Università degli studi di Milano
Dip. di Scienze sociali e politiche

Università degli studi di Torino
Dip. di Culture, politica e società

PhD PROGRAM *SOCIOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL RESEARCH – XXXV cohort*

The Integration of Second Generation Migrants: Exploring Labour Market Dynamics in Italy

Supervisor: Prof. Maurizio Ambrosini

Directors of Doctoral Program: Profs. Paola Rebughini and Giovanni Semi

Doctoral dissertation by
Silvia Di Gaspare

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Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful to numerous people for their support and guidance throughout the past years. Writing a doctoral thesis during a pandemic and while becoming a parent has undoubtedly been a challenging endeavour.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Maurizio Ambrosini for his invaluable guidance, encouragement, and constant support throughout the entire journey of my research. Also, his help in acquiring essential data has been instrumental in shaping this dissertation.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Anna Tegunimataka for her comments and interest in my work.

I am also grateful to my PhD coordinators, Profs. Giovanni Semi, Paola Rebughini and Mauro Barisione for their assistance, insights and feedback during their courses and project colloquiums.

My sincere gratitude also goes to my colleagues who have enriched my research path and experience during my time in Milan and Turin.

To my dear parents and my brother for their unvaluable love and help, if to raise a child (and write a dissertation), it takes an entire village, they certainly have been mine.

A special thanks to Luciana, for being a constant reference and for her lively curiosity.

I also would like to thank my friends, especially Elena and Giulia, for being there for me despite my absences.

Finally, well beyond this PhD, I am deeply grateful to my husband, Giulio, for his unconditioned support and patience without whom this journey would not have been possible.

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved son, Francesco.

Introduction

Immigration has been and continues to be one of the most important forces of sociodemographic change throughout the world. The increase of second generation populations in many countries presents these societies with a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the failure to integrate immigrant populations can place large burdens on society and threaten unity. On the other hand, successful integration provides an opportunity for reinforcing social cohesion and contributing to a diverse and dynamic culture (Zhou, 1997; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003). In reality, however, integration is a multifaceted and long term process that has proven to be challenging across contexts (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Numerous elements can influence the destinies of second generation migrants. The school system, the structure of the labour market, policies and welfare adopted in the receiving context, institutions and the immigration history of the receiving country are all relevant factors for understanding the integration path of children of migrants. The study will try to examine those relative to the labour market. Indeed, schools and other educational institutions play a central role in the process of second generation migrants' integration as they provide a fundamental basis for social mobility and success in the labour market. Despite the spread of universalistic and meritocratic principles of social selection, opportunities for integration are still strongly influenced by second generation's take-off conditions (Alba and Nee, 1997; Portes et al., 2009; Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018).

Although labour market outcomes are regarded as significant measure for assessing the level of integration, the study of second generation migrants' employment success is still a rather unexplored subject usually missing also at a comparative regional level. The aim of this study is precisely that of narrowing the gap by exploring what drives differences in employment between Italians and second generation migrants by adding an Italian geographical perspective. With geographical approach is meant to explore the great regional variations of Italy's North, Center and South. The aim is also to examine whether the well-known North/South divide generates a gap not only between Italians and second generation

migrants but also within second generation migrants living in the North, Center or South.

Immigrant integration and that of their children is, very broadly speaking, the process by which characteristics of immigrant and native populations come to resemble one another (Alba et al., 2012; Brown and Bean, 2006). The process has sociocultural and economic traits and begins with first generation and follows subsequent one. Successful integration implies that immigrants eventually reach parity in critical life chances with the native population. This is frequently evaluated by measuring disparities between individuals with immigrant background and natives in key areas of life such as, education, labour market status, intermarriages, segregation, and health (Heath and Brinbaum, 2007; Crul et al., 2012; Waters and Gerstein, 2015). The extent and pace of integration is often reinforced by, for instance, age upon arrival, linguistic proficiency, human capital and social networks (Chiswick and Miller 2014; Chiswick et al., 2008; Tegunimataka 2017). Moreover, disparities in the integration journey based on country of origin, differences in appearance, social class, language, religion, cultural norms, and values between immigrants and natives have been extensively documented as additional barriers (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Ambrosini and Molina, 2004; Brinbaum and Boado, 2007; Dustmann et al., 2012).

In this broader context, where immigrant integration encompasses various sociocultural and economic dimensions, the labour market integration of second generation immigrants holds particular significance. However, in Italy, this aspect does not appear to be a priority on the policymaker agenda. The urgency of addressing this issue is heightened by the long-term ramifications it carries, as the experiences of one generation shape those of subsequent ones (Ambrosini, 2003). Without effective policies and initiatives to promote the labour market integration of second generation migrants, there is a risk of perpetuating socioeconomic disparities and hindering overall societal cohesion.

In the case of Italy, efforts to study differences in labour market attainments between second generation migrant and Italians have been very little, and literature is very scarce since it has only become a relevant topic recently and because data on second

generation migrants is often missing (Ambrosini and Caneva, 2009; Allasino et al., 2005; Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2022; Gabrielli et al., 2013; Piccitto, 2023).

When considering the labour market outcome in Italy, two country-specific features are important to bear in mind: The regional differences and its relatively recent history as an immigration country.

The origins and the historical evolution of the gap in economic performance between Italy's North and South remains an unsettled issue among researchers. Mainstream Italian economic historians inferred the existence of a sizeable gap at the moment of the unification of the country in 1861, on the basis of anecdotal evidence that documented the backwardness of the South (Federico et al., 2017). However, a number of historians disagree on the timing of the North/South divergence (Daniele and Malanima, 2007, 2011; Vecchi, 2011). They argue that the roots of Italian economic dualism have been a gradual process that boomed after the Second World War, with the extraordinary economic success of northern regions.

Economic history literature on the so-called *questione meridionale* has moved toward a comprehensive and systematic quantitative appraisal of the dimensions of economic performance. According to Daniele and Malanima (2007, 2011), at the time of Italy's unification, the level of GDP per capita was similar all over the country, and the North/South gap remained narrow for at least 20 years. In contrast, Felice (2014) estimated that the gap between the North-Centre and the South of the country was already 18% in 1871, and thus probably also in 1861, growing little by 1911. Evidence about other dimensions of living standards, such as life expectancies, literacy rates, and heights has supported this interpretation. Felice and Vasta (2015) bear out the key role played by education as a fundamental cause of long-run economic growth given that in the South 85.6% of the population was illiterate at the time of unification.

Regardless of when the gap arose, its effects are undoubtedly recognizable today. Inevitably, these differences also impact the distribution of immigrants and their children in the country. The North hosts more than 65% of the second generation population, with high attendance rates in upper secondary and lower secondary

schools; the Center, which accounts for more than 20% of students; and finally, the South, which falls around 10% and has the majority of enrolments in pre-school and elementary levels (Miur, 2023). This factor underscores how the South represents a first and temporary stage of residence; as soon as economic resources or job opportunities permit; immigrants tend to move with their families to wealthier regions. In summary, in the northern regions, the demand for labour comes from small and medium-sized enterprises (as well as agriculture). In the Center, but also in medium to large cities in the North, domestic work assumes a certain importance characterized by strong demand from families for domestic and care work, as well as the service sector (such as catering and cleaning). Finally, in the South, there is almost predominantly (out of irregular job market) demand for domestic work from families and some demand from agriculture (often seasonal in nature) (Ambrosini, 1999, 2001a; Allasino et al., 2005; Fullin and Reyneri, 2011).

A second peculiarity of the Italian case, in sharp contrast with its history of emigration, the country has transformed into a new immigrant-receiving destination. This new immigration phase accelerated at the beginning of the 1990s, when Italy experienced a rise in the number of migrants as part of the worlds' South-North migration trend, with immigrants coming primarily from sub-Saharan and North Africa (Colombo and Sciortino 2004). After the fall of the "Iron Curtain," East-West migration from Central and Eastern Europe also accounted for a large part of the positive net immigration. The attraction and employment of immigrants in Italy, as in the rest of Southern Europe, have been characterized by the demand for labour and subsequent subordinate integration. Hence, this has also affected the image and prospects of second generation immigrants. As a result of this process, the presence of immigrants in the country has increased from just over half a million in 1991 to around 6 million in 2023 (Istat, 2020a; Ismu, 2023). Furthermore, Italy represents an interesting case also for its wide range of source countries.

Outline of the thesis

After this first introductory section, in the first chapter will be addressed the evolution of the term integration, then theories on second generation migrants in the past century will be reviewed together with a specific part on literature in Europe. In

chapter 2, the Italian context will be analysed regarding the educational and the labour market context; an overview of the distribution and numbers of second generation in Italy will follow. In chapter 3 we will look at the source material, data and methodological aspects of the analysis. Descriptive statistics will close this section. Chapter 4 will reveal the empirical analysis results, including limitations and discussion. The concluding section represents the sealing of the work, providing a comprehensive synthesis of the study's findings while emphasizing its principal contributions to the academic discourse. Moreover, it serves as a springboard for future investigations, identifying key areas for further exploration within the broader scope of this topic.

Chapter 1: Theoretical perspectives on the integration of second generation migrants

1.1 Second generations migrants: a challenging definition

Who are the "second generations"? What do we refer to when we talk about them? First and foremost, it must be emphasized that the term could not be confined into a single, unequivocal definition. The emergence of a new generation resulting from immigration represents not only a crucial aspect of the migratory phenomena but also a challenge for social cohesion and a factor of transformation in receiving societies (Ambrosini, 2004).

Historically, it was American scholars from the Chicago School, in their early research during the early 1900s, who used this concept to refer to all individuals born to permanent immigrants who arrived in the United States. This same expression was also adopted and used in European literature. However, interest in the acknowledgment of this new generation lagged behind.

The very definition of "second generations" is not uniform and is often considered misleading and confusing concerning the social category it aims to identify. This expression is the subject of an ongoing debate. The term "second generation" itself, should be read broadly as "second generations of immigration" even though these individuals often do not have a direct migration experience behind them. This confusion arises from the fact that the term "second generation" is, in fact, an oxymoron. There is the implicit suggestion that these young people are also immigrants, even though they do not undergo any migration process, as they are born in the host society. It would be more appropriate to refer to them as "minors of immigrant origins", as the concept highlights a journey, the migratory one, chosen and undertaken by their parents (Ambrosini, 2005, 2018).

Nevertheless, the term continues to prevail in the majority of discourse around the children of migrants. One of the most commonly used definitions in literature is that

of Rumbaut (1997), which has the merit of classifying an articulated concept and the vast reality of second generations clearly and succinctly. His approach in "stages" allows for the distinction of second generations youths into different categories:

1. G2 (Second Generation): those born in the host country to immigrant parents.

2. G1.75: individuals that emigrate at preschool age (0 – 5 years) and complete their entire educational journey in the host country.

3. G1.5: individuals (6-12 years) that begin their education in the country of origin and complete it in the destination country.

4. G1.25: individuals that emigrated from the country of origin between the ages of 13 and 17.

This widely adopted scheme of categorization provides clarity within such a heterogeneous population with so specific experiences and has proven particularly useful in comparative studies. In this gradation, Rumbaut's (1997) uses the first generation (G1) as the reference point. The further we progress from G1, the greater the difference gets across generations. Although very broad and comprehensive, these groupings do not include refugee children and those who arrived through international adoption. However, like many definitions that successfully encompass complex concepts, at the same time, it loses some significant nuances.

The increasing presence of the second generation within our societies brings about new challenges, often insufficiently addressed, as there may still be a prevalent belief that immigrants are temporary figures who will eventually return to their home country (or it is hoped that they will). Instead, the second generation has forcefully brought to the forefront a crucial issue for our societies, breaking the collective imagination that immigration is temporary rather than enduring, if not definitive and the consequences that arise from it (Ambrosini and Molina, 2004).

From a sociological perspective, the second generation is, in fact, a benchmark, for evaluating the results of immigration and the evolving character of our societies. In fact, ensuring the success of a self-determination path for the second generations is a decisive element for the entire society. On one hand, it guarantees the subsequent generations can overcome the subaltern integration experienced by their parents, and

on the other hand, it assures the first generation of immigrants, that the satisfactory integration of their children can bring the benefits of mediation with the institutions of the host society (Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018). The emergence of second generation immigrants carries profound significance that extends beyond mere integration concerns, exerting a far-reaching influence on society as a whole. The arrival of the second generation, marked by its intricate social and cultural interactions, takes on paramount importance for the host society. It serves as a catalyst for the realization of the irreversible transformation the host society is experiencing. It also strengthens the position of the first generation of immigrants, making it an integral part of the society in which they live in (Dalla Zuanna et al, 2009).

Indeed, the second generation serves as a litmus test for the effectiveness of the integration process (Ricucci, 2020). Across various domains, including educational policies, labour market relationships and intergenerational connections, efforts are directed towards fostering and enhancing the processes of civil coexistence within a society increasingly attuned to the transformative and indispensable effects of immigration.

For second generation youth, it is undoubtedly complex to address the issue of constructing their own identity (Colombo and Rebughini, 2011; Colombo et al., 2009). Not only they face generational difficulties and obstacles that are typical of childhood and adolescence, like any other young Italian, but also, they deal with a series of challenges related to their personal experiences and family backgrounds. When investigating into the lives of second generations migrants it is essential to consider also their lifestyles, identification patterns and generational characteristics in the wider frame of a globalized world (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012; Leonini and Rebughini, 2010). They represent a "bridge" generation (Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018), living between two different cultures, thus are called to account for this dual belonging, mediating their connection with the original culture of their family and the reality in which they have grown up. These young people have expectations similar to those who have been raised in our societies, sharing interests, lifestyles, and consumption habits with their native peers. Therefore, they reject the model of

social and cultural integration experienced by the first generation and seek new opportunities for higher social and economic prestige (Ambrosini and Molina, 2004).

Furthermore, second generations raise questions about the conception of European nation-states, challenging the principles of ethnic, linguistic, and religious unity that have historically fuelled the idea of a nation, leading to a profound redefinition, if not an irreversible crisis (Ambrosini, 2001). For these reasons, second generations require a different conceptual approach from the one used in the study of migrations, which follows distinct paths and mechanisms, necessitating an intergenerational perspective.

