

Parenting Double-Bind and the Intergenerational Dynamics of Autonomy and Relatedness: A Comparison between African and Indian Transnational Migrant Families

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Abstract

This article discusses the potential role of parenting double bind interactions on the shifts in the balance and forms of coexistence between autonomy and relatedness across generations, using three case-studies conducted among Punjab (Sikh), Indo-Mozambican (Muslim) and Cape Verdean (Christian) migrant families settled in Portugal. Although the double bind construct has been applied mostly on psychological dysfunctional families, the comparative analysis shows that double binds within the mother-child relationship should be reconceptualised as potentially adaptive and creative responses to changing multilayered demands rather than as an inability to resolve a conflicting impasse. By adjusting, through caregiving, culture-specific developmental goals and practices to unequal balances between autonomy and relatedness in their current migration context, the mothers we worked with represent a stark contrast with official political discourse which tends to view migrant mothering as simply based on intergenerational continuity.

Keywords: Parenting; Double bind interactions; Autonomy; Relatedness; Immigrant families

Introduction

Parents have in common a universal caretaking responsibility to foster the togetherness of autonomy and relatedness needs of their offspring [1-7]. While many variations are possible, parenting constructions, goals and practices are mutually constituted on a dynamic ongoing basis within family frames which are embedded within larger socio-historical and cultural contexts. Meaning systems, mediated by generational and gendered transmission processes, influence parents and children meanings of autonomy and relatedness, the way they are experienced and re-signified, what constitutes their promotion or what is viewed as a threat to both basic needs/goals [8-10]. Accordingly, current cross-cultural

research underlines the conflicting, additive or interdependent ways in which autonomy and relatedness coexist, and the multiplier effects generated by their dynamic coexistence shifting across domains, settings and developmental times, and as response to changing socio-economic, cultural and political contexts (for a general review of the literature see [11]).

Transitional periods, changing and disturbing events in the life cycle of individuals and families – adolescence, physical separation, parents' divorce, economic hardship, migration to a new cultural environment among other situations – can be (but not necessarily) accompanied by certain types of contradictory exchanges within parent-offspring relational frames. Bateson [12] conceptualized

them as “double bind interactions”. A typical pattern of double bind regarding parents’ goals for children results from a parenting demand of relatedness and autonomy conveyed verbally which is more or less simultaneously invalidated by a contradictory demand conveyed non-verbally, thus hindering the detection of the model that children should develop. In other cases, double bind interactions involve a conflicting impasse between the content of the communication and the existing relational frame at a particular moment of the family interactive process. Not infrequently, this impasse derives from a parenting demand for a specific balance between autonomy and relatedness that presupposes a certain child’s developmental time that has not been previously established; or stems from the denial of a transformation in child’s growth that presupposes a different balance between both dimensions. In addition, contexts of socioeconomic and cultural change often increase the amount of variability in parent-child communicative behavior. Then, the balance of the autonomy and relatedness dimensions may become unstable and imbalanced, making it difficult to interpret them in an unambiguous manner. As several studies on transnational migrant families have demonstrated [13,14], parenting double bind can also be viewed as an indication of multiple conflicting frames guiding autonomy and relatedness goals and practices.

Intervening into current debates on youth development within and across cultures, this article aims to contribute to a dynamic approach of the changing dimension of parental goals and practices by addressing the potential role of parenting double bind interactions on the shifts in the balance and forms of coexistence between autonomy and relatedness across generations. A comparative analysis is presented of three case-studies on parenting practices of Punjab (Sikh), Indo-Mozambican (Muslim) and Cape Verdean (Christian) migrant families settled in Portugal.

Adolescence, as a period where autonomy and relatedness dynamics assume special significance [1,5,15,16], was a privileged empirical focus. Nonetheless, the case-studies took in account the potential congruence (or change) between the parenting orientations that are played through early childhood and the variations on these orientations that are sounded during adolescence and early adulthood as they are socio-culturally constructed. This is also consistent with the empirical insight that children and adolescents within the family constellation are most vulnerable to the consequences of

the use of conflicting messages because they have a less consolidated representation of the cultural and family models to which they should conform.

