

For the Future of the Children? The Onward Migration of Italian Bangladeshis in Europe

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we analyse the reasons for the onward migration of Bangladeshis in Italy to the UK after they obtain Italian citizenship. The findings of 51 in-depth interviews and participant observation with Bangladeshi migrants with Italian citizenship in three cities of north-eastern Italy and two cities of the UK indicate that Italian Bangladeshis move to the UK, not only for economic reasons, but also, to better manage the cultural and social reproduction of their family, particularly the second generation. This is indicative of the centrality of colonial legacy from a cultural and economic point of view. Since the UK has the biggest Bangladeshi diaspora, there are more opportunities for reproducing Bengali traditions and religious upbringing for their children. Additionally, Italian Bangladeshis also mentioned that providing British education to the next generation can increase their social status in their home country.

INTRODUCTION

Migrants are rarely in a position to choose the destination they would like to travel to (Van Liempt, 2011), and those who originate from poor countries are likely to migrate to intermediate countries before arriving at their final destination (Takenaka, 2007). After migration to a host country, they usually have three choices: stay permanently at their destination, return to their home country or relocate to a third country (Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2016). However, recent literature shows that instead of settling in the first country or returning to their home country, migrants keep moving onward until they reach their dream destination or fulfil their desired goal (Paul, 2011; Kelly, 2013; Ahrens et al., 2014; Toma and Castagnone, 2015).

In Europe, recent literature has documented increased onward migration of naturalized EU citizens (Kelly, 2013; Ahrens et al., 2014; Mas Giralt, 2016), and the UK appears to be the most popular destination for these migrants. It is estimated that 600,000 EU citizens had applied for “settled status” in the UK, as of August 2018 (O’Carroll, 2019). However, research on onward migration within Europe has mostly addressed refugee groups or African economic migrants (Lindley and van Hear, 2007; Van Liempt, 2011; Ahrens et al., 2014; Toma and Castagnone, 2015), and there is very little research on the onward migration tendencies of other European naturalized migrants, especially citizens with an Asian background. As Asia is the main source of migrants in Europe as well as in the world (IOM, 2017), such research and literature are highly important to understanding the movement of these migrants. Therefore, this research aims to offer new insight into an important Asian migrant community in Europe, that is, Bangladeshis, who are from one of the

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world's top five migrant source countries, after India, Mexico, the Russian Federation and China (United Nations, 2017:9).

Italy has emerged as one of the major destinations of Bangladeshi long-term migrants. Bangladeshis started to arrive in Italy in the late 1980s and continued to do so in larger numbers in the 1990s; these migrants did not only come directly from Bangladesh but also from several European and Middle Eastern countries via both legal and illegal channels (Morad and Gombac, 2015, 2018; Morad and Sacchetto, 2020). The rapid growth of this migrant population has continued over time, and Italy now hosts the second-largest Bangladeshi community in Europe, after the UK (Morad and Della Puppa, 2015). In 2016, there were 122,428 Bangladeshis in Italy, and this made them the fifth largest group of non-European nationals in the country (ISTAT, 2017). In most cases, many of these early migrants came from well-off families in Bangladesh: that is, they had their own family business or farm, were employed in the private and government sector, or came from families of landowners, entrepreneurs, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, military officers and managers (Morad and Gombac, 2018).

Studies have shown that the first settlement of these early Bangladeshi migrants was in Rome (Knights, 1996). From the 1990s, Bangladeshi migrants were able to obtain Italian resident permits, and they started to move to other main Italian urban centres. The majority of these first-generation Bangladeshis now have Italian citizenship, after having accumulated 10 years of continuous residence and fulfilling other necessary requirements. However, findings have indicated that a large number of Bangladeshis in Italy have left the country soon after acquiring Italian citizenship, and these have mostly relocated to the UK. A recent newspaper article in the *Dhaka Tribune* estimated that more than 50,000 European Bangladeshis live in the UK, and among them, almost 30,000 are Italian Bangladeshis (Chowdhury, 2018).