These briefly mentioned considerations confirm how ambivalent the word "second generation" is. Within this term, not only do numerous categories of people with very different immigration-related stories fall, but there is also the danger of perpetuating a dichotomous view of society: natives versus foreigners.

In spite of all these contradictions and inconsistencies in terminology, in this work, the term "second generation" will be used, keeping in mind its inherent limitations, but acknowledging the practicality it provides as a definition. Furthermore, this choice is also based on the fact that second generation is the most widely used term in the literature.

1.2 The evolution and different definitions for integration

The challenge of defining an appropriate vocabulary to describe the integration paths of immigrants and their children is a rather delicate issue. The ambiguity of our language reflects the plurality of perspectives in public opinion, media, as well as in political plans. Words like “integration”, “assimilation”, “adaptation”, “acculturation”, “inclusion” and the list could go on, can lead to different interpretations and often confusion. When we shift to an international comparison perspective, it becomes even more evident how concise terminology is needed in order to have a shared ground of interpretation.

In the ongoing debate on second generation migrants, the term assimilation represents a fundamental pivot around which new and old theoretical interpretations revolve. However, before delving into the theories, a little terminological analysis of

the two most frequently used – assimilation and integration – is necessary to understand what they have signified.

The evolution of the debate on the concept of assimilation and integration in the United States and in Europe highlights the growing awareness and the challenge that encompasses a wide range of diverse realities and situations both among and within countries, as well as across different migrant groups. How can we define "integrated", for example, a young person who has fluently learned the language of the destination country but struggles to find employment? Conversely, is someone with a stable job and citizenship but with very few social interactions with natives integrated? This complexity is further compounded by the fact that in western societies, the term integration is used for both analytical and practical categories (Sciortino, 2015).

The relationship between resident populations and foreign populations, following migratory processes, as mentioned, has long been a subject of heated debate. Among the various concepts useful for interpreting it, integration has gradually emerged as a bridging concept between the realm of social research and public policies. Its growing discursive centrality reflects the risks of lexical inflation that is difficult to control, but also signals the opportunities for an articulated and multi-dimensional view of the dialectic between majority and minority within European societies. On one hand, the notion of integration does not always rely on a precise or shared meaning and is often evoked in prescriptive tones or unilateral terms. On the other hand, the challenge it poses for social research lies in distinguishing the elements of continuity and innovation brought about by this concept in contemporary discourse, in the possibility of linking it to a set of meanings relevant to the governance of migratory phenomena, and in appreciating its implications for migration theory and social theory (Boccagni and Pollini, 2012).

From an analytical perspective, it refers to a social system where there is a high degree of structural interdependence between the foreign-born population and the native population, with a relatively stable structure of mutual expectations that regulates their interactions in a way that makes them reasonably predictable for all participants. From a practical standpoint, Sciortino (2015) refers to the normative

objectives of a given society. In order to discuss integration, it is not enough to empirically observe the interdependence between natives and immigrants. As the author points out, this interdependence must also respect the core values of modern liberal societies, thus, not all possible forms of integration are considered acceptable.

The term integration, when applied to the analysis of migration processes, is relatively recent and has replaced the more commonly used term (in American literature) of “assimilation”. With assimilation in its original meaning, it is understood as the obligation to conform to the social, cultural, and linguistic practices of the majority population (Ambrosini, 2017). The first and perhaps the most well-known analysis of assimilation processes can be attributed to the sociologists of the Chicago School in the early 1900s (Park and Burgess, 1924; Park, 1928; Park and Miller, 1921). This classical view interpreted assimilation as a linear process of fusion, where migrants acquired all the defining traits of the receiving society, leading to the complete disappearance of all their original differences and traits (Park and Burgess, 1924). Immigrants, and especially their descendants, were expected to assimilate and acquire the attitudes and behaviours of the mainstream until they became culturally and socially indistinguishable with the native population. This process was described as homogeneous, inevitable, and irreversible for all ethnic groups, including those that were particularly closed or discriminated against. These theories shared a widespread consensus not only among academics but also among policymakers.

However, at the outset of the First World War, the American approach changed in part due to protests from large segments of German-origin immigrants who openly disagreed with the government's decision. The initial laissez-faire attitude, typical of the first phase, was gradually replaced by programs with the specific aim of Americanization of immigrants by flattening their background differences (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). Hence, the acquisition of citizenship was facilitated, and bilingualism discouraged with emphasis on all those traits that underlined the detachments of personal roots like the adoption of English names for the second generation.

However, this model of assimilation began to shift again in the mid-60s. The reasons for this change can be attributed to a complex set of factors, with the first one being related to changes in migration patterns (Massey, 1998). Starting from 1965, the barriers to immigration to the United States, which had been up until that moment, predominantly European (and Christian), began to erode and new substantial stream from Asia, Africa, Central and South America started to flow. An additional element has been the influence of the civil rights minority's movement during those same years. The term assimilation gradually lost its popularity in favour of the concept of integration thus understood as a process of interchange within social heterogeneity and equal rights and responsibilities (Parsons, 1994). The third aspect was linked to changes in the production model of the American society. Workforce and manpower were not anymore as essential to the production means. Hence, society started to reduce the capacity to integrate the significant quantities of unskilled workers that had characterized the earlier waves of migration.

Furthermore, starting from the 1990s, gradually took place the concept of social valorisation of cultural diversity within the population and a consequent disenchantment of the idea of a complete merging between two culturally diverse groups (Kivisto, 2005). The contemporary view on assimilation does no longer look at the fading of cultural differences between the minority and the majority resident populations but, rather, focuses on reducing socio-economic inequalities between groups (Alba and Nee, 1997; Portes and Zhou, 1993). A new anti-assimilationist movement took place that demanded for greater recognition of the autonomy of indigenous peoples, minorities towards a more colour-conscious interpretation of legislation and civil right in the US (Brubaker, 2001).

Hence, the use of the term assimilation in North American literature become synonymous with integration. The new interpretation had a more critical conception of the consequences of assimilation processes and no longer perceived as a linear process of becoming similar to the dominant group. It is assumed that there is not a single process, but a plurality of distinct processes that involve different social spheres and may extend beyond the first generation (Alba, 2003; Alba and Nee,

1997). Therefore, we witness processes of socio-economic assimilation, educational assimilation, linguistic assimilation, intermarriage, and so on. The speed of these processes is not anymore solely attributed to immigrants but mainly to the socio-economic characteristics of the country. Furthermore, assimilation is no longer inherently good and not all spheres of assimilation are described as positive. An effective example is the assimilation to the unhealthy American diet (Rumbaut, 1997).

Quite differently, is the interpretation of the term integration in Europe. Here the meaning of integration relates to a different conceptual and institutional framework compared to the North American context. This difference stems from the fact that European countries have a very different migration history, and the plurality of social and economic realities make a single synthesis of the term more complex. With the exception of few scholars (Sayad, 1999), however, what most strongly characterizes the experience of the main immigration countries in Europe (especially Western Europe) was the absence, at least until recently, of interest in the long-term consequences of migrations also on the public debate.

Until the mid-1980s, the issue of migrant integration was of marginal interest and was perceived as a topic of little relevance (Dustmann, 1996; Ambrosini, 2004). But things were about to change. The period following World War II was characterized by significant population shifts from Eastern Europe and the Balkans to Western European countries and by workers from southern Europe and later from former colonial countries (Livi Bacci, 1998). Already in the immediate post-war period, we witnessed substantial flows from southern European countries to northern European countries accompanied by workers recruited through bilateral agreements, mainly from Northwest Africa and Turkey or from former colonies (for France, Belgium, Portugal, Netherland and the United Kingdom).

European countries that attracted immigration did not implement any policies for their integration alongside these flows. This was because, in the case of immigration from other European countries, it was assumed that assimilation would be automatic without the need for specific policies (Hollifield, 1992). In the case of non-European

workers, it was believed that cultural and religious differences were such that the integration process was unattainable, and once the reason for staying had expired, they would return to their home countries, with the prevailing concept of the guest worker. Thus, the underlying idea was that of a temporary immigrant with no strings (family) attached (Ambrosini, 1999).

What was initially conceived as a temporary and tolerated presence, turned out to be permanent. European countries did not acknowledge the permanent nature of the foreign population, and by that time they realized it, the issue of migrants' integration became relevant. It wasn't until the aftermath of the oil shocks in the 1970s that European countries recognized the permanent nature of their foreign populations. By then, unemployment rates dramatically rose, especially in welfare state countries, and the pressing issue of integration and the role of policies become relevant in public and academic debate (Barberis and Boccagni, 2014).

This period was followed by a significant body of literature aimed at delineating the characteristics and history of integration models but also at seeking a common ground among European countries. The resulting literature, classified and outlined countries, depends on their "models" of integration. The assimilationist model grants rapid legal equality but exhibits low tolerance for cultural identities (France falls within the description). These were countries that had started earlier on the demographic transition and presented declining populations. Citizenship was hard to reach for first generation immigrants but more accessible for their offsprings. Quite the opposite, is the temporary model characterized by challenging legal equality but open to accepting diverse cultural identities, or at least not worrying about it, with more labour protection policies although permissions were temporary (Germany encloses this model). Finally, the last approach, we have nuances of countries defined as pluralist/multicultural, positioning themselves in an intermediate stance, (like the United Kingdom). These countries were more open to multiculturalism and civil rights movements (Brubaker,1989)

The clear definition of the concept of integration, both as a political objective and as an observable process, quickly became problematic. Since then, there has been a

great effort in reconceptualizing and updating the meaning of integration. More recently the concept of integration has been divided into different dimensions, each of which possesses a certain degree of independence from the others (Sciortino, 2015). In the literature, we usually find studies that analyse different gradients of the recurrent macro dimensions of the immigrant integration process such us the socio-economic dimension, the legal dimension, and the cultural dimension.

In both the United States and Europe, the discussion on integration has evolved significantly over time. Initially, the focus was on a relatively narrow understanding of integration, often leaning towards assimilation. While both North America and Europe experienced shifts from the concept of integration, the timing and nuances differed significantly. North America's transition was driven by changes in the flows of migration and economic structure. The idea of integration within the North American tradition, the primary emphasis is on equality of opportunity, while the theme of cultural and religious diversity is largely secondary as a political objective. Migrants were expected to adopt the culture, language, and values of the host society while shedding their own cultural identities. Hence, integration, in political terms, primarily means the absence or reduction of discrimination, mainly in access to the educational system, the labour market, and the real estate market (Zincone, 2009; Sciortino, 2015). Moreover, to a large extent, the terms integration and assimilation (with its new variance) are considered exchangeable.

In contrast, Europe's evolution in integration models was influenced by the acceptance and acknowledgment of the permanent nature of immigrant populations. Social movements, emphasizing cultural inclusivity and the reduction of inequalities have been often linked with the discourse on the need to address socio-economic disparities while grappling with a diversity of approaches among its nations. These regional differences highlight the complex and context-specific nature of immigrant integration policies and concepts of integration. Furthermore, while in American literature, the two words, assimilation and integration, are often used as mutually exchangeable in Europe they have been intended as two very distinctive words.

The World Commission on International Migration of the United Nations define integration as a "*long and multidimensional process that requires commitment, from both migrants and members of the receiving society, in order to achieve adaptation and reciprocal respect, so that the interactions between natives and immigrants are peaceful and positive*" (GCIM, 2005, p.44). This perspective, much in line with more recent European literature, implies that the latest arrivals are no longer encompassed, as a one-way process, to the mainstream society. At the same time, as noted by Portes and Rumbaut (2001), the idea of a two-way encounter is unrealistic: receiving societies have changed very little, if anything, of their institutional structure to accommodate immigrants: for example, constitution, official language, institutions and the list can go on. What destination societies experience today is a dynamic process of mutual exchange, acceptance and adaptation of migrants' integration. In simple terms, integration can be defined as the process of becoming an accepted part of society (Penninx and Martiniello, 2007). This definition emphasizes the procedural nature of integration, does not specify the required criteria, leaves room for various possible intermediate and final outcomes, and, above all, involves the receiving society, with its willingness to accept or reject new residents, and in which terms (Ambrosini, 2017).

Referring to the literature and how the term is understood in this analysis, the features of integration can be elaborated and summarized with some specifications on the concepts (Ambrosini, 2012, 2014; Zincone, 2009; Boccagni and Pollini, 2012). Integration must first be conceived as a process, unfolding over time, dependent on a plurality of factors (the labour market, acceptance of immigrants, the overall welfare system), not mechanically derived from integration policies, even though it is evidently facilitated by policies more open to the equal inclusion of immigrants into host societies.

Moreover, integration is a multifaceted and multidimensional journey, more advanced in some areas and less in others; it may be more required and promoted in some areas, especially those of public relevance (for example, knowledge of the language of the host society), and left to the free determination of individuals in others, pertaining to the private sphere. The most relevant aspect in this regard is

religious freedom. It does not entail a linear progression of an evolutionist nature, from "traditional" lifestyles determined by ethnic affiliation to "modern" lifestyles, individualistic, secularized, in accordance with prevailing social practices in the host society. It may involve different articulations between the individual and collective dimension, between identifications referring to ethnic or religious ties and behaviours oriented towards taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the host society. It does not oppose reference to ascriptive cultural elements to the acquisition of skills and competencies functional to social integration.

It also assumes a local and contextual character: integration occurs in specific places, in systems of relations situated in time and space, not in an abstract "Italian society." One integrates into a local society, where they manage to find work, housing, friendships, recognition, opportunities for social and political participation. Integration therefore effectively favours the "micro" dimension (interpersonal relationships) or "meso" (associative or group activities), where opportunities for socialization and forms of learning are experienced. At the same time, it entails awareness that not all social interactions and practices learned in the host society are advantageous for acceptance, integration, social mobility.

The integration of immigrants, finally, in various ways involves the host society and its institutions: in citizenship regulations, in public discourse on immigrants, in the climate of acceptance, prejudice, or rejection of certain categories of foreign residents, in the design and implementation of educational and social policies that influence the living conditions of migrants and their children, and the resources invested in them, in concrete opportunities for encounter in everyday life. In other words, integration requires openness and inclusion on the part of the host society. Policy does not automatically produce integration; other factors contribute (primarily the economic system), but it certainly has great responsibility in fostering it or vice versa in compromising it.