Early in children’s lives, triadic child’s interactions with both parents (or parenting figures), as well as mother-father, spouses, sibling and kinship (extended family) relational exchanges communicate to children messages about gendered roles, practices, and their relative power differential [7]. A strong effect on gender development occurs in the three migrant groups selected, where parents and significant adults pass on, both overtly and covertly, to children gendered modes of viewing the world and interacting with others. Therefore, the article explores the ways in which parenting double bind may influence the autonomy and relatedness balance inasmuch as it intersects with gender values and practices.

In the development of adolescents born of immigration, religion and ethnicity are often involved in identity processes and outcomes [17,18]. Available literature still falls short of providing solid comparative findings on parenting goals and practices leading to the generational transmission of a proud affiliation and belonging to a ethno-cultural and/or religious group identity [19] or directed at fostering children’s autonomy to explore, choose and invest in given identities [20]. Though the three groups of parents actively contribute to the intergenerational renewal of cultural and religious values and practices, they are committed to the social insertion of their offspring. Hence, the case-studies investigate the extent to which parent-child interactions may be affected by conflicting cultural frames guiding autonomy and relatedness goals through their placement within the current migration cultural context.

The article is structured as follows. The first section provides information about the methodologies used in the case studies. The following sections particularly highlight the links relating the micro-approach of parent-offspring interactive goals of autonomy and relatedness and the requests situated at the meso-level priorities, moralities, and recurrent anxieties prevailing in their immediate cultural environments [21], interrogating at the same time how the exposure to values and expectations of the current receiving society can be experienced as a source of contradicting demands. The conclusion highlights the adaptive and creative potential of parenting double bind in changing and stabilizing the dynamics of autonomy and relatedness across generations.

Case Studies and Methodology

This article is primarily rooted in ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2005 and 2013 under several research projects involving transnational migrant families settled in Portugal. Cumulative findings underpinned our intent to develop a comparative analysis in which parents' developmental goals of autonomy and relatedness for their offspring could be addressed as they interconnect with other socio-historical and cultural differentials [22]. We thus selected contrasting migrant groups in terms of family dynamics, insertion processes and social positioning.

The first empirical focus was a family configuration frequently associated with transnational migrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of South Asia [23,24]. This family model often involves a strong corporatist family ethos (i.e., promoting extended family relations, gender inequalities and parental control) underpinned by the belief that any transgression of certain rules and principles entails shame and harm to the collective family honor. For this first configuration, we focused on Muslim families of Indo-Mozambican origin and Sikh families from Punjab region. The second focus concerned a configuration related with migrants of either Afro-Caribbean origin or from certain (i.e., Creole) African societies [25-27]. Men build their masculinity, prestige, and power partly through the sexual and reproductive conquest of multiple women. Due to the volatility of marital experiences, mother-children relationships become the main identity investment of the women. For this second configuration, we worked with Cape Verdeans migrants who self-define as Christians.

We followed 8 families from Punjab region, 15 from Cape Verde and another 15 of Indo-Mozambican origin. The main selective criteria for families were: values and practices conceived as specific socio-historical forms of the two types of family dynamics mentioned above; and a more or less long presence in Portuguese society presenting, at least, two generations. Mothers are charged with the bulk of child-rearing tasks in the migrant groups studied, which is why this article especially focuses on mothering work. The comparative analysis relies on empirical data provided by in-depth interviews with 38 mothers and 12 fathers (whose ages ranged from 42 to 58). We attempted to understand how respondents have established specific frames for gender, intergenerational and family relationships, how they behaviorally implemented them on an ongoing basis, and what were

the effects on their family lives of different experiences of insertion and cultural exposure to current receiving society. In parallel, we sought to capture how their biographies provided resources and strategies for them to fashion themselves as parents, and how they approached their children's emotional, educational, socialization, religious and identity needs. We especially focused upon parental goals and fostering practices of autonomy and relatedness for children in different domains. Inter-group comparisons about parenting and family relationships, as well as strategies of cultural continuity and discontinuity were also addressed.

As actors in their own right, children are an integral part of the dialogical process that constitutes parenting practices. Therefore, we expanded upon previous encounters with 41 daughters and 36 sons through in-depth interviews (whose current ages range from 18 to 22). The following topics were compared: growing memories; self-reported perceptions about psychological and behavioral achievements of autonomy and connectedness in different domains and development stages; parenting influences upon children's identifications and feelings of belonging; significant peers as behavior, attitudinal and identity referents; intra and inter-generational identity negotiation processes; experiences of social and cultural insertion in the current migration context.

