

Muslim immigrant parents' social status moderates the link between religious parenting and children's identification with the heritage and host culture

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## **Abstract**

This study addresses the question of whether and when religious parenting is a bridge or a barrier to Muslim immigrant children's integration. Integration was defined as children's identification with the heritage culture and the host culture. Participants included 210 self-identified Turkish-Muslim mothers, children (ages 9-14) and 115 fathers in Germany. All family members filled in questionnaires on identification with Turks and identification with Germans; in addition both parents reported on religious parenting and children on religiosity. Results of multivariate regression analyses revealed that religious parenting was negatively related to children's identification with Germans but positively related to children's identification with Turks through increased child religiosity. However, additional multiple-group analyses revealed that only the religious parenting of lower educated parents and first generation mothers reduced the likelihood of children's identification with Germans. The religious parenting of higher educated parents and second generation mothers did not affect children's identification with Germans but promoted children's identification with Turks. Taken together, the findings highlight the diverse roles of religious parenting for cultural socialization processes in Muslim immigrant families.

**Keywords:** Turkish-Muslim immigrants, integration, religious parenting, ethnic and national identity, intragroup variability, social status

Islamic religious traditions are a vital facet of life across Muslim immigrant generations and a highly valued part of the heritage culture (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004; Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet, & Maliepaard, 2013). However, public debates over immigrant integration and multiculturalism center on the incompatibility of Islamic faith traditions and Western cultural values (Foner & Alba, 2008). As second generation European Muslims become parents and a third generation is coming of age, it is of crucial importance to understand the specific role religion plays in these families' lives and their relationship with the society at-large. The present research aims to investigate whether religious parenting fosters the adherence to the culture of origin while counteracting the orientation of Muslim immigrant children toward the host country. Previous research suggests that religious parenting indirectly strengthens Muslim immigrant youth's ethnic ties as religious parents raise religious children (Güngör, Fleischmann, & Phalet, 2011; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2012), and child religiosity in turn is tightly linked to heritage culture maintenance and identification (Güngör, Bornstein, & Phalet, 2012; Verkuyten, Thijs, & Stevens, 2012). But the role of religious parenting for Muslim immigrant children's orientation towards the host culture is less clear. Some studies indicate that religious parenting can hamper the development of a host culture identity among children whereas others report that religious parenting has no effect (Güngör et al., 2012; Güngör et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 2012). We intend to shed light on these mixed findings by taking into account the social status of Muslim immigrant families within the host society. Our focus is on parental education and generation as they impact the living conditions of acculturating families in general and their perception of religion and attitudes toward cultural relations in particular (Portes & Rivas, 2011; Rumbaut, 1994). A closer look at the heterogeneity within families may therefore be a way to better understand how religious parenting shapes the involvement of Muslim immigrant children with their heritage culture and the host society.

To this end, we aim to answer two research questions: whether and how religious parenting affects Muslim immigrant children's identification with the heritage and host

culture; and under which circumstances religious parenting hampers or fosters children's identification with each culture. To address these questions, we examined how the religious parenting of self-identified Muslim mothers and fathers related to the cultural identities of children. Child religiosity was included in our model as it is likely to mediate the link between religious parenting and children's heritage culture identity (Verkuyten et al., 2012). Our focus was on Turkish-Muslim immigrants as they were found to be particularly efficient in the transmission of religious values and traditions in comparison to other Muslim immigrant groups (Güngör et al., 2011; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2012). We studied Muslim immigrant families in Germany who are likely to experience the challenge of integrating religiosity and developing a sense of belonging to the host culture as exceptionally difficult (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). In addition, Turkish-Muslims immigrants are by far the largest Muslim immigrant group in Germany with 63% of the Muslim population (Haug, Müssig, & Sticks, 2009). Fourth and seventh grade children were studied to capture a developmental period in which group identification becomes relevant to children (Marks, et al., 2007; Quintana, 1998) while religious parenting still affects youth (Taylor, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2012). An acculturation perspective was applied that focuses on the strength of group identification or immigrants' sense of belonging to ethno-cultural groups (Hutnik, 1986; Verkuyten, 2014), and the theoretical independence of immigrants' ethnic heritage culture identity and host culture identity (Berry & Sam, 1997). Social identity theory, which provides explanations for group-based identity as a function of intergroup status and power differentials (Tajfel & Turner, 2001, 2004), guided us to identify the conditions in which religious parenting may become a barrier to host culture identification.

### **Children's cultural identities and religious parenting**

It is a major undertaking for immigrant parents to keep the heritage culture alive and facilitate children's access to the host culture (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This involves,

amongst many things, the promotion of a cohesive sense of self that incorporates identification with the heritage culture and a sense of belonging to the host culture (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006; Hutnik, 1986). Well-known bi-dimensional acculturation models focus on immigrants' cultural maintenance and contact with members of the host society or adoption of its culture (Berry & Sam, 1997; Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). However, cultural identity, or the sense of belonging to a cultural group, is another important part of immigrants' acculturation process. Identity acculturation frameworks (Hutnik, 1986; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Verkuyten, 2014) capture acculturation as a means of identification that typically follows attitudinal and behavioral changes. Heritage and host culture identities are assumed to be independent dimensions indicating that each identity can be either strong or weak. There are multiple benefits of strong heritage and host culture identities. A strong heritage culture identity, for example, is beneficial for minority youths' psychological and academic adjustment (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaná-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, & Guimond, 2009); a strong host culture identity is beneficial for feelings of acceptance and positive intergroup relations (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Schaafsma, Nezlek, Krejtz, & Safron, 2010), and a bicultural identity is linked to better psychological adjustment and more positive attitudes toward members of the host society (Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001).

