

# Filipino immigration.

## A study with a group of second generation.

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**Abstract—** In Italy the Filipino immigration started during the Seventies and it became stabilized during the years (Annual Report, 2014) thanks to several factors that have bolstered their presence (Ambrosini & Buccarelli, 2009). Recently, after the increase of Filipino first generation nuclear families, the presence of Filipino second generation has risen (representing 21.5% of the entire community). Regarding these young people the double cultural belonging is a relevant question that involves complex dynamics of social identity's (Tajfel, 1981) development. The aim of our study was to analyze the representational framework of a Filipino second generation's group on: heritage and the Italian culture; perceived well-being; groups and identity dimensions. Data have been collected through the administration of a semi-structured questionnaire in a face to face setting. Results pointed out a framework characterized by a reasonable tendency to biculturalism.

**Keywords—** second generation, biculturalism, social identity, acculturation, well-being.

## I. Introduction

In last decades Italy changes from a country of emigration to a place of immigration, becoming a transit or target nation of increasingly intense migration flows (Bonifazi, 1998).

In Italy the Filipino immigrant community is one of the foreign communities with the highest migration seniority. Moreover, among Italians this group seems characterized by a positive social representation for different reasons: the stereotype that depicts Filipinos as mild and reliable; because a lot of them have valid residence permit; for many cultural similarities with Italians (e.g. religion); for many long-lasting working relationships they have with Italians (Acocella & Radini, 2009).

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Filipino emigration was predominantly female and it was recently characterized by processes of family reunion both with husbands and children (Zanfrini & Asis, 2006).

These young people (some of whom were born in Italy) could be identified by social category of second generation. It includes migrant children who were born in Italy or in their country of origin, some of whom began their education here, while others did not; minors who came to Italy without parents or relatives – refugees and adopted children; or children of a mixed marriage (Favaro, 2000:63).

The significant and growing presence of second generation imposes a reflection on acculturation (Redfield, Linton & Herskovitz, 1936; Liebkind, 2001;) and on identity development processes (Damigella & Licciardello, 2014).

In detail, acculturation refers to bidirectional change that occurs when two different ethno-cultural groups come into prolonged contact, influencing each other and leading to cultural changes that involve individuals, groups and socio-cultural contexts. These changes come about through a long-term process, sometimes taking years, generations or centuries. Sometimes these mutual adaptations take place rather easily but they can also create culture conflict and acculturative stress during intercultural interactions (Berry, 2005).

With regard to second generation we could intend acculturation as a process that occurs rather than between two ethno-cultural groups within the same subject who belongs at least to two cultural systems.

In this framework, a relevant question is related to Social Identity (Tajfel, 1981) as the self-image that derives from belonging to a group (or groups), combined with the value and the emotional meaning associated with membership.

As argued by Liebkind (1992), identity is not stable and defined once and for all, it is the result of personal and interpersonal processes and of negotiation on contents of identity and on values associated to it.

It is in line with the concept of biculturalism that postulates: “a culture is never internalized as an integrated and general structure [...] but it is rather an interrelated ‘network’ of knowledge and structures [...] so individuals can acquire more than a cultural system, although these systems contain contradictory theories and structures” (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000:713).

However, as stated by Giguère Lalonde and Lou (2010), biculturalism may induce conflicts that can be: at *intergroup* level when individuals are categorized by others as belonging to an outgroup on the basis of a social categorization such as

skin colour, accent etc.; at *interpersonal* level when conflict is within the individual whose experience is of 'feeling torn' between two cultures; at *cultural* level when heritage and mainstream culture offer incompatible behavioural norms. These conflicts are less likely to be realized when there are many similarities between different cultural groups' norms.

## II. Method

### A. Aim and hypothesis

The aim of this study was to explore the representational framework that a group of Filipino second generation youths has on: heritage and Italian culture; perceived well-being; some identity and group dimensions. Specifically, it was intended to test the hypothesis that these representations are affected by the time they spend in Italy, the Country where they were born (Italy or Philippines) and the overlap between cultural identity and heritage or Italian language.