The interview process followed a strong biographical orientation, thus providing the interlocutors with incentives to elaborate on their life stories. The interviews elicited not only contexts, actions, and strategies, but also information on how the biographers subjectively experienced them in order to construct meaningful memories and self-narratives.

'If she has friends here, she doesn't behave like I'd want her to': continuity and discontinuity among meanings of autonomy and relatedness within Sikh families

Settled in several European and northern American countries, the Sikhs only reached Portugal in the early 1990s. Portugal became an attractive destination because it offered easier legalization opportunities, which in turn opened doors to further European destinations in the mid-term. A small group of men settled permanently. The majority works in construction, general trade, and restaurants; as soon as possible, they become self-employed. After an average of five to ten years, they obtain the legal and economic requisites for family

reunification. Recognizing the importance of a positive inter-ethnicity, Sikh attempts to integrate as a religious community often involve strategies of similarity-within-difference [28].

Sikh families usually integrate a couple, their underage children, and other co-residents connected to the central couple by kinship ties. In their Punjab contexts of origin, the dominant micro-family domestic cycle dictates that married sons may only have autonomous 'homes' after the death of their father. Migration makes it possible for sons to attain an early autonomy. However, migrant 'homes' remain strongly associated with the 'homes' of their fathers in terms of both decision making and responsibilities. Migration thus becomes a strategy of continuity for collectivistic cultural values that view family connectedness as a major goal of individual agency. All my life I've been making plans for my family. I have to send money because of the family land that we bought. All that I want for us is to live a happy life together.

Reconstructed in Portugal, gender and intergenerational relations are oriented by long-lasting dynamics involving reciprocity and hierarchy. Parents invest work in their children, and instilled in them a moral responsibility for their own economic support in old age. Men have the charge of the material sustenance of their family while reproductive work and the care of family members are the main responsibilities attributed to the women. Sikh migrant women, however, are allowed to contribute to the family income, and it is common for wives to 'help out in the business', something that tends to be perceived as a sign of 'modernity.' Moreover, options regarding offspring's education have become paramount in many families, as education may bring a considerable status and wealth to the family business. It is often hard to conciliate parents' commitments in their country of origin with the growing demands stemming from the educational investment in their offspring. These very tensions confirm the persistence of a family moral agency incorporated within specific collectivist cultural traditions [14].

Nevertheless, the greatest challenge expressed by Sikh migrant parents is the individuation of the younger generation and the divide that may arise between themselves and their children as a result of a prolonged stay in migration context. From interviews with parents and young Sikhs born or socialized in Portugal, we have found that children are encouraged to become autonomously individuals according to Punjab culture.

Autonomy is geared to the level of educational and other specific gendered skills, as well as to the fostering of relational competences (involving sensitivity to self-other needs) and appropriate cultural and religious standards of behavior. Throughout adolescence and early adulthood, parental care-work continues to be oriented toward the development of children's autonomous-related selves and also toward the growth of certain qualities – called in everyday language as becoming a 'better person' by keeping family values and traditions, respecting the elders, and helping others. A gendered differential is worth to be highlight. Daughters are more trained for autonomy so that they can shift their relatedness for another (in-law's) family.

Parents' main interpretation of gender relations in Portugal is that 'women boss their husbands about'. In turn, Sikh women reach their goals by way of a cultural different manner of acting which does not question the authority of their husbands: 'they ask permission', 'they speak politely'. Their perception of intergenerational relations also underlines the lack of hierarchical respect on the part of Portuguese children towards their parents, but also blames the weakness of the latter as producers of authority. Sikh parents' strong identification with one's family and community thus enhances the perception of tremendous differences in Portuguese others. Therefore, they fear that the access to different cultural references through the attendance of interethnic and mixed schools leads their offspring to develop a more autonomous way of thinking and performing family and gender cultural values. The following narrative of a Sikh father indicates how his daughter's goals of autonomy (allegedly fostered by cross-cultural relatedness) are perceived as an interfering barrier to his Punjab notion of relatedness and a threat for family's reputation that may make it impossible to return to the country of origin.

A daughter stays here five years, ten years, studies here, has friends here, then she likes it here and does not want to go back with her father. What's most important to a Sikh woman is not that she likes to live in Portugal, France, Britain or America, it is just that she wants to live with her father and then her husband. Cultures are different, right?