Muslim immigrant parents might struggle in assisting children's development of a bicultural identity due to continuing discrimination against them (Skrobanek, 2009; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008), and their own difficulties in combining a strong heritage culture identity with positive attitudes toward the host society (Verkuyten, 2014). Religious parenting might become another particular barrier to the development of integrated cultural identities as many

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Europeans and immigrant Muslims themselves perceive Western and Islamic ways of life as incompatible (Foner & Alba, 2008; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). However, there is little empirical research on whether parents pass on these troubles to their children, and even less is known about the role of religious parenting on the emerging cultural identities of children.

Religious parenting refers to parental goals and activities stressing children's conformity to religious rituals and rules (Myers, 1996). From birth to puberty, Muslim parents are held primarily responsible for the religious socialization of children. However, around the age of thirteen Muslim children become more in control of their religious behavior and less dependent on parents (Taylor, 2006; Verkuyten et al., 2012). Religious parenting involves implicit learning as parents provide an example and children imitate their parents' behaviors and practices (e.g., praying, fasting, and visiting the mosque). It further involves more purposeful socialization efforts, i.e., storytelling, religious instructions, requirements to dress modestly and enrolment in Qur'an lessons (Güngör et al., 2013). Muslims put a strong emphasis on religious parenting, perhaps to strengthen their children's resilience and effective coping with prevailing stereotypes and discrimination (Verkuyten, 2014). In the end, they are very successful in the transmission of religious attitudes and practices even if there is a lack of institutional support or social reinforcement of Islam in the host countries (Güngör et al., 2011; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2012).

While religious parenting nurtures personal faith and intrinsic religiosity in children, it may also be a powerful resource for Muslim parents to cultivate children's identification with the heritage culture. As an authoritative source of truth and strong form of culture, religion provides believers with meaning and a sense of belonging (Cohen, 2009; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Religion promotes trust and loyalty towards likeminded people and regulates patterns of cooperation and interaction (Peek, 2005). So from the perspective of parents, religious parenting can strengthen ethnic ties as it selectively channels children into

peer groups and activities within their faith communities (Martin, White, & Perlman, 2003). Yet, other research suggests that religious parenting has a more indirect effect on children's heritage culture identity through increased levels of child religiosity. Verkuyten and colleagues (2012), for example, studied religious and cultural identifications of Moroccan-Dutch Muslims and found an indirect positive effect of parents' religious identity on children's heritage culture identity through children's religious identity. In particular, parents' identification with Muslims was positively related to children's identification with Muslims which, in turn, increased children's sense of belonging to their heritage culture group. The indirect link suggests that parents' emphasis on raising a religious child also serves the maintenance of the heritage culture within family. Studies among second generation European Muslims and other ethnic minorities in the United States further show that youth's religiosity is closely connected to their sense of belonging to the heritage culture group (Güngör et al., 2012; Lopez et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 2012). Therefore, religious parenting has an indirect influence on the child's heritage culture identity especially when parents themselves have experienced and internalized their religion as a salient aspect of their culture of origin and when they want to instill this distinctive collective identity in their acculturating children.

While religious parenting is likely to foster children's heritage culture identity through increased levels of child religiosity, there is an emerging debate about the role of religious parenting in children's identification with the host culture. In the eyes of the European majority, the religiosity of Muslim immigrants forms a 'bright boundary' that sets them apart from the mainstream and may thus stand in the way of their adaptation (Alba, 2005).

Accordingly, the majority in Germany perceives Islam to be at odds with Western values and lifestyle (Kunst, Tajamal, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2012). This suggests that dedicated Muslims do not have the ability or will to integrate their children into German society. However, research on the compatibility of Islam and host culture adaptation presents a mixed picture. In line with



public assumptions, Turkish Muslims in Belgium were less willing to take on Belgian culture after they had attended Qur'an lessons as children (Güngör et al., 2011). In addition, when Moroccan-Dutch parents identified strongly as Muslims, their early adolescent children's sense of belonging to the Dutch society was rather weak (Verkuyten et al., 2012). However, in contrast to public assumptions, Turkish Belgian fathers' mosque visits during childhood and children's perceived parental importance to live according to religious rules did not impede Muslim children's host cultural adaptation (Güngör et al., 2012; Güngör et al., 2011). Thus, a dispute exists: Some studies indicate that religious parenting hampers the development of children's host culture identity whereas others report that religious parenting has no effect. The mixed findings on the role of religious parenting in host culture identity development may partly be due to the often-ignored variations in immigrants' generational status and educational attainment. Although generation and education have been introduced as important moderating variables in the process of immigrant acculturation (Portes & Rivas, 2011; Rumbaut, 1994), they were often overlooked or just controlled for. This raises the question of whether different educational strata and immigrant generation might influence the effects of religious parenting on how children relate to the host society.

### **The moderating role of parents' education and generational status**

Social identity theory argues that the political, economic and social disadvantages of lower status groups increase their resentment and antipathy toward higher status groups; they reduce perceived similarity and promote ethnocentrism (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Empirical research within the social identity tradition confirms that immigrants strengthen their ethnic ties (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Verkuyten & Nekuee, 1999), and weaken their bonds to the receiving country as a reaction to disadvantages of their group and rejection by the larger society (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Muslim immigrants are disliked more than any other immigrant group among Germans

(Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). They are highly stigmatized and regularly feel discriminated against (Skrobanek, 2009). Therefore, we expected that the religious parenting of Muslim immigrants would strengthen children's identification with the heritage culture and weaken children's identification with the host society.