1.3 The Chicago School

The evolution of the concept of assimilation and integration in the US helps to also understand the development of the vibrant literature among classical migration

countries, most notably in North America, Canada and Australia. Here, the assimilation of immigrants has, since the very beginning, received wide attention.

The theory of linear assimilation, developed by the sociologists of the Chicago School at the turn of the twentieth century, considered assimilation as a top-down process (Park and Burgess, 1925). This theory of assimilation appeared during a period of economic optimism and was encouraged for the assimilation of immigrants into the affluent melting pot (Ziyanak, 2015). The experience of the first European migrants was explored in order to study the process by which they assimilated into mainstream society, and what obstacles might impede the process. Key aspect was that the descendants of immigrants and the natives become gradually more similar with the passing of time and of generations. This theory of straight-line assimilation proposes that migrants and especially their children, will absorb not only the social aspect of acculturation, but also acquire economic success.

The authors of the Chicago School were concerned with detecting the impact of the immigration experience on various ethnic groups in the context of urbanization and ethnography is regarded as the most suited methodology to analyse the integration of the newcomers. The uniqueness of their contributions about immigration and ethnic relations is thus based on an investigation on the immigrant's own experience and the effects on American society. Numbers and statistics were systematically collected and utilized by the Chicago School, but this was for description and mapping rather than testing and analysis. The emphasis was upon empirical and intimate knowledge of some aspects of group life and the city was employed as a sort of laboratory (Abbott, 1988).

Certain features are described by the authors of the Chicago School capable of hindering or facilitating the accomplishment of assimilation. This process was accelerated from the existence of some group characteristics. In making the transition from one world to another, the immigrant can experience disruptions, and this could result in various forms of individual and social isolation. In this period of transition, in which the authors describe the immigrant as a marginal man - caught between the old and the new world - certain traits brought in the destination country by chain

migration were particularly relevant (Park and Miller, 1921; Park, 1928). These characteristics include a number of services, relations and institutions provided by immigrant's groups that, at least in the first phase, when the immigrant had just arrived in the US, were very beneficial for its' future assimilation. Immigrant institutions were those organization put in place to solve the practical needs of the foreigners through rendering essential services not readily available outside the ethnic enclave. Boarding houses and restaurants, steamship agencies, labour contractors, real-estate agencies, banks, mutual aid and benefit societies, were tailored to the requirements of Poles, Italians, Jews and Japanese in areas which, despite their ethnic heterogeneity, were known as for example 'Little Italy' (Park and Miller, 1921).

In this entire district the authors describe that there was no food for sale that was not distinctly foreign; it was impossible to buy American products such as green corn or sweet potatoes, but you could find artichokes and cactus fruits. The participation in this separate immigrant institutions increased the effectiveness with which immigrant groups were able to ensure resources in the wider American community and ultimately to achieve fuller integration into its dominant institutions. Participation rather than compliance of foreign-born people made them more easily acquainted to the American way of life (Park and Burgess, 1925). Hence, Park and Miller argued that the immigrants' participation in the corporate activity of their community was an essential condition for maintaining the American ' way of life. Thus, to have a smooth transition to assimilation, Park and Miller suggested that it was both natural and beneficial for the newly arrived immigrant to rely on nationals who preceded to America. Within the immigrant group, a shared language, as well as shared memories and a common cultural heritage, enabled the immigrant to find some reference and a common identity with his/her previous life.

Communal life organized around immigrant social institutions, formed a bridge between the past experience and the immigrant's new environment. Through participation in their own social institutions and in defence of their own heritage, immigrants would be able to find identities and meaning between their old experience and the new situations which confronted them. Also, through this process

they would begin to acquire a framework of interpretation in common with Americans. Hence, *"A wise policy of assimilation, like a wise educational policy, does not seek to destroy the attitudes and memories that are there, but to build on them.*" (Park and Miller, 1921 p. 280). Thus, the participation in the immigrant community life facilitated acculturation by enhancing participation in the larger American. This could happen because the immigrant enclaves reproduced their home but were not real culture but rather mediating products between the old heritages and the new American condition (Park and Miller, 1921).

The period in which immigrants relied on enclaves is although only temporary and transitional. The assimilation was considered completed when the perpetuation of groups and memories lose their significance and attachment because considered no longer useful from a sentimental or practical perspective (Park and Miller, 1921). When the attachment to the home culture start to erode, the American culture replaced the old one and coexistence is not an alternative. Migration and cultural exchanges have a dual aspect: the breakdown of tradition and custom of the group transplanted to a new environment, and a corresponding change in the habits and attitudes of the "new" individual. These alterations will break not only heritages and immigrants' institutions but also personal characteristics such as habits and attitudes. Theorists of the Chicago School were doubtful that different ethnic groups characteristics would survive in the long run since common experiences would replace the culture of the ethnic group (Park, 1928). Also, ethnicity and race were not inherited and hence would fade away with the passing of time, with the adjustment to the new predominant group culture and finally with interbreed. It should be point out that these first immigrants were, from the vast majority, from European countries. However, Perlmann and Waldinger (1997) highlight that old European migratory should not be considered diametrically opposed to those of today's United States. The ethnic-cultural background has always been a barrier to integration as Italians, Polish and Jews were considered members of a different race; the "white status" was harshly achieved over time and not ascribed.

Nevertheless, those immigrant institutions and heritages which had the greatest affinity with the dominant American culture were the one to acculturate and integrate

more easily. Acculturation and assimilation do not proceed with the same ease and the same speed in all racial stocks (Park, 1928). Peoples who come from very divergent cultures and widely different racial stocks had a slower assimilation process. Peoples and races who live together and share the same economy will eventually mingle and in this way the relations that were before merely economic become shared of social and cultural meaning. However, at the end of the process of interbreed we will not find a shared cultural background of the new generation but rather one single dominant culture. Again, assimilation to the American culture is inevitable. The conquering peoples impose their culture and their standards upon the conquered, there will be a transition period of cultural endosmosis but ultimately only the dominant culture will prevail (Park, 1928). It was recognized that the path to assimilation is not always smooth; sometimes relations between the conquering and the conquered finds a temporary solution and takes the form of slavery or of a system of caste. Dynamics of exploitation of immigrant workers in meeting the labour need of a growing society are thus described as a stumbling stone to assimilation. Park defines slavery and caste as temporary forms of accommodation on the way of the ultimate assimilation goal (Park, 1928).

Indeed, the assimilation perspective, pioneered by members of the Chicago School in the 1920s and 1930s and refined by their students in the following decades, remains, even today, the one of the dominant sociological paradigms to describe the integration of immigrants, especially in the U.S. context. Nevertheless, this assimilation perspective does not explain the resurgence of ethnicity and the persistence of minority groups inequalities. In these theories, assimilation is described as an ascending fixed process which is inevitable and predefined. Hence, ethnicity is perceived as an exogenous variable which does not interact with the surrounding environment, personal experiences and relationships. However, the success of their studies cannot be explained only by the pervasiveness of their analysis but above all by the fact of having profoundly innovated the way of analysing social systems as an intertwined processes with the additional merit of introducing solid empirical research. To the Chicago School goes the contribution of identifying new fields of investigation and having shifted the attention of research to the mechanisms that produce and reproduce social stratification and inequalities.

Their legacy has stimulated a lively debate and pushed the investigating on immigrant integration further. In the following paragraph we will look at the legacy of this theories and the wide debate that has arose from these cutting-edge studies.

1.3.1 New assimilation theories

North American studies suggest two main lines of research for the integration of immigrants and their children's. The first could be viewed as a legacy of the linear assimilation theory of the Chicago School. Although it regards assimilation as a less straightforward process, its outcome remains that of the full assimilation and intergenerational mobility of immigrants (Alba and Nee, 1997; Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997). Thus, the point of arrival of this "revisited" theory remains that of full assimilation and intergenerational mobility of immigrants even though the path can differ between ethnic groups in the timing and level of integration (Alba and Nee, 1997; Perlmann and Waldinger, 1997). Compared with the first generation, second and subsequent generations migrants become gradually more exposed to values, culture and language of the mainstream population and consequently also their chances of upward socioeconomic conditions enhance (Alba and Nee 1997). The cultural norms and values of parents will diminish as second generation migrants interact with U.S. native peers. Even specific characteristics like for example, rates of high school dropout, will become close to natives over time (Waldinger and Perlmann, 1998). Most researchers adopting the straight-line theory conjecture that becoming Americanized over generations is a prerequisite for educational and economic success (Rong and Brown, 2002).

According to the second theory, the future of second generation migrants appears to be less rosy. The idea of a homogeneous assimilation into a single mainstream model is replaced by a variety of possible "ethnic dependency paths." The central question is no longer whether second generations migrants adapt to the United States socioeconomic context, but rather to which segment of society they assimilate to (Portes et al., 2009, Portes and Zhou, 1993). The segmented assimilation theory questions linear-assimilation theories for its failure to portray a realistic picture of immigrants' conditions and by distorting what might happen over time to different cohorts and ethnic groups. Ethnic groups and generations face different experiences;

some a rapid process of socioeconomic integration, but others suffer downward mobility (Gans, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1993). Hence, specific ethnic groups face a persistent socioeconomic disparity in comparison to natives and other immigrants' groups, (Portes et al., 2009; Portes and Zhou, 1993). Similarly, Chiswick and DebBurmann (2004), point to the fact that second generations have similar or even better attainment than natives, though Mexicans persistently lag behind.

The second generation's poverty, educational gap and joblessness have not ended. Although, second generation may have become more culturally American as a result of them learning about the ethics and value codes of the destination society this does not mean that their social mobility has upgraded (Gans, 1992; Rumbaut, 1997). According to Rumbaut (1997), in the area of health, educational and economic success, second generation, especially Mexican's immigrants, are doing worse than their parent's. Chiswick and DebBurman (2004) suggest that children of non-white immigrants' experience discrimination and persistent lack of opportunity no matter how they are assimilated into the host society.

The persistence of ethnic differences through generations undoubtedly represents a strong criticism to the linear assimilation theory (Portes et al., 2009). In reality, immigrants face a pluralistic and fragmented environment that leads to what has been called as segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou, 1993). The primary inquiry no longer revolves around whether the second generations will assimilate to the U.S. economic framework, but rather concerns the specific sector of society to which they will be absorbed (Portes et al., 2009, Portes and Zhou, 1993). This approach foresees that immigrants' children will follow different levels of mobility depending on their ethnic group of reference. The results of this process will be on one side, a hierarchy based on ethnicity that limits the social and occupational mobility of certain groups: on the other a persistent disparity between groups and within generations in levels of income and education.

These ethnic benchmarks will develop into three main paths (Portes et al., 2009). The first will be "full acculturation" and consequent upward social and economic mobility (i.e. the case of European descendants); "Selective acculturation" considers

that certain migrants' groups will maintain their cultural norms but assimilate to the native middle-class - mainly through education (i.e. Chinese); Finally, "dissonant acculturation" results when immigrant' children adopt Americans values but are unable to gain higher economic mobility (i.e. Mexicans). Two main features are responsible for these subsequent obstacles: the hourglass structure of today's American labour market and the consequent importance of gaining high levels of education in order to get good jobs (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes et al., 2009). The hourglass shape of the modern labour market implies that low skilled jobs and high skilled jobs are abundant while, on the other hand, medium earning jobs are lacking. This structure has thus reduced the opportunities for well-paid blue-collar jobs and younger generation that fail to achieve adequate education will more likely experience socioeconomic stagnation or even descendant mobility. Downward mobility is defined as poverty and assimilation into the underclass that affects those young immigrants, mainly American Mexicans, who live in certain segregated areas, are uncapable of achieving higher education and refuse to engage in the same low earning jobs of their parents' (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes et al., 2009). In practice, the authors suggest that one effective way out of this "ethnic poverty trap" is through a university degree. While differences among turn-of-the-century European immigrants and Americans have disappeared, the future of non-European immigrant groups in the U.S. remains uncertain and different authors fear that the success of second generation Europeans cannot be replicated (Borjas 1994, 2001; Massey 1995; Alba et al. 2001).

Perlmann and Wladinger (1997) remember that in the late 70s, research on social mobility become disenchanted to mobility research due to the theoretical standstill reached in the interpretation of the literatures' results. Disinterest in social inequality does not seem to be a problem today, however, to a lesser extent, an impasse of interpretations is still ongoing. Overall, emphasis rather than wide differences on empirical findings appears to be at the core of this disagreement although, some interesting methodological approaches have also been highlighted (Portes et al., 2009; Park and Myers, 2010). What emerge from these two divergent assimilation theories is, as a matter of fact, increasing inequality among different immigrants' groups rather than within generations.

Assimilation takes time and is not a linear process that spreads evenly across ethnic groups and even ascendant occupational mobility could coexist with descendant social mobility. Some ethnic groups could even reach mobility above mainstream but still have lower mobility compared to their parents (i.e. Asians). It is, therefore, important to understand which variables of inequality are dragged from "home", which instead, arise in the socioeconomic context of destination countries and which better measures social and economic status. Over time, the ethnic categories that we consider today will be increasingly blurred and fluid and identifying influential variables could lead to a new "methodological" impasse.

1.4 Social inequalities in education

Before delving into the literature in Europe on the outcome of second generation in the educational and labour market context, is essential to contextualize the importance of analysing theories on education and their relevance in shaping labour market outcomes, particularly for the younger generation. While assimilation theories focus on the integration paths of immigrants and their children, theories on educational transmission shed light on the mechanisms through which social inequalities are perpetuated across generations. Understanding the role of education becomes paramount, as it serves as a cornerstone for achieving favourable employment outcomes. Since, in contemporary societies, academic performance represents one of the key predictors of individuals' subsequent occupational position, detecting a school disadvantage attributable to nationality is particularly informative of the presence of obstacles and impediments to the integration process.