The transmission of parents' mother tongue, cultural and religious traditions primarily take place on family contexts. Then, parents remain the first and the most important means for defining the specific domains where individuals are encouraged and expected to perform

autonomy and relatedness [8]. Nevertheless, the image that Sikhs mothers transmit of themselves to children (both at verbal and nonverbal levels, as well as through actions) condenses old and new meanings of relatedness and autonomy. They are 'there for others', an exemplary posture of relatedness according to Punjab culture; but at the same time the foundation of a new 'home' within migratory context has increased their autonomous functioning and responsibility on several spheres. Further, male immigration has provided a larger space for women to improve religious learning [29]. Our own respondents perform ritual acts that have been traditionally carried out by male specialists in India.

While passing down successfully a 'traditional' relatedness and 'new' autonomies as a pathway to innovate family relatedness, Sikh migrant mothers reproduce gender and power dynamics in family and *gurdwara* settings. The following dialogue reveals how accumulated inconsistencies underlying the mother-offspring communication with respect to the intermingled coexistence of relatedness and autonomy with culture and religion can be experienced as a source of conflicting or confusing messages. It also illustrates how adolescent daughters attempt to re-elaborate their mothers' ambivalent messages of religious autonomy and cultural subordination to men by using strategic religious arguments to de-culturalize a Sikh identity and negotiate prevalent ethnicized gendered values and practices in their own families.

[daughter]—Because we are women, there is no place for us in *gurdwara*? Yourself, you are better skilled in *gurmukhi* script than many male specialists. How do you accept to remain in the kitchen preparing food!

[mother]—I would be very, very uncomfortable if I didn't. What would they say about us [the family]?

[daughter]—I have been studying parts of *Subkhani*. Where does Guru Granth Sahib say that women do not have the same value than men? Male domination over women does not agree with our religion, it's only part of Indian culture.

'Without creating any conflict with the family while remaining myself': a dynamic co-existence of Indian and Portuguese relatedness cultures as a path to autonomy

Indo-Mozambicans of Muslim religion are part of a long-lasting Gujarat diaspora. During the 19th century, their forefathers migrated to Mozambique. The

commercial sector flourished, and the most important Muslim economic interests lay in trading operations developed by family firms. The nationalization process implemented in Mozambique and the civil war that broke out in the mid-1970s led to a peak in Indian emigration in the early 1980s. Most Muslim Mozambican families chose Portugal as their destination. Their intercontinental network of contacts, combined with the social, financial and human capital they brought, enabled them to enjoy rapid socio-economic and cultural insertion.

Born in Portugal, young Muslims of Indo-Mozambican origin do not perceive themselves as children of immigrants but rather as 'Portuguese Muslims'. They most often enroll in Portuguese-language private schools because their parents are extremely committed to their successful academic carrier. The transmission of religious and cultural traditions and (sometimes) their education in their parents' mother tongues occur within the extended family. Several mothers adopt a vocabulary and discursive style similar to the predominant Catholic religious context and frequently translate Muslim beliefs, ceremonies into terms compatible with Catholicism. At the same time, and since a very young age, children are encouraged to attend supplementary schooling in Islam and to participate in ethno-religious meetings and activities for youngsters organized by their own communities.

Through all these strategies, Muslim parents promote the development of a Portuguese relatedness by providing their children with resources to full claim their right to sit at the Portuguese table. Moreover, they consider it as a pathway to children's autonomy, both in academic performances and capacity to participate in multiple group membership practices. In parallel, parents foster the development of a Muslim relatedness. They transmit to their offspring a positive hyphenated identity: that of 'Portuguese Muslim'. They pass down a sense of identity pride, a feeling of belonging to a 'we' which combines all that is 'best' about their original cultural and religious traditions with 'the best' that can be gleaned from their secular contact with the Portuguese cultural ecology. This way, Muslim parents integrate their children with others and positively differentiate themselves from others [30].

Prosecuting their developmental pathway to an autonomous-related self [4,5], Muslim children internalize the notions of shame and family pride. They learn that the respect attached to the family's name depends on their individual acts. In terms of pathways

from relatedness to autonomy and vice-versa, the identification with one's family (by themselves and others), the responsibility for protecting and enhancing its reputation while being affected by its reputation is experienced as foundational to personal growth, either by parents and children.

