studies use to measure psychological adaptation in acculturation studies. In an early review, Rogler, Cortes, and Margady (1991) reviewed studies on the acculturation of Hispanic immigrants, focusing on the variety of variables for assessing mental health status as acculturation outcomes, including internal aspects (e.g., distress symptoms or depressive

pathology) and dysfunctional behaviours (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse). An inconsistent pattern emerged for the relationship between acculturation and health, which was partly negative and partly positive (Rogler et al., 1991). In a similar vein, a meta-analysis by Moyerman and Forman (1992) showed the complex effects of acculturation on psychological adjustment. Unsurprisingly, acculturation had a positive effect on self-esteem and a negative effect on anxiety disorders, while the relationship between acculturation and several behavioural outcomes (e.g., drug addiction, family conflict) was less clear cut.

The major limitation of these literature reviews is the conceptualization of acculturation within the unidimensional perspective (Gordon, 1964). As explained in the previous chapter, this perspective views acquisition of the host culture at the cost of rejecting cultural heritage (Gordon, 1978). It is difficult to pinpoint the influence of two cultures in psychological adaptation (see also Yoon et al., 2011). To overcome these weaknesses, new systematic literature reviews take account of the proliferation of studies using the bidimensional model (for specific examples, see Lee & Park, 2017; Lui & Zamboanga, 2018; Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). To cover the full spectrum of mental health indicators in acculturation studies, Yoon and colleagues (2013) reviewed more than 300 studies on the relationship between acculturation and psychological adaptation. To do this, they evaluated negative (depression, psychological distress, negative affect) and positive (life satisfaction, positive affect, and self-esteem) indicators and found an overall consistent pattern of the two acculturation orientations and mental health. Acquisition of the mainstream culture led to favourable outcomes as measured by positive and negative indicators of mental health (e.g., low depression and high self-esteem), whereas maintaining the heritage culture was correlated with positive mental health indicators. Immigrants who retained their heritage culture expressed high levels of anxiety, however. To explain this pattern, the researchers suggested that immigrants tied to their heritage culture "feel inadequate and nervous outside their ethnic

surroundings, because they may be lacking the language or cultural tools to interact with non-coethnics and navigate mainstream systems" (Yoon et al., 2013, p. 25). Nonetheless, the positive correlations between maintenance of the heritage culture and positive mental health indicators reflect the central role that the family and co-ethnics people play in supporting the acculturation experience (Yoon et al., 2013). The review went on to describe the moderating effects of the relationship between acculturation and mental health in which a significant pattern emerged for mental health and immigrant age. Positive mental health was associated with engagement in the mainstream culture by adults and with retaining the heritage culture in younger people. The moderating effect of age in psychological adaptation has two implications: adults need to adapt to the host society to earn a livelihood and provide support for their family (e.g., find a job, register with the health system), while for young people already engaged in the mainstream culture, maintaining the heritage culture may help them to preserve their cultural origins (Yoon et al., 2013).

Despite these consistent results, other studies underlined counterintuitive outcomes between adult and young immigrants. As explained by the immigrant paradox, young immigrants may be more prone to maladjustment compared to their parents (Sam et al., 2008). For instance, in terms of psychological adaptation, young immigrants report personality and mood disorders (e.g., paranoid disorder, generalized anxiety, or major depression syndrome) more often than adult immigrants (Salas-Wright et al., 2014).

2.2.2 Sociocultural Adaptation

Ward and colleagues (2001) identified sociocultural indicators to measure behavioural competencies, such as language proficiency, knowledge of cultural norms, habits and so on (for more detail, see also Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Sociocultural and psychological adaptations are interrelated though empirically distinct (Brisset, Safdar, Lewis, & Sabatier, 2010). For example, psychological adaptation is predicted by such variables as individual characteristics or life-stage, while sociocultural adaptation depends on cultural identity and cultural knowledge (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Furthermore, sociocultural adaptation is correlated with length of residence in a new place, while psychological adaptation is less stable and varies over time (Ward & Kennedy, 1996).

In line with this integrative framework, Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2006; Figure 6) identified the sociocultural skills that immigrants acquire in both cultures: maintaining successful relations with their family members and co-ethnic peers is a form of sociocultural adaptation referable to their heritage culture, while making friends in the new cultural context is an example of sociocultural adaptation referable to the mainstream culture. More in detail, Ward and colleagues (2001) define positive sociocultural adaptation in terms of academic achievement or career success, while sociocultural maladjustment is defined as problematic behaviours, such as delinquency (Titzmann, Silbereisen, & Mesch, 2014), drug abuse (Salas-Wright, Vaughn, Clark, Terzis, & Córdova, 2014) or binge drinking (Svensson & Hagquist, 2010).

A growing body of literature has focused on the sociocultural adaptation of young immigrants (for a review, see Berry et al., 2006; Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & van de Vijver, 2016; Titzmann & Lee, 2018). This is mainly true for immigrant adolescents in which their acculturation experiences co-occur with biological and psychological changes, inevitably leading to stressful situations and potential sociocultural maladjustment (e.g., Shen, Kim,

Wang, & Chao, 2014; Titzmann, Gniewosz, & Michel, 2015; Walsh, Fogel-Grinvald, & Shneider, 2015). Adjustment to the school environment is a key research topic in sociocultural adaptation among adolescent immigrants (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, & Masten, 2013; Sarmiento, Pérez, Bustos, Hidalgo, & del Solar, 2019). Drawing from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a 2017 cross-country study showed that young immigrants with high mainstream orientation attained positive school adjustment, defined as low truancy, academic achievement, and positive attitude toward school (Schachner, He, Heizmann, & van de Vijver, 2017).

2.2.3 Acculturation Strategies and Adaptation

As Yoon and colleagues (2011) have noted, acculturation studies adopting the bidimensional perspective now outnumber studies in which acculturation is considered a unidimensional process. Based on the assumptions of the bidimensional model (Berry, 1997), adaptation has been investigated for the independent contribution of the two acculturation orientations and for the shifts in adaptation between heritage and mainstream orientation. Based on Berry's four strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization), scholars have investigated which adaptation corresponds to which strategy immigrants adopt (Yoon et al., 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). Comparing the four strategies from the immigrants' point of view, empirical findings agree that integration is the ideal strategy because it leads to the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001). In contrast, marginalization is associated with psychological maladaptation, while separation and assimilation fall between the other two because they endorse only one or the other culture (see Berry, 1997). In fact, immigrants successfully integrated in a new context feel they can belong to both cultures and receive support from both cultural groups (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). They report positive psychological well-being and increase their self-

efficacy by acquiring social and cultural competencies (e.g., language fluency, positive interactions with both cultural groups; for a review, see Castro, 2003). The other strategies reflect a degree of uncertainty in the approach to either (separation and assimilation) or neither of the two cultures (marginalization), which impedes psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006). For instance, marginalization is considered the worst strategy because it creates potential intercultural conflicts and removes the social support that immigrants need (Berry, 1997; Castro, 2003). Immigrants who take the separation strategy can gain a sense of cohesion in their cultural group but are not engaged in the receiving society. The assimilation strategy leads to a situation where immigrants distance themselves from their cultural group and become engaged in the host society.

To gain a better overview of research findings, meta-analyses have identified two aspects: the beneficial psychological and sociocultural effects of integrative strategies and the order of choice in which the integration strategies rank first, followed by assimilation and separation, with marginalization as the least chosen (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012; Yoon et al. 2013). As Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2012) point out, the relationship between biculturalism (a strategy conceptually similar to integration; see also Boski, 2008) and adaptation reflects the ability of immigrants to be socially and cognitively flexible. Furthermore, it also helps them to buffer psychological and sociocultural maladjustment and minimise anxiety, depression, interpersonal conflicts or miscommunication.

Similar results have come from a cross-country study on young immigrants (Berry et al., 2006) in which integration was found to be the strategy adolescents most often adopted, for example, in the use of both languages and a balanced contact with their peers of both cultures. With this strategy, young immigrants achieved the best psychological (high self-esteem, satisfaction with life, few psychological problems) and sociocultural (high school adjustment, few behavioural problems) adaptation.

This pattern of positive correlation between integration and psychological and sociocultural adaptation has been only partially shared by other empirical studies (Dimitrova et al., 2016; Schotte, Stanat, & Edele, 2018). According to the integration paradox, some personal and contextual aspects may affect the relationship between integration and adaptation in psychological and sociocultural terms (Verkuyten, 2016). For instance, immigrants with a high educational level seem to be more keenly aware of the ethnic discrimination perpetuated by the host society, which may raise barriers to positive integration (Kunst & Sam, 2014) and in some cases result in poor psychological adaptation (for more detail, see de Vroome, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2014; Tolsma, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2012).

2.3 Acculturation in Second Generation Immigrants

With the recent growth of migration to and relocation in Western countries, scholars have begun to examine the acculturation of the children of these immigrants, the so-called *second generation* (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Since the pioneering work on the assimilation of young immigrants into US society during the 1990s (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes, 1996; Waldinger & Perlmann, 1998), the acculturation experience of a new generation of immigrants has attracted academic interest (see Brenick & Titzmann, 2015; Crul et al., 2012; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). The literature has focused on the way children adapt to Western society. For instance, empirical studies investigating school adjustment suggest that young immigrants now make up a relevant part of the social fabric of pluralistic societies (see Schachner et al., 2017). An early source of empirical evidence for the acculturation of young immigrants regards the role of generational status. Studies have compared first and second generation immigrants to delineate differences and similarities in their acculturation preferences (e.g., Abouguendia & Noels 2001; Tonsing, 2014; van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016) and outcomes (e.g., Sieberer, Maksimovic´, Ersöz, Machleidt, Ziegenbein, & Calliess, 2012; Alvarez Valdivia et al., 2015). and to differentiate the acculturation of first and second generations based on their migration experiences.

First generation immigrants grew up in a country where they were part of the majority. One of major challenges they met after migration was how to adapt to the new cultural setting where they were a minority (often derogated). Differently, second generation immigrants are not migrants *stricto sensu* because they were either born in or arrived young in the receiving country of their parents where they socialize with institutions (e.g., schools) and with native peers. These generational differences have led to the hypothesis of easier acculturation and adaptation for the second than for the first generation. Empirical findings partially support this acculturation pattern for second generations compared to first generation (see Portes,

1996). Studies have revealed different acculturation preferences by immigrant families, with parents more likely to maintain their heritage culture while their children more ready to assimilate the values of the receiving culture (e.g., Rumbaut, 2005; Shapiro, Douglas, de la Rocha, Radecki, Vu, & Dinh, 1999). The *acculturation gap* between parents and children (see Birman, 2006a; 2006b) is a potential source of conflict in family relationships (e.g., Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, & Mccabe, 2008). Other studies found contradictory results, with no significant differences in acculturation strategies between the two generations (Abouguendia & Noels 2001) or poorer psychological adaptation by young immigrants (Salas-Wright et al., 2014).

2.3.1 Defining Second Generation Immigrants

When studying second generation immigrants, a variety of situations need to be considered: some may have grown up in interethnic families or have arrived in the new country through family reunion at different ages of life, while others were born of immigrant parents in a Western country.

As Rumbaut (2004) points out, categorization into first and second generation requires at least information about the country of birth. When they were born abroad, age and date of arrival are used as criteria, while if they born in the receiving country, the country of birth of their mother and father is the principal criterion (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Within this frame, immigrants who are the first in their family to emigrate are identified as first generation. Similarly, children born in the host country are considered the second generation. This distinction between first and second generation does not take into account the various other intermediate situations in which the children born abroad arrived in different stages of their development. In this regard, Rumbaut (2004) demonstrated that the academic and occupational success for immigrants in the United States varied not only if born abroad (first

generation) or in the United States (second generation) but also based on their age when they arrived in the country. For example, immigrants who arrived in the United States during their adolescence were noted to have lower educational levels compared to other first and second generation immigrants. This implies that a general distinction between generational status based on place of birth alone may be an oversimplification. To solve this problem, Rumbaut (1997) proposed the 1.5 generation label to identify children who arrive in a new country in preadolescence (6-12 years old). They have already started school abroad and continue their education and socialization in the receiving country (see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). This classification postulates the existence of a continuum that can account for differences in educational and/or social contexts for immigrants who are born in the receiving country or arrive early in life. The label "second generation" is associated with a specific category of immigrant children. Later, Rumbaut (2004) added to the label "1.5 generation" the "1.25 generation" which includes adolescents who migrated at age 13-17 and the "1.75 generation" for children who migrated in early childhood (aged 0-6). To explain these classifications, Rumbaut (2004; p. 1167) defined immigrants under the 1.25 generation label as those "whose experiences and adaptive outcomes are hypothesized to be closer to the first generation of immigrant adults than to the native-born second generation", while the 1.75 generation was "almost entirely socialized in the destination country and are most similar to the native-born". This last statement has led some scholars to include the 1.75 generation of immigrants within the second generation (e.g., Creese, 2019; Fedi et al., 2019; Fernández-Reino & González-Ferrer, 2019; van Ours & Veenman, 2003; Rizzo, 2020, Rizzo et al., 2020).

The cut-off age at which to define generation 1.5 continues to be debated: some scholars define the 1.5 generation as children who arrive in the new country between age 5 and 12 years (e.g., Huer, Saenz, & Diem Doan, 2001) or between age 11 and 18 (e.g., Remennick, 2003), while others set the cut-off at arrival before age 10 (e.g., Hill, & Johnson, 2004) or

before age 13 or 15 or 18 (e.g., Bean, Swicegood, & Berg, 2000; Kim, Brenner, & Liang, 2003; Wildsmith, Gutmann, & Gratton, 2003). For the sake of brevity and in line with previous studies (e.g., Creese, 2019; Fedi et al., 2019; Fernández-Reino & González-Ferrer, 2019; van Ours & Veenman, 2003; Rizzo, 2020, Rizzo et al., 2020), the present study defines second generation as those immigrants born in the receiving country or arrived before age 6. Beyond the debate on the intergenerational cut-off age, there is general consensus that these young immigrants face diverse challenges during their acculturation. Some problems regard where they place themselves between their heritage culture and the mainstream culture. They are under pressure to maintain traditions, practices, and habits of their heritage culture, especially in the private sphere. Parents encourage their children to follow practices, such as speaking the language of origin or eating typical foods at home (Schwartz e al., 2013). Also, the parental desire to keep their children within the cultural fold may add to the worry that their children will assimilate into the mainstream culture (Schwartz et al., 2017). Outside the home, young immigrants find they have to adapt to the mainstream culture. Indeed, the host society expects them to relinquish their cultural heritage and become part of the dominant society (Birman et al., 2005). Under pressure to conform to the rules of the dominant society in the public sphere (e.g., school and workplace), they experience the contradictory situation of having to strike a balance in adopting both cultures (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). To capture their interaction with each cultural set, scholars have worked terminological clarification into the acculturation theory, which will be explained below.

2.3.2 Acculturation and Enculturation

As explained above (Berry, 1997), acculturation refers to both the maintenance of cultural heritage and the adoption of a new culture. Although this model adequately explains the acculturation experience of first generation immigrants, it may not be so accurate for second and subsequent generations (Kim & Abreu, 2001) and has been criticized for the use of the term "cultural maintenance", which is not considered appropriate for new generations because they are not as embedded in their heritage culture as their parents. A distinction has been proposed between acculturation and *enculturation* (Hakim-Larson & Menna, 2016; Kim Park, 2007; see also; Kim, Ahn, & Lam, 2009; Kim & Omizo, 2006). In detail, enculturation describes "the process of (re)learning and maintaining the norms of the indigenous culture" (Kim, et al., 2009, p. 27). In this vein, enculturation seems to explain the experience of second generations better than the classical acculturation theory does. Second generation immigrants socialize with their heritage and the culture of birth (Hakim-Larson & Menna, 2016). A recent meta-analysis has managed to keep these two orientations (acculturation and enculturation) distinct (see Yoon et al., 2013; 2020).

Having acknowledged this terminological clarification and to simplify the discourse, this work will use the term "acculturation" to refer to the orientation the culture in which they grew up (hereafter national culture) and to the heritage culture.

2.3.3 Segmented Assimilation Theory

As for first generation immigrants, acculturation of the second generation has been investigated through the two main perspectives: unidimensional and bidimensional. Beyond the classical assimilation theory in which acculturation proceeds as a linear process (see Gordon, 1964), Portes and Zhou (1993) developed the *segmented assimilation* theory to conceptualize the assimilation trajectories of young immigrants into American society. They

recognized the possibility for second generations to assimilate following different patterns that resulted from the “segmented” environment characterising the Unites States after enactment of the *Immigration* and Nationality *Act* of *1965*. Three paths have been delineated for these specific populations. Similar to the classical assimilation theory (see Gordon, 1978): in the first path, called *upward assimilation,* young immigrants reject their cultural origin to become part of a prosperous middle-class in American society; in the second path, or *downward assimilation*, young immigrants become separated from American society and enter the impoverished urban underclass; in the third path, the so-called *selective acculturation* (see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), young immigrants retain certain aspects of their heritage culture while assimilating some others of American society.

Studies applying the segmented assimilation theory have tested how each path corresponds to a specific outcome. This is illustrated by the relationship between members of a migrant family (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). When parents and children acculturate in similar ways, whether they maintain aspects of their heritage culture or adopt those of American society, *consonant acculturation* emerges and the second generation achieves *upward mobility* with parental support. If parents and children share some aspects of their acculturation experience, *selective acculturation* emerges and the second generation achieves *upward biculturalism* because parents and children gradually adapt together to American society while continuing to maintain ties with their ethnic community. Finally, *dissonant acculturation* occurs when the children's acculturative experience proceeds faster than that of their parents, creating family conflicts which result in *downward assimilation* and loss of parental support. Taken together, these findings highlight the fundamental role that the family plays in the acculturation of the second generation in American society.

The theoretical framework of segmented assimilation has garnered attention in the literature on second generation groups (e.g., Fernandez-Kelly & Schauffler, 1994; Haller, Portes, &

Lee, 2011; Hirschman, 2001; Neckerman, Carter, & Lee, 1999; Portes, 1996; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Rumbaut, 1994; Zhou, 1997; Zhou & Xiong, 2005) but also criticism and revision (for more details see Alba, 2005; Alba & Nee, 1997; Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997; Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, & Mollenkopf, 2010). Among the criticism and revisions, the ability of the theory to describe in detail a wide range of acculturation experiences in young immigrants is both a strength and a weakness. As Xie and Greenman explain (2005; p. 9), "while segmented assimilation theory provides an insightful and in some sense necessary perspective on the experiences of today's immigrants and their children, it also suffers from interpretational ambiguity, which results in operational imprecision".

Furthermore, the theory is considered too context-specific, with the majority of the studies focusing on the differences between ethnic groups only in the American context (for an exception, see Alba, 2005). In response to the recent flux of migration into Europe, scholars have tested the segmented assimilation theory and found unclear results (for details, see Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Thomson & Crul, 2007; Vermeulen, 2010). In order to overcome the theoretical and contextual limitations of the segmented assimilation theory, greater attention is placed on the acculturation studies of second generation immigrants according to the bidimensional model (Berry, 1997).

2.3.4 How and How Well Young Immigrants Adapt to Both Cultures

One of the first systematic empirical attempts to explain the acculturation process of young immigrants was carried out by Berry and colleagues (2006) in a comparative study involving 26 cultural groups and 13 countries. Based on the bidimensional model, the authors described how young immigrants adapted in terms of the four acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization) and tested the relevance of the construction of an identity profile, a task that poses adolescents with a major challenge during their

development. This focus on an identity profile is part of a debatable issue in the literature on the relation between acculturation and identity (Liebkind, 2001; Phinney et al., 2001). Generally speaking, acculturation and identity are considered quite similar constructs, but acculturation may also be conceptualized as a broader concept of identity (Verkuyten, 2014). This is further illustrated in the acculturation of young immigrants, where the simultaneous adaptation to two cultures involves the construction of a dual identity (ethnic and national; see Verkuyten & Yidliz, 2007). Accordingly, Berry and colleagues (2006) distinguished four identity profiles associated with specific acculturation strategies. In the *ethnic profile*, young immigrants adopt a separation strategy as a preference for ethnic identity, heritage language, and contact with co-ethnic peers, while in the *national profile* they prefer the assimilation strategy, with a strong national identity, a preference for the national language, and contact with autochthones. Unsurprisingly, the *integration profile* defines young immigrants who use the integration strategy as a way to achieve both ethnic and national identity, with no preference for language or contact with members of either cultural group. Finally, the *diffuse profile* defines the most uncertain profile for young immigrants who report a high proficiency in the ethnic language but a low ethnic identity. Likewise, they rarely use the national language and report low national identity and few peer relations. As they seem to alternately use assimilation, separation, and marginalization, it is difficult to determine which acculturation strategy they prefer.

These young immigrants preferred the integration identity profile to the ethnic profile. In addition, Berry and colleagues (2006) reported how well they adapt in psychological (life-satisfaction, self-esteem, psychological problems) and sociocultural (school adjustments, behavioural problems) terms. The study findings (see Berry, 1997) showed that the integration profile is better for both psychological and sociocultural adaptation by young immigrants, while the diffuse profile was associated with the worst adaptation strategy.

This study has two fundamental implications: it demonstrates the applicability of a bidimensional model to study the acculturation of second generation immigrants and it allows comparison of young immigrants in national contexts outside the United States. This latter aspect underlines the fact that acculturation for the second and the first generation (see the previous chapter) may vary depending on the national context of reference (see also Crul et al., 2012). In another study, Berry and Sabatier (2010) showed that the acculturation of second generations varied in Canada and France according to national immigration policies. Both countries are Western, democratic societies; Canada endorses a multicultural policy and France an assimilative policy (for more detail, see also Sabatier & Berry, 2008). As a consequence of these policies, young Canadian immigrants were more integrated than their French peers.

National immigrant policies influence how young immigrants perceive being treated differently because of their ethnic origins. This is a relevant factor in their acculturation. In general terms, discrimination is negatively associated with adoption of the mainstream culture and positively with maintenance of the heritage culture (e.g., Berry & Hou, 2017; Dimitrova, Aydinli, Chasiotis, Bender, & Van de Vijver, 2015; Robinson, 2009; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). In addition, through the lens of acculturative stress (Berry, 1997), empirical findings have shown that discrimination also produces deleterious acculturation outcomes in second generations, including psychological distress (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk, & Schmitz, 2003; Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004), low self-esteem (Verkuyten, 1998), and poor school adjustment (Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, & Warheit, 1995). The next chapter will discuss the role of perceived discrimination in acculturation of second generation immigrants and will explain how the discrimination that second generations perceive is tied to religious affiliation.

The negative role of perceived discrimination in the adaptation of second generations is part of the vast literature on their psycho-sociocultural adaptation. Most of the literature focuses on internal (e.g., depression, anxiety) and external (e.g., substance abuse, drop out) adjustment of young immigrants (for a review, see Dimitrova et al., 2016). Other studies have found positive patterns of adaptation for second generations, as illustrated in the immigrant paradox (Schwartz et al., 2010). Despite their low economic status (Sam et al., 2008), young immigrants appear better adapted, as measured by such indicators as low depressive symptoms (e.g. Slodnjak, Kos, & Yule, 2002) and low alcohol abuse (e.g., Amundsen, Rossow, & Skurtveit, 2005) compared to their native-born peers.

To summarize, the wide range of study findings for the acculturation and adaptation of second generation immigrants emphasizes the need to consider their experience differs from that of first generations and that different conditions may affect their acculturation orientations differently.

CHAPTER 3

3. Religion, Perceived Discrimination, and Flexibility in Existential Quest as Acculturation Conditions

Following the bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997) and the antecedents explained above (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006), this chapter will focus on the conditions for acculturation. To start, the relevance of studying religion in psychological and cross-cultural research will be discussed, then the relation between religion and culture will be used to explain how religion acts as a condition in the acculturation of immigrant groups. The focus will be directed on Muslim immigrants as they represent one of the largest religious minorities in Western countries. A part will be devoted to the ways Muslim second generations view Islam in their process of acculturation.

The second part of the chapter will review the psychological literature on perceived discrimination among Muslim immigrants, its role in their acculturation and how the perception of religious discrimination among Muslim second generations may affect their acculturation process.

Finally, a recent construct proposed as a potential acculturation condition - individual flexibility in existential quest - will be examined starting from an analysis of the origins of and the meanings attributed to this construct, followed by a discussion on its influence in the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations in particular.

3.1 Religion: a Multidimensional Construct

Religion is one of the fuzziest concepts in the social sciences. Numerous empirical studies in the psychological literature define religion and its components in various different ways (for a review, see Hill & Hood, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Woodhaed, 2011). Starting from the main assumption that religion involves the existence of a transcendent reality and that religiosity describes the degree to which people believe in a sacred side of life, psychological definitions has been organized through two perspectives: the *substantive* and the *functional* (Berger, 1974; for details, see Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). The substantive perspective stresses the importance of the sacred across religions and focuses on the thoughts, behaviours, and emotions that arise from a person's belief in a transcendent reality (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1975; Emmons, 1999). Within this perspective, religion may be viewed as a "system of beliefs in and response to the divine, including the sacred books, cultic rituals, and ethical practices of the adherents" (O'Collins & Farrugia, 1991, p. 203). The functional perspective takes into account the beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes that individuals use to deal with existential issues, such as death or life's meaning (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). In brief, religion becomes a "search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (Pargament, 1997, p. 32).

From these two perspectives, the debate in psychology is between those who conceive of religiosity or religiousness as a unidimensional construct and those who define it through different dimensions, forms, or components (Hill et al., 2000). The concept of religiosity as a unidimensional construct is evidenced by empirical results that show a general tendency of people to be religious or not according to church attendance and/or having a positive attitude toward religion (Bergan & McConatha, 2001; Tsang & McCullough, 2003). While the unidimensional perspective provides a parsimonious way to consider religiosity (Francis, Robbins, & Gibson, 2006; Lewis, Shevlin, McGuckin, & Navrátil, 2001; Schwartz &

Huismans, 1995), many scholars work within a multidimensional construct of religiosity (Hill & Hood, 1999; Hill, 2005; Woodhead, 2011) that describes how religious experience varies according to attitudes, practices or commitment (Hill, 2005). Diverse aspects have been treated to report the way people express their religiosity (see Hall, Meador, & Koenig, 2008; Hill & Hood, 1999). Sociologists of religion, for example, usually focus on three aspects to define the individual degree of religiosity: *practices* (observance of religious rules and rites); *beliefs* (knowledge and acceptance of religious doctrines); and *identifications* (attachment to one's religious identity; see Fetzer & Sooper, 2003; Lu & Gao, 2017; Voas, 2007). In the psychology of religion, other aspects regard attitudes, cognitions or identifications. Psychologists focus more on religious identification, viewing religion not only as a belief system but also as an indicator of group belonging (Abu-Rayya & Abu-Rayya, 2009; Davis & Kiang, 2016; Phalet, Fleischmann, & Hillekens, 2018; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). According to the Social Identity theory, which assumes the importance of "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership in a social group" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255), religion can be also conceptualized as an aspect of social identity. As Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman (2010, p. 67) explain, "religious identification offers a distinctive sacred worldview and eternal group membership, unmatched by identification with other social groups, and hence religiosity might be explained (at least partially) by the immense cognitive and emotional value that religious group membership provides".