Drawing on a multi-sited qualitative research conducted in Italy and the UK, this article analyses the onward migration of Bangladeshi migrants with Italian citizenship in Europe. With the exception of Della Puppa and King (2018), researchers engaged in studying the onward migrations of Bangladeshis in Europe are limited. Della Puppa and King (2018) focus on the factors that drive migrants to the UK, but they offer limited explanation as to why some Bangladeshis consider Italy as their final destination while others relocate to the UK. This paper sheds light on this by examining the reasons why some Bangladeshis with Italian citizenship are not interested in migrating farther. Furthermore, we analyse the factors that influence Bangladeshi migrants with Italian citizenship to move and the reasons associated with the intention to relocate to the UK. The research is guided by three main research questions: (1) Why do some migrants want to remain in Italy? (2) Why do they want to move onward from Italy to other destinations? (3) Why do they choose the UK as their onward migration destination instead of other countries? In order to answer these questions, we have used two qualitative methods: (1) in-depth interviews with both Bangladeshi immigrants who have stayed in Italy and moved to the UK, and (2) participant observation of both groups.

The next section presents a review of the relevant literature on migrants' likelihood of onward migration, and this is followed by the methods section. Next, the factors that influence Italian Bangladeshis to remain in Italy and drive onward migration to the UK are presented and discussed. The final part presents concluding remarks and also reflects on the implications of our research for policymakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW: ONWARD MIGRATION OF NATURALIZED EU CITIZENS

Takenaka (2007) first proposed the term "secondary migration" to refer to two-step or multistep migration trajectories. Next, Paul (2011) used the concept of "stepwise migration" to denote movement across several intermediate countries before arrival at the ultimate destination. Following this, the concept of "transit migration" was proposed by Collyer (2007) and Düvell (2012) to refer to

the temporary migration of asylum seekers and migrants without documents: that is, they stay somewhere for a limited period of time before arriving at their final destination (Collyer, 2007; Düvell, 2012). Das Gupta (2005) coined the term “twice migration” to explain the two stages of the migration process, and Ossman (2004) used the term “serial migration” to refer to the migration pattern of people who have moved through at least three countries, lived a significant period of time there and successfully integrated into each of the locations before moving to the final one. With regard to the intra-EU mobility of naturalized EU citizens, several scholars have used the term “onward migration” (e.g. Nekby, 2006; Kelly, 2013; Ahrens et al., 2014; Toma and Castagnone, 2015; Mas Giralt, 2016).

Even though, in recent years, a substantial body of literature explicitly suggests that emigration to a particular country is not permanent, there is no clear consensus among scholars on the factors that drive multiple migration trajectories. Some studies have identified factors that explain why a high number of EU migrants move on instead of settling down in their first country of migration. Much of this literature considers economic factors, such as high unemployment rates and loss of jobs in their first EU country, as the central motivational factors; for instance, this is the case with Latin Americans’ migration from Spain to the UK (Mas Giralt, 2016). Generally, economic reasons are more frequent among highly skilled immigrants with graduate education, than among semi-skilled and unskilled immigrants without a university education, as it is considered as a way to better use of their human capital (Nekby, 2006; Kelly, 2013). This is evident in the migration of highly educated Swedish Iranian citizens to the UK (Kelly, 2013).

Research has also found that social factors are key for onward migration. In this regard, education and language are found to be influential. That is, there has been a tendency among naturalized EU citizens to move to the UK to provide English education for their children. The aim of these onward migrants is to help their children obtain British university degrees so that they can have better careers (Lindley and van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2014). Additionally, the decision to relocate is also based on the possibility of retaining their cultural identity by being part of big migrant communities established outside of the home country (Lindley and van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2014). Importantly, the decision to re-migrate is also fuelled by feelings of exclusion that have emerged from increasing anti-migrant sentiment in some EU countries (Kelly, 2013), and because of discrimination based on their cultural and religious points of view (Van Liempt, 2011; Tuckett, 2016).