Since childhood we have learned that the single act of a single person can bring shame over ten other family members. This is why it's difficult to oppose certain things within the family. It would put parents in a situation of very big shame.

Additionally, Muslim parents promote children's identifications and attachments with friends outside family and their own community as a pathway to both Portuguese relatedness and autonomy, while stimulating them to socialize among community peers (to make intra-group marriage more likely) as a necessary condition for the perpetuation of family ethno-religious identity. As a result, children make themselves by reference to two cultural models of self-construction and fulfillment of both autonomy and relatedness needs: one model in which the awareness of belonging to a family group and the identity responsibilities arising from it is experienced actively, thus involving the search of an autonomous individuality mediated by close attachments to parents and identification with one's family; and another Portuguese cultural model of autonomy as identity individuation within the family, incorporated through extra-community socialization processes and non-Muslim friendships, which integrates a substantial amount of choice and self-endorsement with generational interdependencies.

Even though the distinction between individualism and collectivism continues to provide some orientation in terms of parenting goals and child developmental processes [11], the Indo-Mozambican case-study offers an interesting insight about the 'differences' perceived by parents and children between their own relatedness culture and the Portuguese relatedness culture, in which intergenerational relationships, obligations and expectations are usually renegotiated (from the late adolescence) with greater egalitarianism [9]. This dynamic co-existence of two value systems of relatedness assumes especial significance on the identity processes of gender construction that occur during adolescence and early adulthood.

Since the honour of men and families significantly depends on female moral and sexual behaviour, Muslim mothers often stimulate adolescent sons to monitor and control the conduct of young sisters and cousins. This 'policing' [31] appears to operate as a mothering strategy through which their sons' masculine ethno-cultural identity can be maintained. Although parity, companionship and mutual respect are part of mothers' ideal construction of gender relations and despite their own negative or ambivalent experiences within extended households, they prepare their daughters to care for a new family and to act according to the expectations of deference and subordination which dominate over emotional intimacy in the early years of a young woman's marriage. The following narrative illustrates how ambivalent mother-daughter interactive communication with regards to femininity is inter-related and responds to the way in which masculinity is built, leading to a progressive process of differentiation driven by complementary attitudes.

Within my father's family, my brothers and cousins eat first, while I stay in the kitchen. And they like to give me orders. One day I answered back at them. My mother just pulled me into the kitchen and said: 'You can't dishonour all the women of this family'. This public obedience to men is a bit confusing especially coming from my own mother, who always battled against those things.

Indeed, ethnographic research shows that sons tend to develop their masculinity in a more 'traditional' fashion. They often emphasize the integration of their future wives within the extended family and especially their compatibility with their mothers, more than marital relatedness and emotional intimacy. Conversely, daughters construct their own femininity and marriage expectations based on more conflicting feelings. They have to negotiate the ideals of compatibility, parity, and erotic attraction they share with Portuguese friends with their mothers' (overt and more covert) messages on the ambiguous interactive communication between men and women within the family.

I'm upset with my bridegroom. The most important for him is that I fit into his family. My mother secretly sides with me but she just says: 'Muslim women do not make open war. Men cannot tolerate too much open assertiveness. Very, very gradually, you will gain space for maneuvering for what you want.'

By inciting their sons to a family relatedness over time and simultaneously promoting their pathway to an ethno-cultural masculine identity, Muslim mothers not only reinforce sons' attitudes of satisfying emotional needs with male peers and their own mothers, but also prevent them of developing an autonomous emotional intimacy. By fostering daughters' family relatedness in infancy and shifting their relatedness for in-law's family, while educating them to be autonomously competent and responsible, the duplicitous mother-daughter communication emphasizes the etiquette of female-male deferential behaviour and simultaneously the gradual 'maneuvering' for conjugal autonomy. In this sense, mothering interaction with regards to daughters illustrates the adaptive and creative potential of ambivalent communication [32] in the fostering of a female person, both high in family connectedness and autonomy.