Another important aspect in the psychological literature is the motivational drive that makes some people religious. Motivations can be divided into *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* (Allport & Ross, 1967; Cohen & Hill, 2007; for a review, see Donahue, 1985). The former are shared by people who experience religion as an ultimate end and a way of life. Extrinsic motivations for being religious may help people to feel part of a religious community. As Allport and Ross

state (1967, p. 434), intrinsic motivation leads people to "find their master motive in religion", while extrinsically motivated people "are disposed to use religion for their own ends".

In addition to religious motivations, Batson (1976) included a further religious dimension that characterises a critical and flexible individual attitude toward religious issues - *religious quest*, which is distinguished from religion *as end* (intrinsic) and religion *as means* (extrinsic). The religious quest concerns the way religious people confront such existential questions as the meaning of life and life after death. It comprises three distinct aspects: a readiness to face existential questions without reducing their complexity; a perception of self-criticism and religious doubts as a positive quality; an openness to change one's own religious beliefs (see Batson & Schoenrade, 1991a, 1991b; Batson, et al., 1993).

Among the various religious dimensions in the psychological literature, *religious fundamentalism* is explained as "the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity" (Altemeyer & Hunberger, 1992, p. 118). Despite their similarity, religious fundamentalism does not overlap with *religious orthodoxy*, which defines a staunch belief in religious content (Koopmans, 2015; Laythe, Finkel, Bringle, & Kirkpatrick, 2002). In addition, recent debate has expanded the distinction between religiousness and spirituality (Zinnbauer et al., 1997), in which spirituality is defined "as a personal or group search for the sacred" not tied to traditional religious texts (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005, p. 35).

There are many ways in which people can express their religiosity, regardless of their religious affiliation and cultural context (see Cohen & Hill, 2007; Koopmans, 2015, Saroglou, 2011). To account for the variety of religious expression, cross-cultural psychology defines the individual aspects that characterize a certain way of being religious (Piedmont, 2005). Personality traits and values are two predictors of religiosity across religions and

cultural contexts. Empirical findings reveal the influence of personality traits in the way people are religious or not (Abdel-Khalek, 2013; Emmons, 1999; Eysenck, 1998; Saroglou, & Fiasse, 2003; Maltby, 1999; Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013; Taylor & MacDonald, 1999). A meta-analysis showed that personality traits, such as *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness*, are positively associated with religious people, regardless of their religious faith or cultural context (Saroglou, 2009). Likewise, values may guide people to be more or less religious (Güngör, Fleischmann, & Phalet, 2011; Roccas, 2005; Saroglou & Dupuis, 2006; Saroglou & Muñoz-García, 2008). Following Schwartz's model of human values (1992), religious people across various faiths (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Judaism) and cultural contexts gave the same importance to *tradition* and *conformity* values. This reflects a preference many religious people have to maintain social order through a *Conservative* dimension over the *Openness to change* (hedonism, self-direction, and stimulation values; see Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004).

Beyond the influence of personality traits and values in the way of being religious, studies have also demonstrated that religious people tend to adopt more prosocial behaviours (Preston, Salomon, & Ritter, 2014; Oviedo, 2016) and to enjoy positive mental health (Hayward & Krause, 2014; Koenig & Larson, 2001; Ventis 1995) more than non-religious people.

In psychology, the relevance of common dimensions and common points shared by different religions has led scholars to develop multidimensional models of religiosity that allow for comparison of different religions and contexts. One of the major approaches will be discussed below (Saroglou, 2011).

3.1.1 A Model of the Big Four Religious Dimensions

The big four religious dimensions model identifies universal religious components (Saroglou, 2011). Starting from a review of psychological and sociological religious dimensions, Saroglou stated that the individual degree of religiosity is rooted in four religious components: beliefs, rituals/emotions, moral rules, and community/group. The four components correspond to four psychological dimensions, each reflecting a psychological function. The dimension of *believing* refers to cognitive function (looking for meaning and truth), *bonding* refers to emotional function (experiencing self-transcendent emotions), *behaving* concerns moral function (exerting self-control to behave morally), and *belonging* is about social function (being part of a trans-historical group that consolidates solidifies collective self-esteem and ingroup identification; Saroglou, 2011).

The believing dimension includes "a set of some or many beliefs relative to what many people consider as being an (external) transcendence" (Saroglou, 2011, p. 1323). Although religious people recognize this transcendent reality in several ways, it can generally be considered a universal religious dimension. As an emotional dimension, bonding reflects the personal connection that people experience through religion as they follow rituals in both private (e.g., personal prayer) and public (e.g., ceremonies). Despite the infinite number of rituals that characterize religions, the emotional bond that people develop with a transcendent reality forms a common religious dimension. The behaving dimension describes the religious perspective by which people distinguish between right and wrong. In this regard, religious people usually follow moral standards, such as altruism, respect for others or humility. Furthermore, religion dictates behaviours that are strictly forbidden out of respect for the divinity. The final dimension, belonging, underscores the importance for religious people to feel part of a religious group (see Ysseldyk et al., 2010). As Saroglou affirmed (2011, p.

1327) “religious groups, communities, and traditions constitute just one of many possibilities people have to satisfy their need to belong, hold, and profit from a social identity”.

Through these four basic religious components, Saroglou describes the universalities shared by religions and cultures and reports that the co-existence of these components can help believers to find a full religious experience. Should one of these four components exceed the others, however, religion may become dysfunctional for people. For example, *dogmatism* at the individual level, i.e., when people place too much importance on religious beliefs, which falls within the dimension of believing. Likewise, prejudicial attitudes towards other religious groups could result from individual overinvestment in the dimension of belonging.

Furthermore, the preference for two religious dimensions to the detriment of others is synthesized through different religious typologies. For example, *spirituality* is a combination of the believing and the bonding dimensions, while an *intrinsic religion* is a mixture of believing and behaving (for more detail, see Saroglou, 2011).

To summarize, the model offers a way to understand religiosity as a general attitude defined through specific religious dimensions. It comprises four psychological functions that can be defined as universal across religions (cognitive, emotional, moral, social). This may help scholars to identify what is common and what is different between religions and cultural contexts, as demonstrated in cross-cultural studies (Dimitrova & del Carmen Domínguez Espinosa, 2017; Kumar, Jain, & Saini, 2020; Saroglou et al., 2020).

3.2 Religion and Culture

Religion and its dimensions are strictly intertwined with cultural life (for more detail, see Tarakeshwar, Stanton, & Pargament, 2003; Saroglou & Cohen, 2011). Culture is a shared system of knowledge, languages, norms, and values that modulate human behaviours (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958; see also Hofstede, 2001); except for its sacred role, religion is "essentially indistinguishable from definitions of culture more broadly" (Cohen, 2009, p. 196).

Saroglou and Cohen (2011, 2013) identified four ways in which culture and religion are related. First, religion contributes to defining cultural groups, for example, Islam in the Arab world (see also Cohen, 2009). Second, the social dimension of religion, such as public celebrations, includes cultural features that are recognised as having a religious expression distinct from other cultural elements (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011). Third, the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocally influential, as religion influences certain aspects of culture that are not purely religion (and *vice-versa*). Finally, religion itself is a form of culture because it includes key aspects of culture, such as shared values, principles, symbols, and habits (see also Gattino et al., 2016; Geertz, 1973). Religion can contribute to defining the cultural whole, as well as other aspects of society such as ethnicity (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011). Ethnicity leads people "to form different groups on the basis of descent and corresponding physical characteristics, language, geographical proximity, and often religion" (Saroglou & Cohen, 2013, p. 340). As reported in empirical studies, the relationship between religion and ethnicity range from no relationship to strong interconnection (Calvillo & Bailey, 2015; Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006; for a review, see Hammond & Werner, 1993), including the relationship between religious and ethnic identity (Belot, 2005; Oppong, 2013). The relationship between religion and ethnicity is particularly interesting in studies on immigrants of minority religions in Western countries (Chafetz & Ebaugh, 2000; Kivisto,

2014; Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011). While religious identification may become a protective factor for adaptation and foster a sense of community with co-religious people in some cases, in others it becomes problematic (see Foner & Alba, 2008). Among the various minority religions of immigrants in Western countries, Islam has attracted the most attention in the psychological literature (for studies not addressing Islam, see Kim, Smith, & Kang, 2015; Lu, Marks, & Apavaloiae, 2012; Nguyen, Bellehumeur, & Malette, 2018).

3.2.1 Muslim Immigrants in Western Societies

According recent estimates, the number of Muslim immigrants in Western countries has increased over the last three decades, though the proportion is quite small compared to the overall number of Muslims in the world (Lipka, 2017). Scholars have directed much attention to the impact of Islam on the social fabric of Christian Western societies. Like other religions, Islam (in all its denominations, such as Sunnis and Shiites) guides people in their search to find meaning and to give meaning to their life (Izetbegović, 1993), influencing every aspect of the lives of its followers, including the education of children and the shaping of social relationships (Ajrouch, 2000).

Islamic Values and Practices. Among the unifying features within Islam, the *five pillars* are: faith in one God, or *Allah*, and in his prophet Muhammed; prayer five times a day, or *Salah*, at dawn, at noon, in the afternoon, after sunset, and after dark; alms for the poor, both voluntary charity and charity prescribed by law, or *Zakat*; fasting for one month, or *Ramadan*, from dawn to dusk; pilgrimage to the Makkah at least once in a lifetime (see also Abuznaid, 2006). Furthermore, Muslims celebrate two festivals: *Eid-Al-Fitr* is celebrated at the end of *Ramadan*; and *Eid-Al-Adha*, the feast of sacrifice, is celebrated after the end of pilgrimage to Makkah (see also Ali, Liu, & Humedian, 2004).

In addition to these five pillars, other values and practices are transmitted by the Islamic family and community as expressions of religious adherence (see Hodge, 2002). Islam defines the way believers ought to live in accordance with moral duties and ethical norms, as do other monotheistic religions such as Christianity and Judaism. Equality between people, importance of honesty, respect for others (especially elders), benevolence, and mutual support are just some examples of moral obligation in Islam. Furthermore, Islam supports the success of the group over the individual and the development of a sense of community, following a collectivistic cultural perspective different from the more individualistic culture typical of Western societies (see Hofstede, 2001). For Muslims, individual freedom may be partially limited for the well-being of the community. At the same time, the community strengthens the individual, as laid out in the *Ummah* (for more detail, see Denny, 1975; Karim, 2008).

Among the well-known practices that characterize Islam are the prohibition of eating pork meat or the use of meat not slaughtered according to Islamic rules, or *Halal* (see Kwon, 2015). In addition, the use of alcohol and mind-altering drugs is forbidden. Also mandatory is ablution before each of the five daily prayers or otherwise risk rendering the prayer useless (Hodge, 2002).

Another value common in Islam is modesty in sex and clothing. Although the two values are expressed differently in accordance with local cultural norms, Muslims overall agree on their importance. With regard to modesty in sex, some families believe that young people should not socialize with the opposite sex and that boys and girls should attend separate classes after kindergarten, while other families allow supervised interactions (Hodge, 2002). Closely related to sexual modesty, Islam encourages marriage between young couples. While men are allowed to marry women of other monotheist religions, women are forbidden to do so (Ali et al., 2004). In some families, marriage is prearranged (for more detail, see Welchman, 2007).

Modesty in public attire is a more matter concerning Muslim women than men. Based on how certain verses in the Koran are interpreted, some Islamic cultures prescribe that women cover themselves completely, while others allow more freedom of choice about how women dress in public (Al-Romi, 2000). Most Muslim women wear a headscarf or *Hijab*. When worn by Muslim women residing in Western countries, the headscarf arouses contrasting opinions. While many consider such a practice a symbol of woman's submission to male dominance, which sharply clashes with Western values of equality between the sexes, democracy, and personal freedom (Saroglou, Lamkaddem, van Pachterbeke, & Buxant, 2009), others have found that Muslim women wear the veil out of free choice (see Maes, Stevens & Verkuyten, 2013; Strabac, Aalberg, Jenssen & Valenta, 2016; Tariq & Syed, 2018; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). For example, some studies showed that the veil may represent for women both a symbol of belonging to a religious community (e.g., Ajrouch, 2007, Menin, 2011) and reaffirmation of Islamic identity (e.g., Brünig & Flesichmann, 2015; Rizzo, 2020; Traversa, 2012), while others reported that the veil represents a political sign of opposition to the objectification of women in secular societies (e.g., Reece, 1996; Selby, 2014).

3.3 Religion and Acculturation in Muslim Immigrants Living in Western Countries

Islam is not only a set of religious practices but also defines the societal rules that help people to find meaning in their existence (Hodge, 2002). Such a close interconnection between religion and society that occur in those places where Islam is the mainstream religion does not "fit" with the conception of religion in Western society (Ammerman, 2003; Duderija, 2007). Acceptance of secularization in Western societies is one of the main religious differences in beliefs and rituals between Islam and Christianity. The secularization of societies implies a separation between a public secular sphere and a private religious one. In this sense, for Muslim immigrants who grew up in a country where religion encompasses the whole sphere of life, this secular approach is difficult to understand (Hodge, 2002). As said, Muslim immigrants adhere to collective values that differ from Western individualistic views of the search for autonomy and individual success over the group (Hodge, 2002; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). This is further illustrated in a cross-cultural research that showed the desire of Muslim immigrant parents in Germany and the Netherlands to transmit collectivistic values to their children (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001). Furthermore, the interest of scholars in Islamic minorities has increased after the terrorist event of September 11, 2001 (Foner & Alba, 2008). After this event, the majority attitudes of Western people towards Muslims became increasingly hostile in growing anti-Islamic sentiment, so-called *Islamophobia* (Sheridan, 2006). Public opinion labelled Islam as a religion incompatible with Western cultural norms and values (Kunst, Sam., & Ulleberg, 2013), and considered it as a barrier to the integration of Muslim minorities (Foner & Alba, 2008).

In such a hostile Western context, Muslim immigrants have had to cope not only with their ethnic and national identification but also with their religious identification (Verkuyten, 2014). Muslim immigrants consider their religious identification more relevant than their ethnic identification (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). In other words, the meaning that

immigrants attribute to their ethnic belonging often overlaps with the meaning they attribute to their being Muslim (Rizzo et al., 2020; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). Studies performed in the United States (for a review of Muslim Arab Americans, see Amer & Awad, 2016) and in Western Europe (for a review, see Aitchison, Hopkins, & Kwan, 2008) have found that Muslim immigrants place more importance on their religious than on their ethnic identity.

According to the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), a strong religious identity leads Muslim immigrants to positive outcomes, such as receiving social support from co-religious people, finding a system of meaning-making, and maintaining a cultural continuity (Yssedlyk et al., 2010). Furthermore, when perceived ethnic discrimination is at stake, both ethnic and religious identities may lead to a rejection of identification with the receiving society, as demonstrated by a study on Turkish-Dutch Muslim immigrants (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; see also Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). Furthermore, identity shaping may be extended to the broader acculturation process (see Liebkind, 2001). Specifically, as Verkuyten states (2014, p. 102), "a changing sense of ethnic identity and a developing sense of host national identity can be considered central aspects of the acculturation process". Because the overlap between ethnic and religious identification, and the role the latter plays as a marker of religious belonging, especially among Muslims (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), psychological studies have investigated the role of Islam in acculturation (for a review on Muslim immigrants, see Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet, & Maliepaard, 2013). According to the bidimensional model (Berry, 1997), the acculturation framework offers the structure within which to investigate how Muslim immigrants approach their heritage and mainstream cultures as they negotiate their Islamic identification.

Although psychological studies on the relationship between acculturation and religion have remained overlooked (for some examples of studies not involving Muslim immigrants, see Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Galyapina, Lebedeva, & van de Vijver, 2018; Ghorpade, Lackritz,

& Singh, 2006; Jankowski, Meca, Lui, & Zamboanga, 2020; Pinheiro Rocha, Gamst, Meyers, Der-Karabetian, & Magina, 2018; Safdar, Goh, & Choubak, 2020), most have investigated the acculturation experience of Muslim immigrants (Abu-Rayya & White, 2010; Asvat & Malcarne, 2008; Faragallah, Schumm, & Webb, 1997; Friedman & Saroglou, 2010; Gattino et al., 2016; Güngör 2007; Hindriks, Verkuyten, & Coenders, 2015; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007). Empirical findings showed an overall negative relationship between religious identification and adherence to mainstream culture and a positive relationship with maintenance of the heritage culture (Güngör 2007; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007). For example, a study of Muslim Norwegian-Pakistani immigrants showed that religious identity influenced the acculturation experience and reinforced maintenance of the heritage culture but not adoption of the mainstream culture (Kunst, Sadeghi, Tahir, Sam, & Thomsen, 2016). The positive relationship between adherence to Islam and maintenance of the heritage culture may be explained as an attempt by Muslim immigrants to protect their cultural traditions in response to a Western context hostile toward Islam (Kunst & Sam, 2014; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Friedman and Saroglou (2010) found in a sample of Muslim immigrants in Belgium that the negative relationship between religion and mainstream culture was mediated by the perception of the cultural gap between their heritage and mainstream culture.

Other dimensions besides the role of religious identification in the acculturation experience of immigrants are the idea that religion is a multidimensional construct that includes beliefs, practices, and emotions (see Saroglou, 2011). To date, little systematic research has focused on the impact of each religious dimension on acculturation. In a study on intercultural religious transmission among Muslim immigrants in Belgium, three religious dimensions were investigated (beliefs, practices, identifications; Güngör et al., 2011). The results pinpointed the specific contribution of each religious dimension to the acculturation experience. In detail, beliefs and practices were negatively associated with adoption of the

mainstream culture because "through similarity (e.g., religious dress codes) and synchronicity (e.g., daily prayers or breaking the fast), religion powerfully shapes shared social realities within religious communities" (Güngör et al., 2011, p. 1357). In other words, Muslim immigrants approached religion in cognitive and behavioural terms (Saroglou, 2011) to keep themselves close to a religion threatened by a predominantly Roman Catholic and Western secularized society. In this vein, an Italian study on the role of the religious dimension in a sample of Muslim immigrants (Gattino et al., 2016) showed that only religious identification influenced maintenance of the heritage culture, while the stronger the beliefs and practices in Islam, the lower the adherence to the mainstream culture.

All of these studies refer to first generation Muslim immigrants, i.e., immigrants who grew up in a country where Islam is the majority religion. The increase in the number of Western-born children of Muslim immigrant parents, the so-called second generation, has attracted the interest of scholars to investigate the attitudes of young Muslims toward their religion in a predominantly Roman Catholic and secularized context (Duderjia, 2007).

3.3.1 The Acculturation of Muslim Second Generation

As explained in the previous chapter, second generation immigrants face cultural challenges different from their parents or first generation immigrants. Moreover, when religion holds a salient place in the heritage culture, as in Islam, second generations have to manage additional issues (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). Muslim second generation are under double pressure. First, like other second generations, young Muslims receive the cross-generational transmission of the heritage culture by their family and ethnic community, which includes a religious education. This reflects both a desire and a worry of their parents, who want to fulfil their moral and religious duty and pass Islamic principles on to their children; yet they are concerned that because of assimilation into a secular society, their

children will lose interest in religion (Chafetz & Ebaugh, 2000). Second, young Muslims feel more pressure than their parents to assimilate into the mainstream society (Kunst & Sam, 2013). In a study carried out in Germany, Kunst and Sam (2014) showed that native people were less tolerant toward maintenance of the heritage culture by second (versus first) generations. The authors explained this result with reference to the widespread idea that because second generations were born and raised in the country, they ought to assimilate and fully participate in societal life.

This double pressure on Muslim second generations has led scholars to focus on the way young Muslims view Islam in their beliefs, practices, and identification and to some extent how Islam affects their experience of acculturation. According to the paradigm of secularization of subsequent immigrant generations (Sheikh, 2007), young Muslims are expected to be less religious than the first generation and more open to rejecting Islam because they live in a secular environment (Norris & Inglehart 2011; Lesthaeghe, & Neels, 2000). Empirical findings have generally confirmed this pattern of *religious decline* (Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijsberts 2010) in Muslim second generations with regard to religious beliefs, practices, and identifications, especially among the better educated (e.g., van Tubergen, 2007; Phalet, Gijsberts, & Hagendoorn, 2008). Unsurprisingly, this pattern of religious decline seems to facilitate assimilation of young Muslims into mainstream society as a way to feel part of the larger society (Alba, 2005; Connor, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Sheikh, 2007). Recent studies have found relatively high levels of religious engagement by Muslim second generations; however, this was probably due to parental transmission of religious practices during childhood (Güngör et al., 2011; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2013) and to the presence of a local ethnoreligious context (Smits, Ruiter, & van Tubergen 2010).

Contrary to the secularization hypothesis, the *religious vitality* hypothesis (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012) postulates a religious reaffirmation that leads to the construction of second generation Islamic identity in practices and respect for traditions. To test this hypothesis, Maliepaard and Lubbers (2013) compared the degree of religiosity of parents and children among Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in the Netherlands and found that the transmission of religious values by parents fostered religious reaffirmation in their children. In detail, Muslim parents who regularly attend the mosque influenced their children in following the same practice. Similarly, Güngör and colleagues (2011) investigated whether religious reaffirmation in young Turkish and Moroccan Muslims depended on their attending Koran lessons during their childhood and mosque attendance by their parents. They defined the religiosity of young Muslims as a multidimensional construct, including beliefs, dietary practices, worship, and identification as specific religious dimensions (see also Saroglou, 2011). They found a peculiar association between religious transmission by parents and religious dimensions. For example, the father's regular mosque attendance increased the children's religious identification, dietary practice, and worship but did not affect their orthodox beliefs. This study is particularly relevant because it is one of the few to investigate the relationship between religiosity (as a multidimensional construct) and acculturation in second generation immigrants. According to the assumption of overlapping between ethnic and religious identification in young Muslims, the authors found a strong relationship between religious identification in second generations and their acculturation orientation toward their heritage culture. In addition, religion was found to be independent of acculturation orientations toward the mainstream culture (Güngör et al., 2011; see also Berry et al., 2006). These findings shed light on the negotiation that Muslim immigrants do to find a place for their cultural heritage system within secularized Western society (Saroglou &

Mathijsen, 2007), especially as regards their religious identity or belonging (Peek, 2005; Sartawi & Sammut, 2012).

Empirical evidence suggests that Muslim second generations conceptualize their religious identity not only by refusing or reaffirming their degree of religiosity but rather by viewing religion more in spiritual terms than in behavioural practices (Skandrani, Taïeb, & Moro, 2012). This form of renewed religiosity, or *symbolic religiosity* (Gans, 1994), may be considered as a way to cope with the double acculturation pressures second generations are under. In a comparative study across seven cities in four European countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden; Phalet, Fleischmann, & Stojčić, 2012) a common private way of being Muslim was noted: a symbolic religiosity with strong religious belonging and low adherence to typical Islamic practices and behaviours (e.g., fasting or *Ramadan*; eating meat *Halal*; praying five times a day; regular mosque attendance). In addition, the study investigated whether the degree of religiosity measured in terms of identification, worship, dietary practice, and public attitudes (such as wearing the veil for women) constituted a barrier to full participation in the mainstream society. The results suggested that Turkish immigrants self-identifying as Muslims are fully integrated into mainstream society. According to the bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997), the findings implied more interest from Muslim second generation than first generation in engaging with the mainstream culture (see also van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016), while maintaining ties with religious traditions (especially in their religious identification), which reinforced maintenance of their heritage culture.

To sum up, studies to date have shown that religiosity constitutes a relevant condition for acculturation in the experience of Muslim second generations. While robust associations between religion and maintenance of the heritage culture are found, the relationship with the mainstream culture is less clear. Empirical findings consistently highlight a negative

relationship between religiosity and acculturation toward the mainstream culture (as a result of religious decline) yet also find that religiosity is decoupled from mainstream culture orientations, which implies the desire of second generations to feel part of the larger society, regardless of their desire to follow religious traditions (see Phalet et al., 2018; Rizzo et al., 2020). Furthermore, the perception of widespread anti-Islamic sentiment in the country of residence plays a key role in the expression of an alternative form of religious identity in young Muslims - *reactive religiosity* (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012). Reactive religiosity encourages young Muslims to reinforce their religious identity to the detriment of the national identity and the mainstream culture.

3.4 Discrimination and its Forms

The wave of negative attitudes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism toward minority groups is a clear indicator of the tension Western societies experience in accepting the diversity of individuals and groups. Discrimination by the majority is when individuals are treated unfairly because of their diversity in ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability status or religion (see Al Ramiah, Hewstone, Dovidio, & Penner, 2010). In a hostile context, being part of a minority group limits the opportunities for inclusion in the larger society.

Regardless of the minority, discrimination can take various forms (see Scott, 2017). In general, the literature distinguishes between *explicit* (or direct) and *implicit* (or indirect) discrimination. Explicit discrimination against minority people is expressed through behaviours, including verbal attack, abuse, avoidance, exclusion, and violence. In 1954, Allport identified different degrees of aggression toward members of stigmatized racial groups: *verbal antagonism*, *avoidance*, *segregation*, *physical attack*, and *extermination*. These degrees illustrate an increasingly negative attitude of the majority towards minority groups, with a shift from disparaging comments to concrete social exclusion. Explicit discrimination may be manifest at the *individual* and the *structural* level (Pincus, 1996). Individual discrimination occurs when a person denigrates another on the basis of his/her belonging to an ethnic group, while structural (or institutional) discrimination refers to government policies in matters of minority inclusion (Pincus, 1996). An example of structural discrimination is the role that governments play in accepting immigrants into the social fabric. For example, when a State has no multicultural policy for the integration of immigrants (see MIPEX; Huddleston et al., 2015), the majority may feel legitimized to raise barriers against the inclusion of such minorities.

Differently, instances of implicit discrimination are when subtle discriminant attitudes are expressed against minority members in daily life. Empirical studies have reported the

existence of an unconscious form of discrimination known as *microaggression* (for a review, see Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2014). Sue and colleagues (2007; p. 273) defined microaggression toward ethnic minorities as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group”. The authors proposed a taxonomy of this concept categorized in: *microassaults* (e.g., considering all Arabs as Muslims); *microinsults* (e.g., assuming that Muslim women wearing the veil are subordinate to male dominance); and *microinvalidations* (e.g., expecting that foreigners do not speak the national language; for more detail on these three categories, see Lilienfeld, 2017; Mercer, Zeigler-Hill, Wallace, & Hayes, 2011; Nadal, 2011).