In the case of Italy, research has indicated that a large percentage of naturalized citizens are moving to various countries, with the main destination being the UK. However, so far, there has been little research (e.g. Tuckett, 2016; Ortensi and Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018; Della Puppa and King, 2019) on this onward migration from Italy, in particular, migration to the UK. Among the studies on onward migration, a study by Della Puppa and King (2019) discussed the reasons for relocation: to escape socially limiting factory work in Italy, to invest in the educational careers of the second generation, to live within a bigger community and to avail of facilities such as religious freedom. In a similar way, Ortensi and Barbiano di Belgiojoso’s (2018) quantitative analysis also suggested that the “onward migration intention” is largely a “part of a reactive strategy” for escaping the rise of unemployment and economic insecurity. In this regard, Fullin and Reyneri (2011) also explain how the migrant mind is overcome by a sense of disappointment during the unemployment period in Italy, as they have a low level of social benefits. Furthermore, Tuckett (2016) found that migrant parents in Italy aim to move to a country where they can avoid racial discrimination in their everyday lives.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research approach involving in-depth interviews and participant observation. The fieldwork was conducted between September 2017 and June 2019. The main material

is from 51 in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi first-generation migrants in three cities of north-eastern Italy, namely, Bologna, Padova and Venice and two cities of the UK, London and Bradford. We refer to them as Italian Bangladeshis since they have acquired Italian citizenship. Twenty-one respondents were interviewed in the UK who had already undertaken onward migration and settled there. Thirty interviews were conducted in Italy: twelve with Italian Bangladeshis who had decided not to migrate from Italy, three with Bangladeshis who had returned to Italy after having lived in the UK, and the other fifteen with Bangladeshi migrants who were planning to move to the UK. We used several techniques to gain access to the respondents, including snowball sampling (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). The first author is male and from Bangladesh. These characteristics were useful in the fieldwork but were, also, restrictive: the majority of the participants were male (46 out of 51) because it was difficult to have one-on-one interviews with women. Of the 51 participants, 11 had bachelor's degrees, 2 had master's degrees, and 20 had higher secondary certificates. Further, 24 participants were between 50 and 60 years of age; 17 were between 40 and 49 years; and 7 were between 30 and 39 years.

The interviews were carried out in a place chosen by the interviewees, such as their residences, grocery stores, workplaces, public parks, Bangladeshi mosques, Bangladeshi-owned internet cafés and call shops, and restaurants. The interview largely comprised open-ended questions that were guided by a pre-worked interview guide, but these semi-structured interviews were largely conversational in nature (Kvale, 2007). Both the interviewee and the interviewer were allowed to talk about the issues that they found important and relevant to the topic, and all the interviews were recorded and conducted in Bangla. With regard to their reasons for onward migration, they were given the opportunity to talk about their individual life stories as well as provide their opinion about why their relatives and friends were moving from Italy to the UK.

In addition to these 51 in-depth interviews, participant observation was used to collect relevant information and to crosscheck the findings of the interviews. Participant observation involved “active looking and listening” and “informal interviewing” (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). For this, the first author attended various community gatherings in public and private places—religious and cultural programs, birthdays, family functions and national day celebrations within the Bangladeshi community.

We conducted thematic analysis of the gathered data from both methods by identifying different themes and categorizing them according to the patterns that emerged via the following steps: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, review of the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report, as described by Clarke and Braun (2014).

TO STAY OR TO LEAVE?

Italy remains the country where most Bangladeshis, with and without Italian citizenship, live. Age and working conditions are important factors that affect their decision to stay or to undertake onward migration. Some elderly earlier migrants are not interested in moving, as they believe that they have an important position and respect in the Bengali community on account of their age. Additionally, many migrants with a job in the industry and in the service sectors are not interested in leaving because they have good salaries, permanent contracts and regular days off with annual holidays, which they think would be difficult to get in the UK. In this regard, the interviews also indicate that some of the Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, who have an average monthly income above 3000 euros, are less interested in onward relocation because of their consistent and secure income.

I observed in my community that those whose income is very high are not moving. Me and my brothers will not leave Italy because our monthly income is around 5000 euros, and we have 17

grocery shops in Bologna and Perera. If we moved to the UK, I doubt I would ever be able to earn such an amount there. (Niamot, Bologna, 3 December 2017)

Bangladeshi migrants who intended to stay believed that onward migration meant that they would have to make a fresh start. Onward migration meant that their children would lose their status as Italian citizens and be foreigners in a new country. For instance, a Bangladeshi community leader, with Italian citizenship and an Italian wife, affirms that even though he still feels like a foreigner in Italy, he prefers to stay because he is worried that his kids would feel like foreigners if they moved to a new country:

After migrating many years ago, I am now a citizen in Italy, but I feel like a foreigner. My son and daughter were born in Italy, but if I move to another new country, it will mean that they will be foreigners there again. I do not want them to identify as foreigners. So, I think Italy is my last stop. (Sayed, Venice, 2 April 2018)

Some Bangladeshi families, whose second generation had completed their university education in Italy, were not interested in moving because their children had already created a life for themselves and moving might have a negative impact on them. For instance, Salim explains the probable consequences, had he to move:

No, I do not have a plan. This year, my son completed his MBBS degree from the University of Padova, and my daughter is also studying there in the third year in the School of Medicine [...]. My children were raised in Italian society, they have their circle of friends here. If I move to another place, they have to create their own society again, but it will take time. In fact, I do not give priority to language, and instead, I will concentrate on their careers. (Salim, Padova, 8 October 2019)

Thus, migrants with strong roots in Italy are less likely to move and are not very concerned about passing on their religion and cultural tradition to the second generation. They are also actively involved in the social life (Sapeha, 2016) of their own community in Italy, where they are often in a position of leadership due to their older age. Such a situation provides them with a sense of comfort in their daily life in the host society and gives them the motivation to stay. Additionally, these migrants also have a low intention of returning to Bangladesh. Instead, they envision the creation of a large Bengali community in Italy by educating their children in Italian universities. Since their children were born, raised and educated in Italy, the second generation would be qualified for employment as lawyers, doctors, teachers, professors and bankers, and could also become involved in mainstream local politics. However, second-generation social mobility is a hope that is not so widespread among Bangladeshi migrants in Italy.

Bangladeshis who plan to leave Italy, or who have already relocated to the UK, consider several socio-cultural aspects instead of only one factor, for example, economic motivation. Research has shown that global economic depressions increase the likelihood of onward migration (Domínguez-Mujica et al., 2014; Mas Giral, 2016). However, in this study, only a few participants among those intending to leave Italy mentioned the economic crisis as the main reason. The interviewees highlighted the fact that like in many other southern EU countries, when the global economic depression hit Italy in 2008 (Della Puppa and King, 2019), migrants left Italy and moved to the UK. These were mainly migrants who lost their jobs when factories closed and were not hired for a new job, or those who had salary cuts and/or did not have sufficient unemployment benefits to cope with the monthly expenses. However, since 2013, when the economic depression came to a halt in Italy, most Italian Bangladeshis have not been leaving Italy because of unemployment or financial difficulties caused by loss of jobs, salary cuts, etc. But they are anxious about how they would survive a future economic recession in Italy, as they could lose their jobs or could not have

sufficient social benefits to survive with a family in the face of such a crisis in the future (Fullin and Reyneri, 2011; Tucket, 2016). It is worth mentioning here that compared to many other European countries, such as Germany, the UK and France, Italy provides relatively less unemployment benefits that are also not sufficient for expenses over the long term (Fullin and Reyneri, 2011). The participants of this study were aware that some EU countries offer better social benefits than Italy, and, therefore, they wanted to move there:

Italy is a first world country, but if one loses his or her job, he or she will not get unemployment benefits for a long time. It was not only me who experienced this tension. Many Bangladeshis who are now in Italy have this stress, thinking that if they lose their jobs, how will they survive? For instance, in 2009, when the crisis started, many factories shut down, and I also lost my job. But the amount of benefit I was receiving was not sufficient to survive with my family. I was always in a state of tension thinking “after two years, when my unemployment benefit stops and if I don’t manage to find a job, how will I survive?” But fortunately, when the recession was over, our factory reopened, and I got my job back in 2011. However, in 2016, when I received my [Italian] passport, I left Italy only because of this uncertainty. (Sumon, London, 30 June 2019)

Like Sumon, many Bangladeshis migrants left Italy to move to the UK because the latter offers more generous social security.