Social identity theory did not consider within-group status differences. Hence, it needed to be explored how a relatively higher social status within a generally devalued and stigmatized group relates to the identity management strategies of immigrants. Educational attainment and generational status can be used as overall indicators of parents' social status. In Germany, higher education corresponds to a relatively higher social status as higher educated Turkish immigrants are less disadvantaged on the job market, the housing market or in terms of access to political and social rights (Danzer & Ulku, 2011; Kogan, 2007; Sager, 2012). Generational status also corresponds to status differences in Germany but this applies mainly to Turkish immigrant women. For instance, while Turkish immigrant women improve their position on the German labor market from one generation to the next, Turkish immigrant men do not differ in terms of earning positions and employment across generations (Algan, Dustmann, Glitz, & Manning, 2010; Diehl & König, 2009; Granato & Kalter, 2001). We speculated that parents with a relatively higher social status are less inclined to separate children from the host culture and less inclined to fortify children's heritage culture identity than parents with a very low social status. Thus, the role of religious parenting on children's cultural identities was expected to depend on the social status of families within society.

### **The present study**

We firstly examined whether religious parenting weakens Muslim immigrant children's identification with the host society and strengthens children's identification with the heritage culture. Following Verkuyten and colleagues (2012), our model proposed that

religious parenting is directly linked to children's host culture identity and indirectly linked (via child religiosity) to children's heritage culture identity. To examine the unique effect of religious parenting, we controlled for the corresponding parent identities. The effects of mothers and fathers were explored separately because little is known about fathers' contribution to the religious and cultural socialization of children. In addition, previous research on ethnic socialization suggests a task division; mothers are more important to children's identification with the heritage culture whereas fathers might have a stronger influence on children's identification with the host culture (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Killian & Hegtvedt, 2003; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Sabatier, 2008). Secondly, we tested whether the effects of religious parenting were moderated by the social status of parents. It was anticipated that lower educated parents hampered children's host culture identity and promoted children's heritage culture identity more strongly than higher educated parents. Similar effects were expected for first and second generation mothers.

### Method

#### Sample

Participants included 210 self-identified Muslim mothers ( $M = 37$  years,  $SD = 5$ , range 28-59 years) and their children (92 males and 118 females) who participated in a larger study on resilience and social integration of Turkish immigrant children. Children were either in fourth grade ( $n = 136$ ,  $M = 10$  years,  $SD = .54$ , range 9-11 years) or seventh grade ( $n = 74$ ,  $M = 13$  years,  $SD = .64$ , range 12-14 years). Information from 115 fathers was available ( $M = 40$  years,  $SD = 5$ , range 30-58 years). The majority of parents reported to be Sunnis (90%); others were Alevis (5%), Shiite (1%) or other (4%). Most fathers (75%) were gainfully employed but only 33% of mothers were working. The average net monthly equivalized

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household income according to the OECD scale (Hagenaars et al., 1994) was 877 Euro (range 92.59 to 1944.44 €).

The distribution of educational attainment was based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED; OECD, 1999; Schneider, 2008). Twenty-nine percent of mothers and 13% of fathers had primary education, 36.7% of mothers and 36.5% fathers had lower secondary education (Hauptschule, Realschule, Lise), 19% of mothers and 30.4% of fathers had upper secondary education, 6.7% of mothers and 6.1% fathers had post-secondary (not tertiary) education, and 8.6% of mothers and 14% of fathers had tertiary education (university). For the moderation analyses parents were categorized into just about evenly divided groups of either lower education (primary education or Hauptschule indicating up to 9 years of schooling) or higher education (Realschule, Lise or higher indicating at least ten 10 years of schooling). In Germany, Hauptschule is the lowest school track whereas Realschule is the more demanding middle school track. According to this definition, 43.3% of the mothers and 63.5% of the fathers were higher educated parents.

The rationale for the definition of generational status followed Rumbaut's work on the decomposition of immigrant generations (Rumbaut, 2004), an adjustment to the German context in which compulsory schooling typically ends by the age of sixteen and some preliminary analysis. Second generation parents (82 mothers and 41 fathers) were by definition either born in Germany or immigrated to Germany before the age of seven. Thus, all of the second generation parents started school in Germany. First generation parents (98 mothers and 55 fathers) were born in Turkey and moved to Germany at the age of sixteen or older. Hence, they were not legally obligated to attend school in Germany. The average age of migration among the first generation was 22 years for mothers ( $SD = 5$ ) and fathers ( $SD = 4$ ). Parents who immigrated to Germany between eight and fifteen years of age (29 mothers and

17 fathers) were not considered for the moderation analyses due to a small sample size. In addition, they could not be accurately combined with the first or second generation parents as our preliminary analyses revealed large standard errors on the main variables for these parents and inconsistent similarities with either first or second generation parents especially in the mother sample. One mother and two fathers did not provide information on their place of birth and age of migration which is why they were excluded from the moderation analysis.

There was an overlap between mothers' education and generation ( $\chi^2(1) = 34.69, p < .001$ ). The majority of first generation mothers had lower education (76%) whereas the majority of second generation mothers were highly educated (68%). The overlap between education and generation was less clear for Turkish fathers who were generally more likely to be higher educated ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.80, p < .051$ ). A total of 56% of first generation and 76% of second generation fathers had higher education. This calls for separate analyses of education and generational status in the father sample. In order to be consistent, we ran separate analyses for mothers as well.

### **Procedure**

Sampling took place in the Ruhr area, an industrial area in Northwest Germany. School administrations were asked for permission to distribute information about the project in schools. To raise the acceptance of the project, researchers attended formal and informal meetings with parents. Additionally, a campaign was started to make the project known and accepted within the Turkish community through posters, information stands, articles in German and Turkish language newspapers, leaflets in the offices of pediatricians, presentations in mosques, and at meetings of associations of Turkish parents. Community leaders and organizations were asked for their endorsement. Because parents heard of the

project through multiple channels and repeatedly, it is difficult to identify how exactly families were recruited.