### B. Participants

Research was carried out with a group of Filipino second generation youths (N. 55; M= 43.6% F= 56.4%; age range 13-32, M=19.7) living in a Sicilian town. In relation to professed religion most of them are Catholic (89.1%).

Many participants (69.1%) were born in Italy and the remaining part (30.9%) in the Philippines. The latter spend in Italy from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 29 years (M=13.89). In relation to Italian citizenship, more than half (63.6%) declared not having it and 36.4% has it. Half (50.9%) of those who did not have Italian citizenship thought of acquiring it in the future.

### C. Materials and techniques

Data was collected by a questionnaire containing: I) background questions aimed at collecting specific data in order to draw an appropriate profile of respondents' socio-cultural features, useful as research variables (Licciardello, 1994); II) two group of items, one group in order to measure the representational framework related to heritage and Italian culture (1=*total disagreement*; 7=*total agreement*, with 4='midpoint') and the other one to measure the identification with different contexts (1=*not at all*; 4=*very much*); III) a self-esteem scale (1=*total disagreement*; 4=*total agreement*) in order to measure the perceived psychological well-being (Rumbaut, 1994); IV) the Inclusion of the Other in Self Scale (Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992; Schubert & Otten, 2002) consisting of eight circular graphics symbols, each representing a different degree of overlap between cultural identity and language (1=*distant*, 8=*complete overlapping*); V) four Semantic Differentials (Di Nuovo & Licciardello, 1997) concerning attitudes on Actual Self ("As I am"); Future Self

("As I will be"); ingroup (*Filipino peers*); outgroup (*Italian peers*).

The materials were administered by the researcher in a face to face setting using snow-ball method.

### D. Procedures

Data analysis was carried by SPSS 20 for Windows, using MANOVA and Pearsons's "r" for correlation analysis. We calculated the mean values of each item for the data obtained with the questionnaire. Regarding the Semantic Differentials, we calculated the: 1) reliability with Cronbach's alpha: Actual Self ( $\alpha=.835$ ), Future Self ( $\alpha=.890$ ), ingroup ( $\alpha=.901$ ), outgroup ( $\alpha=.904$ ); 2) and the average sum of each pair of opposite adjectives scores.

## III. Results

### A. Attitudes on Heritage and Italian culture

Regarding data of the Inclusion of the Other in Self Scale, respondents revealed moderate overlap between cultural identity and both Italian ( $M=5.04$ ) and heritage ( $M=5.02$ ) language. However, participants who were born in Philippines expressed less overlap between cultural identity and Italian language than those who were born in Italy ( $M=3.65$  vs.  $M=5.66$ ) ( $p=.008$ ).

In general, respondents (MANOVA with 3 Within factors  $DF=2,108$   $F=1.15$   $p<.001$ ) approved moderately both the item on a close feeling with heritage culture ( $M=5.05$ ) and on the preference to maintain some heritage culture aspects in family context and the Italian culture in relationships with peers ( $M=5.02$ ). Slightly lower score was given to the tendency to select and include aspects of the two culture that are more similar to personal way of thinking ( $M=4.80$ ).

These data seem to be confirmed by those on identification with different contexts (MANOVA with 5 Within factors  $DF=4,216$   $F=4.67$   $p<.001$ ). Specifically, participants identify fairly themselves with parents' country of origin ( $M=3.13$ ) and with a lesser extent with the town where they live ( $M=3.04$ ). Less valued was the identification with Italian ( $M=2.80$ ), Sicilian ( $M=2.73$ ) and European ( $M=2.53$ ) contexts. In detail, those who were born in Philippines identify themselves with parents' country of origin more than participants who were born in Italy ( $M=3.59$  vs.  $M=2.92$ ) ( $p=.008$ ).

Moreover, participants (MANOVA with 4 Within factors  $DF=3,162$   $F=23.50$   $p<.001$ ) approved moderately the item on improvement and maintaining the two cultures ( $M=5.51$ ) and with a lesser extent on the consideration of people as individuals rather than as members of a cultural groups ( $M=4.71$ ). They rejected both options of preserving exclusively the Italian ( $M=3$ ) or the heritage ( $M=2.91$ ) culture.