Moreover, our interview narratives indicated frustration regarding the employment prospects of their second generation in Italy. They did not necessarily intend to move for their own employment and labour market opportunities; rather, they had the long-term career interests of their children in mind. Similar to Tuckett’s study (2016), in this study, some of the participants felt that their children have fewer opportunities for professional success than a white native Italian, as their children are still treated as foreigners despite being born and raised in Italy. Here, they often referred to some EU countries where they see Black, Asian or other naturalized citizens working as doctors, engineers, police officers, lawyers or other white-collar professionals. This is also one of the factors that led them to move from Italy to a more multicultural country where migrants do not face such informal and structural discrimination (Andall, 2002). For instance, outlining the reason for his onward migration to the UK, one respondent mentioned the following:

I have not found any change in my position in Italian society. I received citizenship, but I was feeling uncertainty regarding the future of my children, thinking about whether they would have a government job or not. [. . .]. Here, I want to mention a point, a few years ago I went to Sweden, and after going out of the airport, I saw Black and Asian police officers besides the white Swedish police officers. I suddenly thought that if Sweden can make this change, why can’t Italy? [. . .]. But of course, a few of us [naturalized citizens] are doing governmental jobs in Italy, which is exceptional and very rare. I mean Italy has just begun what some countries started 100 years ago – for instance, the UK. (Mostafiz, London, 2 May 2019)

Thus, the interviews indicate that Bangladeshis with Italian citizenship experience job insecurity which is not linked with their employment contract, but with Italian welfare benefits during economic downturn. In addition, they harbour the fear that their second generation has little possibility of getting higher status jobs even though their offspring were born and raised in Italy (Tuckett, 2016). Thus, motivated to protect their children from such job market discrimination, Bangladeshis are taking the step to re-migrate to a country where their children have a lower possibility of encountering such labour market situations and have better employment prospects.

Similar to Van Liempt’s (2011) observation in Dutch Somalis, our findings also indicate that the Italian passport reminds Bangladeshis that Italy is a country that was generous enough to bestow them with Italian citizenship. They said that they felt Italian and considered Italy as their second home after Bangladesh. However, they realized that their citizenship was only “on paper” because it brought very minimal changes in their social lives (Andall, 2002). Their narratives suggest that

they encounter discrimination at different levels in their daily lives (Tuckett, 2016). This was explained by Imdad:

I think Italy is my home after Bangladesh. I long desired to one day have Italian citizenship [...]. But I do not find any change in my life, people are not recognized us as citizens, and they always think of us as *Straniero* [foreigners]. (Imdad, London, 5 June 2019)

As Imdad indicated, their decision to relocate was also based on the feeling of exclusion that emerged from their daily experiences in the country of citizenship (Ahrens et al., 2014; Tuckett, 2016). For instance, a 50-year-old Bangladeshi in Bologna mentioned that because he is an immigrant, he does not receive the same salary as native Italians, although the nature of their jobs is similar:

The foreman in my section suddenly resigned from his job without any prior notice, and I replaced him. None of the employees in the factory have the skill for this job except me because I was his helper for a long time. [...] The previous foreman was receiving a higher salary than me even though the nature of the work and the position are the same. As I was his helper, I know he was receiving 2800 Euro, but now I am receiving only 1700 Euro. (Mamun, Bologna, 2 December 2017)

Despite being Italian citizens, some migrants feel that native Italians treat them as outsiders because their religious upbringing and skin colour separates them from mainstream Italian society (Strabac et al., 2016). In this regard, they stress that in some cases, Bangladeshi females are viewed negatively because of “the symbolic connotations of their style of clothing” (Strabac et al., 2016). This might be one of the reasons why migrants are interested in raising their children in a country, such as the UK, which allows more religious freedom, as one can follow a fully Islamic way of life within a bigger community (Van Liempt, 2011). Thus, as other research conducted on EU naturalized citizens stresses (e.g. Ahrens et al., 2016; Tuckett, 2016), our findings underline that Bangladeshis’ decision to migrate from Italy is also a result of the formal and informal discrimination and racism they experience in their daily life in Italy. Such frustration has led migrants to construct an image of a multicultural environment in their next destination.