Education plays a pivotal role in preparing individuals for the labour market by equipping them with the necessary skills and qualifications demanded by employers. Therefore, exploring educational theories allows us to grasp how disparities in educational attainment could contribute to divergent labour market trajectories among young people, including second generation migrants. Gaining good levels of education is widely recognized as a critical step towards securing meaningful

employment opportunities and upward mobility in the job market. By analysing the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital, we can identify potential barriers and opportunities for the integration and success of the younger generation in their educational path and when they will access the workforce (Lagomarsino and Ravecca, 2014).

Thus, school represents one of the main channels of social mobility and social selection. At the end of the educational journey, the academic qualifications obtained by students will be extremely relevant for the possibility of attaining the best positions within the social and occupational stratification (Romito, 2016; Schizzerotto and Barone, 2006). Since academic performance is one of the key predictors of individuals' subsequent occupational positions, detecting a schooling disadvantage attributable to nationality is particularly informative of the presence of obstacles and hindrances to the integration process. Data and studies conducted highlight that these phenomena predominantly affect population groups with lower socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds; in other words, it is not a mystery that individuals' living conditions influence their levels of competence, school track choices, the academic qualifications achieved, and professional realization (Giancola and Salmieri, 2023).

As Romito (2014) emphasizes, the role played by teachers is fundamental; it not only concerns the specific practice, moment, or orientation process but rather everything that the teacher has been able to impart to the student throughout the entire educational journey. Sociological literature has also extensively highlighted how academic success or failure is strongly linked to teachers' expectations. As the author points out, teachers often underestimate the academic potential of students of foreign origin because they lack the cultural capital necessary to be recognized as talented, intelligent, or capable of successfully pursuing a different educational path. There is often the fault of mistaking social characteristics for natural abilities (Bourdieu, 1973). A typical example is language. The use of syntactically rich language or possessing good language proficiency is often considered synonymous with intelligence rather than the result of the specific context from which students come (Lagomarsino and Bartolini, 2019). In this sense, teachers inadvertently risk using judgment criteria that overestimate socio-cultural characteristics, which can be

learned or improved, and which are less present in students of immigrant origin. However, in doing so, teachers risk underestimating the potential of immigrant-origin students who come from contexts less privileged by families with limited cultural capital, at least concerning socialization in the Italian language and culture.

A problematic academic trajectory, however, does not exhaust its negative effects solely within the realm of social mobility. School, in fact, beyond its function of social selection, is tasked with exercising a multitude of other functions central to the development of society itself (Romito, 2016). The academic qualifications attained by individuals, not only serve as credentials capable of securing the best occupational positions but can also be interpreted as signals of the human capital accumulated by the individual during their educational journey (Becker, 1975). The transmission of skills and the development of individual capacities, together with student selection, represent one of the primary objectives of the school (Giancola and Salmieri, 2023). The latter must succeed in preparing the new generations in the best possible way, especially those with migrant backgrounds, for life in a complex society, where personal abilities are considered central and multiculturalism should not coexist with discrimination (Santagati and Bertozzi, 2023). In addition to these general skills, the school must also equip students with specific knowledge and expertise to support them in entering the labor market.

While it deals with transmitting skills, the school fosters the internalization of social norms, codes of conduct, and shared values within a given social context (Schizzerotto and Barone, 2006; Ballarino and Cecchi, 2006). It is precisely the socializing function of the school that assumes particular relevance in contemporary societies, where the multiethnic character is increasingly pronounced. Compulsory education, especially, finds itself in a privileged position for the inclusion of young people belonging to different cultures (Bertozzi, 2016). The population of students entering European educational systems every year is indeed becoming more heterogeneous. The challenging task of the school is to manage this diversity, promoting encounters and interactions between groups, while simultaneously developing the personalities and capacities of all students, regardless of their background.

However, it should not be assumed that students must necessarily be exactly equal to each other at the end of their educational journey. The task of the school, in fact, is not so much to ensure equality of outcomes but rather equality of opportunities (Giancola and Salmieri, 2023). In other words, the presence of even significant differences among students in terms of qualifications attained and skills acquired is not particularly problematic for society, as long as these reflect personal aspects such as motivation, commitment, and individual inclinations. Such differences are considered legitimate (Schizzerotto, 2002). What is reasonable to expect based on these premises, therefore, is that with equal effort and ability, students demonstrate similar academic results.

However, empirical analysis has provided evidence starkly contrasting with this expectation (Giancola and Salmieri, 2023). Data for Italy highlight that these phenomena predominantly affect population groups with lower socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds; in other words, it is not a mystery that individuals' living conditions influence their levels of competence, the academic qualifications achieved, professional realization, and their background of origin. Disparities in education systematically connected to ascribed characteristics such as social origin, gender, and nationality still seem to be present (Romito, 2016; Schizzerotto and Barone, 2006). These are often compounded by a mismatch between the skills acquired upon leaving school and those required by the labor market. Furthermore, the issue of territorial inequalities represents a further historical constant in analyses of the Italian education system and in national and international surveys (Bertozzi, 2016; Bertolini et al., 2015). Educational poverty appears more marked and persistent in relation to the territory in which one lives. It is influenced by structural factors that impact the functioning of the school, compared to family background and variables attributable to the territory, such as geographical and demographic aspects, the level of economic development, and the characteristics of the labor market. However, the school cannot be solely responsible for reducing inequalities.

Among these, inequalities related to nationality are particularly interesting from a sociological perspective. Their presence not only reflects the degree of social closure

in a society but is also particularly informative of the integration process of minorities in the receiving country.

When discussing social inequalities in education, reference is made to the model developed by Boudon (1974). According to this theory, differentials in school transitions observed, even in the case of natives and children of immigrants, take shape through two channels. The first channel, is indirect, defined by the effect that migratory status has on educational choices, given that children of immigrants, on average, achieve lower academic performance than native peers (primary effects). The second channel, on the other hand, identifies the direct effect of migratory background on choices, and therefore, the existence of differentiated choice patterns among groups, net of previous academic results (secondary effects). In the theories of contemporary sociology, we find an effort to reveal how cultural systems, and especially the school system, operate in legitimizing the hegemony of the ruling class.

The school becomes the fulcrum also in Bourdieu's analysis aimed at showing what are the mechanisms that reproduce social inequalities. The focus is especially on higher education, seen as the apex of a selection process that starts from the family of origin and leads to the determination of the "destination" status. However, what interests the author is not to analyse a separate field of research with education but rather the intent is to investigate the complex relationship that develops between culture and power (Bonichi, 2010).

The point of departure of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) will be the data on school attendance in France. From this database the authors will start to study the striking differences between social classes and school paths. Contrary to the rhetoric on the equity of the educational system, students from the poorest classes are dramatically underrepresented in the most prestigious study courses and at the university. According to the authors, these results brough out a close relationship between academic success and social origin and disproved the deeply rooted belief, especially in those years, that school success depends on one's personal abilities and merits. The idea of school as a great equalizer for society tremble in the authors' view.

Bourdieu (1973) will also highlight less explicit forms of selection such as school delay and segregation within certain school paths. Academic achievements are only a reflection of the students' backgrounds and not the result of their commitment to study. Hence, school inequalities follow a process that evolves in different stages from selection to elimination and finally segregation. The first operates in access to education. In fact, it appears that the children of agricultural workers are less likely to enter university. The second type of inequality is what we find in delays and failures. Students in less advantaged classes are reduced over time. Finally, segregation, is the logical consequence of the first two stages, in which the choices of the poorest classes will be conditioned. This process more than a selection is a self-selection. The school choices of young people belonging to the working class are conditioned by the prospects for their future which are linked to their class of origin. According to the author, there is, therefore, a correspondence between expectations and opportunities which he will be confirmed also in university career paths (Bourdieu, 1988).

The ways in which the various economic, social, and cultural determinants operate to effectively exclude the children of the working class from higher education levels is explained through the concept of cultural capital. Cultural capital is defined as “capital” precisely because, like other forms of capital, delimits a resource that is not accessible to everyone. Thus, each social class has its own cultural capital at its disposal. Cultural capital, like economic capital, confers undisputed social power and access. Furthermore, as well as the economic one, cultural capital can be accumulated and transferred. This means that it has an intergenerational value and could be passed not only from parents to children but also (to a lesser extent) from grandparents to grandchildren (Bourdieu, 1986).

Thus, the family of origin transmits naturally and spontaneously with socialization a cultural heritage to their children (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This transmission of cultural capital is different among social classes and can influence the child's school experience. With cultural capital there is also the transmission of what the authors call information capital. This could be considered as the awareness of the

costs associated with education, the importance of school tracking choices on future careers and the system of penalties and rewards adopted in school. In addition, cultural capital is also linked to the access and use of cultural assets such as going to museums or reading books that are not specifically associated with homework. Furthermore, linguistic capital is even more important. Privileged classes teach their children the language of the educated bourgeois which is the vocabulary that students are asked to perform at school (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Hence, linguistic capital depends on the language used in the family environment and is connected to the ability to understand and master the language used at school. The social and cultural contest of the family inevitably conditions the relationship that students have with the language and the fact that the less affluent classes will start to use this vocabulary only later at school has, inevitably, an impact on their performance (Bonichi, 2010).

For understanding how the continuity of the social order is maintained, the concept of habitus is also of vital importance. Bourdieu (2010) uses the concept of individual habitus to describe the cultural and familial roots from which a person grows. Habitus is constituted by an individual's embodied dispositions manifested in the way they interpret the world, and it develops from the beginning of life in relation to individuals' social background. The habitus is necessity internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and perceptions (Bourdieu, 2010). In education this could, for example, be interpreted as individual's choice of not pursuing university when the family of origin has no history of higher education hence these decisions would not be dissonant with family traditions.

Furthermore, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1971) underline, it is precisely the school that devalues and denigrates the student who learns the school culture that is transmitted to him. The diligent student who applies and studies is contrasted with the brilliant one who does not struggle in school while succeeding. This process happens without the deep understanding that what is defined as a talent actually reflects the better starting condition of the student. Therefore, it happens that the successes and failures that professors attribute to personal skills depend on the upbringing environment of the student (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1971). These

divergences in better-off circumstances eventually lead to inequalities of access and achievement in education because the school system itself translates social conditions into merit. Hence, according to the authors, the neutrality of the school is only apparent. By appreciating the cultural heritage of the wealthy classes, the educational system legitimizes class differences and contributes to perpetuating the existing socio-cultural order.

To explain how inequalities are reproduced and transmitted by the educational institutions, Bourdieu also introduces the concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). School is described as a form of symbolic violence because it promotes the recognition of its legitimacy through the misrecognition of the relations of power that itself entails. In Bourdieu's view, educational institutions exclude the students whose habits are incompatible with the dominant explicit and implicit knowledge (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1971). The educational system in fact operates according to its own code and internal organization, which does not always correspond to the reality of the labour market. It is precisely with this self-referential structure that, according to Bourdieu, the educational system manages to preserve itself and resist external forces. The symbolic violence of educational institutions thus, is manifested in the fact that knowledge is imposed as legitimate and neutral, which instead is biased and whose value lies only in the social recognition it allows. Symbolic violence works through the complicity of the victims themselves who, not having a symbolic to oppose to what is attributed to them, end up acting in a manner consistent with the symbolic imposed on them (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

Interestingly, despite starting from disadvantaged social conditions, many second generation migrants have achieved success in various aspects of life. They have overcome barriers to education and socioeconomic advancement, achieving academic and professional success. However, it's essential to recognize that highlighting these individual success stories can sometimes mask the broader structural inequalities and systemic barriers that persist for many others within the second generation immigrant community as, successful stories, can inadvertently perpetuate an unequal status quo and uphold structural inequalities (Hart, 2019).

1.5 The landscape of immigrant integration in Europe: challenges and prospects

Several reasons justify the prolonged lack of interest in this topic in Europe. While many countries on the old continent have been receiving immigrants for a long time, it is only since the 1960s that the origin of these flows has become non-European. Moreover, it is only in the more recent past that these countries began to consider themselves as immigration destinations. Hence, most policies were based on labour import programs that did not take into account the possibility of permanent settlement. Emphasizing the temporary nature of immigration significantly contributed to the scarcity of integration studies. The children of immigrants are often considered at risk because they can more easily find themselves in situations of relative disadvantage compared to others. Certainly, the success of children depends on the degree of integration of their parents and the amount of resources available to them for their development. But what are the resources that can promote or inhibit their social mobility? Furthermore, what sets the children apart from their immigrant parents? What could be the areas of conflict between the first and second generations? If and how can the native population influence the life paths of the second generations? Following the literature on this topic, we seek to provide some insights in this regard.

In Europe the debate on a 'model minority' is not as clear-cut as it is in traditional immigration countries. Here the situation of immigrants' and their descendants is more divided given the variety of local and national contexts, languages spoken, institutional frameworks, migrants' source countries, and different migration histories. Nevertheless, a significant body of literature draw an overall pessimistic picture of structural obstacles for the first immigrant population (Ambrosini, 2001; Reyneri, 2016; Ricucci, 2010; Heath and Cheung, 2006). This extensive literature chronicles the challenges immigrant face in the host country and the disadvantages they face due to the disruptive nature of migrating to a new country. To list just a few, language fluency issues, foreign educational qualifications, and abroad work experiences are mentioned as recurring concerns in the studies.

On the other hand, second generation migrants, born and bred in the destination country, should face labour market barriers comparable to those of natives. Nevertheless, although doing better, this group seems to drag the disadvantages experienced by their parents' generation (Dustmann and Theodoropoulos, 2010; Ambrosini, 2020a; Van Our and Veenman, 2003; Kristen and Granato, 2007). Despite the fact that second generation migrants attain better results than those of first generation, their social mobility does not seem to be proportionally affected. The most disadvantaged groups are those from non-Western countries. Children of Turkish ancestry is lagging in Belgium (Phalet et al., 2007), the Netherlands (Van Our and Veenman, 2003), Norway (Fekjær, 2007) and in Sweden (Smith et al. 2018). Similarly, young adults of North African origin are at disadvantage in France (Brinbaum and Lutz, 2017). Indeed, the experiences of those groups culturally more distant from natives show an even more difficult integration path into the receiving context. However, the disadvantage of these groups seems connected to a variety of structural or traditional factors linked to social and institutional characteristics rather than to the source country itself (Heath and Brinbaum, 2007; Curl, 2015; Ambrosini and Molina, 2004; Phalet et al. 2007).