Specifically, in stating the reasons of heritage culture importance (MANOVA with 5 Within factors  $DF=4,212$   $F=4.68$   $p<.001$ ), Filipino second generation youths approved

with medium low scores the fact that it is not fair to abandon the course showed by ancestors ( $M=4.4$ ). Near to the midpoint the evaluation of heritage culture as the basis of personal identity ( $M=4.09$ ). Rejected items: "It is not a relevant question" ( $M=2.91$ ); "It is important to strive to fit in with the other culture in order to reduce, as much as possible, integration problems" ( $M=3.62$ ); "I never ask this question" ( $M=3.62$ ).

### B. *Selves and groups representations and perceived well-being*

In general, participants (MANOVA with 4 factors Within  $DF=3,162$   $F=38.59$   $p<.001$ ) seems to have a fairly good Future Self ( $M=5.23$ ) representation. Filipino peers ( $M=4.73$ ) and Actual Self ( $M=4.57$ ) are valued in a slightly positive way and the assessment of Italian peers is near the midpoint ( $M=4.13$ ). In detail, respondents who were born in the Philippines valued Actual Self and Filipino peers more than those who were born in Italy (respectively  $M=4.92$  vs.  $M=4.41$  and  $M=5.22$  vs.  $M=4.50$ ) ( $p=.005$  and  $p=.001$ ).

Moreover, participants revealed a reasonable level of self-esteem, recognizing to be able to do things as well as most of other people ( $M=3.4$ ); to identify themselves as people of value in comparison with other people ( $M=3.2$ ); to feel they possess a number of good qualities ( $M=3.13$ ); to believe they have a positive attitude towards themselves ( $M=3.02$ ); to be satisfied of themselves ( $M=2.85$ ). It is interesting to note that participants expressed a slight agreement in relation to the item "I wish I could have more respect for myself" ( $M=2.73$ ) and low level of agreement with items such as: "I feel I have nothing to be proud of me" ( $M=1.89$ ); "I am inclined to think that a I am a failure" ( $M=1.91$ ); "Sometimes I feel useless" ( $M=2.22$ ); "Sometimes I think I am not good," ( $M=2.45$ ).

### C. *Correlation analysis*

The correlation analysis between how much time participants spend in Italy and dimensions previously examined revealed that the longer the time they stay in Italy:

- a) the more they identify themselves with European ( $r=.285$ ;  $p=.035$ ) and Italian ( $r=.517$ ;  $p<.001$ ) contexts;
- b) the more they think to be able to do things as well as most of other people ( $r=.286$ ;  $p=.034$ );
- c) the less they agreed with the desire to have more respect for themselves ( $r=-.277$ ;  $p=.040$ ) and to preserve exclusively heritage culture ( $r=-.275$ ;  $p=.042$ );
- d) the less they valued Filipino peers ( $r=-.368$ ;  $p=.006$ ).

Moreover, the correlation analysis between the Inclusion of the Other in Self Scale (cultural identity and Italian language) and the Self-esteem Scale revealed that more is the overlapping between cultural identity and Italian language:

- a) the more they identify themselves with Italian context ( $r=.344$ ;  $p=.010$ );

- b) the less they arise the question on the importance to preserve heritage culture ( $r=-.286$ ;  $p=.035$ ).

The correlation between the Inclusion of the Other in Self Scale (cultural identity and parents' language) and the Self-esteem Scale and items revealed that the more is the overlapping between cultural identity and parents' language:

- a) the more they identify themselves with parent's country of origin ( $r=.425$ ;  $p=.001$ ) and less with European ( $r=-.367$ ;  $p=.006$ ) and Italian ( $r=-.288$ ;  $p=.033$ ) contexts;
- b) the more they assessed Actual ( $r=.270$ ;  $p=.046$ ) and Future ( $r=.299$ ;  $p=.027$ ) Selves;

## IV. Conclusion

Results seem to delineate a substantially positive framework with some elements of complexity.