In Italy, immigrants feel socially and culturally marginalized since there are fewer opportunities to educate their children in English, while also familiarizing them with Bengali culture and providing them with an Islamic education. As English is not the lingua franca in Italy, the aspiration to educate their children in English is one of the main drivers for immigrants to leave Italy. Parents believe that not learning good English will pose a problem for their future prospects outside of Italy, in particular, in their home country of Bangladesh, if they chose to go back (Lindley and van Hear, 2007; Ahrens et al., 2014). In this regard, similar to Das Gupta’s (2005) findings on South Asian migrants who undertook their second migration from the Middle East to Canada, Bangladeshis in Italy want to provide their children with schooling and university education in an English-speaking country based on the view that their children will cultivate English language skills, that are considered as crucial for upward social mobility and survival in the global market. For instance, Salam’s two children are now reaching the ages of eight and four, and he explains why he is planning to move:

My children are studying in the Italian language. They are very good at Italian for writing and reading. But outside Italy, it has very little value since English is applicable everywhere. When they return to Bangladesh, they will not be valued. My children are little now, so it is a good time to move to London to ensure English schooling for them. So that they can develop their future. (Salam, Bologna, 2 December 2017)

While Italian schools teach basic English, private English schools in Italy are too expensive for Italian Bangladeshis with low salaries. Moreover, many of our research participants expressed

frustration that by growing up in the cultural environment of Italy, their children were becoming distanced from their home culture and Islamic norms. Since the Bangladeshi and South Asian Muslim community is very small, their children have no scope for socializing with other Muslim kids in school and after school.

Therefore, it could be argued that the decision to leave Italy is also a result of the “feeling of being pushed back” (Lindley and Van Hear, 2007) as a result of social and cultural marginalization in their country of citizenship.

MOVING WITHIN THE COLONIAL LEGACY

Bangladeshi migration to Britain has been in existence since British colonial India (Siddiqui, 2003), and the UK has the largest Bangladeshi settlement outside of their home country. As of 2015, the number of Bangladeshis settled in the UK was 600,000, of which 70 per cent live in London (Wigmore, 2016). They are mostly concentrated in inner London in boroughs such as Tower Hamlets, Newham, Camden and Southwark. Besides, there are also small numbers of Bangladeshis living in Manchester, Oldham, Birmingham, Cardiff, Portsmouth, Luton and Bradford. Because of a long emigration history, the Bangladeshi community has already established itself there, and British Bangladeshis hold important government and administrative positions. Therefore, as Ahrens et al. (2014) argue, onward migration to the UK is also driven by the opportunity to be closer to family friends as they have a bigger diaspora community already established there. In this regard, most of our interviewees, who were originally from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, where a large part of British Bangladeshis originated (Gardner, 2009), often had many family members and relatives who had been living in the UK for several generations. The social, economic and political success of these earlier immigrants were also motivating factors when making the decision to migrate to the UK.

As you know, here the majority of Bangladeshis are from Sylhet. I chose England because I have relatives who have been living here for four generations. I have more than 250 relatives, and on my wife's side, she has over 100. For instance, my fathers-in-law, my nephews and my wife's brothers and sisters live here in Bradford. My cousins and their families are living in London, and many people from my own locality are here. If my family lives here and I die one day, my children will get all the support from my relatives. (Kamal, Bradford, 16 April 2019)

Migrating to the UK is also an attractive prospective because of the possibility of raising children in a more prominent Bangla cultural atmosphere. In this regard, our interviewees mentioned that they felt like they were living in their home country because they were able to maintain their own style of living. Bangladeshi migrants in the UK have their own ethnic shops on every street and can use the Bengali language in their daily life; additionally, they can to dress in the Bangladeshi way if they wish to. These are all cultural aspects of the home country that provide these relocated migrants with a feeling of home.

Here nobody treats you as a foreigner. Here [East London] Asian is the majority – there are Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans. You can lead your life without English. You will find everything that you need. For instance, in Italy, green chilli you only find in Bengali shops. But here you find it in every shop, even in Tesco and Sainsbury. Here, in the underground ticket machine, you have the option to select the Bengali language which is unthinkable in Italy. (Mostafij, London, 2 May 2019)

The Bangladeshis who participated in this study signified that in the UK, they can enjoy formal religious freedom, and their Islamic way of life is more accepted by local society (Van Liempt,

2011). While they felt anxious in Italy about how their children would be able to read the Quran and learn to pray five times a day, in the UK, it is easier because of the abundance of mosques and *Madrasah* (Koranic schools).