In Europe, the focus of scholarly research on the second generation has primarily been on their educational achievements due to their relatively young age. However, more recent studies are beginning to delve into the labour market experiences of this generation (Picitto, 2023; Heath et al., 2008).

1.5.1 Socioeconomic determinants

Studies on second generation, and more in general, immigrants' social mobility in the labour market are addressed from economic theories of human capital (Becker 1975). In this theory, the parental generation make a cost-opportunity decision and renounces a share of their consumption possibilities and invests it in the skill formation of their children. These investments generate a pattern of persistence in labour earnings over generations, known as intergenerational transmission. This capital encompasses their educational achievements and attainments in explaining the labour market integration of these second generation individuals. According to

this perspective, the higher the human capital held by the children of immigrants, the greater their economic incorporation (Hammarstedt and Palme 2012).

Borjas (1992) take a step further in the context of migrants' integration and extends Becker theories by introducing the concept of "ethnic capital". Therefore, the author stresses that the accumulation of human capital in the second generation relies on both parental inputs and the quality of the ethnic environment in which the first generation invests. Hence, the concept of a sort of collective "ethnic" responsibility is introduced for the success of future's generations.

A first strand among the literature of second generation migrants look at structural and cultural reasons as the two main staple explanations for disparities in second generation outcomes although the relevance and the magnitude of this disparities differs widely among receiving countries and source countries (Heath and Brinbaum, 2007; Kristen and Granato, 2007; Schnepf, 2007). Social background has been shown to have direct effects especially on the educational outcome of migrants' children and it has been found to have some association also with their occupational attainment (Crul, 2015; Heath at al., 2008.)

Two studies that relay on PISA standardized tests conclude that a substantial part of the disadvantages faced by the second generation can be explained by their social background (Marks, 2005; Levels and Dronkers, 2008). However, Luthra, (2010) find that in Germany children of immigrants appear to be more resilient to lower socioeconomic and educational status than natives' children. Also, Ballarino and Panichella (2015) conclude that especially for the German context, the disadvantage of the second generation disappears once education is controlled for, and children of native-born parents and immigrants become statistically indistinguishable. Even in Norway, no difference in upward mobility is found among children of native-born parents and immigrants (Hermansen, 2016).

In different studies workforce integration remain lower across generations of European descendants. The offspring of Italians', Greeks', Portuguese', and former Yugoslavs' labour migrants exhibit disadvantages that can be traced back to their

social origins (Kristen and Granato 2007; Phalet et al. 2007; Brinbaum and Boado 2007). There is also evidence of generational persistence of adversity for those children with non-EU parents. In an extensive study on intergenerational mobility, OECD (2017) compares natives and second generations immigrants with non-EU parents but comparable socio-economic background and find that employment probabilities for the latter group are lower even after controlling for individuals' education. This correlation between country of origin of the parents and intergenerational transmission appears to be notably pronounced for descendants of non-Western nations (Smith, et al. 2016).

Hence, evidence regarding the influence of social background in the labour market integration seem to affect especially individuals from more culturally distant countries and males more than females (Heath et al., 2008). The challenges encountered by Turkish minorities in the Netherlands and in Germany, as well as constrains for north-western Africans in France, are ascribed to their socioeconomic background (Van de Werfhorst and van Tubergen 2007, Brinbaum and Boado 2007).

Simultaneously, there is support in the literature for upward mobility for some minority groups, mainly of Asian origins. These groups stand out from their peers and sometimes even outperform the average native population with comparable economic backgrounds and parental resources. This is the case of Indians and Chinese immigrants in Britain and France (Rothon 2007; Boado 2007) where women appear to have even a slight advantage in being hired in highly skilled positions (Brinbaum, 2018).

It is important to note that the literature examine primarily the descendants of labour migrants who frequently experienced concentration in lower-skilled jobs. Hence, it is plausible that social background might illustrate, albeit partially, the disparities observed within both education and labour market among minority groups. Furthermore, is also important to stress out issues of comparability between less educated native-born and foreign-born parents when using education as a proxy of social background. Clearly opportunities of gaining an education are substantially different between Western societies. Here, a parent who has not attained secondary

education or not completed compulsory schooling is quite likely situated in the lowest segments of the economic distribution. In contrast, a parent from a developing country with a lower secondary education, for example, could indeed be positioned at or even above the average educational level of the home country. Therefore, the extent of the comparability issue depends largely on the underlying mechanisms that lie behind parental occupation, parental education, and their children's integration (Heath et al., 2008).

There is no univocal consensus regarding which host countries exhibit the smallest disadvantages net of individuals' social background and whether specific groups, if any, are doing worst. What we can gather from these studies is that social origins have a considerable larger effect on educational outcomes compared to labour market success. Therefore, the literature finds that social background, typically, explains a more substantial portion of the educational disparities experienced by second generation immigrants than the disadvantages experienced in the labour market although we cannot rule out that such results are influenced by the increased complexity and additional factors that interwind as second generations lives evolve.

Nevertheless, even with more refined assessments of individuals' social backgrounds, it remains unlikely that an improved measurement of these factors alone can explain all the disparities at play within labour market integration. Different societies, countries, and overall institutional and cultural contexts require distinct explanation to understand anomalies in the integration paths of immigrants' children. Consequently, the next paragraphs will turn to studies that look at these supplementary and additional mechanisms.

1.5.2 Language and knowledge

Other than socio-economic difficulties, language represents another important element when assessing how well children of immigrants are doing in education and labour market. Linguistic skills are often cited as one of the primary drivers of migrant offspring's integration. However, linguistic skills have a dual aspect. It should be considered not only the language proficiency of second generation

migrants but also that of their parents which has often been considered a marker of the degree of their integration.

Different studies on several European countries have shown that lack of proficiency in the language of the host county is crucial for first generation migrants in the labour market (Rooth and Saarela, 2007; Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003; Chiswick and Miller 2014; Schnepf, 2007). However, the key question is whether language difficulties of the first generation have consequences relevant also for the second generation.

The duration parents have resided in the host country seems to have a positive influence on their children's educational achievements, primarily attributable to the enhancement of parents' language proficiency over time. In a broader context, there is indicative data suggesting that parents' proficient language skills play a favourable role in enhancing the educational outcomes of their offspring, especially during their formative years. Nielsen and Schindler Rangvid (2012) reveal, in the case of Denmark, a positive correlation between the number of years parents have been in the country since migration and their children's academic success. Language proficiency of the first generation is found to have a positive effect on the educational attainments of their sons but no effect on the educational attainment of their daughters (Van Our and Veenman, 2003). Also, the language spoken at home has great impact on explaining differences between immigrant and native children. For Turkish immigrants' low school results are widely explained by the fact that they interact in another language with their parents (Dustmann et al. 2012). However, for the context of Denmark, bilingualism is considered an asset (Tegunimataka, 2021).

Different research point to the fact that linguistic difficulties are largely attributed to the parents' generation which have repercussion on cultural factors such as inabilities to communicate properly with teachers and lack of knowledge regarding school system of host countries, lack of homework support for their children and disempowerment from the children perspective (Andriessen and Phalet 2002; Colding et al. 2005; Kristen and Granato, 2007). The relationship between schools and foreign families is made difficult by the poor knowledge of the language and the feeling of inadequacy in front of teachers. Foreign parents therefore avoid

communicating with teachers when they feel they are unable to do so or fear negative repercussions for their children (Colombo and Capra, 2019). Additionally, the language barrier prevents foreign parents from understanding school requests even in the case of written communications. The institutional vocabulary of the school is not always easy to understand, sometimes not even for natives, let alone for foreigners. Hence, parents' limited proficiency in the dominant language represents an additional factor contributing to educational disadvantage, (Crul, 2000; Kristen and Granato, 2007; Dalla Zuanna et. al., 2009; Brunello and Cecchi, 2007), which can carry over when young individuals seek employment.

Furthermore, Kristen and Granato, (2007) uncover that Turkish parents are less informed about the German educational system and thus, are more likely to choose certain tracks or types of schools for their children due to a lack of knowledge. Hence, parent's language fluency, especially when children are still young, relevantly affects the understanding of the educational system and knowledge about grades/prerequisites necessary in order to assure the best option for their offspring's. Restricted transferability of origin-specific educational resources may further harm first generation's ability to confront school careers or educational investments. Also Van de Werfhorst and van Tubergen (2007) provide some supportive evidence. They find that the knowledge of the Dutch language by parents enhances familiarity with the school system and yield substantial and favourable impacts on the test scores of second generation children as they enter secondary school.

However, it is important to emphasize that many of these studies also highlight that the lack of understanding of the school systems cannot be solely attributed to a linguistic gap among parents, thus the educational system per se represents a further barrier to equality of attainments. While in the US context tracking is mainly ability grouping within a fully comprehensive schooling structure, in the EU context tracking refers to the presence of differentiated curricula, usually with an academic or a vocational emphasis, and students are recommended from teachers or self-sort into the specialized paths. Moreover, according to the path chosen, access to university can be restricted or limited to further examinations. In some countries, like Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, early selection of tracks leads to greater ethnic

disadvantage in education by reinforcing the impact of family background (less confident on the economic support they can provide to their children choice's) and increase the dispersion in student achievements because less aware of the different paths available in the school system (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Borgona and Contini, 2014; Brunello and Cecchi, 2007; Crul, 2015).

Thus, pupils with immigrant parents are more concentrated in vocational or technical schools. This holds true especially in countries with a rigid selective school systems where the career paths are chosen at early stages of education (Dustmann, 2004; Brunello and Cecchi, 2007). This overrepresentation holds true for Italy (Contini and Azzolini, 2016; Ravecca, 2009; Azzolini and Vergolini, 2014), France (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2009), Germany (Kristen and Granato, 2007; Worbs, 2003). Furthermore, early specialization reduces student versatility in the labour market which generates additional economic losses and persistence of inequalities (Brunello and Cecchi, 2007; Dustmann et al., 2012).

An additional important element for language acquisition among second generation migrants is early childhood engagement. Attending preschool activities can yield a substantial and positive effects on educational and labour market outcomes, especially among children from low-income and immigrant backgrounds (Elango et al., 2015). Preschool education emerges as a pivotal factor in enhancing language skills for children with immigrant parents, while also exerting favourable influences on subsequent academic performance (Spiess et al., 2003; Schneeweis, 2011; Drange and Telle, 2010). Also, Brinbaum and Kieffer (2009) argue that for France educational inequalities take root at very early stages and the path of primary school has a lasting impact on a student's entire future school career. From the OECD (2017) analysis, the majority of countries that enhance pre-primary education exert an educational advantage of a full year of schooling for children from immigrant backgrounds when compared to their peers with foreign born parents who did not attend preschool. Notably, in the cases of Italy the disparities in academic achievement are even greater and add up to two years of schooling (OECD, 2017).

Not only the parents but also children's language gaps are one of the elements most invoked in accounting for the poor educational achievements of the second generation across Europe. For this reason, children of immigrants, age of arrival is often regarded as crucial in determining the success of integration. There is a very specific time frame, usually before puberty, when languages can be acquired easily and native competence is obtainable (Singleton and Lengyel 1995; Tegunimataka, 2021). Hence, those who arrive beyond this time, will have less exposure and more difficulties in acquiring the majority language. Evidence suggests that most members of the second generation who were actually born in the country of destination are reasonably fluent in the majority language, however how their parents speak and communicate the language of the host country seems to have some repercussions also among those that acquire complete fluency especially, regarding the educational choices of their children.

Overall, the second generation improves on the acquisition of the host language across groups and cohorts although some experience minor improvements. This is the case especially, again, for those minority groups culturally more distant (Diehl and Schnell, 2006; Brinbaum and Boado, 2007; Stevens et al., 2011; Driessen and Smit, 2007). Evidence from PISA standardized tests highlight that the second generation lag often behind in reading skills, thus we cannot exclude that language difficulties may have some effect on the second generation's education and labour market achievements (Heath et al., 2008; Colding et al., 2005).

Few studies examine the influence of language proficiency for second generation migrants in the labour market alone. The overall tendency highlights progression on language competence, nevertheless, if certain second generation cohorts exhibit a more rugged path into education compared to their peers from the majority population, despite having similar results, it remains plausible that unquantified language barriers might contribute to explaining at least a portion of the second generation disadvantages in the labour market (Heath et al., 2008).

1.5.3 Education

In the realization and academic success of their children, parents can, in some way, hope for redemption from the condition they held in their country of origin and a payoff from the migration process (Colombo and Capra, 2019). The migratory journey can thus constitute an opportunity for educational mobility, which could be followed by improvements in terms of employment, economic, and social conditions for the entire family. The migratory journey can therefore constitute an opportunity for educational mobility, which could be followed by improvements in terms of employment, economic, and social conditions for the entire family. Thus, the migratory trajectories of the family pass from the parents to the children, who become protagonists of the successful efforts of their parents. Additionally, it is important to remember that the educational success of a child can influence the family's decision to settle in the host context (Santagati, 2009).

Also in Europe, a core dimension for the integration of sons and daughters of immigrants is represented by school outcomes (Zhou and Lee, 2007; Ricucci, 2010; Crul et al., 2012). Given the strong connection between educational accomplishments and labour market outcomes, it should come as no surprise if occupational trends mirror the patterns observed in education. The general level of education of parents has a significant impact on children’s results as second generation migrants perform worse than natives’ when their parents have educational levels below the majority group average (Dustmann et al. 2012).