Data were collected in the participants' homes. In some cases, families preferred to come to the university instead. According to the participants' preferences, trained bilingual research assistants conducted structured interviews with the mothers in either German or Turkish language. In addition, mothers and fathers were asked to fill out a questionnaire in their preferred language. If fathers were not present, questionnaires were left with the family. Children were interviewed and asked to fill out a questionnaire in German. Interviews and questionnaires combined took about 1.5 – 2 hours per family. Confidentiality was explained and one of the parents as well as the child signed consent forms. Families received €25 compensation.

### Measures

*Parents' heritage and host culture identities* were measured with four parallel items adapted from the Questionnaire for International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Adolescents (the ICSEY project; Berry et al., 1993). The items were: I think of myself as Turkish / I think of myself as German / I feel that I am part of the Turkish culture / I feel that I am part of the German culture. A five point Likert-type scale was used ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree" with higher values indicating stronger identification with the group in question. Construct reliabilities ranged from .75 to .89.

*Children's heritage and host culture identities* were assessed with ten parallel items among seventh graders. Four items were identical to the parent items and the other six items were taken from the commitment subscale of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM, Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM is not considered age appropriate for younger children (Holmes & Lochman, 2009; Reese, Vera, & Paikoff, 1998). Therefore, we designed six

parallel items for the fourth graders that capture children's positive evaluations of cultural group membership (e.g., commitment, group esteem and private regard) and therefore, a key component of ethnic-racial identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). The items were: I feel I belong to Turkish children / I feel I belong to German children / I am happy to be a Turkish child / I am happy to be a German child / Being Turkish is an important part of who I am / Being German is an important part of who I am. A five point Likert-type scale was used ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree" with higher values indicating stronger identification with the group in question. Construct reliabilities ranged from .82 to .89.

*Religious parenting* was assessed with four items designed for the purpose of the current study to measure the role of religious principles in child rearing: I use my religion as a guideline for the parenting of my child / My religion helps me to rear my child well / I teach my child a lot about my religion / I teach my child that religion plays an important role in our life. Parents indicated their agreement with these statements on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with higher values indicating more religious parenting. Construct reliability was .95 for mothers and .93 for fathers.

*Children's religiosity* was assessed with the spirituality items from the Practice and Belief Scale (PBS; Holder, Coleman, & Wallace, 2008). We focused on the spirituality of children rather than their engagement in religious practices because religious practices may be more strongly determined by the specifications of parents. We slightly simplified and shortened the items to enhance children's understanding and ensure easy completion. Three items measured the role of spirituality in children's everyday life: How often do you find strength and comfort in God (Allah)? / When you are worried or have a problem, how often do you depend on God (Allah) to help you? / I try hard to include God (Allah) in all parts of my life. A fourth item measured the child's overall self-perception: I am a religious person.

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Children answered on a four point Likert-type scale ranging from 'never' to 'often' with higher values indicating greater religiosity. Construct reliability was .79.

*Demographics.* Mothers indicated their own and their husband's birth place, age at migration, age, highest level of educational attainment, and family's household net income.

*Confirmatory factor analyses.* To test whether our main variables (religious parenting / religiosity, identification with Turks and identification with Germans) corresponded to three separate factors in the two child cohorts and both parent samples, four confirmatory factor analyses using maximum likelihood estimation were conducted in AMOS 21. For each sample a three-factor model was specified and compared to a two-factor model in which religious parenting / religiosity and identification with Turks combined into one factor. The three-factor models had good fit (Table 1) and were always superior to two-factor models ( $\chi^2$  dif (2) mothers = 148.20,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2$  dif (2) fathers = 110.77,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2$  dif (2) 7th graders = 119.96,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2$  dif (7) 4th graders = 109.18,  $p < .001$ ).

*Missing data.* The amount of missing data ranged from 3% in younger children's identification with Germans to 6% in mothers' identification with Turks. However, in 23 % of the cases child religiosity was not assessed due to an error with the questionnaires of fourth graders. We decided to keep these children in the sample and imputed their data based on the confirmatory factor analyses models.<sup>1</sup> The unobserved values were replaced by regression imputation in AMOS. In this procedure, linear regression is used to predict the missing values for each case as a function of the observed values (Arbuckle, 2012).

## Results

### Descriptive results



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Table 2 presents the mean scores of religious parenting and parents' cultural identities depending on parents' educational attainment and generational status. Higher educated mothers and fathers identified more strongly with Germans than lower educated mothers and fathers but parental education was not linked to mothers' and fathers' religious parenting and identification with Turks. Second generation mothers identified more strongly with Germans but less strongly with Turks compared to first generation mothers. Religious parenting was equally important to first and second generation mothers. First and second generation fathers did not differ in their religious parenting, Turkish identity or German identity. Children were very religious ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .46$ ) and identified strongly with Turks ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) but less with Germans ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). Children of first generation mothers were more religious ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = .29$ ) than children of second generation mothers ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .47$ ,  $F(1,178) = 6.35$ ,  $p = .013$ ), and children of first generation mothers identified more strongly with Turks ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = .62$ ) than children of second generation mothers ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = .70$ ,  $F(1,178) = 5.75$ ,  $p = .018$ ). There were no significant links between mother generation and child German identity, between father generation and any of the child variables and between mother and father education and all the child variables.

The correlations of the main variables are presented in Table 3. Religious parenting / religiosity and Turkish identity were positively related among all family members. Religious parenting and German identity were negatively related among mothers and fathers but religiosity and German identity were unrelated among children. Turkish and German identities were negatively related among the parents but unrelated among children.