Here you find many mosques nearby in every neighbourhood. You send your children based on your preference. Alhamdulillah, now my two sons have finished the Quran twice, and they are fluent in reciting the Quran and the five-times-a-day prayers. Now, they are more advanced in terms of maintaining our religious and cultural norms. My daughter is now going to high school every day wearing the burka and hijab, which she would never be able to do in Italy because the environment in school does not support that. (Kamal, Bradford, 16 April 2019)

As described by Kamal, another respondent also mentioned the changes that occurred in his children after moving to the UK in terms of adaptation and preservation of Bengali culture and Islamic norms:

When they went to Bangladesh [from Italy], they did not feel comfortable in conversation with my mother and mother-in-law as they were not fluent in Bengali. But after arriving here in London, now they are fluent in Bengali and they are accustomed to the Bengali culture. Now when they go to Bangladesh, I observe they feel very at ease in communicating with others. The UK is actually a real multicultural society, and our children had great scope for learning Bengali as well [. . .]. (Mrida, London, 8 June 2019)

The above findings suggest that Bangladesh families try to control the destinies of their children and reproduce their culture. In this regard, the UK is considered as the right destination for them since it has a bigger Bangladeshi diaspora. Nevertheless, the motivation to pass on important cultural traits to the second generation also indicates that they expect their children to return to the home country one day. One the important reasons that emerged for their onward migration to the UK is providing their children with English education from *Bilat* (England), as this is considered as a “symbol of prestige and high social standing” (e.g. Jung et al., 2017) in the home country, Bangladesh, that only high-class people can afford.

You know that, in Bangladesh, *Bilat Ferat* [England Returned] is a symbol of high status. Still, the majority of the successful professionals like university professors, engineers, judges and barristers are educated in England. The majority of our politicians, MPs [Members of parliament] and ministers’ children are studying in the UK. (Masum, Bologna, 4 December 2017)

Moving to the UK in order to provide a British education to kids is considered an “opportunity because of the Italian passport”. According to our interviewees, a student with a Bangladeshi passport needs to spend huge amounts of money to be able to afford a British education. However, as European citizens, they are eligible for British schooling with minimal tuition fees and are also entitled to an education loan from the government for UK university education.

From Bangladesh, not just anyone can come to London to receive an education if they want. Only Bangladeshi big businessmen, politicians and high professionals can afford it, because British education requires huge tuition fees. As an Italian citizen, when we get this opportunity, we believe we should use it. (Dipu, London, 29 April 2019)

An interesting finding which emerged was that Italian Bangladeshis do not think that education in the UK is better than that in Italy. Rather, they believed that the credentials from a “British education” are better with regard to getting employment elsewhere in the world. Most of the interviewees in London and Bradford mentioned that their children were doing well in UK schools with the basic education they received from Italian schools, but they moved only because of the better prospects associated with UK degrees:

In Italy, the standard of education in schools is sometimes better than here. For instance, in our community, children who came from Italy are all doing well in school. In mathematics, their performance is better than UK kids. But, in Italy, the only problem is the language, we are not able to teach our children in English. I think the universities of England are accepted all over the world, it doesn't matter what the rank of the UK university is. Suppose that my children graduate in Italy, they will not have a good job in the Middle East. But with a UK degree, they will be welcome there because Arabs need English-speaking people. If my daughter goes back to her country [Bangladesh] with a master's degree from the UK, regardless of the subject, she will get a very good job in a bank, the private sector, a school or a private university. (Mostafiz, London, 2 May 2019)

As a whole, the findings in this section delineate the overwhelming desire of Italian Bangladeshis to provide British university degrees to their children that has emerged from the long-standing colonial relation between Bangladesh and the UK. These Italian Bangladeshis, who come from traditional middle-class families in their country of origin, aim to provide their children with a degree from a British university and to make sure that they are fluent in English. By pursuing a UK-based educational curriculum, their children can strive for social mobility both in the UK and in Bangladesh. Thus, their intention to relocate to the UK could also be described as a path to increasing the social status of their family back home. Further, through onward migration to the UK, Italian Bangladeshi families try to pass on their cultural tradition to the new generation born in Italy who have little knowledge about their ancestral country. Fostering these social and cultural reproductions will help their children to adjust better in the home country, if they choose to return one day with the credentials they obtain from British universities.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to contribute to the literature on migration studies, especially that on the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe, by presenting in-depth qualitative research on the key drivers of onward migration among naturalized EU citizens. This is still considered to be an under-researched subject, so the contribution of this study is rather valuable.