In a cross-country study of ten high immigration Western countries Schnepf (2007) confirms that mother and father educational level has long lasting effects on their descendants. However, quite the contrary, Brinbaum and Lutz (2017) find that native’s educational background in France has a stronger influence on child attainment whereas immigrants’ education is less influential on school outcomes. Gang and Zimmerman (2000) find that the educational achievements of second generations in Germany remain unaffected by the educational levels of the parents. However, their sample encompass a very wide range of children of immigrants, also including those children who arrived late during compulsory schooling. Using

OECD's PISA data also Dronkers and Fleischmann (2010) find that educational attainment among second generation immigrants in Europe is not determined by educational level gaps between parents and natives. Particularly in France, parental education and background seem to have a moderate effect only on second generation males with Islamic origins (Silberman et al., 2007; Dronkers and Fleischmann, 2010). Hence, the gap between second generation and natives reduces in those countries where immigrants are highly selected, like in the UK or Germany, as immigrant's and native's attainments are more similar whereas in countries with low entrance barriers, like Spain or Italy, second generation migrants tend to do substantially worse than natives' peers (Dustmann et al. 2012).

Although higher education helps to some extent in finding employment, a number of studies show that high educational outcomes do not necessarily translate into the respective jobs, higher earnings later on or even upward social mobility (Connor et al., 2004; Ricucci, 2010; Dustmann and Theodoropolous, 2010; Krause and Liebig, 2011). In general student from migrant families, especially males in the UK, are found to have higher unemployment after graduation compared to their natives' peers (Connor et al, 2004). Similar findings are made in Norway where second generation with non-EU parents are less likely to find employment after completing their studies than native students (Brekke, 2007). Also in Denmark, Datta Gupta and Kromann (2014) confirm that after completing vocational school, students of migrants' origin have fewer job offers and higher layoff rates than natives' schoolmates.

However, studies confirm the hypothesis that achieving the highest levels of training credentials remains an important factor for ascending occupational mobility (Ambrosini, 2020a; Stangati, 2021). The relevance of detaining a university degree in order to obtain a better labour outcome is increasingly relevant for securing upward occupational mobility. Surely it has become more important today for young second generations than for their parents' (Lagomarsino and Ravecca, 2014). Nonetheless, a pertinent question remains regarding whether individuals with migrant backgrounds who are native to a country encounter particular hindrances when aspiring to enter university. Research findings indicate that native individuals with migration origins who have completed their upper secondary education exhibit a

higher likelihood of university enrolment compared to their peers with similar socio-economic backgrounds (Kristen et al. 2008; Crul and Schneider 2008; Jackson et al., 2012). In many European countries, children of first generation migrants are less successful than their peers with native-born parents in the labour market (OECD/EU, 2015). Although a significant portion of these challenges can be attributed to disparities in educational achievement, it is essential to note that educational attainment alone does not provide a comprehensive explanation for these discrepancies across most nations.

The literature has highlighted the significance of the transition from school-to-work especially for second generation migrants that often encounter challenges in securing employment despite achieving similar educational levels. The limited presence of social networks may serve as a constraining factor, securing the transition from education especially if their parents are unable to provide valuable contacts (Roth, 2014; Li et al., 2008). Extensive research has unequivocally illustrated the significance of connections and personal relationships when looking for a job. The scarcity of such networks for the second generation could be a factor that limits the transition from school to the workforce, especially when their parents are unable to offer valuable connections. Informal networks and word-of-mouth are common and often a first choice when entering the labour which explains immigrants' concentration in some specific sectors or places thus, social ties often represent a source of occupational niches (Ambrosini, 2001). As such, vocational education and training systems should facilitate the school-to-work transition for migrants' children offering a smoother entrance into the labour market (OECD, 2012). However, this is debated because it may also imply an early channelling into the lower branches of higher education (Ravecca, 2009).

1.5.4 Segregation

Spatial segregation, intended as the clustering and separation of distinct social groups within specific geographic areas, is a very visible manifestation of inequality and a mechanism that perpetuates social disparities. Studies on residential segregation are

more developed in Central and North Europe, countries with older migration history, in which immigrants are concentrated in the urban neighbourhoods, as opposed to more recent migration countries, such as Italy, where they appear to be more likely to live in spread urban areas instead of circumscribed blocks (Strozza et al., 2016; Nielsen.and Hennerdal, 2017). This phenomenon can curtail access to quality education and employment opportunities.

Moreover, there is compelling evidence suggesting that residing in a disadvantaged neighbourhood exhibits a degree of persistence across generations. When moving from the family house, young adults from low-income neighbourhoods often relocate to other low-income areas. This connection is reinforced especially for minority groups (van Ham et al., 2014 show this process for the city of Stockholm). Second generation migrants who live in segregated areas frequently attend schools and meet peers from the same disadvantaged area. A high degree of segregation exerts a negative impact on second generation students' attainment particularly in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Schnepf, 2007), although some studies find that a certain degree of ethnic proximity could have beneficial effects. In Germany and to a lesser extent in France, close contact to own's ethnic community, can also become a strength and improve school and labour market performances through social capital and ethnic networks (Gang e Zimmerman, 2000; Crul, 2015).

However, interaction with peers from all backgrounds is also considered an important explanatory variable for integration and labour market success. In Spain, integrated adolescents, who frequently interact with natives identify themselves more with the host culture and do better at school (Álvarez et al., 2015). Socialization may protect immigrant adolescents from stressful experiences of discrimination and may facilitate school success in particular (Ambrosini, 2020a).

1.5.5 Discrimination

Discrimination, racism, and stereotypes are potential explanations for second generation immigrants' disadvantage in the labour market. They all lead to

economic inefficiency and play an important role when assessing the occupational system. It occurs when migrants, ceteris paribus, are sorted out from natives in the labour market for reasons that do not take into account their productivity. Discrimination could be driven from employers, co-workers, or costumers (Neumark et al., 1996).

The literature reviews mainly two forms of discrimination. First, "statistical" discrimination, is when employers apply a prejudice when sorting for workers and extend this incomplete information to all the same categories of individuals, treating them differently based on certain statistical characteristics (or group averages), even when these characteristics do not reflect the real abilities, qualities, or behaviours of the individuals (Arrow, 1972). In other words, it is a type of discrimination driven by statistical generalizations rather than individuals' attributes and is not linked to the actual productivity of the applicants (Carlsson and Rooth, 2007; Lang and Manove, 2011). Hence, statistical discrimination occurs regardless of, immigrants' actual human capital. Rather, employers base their hiring and promotion decisions on exogenous characteristics such as nationality or gender of individuals. If, for example, a firm believes that worker's productivity is linked to certain ethnic groups, the company will reasonably use this information as a proxy of productivity and hire only people from that specific group (Triandafyllidou, and Ambrosini, 2011).

A second kind of discrimination is the "taste model". This type of discrimination happens when workers, employers or customers do not want to share the same working environment with members of a certain ethnic or gender group (Becker, 1957). Taste discrimination, on the other hand, is a type of discrimination based on personal preferences or biases held by individuals, rather than statistical characteristics. It occurs when employers exhibit discriminatory behaviours because of their personal tastes, which again is unrelated to the qualifications, abilities, and productivity of the person being discriminated against. This form of discrimination is more subjective and arbitrary and relies on personal perception.

An additional theory of discrimination which combines the above-mentioned forms of discrimination come from gender studies and is known as "pollution theory". This

form of discrimination is a mix of statistical discrimination and Becker's preference model. It is found when (male) co-workers find that new (female) hires may reduce or "pollute" the prestige of their occupation (Goldin, 2002a). This theory suggests that discrimination can emerge as a consequence of the presence of both discriminated and non-discriminated groups in the same labour market. The theory proposes that when there is a mix of both prejudiced and non-prejudiced employers or customers, the good reputation and productivity of non-discriminated individuals can be "polluted" by the presence of discriminated individuals. This happens because the prejudiced employers or customers, when interacting with both groups, may attribute the lower performance or quality of work from the discriminated group to the non-discriminated group as well. This can lead to lower wages, limited job opportunities, or less favourable treatment for non-discriminated individuals, as employers or customers may have difficulty distinguishing between the two groups.

Furthermore, labour segregation is also a form of discrimination which is easily detectable also for immigrants' groups and is divided between:

horizontal segregation ("sticky floor"), a form of labour market segregation where individuals from a particular gender (or minority group), are concentrated within specific types of industries or sectors of the job market. It occurs when individuals tend to work in fields that are traditionally associated with their specificity or where they have historically been predominant. As a result, these individuals are confined to these particular sectors, limiting their opportunities for diversifying their careers and potentially increasing their earnings. For instance, the literature shows how wages and employment conditions might be lower in occupations with a high share of workers with an immigrant background and how access to the workforce in some European countries, such as Italy, often relies on informal networks (Ambrosini, 2000, 1999**)**

Vertical Segregation ("glass ceiling"[1]) occurs when women (or minority groups) are hindered or prevented from advancing to top managerial or leadership positions

[1] Similarly, the term "Canvas ceiling" has been adopted to describe a systemic and multilevel barrier to refugee workforce integration and professional advancement (Lee et al., 2020).

within an organization. The "glass ceiling" represents an invisible but substantial barrier that restricts the upward career progression of individuals, particularly into executive and decision-making roles. As a result, there is an underrepresentation in senior management roles, corporate boards, and other high-ranking positions. Vertical segregation perpetuates inequalities in power, leadership, and income within workplaces.

In the context of migrant women, the phenomenon of the "glass ceiling" takes on particular significance and complexity. Migrant women often face compounded discrimination due to both their gender and immigrant status, leading to intersecting barriers in career access and advancement. Hence, migrant women, contend not only with gender biases but also with racial or ethnic prejudices in the workplace. As a result, they are often subjected to a dual disadvantage, encountering obstacles in accessing a job and later on top-tier positions despite their qualifications and capabilities. This intersectional discrimination perpetuates inequalities in power, leadership, and income, further marginalizing migrant women within the labour market. Additionally, migrant women may face cultural and language barriers that exacerbate their challenges in navigating the professional landscape, limiting their opportunities for career progression and economic empowerment. Therefore, addressing the "glass ceiling" for migrant women requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges and dismantles both gender and racial/ethnic biases in the workplace, while also addressing the unique needs in the labour market.

Discrimination in the labour market is very difficult to quantify and for the case of second generation migrants field experiments have often been the methodology adopted in quantitative studies. Following the International Labour Organization approach (Bovenkerk, 1992), a number of studies have examined the call-back rates of fictitious pairs of equally qualified migrant/minority and majority applications for advertised vacancies or, even the outcome of job-interviews staged by actors. These studies show that first and second generation migrants (especially those with non-EU origins) are likely to experience discrimination in the hiring process measured from the significant higher number of applications they need to send before being invited

to an interview (Heath et al., 2013; Carlsoon and Rooth 2007; Allasino et al., 2005; Carlsoon, 2010).

Compared to discriminatory hiring practices, there is limited empirical support for understanding the ramifications of discrimination on subsequent career trajectories, including salaries, advancements, and layoffs. This lack of evidence is partly due to the inherent challenges of quantifying the effects of discrimination. Nonetheless, a substantial body of literature has emerged to gauge the extent of "ethnic penalties" – disparities in labour market outcomes that persist even after controlling for background factors, such as education, age, or professional experience.

When examining the labour market experiences of second generation migrant children in Western economies, notable variations in both the scale and extent of ethnic penalties become evident across different countries. In the United Kingdom, for instance, second generation Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi males encounter pronounced hurdles concerning unemployment, income, and occupational achievement (Heath and Cheung, 2006). Also, descendants of Turkish immigrants face considerable obstacles in accessing the labour market in different European countries such as Austria, Belgium, and Netherlands, even after accounting for their educational backgrounds (Crul et al., 2012), whereas differences in the labour market are not detected in Sweden and France (Lessard-Philips et al., 2012). In the context of Norway, Hermansen (2013) finds that children of immigrants, again from non-European countries, still do not have equitable access to the labour market. The same is true for Muslims in France where levels of unemployment cannot be explained by educational differences (Silberman et al., 2007). To worsen this context, a recent study in Sweden finds that prior experiences of unemployment significantly elevate the likelihood of current unemployment, particularly among second generation immigrants of Middle Eastern, Turkish, and also of southern European descent, thus current unemployment augment the risk of staying unemployed (Siddartha et al., 2023).

Also, important is individuals' behaviour from the supply side when examining discrimination in the labour market. The literature discuss that disadvantaged starting

conditions can be compensated by aspirations. Regardless of their socio-economic background, immigrant parents and their offspring often show higher educational aspirations than their native peers (Brinbaum and Cebolla-Boado, 2007). Brinbaum and Lutz, (2017) find that in France, North-African families express higher aspirations and attainments than natives with a similar background. This is found also in the UK where migrants groups with high personal or family aspirations overtake native peers during compulsory education (Dustmann and Theodoropoulos, 2010; Rothon 2007). Furthermore, children's academic success in countries like France and Germany may represent an opportunity for redemption, a form of compensation for the costs of migration (Kristen et al., 2008; Vallet and Caille, 1999). Moreover, attitudes towards investment in education are often stressed in specific migrant groups. In Italy, the importance placed on education varies among nationalities and cultures, with Chinese and Filipino migrants' parents' being more supportive towards their children (Albertini et al., 2018).

As examined above, although mechanisms of discriminations for women and for immigrants and their children originate from different factors, it is still plausible that some of the theories on gender discriminations could also apply to second generation migrants (OECD, 2017). Although ambition is a significant determinant for success (Friberg, 2012), second generation migrants could be invested in gaining higher levels of education or pursue more applied and practical subjects because they anticipate future discrimination in the labour market and higher selectivity barriers when searching for an employment. For example, Rothon (2007) found that discrimination could explain the persisting advantage in school for Indians in Britain. Higher educational outcomes and extended studies could also signal increased selectivity barriers in the labour market for certain immigrant groups (Kristen and Granato, 2007; Lang and Manove, 2006). The case of people with migrant background, especially when they are easily detectable from the majority population, could have some similarities with the situation of women in many European countries, which gain higher levels of education, compared to their male peers, for signalling higher productivity and reduce discrimination in the labour market (Goldin and Katz, 2009). At the same time, second generation groups might be risk adverse in their educational choices and opt for more practical subjects compared to students

from the majority group (Boliver 2006; D'Agostino et al. 2018). Preference for applied subjects at university or technical applied academic tracks with higher probabilities of occupation could also be viewed as a sort of insurance for securing employment.

In brief, the integration of second generation migrants into the labour market presents complex challenges influenced by various factors such as socioeconomic endowments, country of origin characteristics, education, discrimination, and diverse forms of segregation.