### **Religious parenting and children's cultural identities**

Multivariate regression analyses were conducted in AMOS 21 to examine whether religious parenting is linked to the heritage and host culture identities of children. Separate

analyses were conducted for mothers and fathers to examine their unique roles in the formation of child cultural identities. Fourth and seventh grade children were analyzed together.<sup>2</sup> We specified a model where religious parenting predicted children's heritage and host culture identities directly and indirectly through child religiosity, controlling for parents' heritage and host culture identity. The indirect effect was quantified as product of the religious parenting on child religiosity effect and the child religiosity on child Turkish identity effect. Standard errors of the direct and indirect effects were estimated with the bootstrapping function of AMOS. Children's grade was included as a covariate for religious parenting because mothers of fourth graders reported more religious parenting ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) than mothers of seventh graders ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = .62$ ,  $F(1,208) = 11.78$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Child gender was not considered as a covariate because it was not related to any of the variables.

The fit of this model was good for mothers and fathers (Table 1). As anticipated, we found a marginal direct and negative effect of mothers' religious parenting on children's German identity ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p = .078$ ), but fathers' religious parenting was neither directly nor via child religiosity related to children's German identity (Figure 1). In addition and in line with our expectations, there were no direct effects of religious parenting on children's Turkish identity, but there were indirect effects through child religiosity for mothers ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and fathers ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .041$ ).

### **The moderating role of parents' education and generation**

To examine whether the effects of religious parenting on children's Turkish and German identity were moderated by *parental education* we performed multiple group analyses separately for mothers and for fathers. In these analyses, the model in Figure 1 was compared for lower educated and higher educated parents. Children's grade was included as a covariate of religious parenting. We first specified a model with similarity constraints on all structural weights and the child covariance (child German identity ↔ child Turkish identity)

but no constraints on parent covariances (i.e., parent German identity  $\leftrightarrow$  parent Turkish identity). This model was compared to a less constrained model. For example, to test whether the direct effect of religious parenting on child German identity was moderated by parents' educational attainment we compared the constrained model to a model in which we released the path from religious parenting to child German identity. To examine whether the mediation effect or indirect effect of religious parenting on child Turkish identity was moderated by parents' educational attainment, we compared the constrained model to a model in which we released the two paths that were involved in the mediation, i.e., the effect of religious parenting on child religiosity and the effect of child religiosity on child Turkish identity. Moderation was indicated by a significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained model. The fit indices of the unconstrained models are presented in Table 1.

In the mother sample, education moderated the link between mothers' religious parenting and children's German identity as the unconstrained model was significantly better than the constrained model ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 3.93, p = .047$ ). A closer look at the direct effects revealed the expected negative link between religious parenting and children's German identity among lower educated mothers ( $\beta = -.22, SE = .09, p = .015$ ), whereas among higher educated mothers, religious parenting was not related to children's German identity ( $\beta = .03, SE = .10, p = .799$ ). Mothers' education also moderated the indirect effect of religious parenting on child Turkish identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (2) = 9.41, p = .009$ ). However, in contrast to our expectations, we found an indirect positive link between religious parenting and children's Turkish identity among higher educated mothers ( $\beta = .25, SE = .09, p = .001$ ) but no link among lower educated mothers ( $\beta = .04, SE = .04, p = .204$ ).<sup>3</sup> In line with our expectation, i.e., the relation between father religious parenting and child German identity would depend on the level of father education, fathers' education marginally moderated the link between religious parenting and child German identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 3.34, p = .068$ ). Moreover, we found a

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negative, however, non-significant link between religious parenting and child German identity among lower educated fathers ( $\beta = -.21, SE = .17, p = .252$ ), and positive but non-significant link among higher educated fathers ( $\beta = .15, SE = .12, p = .254$ ). Fathers' education also moderated the indirect effect of religious parenting on children's Turkish identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (2) = 6.87, p = .032$ ). Again, an indirect positive link between religious parenting and children's Turkish identity was found for higher educated fathers ( $\beta = .07, SE = .05, p = .042$ ) but not for lower educated fathers ( $\beta = .04, SE = .09, p = .558$ ).

To explore whether the effects of religious parenting on children's Turkish and German identity were moderated by *parental generation* we performed another set of multiple group analyses. This time the model in Figure 1 was compared for first and second generation parents. Separate multiple group analyses were performed for mothers and fathers, and child cohort was included as a covariate of religious parenting. The analytic strategy followed the same procedure as for the educational attainment. Mothers' generation marginally moderated the link between religious parenting and child German identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 2.97, p = .084$ ). A direct negative link between religious parenting and children's German identity was found among first generation mothers ( $\beta = -.23, SE = .09, p = .013$ ) but not among second generation mothers ( $\beta = .03, SE = .11, p = .778$ ). Mothers' generational status further moderated the indirect effect of religious parenting on children's Turkish identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (2) = 8.49, p = .014$ ). There was an indirect positive link between religious parenting and children's Turkish identity among second generation mothers ( $\beta = .16, SE = .08, p = .012$ ) but not among first generation mothers ( $\beta = -.02, SE = .03, p = .580$ ). Fathers' generational status did not moderate the link between religious parenting and children's German identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (2) = 0.23, p = .628$ ) or the link between religious parenting and children's Turkish identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (2) = 0.82, p = .665$ ). This indicates that the effects of religious parenting are similar for first and second generation fathers and comparable to those reported for the whole father sample.

### Discussion

Previous research has documented the benefits of religious socialization for Muslim immigrant children's identification with the heritage culture but yielded mixed results about potential harms to children's identification with the host culture (Güngör et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 2012). Our results confirm that religious parenting is linked to greater religiosity among children which in turn relates to more identification with the heritage culture. We further found a negative link between religious parenting and the host culture identities of children. However, these associations were moderated by social status differences between parents. For instance, religious parenting seemed to nurture the heritage culture identity of children in higher educated families but not in lower educated families, and religious parenting seemed to interfere with the development of a host culture identity in lower educated families but not in higher educated families. Similar effects were found for the generational status of mothers.