In general, participants seem to be oriented towards biculturalism, rejecting both the hypothesis to preserve only heritage or Italian culture. Specifically, they approved moderately the idea both to improve and maintain the two cultures and to select and include aspects that are more appropriate to personal way of thinking and to specific context.

It could be referred to the concept of frame-switching (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000) that occurs when individuals alternate between different cultural interpretive frames as a function of the cues in their environment.

As Stroink and Lalonde (2009) argued, bicultural individuals are in the unique position of potentially holding two cultural social identities and navigating two potentially different cultural frameworks.

In relation to our results, the participants' moderate orientation towards biculturalism could probably be ascribed to the fact that a prevalent part of them are in adolescence age, that is in a phase of identity negotiation that could be more complex because of their dual cultural affiliation.

We have to add to this aspect that identity development processes are strictly affected by Self social roots. Specifically, we have to remember the importance of affiliation to social groups (James, 1890; Mead, 1934; Tajfel, 1981) and of interpretation of how others perceived us (Cooley, 1902).

In this regard, it could be interesting to evaluate how specific groups (e.g. Filipino first generation, Italians etc.) feel about Filipino culture in order to better understand to what extent these representations could affect Filipino second generation's attitudes both on their heritage culture and self-image.

On the basis of these considerations and according to Lewinian circular logic (1965) biculturalism would be related to different factors considered in their mutual relations and in connection with different life contexts.

Data on Selves revealed a fairly good Future Self representation and a reasonable level of self-esteem.

Some interesting differences among respondents are related to place where they were born. In fact, participants who

were born in Philippines compared to those who were born in Italy valued better Actual Self and Filipino peers, they identify more themselves with parents' country of origin, and they expressed less overlap between cultural identity and Italian language. This findings emphasize interesting differences among Filipino second generation youths. Moreover, these results are in line with those of a research with two groups of Filipino Americans (one born in America and the other in the Philippines): Philippine-born individuals identified more themselves with important aspects of heritage culture (Tuason, Taylor, Rollings, Harris & Martin, 2007).

Research hypothesis seems to be confirmed. In particular, correlation analysis revealed that: the more participants spend time in Italy better is their Self-esteem, the less they valued Filipino peers and the idea to preserve exclusively heritage culture; the more is the overlapping between cultural identity and Italian language the more they identify themselves with Italian context and the less they arise the question on the importance to preserve heritage culture; the more is the overlapping between cultural identity and parents' language the more they identify themselves with parents' country of origin and the more they assess Actual and Future Selves.

So, even to avoid possible conflicts induced by biculturalism (Giguère, Lalonde & Lou, 2010), this orientation should be supported by educational and socio-political interventions. In fact, data from an interesting research revealed that second generation adolescents who are being engaged in both their heritage culture and in the larger society are better adapted than those who acculturate by orienting themselves to assimilation, to separation or to marginalization (Sam & Berry, 1995).

Moreover, bicultural orientation has been related to psychological and social adaptation of immigrant minorities and it was found to facilitate their well-being and to foster harmonious intergroup relations (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006).

If biculturalism is found to be associated with better psychological adaptation, greater productivity and achievement, fewer interpersonal conflicts, etc., then public policy supporting biculturalism might lead to greater national success and well-being (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006).

Specifically, educational processes have an important role in promoting cognitive and relational change in favour of positive intercultural attitudes at interpersonal and intergroup level. School, in fact, could be a 'potential place' in which it is desirable to support biculturalism, to improve intergroup relationships and to reduce ethnic prejudices and stereotypes (Damigella, Licciardello & Bisicchia, 2014).

The relevance of this issue is also related to the fact that bicultural individuals have skills (e.g. bilingualism, cultural frame switching, intercultural sensitivity) that are crucial for success in our increasingly globalized world; thus, these individuals are ideal cultural mediators for intercultural conflicts and miscommunications within communities, nations, and internationally (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2007; Damigella, Licciardello & Longo, 2013; Licciardello & Damigella, 2013).

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