With reference to the first research question on the motivation to remain in Italy, the findings of this study indicate that Italian Bangladeshis with strong roots within Italy are less interested in onward migration. They consider onward relocation as a "new beginning of migration", which is something they would not like to undertake, having already established themselves socially and economically in Italy. Thus, they considered onward migration as a loss when it came to the second generation, especially for those who had already completed their university education. These Bangladeshis seem to have low motivation with regard to passing on Bengali cultural tradition and religious traits to the second generation.

With regard to the second research question on the intention to leave Italy, unlike some studies (e.g. Mas Giralt, 2016, on Latin American in Spain) which have argued that economic depression is the main reason for intra-EU mobility of naturalized EU citizens, Italian Bangladeshis' onward migration is motivated by social and cultural marginalization in the country of citizenship. With the aim of maintaining or regaining control over their children's lives, Italian Bangladeshis aim to reproduce their culture for the sake of the second generation by familiarizing them with Bengali traditions and providing them with a religious upbringing. They feel that by growing up in the Italian cultural environment, their children are becoming distanced from their home culture and Islamic norms. As reported in other studies on intra-European mobility, for example, Lindley and Van Hear's study (2007) on Danish Somalis and Ahrens et al.'s study (2014) on Dutch Somalis, Swedish-Iranians and German-Nigerians, English is also one of the main drivers of the intention to leave Italy. Learning good English was considered to be crucial for building future prospects

outside of Italy, in particular, in their home country. A third driving factor, which was also reported by Van Liempt's study (2011) on Dutch Somalis and Tuckett's (2016) research in Italy, was racial discrimination experienced in daily life, which gave them a sense of dissatisfaction. They felt that their citizenship status was only "on paper" and that it has not brought any changes in their social lives.

Concerning the third research question regarding the selection of the UK as an onward migration destination, the findings indicate the centrality of colonial legacy from a cultural and economic point of view. Since the UK has the biggest Bangladeshi diaspora, there are more opportunities in terms of practising Bengali culture as well as enjoying religious freedom. In this regard, like the other (albeit limited) research on intra-EU mobility towards the UK (Van Liempt's [2011] study on Dutch Somalis and Bang Nielsen's study [2004] on Danish Somalis), this study argues that the political climate of the UK makes it more welcoming towards migrants and more multicultural. As described by Bang Nielsen (2004) in the research on Danish Somalis, our study indicates that whereas Italian Bangladeshis still feel like foreigners in Italy, their image of British society, based on the larger presence of their community, is different because it signifies a sense of belonging to their own society. Furthermore, Italian Bangladeshis consider British education to be a symbol of high social status in their home country, as only high-class people can afford it in Bangladesh. Finally, they also perceived the UK as the perfect destination for securing better careers for their offspring.

Overall, the findings of this study have shown that onward migration is largely motivated by a search for better opportunities for the second generation, especially among immigrants with young children. However, once their children have attended an Italian University or completed university education, they are less interested in relocating to the UK. The onward migration is also, often, based on whether they want to spend their new social capital by going back to their country of origin.

In the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, some Italian Bangladeshis are considering international migration to other countries, for example, the USA, where they have transnational ties with family members and relatives and a large Bangladeshi community. However, those who have already moved to the UK have been developing several strategies to deal with the post-Brexit situation, and this will form the topic for the next stage of our research.

With regard to policy recommendations, our research suggests that migration policymakers should consider that inter-EU mobility is not always driven by the need to escape economic vulnerabilities, which some researchers identified as being the prime reason (Domínguez-Mujica et al., 2014; Mas Giralt, 2016), but rather, disappointment in everyday life due to anti-migrant sentiment and discrimination also pushes naturalized EU citizens to choose a country that is more multicultural and tolerant towards migrants. From this point of view, migration scholars need to take into account that the citizenship status that migrants acquire after living for several years in and fulfilling the requirements of one of the EU countries brings little change in their social lives. We also argue that in order to analyse the drivers of onward migration within Europe, policymakers need to be aware that changing policies, the attitudes of civil society and anti-Muslim migrant prejudice can make naturalized citizens feel isolated and excluded from society. This might drive them to relocate to a third country where their own diaspora community has already established itself, so that they can control the second generation by reproducing their own traditions and religious way of life.

Peer Review

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/imig.12765>.

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