Both explicit and implicit forms of discrimination stigmatize minority groups. The following section describes from the perspective of the minority group their perception of discrimination for belonging to a minority and its effects (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999).

3.4.1 The Perceived Discrimination of Minorities in Western Societies

Perceived discrimination refers to an individual’s awareness of being treated differently because he/she belongs to a stigmatized group (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). Disadvantaged members have less access to societal resources than the majority: limited chances of employment in the labour market and less opportunity in education or use of health care services (Taylor, Wright, & Porter, 1994). This perception of discrimination, regardless whether the result of objective or subjective experience (see Paradies, 2006), leads to negative outcomes (e.g., reduced general well-being) in stigmatized individuals (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Empirical studies have investigated the impact of individual perceived discrimination on health indicators. For example, perceived discrimination was associated

with health problems such as high blood pressure, breast cancer or obesity (for more detail, see Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Psychological studies investigating the detrimental effect of perceived discrimination on mental health indicators have revealed lower self-esteem, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction (see Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003).

Among meta-analyses of studies on the relationship between perceived discrimination and health (see also Krieger, 1999), Pascoe and Richman (2009) reviewed more than 100 empirical studies involving diverse minority groups to explain a common pattern of perceived discrimination in mental and physical health. A direct impact of perceived discrimination on health problems was found for indicators of physical (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, nausea) and mental health (e.g., depressive symptoms, reduced self-esteem and happiness, stress). The authors highlighted other indicators beyond this direct effect that mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and health. For instance, a strong link emerged between perceived discrimination and individual responses to stressful situations, which generate low self-esteem and high levels of anger or depression: people who regularly perceive themselves as being discriminated become more sensitive to stressful situations and suffer from chronic health problems in extreme cases. Furthermore, the authors delineated another mediation path for the link between perceived discrimination and health behaviours. Negative behaviours such as drug abuse, tobacco smoking or alcohol consumptions are negative coping strategies minority people adopt in response to perceived discrimination. These unhealthy behaviours lead to other destructive behaviours. In contrast, active coping behaviours, such as talking with friends and family about discrimination, might play a protective role against the detrimental effects of perceived discrimination.

Consistent with this meta-analysis, Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, and Garcia (2014) conducted two meta-analyses on the impact of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem, depression, anxiety, psychological distress, life satisfaction).

They employed several moderators to characterize the main influence of perceived discrimination on psychological well-being, such as age or group status (see Schmitt et al., 2014). The results showed a relevant component in the conceptualization of perceived discrimination: the difference between *personal* and *group* perceived discrimination. This distinction has been theorized by Crosby (1984) in a study that showed that women were more aware than men about the sex discrimination women perceive on a group rather than an individual basis. Later, other scholars refined this distinction between personal and group-based perceived discrimination (e.g., Barry & Grilo, 2003; Bourguignon, Seron, Yzerbyt, & Herman, 2006; Taylor et al., 1994): individuals attribute personal discrimination to themselves, whereas group discrimination is the extent to which people perceive their group as being stigmatized.

According to the theory of personal/group discrepancy (Taylor et al., 1994), people believe that their group tends to be the object of discrimination rather than they as single individuals. Two explanations can be given for this discrepancy. The *cognitive* explanation posits that the way people perceive discrimination reflects the way they generally process information. In other words, people apply different standards when differentiating between personal and group-based perceived discrimination (Crosby, Clayton, Alksnis, & Hemker, 1986). Differently, a *motivational* explanation assumes that people have reasons for the way they perceive personal or group discrimination. For example, people may prefer minimizing their personal experience of discrimination and defer attention to group discrimination, thus avoiding higher negative consequence for their own well-being (Bourguignon et al., 2006). This motivational explanation is supported in a meta-analysis by Schmitt and colleagues (2014) that included the moderator role of personal/group discrepancy in the relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological well-being. They found that perceived personal discrimination was associated with more negative outcomes for psychological well-

being than perceived group discrimination.

These meta-analyses (Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Schmitt et al., 2014; see also Krieger, 1999) were conducted on studies involving various minority groups. Most of the psychological studies focused on the impact of perceived ethnic (or racial) discrimination on ethnic minority health. This was further illustrated in literature reviews on the association between perceived discrimination and health in racial groups (e.g., African-Americans; Williams & Williams-Morris; 2000; Latino immigrants; Lee & Ahn, 2012) or across different ethnic or racial groups (Bastos, Celeste, Faerstein, & Barros, 2010; Kressin, Raymond, & Manze, 2008; Paradies, 2006; Paradies et al., 2015). Overall, the results confirmed the effect of perceived discrimination on physical and mental health indicators, with few differences across ethnic groups (for more detail, see De Freitas et al., 2018; Paradies et al., 2015). The effects of perceived ethnic discrimination on health indicators led scholars to investigate the relevance of discrimination for daily life (Barry & Grilo, 2003). The perception of being treated differently because of their ethnic origin may influence the way immigrants defend their heritage culture (including traditions, customs, habits) and the way they adhere to mainstream culture. In brief, perceived ethnic discrimination may affect the acculturation of immigrants (see Carter, Lau, Johnson, & Kirkinis, 2017).

3.5 Perceived Discrimination, Ethnic Identity, and Acculturation

To become fully integrated, immigrants need to assimilate the mainstream culture and they also have to find ways to maintain their heritage culture (Sam & Berry, 2010). Retaining a link with cultural traditions helps create the cultural continuity the new generations need and fosters a sense of rootedness in the heritage culture (Zolfaghari, Möllering, Clark, & Dietz, 2016). Shaping of an ethnic identity is key to maintenance of the heritage culture and to creation of a national identity (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The formation of a double identity (ethnic and national) is a part of a broader acculturation process (see Liebkind, 2001; Verkuyten, 2014). Empirical studies have demonstrated that ethnic identity influences well-being by raising self-esteem (for details, see Smith & Silva, 2011). A logical extension of this empirical evidence is that ethnic discrimination perpetuated by the majority can influence how immigrants shape their ethnic identity (Carter et al., 2017). Immigrants living in a context hostile to multicultural inclusion may feel their ethnic identity threatened by their perceived ethnic discrimination (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). In response to threats to their identity, immigrants adopt different coping strategies (for more details, see Major & O'Brien, 2004).

Two models that illustrate the way immigrants negotiate their ethnic and national identity in response to ethnic discrimination are: the *Rejection-Identification-Model* (RIM; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999) and the *Rejection-Disidentification-Model* (RDIM; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). The RIM starts from the assumption that perceived ethnic discrimination causes immigrants to reduce their well-being. The social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) defines the positive implications for individuals to feel themselves part of a social group. As a coping strategy, immigrants increase their ethnic identification in response to perceived ethnic discrimination. The RIM suggests that perceived discrimination "can indirectly enhance well-being by encouraging minority group identification, while at the

same time having a direct negative effect" (Branscombe et al., 1999; p.143). The RIM is generally accepted in the literature on ethnic groups (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten, 2012; Romero & Roberts, 2003). Though some studies criticized the directionality assumed in the RIM between perceived ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification (for more detail, see Major et al., 2002), longitudinal studies have confirmed the causality of such a relationship (see Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher, & Haslam, 2012).

Differently, the RDIM explores the way immigrants view national identification in response to perceived ethnic discrimination (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). According to this model, when immigrants perceive a high level of ethnic discrimination, they tend to display a pattern of national dis-identification. To confirm this observation, the RIM and the RDIM were compared in a longitudinal study on Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland. The results supported only the RDIM. In detail, perceived ethnic discrimination affected neither directly nor indirectly (via ethnic identification) the psychological well-being of immigrants: the greater the perceived ethnic discrimination, the greater the rejection of national identity. Furthermore, such national dis-identification increased immigrant hostility towards the majority. Other empirical evidence supports the RDIM in different intergroup contexts (e.g., Badea, Jetten, Iyer, & Er-Rafiy, 2011; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Mähönen, & Liebkind, 2012), as well as in stigmatized groups (see the studies on perceived religious identification; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012).

The RDIM explains the effect of perceived ethnic discrimination on both ethnic and national identification, and it seems to conform with the bidimensional model of acculturation that identifies two independent attitudes towards the heritage and the mainstream culture. As explained in chapter two, the acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Berry, 2001) includes perceived ethnic discrimination as an acculturation condition that affects the acculturation orientations of ethnic groups. As seen for acculturation outcomes,

the way immigrants adopt the mainstream culture and maintain the heritage culture can influence their psychological and sociocultural adaptation (see Castro, 2003). To date, few studies have investigated the moderating role of acculturation orientation (and its strategies) in the relation between perceived ethnic discrimination and psychological well-being (for exceptions, see Carter et al., 2017; Te Lindert, Korzilius, van de Vijver, Kroon, & Arends-Tóth, 2008; Noh & Kaspar 2003). A study by Aichberger and colleagues (2015) explored in Turkish-German women the effect of their perceived personal ethnic discrimination on psychological well-being via the acculturation strategies they pursued. The results showed that psychological distress occurred as a consequence of perceived ethnic discrimination only when the women chose separation as their acculturation strategy (i.e., maintaining the heritage culture and refusing the mainstream culture).

A closer look at the relationship between perceived ethnic discrimination and acculturation orientations reveals that immigrants who perceive a high level of ethnic discrimination usually select a separation or a marginalization strategy according to the RDIM (see Sam & Berry, 2010). In other words, immigrants strengthen the maintenance of their heritage culture and reject the mainstream culture because of perceived ethnic discrimination (e.g., Cuadrado, García-Ael, Molero, Recio, & Pérez-Garín, 2018; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Tonsing, Tse, & Tonsing, 2016; Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2014; van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). The relationship between perceived discrimination and acculturation strategies can be explained through the *reciprocity* phenomenon observed in intergroup attitudes (see Berry et al., 2006) which "refers to a reflection of the attitude held by one group towards the other, by the second group towards the first" (Kalin & Berry, 1996, p. 255). When immigrants perceive themselves discriminated by the majority, they distance themselves from the mainstream culture and adopt the heritage culture. A reverse relationship is also possible, however, as shown by some empirical evidence for an influence of

acculturation in perceived ethnic discrimination (e.g., Hashemi, Marzban, Sebar, & Harris, 2019). For example, Barry and Grilo (2003) described an inverse relationship in which acculturation strategies affected the individual degree of perceived discrimination and not *vice-versa*. In a sample of East Asian immigrants, they found that assimilation and integration strategies negatively affected personal perceived ethnic discrimination, whereas adopting separation and marginalization strategies led to an oppose positive pattern. Though these results seem to indicate an influence of acculturation on the perception of discrimination, there is consensus in the literature on the superiority of the inverse pattern in which perceived ethnic discrimination is an acculturation condition, consistent with the acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006).

Among the moderating factors that can influence perceived ethnic discrimination in the acculturation process, there is some evidence for the role of age and length of stay in the receiving society. Rejection of the mainstream culture and reinforcement of the heritage culture can be noted for young immigrants or second generations. In this vein, Berry and colleagues (2006) found that young immigrants across several countries preferred the integration or the assimilation strategy in response to a low perception of ethnic discrimination, whereas when confronted with high levels of perceived discrimination they selected a separation or a marginalization strategy. Accordingly, several studies have found that perceived ethnic discrimination influences the acculturation of young immigrants (e.g., Baldwin-White, Kiehne, Umaña-Taylor, & Marsiglia, 2017; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2003; Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, & Asendorpf, 2018; Oppedal, Røysamb, & Sam, 2004; Robinson, 2009; Sabatier & Berry, 2008; Verkuyten & Brug, 2002). Some differences have been reported in studies that compared first and second generation immigrants. According to Rumbaut (1994), young immigrants who closely associate with native peers and attend school or other contexts report more experience of ethnic discrimination than their parents

(see also Tonsing, 2014). Based on the RIM, young immigrants can reinforce their ethnic identification to protect their psychological well-being (Branscombe et al., 1999). Alternatively, they report negative outcomes in response to perceived ethic discrimination, such as increasing stress or antisocial behaviours (see Ward et al., 2001).

Finally, because ethnic minorities are also members of religious minority groups, it is relevant to examine the role of perceived religious discrimination in acculturation and religious identity.

3.6 The Effect of Perceived Religious Discrimination on Religious Identity and Acculturation: the Case of Muslim Immigrants

Religious diversity has become a topic for public opinion in European countries with a sizeable presence of immigrant groups and where governments have sought to restrict religious freedom outside officially recognized or majority faiths. Inevitably, these restrictions are perceived by immigrant groups as a form of religious discrimination and an escalation of violence and harassment (Pew Research Center, 2019). Islam ranks among the most contested religions in Western countries. The stigmatization perpetuated by predominantly Roman Catholic and secularized societies has fomented widespread *Islamophobia* in Europe, i.e., a social fear of Muslims (for more details, see Allen, 2010). In response to anti-Islamic feelings, Muslim immigrants perceive themselves discriminated more because of their religion than their ethnic identity (Kunst et al., 2013; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The relevance of Islam in the public debate in Western societies has interested scholars in the way Muslim immigrants define their religious affiliation in response to religious discrimination (see Perocco, 2018; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). There is empirical evidence for the effect of perceived religious discrimination on religious identification,

including its effect on the broader acculturation process (for exceptions regarding other stigmatized religions, see Fernandez & Loukas, 2014; Nakash, Nagar, Shoshani, Zubida, & Harper, 2012).

According to the bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997), living in a country that generally discriminates against Muslims can have two outcomes: the Muslim immigrants can either assimilate the mainstream culture and renounce their Islamic beliefs, practices, and identification, or they can reinforce their ties to the heritage culture, becoming more religious and reject the mainstream culture. Empirical studies have not found much evidence for assimilation in the mainstream culture but rather much more evidence for a separation of Muslim immigrants from the mainstream culture as way to strengthen their Islamic identification (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). This is consistent with both the RIM and the RDIM, and constitutes a form of *reactive religiosity* (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Maliepaard, Gijsberts, & Phalet, 2015). In detail, Muslim immigrants tend to strengthen their Muslim identity when they feel discriminated because of their religion; this pattern is similar to the RIM developed by Branscombe and colleagues (1999; see above). The alternative RDIM (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009) produced similar findings that stronger Islamic identification is associated with weaker national identity. In a study of Turkish-Dutch Muslim immigrants, Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) tested the impact of perceived discrimination because of ethnic and of religious identification. Starting from the assumption that ethnic and religious identification are intertwined in Muslims, the authors stated that perceived religious discrimination increased Muslim and Turkish identification, which led to a national dis-identification. Furthermore, these results underscored the predominance of Muslim identification over ethnic identity. Consistent with the acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006), other cross-country studies found a negative relationship between religious and national identity (in a broad sense, the mainstream orientation) due to religious

discrimination of ethnic minority groups (Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012; Kunst et al., 2013; Maliepaard & Verkuyten, 2018; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012; Onishi & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2003). However, some studies found an inverse relationship between perceived religious discrimination and acculturation. Testing the hypothesis by Barry and Grilo (2003), Awad (2010) investigated the effects of acculturation orientations and religiosity in relation to the degree of perceived religious discrimination in a sample of Muslim Arab and Middle Eastern American immigrants. The results showed that the interaction between high maintenance of the heritage culture and religiosity increased the perceived religious discrimination in these Muslim immigrants (for similar results, see also Ghaffari & Çiftçi, 2010).

Regardless of whether the perceived religious discrimination is a condition or an outcome of acculturation, there is consensus in the literature that Muslim immigrants tend to reject the mainstream culture in modern societies and to reinforce their adherence to religious and cultural origins in response to a perception of religious discrimination. A more diversified pattern emerges for second than for first generation immigrants in their religious acculturation wherever religious stigma is perceived, according to the acculturation framework in which perceived discrimination is defined as an acculturation condition (see Güngor et al., 2013; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012).

3.6.1 A Focus on the Perceived Religious Discrimination in Muslim Second Generation Immigrants

Growing up in a Western context since childhood, second generation immigrants live different experiences than their parents (Duderija, 2007). Second generation immigrants are more in contact with the national environment than the first generation, especially during their formative years (see Sirin & Fine, 2008). In social contexts that emphasize religious and ethnic differences, however, young Muslim immigrants cannot feel "completely at home" because they are attributed the same religious stereotypes as those attributed to their parents, such as the idea that young girls are forced by Muslim men to wear a veil (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). Furthermore, Muslim second generations feel under more assimilative pressure than first generation, which Kunst and Sam (2014) explain as a lack of tolerance toward these young people to maintain their Islamic faith. In this complex situation, young Muslims perceive more religious discrimination than their parents in some cases, as reported in an Italian study that compared Muslim first and second generations (Giuliani et al., 2018). The authors found that religious discrimination could be a stronger obstacle to the integration of young Muslims than for Muslim first generation. Muslim second generation report lower levels of psychological well-being than Muslim first generation immigrants (see Kunst & Sam, 2013; Yazdiha, 2019). Moreover, young Muslims who attained a high educational level in Western schools were more aware of the different facets of religious discrimination (including subtle discrimination) and better able to recognise discriminatory episodes than their parents (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). Consistent with the integration paradox, highly educated young Muslims are better able to see signs of religious discrimination in their life, which has a detrimental effect on their acculturation into the mainstream society (e.g., De Vroome et al., 2014). This paradox shows that young Muslims engage in a reactive religiosity

in response to perceived religious discrimination, as their parents do (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Güngor et al., 2013).

In this vein, young Muslims take up a form of religious identification as a reactive coping strategy against perceived religious discrimination (consistent with the RIM). Reactive religiosity in response to religious discrimination may also reflect national dis-identification (as explained in the RDIM). A European study carried out in five major cities in three countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden), and involving two Muslim ethnic minorities (Turks and Moroccans), investigated how Muslim second generations viewed their national, ethnic, and religious identity based on their perception of being victims of religious discrimination. (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016). Except for differences in ethnic origin (Turks and Moroccans) and sociopolitical context (Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden), the three countries shared some common data. Consistent with the RDIM, the results showed that when Muslim second generation perceived a high level of religious discrimination, they strengthened their religious identity and reduced their national identity in a pattern of "identity conflict". Conversely, when they perceived less religious discrimination, religious and national identity became more compatible.

Empirical evidence has highlighted social implications of the relationship between perceived religious discrimination and identification in young Muslims. Fleischmann, Phalet, and Klein (2011) demonstrated in a large comparative European study on Turkish and Moroccans Muslim second generation that high levels of perceived religious discrimination increased religious identification which, in turn, activated "politicization" for Islam. The authors showed that young Muslims who perceived discrimination because of their faith tended to advocate for public recognition of Islam in Western societies and for the civil rights of Islamic communities against unfair treatment by the majority. This active political participation is an example of the desire of second generation to connect two cultural sets to

achieve complete integration, that of their heritage religious culture with that of the national culture. In the public opinion, however, the civic activism of these young Muslims is sometimes confused with religious radicalization (see Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Though perceived religious discrimination and identity issues may lead to radicalization, it remains an extreme case (for more details, see Robinson, Gardee, Chaudhry, & Collins, 2017).

In addition to the social implications of perceived religious discrimination and heightened religious identification, personal characteristics can moderate the link between religious discrimination and identity (including acculturation). Studies on gender differences in defining the weight that perceived religious discrimination might have on religious identification and on the well-being of young Muslim men and women (Peek, 2005; Rizzo, 2020) have addressed the issue of young and adult women wearing the veil (Strabac et al., 2016). Young women may perceive more religious discrimination than young men (see Jasperse et al., 2012). For example, Maes and colleagues (2013) showed that high levels of perceived religious discrimination interacting with strong religious identification was associated with more behavioural problems involving young Muslim women than men.

Although these internal differences indicate a general trend of national dis-identification (RDIM) or separation from the mainstream culture in Muslim second generation, what emerges is a greater desire to integrate into their bicultural context of life than their parents. Accordingly, van Heelsum and Koomen (2016) compared first and second generation Muslim Moroccan immigrants in a large European sample based on ethnic, religious, and national identification. They explored the influence of ascription on these identities, intended as the perception that Muslims have of how they are portrayed in public opinion (e.g., in newspapers and other media). While similar results emerged between Muslim first and second generations for ethnic and religious identification in response to ascription, young Muslims presented a unique pattern regarding their national identification. Muslim second

generation seemed to be less influenced by the ascription than the first generation on national identity, demonstrating that they are "less likely to let a negative context weaken their national identification" (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016; p. 289). Consistent with this pattern, having native friends can help young Muslims to reinforce their national identity and integrate their way of being Muslim into a Western context of life, as shown in a recent comparative study involving young Muslims from five Western countries (Belgium, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden; see Fleischmann & Phalet, 2017).

To summarize, the literature documents that the perceived religious discrimination reported by Muslim second generation may reinforce their heritage culture, as happens for the first generation. Also, being Muslim may complicate their adoption of the mainstream culture, depending on the degree of discrimination they experience in their life and on their capacity to connect two different cultural worlds (for a review, see Phalet et al., 2018).

3.7 The Flexibility in Existential Quest

Human beings differ from other living beings in the possession of self-awareness and the ability to reflect on one's existence. The uniquely human ability to form attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about existential issues is universal across cultures, religions, ideologies, and historical periods. According to the *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 2012), treating the existential aspects of life, such as the origin and finality of the world or the awareness of death, can help people control their behaviour and act autonomously in their environment and may also promote individual psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; 2004). By focusing on existential issues, people may be able to live according to their needs, coherent with their values, and enter authentic positive relationships, all aspects that fall under the category of *eudemonic* well-being, different from the more immediate pleasure-principle typical of *hedonic* well-being (see Ryff, 2014). Asking oneself existential questions can also produce a state of uncertainty that leads to a form of existential anxiety (see Tillich, 1952).

In general, the literature on existential psychology has outlined the main existential issues that can universally define individual internal conflicts, concerning *death*, *isolation*, *identity*, *freedom*, and *meaning* (see Koole, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2006). According to the paradigm of *mortality salience* (Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg, 2003), people oscillate between their desire to continue living and their awareness that life ends, i.e., the realization that death is inevitable. In addition, people must confront the issue of isolation from others or of being alone in the world, especially after going through a separation or experiencing ostracism (Pinel, Long, Landau, & Pyszczynski, 2004). Another individual existential issue is a personal identity crisis. Although a common experience of adolescence (Erikson, 1968), adults may not be able to create a coherent sense of self when they live some unexpected life experiences (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Beyond the issues of identity, freedom of choice poses the dilemma of selecting one possibility from among many (Kokkoris, Baumeister, &

Kühnen, 2019), combined with the search for meaning in a world that appears to be full of random events (Baumann & Kuhl, 2002).

Such existential issues often arise after a critical life event, such as the death of a loved one or the loss of a job or the news announcement of a natural disaster or a terroristic attack (as illustrated in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks; see Pyszczynski et al., 2003). However, studies in *Experimental Existential Psychology* (XXP; for details, see Greenberg, Koole, & Pyszczynski, 2004) demonstrated that people may activate a reflection on existential issues also during their normal functioning and not only as a consequence of traumatic or stressful situations. In other words, people vary their predisposition to deal with existential issues. The above described individual predisposition may also be understood as a form of *existential intelligence*. In 1999, Gardner incorporated this form of intelligence in his theory of *multiple intelligences*, defining it as the "capacity to locate oneself with respect to the farthest infinite no less than the infinitesimal – and the related capacity respect to the most existential aspects of the human condition" (Gardner, 1999, p. 60). This new form of intelligence supported the idea that people may be more or less apt to consider the above-mentioned existential issues.

In this frame, the concept of *existential quest* may be defined as one possible application of existential intelligence because it addresses individual flexibility in treating core and universal existential issues, i.e., the "readiness to engage in the process of questioning one's opinion regarding such existential issues" (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012; p. 2). The construct of existential quest comprises an individual uncertainty related to existential issues, a positive valorisation of doubt in response to these existential concerns, and a possibility to change one's perspectives over time, or an openness to change (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012). The concept is inspired by the *religious quest* concept (Batson, 1976) in which a religious orientation leads people to reconsider their religious beliefs. The religious quest is a relevant

concept in the psychological studies investigating the human moral and existential domain. Indeed, numerous psychological studies have conceptualized existential issues in a religious and a spiritual perspective (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). People usually understand the meaning of life and death through sacred aspects of life that are typically embedded in a religious point of view (Pargament, Magyar-Russell & Murray-Swank, 2005). The sacred includes beliefs in a transcendent reality and the existence of divine that provide an ultimate meaning of life and guide people in their search for a purpose in life (Pargament, 1997). However, it must be noted that the association between sacred and existential issues is not coherent for people who do not accept any religious notions in their life (Pedersen et al., 2018). In fact, according to la Cour and Hvidt (2010), people may reflect on the meaning of life also in a broad secular perspective that does not fit with the existence of a transcendent reality. Consequent to the decline in religion in modern society (la Cour & Hvidt, 2010; Yu, Reimer, Lee, Snijder, & Lee, 2017), people may see in science or political ideology the same role as religious beliefs (Farias, Newheiser, Kahane, & de Toledo, 2013). In a such frame, is evident that the religious quest cannot taken into account all the aspects connected to the reflection about existence. Thus, this idea has led to the construction of the concept of existential quest. As van Pachtereke and colleagues (2012) pointed out, the concept of an existential quest overcomes the limitation of religious quest orientation because it defines an individual's readiness to tackle existential issues irrespective of religiosity. They stated that the existential quest was similar to the construct of religious quest but that the two do not overlap since a religious quest is undertaken by religious people, whereas an existential quest can refer to anyone whether religious or not (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012).

As an extension of the religious quest, the existential quest holds similar but not overlapping relationship with other constructs. On the continuum of rigidity/flexibility in the existential quest, van Pachterbeke and colleagues (2012) showed that existential questers, like religious

questers (Batson & Schoenrade 1991a; 1991b), tended to show higher flexibility than non-questers, being self-critical and open toward rethinking their existential beliefs (see also Tapia Valladares, Rojas Carvajal, & Villalobos García, 2013). Moreover, they stated that the existential quest construct did not correspond to other constructs of open-mindedness. In detail, they found a positive relationship between high levels of existential quest and high levels of the *need for cognition*, which refers to the individual enjoyment of the response of cognitive efforts (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Furthermore, the authors reported a similarity between existential quest and other constructs concerning individual close-mindedness, such as the *need for cognitive closure* (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994) and *dogmatism* (Rokeach, 1954). However, the significant negative relation between individual close-mindedness and existential quest did not imply an overlap. They went on to explain that the existential quest focuses on the degree of flexibility in existential questions, whereas the need for cognitive closure and dogmatism were more general orientations that individuals adopt to gain certainty and avoid ambiguity. The authors also found some internal differences in flexibility in existential issues on the base of personal characteristics. For example, an age effect in which young people may be more open than adults to engage in existential concerns. Several studies investigated the way people approach existential beliefs (Greenberg et al., 2004; Schmitt, Behner, Montada, Müller, & Müller-Fohrbrodt, 2000; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006; Thorne, 1973; Weems, Costa, Dehon, & Berman, 2004) but none of these or other constructs were found comparable with the existential quest. Perhaps the most similar concept of existential quest is *existential thinking* (Allan & Shearer, 2012), which enquires into the frequency of dealing with existential issues and differs from the existential quest that describes an individual's readiness to engage with such issues.