Young Muslim respondents nurture affections, juggle references and carve out their own personal identities turning to non-Muslims friends to work through central concerns. Influenced by their non-Muslim Portuguese friends, they often express their preference to 'only marry the person' they 'really love' and found it 'acceptable to be in a relationship before marriage'. This autonomy does coexist with relatedness, and does have limits: 'marrying a non-Muslim, no, no; I know what my family wishes, so I will have to give in'. Nonetheless, these romances and friendships are particularly valued for their emotional quality. They are often defined as 'more complete' because they deactivate a number of communication and sociability tactics conventionally deployed within their families and community. This results in unique conditions for telling their friends 'secrets' that they would never reveal to Muslims peers. In sum, these ties help them to construct a "personal domain" [33] fundamental to their identity development.

Not infrequently, these friendships are also described as a greatest stimulus to an autonomous exploration of religiosity. As in the case of many European peers, youth respondents want to enact their Islam in different ways to their parents [30]. They often express a critique of parental demand for a mimetic and normative practice. Instead, they espouse ideas about religion as a matter of individual choice and inner belief, rather than adhering to the maintenance of external symbols and performances as measure of their Muslimness [30]. Because they do not experience the same level of discrimination which characterizes the second generation in other parts of

Europe [34,35], they tend to reject the *Salafist* option, which demands a return to an original, authentic but also global Islam. In sum, extreme traditionalism and positioning oneself in opposition to Portuguese relatedness, where they feel well integrated, have not occurred.

Despite the almost total absence of Islamophobic movements in Portugal following 11 September 2001, the international situation and the subsequent growth of public interest in Islam encourage Muslim youth respondents to respond to the questions posed by their peers, teachers and journalists. This 'going public' on issues that until recently had been considered the purview of Muslim relatedness opens up a new pathway to juvenile autonomy. Their parents' investment in secular education and what it allows in terms of networking and bridging capitals gives them self-confidence about their own qualities as translators to counter stereotypical images of Islam.

The majority of my friends aren't Muslims. I take it as an opportunity to express who we are. Otherwise, how can they understand that we share the same values? It makes me more confident to be a Portuguese Muslim.

'The problem is that men are looking for a mother in every woman': autonomous daughters and 'womanizer' sons who remain their mothers' child

The Cape Verdeans whom we worked with belong to a long-time labor diaspora supported by transnational family ties that guarantee the circulation of people, goods, values and practices between the country of origin and various diasporic spaces, namely in Europe, the USA, and Angola [36]. They came to Portugal in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s looking for work and a degree of social mobility they believed would be within their reach. Their labour trajectories, however, are often restricted to the construction industry and the domestic service. Furthermore, they have to deal with the most pejorative Portuguese imagery about foreign ethnic groups, which stresses the juvenile 'delinquency' of immigrant offspring of African origin [30].

Despite the difficulties experienced in terms of economic integration and social recognition, our respondents agreed that migration to Portugal did not bring a significantly change to family relationships. Cape Verdean family structures, which result from the encounter between European traders and West African

slaves, were simultaneously influenced by a patriarchal family model inspired by Catholic values and a family setting marked by the volatility of marital relations [37]. One father respondent expressed it as follows: European men more clearly aim to raise a family. Creole men can't resist a woman, whether in Cape Verde, the Netherlands, the USA, France, or Portugal. We can't eat from the same dish all the time.

In turn, family patterns such as co-mothering, priority of the mother-child relation over the conjugal one and the extended family as a meaningful unit remain significant. Experiences of child fostering are socially accepted in Cape Verde. However, leave a child with a foster mother (other than the maternal grandmother) due to migration is viewed with ambivalence [38]. In turn, migration with small children while managing integration problems and racial discrimination makes it harder for single mothers to successfully combine work and mothering responsibilities. These contingencies, especially when they live in a 'problematic' neighbourhood, can lead to labels of maternal 'deficit' or 'irresponsibility' [39]. Although their main mission is protecting mothers and children from economic poverty and racial discrimination, social welfare providers do not always problematize the extent to which their interventions are selectively racialized, nor the damage caused to women and children when they devalue their internalized constructions of motherhood and childhood. Converging with several studies on migrant mothering experiences [40,41], our findings indicate that many Cape Verdean mothers are subject to contradictory demands which can be conceived as double binds. Fearing that their children might be taken away from them because their mothering practices do not fit the maternal care-work model valued, some respondents tend to only seek social welfare programs when they reach severe stages of material deprivation which increase the probability of losing the guard of their children:

Migrant mothers' strategies to reconcile work and care often trigger a gender differential in the development pathway of their offspring to autonomy [42]. Trained to take care of younger children, while simultaneously getting multiple competencies of independent functioning, daughters integrate autonomy with relatedness from early childhood. In turn, sons tend to develop a higher degree of psychological connectedness and functional dependence on mothering persons (compared to girls of the same age). However, this differential is combined with a more uniform patterning

of relatedness underlying self-other relations within the transnational extended family.