Research in the social identity tradition has shown that immigrants can react to disadvantages of their group by weakening their bonds to the receiving country (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The present findings indicate that when it comes to children this applies primarily to the most disadvantaged immigrant families but less so to immigrant families who have a higher social status within the receiving country. Thus, a somewhat higher social status might encourage openness towards members of the host society among parents and subsequently among children. This is in line with previous ethnographic studies on patterns of religious interpretation showing that higher educated female Muslims in Germany prefer an 'embedded Islam' that is more compatible with the real living conditions in the host society (Karakaşoğlu, 2007).

Another possible reaction to disadvantage and lower social status is the reinforcement of ethnic group membership (Branscombe et al., 1999; Verkuyten & Nekuee, 1999). Our

results indicate that when it comes to children this strategy might be preferred by immigrant families with a relatively higher social status in the receiving country. Higher educated and second generation parents may experience their religious and heritage culture identity as inseparable aspects of the culture of origin they represent as minorities more than lower educated and first generation parents. This reasoning is supported by a Dutch study showing that for first generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants being Muslim is less strongly related to feeling Turkish or Moroccan (Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2010). Seemingly, a relatively higher social status does not encourage parents to give up the securing harbor of a heritage culture community. Higher educated parents, more than lower educated parents are well aware that Muslim immigrants are less accepted and treated unfairly (Wodtke, 2012). Therefore, they may emphasize identification with the heritage culture to improve their children's psychological well-being in rather hostile immigration contexts (Branscombe et al., 1999).

It further appeared that religious parenting might be a more central route of heritage culture transmission for higher educated parents and successive generations. The ties that connect these parents to members of the heritage culture are more indirect, intermittent, and limited. Resorting to religious principles in child-rearing might bridge this gap and strengthen children's ethnic ties. Lower educated and first generation parents can use other routes of transmission to support children's identification with the heritage culture such as more frequent ethnic language exposure (Portes & Hao, 1998; Yagmur & Ali-Akinci, 2003), sharing of childhood memories from the country of origin (Sabatier, 2008), and higher ethnic concentrations in the neighborhood (Sager, 2012); resources that are less accessible to higher educated and second generation parents. We conclude that when it comes to their children, Muslim immigrant parents might use different strategies to cope with disadvantage and lower social status. The religious parenting of the most disadvantaged parents may emphasize

intergroup boundaries whereas parents with a relatively higher social status may reinforce ethnic ties through religious parenting while allowing their children to simultaneously engage with the host culture.

In the future it may be worthwhile to explore different forms of religious parenting. While all of the parents in the study emphasized religious parenting, the present findings suggest that religious parenting can have quite different implications and serve different goals. Research in immigrant and ethnic minority families already distinguished different forms of ethnic socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). For instance, cultural socialization facilitates learning about the heritage culture and promotes pride in one's ethnic origin. But preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust are socialization styles that focus more on intergroup relations and group boundaries. Preparation for bias promotes children's awareness of prejudice and discrimination, and promotion of mistrust involves parents' reservations or warnings about other ethnic groups. It is plausible to expect comparable variants of religious parenting. Among the most disadvantaged Muslim immigrant families, religious parenting may be stricter or even reactive; emphasizing that Islam is about fundamental truths and not compatible with the Western world. Interpretations and practices may perhaps take on more rigid and narrow forms and children could get the impression of non-permeable group boundaries. Muslim immigrant families with a relatively higher social status might practice more liberal and modern interpretations of Islam that focus on the compatibility of Islamic traditions and Western culture (Verkuyten, 2014). This type of religious parenting culturally anchors children but simultaneously facilitates children's access to the host culture.

We would also like to draw attention to the links of heritage and host culture identities among diverse family members, as this may be relevant to ongoing debates about the integration of Muslim families. Parents' identification with the heritage culture was negatively related to their identification with the host culture but no such link was found

among children. Therefore, it seems that heritage and host culture identities of Muslim immigrant children in Germany do not preclude one another until seventh grade (approximately 13 years). However, research among Muslim youth in the Netherlands suggests that the negative link between heritage and host culture identities is likely to emerge later in adolescence (Verkuyten et al., 2012). From our perspective, it is a major task for future research to clarify why these cultural identities become exclusive social categories during adolescence. It may be that children start to experience discrimination based on their ethnic group membership as they grow older, and parents may intensify their ethnic socialization efforts during adolescence (Hughes et al., 2006). Both can carve out the negative association between heritage and host culture identities.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Although this study yields important results, there are limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, our model assumed that parents influence their children and not the other way around which neglects the agency children may have in the process of cultural identity development. This supposition is justified in part by longitudinal research on ethnic socialization and U.S. immigrants' heritage culture identity stating that ethnic socialization is a family driven process (Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders & Updegraff, 2013). Still, we cannot rule out the possibility that socialization into the mainstream is a more youth-driven process or at least reciprocal in nature. This would be the case if child characteristics, such as the degree of identification with the host culture, inform religious parenting efforts.

Secondly, we studied self-identified Muslims of Turkish origin in Germany. Our overall model resembled the findings of Verkuyten et al.'s (2012) study that was conducted among a different Muslim immigrant group and within a different national context which gives us confidence about the robustness of the proposed models. However, more research is needed to test the cross-cultural validity of findings. For example, religious transmission may



be less pronounced in Muslim immigrant groups with lower degrees of social cohesion and interdependence in the settlement countries (Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2012). Religiosity may also be less important for the host culture identity of Muslims in national contexts with lower islamophobic attitudes (Kunst et al., 2012). Therefore, country of origin and the national context can act as contextual moderators to take into account for the effects of religious parenting.