Despite its novelty, existential quest has been applied in several fields of studies. For instance, Deak and Saroglou (2015; 2017) investigated in two studies the role of existential

quest when people confront moral dilemmas, such as abortion, child euthanasia, gay adoption, and suicide. The results showed that existential questers tolerated these moral issues more than those who were not flexible in dealing with existential questions. Another study showed that high levels of flexibility in existential quest helped people enhance their psychological well-being, especially their eudemonic well-being (Joshanloo, 2020). In addition, flexibility in existential issues varies with the cultural context where people live. A study showed that people living in individualistic cultures were existentially more flexible than those living in a collectivistic culture (Sullivan, 2013). A recent study tested the influence of flexibility in existential quest in prejudicial attitudes (Uzarevic, Saroglou, & Muñoz-García, 2019). The authors found that low levels of flexibility led atheists to hold negative attitudes toward religious people, showing their inability to accept people who have a religion.

These studies have some important implications for the current research. For example, the study conducted by Sullivan (2013) suggests that existential quest is a concept strictly related to the cultural context where people live. Indeed, the relevance of the context will be treated in the present research through the comparison of young people with an heritage culture different from the one where they live. Furthermore, Uzarevic and colleagues (2019) showed that the existential quest may orient some social attitudes, such as the prejudice of atheists towards religious people. In a similar way, the flexibility in existential quest may affect another relevant social attitude, such as the acculturation process of young people with an heritage culture different from the mainstream one.

3.8 Flexibility in Existential Quest and Acculturation: Bridging the Gap

While the relationship between existential quest and acculturation has not yet been tested, some empirical evidence suggests a significant pattern may exist. As mentioned above, there is a close link between the constructs of flexibility in existential quest and cognitive closure (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012). Within the framework of acculturation, comprising acculturation conditions, several individual aspects for immigrants can be grouped in self-oriented and other-oriented factors (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006).

As regards the self-oriented factors, some theories seek to explain the role of a general cognitive style as a possible acculturation condition for immigrants (Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). The degree of cognitive rigidity/flexibility that immigrants express may influence their acculturation process toward either maintenance of their heritage culture or adoption of the mainstream culture. Empirical evidence suggests an impact of the need for cognitive closure on acculturation processes. Kosic and colleagues (2004) showed that the acculturation orientations of European immigrants vary with different levels of cognitive closure. They stated that immigrants with high levels of a need for cognitive closure tend to reinforce their heritage culture and to refuse the mainstream culture, ensuing in separation from the receiving society. Conversely, immigrants with low levels of a need for cognitive closure were inclined to adopt the mainstream culture, reflecting an integrative pattern of acculturation. Furthermore, such a relationship between the need for cognitive closure and acculturation orientations may result in different acculturation outcomes (Kosic et al., 2004). High levels of a need for cognitive closure are associated with low levels of psychological adaptation. Kashima and Loh (2006) also found an impact of the need for cognitive closure on acculturation orientations and outcomes in an international sample of young immigrants. The results confirmed that young, cognitively rigid immigrants had difficulty in adapting to a bicultural context, with low adherence to the mainstream culture

and stressful experiences. Conversely, young immigrants with low levels of a need for cognitive closure were found to be open and flexible toward the mainstream culture, with better psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Furthermore, a relevant relationship emerged between the acculturation process and the construct of cognitive flexibility (Martin & Rubin, 1995). For example, Christmas and Barker (2014) compared the impact of cognitive flexibility on the acculturation attitudes of first and second generation Latino immigrants. The results showed that the greater the level of cognitive flexibility, the richer the bicultural profile in both first and second generation immigrants. In other words, high levels of cognitive flexibility were correlated with maintenance of the heritage culture and adoption of the mainstream culture. Moreover, second generation immigrants reported higher levels of cognitive flexibility than first generation. The authors attributed this difference to the fact that the second generation immigrants were more exposed to the reception context than the first generation. This would make second generations more open to other cultures than the first generation. (see also van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). The influence of cognitive flexibility on acculturation in second generation immigrants is consistent with previous studies on Asian American students conducted by Kim and Omizo (2005; 2006; 2010) who found that young immigrants with high levels of cognitive flexibility tended to adopt the mainstream culture more than those with low levels of cognitive flexibility.

These studies highlight two implications for a possible relationship between flexibility in existential quest and acculturation, especially in young immigrants. First, since cognitive rigidity/flexibility is one of the acculturation conditions, a logical extension is that flexibility in existential quest may also affect the acculturation process given the conceptual similarities between flexibility and the need for cognitive closure (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012). Second, the possible relationship between existential quest and acculturation seems to align with the

acculturation of second generations, as demonstrated in studies that reported differences between first and second generation immigrants in acculturation and cognitive flexibility (Christmas & Barker, 2014) and cognitive rigidity (Kashima & Loh, 2006).

In addition to the theoretical argument for a pattern between existential quest and acculturation, the literature reports that cognitive rigidity/flexibility as acculturation conditions is consistent with the *acculturation complexity model* developed by Tadmor and Tetlock (2006). They suggested that immigrants who want to successfully integrate in a bicultural context experience more complex cultural dissonances than those who prefer to adopt only the mainstream culture (assimilation) or maintain the heritage culture (separation). In other words, immigrants need to be open and flexible "to justify their conduct to representative members of both cultural groups" (Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009; p. 107). Furthermore, the acculturation complexity model assumes that integrative complexity increases with the distance that immigrants perceive between the heritage and the mainstream culture. In detail, when immigrants perceive a bicultural conflict, they can activate two possible responses: either simplify the cultural question by relinquishing one of the two cultures through increased mental cognitive closure or hold these two different cultures together in response to high cognitive flexibility. In this regard, it seems reasonable to include flexibility in existential quest in the acculturation complexity model. Indeed, existential flexibility concerns an individual's predisposition to hold different perspectives on existential issues and that it may be coherent with a cultural choice due to a bicultural conflict. Furthermore, as described in the acculturation complexity model (Tadmor et al., 2009), the need to be open toward other perspectives varies according to the distance that immigrants perceive between cultural sets. An example of this cultural distance for Muslim immigrants in Western countries is that they have to include a religion stigmatized by public opinion (Foner & Alba, 2008; Stubbs & Sallee, 2013). Saroglou and Mathijsen (2007) found a significant

relationship between religious quest and acculturation in young Muslim immigrants in Belgium. They noted a positive relationship between high levels of religious quest and adoption of the Belgian culture and negative relationship with maintenance of the heritage culture. These results describe a complex situation for young Muslims, or second generations, because they need to deeply reflect on existential issues. These young people have to integrate their religious and national belonging and find a way to integrate their bicultural features into their daily lives.

CHAPTER 4.

4. Acculturation of Muslim Second Generation Immigrants: an Empirical Research in Two European Countries

4.1 Rationale of the Study and Hypotheses

The aim of the present study was to investigate the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations in two different European contexts. Berry's bidimensional model (1997) posits that acculturation is a process of cultural change in behaviours, attitudes, and identities for immigrants who live between two cultural sets: one being the heritage culture and the other being the mainstream culture. Acculturation has been studied in relation to a wide variety of contextual and personal dimensions and several ethnic groups, as explained in the framework of acculturation (chapter two). To date, few studies have included a religious dimension in the acculturation process (for a review, see Güngor et al., 2013).

Religion is a form of culture because the shared symbols, habits, and practices enable people to find meaning in life, mutual support, and cultural continuity between generations (Saroglou & Cohen, 2011; 2013; Ysseldik et al., 2010). As such, religion is a potential acculturation condition to be included into the acculturation of immigrant groups. Empirical evidence for the religious dimension in acculturation is still scarce; what evidence there is regards mostly Muslim immigrants (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010; Gattino et al., 2016; Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007). The reason for so much attention to Muslims is that such immigrants living in Europe are among the most problematic religious minorities; in general, public opinion in Western society attributes negative connotations to Islam (Foner & Alba, 2008). In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States and other Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe, anti-Islamic sentiment of natives in Europe has increased in the last decades and complicated the integration process of Muslim immigrants.

Moreover, similar to other ethnic and religious minorities, the acculturation experiences between Muslims who arrived in Western society (i.e., first generation) and their children (i.e., second generation) differ (Berry et al., 2006). While acculturation of the first generation of Muslim immigrants has long been debated (Abu-Rayya & White, 2010; Gattino et al., 2016; Friedman & Saroglou, 2010), the process in Muslim second generations is less studied (for some exceptions, see Berry et al., 2006; Güngör et al., 2011). Most studies concerning Muslim second generations explored the relevance of national, ethnic and religious identity more in depth than the general process of cultural change that they face (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Rizzo et al., 2020; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016).

Following the bidimensional model of acculturation, this study seeks to fill the theoretical gap between how young Muslim second generations approach both their heritage and mainstream culture. Analysis of acculturation through two independent orientations (heritage and mainstream) can produce more consistent results than by studying it according to the unidimensional model (see chapter one). Based on the theoretical and methodological elements at the interface of the two orientations (Rudmin, 2010; Tahir, Kunst, & Sam, 2019), we will examine the influence of the two main acculturation orientations (heritage and mainstream) may interact and not how they interact via the four acculturation strategies (integration, separation, assimilation, marginalization)

As mentioned (see chapter two), both contextual and personal aspects can influence acculturation in Muslim second generations. Recent empirical studies have shown that the social context, i.e., the European country of residence, can influence the identity formation of young Muslims (for example, Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; 2017). Based on this evidence, the present study investigates whether the experience of acculturation by second generation Muslims differs between two European countries, Italy and Belgium. The hypothesis was that the relationships would be similar in a context where the experiences of second generation

Muslims are recent and where there is a strong Roman Catholic tradition (Italy) and in a context with a longer tradition of Muslim immigration and a comparatively less strong Roman Catholic tradition (Belgium).

The contextual and individual factors composing three conditions for acculturation will be discussed.

The contextual and individual factors composing three conditions for acculturation will be discussed. The first condition concerns the degree of religiosity of young Muslims. Contrary to the hypothesis for religious decline among young Muslim immigrants, the literature has demonstrated a pattern of religious reaffirmation by these young Muslims (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012; Flesichmann & Phalet, 2012; Maliepaard et al., 2010). Religiosity is a relevant issue for the acculturation of second generations, as well as for their parents (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). In the overlap between culture and religion that characterizes the faith (Saroglou & Cohen, 2013), young Muslims who follow the precepts of Islam tend to maintain their heritage culture. Few studies to date have investigated the influence of Islam on acculturation through religious dimensions (Gattino et al., 2016; Güngor et al., 2011) and none on Muslim second generations. Taking a multidimensional approach to religiosity (Saroglou, 2011), the present study will explore the religious dimensions in the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations.

Closely related to the first condition, the second is a situational factor, namely, the perception that young Muslims have of being discriminated because of their religion and the impact this has on their acculturation. Previous studies have examined perceived religious discrimination in first and second generation Muslim immigrants, with a focus on the relationship between perceived religious discrimination and identity formation (Maliepaard & Verkuyten, 2018; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). According to the Rejection Disidentification Model (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009), young Muslims who perceive themselves discriminated because of their

religious belonging tend to refuse their national identification. In the acculturation process, young Muslims are likely to reaffirm their heritage culture while distancing themselves from the mainstream culture. The present study will make a distinction between personal and group religious discrimination (Bourguignon et al., 2006), with a focus on personal discrimination, which influences the individual acculturation experience of young Muslims.

Finally, the third acculturation condition regards a relationship that the literature has not yet investigated: the ways that individual flexibility in existential quest influence the acculturation experience of Muslim second generations. Such flexibility resides in the readiness of an individual to engage with existential issues and the predisposition that may help young immigrants to reconcile their heritage culture with the mainstream culture. According to the acculturation complexity model (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006), it is likely that young immigrants who are highly flexible with regard to existential issues will tend to integrate diverse cultural and religious perspectives, resulting in a more favourable attitude towards the mainstream culture.

To summarize, the main aim of this study is to investigate acculturation of second generation Muslims in two different European contexts (Italy and Belgium) by exploring the influence of religiosity (and its dimensions), perceived personal religious discrimination, and flexibility in existential quest in acculturation orientations (heritage and mainstream). Since there are no validated instruments that assess existential questioning in the Italian context, the secondary aim was to evaluate the psychometric properties of a measure of this construct in an Italian sample.

The hypotheses, controlled for socio-demographic variables (gender, age, educational level), are:

Hypothesis 1: All four religious dimensions (believing, behaving, bonding, belonging) will be positively associated with maintenance of the heritage culture (Güngor et al., 2011).

Hypothesis 2: In line with previous studies (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), there will be a positive association between perceived personal religious discrimination and maintenance of the heritage culture. Conversely, there will be a negative association between perceived personal religious discrimination and adoption of the mainstream culture (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive association between flexibility in existential quest and adoption of the mainstream culture.

4.2 The Contexts of Study

4.2.1 The Italian Context

Though Italy has received major migration flows over the past 25 years, immigration still carries negative connotations in the public opinion. And while legislation and policies have been implemented, none fosters the inclusion of cultural minorities (Allievi, 2014). Living in Italy without a valid residence permit is a crime. A recent Decree Law proposed by former Interior Minister Matteo Salvini was designed to impede the uptake of migrants and permanence in Italy. Acquiring Italian citizenship is difficult for immigrants who bear the stigma of foreignness that crosses generations. Current legislation regulating Italian citizenship is based on the concept of *ius sanguinis*, by which an individual automatically acquires Italian citizenship born of at least one Italian parent. Individuals born of immigrant parents and residing in Italy (i.e., second generation) have one year after their 18th birthday to apply for Italian citizenship. After this period, the law defines them non-nationals residing in Italy. Another way to Italian citizenship is through marriage to an Italian citizen after a period of two years of legal marriage. Another way still is to apply for citizenship after having lived and worked regularly in Italy for at least 4 (for European Union citizens) or 10 (for non-

European Union citizens) years. None of these procedures are easy and the time to acquisition can vary from case to case. What this means is that the estimated immigrant population in Italy is inaccurate, as many do not have citizenship because the procedure works against them.

To date, there are an estimated 5,255,503 foreigners residing legally in Italy, or about 8.7% of the population (Italian National Institute of Statistics [ISTAT], 2018). Within this variegated population, the ethnic origin can be roughly divided in European and non-European. The three largest groups by country of origin is Romania (1,206,938), Albania (441,027), and Morocco (422,980). The growing proportion of new generations of immigrants is seen in the number of minors from immigrant families attending Italian schools (ISTAT, 2018). Albanians and Moroccans have been settled for longer than other groups and make up the most numerous second generation, especially in northern Italy. For example, according to the most recent estimates, of the total number of Moroccans legally resident in Italy 27.4% are minors and 40.6% are young adults under age 30 years.

Moreover, the proportion of Muslims is higher among Moroccans and Albanians in part (see Allievi, 2003), though there are also Muslim immigrants who come to Italy from countries outside Europe, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Egypt. According to the most recent estimates (see Ciocca, 2019), there are around 1,580,000 Muslims among foreigners in Italy (the total population including Italian Muslims is about 2,600,000), making Islam is the second most widely professed religion in Italy after Roman Catholicism (80% of Italians; Pew Research Center, 2018). The presence of Muslims in Italy has been stable in recent years. Although Italy has no state religion, the majority of Italians identify as Roman Catholics, while 15% state no religious affiliation (atheists and agnostics). Also, the majority believes in a sort of Islamic invasion that threatens the foundations of Italian culture (Pew Research Center, 2018). A recent survey highlighted that Italians who identify as Christians

hold a more negative opinion of Muslims and nationalist feelings than people without a religious affiliation (Pew Research Center, 2018). An analysis of *tweets* on social media by the Italian observatory on intolerance (VoxDiritti, 2019) confirmed this trend for Italy: 6.9% in negative comments towards Muslim immigrants over the past year, usually associated with terrorism and radicalization. The last report on *Islamophobia* also portrayed Italy as a country with spreading nationalism and intolerance towards religious minorities and episodes of violence and discrimination in public places and the workplace (Alietti & Padovan, 2018). Furthermore, the increase in political campaigns supported mainly by conservative parties united under the slogan "Italians First" has hindered the implementation of inclusive policies. This social context complicates the recognition of Islam as a religious confession in Italy (Alietti & Padovan, 2018). In this regard, Muslims may find it difficult to practice their religion: there are only ten "official" mosques in Italy. Over 100 cultural and Islamic associations have had to adapt private premises into a place of worship. The three best known Islamic associations in Italy are the UCOI (Union of Italian Islamic Communties), the CoReIs (Italian Islamic Religious Community), and the GMI (Young Muslims of Italy).

Finally, while there is no national legislation limiting Islamic practices, norms forbidding *Halal* (slaughter) or wearing the *hijab* (veil), the lack of explicit recognition of Islam by the Italian State, and attempts by local communities to restrict Islamic practices have precluded full inclusion of Islam in the social fabric.

4.2.2 The Belgian Context

Belgium has a long history of immigration that started with programs of labour migration in the 1960s. Many Turks and Moroccans arrived in Belgium at that time through bilateral agreements between the countries. These guest workers were mainly men who lived for one or two years in Belgium to earn money for their family who remained behind in the country

of origin. As the years went by, this form of temporary migration became more permanent migration, and many immigrants had their family join them or formed a new one in Belgium (for more details, see Reniers, 1999).

Today, Belgium has a heterogeneous population due to its long history of migration and its internal cultural and linguistic division. In 1993, Belgium officially became a federal state composed of three regions: Flanders, where most Belgians speak Flemish; Wallonia, mainly French speaking; the capital of Brussels, officially bilingual but with a prevalence of French speakers.

This plurality of cultures and languages has fostered integration policies for immigrants, like naturalization of foreigners, though political separatist movements that advocate restrictions on immigration are growing (Baudewyns, Dandoy, & Reuchamps, 2015). Belgian citizenship is regulated by laws that are based on a mix of *ius soli* and *ius domicilii*. An individual can become a Belgian citizen after a period of three years of residence. For the second generation immigrants, acquisition of Belgian citizenship is quite simple: they automatically acquire Belgian citizenship if their immigrant parents have resided in Belgium for at least 5 of the previous 10 years before their birth. Furthermore, young immigrants acquire Belgian citizenship at age 18 if they were born in Belgium or arrived by age 12. Finally, third generations have Belgian citizenship if their immigrant parents were born in Belgium. Owing to its long history of immigration and open access policy to citizenship, Belgium has a sizeable proportion of second generations in the population, as well as a growing number of third generations that acquire Belgian citizenship at birth.

According to the most recent estimates, there are 1,426,651 foreigners or 12.4% of the total population (Statistics Belgium [STATBEL], 2020). Based on country of origin, the first three are France, Italy, and the Netherlands, while Morocco is the main extra-European country, also due to its long history of immigration. Unsurprisingly, Moroccans rank first in

application for citizenship, with 2498 naturalization procedures reported by the most recent estimates, most of which are second generation immigrants (STATBEL, 2020). Consistent with the majority religion in their country of origin, Moroccans and Turks are predominantly Muslims (Lesthaeghe & Neels, 2000). Muslims account for 7.5% of the total population in Belgium (Pew Research Center, 2017). The majority of Belgians identify as Christians, generally Roman Catholics (60.5%), alongside a consistent part of the population (31%) not affiliated with any religion. Belgium has no official state religion; Islam was formally recognised in 1974. The Islamic and the Christian community receive state funding for religious services, have designated places of worship, and support religious instruction in primary and secondary schools. Despite legal recognition and its stable presence, Muslim immigrants come up against anti-Islamic sentiment by natives. According to the last report of *Islamophobia* (Easat-Daas, 2018), episodes of discrimination towards Muslims have increased in recent years, including verbal and physical attacks on women who wear the Islamic veil and cases of vandalism to mosques. In response to terroristic attacks in Belgium, far right movements enjoy consensus and conduct political campaigns against migration and Islam, such as the *Marche contre Marrakech* (March against Marrakech) held in December 2018. This anti-Islamic climate pervades the workplace and schools, with reports of denigrating attitude against women wearing a veil and Muslim children.

In general, these episodes reflect the contradictions regarding Islam in Belgium. While Islam is a fully recognised religion and its structures are operated by organs such as the Belgian Muslim Executive (EMB) that oversees the Muslim communities in the country, Muslims are finding it increasingly difficult to practice their religion. The federal government does not impose limitations on Islamic practices, but some regions prohibit ritual slaughter and local communities have the authority to ban wearing the hijab in schools.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Participants

The initial total sample was 565 participants, 309 of which in Italy and 256 in Belgium. Since the aim of the present study was to investigate Muslim second generation immigrants, respondents belonging to first or third generations had to be identified and excluded from the analysis. Based on Rumbaut (2004) and other empirical studies (e.g., Creese et al., 2019; Rizzo et al., 2020), two criteria were applied to classify respondents as belonging to the second generation: the participant's place of birth or the age of arrival; the parent's country of origin. For the first criterion, participants were classified as second generations if born in a European country or resident there since the age of 6. For the second criterion, participants were classified as second generations if at least one parent had come from a country other than Italy and Belgium. This second criterion distinguished second generations from third generation immigrants (people with both parents from Italy or Belgium).

Based on these criteria, first and third generation participants were excluded in some cases: 69 participants of first generation in Italy and 37 in Belgium were removed during the initial data cleaning phase, while 10 participants of third generation in the Belgian sample were removed because born of Belgian parents (no participants of third generation were present in the Italian sample).

For the present study, the total second generations samples were of 240 respondents in Italy and 209 respondents in Belgium. All referred to themselves as Muslims (Sunni).

4.3.2 Procedures

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling to take part in an online survey in Italy and Belgium. The majority of the Italian participants resided in north-Italy, and the majority of the Belgian respondents resided in the Walloon Region or the Brussels-Capital Region, where the majority is French-speaking. Data were collected in the two countries from January to June 2019. Representative members of cultural and religious associations (e.g. the FMI or the EMB) were contacted to find participants in Italy and Belgium. They provided contact with other religious associations or relevant people in the Islamic communities. Most of the recruitment took place through email and online messages to the administrators of Muslim groups on social media, where the main aim of the study and the target audience were briefly explained. People interested in participating in the study received a link to access the online survey that they could share with other members of Muslim groups. The link opened the first page of the questionnaire, which contained the informed consent form (Appendix A), a brief introduction to the study, and a data privacy statement that ensured participant anonymity according to current privacy law. The informed consent form stated that participants could exit the survey at any time (there was no obligation to answer all questionnaire items), that the estimated time to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes, that the minimum age to participate was 18 years, and that participation was completely voluntary. The principal investigator could be contacted by email to answer any questions. At the bottom of the first page, respondents had to give their informed consent in order to start the questionnaire. The questionnaire automatically jumped to the last page if they did not grant informed consent or stated they were under 18 years of age.

The study was developed in Italy at the University of Turin with the collaboration of the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL). The Ethic Committees of both universities approved the study protocol.

4.3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire was originally developed in English and forward-back translated in Italian and French for the Italian and Belgian participants, respectively. The questionnaire was composed of four instruments: a scale of *Flexibility in Existential Quest* (EQ); a scale which assess the respondent's degree of religiosity, the *Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale* (4BDRS); an acculturation measure, the *Vancouver Index of Acculturation* (VIA); and an index of *Perceived Religious Discrimination* (PRD). In addition, was also present a list of socio-demographic items (for details on the Italian and the French version of the scales and socio-demographic variables, see Appendix B).

Existential Quest (EQ). The EQ scale was developed by Van Pachterbeke and colleagues (2012) to measure individual flexibility on existential questions. The scale includes nine items dealing with uncertainty about existential issues (e.g., "Today, I still wonder about the meaning and goal of my life"), the positive valorisation of doubt (e.g., "Being able to doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality") and the openness to reconsider their own perspective (e.g., "I often reappraise my opinion on religious/spiritual beliefs"). Participants marked their response on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree. The measure included two reversed items ("I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is" and "I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is"). For the present study, the alpha coefficient of the nine items was .69 in the Italian and .82 in the Belgian sample.

Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale (4BRDS). The 4BDRS (Saroglou, 2011) is composed of four subscales that measure four religious dimensions labelled

believing, *bonding*, *behaving*, *belonging*. Each subscale is composed of three items, for a total of twelve items. Examples are: “I feel attached to religion because it helps me to have a purpose in my life” (believing), “Religious rituals, activities or practices make me feel positive emotion” (bonding), “Religion helps me to try to live in a moral way” (behaving), and “In religion, I enjoy belonging to a group/community” (belonging). Participants marked their response on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree. There were no reversed items. A single item investigated the general importance that people attribute to religion in daily life. For the present study, the alpha coefficients of the overall scale was .94 in the Italian and .92 in the Belgian sample. The alpha coefficients of the single religious dimensions in the two samples were: believing (.87 in the Italian and .86 in the Belgian sample); bonding (.81 in the Italian and .77 in the Belgian sample); behaving (.90 in the Italian and .85 in the Belgian sample); belonging (.88 in the Italian and .86 in the Belgian sample).

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA). According to the bidimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997), the VIA measures acculturation on two dimensions: heritage orientation and mainstream orientation (Ryder et al., 2000). The scale comprises twenty items: ten items investigating the heritage culture and ten items the mainstream culture. The scale assesses various aspects of acculturation in both the heritage and the mainstream culture, such as participation in cultural traditions (e.g., “I often participate in my native cultural traditions; “I often participate in mainstream *Italian/Belgian* cultural traditions”), social relationships (e.g., “I am interested in having friends from my heritage culture; “I am interested in having typical *Italian/Belgian* friends”), and entertainment (e.g., “I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my native culture; “I enjoy *Italian/Belgian* entertainment (e.g. movies, music)”). The response scale was shortened from the original 9-

point to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (see Testa, Doucerain, Miglietta, Jurcik, Ryder, & Gattino, 2019). There were no reversed items. For the present study, the alpha coefficients for the two acculturation orientations were: heritage orientation (.86 for the Italian and .82 for the Belgian sample); mainstream orientation (.74 for the Italian and .80 for the Belgian sample).