The main role of Cape Verdean migrant mothers in the material exchanges related to the sphere of care giving allows their children to identify the members of the transnational extended family and to differentiate the quality of the relationships. Furthermore, mothers transmit to their offspring that the renewal of family ties through giving and receiving is a form of remembering those who were left behind or who are far away, of offering or receiving hospitality, of care giving, or of fulfilling responsibilities and expectations. By emphasizing the giving and taking, the caring for and depending on within the transnational family, mothers foster in their children family relatedness and sensitivity to the needs of others [14].

Mother-child interactions operating in the differentiation of gender identities may be addressed simultaneously as culture-specific strategies to promote complementary forms in which autonomy and relatedness do coexist. Early sexual activity marks a rapid transition of adolescent girls into adulthood. The first pregnancy of a teenager, while producing a ritualized crisis, is rapidly accepted by her mother and close relatives. Mothers concentrate on the welfare of their daughters and grandchildren, rather than on the daughters' marital situation. Mother-daughter communication not only emphasizes the primacy of the mother-child bond over marital ties, but also defines the first mother-child bond as the entrance into an adult-female balance between autonomy and relatedness: When the baby was born, my mother told me: You're grown-up, your son is your life. A mother's responsibility is to breastfeed her children throughout their lives.

My mother told my brother: 'Don't worry, you still need to grow'. It is often said that girls gain maturity earlier than boys. Indeed, it is also said that men remain their mothers' breastfed babies until they die [laugh].

When the first child of their sons is born, mothers appreciate the 'proof' of masculinity, but they excuse the young fathers from parental obligations. They often justify this because sons experience difficulty in 'breaking' with their maternal homes. The ambivalent communication to sons who have become fathers - 'you're men/fathers' and 'you still need to grow' - produces an impasse in the mother-son relational frame. Minimizing the transformation introduced by their sons'

fatherhood, mothers continue to emphasize their relatedness over time in detriment of a responsible fatherhood accordingly to well-established cultural values they also transmit them. This is further enhanced by their willingness to provide care through food to adult sons, and to host them in their houses in times of transition between female partners.

Mothers' double binding is strongly developed in relation to the moralities and anxieties prevailing in their immediate sociocultural context. In line with their fellow compatriots, they recognize the role of the Cape Verdean masculine ideal conception in the shaping of a man's self-esteem and agency. Conversely, in the attempt to spare 'their daughters [suffering] later what they suffered', mothers encourage them to achieve autonomy: 'school is the best way to earn a livelihood and not to take abuse from men'. The ideal of the 'womanizer' could not prevail without female peers that assume the responsibility for the subsistence of children. By defining male and female conceptions in relationship to one another, mothers simultaneously inculcate in their offspring complementary balances of autonomy and relatedness. Nonetheless, daughters' attempts to rethink Cape Verdean mothering patterns with regards to sons may include some transformative potential.

Our mothers brought their sons food in bed, they washed their feet if necessary. Our own mothers, from very early on, told them: a true man cannot be man to just one woman. We don't want to do that with our sons.

A number of youth respondents were born in Cape Verde but have been living in Portugal since childhood. Many were born in Portugal but this does not automatically translate into a feeling of belonging. Reacting to Portuguese mass media, which have created a negative image of African immigrants (particularly of their descendants), these youth often develop an oppositional 'African' identity. Hence, care giving has brought to migrant mothers more challenges: keeping their offspring away from delinquency and working to ensure their self-esteem against racism through a project of community development driven by religious values. As Christians and familial persons, they take on roles (mainly in the fields of maternal, infant and elderly care, education and health) which complement or replace the reduced services provided by local authorities. In parallel, they have fostered in their children a goal of civic-relatedness as a path to self-esteem and improvement of a stigmatized relatedness. Inspired by their mothers' civic-religious

activism and the lyrics of African American rappers, several interviewees have embraced a new attitude which involves refusing 'to continue to be a victim, pointing fingers, and not doing anything to change things', while also 'speaking of positive things, saying what can be improved' to prevent the experience of differential racism and social marginalization.