Thirdly, we separately investigated the moderating role of parents' education on the one hand and parents' generational status on the other hand. We are aware that generation plays an important role in immigrants' educational attainment (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). Indeed, there was overlap between mothers' education and generation, and the moderation analyses yielded similar results. However, our father results indicate that a distinction between generation and education was useful as only father education moderated the link between religious parenting and child identities while generation did not. This findings is directly relevant to the notion that Turkish men's economic disadvantage remains similar across generation (Algan et al., 2010; Diehl & König, 2009; Granato & Kalter, 2001). Perhaps, for Turkish-Muslim men, social status differences are more clearly indicated by education rather than generation. In the future, it would be of interest to see whether the effects of education and generation add to each other, i.e., among lower educated first generation parents, or cancel each other out, i.e., among higher educated first generation parents.

Fourthly, we collapsed daughters and sons into one group due to our sample size, and by doing so we were not able to examine cross- and same-gender transmission patterns. Previous research suggests that immigrant parents' socialization efforts are in large parts directed at daughters, who are supposed to exemplify traditional ideals, whereas sons have much more autonomy (Dion & Dion, 2001). In addition, Muslim immigrant men are more

traditional than women (Idema & Phaet, 2007; Scheible & Fleischmann, 2013) and being more traditional relates to greater fears of daughters separating from the family and becoming too independent (Sarroub, 2001, as cited in Qin, 2006). It is also hypothesized that parents increase pressures on daughters to maintain family traditions in the face of threat (Dion & Dion, 2001). Accordingly, there may have been stronger effects of fathers' religious parenting on daughters' identification with the host culture.

Fifthly, our measures cannot reveal the distinct and essentially subjective meanings attributed to each social identity. It is likely that some participants referred to Turks in Germany as collective point of reference whereas others may have referred to Turks in Turkey (Schultz & Sackmann, 2001). Similarly, it is unclear what participants had in mind when reporting on their German identity (Sackmann, Prümm, & Schultz, 2000). Research with ethnic minorities in the U.S. suggests that identification with the national majority group can refer to some sort of physical or racial appearance, specific characteristics and traits, or ideologies and values (Rodriguez, Schwartz, & Whitbourne, 2010).

Finally, our analyses are based on cross-sectional data. Single-time-point data cannot make the empirical distinction that the ordering of variables in the proposed model is better than an alternative ordering. The different measures among the fourth and seventh graders limit the comparability of findings across age groups and ultimately any conclusions about developmental trends. In addition, the relatively small sample sizes, especially with respect to fathers and the comparisons of generational status groups, mean low statistical power and require replication within larger samples.

### **Conclusion**

Heritage and host culture identities have a vital impact on immigrants' socio-cultural and psychological adjustment. Their development has been studied with reference to parental

ethnic socialization, peer group influences and increasing wider social experiences (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). The present study draws attentions to the role of religious parenting and, most importantly, to the heterogeneity within Muslim immigrant families. Previous research tended to collapse all families within the “Muslim immigrant” category. By unraveling diversity among immigrant families we were able to highlight the different meanings of religious parenting. For many families, religious parenting was primarily a valuable tool for cultural continuity across generations. Still, it is very important to understand why some immigrant families are more prone to promote national disengagement, given that religious parenting per se is not exclusive of the mainstream culture. It may be that the most disadvantaged groups feel more threatened by the public discourse over value incompatibility and perceive more pressures from the host society to assimilate. As a result, their religious parenting may take on more rigid and exclusive forms. We should thus be aware that national attitudes towards immigrants and integration might provoke a form of religious parenting style that prevent children from becoming entangled with the host society, especially the children from very disadvantaged families.

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## Tables and Figures

Table 1

*Model Fit Indices*

Model	$\chi^2(df)$	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Factor analyses					
4th graders	54.30 (39)	.96	.97	.05	.40
7th graders	65.97 (73)	1.00	1.00	.00	.94
Mothers	24.02 (17)	.99	.99	.04	.55
Fathers	16.02 (16)	1.00	1.00	.00	.72
Model Figure 1					
Mothers	4.33 (9)	1.10	1.00	.00	.98
Fathers	4.98 (9)	1.18	1.00	.00	.92
Moderation education					
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CGI</i>	28.23 (26)	.97	.98	.02	.87
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CR → CTRI</i>	22.75 (25)	1.03	1.00	.00	.95
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CGI</i>	31.29 (26)	.88	.92	.04	.56
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CR → CTRI</i>	27.77 (25)	.93	.96	.03	.66
Moderation generation					
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CGI</i>	40.03 (26)	.77	.86	.05	.37
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CR → CTRI</i>	34.51 (25)	.84	.90	.05	.53
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CGI</i>	20.21 (26)	1.14	1.00	.00	.93
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CR → CTRI</i>	19.63 (25)	1.14	1.00	.00	.92
Moderation grade					
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CGI</i>	19.57 (18)	.98	.99	.02	.82
<i>Unconstraint MRP → CR → CTRI</i>	15.57 (17)	1.02	1.00	.00	.91
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CGI</i>	23.11 (18)	.87	.92	.05	.46
<i>Unconstraint FRP → CR → CTRI</i>	22.13 (17)	.86	.92	.05	.44

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . M = Mother, F = Father, C = child, RP = religious parenting, R = religiosity, TR = Turkish, G = German, I = identity

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Table 2

*Cultural identities and religious parenting for mothers and fathers depending on parents' educational attainment and generational status*

	Total	Educational Attainment		F	Generational Status		F
		low	high		first	second	
Mothers	(n=210)	(n=119)	(n=91)		(n=98)	(n=82)	
Religious parenting	4.37 (.73)	4.38 (.69)	4.36 (.78)	0.05	4.36 (.66)	4.49 (.63)	1.75
Turkish identity	4.45 (.73)	4.52 (.72)	4.37 (.73)	2.10	4.61 (.65)	4.33 (.73)	7.12 **
German identity	1.95 (.95)	1.76 (.87)	2.19 (1.01)	11.03 **	1.55 (.75)	2.33 (.99)	35.53 ***
Fathers	(n=115)	(n=42)	(n=73)		(n=55)	(n=41)	
Religious parenting	4.47 (.65)	4.38 (.74)	4.51 (.59)	1.47	4.45 (.72)	4.57 (.52)	0.51
Turkish identity	4.38 (.76)	4.51 (.76)	4.30 (.76)	1.80	4.33 (.89)	4.46 (.61)	0.61
German identity	2.31 (1.08)	1.98 (.98)	2.49 (1.10)	5.95 *	2.13 (1.07)	2.53 (1.08)	3.23

*Note.* Values represent M (SD). The scales range from 1-5. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  (2-tailed).