Perceived religious discrimination scale (PRD). Following previous studies (Verkuyten & Yldiz, 2007; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012) and given the discrepancy between personal and group-perceived religious discrimination (see Barry & Grilo, 2003; Bourguignon et al., 2006), a total of six items investigated these two forms of perceived discrimination; three items were replicated in both personal and group terms: "*My religious group is /I am* often discriminated when looking for a job or internship"; "*My religious group is /I am* often discriminated in cafes and clubs"; "*My religious group is /I am* often discriminated in daily life". Participants marked their response on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = for nothing to 5 = completely. There were no reversed items. For the present study, the alpha coefficients of the six items were: perceived personal Muslim discrimination (.86 for the Italian and .83 for the Belgian sample); perceived group Muslim discrimination (.78 for the Italian and .74 for the Belgian sample). Also non-religious participants could report their perceived personal and group discrimination based on their cultural belonging. If they reported being atheist or agnostic, the questionnaire automatically changed the questions from religious to cultural perceived discrimination.

Demographic questionnaire. The items on this questionnaire investigated participant gender, age, country of birth, father's country of birth, mother's country of birth, years of residence in the country, religious affiliation, educational level, occupational status, national

citizenship. There was a question which investigated if the participant planned to leave the country of residence in the next five years, and an open question about cultural belonging.

To prevent potential order effects, two versions of the questionnaire were developed and participants were randomly assigned to one of the two versions. The first version presented the 4BDRS, followed by the EQ, the VIA and the PRD. The second version presented the VIA, followed by the PRD, the 4BDRS and the EQ. In both versions, some of the socio-demographic items were presented in the first part of the survey and some in the last section. In the first part of the questionnaire the socio-demographic section investigated gender, age, country of birth, father's country of birth, mother's country of birth, years of residence in the country. The last section contained the remaining socio-demographic items investigating educational level, occupational status and national citizenship.

To ensure that the questionnaire items were clearly stated (i.e. no ambiguous or unfamiliar questions) and that the cognitive effort to complete the questionnaire was adequate for the Muslim second generations, a pre-test study was implemented (Ruel, Wagner III, & Gillespie, 2016) with Italian and Belgian respondents of Muslim second generations, as well as with experts on Islamic issues.

The results confirmed the choice of the measures, specifically the appropriacy of the 4BDRS rather than Islamic religious measures. The pre-test respondents agreed that a general measure of religiosity was better than a specific Islamic instrument so as to avoid effects of social desirability that may occur when young Muslims are asked to respond to items that recall Islamic precepts.

4.3.4 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was perfomred using MPLUS 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) and SPSS 26.0 (IBM SPSS Statistics, IBM Corporation). In a preliminary phase of analysis, missing data

were imputed using the expectation maximization (EM) procedure under SPSS. This procedure was implemented after it was assessed with Little's test that missing values of the scales in both samples were missing completely at random (MCAR) (Little, 1998). In detail, the percentage of missing values for each scale ranged from 0.4% to 2.5% in the Italian sample and from 0.5% to 2.4% in the Belgian sample. Furthermore, through the use of Mahalanobis distance it was assessed that three particpants were outliers, but none of them were influential observations, so they have been included in the total sample.

Frequencies, means, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics were used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Pearson's correlation (r) was used to test the relationship between scale scores and the relationship between scale scores and socio-demographic variables. According to Cohen (1988), the relationships were considered negligible if $r < .10$, weak if in the range .10 - .30, moderates if in the range .30 - .50, and strong if $r > 50$. Furthermore, a battery of t-tests was conducted to assess differences between means of the socio-demographic variables across the two samples. Cohen's d coefficient was used to evaluate the effect size of the means difference: small effect size ($d < .20$); medium effect size ($d > .50$); large effect size ($d > .80$) (Cohen, 1992). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to investigate the measurement properties of the scales in both samples. The omega (ω) coefficient was calculated to evaluate scale reliability (McDonald, 1999).

A multi-group structural equation model (SEM) was estimated to test whether the study hypotheses held for both samples. A multi-group SEM is a system of equations model that includes a measurement model and a structural model. In the first step of analysis, the measurement invariance of all the scales for the Italian and Belgian participants was tested. After a satisfactory measurement invariance between the two samples on all the scales was

reached, a structural invariance model was estimated to determine whether the relationships between the antecedent and the outcome variables were the same in the two samples.

The items with a range of responses on the 7-point Likert scale were treated as continuous variables, while the items with a range of responses on the 5-point Likert scale were treated as ordinal variables. Admittedly, treating items with few categories as continuous variables may be a weak strategy (see Rhemtulla, Brosseau-Liard, & Savalei, 2012).

The distribution of the data showed that the assumption of multivariate normality was not respected in either sample, according to Mardia's multivariate omnibus tests of skewness and kurtosis. The estimator for the analysis was the Asparouhov and Muthén (2010) mean- and variance-adjusted ML method of estimation (MLMV). According to Maydeu-Olivares (2017), this method of estimation can reveal satisfactory properties in accuracy of standard errors and type I error in the presence of non-normal data. For the ordinal variables (VIA and PRD scales), the mean- and variance-adjusted weighted least squares (WLSMV) was the estimation method (see Li, 2016).

To assess the goodness of the fit model in CFA and SEM, three criteria were applied: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ≤ .080; comparative fit index (CFI) ≥ .900; and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) ≤ .080 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). To improve the fit of the model, the Modification Indexes (MIs) were inspected to determine whether their contents were theoretically coherent.

Four increasingly restrictive models were estimated for the measurement invariance in the multi-group SEM for continuous the variables (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). First, the configural model in which all parameters are freely estimated across groups; second, the metric model in which the loadings are constrained to be equal across groups; third, the scalar model in which loadings and intercepts are constrained to be equal across groups; fourth, the uniqueness model imposing equality constrains also on the residual variances across groups.

For each model, the goodness of fit was compared to that of the previous model (e.g., the metric *versus* the configural; the scalar *versus* the metric). As described in Bowen and Masa (2015), only two increasingly restrictive models were estimated and compared (the configural and the scalar) in the multi-group SEM for the ordinal variables. The goodness of fit indices defined a lack of invariance with a ΔCFI $\leq$ -.005 and at least one of the two following criteria with the continuous variables: ΔRMSEA $\geq$ .010, and ΔSRMR $\geq$ .025 for loading invariance, and $\geq$ .005 for intercepts and uniqueness invariance (Chen, 2007). For the ordinal variables the goodness of fit was evaluated with the same cut-off for ΔCFI and ΔRMSEA, while the SRMR was not considered as it is not reported for this type of analysis.

According to Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller (2003), an additional fit criterion for both the continuous and the ordinal variables concerned the $\Delta\chi 2$. The lack of invariance was assumed when the ratio between $\Delta\chi 2$ and Δdegree of freedom (Δdf) was > 3. The fit criteria for the structural invariance in the multi-group SEM were the same as the measurement invariance. However, the structural invariance was reached if the fit indices were satisfactory after a restriction from a baseline model (which allowed free estimation of the structural relationships across latent factors in different groups) to a strict model (where all these relationships were constrained to be equal across groups).

The MPLUS syntaxes of the analyses (CFAs, measurement invariance and structural invariance) are available from the author upon request.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics Across Italy and Belgium

As reported in Table 1, the mean age was 22.1 years (SD = 4.0) in the Italian and 30.9 years (SD = 10.0) in the Belgian sample; the means difference was statistically significant ($t(447) = 12.48$, $p = .000$; $d = 1.15$). Women made up the majority of participants in both samples; the difference of the percentage of women across the two samples was not statistically significant ($t(447) = -1.07$ $p > .05$; $d = .15$). There were some differences in their occupation and educational level.

Most of the respondents in the Italian sample were university students. The occupational status og the Belgian varied: most reported having a job (Φ-coefficient = .454, $p = .000$). In general terms, the educational level in both samples was high. Most of the participants in the Belgian sample had a master's degree, whereas the Italian participants were university students. The total years of education was higher in the Belgian sample than in the Italian sample, and the difference means was statistically significant: $t(447) = 9.82$, $p = .000$ with a small effect size ($d = .09$). All respondents reported they had national citizenship (82.1% in Italy; 93.1% in Belgium) and that they would remain in Belgium or Italy over the next five years (73.3% in Italy; 71.1% in Belgium).

Table 1

Sample Characteristics

Variables	Italy (N = 240)	Belgium (N = 209)
Mean age (years) (SD)	22.1 (4.0)	30.9 (10.0)
min-max	18-50	18-62
Gender (%)		
Female	71.7	67.0
Male	28.3	33.0
Employment status (%)		
Students	77.9	33.0
Employed	17.5	57.9
Unemployed	4.6	9.1
Education level (%)		
Junior high school	7.1	1.4
High school	57.9	21.5
Bachelor's degree	30.8	49.3
Master's degree or higher	4.2	27.8
National Citizenship (%)	82.1	93.3

Some other differences between the Italian and Belgian second generations were that, although most had Moroccan parents. The ethnic origin was more variegated in the Belgian sample than in the Italian sample. Many had grown up in mixed households (24.9% of the total Belgian sample) or had at least one Belgian parent, whereas only 6.2% of the total Italian sample had grown in mixed households (Table 2).

The response rate was 96.3% for the Italian and 93.8% for the Belgian sample.

Table 2

Second Generations and Parents' Country of Origin

Variables	Italy (N =240)	Belgium (N =209)
	%	%
Second generation		
born in EU country	60.4	87.1
arrived by age 6 years	39.6	12.9
Parents' country of origin		
Fathers		
	Morocco (75.4)	Morocco (50.7)
	Egypt (9.2)	Algeria (12.7)
	Tunisia (7.9)	Belgium (11.5)
	Italy (2.9)	Turkey (6.7)
	Other (4.6)	Other (18.4)
Mothers		
	Morocco (77.5)	Morocco (46.9)
	Egypt (7.9)	Belgium (22.0)
	Tunisia (5.8)	Algeria (7.7)
	Italy (3.3)	Turkey (6.2)
	Other (5.4)	Other (17.2)
The same country of origin	Morocco (72.0)	Morocco (35.4)
	Egypt (7.9)	Algeria (7.2)
	Tunisia (5.9)	Turkey (5.7)
Mixed origin[a]		
	Italy/Morocco (5.4)	Belgium/Morocco (22.5)
	Italy/Tunisia (0.8)	Belgium/Algeria (2.4)

Note. [a =] Percentage of participants with only one parent of immigrant origin.

Table 3 and Table 4 present preliminary information about the two samples. Table 3 reports the descriptive statistics of the scale scores in the two samples, as means, standard deviations indexes of skewness and kurtosis of the scale scores.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Scale Scores

Measures	Italy (N = 240)					Belgium (N = 209)				
	M	SD	Range	Skew	Kurt	M	SD	Range	Skew	Kurt
EQ	4.83	.94	1-7	-.50	-.49	4.11	1.31	1-7	-.39	-.70
REL	5.74	1.23	1-7	-1.52	2.21	6.02	1.13	1-7	-1.88	4.12
BELI	5.78	1.42	1-7	-1.34	1.21	6.23	1.32	1-7	-2.18	4.58
BOND	5.67	1.30	1-7	-1.30	1.76	5.90	1.28	1-7	-1.56	2.51
BEHA	5.85	1.40	1-7	-1.41	1.43	6.42	1.07	1-7	-2.93	10.17
BELO	5.66	1.46	1-7	-1.40	1.62	5.51	1.68	1-7	-1.11	.36
PRD_PR	2.36	1.11	1-5	.59	-.34	2.96	1.27	1-5	.15	-1.07
PRD_GR	3.21	.98	1-5	-.16	-.35	3.78	.93	1-5	-.53	-.15
HER	3.82	.58	1-5	-.05	-.11	3.68	.59	1-5	-.04	-.37
MAI	3.78	.45	1-5	-.12	1.10	3.45	.52	1-5	-.24	2.36

Note. EQ = Existential Quest Scale; REL = Religiosity; BELI = Believing; BOND = Bonding; BEHA = Behaving; BELO = Belonging; PRD_PR = Personal Perceived Religious Discrimination; PRD_GR = Group Perceived Religious Discrimination;
HER = Heritage orientation; MAI = Mainstream orientation

Table 4

Intercorrelations between Scale Scores

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.EQ	-	-.35**	-.31**	-.27**	-.29**	-.35**	.04	.09	-.15*	.20*
2.REL	-.25**	-	.92**	.84**	.92**	.83**	.08	.04	.33**	-.01
3.BELI	-.23**	.86**	-	.74**	.84**	.66**	.13	.10	.24**	.02
4.BOND	-.16*	.86**	.63**	-	.70**	.53**	.09	.01	.32**	.05
5.BEHA	-.20*	.84**	.76**	.70**	-	.69**	.06	.06	.28**	-.06
6.BELO	-.25**	.83**	.56**	.62**	.51**	-	-.01	-.03	.31**	-.05
7.PRD_PR	-.06	.11	.01	.13	.08	.13	-	.66**	.09	-.02
8.PRD_GR	-.04	.15*	.12	.15*	.18*	.07	.68**	-	.04	-.02
9.HER	-.05	.36**	.27**	.32**	.30**	.33**	.07	.01	-	.12
10.MAI	.05	-.08	-.04	-.09	-.02	-.08	-.21*	-.21*	.32**	-

Note. Italian sample (upper triangular part); Belgian sample (lower triangular part);N Italy = 240; N Belgium = 209; EQ = Existential Quest Scale; REL = Religiosity; BELI = Believing; BOND = Bonding; BEHA = Behaving; BELO = Belonging; PRD_PR = Personal Perceived Religious Discrimination; PRD_GR = Group Perceived Religious Discrimination; HER = Heritage orientation; MAI = Mainstream orientation; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Table 4 reports the bivariate correlations of the scale scores. The EQ scores were negatively correlated with the scores on religiosity and its group factors, in both the Italian and Belgian sample. The two samples differed for the correlation between EQ scores and VIA subscale scores. The EQ scoresin the Italian sample were negatively correlated with heritage acculturation orientation scores and positively with mainstream orientation scores, whereas in the Belgian sample there were no statistically significant correlations between the EQ scores and the two acculturation orientation scores. The high correlation between personal and group-perceived discrimination demonstrated the conceptual similarity of these two forms. However, there were some differences in the correlations between each perceived religious

discrimination and the other scale scores. There were no correlations in the Italian sample, whereas group-perceived religious discrimination in the Belgian sample was positively correlated with the overall score on religiosity and its dimensions, except for the bonding dimension for which the correlation was not statistically significant. In addition, there was a negative correlation between both forms of perceived religious discrimination and the score on the mainstream acculturation orientation in the Belgian sample. According to the bidimensional model of acculturation, the two acculturation orientations in the Italian sample were not correlated with each other, whereas the correlation was positive and moderate in the Belgian sample.

Table 5 presents the bivariate correlations between the scale scores and the socio-demographic variables. There were negative and weak correlations between age and EQ scores and the overall religiosity scores only in the Belgian sample. A similar trend between the Italian and Belgian sample was found between the religious dimensions of bonding and belonging and age; a negative correlation was also present between age and behaving dimension in the Belgian sample. In both samples there was a positive weak correlation between age and the score for the mainstream orientation.

Gender was not correlated with any of the scale scores in the Belgian sample, whereas in the Italian sample there was a positive weak correlation between gender and personal perceived religious discrimination. This implies that Muslim women in the Italian sample perceived themselves as more discriminated than Muslim men.

There was no correlations between educational level and other scale scores in the Italian sample, while in the Belgian sample there was a positive weak correlation with the score on the mainstream orientation, which means that the Belgian Muslim second generation respondents with a higher educational level were more likely to adopt the mainstream culture

than those with a lower educational level. There was a positive weak correlation between national citizenship and the specific religious dimension of behaving in the Belgian sample.

Table 5

Intercorrelations Between Scale Scores and Socio-demographic Variables

Measures	Italy (N = 240)				Belgium (N = 209)			
	Age	Gender	Education	Citizenship	Age	Gender	Education	Citizenship
EQ	-.004	.07	-.02	.03	-.18*	.01	.19*	.01
REL	-.10	-.03	-.04	-.01	-.20*	.01	-.05	.07
BELI	-.08	-.05	-.07	-.02	-.09	.03	-.11	.05
BOND	-.15*	.06	-.05	-.12	-.24**	-.05	-.03	.04
BEHA	-.003	-.08	-.02	.03	-.15*	.06	-.03	.16*
BELO	-.13*	-.02	-.001	.05	-.19**	-.001	-.02	.02
PRD_PR	-.11	.14*	-.04	.05	-.10	.04	-.07	.03
PRD_GR	-.006	-.02	.03	.02	-.09	.12	-.01	.08
HER	-.02	.03	-.09	.002	-.06	-.09	-.003	.12
MAI	.16*	-.05	-.02	-.04	.17*	.01	.24**	.13

Note. EQ = Existential Quest Scale; REL = Religiosity; BELI = Believing; BOND = Bonding; BEHA= Behaving; BELO = Belonging; PRD_PR = Personal Perceived Religious Discrimination; PRD_GR = Group Perceived Religious Discrimination; HER = Heritage orientation; MAI = Mainstream orientation; Gender (0 = men); Educ (0 = medium level); Citiz (0 = National citizenship); * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

4.4.2 Psychometric Properties of the Instruments Across Italian and Belgian Samples

Existential Quest Scale. Before going into detail about the scale properties of the EQ measure in the Italian and the Belgian sample of Muslim second generations, a brief summary of the contribution to the Italian validation of the EQ scale will be discussed. This step was necessary for the present research because the EQ scale was developed in the Belgian context and its psychometric properties had not been investigated in the Italian context.

Preliminary Validation of the Existential Quest in Italy. This preliminary study tested the psychometric properties of the EQ scale in a sample of Italian adults. To do this, the EQ items were back-translated from English to Italian and administered via a self-report questionnaire to a sample of 291 Italian adults (64.3% women; age range, 18 to 82 years; mean = 37.0; Standard deviation (SD) = 14.6). The factorial structure of the scale was assessed by means of CFA and multi-group CFA was used to assess the measurement invariance of the measure across age (using the median age of 31 years as a cut-off criterion) and gender. Based on the original study (van Pactherbeke et al., 2012), discriminant validity was investigated by correlating EQ scores with the scores of scales that measured individual cognitive closure and degree of authoritarianism. The results confirmed the one-factor structure of the EQ scale, as found in the original study. To reach a satisfactory model fit to the data, however, two modifications were introduced. First, according to the standardized loadings of each item, one of the nine items did not reach an acceptable value ("I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is") and so was removed from the scale. Second, following the MIs and the item content, the residuals of two pairs of items were correlated: "My attitude toward religion/spirituality is likely to change according to my life experiences" correlated with "I often reappraise my opinion on religious/spiritual beliefs"; "Being able to

doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality" correlated with "In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions". As can be seen from their formulation, these two item pairs are similar in content ("religious/spiritual beliefs" and "doubt"). In the subsequent analyses, the final eight-item scale reached full measurement invariance across genders and partial measurement invariance for age groups. The correlations between the EQ scale scores and the scale scores in the questionnaire assessed the discriminant validity of the EQ scale according to the original study, as demonstrated by the non-overlapping between the EQ scale and the measures of cognitive closure and authoritarianism.

In general terms, it can be concluded that the Italian version of the EQ scale is a valid instrument to assess flexibility in existential quest with a structure like that of the original study. For more detail on this validation study, see Rizzo, Testa, Gattino, and Miglietta (2019).

EQ Scale in the Italian Sample. As in the Italian validation study (Rizzo et al., 2019), a CFA was conducted to test the structure of the EQ scale in the Italian sample. Factor loadings were freely estimated, and the variance of the latent variable was fixed at 1.0. This first model reported an unacceptable fit: χ^2 (27) = 110.54, p < .001; RMSEA = .114 (90% CI = .092, .136); CFI = .708; SRMR = .085. Furthermore, the factor loading of the item "I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is" was not statistically significant and so was excluded from the scale, as was done in the Italian validation study (Rizzo et al., 2019). Re-testing of the model without the item that did not have a statistically significant loading led again to an unsatisfactory fit to the data: χ^2 (20) = 67.7, p < .001; RMSEA = .100 (90% CI = .074, .126); CFI = .816; SRMR = .068. As done in the Italian validation study, the content of the items was reviewed to obtain a better fit of the model to the data by looking for item pairs

that shared part of their specificity. With the support of MIs, the model was re-tested and the residuals of one pair of items was correlated ("Being able to doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality" with "In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions"). The fit of this last model was satisfactory: χ^2 (19) = 37.9, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .064 (90% CI = .034, .094); CFI = .927; SRMR = .054. All the standardized loadings were acceptable. The correlation between residuals was not negligible (> .30) (Table 6). The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the EQ scale in the Italian sample factor was .65.

Table 6

Standardized Loadings for the One-Factor Confirmatory Model of the Existential Quest Scale in the Italian sample.

EQ Item	Loading
1. Today, I still wonder about the meaning and goal of my life	.33
2. My attitude toward religion/spirituality is likely to change according to my life experiences	.37
3. Being able to doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality	.47
4. In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions	.58
5. My way of seeing the world is certainly going to change again	.76
6. My opinion varies on a lot of subjects	.52
8. Years go by, but my way of seeing the world doesn't change*	.34
9. I often reappraise my opinion on religious/spiritual beliefs	.37

Note. N = 240. Item 7 was removed from the analysis. * Item reverse-coded. Model estimates included one correlations residual: .49 (items 3 and 4). All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

EQ Scale in the Belgian Sample. A CFA was performed to assess how well the one-factor model fitted the nine item scores. Factor loadings were freely estimated, and the variance of the latent variable was fixed at 1.0. The results showed an unacceptable fit of the model: χ^2 (27) = 93.7, p < .001; RMSEA = .109 (90% CI = .085, .133); CFI = .827; SRMR = .070. Among the factor loadings, the item "I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is" showed a low standardized value (< .25) and as done in the Italian validation study (Rizzo et al., 2019), the item was dropped from the scale. However, its removal did not sufficiently improve the fit of the model: χ^2 (20) = 68.2, p < .001; RMSEA = .107 (90% CI = .080, .136); CFI = .864; SRMR = .062. Review of the item content guided by MI's showed that one item pair shared part of the specificity. After the model was re-tested with the residual correlation estimated between one pair of items ("Being able to doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality" and "In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions"), the fit indices reached satisfactory values: χ^2 (19) = 30.8, p < .05; RMSEA = .054 (90% CI = .010, .088); CFI = .967; SRMR = .047. The size of the standardized loadings was acceptable. The correlation between residuals was not negligible (> .30) (Table 7). The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the EQ in the Belgian sample factor was .79.

Table 7

Standardized Loadings for the One-Factor Confirmatory Model of the Existential Quest Scale in the Belgian sample

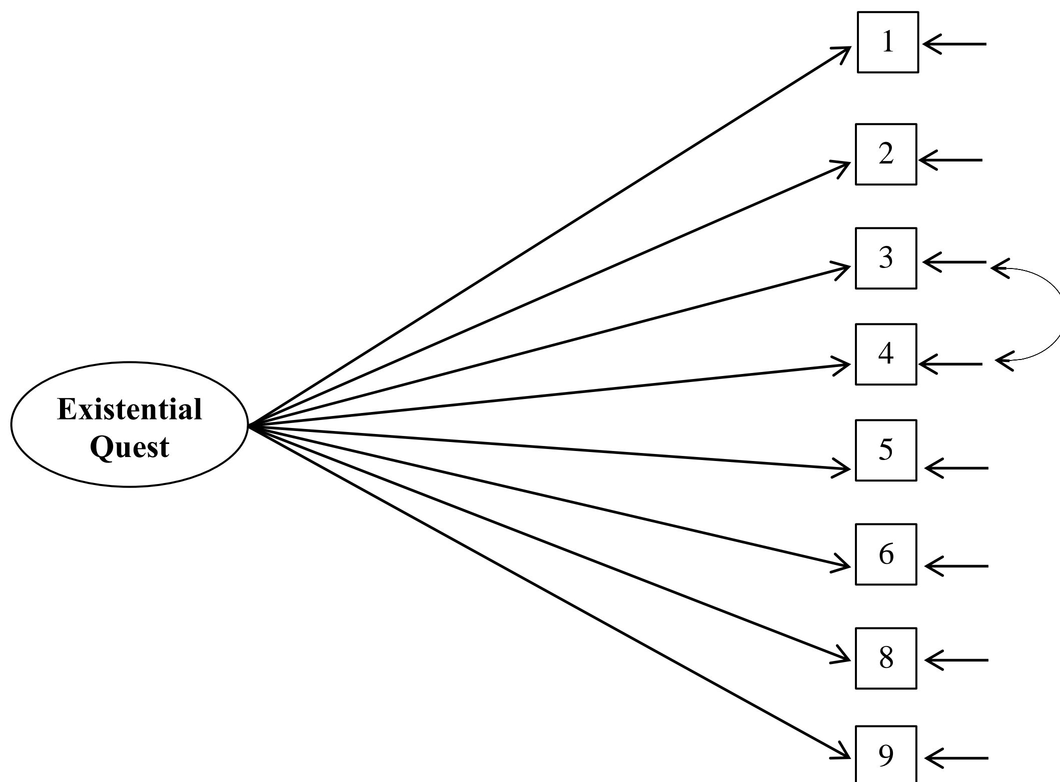
EQ Item	Loading
1. Today, I still wonder about the meaning and goal of my life	.42
2. My attitude toward religion/spirituality is likely to change according to my life experiences	.57
3. Being able to doubt about one's convictions and to reappraise them is a good quality	.58
4. In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions	.54
5. My way of seeing the world is certainly going to change again	.81
6. My opinion varies on a lot of subjects	.72
8. Years go by, but my way of seeing the world doesn't change*	.54
9. I often reappraise my opinion on religious/spiritual beliefs	.59

Note. N = 209. Item 7 was removed from the analysis. * Item reverse-coded. Model estimates included one correlations residual: .55 (items 3 and 4). All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Measurement invariance between the Italian and Belgian sample: EQ. Based on the results reported above, the factorial structure of the EQ scale seemed to be the same across the two samples. In line with the original (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012) and the Italian validation (Rizzo et al., 2019) study, the one-factor model fitted the data in both samples. One item had to be removed to reach a satisfactory fit of the model ("I know perfectly well what the goal of my life is") and the residuals of the two items correlated that shared the content of "doubt" in the existential questions in both samples. The final factorial solution with eight items is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7

The One-Factor Model of the Existential Quest Scale in the Italian and Belgian Sample



To formally test the presence of measurement invariance across the Italian and the Belgian sample, a multi-group CFA was performed. Table 8 shows that the fit of the least restricted model was excellent (configural model), as was the fit for the other more restricted models (metric, scalar, uniqueness models). As explained in the data analysis section, the fit criteria selected to reach the measurement invariance yielded satisfactory results in the comparison between the more restricted metric model, which imposed constraints on the factor loadings across samples, and the more freely configural model, where all the parameters were free to be estimated across samples. However, the comparison between the scalar model, which imposed the equality of the intercepts, and the less restricted metric model returned several unsatisfactory results. In detail, $\Delta\ \chi^2$, ΔCFI and ΔSRMR showed a lack of invariance across models. The MIs were examined to determine whether partial scalar invariance was present: they showed that the equality constrained the intercepts of the item "In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions", which was removed. After this modification, partial scalar invariance was reached across the two samples. Changes in the fit indexes became very small and adequate. The intercept of the item relaxed for the reach of a partial invariance was higher in the Italian than in the Belgian sample. Finally, the partial measurement invariance of the EQ scale across the samples was confirmed in the more restricted uniqueness model. ΔRMSEA, ΔCFI and ΔSRMR were within the range established to the reach of the measurement invariance, including the ratio between $\Delta\ \chi^2$ and Δ df.