Rap lyrics fascinated us because those were struggles we felt in our neighbourhood. Rap and the incomparable strength of my mother are part of why I became involved in social activism.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Cross-cultural perspectives address questions regarding the different processes of children's development, the dynamics of socialization that engender them, and their embeddedness in specific socioeconomic, cultural and political contexts. Although these very contexts are also changing and require new adaptations in different spheres of youth development, research has increasingly shown that immigration compels families to rethink on how to provide children with adaptive skills and interpretative lens in a changing and urbanized world in which migration is mostly transnational. Debates in wider society are also interacting with these redefinitions in complex ways. The cultural values and practices that are believed to represent immigrant families in many receiving countries have been subjected to intense public scrutiny and policy initiatives. Notwithstanding, what is missing is a dynamic approach that tell us *how* parenting goals and practices are changing, and *how* the interplay of parents-offspring interactions with their immediate and larger sociocultural contexts influences the autonomy and relatedness' syntheses developed by their sons and daughters.

Addressing these questions, the case-studies presented indicate that mothering interaction to daughters suggests a potential connection between double bind and dynamics of change, while producing a stabilizing effect the in the case of sons. Despite the differences between culture-family values across the three migrant groups, daughters integrate autonomy and relatedness earlier than their brothers. Recognizing the importance of male self-esteem as an autonomy-oriented stance, mothers promote their sons' pathway to a masculine ethno-cultural identity and instill in their daughters a construction of femininity driven by complementary goals. Mothering double bind with regards to sons tends

to foster youth masculinities, high in family relatedness regardless of age, and high in both autonomy (male self-esteem) and heteronomy (governed by culture-specific gender moralities). Thereby, sons remain more interconnected with their own mothers and male significant peers. Conversely, mothering double bind with regards to daughters promotes youth femininities, high in autonomy *per se* and as a path to relatedness, and equally high in relatedness *per se* and as a gradual path to autonomy. In early adulthood, mothering goals for daughters continue to be oriented toward an improved integration of autonomy and relatedness goals but also toward self-transformation.

As discussed in the case studies, double bind interactions within the mother-child relationship are consistent with their sociocultural contexts of origin, which are not only adaptive and functional but also full of imbalance and contradiction. Their cultural repertoires operate not only as a vehicle for the expression of their own ambivalent messages but also as a source of novel communicative processes regarding children's development. In addition, mothering double binding also comes from a relative self-redefinition of migrant mothers' balances of autonomy and relatedness. The migration experience has provided new opportunities and resources to improve their position, agency and responsibility in family, community and religious domains without subverting long standing gendered inequality moralities and collectivistic ways of thinking and acting. These shifts are leading to discontinuities in the balance between autonomy and relatedness across generations which might bring identity gratifications or be experienced as menacing associations for both parents and children.

Furthermore, parents-offspring communication regarding the influence of culture and religion on the interpretation of what is autonomy and relatedness, and how both needs/goals are performed and combined often constitutes a source of conflicting messages. This, however, should not be mistaken as a statement that double binds always express an inability to resolve an impasse. The narratives from children in our studies underscore the emergence of new balances of autonomy and relatedness resulting from a more individualised and critical stance toward their faith and ancestors' family culture, and highlight the multicultural skills which have been integrated in their socialization process, enhancing their capacity to flexibly respond to the demands of their cultural communities and multiple other social groups.

The implications of these findings may be significant regarding both theory and practice. Although Bateson's double bind construct has been applied mostly on psychological dysfunctional families, the case-studies presented call for further work on the creative potential of parenting double bind communication on the meaning-making processes operating in the dynamic patterns of association between autonomy and relatedness across situations, developmental time, and as adaptive responses to socioeconomic-cultural change.

In Portugal, as in other European countries, policy makers and social practitioners often view migrants' cultural and religious repertoires as a-priori resistant to the host society [43]. By adjusting, through care giving, culture-specific developmental goals and practices to unequal balances between autonomy and relatedness in their current context of residence, the mothers we worked with represent a stark contrast with official political discourse which tends to conceptualize migrant mothering as simply based on intergenerational continuity.

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