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Table 3

*Correlations of the main variables*

	MRP	MTRI	MGI	FRP	FTRI	FGI	CR	CTRI	CGI
Mother religious parenting	1								
Mother Turkish identity	.24**	1							
Mother German identity	-.20**	-.30***	1						
Father religious parenting	.50**	-.02	-.11	1					
Father Turkish identity	.15	.20*	.03	.35***	1				
Father German identity	-.13	-.02	.12	-.18*	-.37***	1			
Child religiosity	.32***	.17*	-.11	.19*	.10	-.05	1		
Child Turkish identity	.16*	.23**	-.09	.04	.14	.01	.42***	1	
Child German identity	-.11	-.07	.15*	.01	.02	.08	.00	-.04	1

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . M = Mother, F = Father, C = child, RP = religious parenting, R = religiosity, TR = Turkish, G = German, I = identity



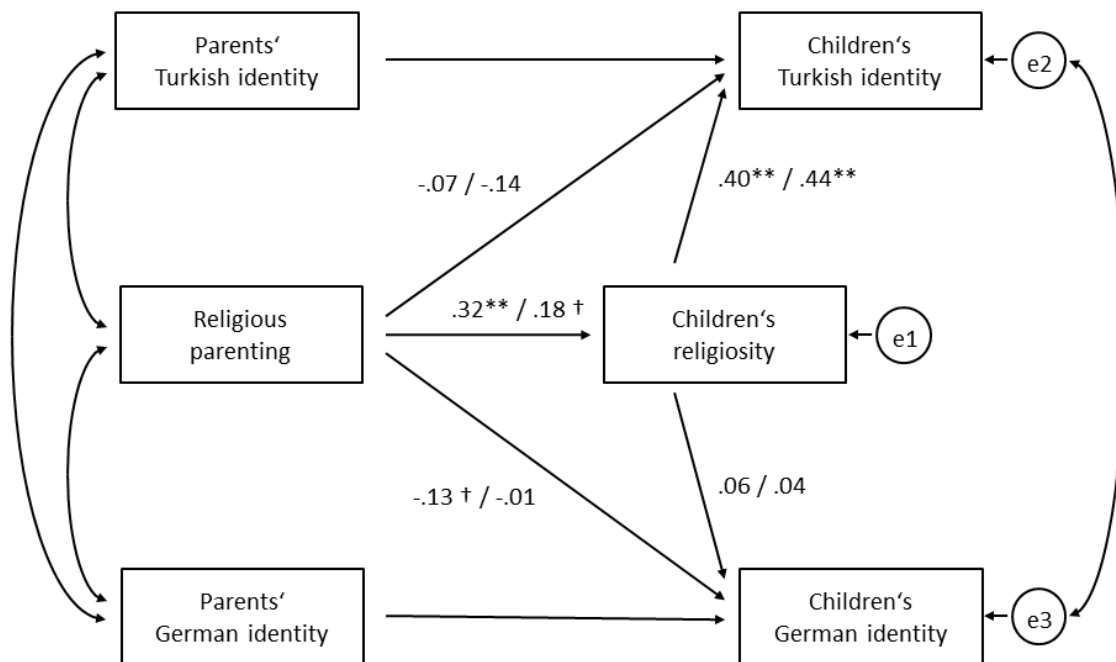


Figure 1. Standardized direct effects of mothers' / fathers' religious parenting on children's religiosity and cultural identities.

$^{\dagger} p < .10$ ,  $* p < .05$ ,  $** p < .01$ .

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<sup>1</sup> We repeated our main analyses with the smaller sample and found virtually the same results. While the model fits were a little less good in the smaller sample all estimates remained the same.

<sup>2</sup> A multiple group analysis was performed separately for mothers and fathers to explore whether religious parenting has different effects on fourth and seventh graders. We first specified a model with similarity constraints on all structural weights and covariances. In the mother sample the direct and indirect effect of religious parenting on child German and Turkish identity were not moderated by children's grade. Releasing the path from religious parenting to child German identity did not improve the model ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 0.18, p = .669$ ), and releasing the paths from religious parenting to child religiosity and from child religiosity to child Turkish identity did not improve the model either ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 4.17, p = .124$ ). Children's grade also did not moderate the direct effect of fathers' religious parenting on child German identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 0.73, p = .393$ ) and the indirect effect on child Turkish identity ( $\chi^2 \text{ dif } (1) = 1.72, p = .424$ ).

<sup>3</sup> Our preliminary analyses indicated that children of first generation mothers identified more strongly with Turks than children of second generation mothers. Therefore, we specified another model in which mothers' generational was added as a control variable for child Turkish identity. To achieve an acceptable model fit mothers' generational status also predicted mothers' German and Turkish identity. Results showed that mother education again moderated the indirect link between religious parenting and child Turkish identity but the link among the higher educated mothers was smaller. Yet, it remained positive and significant  $\beta = .15, SE = .08, p = .036$ . This strengthens our results and we can confidently say that the religious parenting of higher educated mothers is linked to a stronger Turkish identity in children even if one controls for mothers Turkish identity and mothers' generational status.