Table 8

Measurement Invariance of the Existential Quest Scale

Model across samples	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔSRMR
Configural invariance$_a$	67.497*	38	.059	.952	.051	-	-	-	-	-
Metric invariance$_a$	71.300*	45	.051	.958	.052	2.270	7	-.008	.006	.001
Scalar invariance$_a$	92.497*	52	.059	.935	.063	26.374*	7	.008	-.023	.011
Scalar Invariance$_{ab}$	79.383*	51	.050	.954	.057	8.827	6	-.001	-.004	.005
Invariant uniquenesses$_{ab}$	92.461*	58	.051	.944	.064	15.461*	7	.001	-.010	.007

Note. RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual.

$_{a=}$ The error covariance between items 3 and 4 was constrained to be equal across groups;

$_{b=}$ Free intercept on item 4 : “In my opinion, doubt is important in existential questions”

*p < .05

Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale. The factorial structure of the 4BDRS scale has been tested in diverse CFA models. Some studies tested a one-factor model in which the means of the four specific dimensions (believing, behaving, bonding, belonging) loaded on a latent factor of religiousness (e.g., Dimitrova & del Carmen Domínguez Espinosa, 2017; Saroglou et al., 2020). In other studies in which the factorial structure was evaluated at the item level, the one-factor model was compared with models in which the four dimensions were specified as latent factors, i.e., the four-factor model, and the second-order factor model with four first-order factors and one second-order factor (Kumar et al., 2020). Based on the literature, the 4BDRS factorial structure in this study was also tested in different CFA models: one-and four-factor models, a second-order factor model and a bifactor model.

4BDRS in the Italian sample. A first model was specified in which the twelve items loaded on a single latent factor. To fix the latent factor scale, the variance of the latent variable was set to 1.0. The fit of the model was unsatisfactory: χ^2 (54) = 180.0, p < .001; RMSEA = .099 (90% CI = .083, .115); CFI = .874; SRMR = .062. This result confirmed the need to specify more than one latent factor. In the second CFA, a four-factor model was estimated to measure the four basic religious dimensions (believing, behaving, bonding, belonging). The fit of the model was excellent: χ^2 (48) = 58.0, p > .05; RMSEA = .029 (90% CI = .000, .054); CFI = .990; SRMR = .028. However, the standardized values of the covariances between the four latent factors showed a very high relationship between the factors of believing and behaving (.92). The third model, in which the four factors loaded on a second-order factor, showed problematic functioning on the first-order factor of believing, as demonstrated by its negative residual variance on the second-order factor of religiosity.

Given the unsatisfactory results of the previous models, a bi-factor model was tested in which the items of the believing and behaving subscales loaded only on the general factor of religiosity and the items of the bonding and belonging dimensions loaded in both the general

factor and a group factor. The fit of the bi-factor model was excellent: χ^2 (48) = 65.6, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .039 (90% CI = .006, .061); CFI = .982; SRMR = .028. Table 9 showed that the standardized loadings of the items were all acceptable, though one item of the bonding subscale reported a lower, albeit acceptable, value compared to the other loadings. Overall, the bi-factor model seemed to be the best solution for this Italian sample of Muslim second generation. As a bifactor model, the omega total (ω) coefficient was calculated for the total observed scores of religiosity and for the belonging and bonding observed scores (Reise, 2012). The ω coefficient for the reliability of religiosity in the Italian sample was .96, while the ω for belonging and bonding was .88 and .82, , respectively.

Table 9

Standardized Loadings for the Bi-Factor Confirmatory Model of Religiosity Scale in the Italian Sample.

4BDRS Item	Loading		
	Religiosity	Bonding	Belonging
1. In religion, I enjoy belonging to a group/community	.65		.49
2. Belonging to a religious tradition and identifying with it is important for me	.72		.54
3. Referring to a religious tradition is important for my cultural/ethnic identity	.57		.59
4. I am attached to the religion for the values and ethics it endorses	.81		
5. Religion helps me to try to live in a moral way	.90		
6. When I've got a moral dilemma, religion helps me make a decision	.85		
7. I like religious ceremonies	.71	.50	
8. Religious rituals, activities or practices make me feel positive emotion	.77	.49	
9. Religion has many artistic, expressions, and symbols that I enjoy	.51	.25	
10. I feel attached to religion because it helps me to have a purpose in my life	.85		
11. It is important to believe in a Transcendence that provides meaning to human existence	.82		
12. Religious beliefs have important implications for our understanding of human existence	.78		

Note. N = 240. All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$

4BDRS in the Belgian Sample. The factorial structure of the twelve-item scale of the 4BDRS was tested with a one-factor model. Factor loadings were freely estimated, and the variance of the latent variable was fixed at 1.0 for model identification. The fit of the model was unsatisfactory: χ^2 (54) = 151.6, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .093 (90% CI = .076, .111); CFI = .813; SRMR = .079, demonstrating that the items were not indicators of an overall religious dimension. A second model in which the twelve items were indicators of four latent variables corresponding to the believing, behaving, bonding, and belonging dimensions was then specified and obtained a satisfactory fit to the data: χ^2 (48) = 71.2, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .048 (90% CI = .021, .070); CFI = .956; SRMR = .049. Although the standardized values of the factor loadings on the four religious dimensions were all statistically significant, the standardized value of the covariance between believing and behaving was too high (.89). This reflected the overlapping between these two religious dimensions. A second-order model was then specified to test whether the four religious dimensions represented the first-order factors of a higher religiosity latent factor. Although the fit of the model was good (χ^2 (50) = 79.7, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .053 (90% CI = .030, .075); CFI = .943; SRMR = .060), the factor loadings of the first-order latent factors showed very high values for the believing (.92) and the behaving (.94) dimensions on the main factor of religiosity. For these reasons, a bi-factor model was evaluated with two group factors corresponding to the bonding and belonging dimensions and a general religiosity factor. In this model, the items of the behaving and believing subscales loaded only on the general factor, because of their very high loadings in the second order factor in the previous model. The fit of the bi-factor model was good: χ^2 (48) = 79.3, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .056 (90% CI = .033, .077); CFI = .940; SRMR = .056. Table 10 showed that the standardized loadings were all statistically significant and of appreciable size, except for one item on the bonding group factor. Overall, these results confirmed the

validity of the bi-factor model of the 4BDRS, with one main factor of religiosity and two specificities for the bonding and the belonging dimensions. As a bifactor model, the omega total (ω) coefficient was calculated for the observed scores of religiosity and for the belonging and bonding observed scores (Reise, 2012). The ω coefficient for the reliability of religiosity in the Belgian sample was .94, while the ω for belonging and bonding were, respectively, .87 and .79.

Table 10

Standardized Loadings for the Bi-Factor Confirmatory Model of Religiosity Scale in the Belgian Sample.

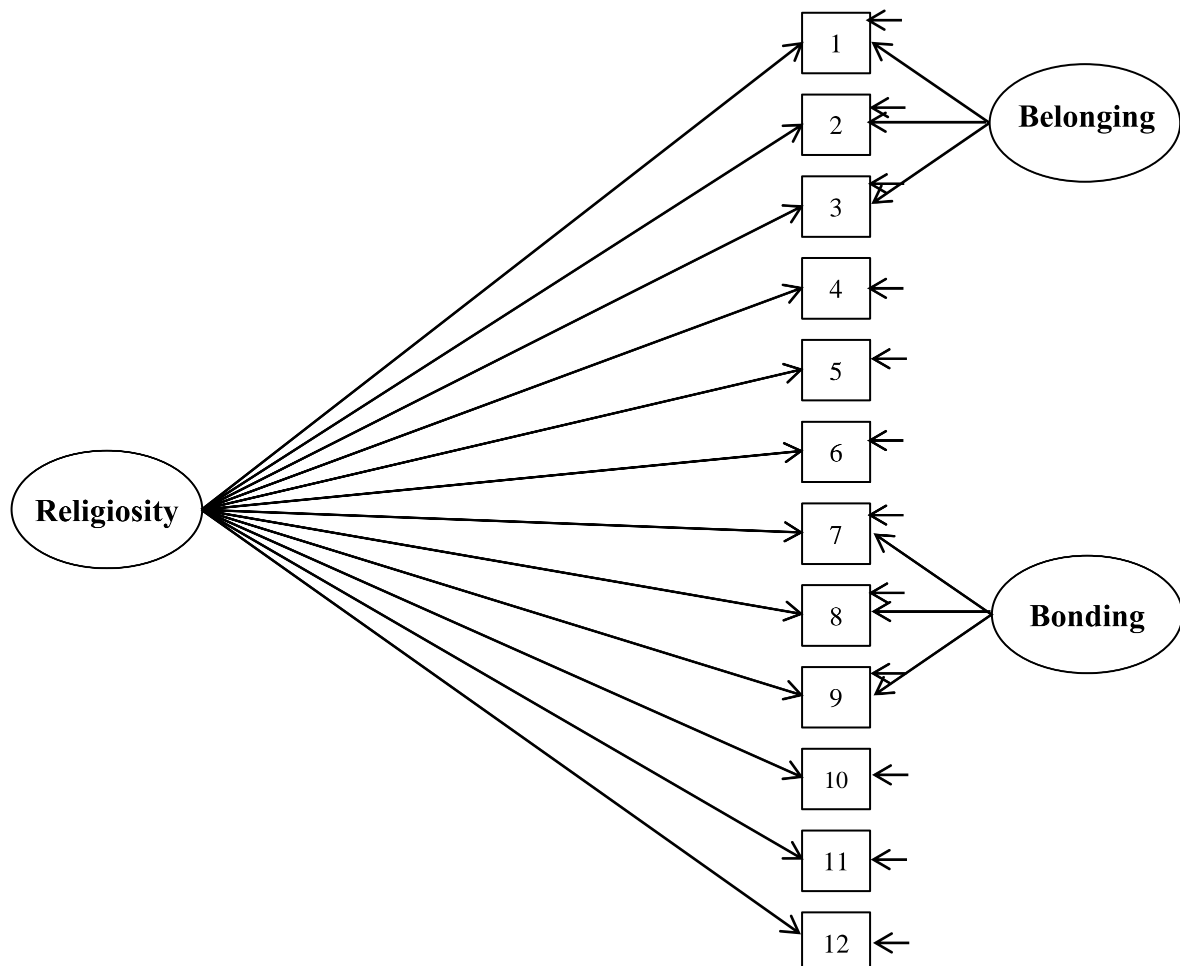
4BDRS Item	Loading		
	Religiosity	Bonding	Belonging
1. In religion, I enjoy belonging to a group/community	.67		.47
2. Belonging to a religious tradition and identifying with it is important for me	.53		.67
3. Referring to a religious tradition is important for my cultural/ethnic identity	.43		.73
4. I am attached to the religion for the values and ethics it endorses	.79		
5. Religion helps me to try to live in a moral way	.83		
6. When I've got a moral dilemma, religion helps me make a decision	.75		
7. I like religious ceremonies	.68	.47	
8. Religious rituals, activities or practices make me feel positive emotion	.75	.67	
9. Religion has many artistic, expressions, and symbols that I enjoy	.47	.73	
10. I feel attached to religion because it helps me to have a purpose in my life	.78		
11. It is important to believe in a Transcendence that provides meaning to human existence	.77		
12. Religious beliefs have important implications for our understanding of human existence	.83		

Note. N = 209. All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$

Measurement invariance between the Italian and Belgian sample: 4BDRS. The CFAs conducted on the 4BDRS in the Italian and the Belgian sample showed a factorial structure different from the hypothesised one: both samples had a bi-factorial structure with a general religiosity factor and two group factors concerning the emotional (bonding) and social (belonging) function of religiosity (Figure 8).

Figure 8

The Bi-Factor Model of the Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale in the Italian and Belgian Sample



This bi-factor model was tested in a multi-group CFA to assess the measurement invariance across the Italian and the Belgian sample The fit of all the models from the least constrained (the configural model) to the most restricted (the uniqueness model) was excellent. According to the fit criteria of the multi-group CFA, measurement invariance was reached in each step: comparison between the metric and the configural model showed that all the fit criteria were good, except the ΔSRMR. According to Chen (2007), the measurement invariance is reached when the fit criteria are satisfactory for the ΔCFI and at least one among the ΔRMSEA or ΔSRMR, as happened in this case. The results of the other two tests of measurement invariance (scalar model and uniqueness model) were excellent because all the fit criteria were acceptable, confirming that the Italian and the Belgian sample considered the religiosity scale in the same way, including the group factors of bonding and belonging (Table 11).

Table 11

Measurement Invariance of the Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale

Model across samples	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δ df	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔSRMR
Configural invariance	146.543*	96	.048	.965	.043	-	-	-	-	-
Metric invariance	166.268*	111	.047	.961	.074	23.806	15	-.001	-.004	.031
Scalar invariance	177.873*	120	.046	.959	.076	14.122	9	-.001	-.002	.002
Invariant uniquenesses	189.384*	132	.044	.960	.080	16.755	12	-.002	.001	.004

Note. RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual. $^*p < .05$

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation. Before going into detail about the analyses of the remaining instruments, it is worth noting that the items of the VIA and the PRD were defined as ordinal variables. As explained in the data analysis section, treating these variables as order categorical data required switching the method of estimation from MLMV to WLSMV; moreover, in the assessment of measurement invariance only two models need to be compared: the least constrained model (configural) and the model that constrained both the factor loadings and the intercepts (or thresholds; scalar) to be equal (for more details, see Bowen & Masa, 2015).

VIA in the Italian Sample. According to the bidimensional model of acculturation and based on previous psychometric studies on the VIA in the Italian context (e.g., Testa et al., 2019), a two-factor model was estimated to test the factorial structure of the scale. In this and in the following models, the loading of one item for each latent factor was set to 1.0 to fix the scale of the latent variables. The fit of the model was unsatisfactory: χ^2 (169) = 917.5, p < .05; RMSEA = .136 (90% CI = .127, .145); CFI = .717; WRMR = 2.00. Although the standardized loadings were all acceptable on the two latent dimensions of heritage and mainstream, the badness of fit signalled the need for modifications. Regarding the MIs and the formulation of the items, the model was re-tested with several new parameters. By means of a step-by-step process, the following items of the mainstream subscale were allowed to load also on the heritage orientation factor: “I often participate in mainstream Italian cultural tradition” “ I would be willing to marry a typical Italian person”, and “I often behave in ways that are typically Italian”. While the fit of the refined model including these three secondary loadings was better than that of the previous model, it still was not acceptable: χ^2 (166) = 686.0, p < .05; RMSEA = .114 (90% CI = .105, .123); CFI = .804; WRMR = 1.64, but the three secondary loadings were negative as theoretically expected. To further improve the fit

of the model, several residual correlations were estimated in accordance with the MIs and the item contents. To summarize, the following five pairs of items showed residual correlations: the two items investigating the choice of friendship (“I am interested in having friends from my native/Italian culture”); the two items investigating the preference of entertainment (“I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my native/Italian culture”); the two items investigating the preference of light humour (“I enjoy the jokes and humour of my native culture” with “I enjoy typical Italian jokes and sense of humour”); the choice of having co-ethnic friends with being with co-ethnic people (“I am interested in having friends from my native culture” with “I enjoy social activities with people from the same native culture as myself”); finally, again the preference of being with co-ethnic people and the acceptance to be with co-ethnic people (“I enjoy social activities with people from the same native culture as myself” with “I am comfortable working with people of the same native culture as myself”). The fit of this last model was good: χ^2 (161) = 401.6, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .079 (90% CI = .069, .089); CFI = .909; WRMR = 1.20. The standardized loadings on the two acculturation orientation factors were all satisfactory in size and statistically significant (Table 12). The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the Heritage and Mainstream in the Italian sample was .85 and .77, respectively.

Table 12

Standardized Loadings for the Bidimensional Model of Acculturation in Italy

VIA item	Loading	
	Heritage	Mainstream
1. I often participate in my native cultural traditions	.63	
2. I often participate in mainstream Italian cultural traditions	-.42	.61
3. I would be willing to marry a person from my native culture	.61	
4. I would be willing to marry a typical Italian person	-.37	.48
5. I enjoy social activities with people from the same native culture as myself	.57	
6. I enjoy social activities with typical Italian people		.64
7. I am comfortable working with people of the same native culture as myself	.70	
8. I am comfortable working with typical Italian people		.57
9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my native culture	.61	
10. I enjoy Italian entertainment (e.g. movies, music)		.44
11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my native culture	.74	
12. I often behave in ways that are typically Italian	-.30	.80
13. It is important for me to maintain or develop the cultural practices of my native culture	.75	
14. It is important for me to maintain or develop Italian cultural practices		.62
15. I believe in the values of my native culture	.65	
16. I believe in mainstream Italian values		.57
17. I enjoy the jokes and humour of my native culture	.56	
18. I enjoy typical Italian jokes and sense of humour		.47
19. I am interested in having friends from my native culture	.65	
20. I am interested in having typical Italian friends		.53

Note. N = 240. Model estimates included 5 residual correlations: .78 (item 19 and 20); .54 (item 19 and 5); .46 (item 9 and 10); .39 (item 17 and 18); .46 (item 5 and 7). All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .001$.

VIA in the Belgian Sample. A two factor model was tested in the Belgian sample to assess the factorial structure of the VIA items. For this and subsequent models, the loading of one item for each latent factor was fixed to 1.0 for identification purposes. The fit of the model was unsatisfactory: χ^2 (169) = 829.0, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .137 (90% CI = .127, .146); CFI = .713; WRMR = 1.96. With the support of the MIs and the item contents, the model was refined to allow three items to load on the other latent factor one at a time. These three items were the same as the ones that emerged in the Italian sample (for details on the content of these items, see the previous paragraph). However, the fit of this model was unsatisfactory: χ^2 (166) = 802.0, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .135 (90% CI = .126, .145); CFI = .723; WRMR = 1.88. To improve the fit of the model, according to the MIs and their content, several residual correlations were relaxed. Specifically, the same five pairs of residual correlations in the Italian sample were included (for details on the item content, see above). In addition, a sixth pair of items and their residual correlation were included in the model. This item pair concerned the relevance of Belgian traditions with the importance an individual gives to Belgian values ("It is important for me to maintain or develop Belgian cultural practices" with "I believe in mainstream Belgian values"). After these modifications, the fit of the model was satisfactory: χ^2 (160) = 345.1, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .074 (90% CI = .064, .085); CFI = .919; WRMR = 1.12. The standardized loadings were all acceptable and statistically significant (Table 13). The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the Heritage and Mainstream in the Belgian sample was .86 and .78, respectively.

Table 13

Standardized Loadings for the Bidimensional Model of Acculturation in Belgium

VIA item	Loading	
	Heritage	Mainstream
1. I often participate in my native cultural traditions	.67	
2. I often participate in mainstream Italian cultural traditions	-.23	.84
3. I would be willing to marry a person from my native culture	.63	
4. I would be willing to marry a typical Italian person	-.22	.43
5. I enjoy social activities with people from the same native culture as myself	.52	
6. I enjoy social activities with typical Italian people		.61
7. I am comfortable working with people of the same native culture as myself	.53	
8. I am comfortable working with typical Italian people		.68
9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my native culture	.43	
10. I enjoy Italian entertainment (e.g. movies, music)		.54
11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my native culture	.64	
12. I often behave in ways that are typically Italian	-.15	.62
13. It is important for me to maintain or develop the cultural practices of my native culture	.73	
14. It is important for me to maintain or develop Italian cultural practices		.57
15. I believe in the values of my native culture	.72	
16. I believe in mainstream Italian values		.56
17. I enjoy the jokes and humour of my native culture	.47	
18. I enjoy typical Italian jokes and sense of humour		.45
19. I am interested in having friends from my native culture	.71	
20. I am interested in having typical Italian friends		.63

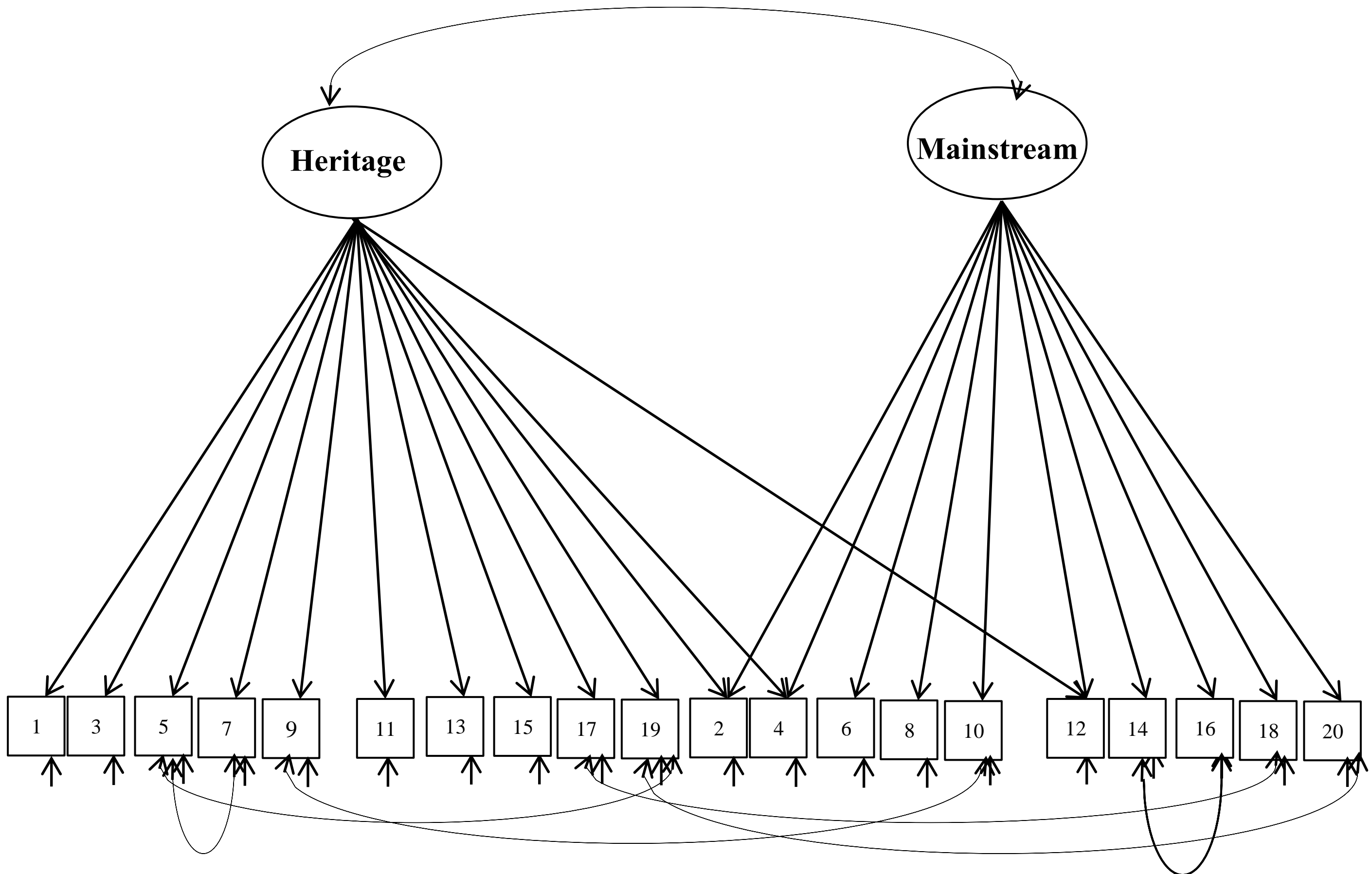
Note. N= 209; Model estimates included 6 residual correlations: .75 (items 19 and 20); .20 (items 19 and 5); .40 (items 9 and 10); .75 (items 17 and 18); .40 (items 5 and 7); .54 (items 14 and 16) All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

A Note on the Correlation Between the Two Latent Variables. In both the Italian and the Belgian sample, the correlation between the two acculturation latent factors did not reflect the expected orthogonal or, at least, a negative pattern that is often reported in the literature (Ryder et al., 2000). In both samples the correlations resulted positive and moderate (Italy = .36; Belgium = .47). Since the estimator WLSMV tended to increase the estimates (Bowen & Masa, 2015), a control analysis of the Italian and the Belgian sample defined the VIA items as continuous variables. In both samples, the model tested with the MLMV estimator showed a lower positive correlation between the two latent factors compared to the same model estimated with WLSMV. Moreover, the correlation between heritage and mainstream factors decreased when the models were re-tested without the secondary loadings on the heritage factor, demonstrating the influence of these loadings on the correlation between latent factors. Finally, according to empirical studies that reported a change in the correlation between the two latent factors with advancing age of immigrants (Goforth et al., 2014; Jurcik et al., 2013; Ryder et al., 2000), a control analysis of the median age of the total sample (24 years). showed that the correlations became higher with advancing participant age in both samples.

Measurement Invariance Between Italy and Belgium: VIA. The CFAs showed that the factorial structure of the VIA in the Italian and the Belgian sample was equal, with two latent factors defining the heritage and mainstream orientations. In addition, to obtain a satisfactory model fit, a secondary loading for three items of the mainstream subscale and some residual correlations had to be estimated (Figure 9). The only difference between the final Italian and the final Belgian model was the estimation of an additional residual correlation in the Belgian sample. With these premises, a multi-group CFA was conducted to test the measurement invariance across the two samples. As explained in the data analysis section, the test of measurement invariance with ordinal variables was estimated by comparing the least restricted model (configural) with a model that constrained both the factor loadings and the thresholds (scalar). Full measurement invariance was reached because all the fit criteria were satisfactory (Table 14). Specifically, the ratio $\Delta\chi2$ / Δdf was less than the cut-off value of 3, and both the ΔCFI and the ΔRMSEA were within the requested range.

Figure 9

The Bidimensional Model of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation in the Italian and the Belgian sample



Note. Residual correlation between items 14 and 16 only in the Belgian sample

Table 14

Measurement Invariance of Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Model across samples	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δ df	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI
Configural invariance	743.622*	321	0.077	0.914	-	-	-	-
Scalar invariance	870.563*	405	0.072	0.905	185.761	84	-.005	-.009

Note. RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; *$p < .05$

The Perceived Religious Discrimination Scale. The CFAs were conducted only on the personal form of perceived religious discrimination. As reported in the rationale of the study, the aim was to investigate to what extent Muslim second generations perceive themselves as being discriminated for religious reasons and whether such perceived discrimination is related to their acculturation. The group-perceived discrimination score was used in a preliminary analysis to verify the discriminant validity of the personal perceived discrimination score.