While higher educational attainment is crucial for securing better employment outcomes, disparities persist, with second generation migrants often facing hurdles even when same levels of education are achieved. Moreover, the transition from school to work can be hindered by limited socioeconomic conditions and a lack in knowledge of country specific information and few social networks with the majority group.

Spatial segregation compounds these challenges, limiting access to quality education and employment opportunities. Additionally, discrimination in the labour market, driven by factors such as statistical biases and taste preferences, exacerbates inequalities. Discriminatory practices in hiring processes and labour market segregation further disadvantage second generation migrants, leading to lower call-back rates, fewer job opportunities offer, and limited career advancements. However, individual responses to discrimination, such as higher educational aspirations and strategic career choices, indicate resilience among second generation migrants.

Understanding the dynamics between second generation immigrants and the labour market requires careful consideration of various factors, including the country of origin and the length of time their parent's, the corresponding first generation, settled in the receiving country. This distinction is not merely a detail but a fundamental factor that significantly influences the resources, social capital, and relationships, both local and transnational, which can impact labour market opportunities.

From the European literature reviewed we can clearly state that country of origin plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences and opportunities available to second generation immigrants. Different countries have distinct cultural, economic, and

social contexts that shape individuals' perceptions, skills, and networks. For instance, second generation immigrants from countries with strong educational systems and robust social support networks may have different advantages and challenges compared to those from countries with less developed infrastructure and social services.

Furthermore, the length of time the first generation has settled in a country is a critical element that influences the level of social integration, language proficiency, and access to networks for second generation immigrants. Families that have been in the country for multiple generations may have deeper roots in local communities, stronger connections with the institutions, and better linguistic skills, which can enhance their labour market prospects and reflect on their children development. On the other hand, recent immigrant families may face greater barriers in navigating the labour market due to language barriers, limited social networks, and unfamiliarity with local customs and practices.

Moreover, studies have highlighted that the interplay between ethnic and intercultural social capital shapes the opportunities available to second generation immigrants in the labour market. Ethnic social capital refers to the resources and networks within immigrant communities, while intercultural social capital refers to connections and relationships bridging different cultural groups. Both forms of social capital can facilitate access to employment opportunities, information, and support networks. Understanding how these dynamics intersect and evolve over time is essential for devising strategies to leverage social capital for the benefit of second generation immigrants in the labour market.

Accordingly, when analysing the Italian case, examining the relationships between second generation immigrants and the labour market through the lens of country of origin and length of settlement of the previous generation provides valuable insights into the factors shaping their experiences and opportunities. It's important to keep in mind that the Italian landscape is highly diverse, and the backgrounds of these younger generations intertwine with the experiences of their parents. By acknowledging the diversity within the second generation immigrant population, we must consider that the process of integration is neither uniform nor one-dimensional;

rather, various experiences and forms of integration form a complex and multifaceted layer.

Therefore, when addressing the integration of second generation migrants, it's imperative to adopt a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy that tackles different spheres of inequalities. While labour market inequalities represent a crucial aspect of integration, it's essential to recognize that successful integration encompasses various dimensions beyond just employment. Bearing in mind this gap, the following analysis will focus specifically on labour market inequalities among second generation migrants in Italy. The empirical section will focus on quantitatively examining the labour market outcomes of second-generation migrants, specifically their access to employment and full-time positions. By narrowing the scope to this particular dimension, is possible to delve deeper into the unique challenges and barriers that impact the economic integration of second generation migrants in a country context still rather unexplored.

Chapter 2: The Italian context

2.1 Labour markets dualism

On theoretical level, the integration of second generation immigrants poses a number of questions regarding the role of institutions, the relevance of the social background and the role of discrimination. Issues relating to labour market integration have featured highly on the political and academic agenda for decades. Theoretically, an individual is integrated into the labour market first, when that person is part of a formal employment relationship; secondly, when the level of integration, has on equal terms, similar characteristics to local workers, thus the employment conditions are on the same level as those of natives, ceteris paribus. Therefore, individuals who are outside the labour market are, for whatever reason, considered as not integrated in the labour market. Thus, a formal employment relationship exists when an individual performs a job under a certain set of conditions in return for remuneration (Constant and Massey, 2005, 2003). The definition of labour market integration, commonly measured trough earnings, working hours, employment stability and hourly wages, is, thus, defined as labour market participation as a state where an individual either participates in the labour force or it does not or, in more simplistic terms, is employed/unemployed (Chiswick, 1978; Borjas, 1985). Although immigrants' integration might be studied as an insider/outsider relation, their integration is widely understood in relation to the native population (Alba and Nee, 2005; Kogan, 2007). Immigrants integrate into an already established labour market hierarchy and are thereby viewed as integrated once they have become indistinguishable from the mainstream workforce (Alba and Nee, 1997). However, less in general terms and more from a country-specific perspective, different nuances and degrees of integration could exist at the same time together with different form of exclusion.

In Western countries, labour markets are organized into segments that differ more or less, depending on the composition of the workforce and the conditions they provide to workers (Piore, 1979). In Piore's dual labour market theory, labour markets are thought to be divided into a primary and capital-intensive sector and a secondary and

labour-intensive sector. Both sectors are further divided into separate sectors or segments with different wages and working conditions. The most significant differences, however, exist between the primary and the secondary sector. Jobs in the primary and secondary sectors differ in several important ways: in the primary sector specific sets of skills or prior training is required; while jobs in the secondary sector are unskilled, menial, and repetitive (Piore, 1979). Hence, jobs in the primary sector are stable and workers consequently accumulate job tenure with firm and work specific skills through long-term working experience and formal on-the-job training. In the secondary sector, on the other hand, jobs are unstable, and workers often change jobs involuntarily depending on fluctuations on job demand following business cycles. This dualistic model is often used in literature as a starting point to explain the integration of immigrants also regarding the Italian work context (Ambrosini, 1999; 2020a).

2.2 The Italian setting

As analysed in the previous chapter, much of the research on labour market attainment of second generation migrants has been focused on countries with a less recent migration history while this topic remains largely unexplored in new receiving countries (Ambrosini e Pozzi, 2018; Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2022). Before reviewing the literature on the labour market integration of second generations in Italy, it is essential to provide a brief overview of the employment trajectories that their parents have navigated and continue to face in the country. This will offer a better understanding of the background from which these young generations emerge.

The foreign workforce is not a marginal presence in the country's work context. They represent over 10% of Italian employment, with peaks reaching nearly 20% in some areas of the northern regions and in certain sectors (MLPS, 2023). The first generation of migrants in Italy have already been identified as a particularly notable group in which the disadvantages experienced by the parents are often dragged to their children (Ambrosini, 2004; Avola and Piccitto, 2020; Panichella et al., 2021). The role of the immigrant component of the labour supply is nothing new for the Italian context and becomes increasingly crucial in addressing the challenges posed by an aging population, characterized by a growing share of elderly individuals.

(Golini et al., 2000; Dalla Zuanna et al., 2009; Livi Bacci, 1998). Additionally, the inadequate economic support offered by the welfare system pushes immigrants, especially irregular ones, to accept the first available job offered, often to secure a residence permit, even when these opportunities are not suitable for their level of education (Ambrosini, 1989; Reyneri and Fullin, 2011).

Immigrant labour complements rather than substitute the Italian workforce, even in the hidden or underground economy (Ambrosini, 2001b). Immigrants arriving in Italy interface with a labour market, - however, more in the past than today - characterized by a rigid legal regulation and a sizeable and flexible underground economy that typically leads to unskilled, underpaid, and hazardous types of employment (Ambrosini, 1999; Reyneri, 1998). These conditions are inevitably faced, at least initially, by those who have just arrived in the country and are typically pushed towards the lower segments of the labour market (Colombo, 2012). Hence, the extent and success of their integration can be determined by the relative size of these secondary segments, which offer good chances of getting an employment but few opportunities of acquiring a good job (Ambrosini, 2001a; Reyneri and Fullin, 2011; Ballarino and Panichella, 2015). Although migrants have similar chances of natives of securing a job, are, at the same time, strongly penalized in terms of employment quality and career paths.

The labour market structure is characterized by the presence of a large informal segment of the economy that allows small businesses to use irregular immigrants' labour to compress costs and maintain flexibility and competitiveness margins in high-intensity labour activities (Reyneri, 2011). This divide between regular and irregular employment, to which informal arrangements thrive, coupled with the strong employment segmentation prevents immigrants to access better paid opportunities and often traps them in dead end jobs enhancing their concentration in the lower strata of the occupational structure, although is important to state that the segmentation also operates within the formal labour market (Ambrosini, 2020a, 2020b; Reyneri and Fullin, 2011).

To further explain this context, Ambrosini (2020a) introduces the concept of the "five P" to describe the occupations typically undertaken by immigrants and avoided by the local workforce: ponderous (*pesanti*), perilous (*pericolosi*), precarious (*precari*), poorly paid (*poco pagati*), and socially penalized (*penalizzati socialmente*).

The institutional component also represents a central point of differentiation for the analysis of the Italian case. The distinct features of the Italian welfare system, which lacks both public services for the elderly and childcare, opting instead for cash transfers to households, indirectly generates a significant demand for unskilled labour targeted at immigrants (Ambrosini, 1999; Sciortino, 2004). Another significant distinction present in this job market pertains to the categorization between live-in and live-out positions. This distinction often reflects an intersectional hierarchy among workers, influenced by factors such as their racialized backgrounds, citizenship status in the host country, and the extent of gendered responsibilities towards their family of origin. (Marchetti, 2022).

This also applies for the female component of the immigrant population. Although having an overall higher employment rate than Italian women, also immigrants' women are often confined into low-skilled and segregated occupational related to domestic assistance and care for the elderly (Fullin and Vercelloni, 2009; Ambrosini et al., 2005; Ambrosini, 2013a). The presence of women has often marked a crucial transition from labour migration to settlement migration, wherein the influx of immigrant women, both as primary migrants and as family reunions, has led to the birth of children and forms of family reunification. These dynamics have been instrumental in shaping the second generations that now characterize the cities (Lagomarsino and Erminio, 2019). Hence, women are predominantly employed in household services, a profession that historically found greater opportunities for integration within urban areas. Here immigrant women play, within the Italian welfare system, a valuable yet volatile role as they engage in occupations managed by families. This role is marked by persistent instability, influenced not only by the legal system itself but also by external events (Ambrosini, 2013a; Dotsey et al., 2023). As a result, migrants find themselves 'trapped' in the low-qualified segments of the labour market with very low chances of upward mobility, regardless of their human capital, experience, and social background.

Many of these women initially came to Italy independently with a work-oriented migration plan, focusing on domestic work opportunities and only later, during a second phase, characterized by family reunification (Lagomarsino, 2023). Furthermore, as highlighted before, the concentration of employment for immigrant men and women in dead-end jobs, is the main reason explaining their likelihood of finding a job but at the same time the difficulty in accessing a qualified one (Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018).

Italy has experienced a delayed process of tertiarization (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002). The productive structure is marked by a strong presence of small manufacturing enterprises employing an unskilled and labour intense workforce. Thus, in the service activities, there is a predominance in businesses services, often relying on self-employment, and families' services relayed on low skilled jobs (Ambrosini, 2015, 2020b). This results in a labour demand characterized by a notable share of bad jobs opportunities, which are often precarious due to their inherent nature or to seasonality. Simply stated, in Italy, immigrants are as likely as natives to work due to their almost exclusive insertion in the lower strata of employment. Moreover, career prospects are limited due to the generally small size of companies or the nature of the job (Fellini and Fullin, 2018).

Self-employment has emerged as a prominent alternative to traditional wage-based employment for immigrants in response to subordinate immigration also in the labour market (Ambrosini, 2013). This shift towards self-employment is not only driven by entrepreneurial aspirations but is also a strategic response to the challenges of securing an employment opportunity. The trend reflects a broader phenomenon where individuals, faced with the intricacies of the job market, are increasingly turning to self-employment as a refuge. This shift, is not new to the Italian context and underscores the multifaceted nature of immigrant experiences in the workforce, highlighting the dynamic strategies employed to navigate the complexities of employment and economic stability being construction and commerce the two main drivers of self-employment. On the other hand, however, there is an evident replacement as immigrants' step into roles - often strenuous and less lucrative ones like street commerce, bakery, masonry, etc. - that have been relinquished by aging

Italian employers upon retirement, lacking successors to carry on their businesses. This dynamic shift in occupational patterns reflects a form of succession within the labour market, where immigrants fill the void left by Italian business owners who have exited the workforce. This not only underscores the adaptability of immigrant communities but also underlines the evolving nature of certain industries undergoing transformation due to demographic shifts and economic dynamics (Ambrosini, 2013).

To sum up, the distinctive peculiarities of the immigrants' insertion into labour markets are essentially: a limited penalty in terms of the risk of unemployment but accompanied by a pronounced difficulty in accessing more qualified positions as employees. This difficulty in access is probably one of the reasons explaining high rates of self-employment among educated immigrants, whereas among natives, it represents the main channel of social mobility for those with a low level of education. The structural context in which the work paths of the first generations unfold not only helps understand the family background from which the second generations come from, but, above all, provides insights into the receiving contexts they encounter and the alternatives available to them compared to their parents. Furthermore, in migrant families, the concepts of family and migration intertwine, giving rise to a fluid reality that changes its reference points according to historical epochs and the societies involved. The migration process is experienced in different ways, depending on individual experiences, but also on the groups of origin and sometimes even on the historical-political events that mark the countries of origin and have influenced the choice of emigration (Prisco, 2018).