PRD Scale in the Italian Sample. For the three items measuring personal PRD in the workplace, public space and daily life a one-factor model was estimated by fixing one loading at 1 to set the scale of the latent variable. The model was exactly identified because it contained the same number of equations (or independent data) and free parameters and so perfectly fitted the data: χ^2 (0) = 0.0, p < .001; RMSEA = .000 (90% CI = .000, .000); CFI = 1.00; WRMR = .000. The standardized values of the factor loadings were all acceptable (Table 15). The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the perceived religious discrimination in the Italian sample was .92.

Table 15

Standardized Loadings for the Perceived Personal Religious Discrimination Scale in the Italian Sample

PRD Item	Loading
1. *I am* often discriminated when looking for a job or internship	.80
2. *I am* often discriminated in cafes and clubs	.93
3. *I am* often discriminated in daily life	.90

Note. N = 240. All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .001$

PRD Scale in the Belgian Sample. To support a one-factorial structure, the three items of the personal PRD were estimated by fixing one loading at 1 to define the scale of the latent variable. Since the model included the same number of independent data and free parameters estimated, it resulted exactly identified. The model fit was perfect: χ^2 (0) = 0.0, p < .001; RMSEA = .000 (90% CI = .000, .000); CFI = 1.00; WRMR = .000. The standardized loadings were of appreciable size (Table 16).

The omega (ω) coefficient for the reliability of the perceived religious discrimination in the Belgian sample factor was .89.

Table 16

Standardized Loadings for the Perceived Personal Religious Discrimination Scale in the Belgian sample

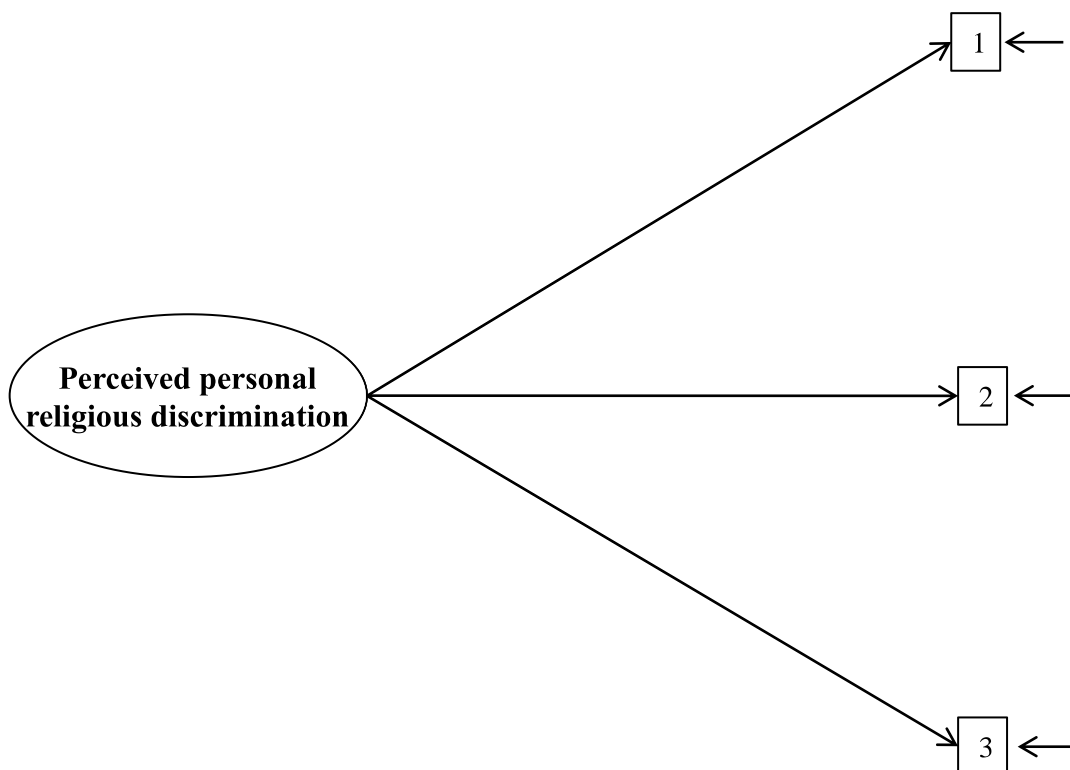
Note. N = 209. All estimates are statistically significant at $p < .001$

PRD Item	Loading
1. *I am* often discriminated when looking for a job or internship	.78
2. *I am* often discriminated in cafes and clubs	.86
3. *I am* often discriminated in daily life	.89

Measurement Invariance Between Italy and Belgium: PRD. The one-factor model was estimated by a multi-group CFA to determine whether the two scales measured the same construct across the Italian and the Belgian samples (Figure 10).

Figure 10

One-Factor Model of the Perceived Personal Religious Discrimination Scale in the Italian and the Belgian Sample



The measurement invariance was tested from the least constrained model (configural) to the most restrained model (scalar), which constrained both the factor loadings and the thresholds. Since the variables for these measures were ordinals, the intermediate metric invariance was not estimated for this multi-group CFA (Bowen & Masa, 2015). The results showed a full measurement invariance of the PRD scale across the Italian and the Belgian sample. The ratio

between $\Delta\chi^2$ and Δdf was < 3 and both the ΔCFI and the ΔRMSEA were acceptable according to the fit criteria, suggesting that the PRD in these two samples measured the same construct (Table 17).

Table 17

Measurement Invariance of the Perceived Personal Religious Discrimination Scale

Model across Italy and Belgium	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI
Configural invariance	.000*	0	.000	1.000	-	-	-	-
Scalar invariance	22.275*	10	.074	.995	22.660*	10	.074	-.005

Note. RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index; $^*p < .05$

4.4.3 Structural Model Testing

The reach of the measurement invariance of all the measures across the Italian and the Belgian sample was used for testing the hypothesized patterns of relationship across the two samples simultaneously in a multi-group approach.

Baseline model results. A baseline model was tested in which all structural parameters were freely estimated for the two samples. All the associations that the baseline model showed not to be statistically significant in both samples were fixed equal to 0 in the following models. The model tested the relationship between EQ, general factor of religiosity and its group factors (according to the bi-factor model), personal PRD and the two acculturation orientations of the VIA (heritage and mainstream), while controlling for socio-demographic variables (age, educational level, and gender). The fit of this baseline model was acceptable: χ^2 (2042) = 2770.10 $p < .001$; RMSEA = .040 (90% CI = .036, .044); CFI = .876; WRMR = 1.65. Only the CFI was slightly under the threshold value.

The standardized path coefficients partially confirmed the hypotheses for the Italian sample. In detail, the impact of the general factor of religiosity on heritage orientation was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .32$, S.E. = 0.05, $p < 0.001$). Though lower than the values for the main factor of religiosity, the religious group factors of belonging and bonding had the same statistically significant paths with heritage orientation: belonging ($\beta = .28$, S.E. = .09, $p < .001$); bonding ($\beta = .18$, S.E. = .08, $p < .05$). The association between personal PRD and heritage orientation was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .13$, S.E. = .06, $p < .05$). No other influences emerged from the other predictors for heritage orientation.

For the outcome of mainstream orientation, there was an unexpected statistically significant relationship with the general factor of religiosity ($\beta = .22$, S.E. = .08, $p < .05$), but not with the group factors of religiosity. As hypothesized, EQ positively influenced mainstream

orientation ($\beta = .39$, S.E. = .08, $p < .001$), whereas there was no relationship between personal PRD and mainstream orientation ($\beta = -.003$, S.E. = .07, $p = .970$). Among the control variables, only participant age was significantly related to mainstream orientation ($\beta = .20$, S.E. = .09, $p < .05$).

Regarding the correlations between predictors, there was a negative and statistically significant correlation between EQ and religiosity (-.34; $p < .001$) and belonging (-.35; $p < .05$), whereas there was a non-statistically significant correlation between EQ and bonding (-.03; $p = .776$). There was no significant correlation between personal PRD and any of the other predictors. The correlation between heritage and mainstream orientations was moderate and statistically significant (.40; $p < .01$). The reason for this unexpected correlation between the two acculturation orientations is explained in the previous paragraph regarding the CFAs of the VIA measure.

The Italian model explained 22.5% of heritage orientation variance and 16.2% of mainstream orientation variance.

In the Belgian sample, the standardized path coefficients partially confirmed the hypotheses. Similar to the Italian sample, heritage orientation was positively related to the general factor of religiosity ($\beta = .36$, S.E. = .05, $p < .001$) and by the two religious group factors: belonging ($\beta = .20$, S.E. = .08, $p < .05$), and bonding ($\beta = .17$, S.E. = .07, $p < .05$). Again similar to the Italian sample, there were no other significant associations with heritage orientation.

Regarding mainstream orientation, several results differed between the Belgian and the Italian sample. As expected, the main factor of religiosity showed no significant relationship with mainstream orientation ($\beta = .10$, S.E. = .07, $p = .133$), including its group factors. Contrary to the theoretical expectations, the path coefficient from the EQ to mainstream orientation was not statistically significant ($\beta = .06$, S.E. = .07, $p = .346$), while the personal PRD was negatively associated with mainstream orientation ($\beta = -.19$, S.E. = .07, $p < .05$), as

hypothesised. Among the control variables, both age ($\beta = .22$, S.E. = .08, $p < .05$) and education level ($\beta = .25$, S.E. = .07, $p < .001$) had a significant influence on mainstream orientation.

Among the model predictors, for the EQ in the Belgian sample there were negative correlations with the general factor of religiosity (-.25; $p < .001$) and belonging (-.20; $p < .01$), but not with bonding (-.09; $p = 295$). There was a positive correlation between personal PRD and belonging (.15, $p < .05$). This correlation was also present in the Italian sample, but with an opposite directionality. The correlation between heritage and mainstream was high (.62; $p < .001$). As for the Italian sample, this high correlation is commented in the paragraph on the CFAs of VIA measure.

The Belgian model explained 20.4% of heritage orientation variance and 14.4% of mainstream orientation variance.

Structural invariance results. Since the baseline model reached a satisfactory fit, a more restrictive model was tested to obtain a structural invariance across the Italian and the Belgian sample. All the relationships between predictors (general religiosity, group factors of belonging and bonding, EQ, personal PRD and the control of socio-demographic variables) and outcomes (heritage and mainstream orientations) were constrained to be equal across groups, except for relationships estimated to be equal to 0, as in the previous baseline model. As mentioned in the data analysis section, in order to reach structural invariance, this last model needed to have a satisfactory fit and meet the fit criteria compared to the more freely estimated baseline model. Furthermore, all the relationships between predictors and outcomes confirmed the hypotheses of the present study implying that the two samples could be considered similar to each other.

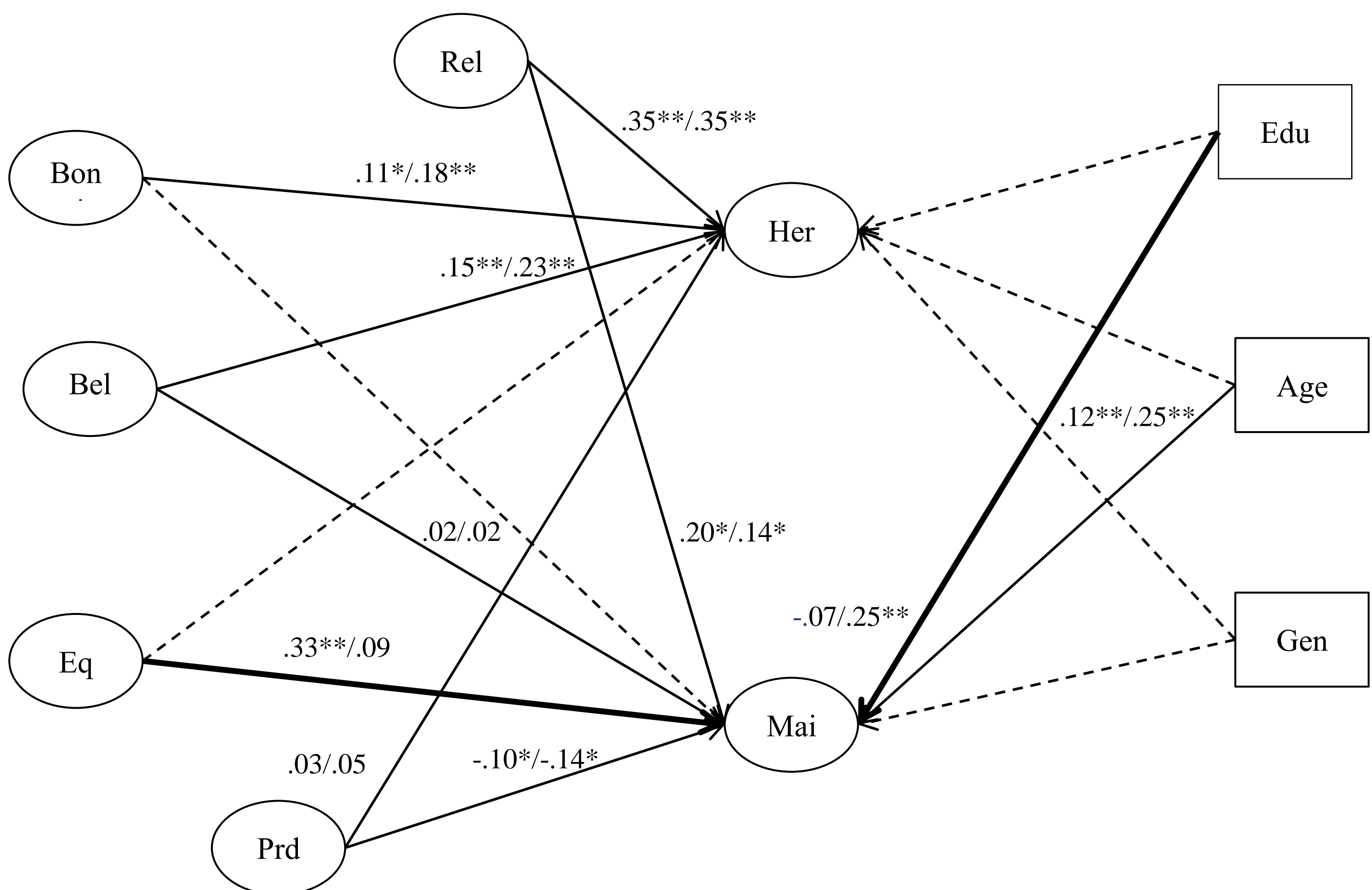
The first structural model with all the relationships constrained to be equal across the two samples showed problematic functioning in some instances. The residual variance on one item of the bonding group factors was negative in both samples. Furthermore, there was a very high correlation in the Italian sample between belonging and EQ. This problematic functioning suggested that some relationships needed to be estimated separately in the samples in a step-by-step process. Testing of a new model in which the relationships were relaxed showed different paths for the two samples in the baseline model.

The association between EQ and mainstream orientation was free to be estimated in the Italian and the Belgian sample. The fit of this model was acceptable: χ^2 (2051) = 2764.5, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .039 (90% CI = .036, .043); CFI = .879; WRMR = 1.68. Only the CFI was slightly under the cut-off. To improve the model fit the MIs and the contents of the relationships were inspected and the the relationship between educational level and mainstream was relaxed. After this modification, the fit of the model improved: χ^2 (2050) = 2751.5, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .039 (90% CI = .036, .043); CFI = .881; WRMR = 1.67). The

CFI was increased compared to the previous model, although the value was still under the cut-off. As illustrated in Figure 11 (bold arrows), the final model was estimated after relaxing the two parameters: the association between EQ and mainstream and the relationship between educational level and mainstream.

Figure 11

Results of the structural invariance model



Note. N = 449. The arrows in bold are parameters free to be estimated across samples; the arrows in dashed lines are parameters constrained to be equal to 0.
All the values are standardized.
Italian sample (results on the left); Belgian sample (results on the right);
Rel = Religiosity; Bon = Bonding; Bel = Belonging; Eq = Existential Quest; Prd = Perceived Personal Religious Discrimination; Her = Heritage; Mai = Mainstream; Edu = Educational level; Gen = Gender. ; **p* <.05; ***p* <.001

The structural invariance of the model was reached because the fit criteria emerging from the comparison between the least restricted baseline model and the most constrained structural model were all within the acceptable range (Table 18).

Table 18

Structural invariance across the Italian and the Belgian samples

Model across samples	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta\ \chi^2$	Δ df	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI
Baseline model	2770.0*	2042	.040	.876	-	-	-	-
Structural invariance	2751.5*	2050	.039	.881	9.51*	8	-.001	.005

Note. RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; CFI, comparative fit index. *$p < .05$

Regarding the content of the relationships between the predictors and the outcomes constrained to be equal across groups, the results were quite conform with the expectations. The relationships confirmed that the two samples shared similar paths between several acculturation conditions and acculturation orientations. The results (as illustrated in Figure 11 for the relationships where the arrows are not bold and dashed) are divided by sample because they report the standardized values, while they imply a unique estimated parameter because these relationships are constrained. That said, the relationship between the general factor of religiosity and heritage orientation was positive and significant, as hypothesized (β Italy = .35, S.E. = .04, $p < .001$/ β Belgium = .35, S.E. = .04, $p < .001$). However, there was an unexpected positive and significant relationship between the general factor of religiosity

and mainstream orientation (β Italy = .20, S.E. = .06, $p < .01$/ β Belgium = .14, S.E. = .04, $p < .01$). Among the relationships of the religious group factors, belonging confirmed a positive pattern of the main factor of religiosity for heritage orientation (β Italy = .15, S.E. = .05, $p < .05$/ β Belgium = .23, S.E. = .07, $p < .05$) and of bonding for heritage (β Italy = .11, S.E. = .04, $p < .05$/ β Belgium = .14, S.E. = .04, $p < .05$). Regarding mainstream orientation, there was no significant influence of the belonging group factor (β Italy = .02, S.E. = .06, $p = .770$/ β Belgium = .02, S.E. = .07, $p = .772$).

There was no significant association between the predictive role of personal PRD and heritage (β Italy = .05, S.E. = .06, $p = .406$/ β Belgium = .03, S.E. = .03, $p = .382$), whereas, as hypothesized, there was a negative and significant relationship between personal PRD and mainstream (β Italy = -.10, S.E. = .04, $p < .05$/ β Belgium = -.14, S.E. = .06, $p < .05$)

The control for socio-demographic variables (age, gender, educational level) was constrained across groups, except for those relationships constrained to be equal to 0 from the previous baseline. Only participant age had an influence on mainstream orientations (β Italy = .13, S.E. = .04, $p < .05$/ β Belgium = .25, S.E. = .07, $p < .05$).

Two parameters were relaxed to obtain a satisfactory fit of the model. As expected, there was a positive and significant relationship between EQ and mainstream orientation in the Italian sample (β = .33, S.E. = .08, $p < .05$), but not in the Belgian sample (β = .09, S.E. = .07, $p = .185$). The second and last parameter free to be estimated across the two samples was the relationship between the educational level and mainstream orientation. There was a statistically significant positive relationship in the Belgian sample (β = .25, S.E. = .07, $p < .01$), but not in the Italian sample (β = -.07, S.E. = .08, $p = .328$).

Among the correlations between acculturation conditions (including socio-demographic variables), there was a negative correlation between EQ and the the general factor of religiosity in both the Italian (-.33; $p <.001$) and the Belgian sample (-.26; $p <.001$). A similar

pattern was found between EQ and belonging with similar correlations across the samples (-.26; p <.05 in Italy; -.20; p < .05 in Belgium). However, there were no statistically significant correlations between EQ and bonding, in either the Italian (.08; p = .481) and the Belgian (.08; p = .329) sample. There were no statistically significant on the correlations between personal PRD and the other acculturation conditions (EQ, religiosity, belonging and bonding).

Finally, as observed in the baseline model, there was a positive and moderate correlation between the two acculturation orientations in the Italian (.40; p < .001) and the Belgian (.62; p < .001) sample, for the same reasons as those explained above (in the baseline model and in the CFA of the VIA measure).

The Italian model explained 16.1% of heritage orientation variance and 11.6% of mainstream orientation variance, while the Belgian model explained 22.1% of heritage orientation variance and 15.0% of mainstream orientation variance.

4.5 Discussion

The present study investigated acculturation in two groups of Muslim second generations, one living in Italy and the other in Belgium. The study was referred to the bidimensional model (Berry, 1997) which conceives acculturation as a process of change along two dimensions: heritage and mainstream cultural orientation.

On the whole, findings according to the multi-group SEM were similar for the role of certain conditions in the acculturation of the two groups. Similar results obtained for the factorial structures of the instruments used in this study and the test of measurement invariance allowed the two samples to be compared and the main hypotheses tested. The findings partially confirmed the hypotheses, while highlighting several differences between the two groups.

Regarding the factorial structures of the instruments, the scale measuring the construct of flexibility in existential quest (EQ) corroborated the results of the original study (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012) and in the preliminary validation study on Italian adults (Rizzo et al., 2019). Evidence for partial measurement invariance implies that the Italian and the Belgian samples of young Muslims interpreted the EQ scale in the same way regardless of the context where they live. The only exception that precluded assessment of a full measurement invariance across the samples was the importance of doubt in forming existential questions. The difference may stem from the composition of the two groups: the Italian sample was younger and most were university students, whereas the Belgian sample was older and already in employment. It is plausible that with advancing age and greater social responsibilities people will seek more certainties in their life. Conversely, being young and attending university may imply acceptance of doubt as part of this phase of life, in which identity and social role are being shaped. These results are in line with the Italian study that

highlighted how a readiness to engage in existential questions might have more implications for the young than for the old (Rizzo et al., 2019).

The factorial structure of the religiosity scale was expected to delineate four religious dimensions that assess moral, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects (Saroglou, 2011). The factorial structure in both samples differed slightly from previous empirical studies (Dimitrova & del Carmen Domínguez Espinosa, 2017; Kumar et al., 2020; Saroglou et al., 2020). In the present work, the final structure showed a bi-factorial solution in which only the social (belonging) and the emotional (bonding) religious dimensions clearly performed as group factors from a main factor of religiosity; the moral (behaving) and the cognitive (believing) dimensions did not emerge as distinct group factors. A possible explanation for the lack of behaving and believing as group factors may reside in the meaning that young Muslims give to religion. They follow the five pillars of Islam and assume moral behaviours that guide their daily life, such as abstinence from alcohol or wearing the veil (Hodge, 2002; Peek, 2005; Rizzo, 2020; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). In this sense, it is likely that their way of being Muslim intrinsically includes both moral and cognitive religious dimensions. The fact that the social religious dimension results as a specific group factor is consistent with previous studies that highlighted the importance for young Muslim to feel part of a religious group as a way of their religious reaffirmation and in response to the negative connotations Islam has in the public opinion (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012; Maliepaard & Lubbers; 2013; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). The emergence of an emotional religious dimension (bonding) as a specific group factor may ensue from a renewed form of symbolic religiosity (Gans, 1994), which suggests that young Muslims adopt a private and very personal way of being religious (Phalet, et al., 2012; Rizzo et al., 2020; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012). The achievement of full measurement invariance across groups implies that young Muslims observe Islam in all its aspects regardless of having been born in a Western society. These

findings add empirical evidence to the applicability of this instrument across countries according to the multidimensional perspective of religiosity (Saroglou, 2011) and to previous cross-cultural and religious studies (Dimitrova & del Carmen Domínguez Espinosa, 2017; Saroglou et al., 2020).

Findings for the acculturation scales showed good performance of two acculturation factors in both samples, one concerning heritage culture and the other mainstream culture (Ryder et al., 2000). However, these two acculturation factors were not completely independent as expected by the bidimensional model (Berry, 1997; for similar results, see Jurcik et al., 2013), which may have been due to item content: questions concerning social domains of acculturation (e.g., friendship, entertainment, humour, social activities) showed a greater correlation between heritage and mainstream culture than between other domains like cultural values and traditions. Since all respondents were second generations who grew up in a Western society, it is likely that they were unable to clearly distinguish their social relationship because they shape their connections with other people in a sort of cultural pluralism. In other words, young immigrants may experience successful integration by forming close friendships with both co-ethnic/religious and native peers, as demonstrated in previous studies on the process of school adjustment for immigrant adolescents (Alvarez Valdivia et al, 2015; Schachner et al., 2017). Evidence for full measurement invariance across the Italian and the Belgian sample on the two factor solution confirms how these young Muslims view heritage and mainstream orientation in the same way. This supports previous studies on acculturation scales that assessed how heritage and mainstream orientations performed similarly in young immigrants from different countries (Testa et al., 2019).

The results for the index of perceived religious discrimination are consistent with the literature (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). Furthermore, a

conceptual differentiation emerged between a form of personal perceived religious discrimination, based on negative episodes that participants experienced and a group that expressed its opinion about the religious discrimination perpetuated by natives against Muslims (see Bourguignon et al., 2006). This seems to agree with empirical evidence that young Muslims have been victims or witnessed of episodes of religious discrimination during their interactions with native people at school, at workplace or in public (Giuliani et al., 2018; van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The factorial structure, similar for both groups, showed that they are comparable with regard to perceived religious discrimination. The reach of full measurement invariance showed that the instrument the present study used to investigate perceived religious discrimination had the same psychometric properties in the Italian and the Belgian sample.

As expected, a positive association was found between the degree of religiosity and the maintenance of heritage culture in both samples. This is consistent with previous work that highlighted the relevance of religion in the acculturation of Muslim immigrants, especially in maintaining the heritage culture (Berry et al., 2006; Güngor et al., 2013). Previous studies showed that Muslim immigrants high levels of religiosity reinforce their bond with their culture of origin (Gattino et al., 2016; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). As in other religious minorities, religion and culture are closely intertwined in Muslim immigrants (Saroglou & Cohen, 2013). Religion is commonly "considered a powerful source of group identity for many individuals, as religious cultural norms form cognition and direct actions, providing its followers with a sense of security, a set of shared values, and group boundaries" (Tahir et al., 2019; p. 75). This close interconnection has led some scholars of acculturation to recast the dimension of heritage culture into a fusion of cultural and religious elements, or *religious culture* (Kunst et al., 2016; Tahir et al., 2019). Since both samples were second generation immigrants, the tight link between heritage culture and religion suggests that these young

Muslims are aware of the interconnection between culture and religion, coherent with the religious reaffirmation of young Muslims (Malieepaard et al., 2012; Voas & Flesichmann, 2012). Contrary to the hypothesis of secularization in modern society, which posits that young Muslims are moving away from religious practices and beliefs (Malieepaard et al., 2010), the present findings suggest a pattern in which the observance of Islamic precepts may foster the cultural continuity of new Muslim generations by encouraging respect for their culture of origin (Güngor et al., 2011).

Regarding the impact of each religious component on heritage orientation, while no significant differences were found between the main factor of religiosity and its group factors, the present study is one of the first to clearly distinguish the role of each specific religious dimensions on the process of acculturation in young Muslims (Güngor et al., 2011). Furthermore, the association between religious attitudes and heritage orientation showed similar findings for the two samples: these young Muslims regard their way of observing their religion as a process independent of the influence of the national context. This is consistent with empirical evidence that the religious reaffirmation of young Muslims in Western society is influenced by an Islamic education received during childhood by parents and the ethnic/religious community at large, such as attendance at mosque or Koran lessons since childhood (Güngor et al., 2011; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2013). In other words, becoming more or less religious is a process that second generation Muslims shape within private rather than within public secular contexts.

Given the lack of influence of Western society on religiousness for Muslim second generations, no association between religiousness and the adoption of mainstream culture was expected. Nonetheless, an unexpected positive relationship was found between the degree of religiosity and mainstream orientation in both the Italian and the Belgian sample. To explain this unusual finding, the role of flexibility in existential quest in the relationship between

religiosity and mainstream orientation was analysed. Based on other studies (van Pachterbeke et al., 2012; Uzarevic et al., 2019), a negative relationship between religiosity and flexibility in existential quest in both samples was found. It is plausible that second generation Muslims with a high level of existential flexibility are more apt to accept mainstream culture, regardless of their degree of religiosity. To test this notion, a new model that excluded flexibility in existential quest was realized. The findings confirmed that the previous association between religiosity and mainstream orientation disappeared when the existential quest was removed. This control analysis opens new perspectives for further empirical work to explore the relationship between existential quest and religiosity. It is likely that existential quest may play a mediating role in the association between religiosity and mainstream orientation.

With regard to the hypothesis for a link between personal perceived religious discrimination and acculturation orientations, the results partially supported what was expected: a negative association between perceived discrimination and adoption of mainstream culture in both groups. This is consistent with the Rejection-Disidentification Model (RDIM; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009) and previous studies that showed that young Muslims tend to distance themselves from Western society when they personally experience episodes of religious discrimination (Malieepard & Verkuyten, 2018; Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016). The normative pressures that young Muslims encounter from society may hinder their integration (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). Being born and raised in a European context, second generation Muslims have a claim on Western society but this is often problematic since natives regard them as foreigners because of their religious belonging (van Heelsum & Koomen, 2016). This has been highlighted by studies that have reported that Muslim second generations feel more discriminated than Muslim first generation, delineating a more complex experience for this new generation (Giuliani et al., 2018; Kunst & Sam, 2014; Voas

& Fleischmann, 2012). This explains, in part, why young Muslims feel disillusioned with Western society and why they adopt a coping strategy of refusing mainstream culture (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). An example of this strategy is when young Muslim women wear the veil in public as an Islamic practice and become a target of prejudice by natives (Scheible & Flesichmann, 2013; Rizzo, 2020).

While the expected association between religious perception of discrimination and mainstream orientation was confirmed in the present study, the relationship between perceived discrimination and heritage culture was not confirmed. According to the Rejection-Identification model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999; for previous results, see Berry et al., 2006), an increase in religious discrimination would be expected to force these young Muslims to strengthen their heritage culture as a coping strategy. This missed association seems to confirm the higher relevance of the RDIM on the RIM in studies on young immigrants (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). The repeated experience of religious discrimination seem to provoke in young Muslims the more powerful effect of refusing the host culture rather than reinforcing their culture of origin. However, in the baseline model, which tested the relationships with no constrains on samples, a weak positive relationship was found only in the Italian sample. Since the result related to the relationship between perceived religious discrimination and heritage orientation had been confirmed in the structural model, it is likely that the positive association between these two constructs is due to several differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of the two samples. While the Italian sample consisted mainly of university students, the Belgian sample was composed largely of participants in employment. This significant difference between second generations in Italy and Belgium reflects the immigration history of two countries. Immigration to Italy is a rather recent phenomenon, through which young Muslims are increasingly becoming part of the country's social fabric. Differently, immigration to Belgium has a longer history, as

demonstrated by the coming of a third generation of immigrants. Control analysis was carried out by splitting the Belgian sample into students and workers. The results clearly distinguished a negative link between perceived religious discrimination and mainstream for the sub-sample of workers (as confirmed in the structural model) from a positive link between such discrimination and heritage for the sub-sample of students, as found in the Italian sample. These findings suggest that, regardless of their country of reference, young Muslims attending university may cope differently with episodes of religious discrimination compared to those young Muslims who have a job. It is likely that university students will want to affirm their cultural origins as a response to unfair treatment because of their religion, as noted by empirical studies that highlighted the civic and political activation of young and highly educated Muslims in favour of the institutional recognition of Islam in Western society (Fleischmann et al., 2011). Cultural movements such as Young Muslim in Italy (GMI) represent an example of Muslim second generations that claim their religious rights. Young working Muslims may experience the disparate treatment they receive because of their religion than young Muslim students. This reflects a complex context that Muslim workers encounter, as reported in literature reviews that highlight that Muslims are often discriminated against at work because of ther religion (Ghumman, Ryan, Barclay, & Markel, 2013). For example, they may observe dietary restrictions that are usually not accepted by their supervisors (Ball & Haque, 2003) or Muslim women may not find a job because they wear the veil or have to remove it in compliance with dress-codes (Ali, Yamada, & Mahmood, 2015).

Although the above results are valid for both groups, some differences emerged between the Italian and the Belgian sample. There was a positive association between educational level and mainstream orientation only in the Belgian group. This is consistent with numerous studies that have shown that education is a key indicator of the degree of integration of

second and subsequent generations (Crul, Schnell, Herzog-Punzenberger, Wilmes, Slootman, & Aparicio Gómez, 2012; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). Educational achievements may favour the integration of upcoming generations by helping them become an integral part of Western society (Wachter & Fleischmann, 2018). Recent studies showed that highly educated young Muslims tend to adhere more to the cultural aspects of mainstream society than less educated young Muslims (Tahir et al., 2019; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Attending university may enable young immigrants to improve their learning methods based on openness and exploration of diverse viewpoints which, in turn, can help them to adopt different cultural elements (Sharif, 2019). The lack of such a relationship in the Italian sample may have been due to the homogenous educational level of the respondents. At the time of data collection, the Italian sample consisted primarily of university students which makes it impossible to define academic achievement and acculturation guidelines.

Another difference between the two samples was the association between flexibility in existential quest and mainstream orientation. The hypothesis for the positive link between these two constructs was confirmed only in the Italian sample. Being flexible about existential questions seems to help young Italian Muslims to find a path to successful integration, according to the perspective of integrative complexity in the process of acculturation (Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006). It is likely that the willingness to deal with existential issues can increase the ability of the young Muslims in the Italian sample become reflective and deal with the complexity of the cultural dissonance that they face in their daily lives. Previous studies have shown that high levels of flexibility in existential research have enabled people to engage in prosocial behaviours, for example by reducing prejudice (Uzarevic et al., 2019) or supporting moral behaviour on such controversial issues as abortion or euthanasia (Deak & Saroglou, 2015; 2017). The lack of such a relationship in the Belgian sample may have been partly due to the characteristics of the respondents. Another difference

between the two samples was the country of origin of the parents. A not negligible part of the participants (about 30%) in the Belgian sample was young Muslims from mixed households, i.e., families where only one parent was of Islamic culture. In contrast, in the Italian sample few participants grew up in a mixed household (about 5%). Following this result, the model was re-tested after excluding all participants who grew up in mixed families. The findings confirmed the structural invariance of the positive relationship between flexibility in existential quest and mainstream orientation. These results highlight the specificity of young Muslims raised in mixed households, a group still poorly studied (Cerchiaro, 2019) and that deserves attention. It is likely that they have adopted a dual cultural and religious affiliation within their families since their childhood. It is plausible that in balancing heritage culture with mainstream culture they may have to be less flexible on existential issues than the young people whit both parents of Islamic culture.

4.5.1 Limitations and Future Studies

The present study contributes to illuminating the characteristics that define the acculturation of young Muslim immigrants, a field little studied in European contexts (Güngor et al., 2013) despite the recognised need to elucidate their cultural and religious experience and "debunking some of the recurrent ideas in public discourses about the position of Muslims in Western societies" (Phalet et al., 2018; p. 40). In line with previous studies (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012), the present work advances knowledge about the relevant role of religion for young second generation Muslims in their acculturation process, because "as a form of culture with its meaning making and community building functions (Cohen, 2009), religion lies at the heart of the acculturative experience of Muslim immigrants" (Güngor et al., 2013, p. 203). Furthermore, the study introduces the relevance of flexibility in existential quest in acculturation research. Findings for the link between existential quest and acculturation, as well as the potential role of existential quest in the association between religiosity and acculturation merit attention in future studies. A further strength concerns the implementation of a cross-country comparison which takes into account the role of the national context in acculturation studies, an aspect underestimated in the current literature (Yağmur, & van de Vijver, 2012). The national context is a key element that can make a difference in the acculturation of immigrants (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

The present study provides a starting point for further research. One line of development could be to compare acculturation processes between first and second generation Muslim immigrants across European countries. For example, the association between religious dimensions and acculturation orientations presented here seems discordant with previous work on Muslim first generations (Gattino et al., 2016). In that study, the cognitive and moral aspects of religion were not associated with the maintenance of heritage culture, while the present study showed that in young Muslims there is an overall positive association between

the religious dimensions and the heritage culture. Future studies will need to specify the differences between these groups.

Its strengths notwithstanding, the study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design precludes a causal understanding of the pattern of findings. Longitudinal studies on Muslim second generations should be addressed. For example, one area of focus could be to determine whether flexibility in existential quest can have an indirect effect on the influence of religiosity on acculturation orientations, as these data suggest. Future works should also address methodological issues pertaining to the religiosity and acculturation scales because of the peculiar results for their factorial structure.

A second limitation is the homogeneity of the Italian sample in the distribution of age and educational levels that precludes further explanation of their relevant role in acculturation. Furthermore, the sample size does not allow the integration of further analyses of the role of age and education in their association with acculturation orienattions. Age and education may be considered not only as control variables but also as potential moderators in the relationship between acculturation predictors and orientations. For instance, an interaction effect on the acculturation process could be investigated between age and existential quest to better explain some of the differences in age groups and the construct of flexibility in existential quest (Rizzo et al., 2019, van Pachterbeke et al., 2012). As happens for other second generations, young Muslims encounter challenges during their transition from adolescence to adulthood that set them apart from adult Muslims which, in turn, can result in a different acculturation process. Young Muslims shape their identity during the transition from adolescence to adulthood in a period of uncertainty that may affect their degree of existential quest and its association with acculturation orientations. Both education and age are two other aspects that require further exploration in studies with larger sample sizes than in the present study. A

multi-group analysis on the base of different age and education level groups may help to elucidate the structural relationships that emerged in the present work.

Third, the sampling method did not allow for generalization. Since the research was carried out as a study on young Muslims, they were recruited mainly from public and private groups via social networks that shared the importance of being Muslim. This led to an over-representation of religious people, as confirmed by their high level of religiosity. Young Muslims who are not very religious or not religious at all are absent from the sample. However, recruiting a sufficient number of young people of Muslim origin who openly state they are non-religious can be difficult when carrying out quantitative research, as respondents may be reluctant to answer questions about their attitude towards Islam. This question can be solved by integrating qualitative studies that allow respondents to explain in depth the reasons for their rejection of Islam and to better understand their acculturation process (cf. Fedi et al., 2018). A further limitation related to the sampling method concerns the use of an online questionnaire which, among other issues, does not ensure who the respondent is. Nonetheless, the use of online data collection software has distinct advantages (Wright, 2005): data can be contemporarily collected in sevral countries, as done in the presente work; the distribution of the questionnaires can be better controlled than with paper-and-pen procedures for randomization in several versions, as well as exclusion criteria, done here for minimum age (the questionnaire automatically jumped to the last page when a respondent declared being under 18 years of age).

4.6 Conclusions and Practical Implications

This study provides some insights into the new generation of immigrants living in two different European countries and highlights the way they handle the challenge of growing up between two worlds. The findings show that among young second generation Muslims some do not want to give up their cultural and religious traditions and practices but still want to express them within a social context that is usually reluctant towards Islam and its followers. The active role that these participants play in connecting two different cultural and religious worlds needs to be supported in Western society, as it is likely that, in the coming years, one of the major changes in society will involve greater cultural and religious diversity (Serino & Saponara, 2012). This is further illustrated by the demographic projections that show continued growth of Islamic population in the near future (Pew research center, 2017).

The present study suggests areas where government policymakers and religious and cultural associations can include these new generations in Western society. The double cultural and religious belonging of Muslim second generations should be an opportunity for national governments and the European Union to implement policies in favour of cultural and religious pluralism. Such inclusive policies must take place through two different forms of recognition so as to allow young immigrants to perceive themselves as part of a larger society (Honneth, 1995). Moreover, legal recognition is a legislative form of recognition that ensures immigrants their rights, while the social recognition is a more complex form based on the recognition of the individual qualities of immigrants. Social recognition implies esteem and respect for immigrants through the recognition of their achievements and needs. In contemporary societies, being stigmatised as foreigner or terrorist because of ethnic origin makes it very difficult for these young people to feel socially recognised for their individual qualities. In addition, this lack of recognition may also have consequences for daily life, such as difficulty in finding a job or managing relationships in the workplace. In order to

overcome these problems, it is necessary that these people be socially recognized by natives. This form of recognition can be fostered through educational programs that promote positive valorisation of cultural pluralism, which begins in childhood. Schools are one of the major contexts in which intercultural contact and acculturation develop (Schachner et al., 2017). School curricula that emphasise cultural pluralism are the first step to reduce the tension linked to racial and religious discrimination and to improve intercultural relations and the psychological well-being of young immigrants. In addition, educational programmes should foster an attitude of openness toward other perspectives and social recognition of the individual qualities of other people, in young immigrants and their native peers. Furthermore, the promotion of flexibility in existential quest may enhance the capability of young students to reflect on issues in different cultural perspectives. As pointed out by Rumianowska (2020, p. 263), the relevance of reflecting on existential issues in schools may “inspire individuals to become themselves, to become more reflexive, self-aware, emphatic and more human”.

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List of Appendix

Appendix A

Written informed consent

Italian version

Benvenuto e grazie per la sua disponibilità a far parte della nostra ricerca.

La ricerca per cui abbiamo chiesto la Sua collaborazione riguarda il rapporto tra le persone e i contesti di vita e si svolge in collaborazione con l'Università di Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgio). A Torino il referente della ricerca è Marco Rizzo (marco.rizzo@unito.it) a cui può rivolgersi per qualsiasi chiarimento.

La ricerca risponde agli standard etici e di riservatezza previsti (è anonima e i risultati saranno utilizzati solo a fini di ricerca e non saranno comunicati a terzi ai sensi del D.Lgs 196/2003). Il team di ricerca conoscerà soltanto il suo indirizzo IP, al fine di evitare che chi partecipa allo studio risponda più volte al questionario.

Le chiediamo gentilmente di rispondere a tutte le domande, può comunque interrompere la compilazione in qualsiasi momento, senza dover dar conto della sua decisione.

Occorrono all'incirca 20 minuti per rispondere a tutte le domande del questionario.

Per partecipare allo studio è necessario avere almeno 18 anni.

Ho compreso le informazioni e:

- Sono d'accordo a partecipare allo studio
- Non sono d'accordo a partecipare allo studio

French version

Bienvenue et merci de votre intérêt à prendre part à nos recherches.

Cette étude fait partie d'un projet de recherche du département de psychologie de l'Université de Louvain (Belgique) en collaboration avec l'Université de Turin (Italie).

Le but de la recherche est d'examiner certains arguments dans le domaine social comme la culture et la religion sur les Belges d'origine étrangère.

L'enquête est anonyme et personne ne saura votre identité. (Seule votre adresse IP sera connue des chercheurs, la seule raison est d'éviter les doubles réponses des mêmes participants). Nous vous prions donc de bien vouloir répondre à toutes les questions de manière ainsi, il est préférable de ne pas commencer l'enquète si vous risquez d'être interrompu.afin de garantir la qualité scientifique des résultats. Toutefois, si vous ne souhaitez pas répondre à l'une des questions, vous pouvez le faire, voire même quitter le sondage à tout moment sans avoir à justifier votre décision.

Les risques et les inconforts liés à la présente étude ne dépassent pas ceux de la vie quotidienne. Il faut environ 20 minutes pour répondre à l'ensemble du sondage.

Il est important que vous remplissiez le sondage en une seule fois. Ainsi, il est préférable de ne pas commencer l'enquète si vous risquez d'être interrompu. Veuillez noter que vous devez avoir 18 ans ou plus pour participer à l'étude. Pour toute question ou information sur cette enquête, n'hésitez pas à envoyer un courrier électronique à marco.rizzo@unito.it

Je comprends les informations ci-dessus et:

- Je suis d'accord avec ma participation à l'étude
- Je ne suis pas d'accord avec ma participation à l'étude

Appendix B

Measures of the questionnaire

Italian version

Four Basic Religiousness Dimensions Scale (4BDRS)

Può essere interessato o no alla religione per diverse ragioni. Per ogni affermazione, indichi la misura con cui è d'accordo o in disaccordo con essa, tenendo presente che:

1 = Completamente in disaccordo

7 = Completamente in accordo

Rispetto alla religione, sono contento/a di appartenere a una comunità/gruppo

Appartenere a una tradizione religiosa e identificarmi con essa è importante per me

Il riferimento a una tradizione religiosa è importante per la mia identità etnica/culturale

Sono legato/a alla religione per i valori e l'etica che esprime

La religione mi aiuta a cercare di vivere seguendo la morale

Quando ho un dilemma morale la religione mi aiuta a prendere una decisione

Mi piacciono le cerimonie religiose

I rituali, le attività e le pratiche religiose mi suscitano emozioni positive

La religione ha molti simboli e espressioni artistiche che mi piacciono

Mi sento legato/a alla religione perché mi aiuta ad avere uno scopo nella vita

È importante credere nella Trascendenza che dia senso all'esistenza umana

Le credenze religiose hanno implicazioni importanti per la nostra comprensione dell'esistenza umana

Existential Quest (EQ)

Qui di seguito troverà alcune affermazioni con le quali si può essere d'accordo o in disaccordo. Per cortesia, indichi la misura con cui è d'accordo o in disaccordo, tenendo presente che:

1 = Completamente in disaccordo

7 = Completamente in accordo

Ad oggi, mi pongo ancora delle domande sul significato e lo scopo della mia vita

Sulla base delle esperienze della mia vita, il mio approccio verso la religione/spiritualità probabilmente cambierà

Mettere in dubbio le proprie convinzioni e rivalutarle è una caratteristica positiva

Penso che il dubbio abbia un ruolo importante nelle domande esistenziali

Il mio modo di vedere il mondo sicuramente cambierà ancora

La mia opinione su molti argomenti varia

Ho ben presente qual è lo scopo della mia vita (*)

Passano gli anni ma il mio modo di vedere il mondo non cambia (*)

Spesso rivaluto la mia opinione sulle credenze religiose/spirituali

(*) reverse-scored item

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Di seguito troverà alcune affermazioni che si riferiscono alla sua cultura d'origine, ovvero alla cultura che fa parte della sua tradizione e che l'ha influenzato/a di più (senza considerare quella italiana). Questa potrebbe essere la cultura del suo Paese di nascita, la cultura nella quale è cresciuto/a, o un'altra cultura che fa parte della sua vita. Se ci sono più culture, scelga quella che l'ha influenzato/a di più (es., marocchina, egiziana, tunisina...). Se sente di non avere una particolare cultura d'origine, per cortesia pensi ai suoi genitori e provi ad identificare la cultura che potrebbe avere avuto un impatto maggiore su di loro.

Per cortesia legga con attenzione ed indichi quanto è d'accordo o in disaccordo con ciascuna affermazione:

1 = Fortemente in disaccordo

2 = In disaccordo

3 = Né in accordo né in disaccordo

4 = In accordo

5 = Fortemente in accordo

Spesso seguo le usanze della mia cultura d'origine

Spesso seguo le usanze della cultura italiana

Sarei disposto/a a sposare una persona della mia cultura d'origine

Sarei disposto/a a sposare una persona italiana

Mi piace trascorrere del tempo con persone della mia cultura d'origine

Mi piace trascorrere del tempo con persone italiane

Sono a mio agio quando ho a che fare con persone della mia cultura d'origine

Sono a mio agio quando ho a che fare con persone italiane

Mi piacciono i film e la musica della mia cultura d'origine

Mi piacciono i film e la musica italiana

Spesso mi comporto nei modi tipici della mia cultura d'origine

Spesso mi comporto nei modi tipici italiani

E’ importante per me mantenere o sviluppare le abitudini della mia cultura d'origine

E’ importante per me mantenere o sviluppare le abitudini culturali italiane

Credo nei valori della mia cultura d'origine

Credo nei valori italiani più comuni

Apprezzo l’umorismo e il modo di scherzare della mia cultura d'origine

Apprezzo l’umorismo e il modo di scherzare degli italiani

Mi interessa avere amici della mia cultura d'origine

Mi interessa avere amici italiani

Perceived religious discrimination (PRD)

Per cortesia legga le seguenti affermazioni e per ciascuna indichi quanto è vicina alla sua posizione, tenendo presente che:

1 = Per niente

5 = Del tutto

Il mio gruppo religioso è spesso discriminato quando cerca un lavoro o un tirocinio

Il mio gruppo religioso è spesso discriminato nei bar e nei locali

Il mio gruppo religioso è spesso discriminato nella vita di tutti i giorni

Sono spesso discriminato quando cerco un lavoro o un tirocinio a causa della mia religione

Sono spesso discriminato nei bar e nei locali a causa della mia religione

Sono spesso discriminato nella vita di tutti i giorni a causa della mia religione

French version

Four Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale (4BDRS)

La religion peut vous intéresser ou non pour différentes raisons. Merci d’être le plus précis possible en répondant à ces questions au sujet des raisons de votre intérêt éventuel pour la religion.

L’échelle s’interprète comme suit:

1 = Pas du tout 7 = Tout à fait

Appartenir à une tradition religieuse et s'y identifier est important pour moi

J'apprécie appartenir à un groupe/communauté religieuse

La référence à une tradition religieuse est importante pour mon identité culturelle/ethnique

Je suis attaché à la religion pour les valeurs et l'éthique qu'elle prône

La religion m'aide à vivre de façon morale

La religion m'aide à prendre une décision dans les dilemmes moraux

J'aime les cérémonies religieuses

Les rituels, activités et pratiques religieux me procurent des émotions positives

La religion a des formes d'expression et des symboles artistiques que j'apprécie

Je suis attaché à la religion parce qu'elle m'aide à avoir un but dans la vie

Il est important de croire en une Transcendance qui donne du sens à l'existence humaine

Les croyances religieuses influencent de manière importante notre compréhension de l'existence humaine

Existential Quest (EQ)

Vous trouverez ci-dessous certaines déclarations avec lesquelles vous pouvez être d'accord ou non.

S'il vous plaît lisez les questions suivantes et mettez une croix sur le chiffre qui correspond à la réponse qui vous convient le plus. L'échelle s'interprète comme suit:

1 = Pas du tout 7 = Tout à fait

Aujourd'hui, je me pose toujours des questions sur le sens et le but de ma vie

Mon attitude par rapport à la religion/spiritualité est susceptible de changer en fonction de mes experiences

Pouvoir douter de ses convictions et les remettre en question est une qualité

Pour moi, le doute est important quant aux questions existentielles

Ma façon de voir le monde va certainement encore changer

Il y a beaucoup de sujets pour lesquels mon point de vue change

Le but de ma vie m'apparaît clairement (*)

Même si les années passent, ma façon de voir le monde ne change pas (*)

Je remets souvent en question mon avis sur les croyances religieuses/spirituelles

(*) reverse-scored item

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Les questions qui suivent font référence à votre culture d'héritage, c'est-à-dire la culture qui vous a le plus influencé-e (autre que la culture Belge). Cela pourrait être la culture de votre naissance, celle dans laquelle vous avez été élevé-e, ou une autre culture qui a fait partie de votre milieu. S'il existe plusieurs de ces cultures, choisissez celle qui vous a le plus influencé-e. S'il ne vous semble pas avoir été influencé-e par une autre culture, alors veuillez identifier une culture qui aurait pu influencer les générations précédentes de votre famille.

Veuillez répondre à chaque question ci-dessous aussi attentivement que possible en indiquant l'étiquette qui indique votre degré d'accord ou de désaccord

1 = Fortement en désaccord

2 = En désaccord

3 = Neutre/Ça dépend

4 = En accord

5 = Fortement en accord

Je participe souvent aux traditions de ma culture d'héritage

Je participe souvent aux traditions de la culture dominante Belge

Je serais prêt(e) à épouser une personne de ma culture d'héritage

Je serais prêt(e) à épouser une personne Belge

J'aime participer à des activités sociales avec des gens ayant la même culture d'héritage que moi

J'aime participer à des activités sociales avec des Belge typiques

Je me sens à l'aise lorsque je travaille avec des personnes de la même culture d'héritage que moi

Je me sens à l'aise lorsque je travaille avec des Belge typiques

J’apprécie les divertissements (par exemple, films, musique) de ma culture d'héritage

J’apprécie les divertissements Belge (par exemple, films, musique)

Je me comporte souvent de façon typique à ma culture d'héritage

Je me comporte souvent de façon typiquement Belge

Il est important pour moi de maintenir ou de développer les pratiques de ma culture d'héritage

Il est important pour moi de maintenir ou de développer les pratiques de la culture Belge

Je crois en les valeurs de ma culture d'héritage

Je crois en les valeurs de de la culture Belge

J’apprécie les plaisanteries ainsi que l’humour de ma culture d'héritage

J’apprécie les plaisanteries ainsi que l’humour typiquement Belge

Je suis intéressé-e à avoir des amis ayant la même culture d'héritage que moi

Je suis intéressé-e à avoir des amis Belge

Perceived religious discrimination (PRD)

S'il vous plaît lisez les questions suivantes et mettez une croix sur le nombre qui correspond à la réponse qui vous convient le plus. L’échelle s’interprète comme suit:

1 = Pas du tout

5 = Tout à fait

Mon groupe religieux est souvent discriminé lors de la recherche d'emploi ou d'un stage

Mon groupe religieux est souvent discriminé dans les cafés et les clubs

Mon groupe religieux est souvent discriminé dans la vie quotidienne

Je suis souvent discriminé lors de la recherche d'emploi ou d'un stage à cause de ma religion

Je suis souvent discriminé dans les cafés et les clubs à cause de ma religion

Je suis souvent discriminé dans la vie quotidienne à cause de ma religion