2.3 Literature on second generation labour integration

Aligned with theories on the inter-generational transmission of inequality, these challenges could conceivably persist in subsequent generations of migrants. It is plausible to envision that these disadvantages may extend or intensify in later generations. Hence, for the second generations who have been educated in Italian schools and have interests, lifestyles, and consumer desires that closely mirror those of their peers, is unlikely to consider acceptable the modes of “subordinate

integration" experienced by their parents (Ambrosini, 2003). Indeed, the children of immigrants, in contrast to their parents, who worked in marginalized and less favourable sectors, may experience an assimilation paradox effect (Ambrosini, 2020a). Aspirations of the immigrant children extend beyond their parents' occupations and aligning more closely with the goals of peers of native descendants. This broader ambition could, however, expose them to higher chances of encountering racism and discrimination. Moreover, it exists a significant dearth of information regarding the well-being and mental health status of this emerging generation, leaving a notable gap in our understanding of the holistic experiences and challenges they may encounter. Further exploration and comprehensive research in this domain are important to elucidate the multifaceted aspects of their overall health and psychological resilience (Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2022)

However, the limited number of economically active children of immigrants has hindered the analyses of their ethnic penalty in the Italian labour market whereas literature on their educational advancement is more prominent.
The ongoing discourse surrounding the ways in which children of immigrants can surmount prevailing obstacles and attain commendable educational outcomes remains a subject of active discussion. This discourse aligns with the principal findings of European literature, even though Italy, in its unique context, does not exhibit a model characterized by specific and enduring disadvantages targeted at particular ethnic groups. The exploration of effective strategies for the academic success of immigrant children continues to be a dynamic field, drawing insights from broader European experiences while recognizing Italy's distinct circumstances.

There is evidence that the second generation performs better than the first generation but not equally as Italians (Miur, 2023; Azzolini and Barone, 2013; Di Bartolomeo, 2011). However, OECD (2018) draws a very pessimistic picture for Italy emphasizing a wide ethnic educational disadvantage, one of the greatest in Europe. Also, regarding intergenerational earnings mobility - meaning income from work, welfare and assets - Italy is found to be the least mobile country (D'Addio, 2007). This is because, children of immigrants have one of the highest penalties in educational performances and one of the highest percentages of early leaving from

education and training, hence higher dropouts, compared to the other EU15 countries and overall, a large number of Neets (European Commission, 2014). Different scholars have outlined the problems of including the second generation in the Italian educational system, highlighting problems related to their inconsistent participation, school success and training choices (Azzolini et al., 2012; Gabrielli et al.,2013). Children of immigrants display higher dropout risks and a higher probability of enrolling in vocational schools, while they are less often found in academic tracks (Mantovani et al., 2018). Moreover, there are wide regional differences between second generation in the North or in the South of the country (Bertolini et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, recent data paint a more optimistic picture, pointing to some improvements and progress in the field of education among second generation migrants, although the gap continues to be wide, these trends suggest a promising trajectory towards narrowing the educational disparities (Miur, 2023; 2022).

Beyond a mere causal relationship, it is imperative to interpret this finding as indicative of an underlying issue. Instead of questioning why second generation students exhibit lower academic performance, the focus should pivot towards understanding, the inefficacy of schools in addressing their needs. Central to this inquiry is an exploration of whether discriminatory practices contribute to the observed disparities in educational outcomes. The emphasis lies on scrutinizing the educational system itself and its potential shortcomings rather than attributing the challenges solely to the characteristics of the student population (Zanfrini, 2006).

The transition from study to the labour market has just begun to be examined thus, studies, especially quantitative one, specifically addressing the issues of employment and the success of second generations in the workforce are still quite limited. There are two main reasons for the lack of research in our country focusing on the challenging transition from school to the labour market. One is the relatively young age of the second generations and, consequently, their limited presence in the current job market, considering that Italy became an immigration country only from the early 1980s. The other concerns the difficulty of obtaining official data.

Some research has shown how young people of immigrant origin often have the awareness that, at the end of their educational path, what awaits them is not so much a university path but rather entry into the job market (Mantovani et al., 2018; Colombo et al., 2009). This is also influenced by the sense of obligation to repay their parents for the efforts made and for encouraging them to study (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012). Furthermore, this young generation enter adulthood more quickly than natives and the need to "stabilize" with a job and start a family are generally higher (Ricucci, 2022). Thus, the first hurdle for second generations remains that of access to the labour market. Detectable traits linked to origins, such as nationality, physical appearance and surname hinder the changes of even getting access to an interview (Allasino et al., 2005; D'Agostino et al., 2018). Furthermore, second generation with low native social capital, are disadvantaged in job search in comparison with their native peers and often fall in the trap of informal networks avoiding formal working agencies (D'Agostino et al., 2018; Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018).

An initial qualitative investigation carried out in Turin in 2005 brought to light that second generation individuals generally possess a good knowledge of the Italian language, coupled with increased maturity and determination concerning future career aspirations when compared to native Italian youth. Almost all second generation youths who had already secured stable employment were offspring of artisans or proprietors of small businesses (i.e., Chinese restaurateurs, Egyptian shopkeepers) engaged in family enterprises. Nonetheless, the advantage of having a readily available job opportunity is counteracted by the aspiration to extend beyond the familial sphere and pursue alternative forms of employment (Allasino et al., 2005). In contrast, a limited number of young adults interviewed experienced discontinuous and precarious work trajectories, occupying low-paying and modest positions that were often abandoned, however, for similar types of jobs. These trajectories exhibited significant parallels with those of first generation immigrants. Given the scarcity of second generation individuals actively seeking employment in Turin, due to the still restricted size of the working-age cohort, the study, while detecting relevant issues, could not provide a comprehensive depiction of their situation (Allasino et al., 2005).

Another qualitative study finds similar outcomes although highlighting how the resilience of these young generations represents a strength (D'Agostino et al., 2016). However, a family heritage with a multicultural imprint in a society that increasingly requires flexibility between languages and cultures is considered an asset (Colombo and Semi, 2007). Nevertheless, second generation individuals entering the workforce encounter various obstacles related to their legal status - understood as difficulties in obtaining Italian citizenship- which can hinder (or be used as an excuse for) certain job positions. According to the authors, the change in the regulatory scenario regarding citizenship acquisition is undoubtedly a first step toward greater equality of rights and access to the labour market for these young generations (D'Agostino et al., 2016).

In a qualitative study of second generation Italians migrating out of the country, Ricucci (2022) highlights how acquiring citizenship emerges as a protective element to overcome barriers and prejudice to inclusion. A kind of free pass to emigrate to other countries more open to multiculturalism. The author underlines how for some young adults, the decision to spend time abroad, primarily working or studying, is part of a defensive strategy against stereotypes and the enduring economic crisis. Building professional skills and experiences in another country, coupled with the removal from a daily condition of marginality, enables some second generation to forge a more robust and independent identity respectively of the Italian one. This migration project does not necessarily translate into a permanent move but is also seen as a strategy to become more appealing to employers, even within the context of the Italian labour market (Ricucci, 2022).

In an insightful study carried out in the Milan area, Greco (2010) summarizes efficiently the four predominant pathways frequently identified in the literature concerning the employment trajectories of second generation immigrants. A first orientation can be defined as "traditionalist", representing the continuation of the career path started and developed by parents. This orientation appears to prevail for specific nationalities (also highlighted in Allasino et al., 2005). A second orientation is referred to as "individualistic", involving second generations that choose an

educational and career path distinct and independent from their family's choices. A third orientation is “transnationalist”, intended where second generation migrants leverage their cultural capital, distinct from the native population, and use their multicultural networks to enter the labour market (see also Ambrosini and Molina, 2004). This includes young individuals who take advantage of their parents' language to enter the job market as interpreters or translators. According to Greco (2010), the last orientation in the Italian labour market tends towards isolation with downward assimilation. This involves second generation migrants with lower economic, social, and cultural capital from their family background, who have obtained their educational credentials from vocational or technical institutes or have not been able to attain any academic school diploma. Consequently, due to their low level of human capital and limited economic resources, labour market integration becomes particularly challenging for those who do not yet possess Italian citizenship but only a residence permit (D’Agostino et al., 2018).

Using European Union Labour Force Survey data for the years 2008 and 2014, a recent study investigates how migrants, and their descendants are doing in the labour market (Piccitto, 2023). The gap between migrants and natives is estimated on two outcomes: the likelihood of employment and the socio-economic status of the job. The employment outcome of second generation migrants in Italy seems in line with natives and no statistically significant difference is detected whereas 1.5 generation is doing considerably worse. The study also confirms that second generation migrants are unwilling to fill jobs in the least qualified areas of the labour market. However, when unpacking the heterogeneity of the ethnic penalty and second generation individuals and children of mixed couples (meaning one native and one foreign born parent) are examined separately, the picture takes a completely different form. Here, for those individuals with both foreign born parents, the labour market achievements are very similar to those of the first generation and the ethnic penalty trap is still evident whereas mixed generation are in line and in some cases even outperform natives (Piccitto, 2023).

Although it is currently less straightforward to make a definitive judgment on the rate of inclusion or exclusion experienced by this generation of “new Italians” (Ceravolo

and Molina, 2013) in the labour market, nevertheless, the literature does not allow an unambiguous picture. Overall, it cannot be overlooked that the literature in Italy draws a path of fragility for the whole young population of migrants' descendants. However, is also true that given the very young age of this second generation, which is just now entering the labour market, it is perhaps too early to come to ruling (Ceravolo and Molina, 2013). In light of reproductive trajectories that we find in the life histories reported by recent research, there is also a growing incidence of successful pathways, providing a reason for hope to avert the risk of subaltern and imperfect integration (Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018; Colombo, 2010; Piccitto, 2023).

When we analyse second generations, it is important to highlight some fundamental characteristics as gender, and internal differentiation among those born in the country, those who arrived later as children/youths, and those who belong to mixed families.

2.4 Gender

Gender distinctly differentiates the experiences of the second generation (Ricucci, 2020). The intersectionality between gender and immigrant backgrounds depends on the extent to which gender norms differ between immigrants' origin and destination countries. Since Italy is a relatively gender-unequal country compared to other Western countries, the distance between its prevailing gender ideology and those of immigrants might not be as large as in other contexts (Ferrara and Brunori, 2023). Thus, enrolment to upper secondary education in Italy is highly gendered, with boys being significantly more likely to enter technical and vocational education and girls choosing more academia oriented tracks (Dalit and Azzolini, 2016).

One of the hypotheses suggested is that the greater academic success of second generation girls could be associated with the different gendered treatment of boys and girls in their families. This creates a paradox: indeed, the family upbringing based on the maintenance of traditional gender roles, rather than the abandonment of this model, promotes better academic performance among young immigrant women compared to their brothers and creates conditions for success in school, fostering ambitions in studies and work that are non-traditionally gendered (Lopez, 2003).

Immigrant parents act in accordance with the culture of their countries of origin, but in practice they produce positive effects on the schooling of their daughters while boys are left unsupervised (Ramella, 2013). Hence, first generation parents tend to have a stricter authority over daughters than that over their sons. Daughters, in particular, often face greater pressure to excel academically and achieve success in school but, despite this pressure, girls actively resist and renegotiate parental control while maintaining their connection to the family's migration project (Lagomarsino and Castellami, 2016).

In the case of immigrant's children, given that they have been raised and socialized in the host country, their labour market integration success, or lack, provides, especially for the female component, therefore, a test of the openness of the socioeconomic structure of the country. The lack of studies, especially quantitative ones, on the employment integration of second generations is becoming increasingly important because these young individuals constitute a growing share of the youth workforce that is numerically diminishing. However, this lack is largely due to the difficulty of identifying and collecting official data of those strata of the population who were born in Italy to immigrant families and have acquired Italian citizenship.

2.4.1 Generations

Another necessary categorization, to better understand highly diversified context, is to distinguish between those born in Italy to immigrant parents and those who arrived later on in their lives.

Under the term second generations, we find highly distinct realities that need to be analysed separately to understand their success (or lack) in the fields of education and employment.

Firstly, we have second generations in the strictest sense. By this, we mean those born in Italy to parents who were both foreign-born. Within this group, we can further divide those with both parents of European nationality and those born to parents of non-European nationality. As further analysed in chapter 3, the distribution of second generations by nationality is consistent between mothers and fathers. Typically, in the Italian context, we encounter children born to parents from the same

geographical areas. Regarding the age distribution of second generations, we find modest cohorts for those born at the end of the last century, a pronounced expansion for those born in the years from 2002-2009, and a subsequent slowdown in growth in more recent times. The second generation today are, therefore, still very young, with the majority still enrolled in school. Cohorts entering the workforce are modest in numbers, but their presence is increasing. In most cases, Italian is their first language, although they often speak a second language with their parents. They are a generation with customs and consumption patterns very similar to their Italian peers (Leonini and Rebughini, 2010).

We than find the children of immigrants born abroad and arrived in Italy at a preschool age. For these generations the ability to adapt and learn a new language is still very high. For them, the school is unquestionably the Italian one, and they have great similarities with the second generations in the strict sense (but not in terms of access to citizenship) (Molina, 2014).

Next, we find the children of immigrants born abroad and arrived in Italy between the ages of 7 and 12. They are the so-called 1.5 generation, composed of young people who started their schooling in the country of origin but find themselves continuing it, with considerable difficulties, in the destination country. Adaptation difficulties for these young people are more significant; they have interrupted their schooling in the country of origin and left behind friends and relatives with whom they presumably grew up until that moment. They need to learn a new language with difficulties, integrate into a new cultural context, and rebuild their identity.

Finally, we have those born abroad and arrived in Italy between the ages of 13 and 17. They are the so-called 1.25 generation, composed of young people who have more similarities with the first migrant generation than their peers, even though the choice to migrate was not theirs. These cohorts show more conflicts with their parents and significant difficulties in learning the Italian language. Hence, the integration path of this generation is usually more challenging (Azzolini et al., 2012; Piccitto, 2023).

Favaro (2010) describes these generations in terms of linguistic skills. For the second generation in the strict sense and for those arrived before the age of 7, Italian is an

“adoptive language”, since it is brought and developed through the oral usage into the family by the children, rather than by the parents, as one would normally expect. For the other groups, arrived in Italy later on through family reunification, Italian is, instead, a foreign language and as such remain for many of them (Favaro, 2010).

Overall, despite successful experiences, the literature, and data show that migrant students are underrepresented in academic paths, drop out of school earlier than Italian peers, have higher rates of school delay, and more frequently pursue short-term educational paths and vocational schools (Istat, 2020a). As in other European countries, this phenomenon is particularly evident among those who have completed much of their schooling in the host country, but it is also present, albeit to a lesser extent, among those who arrived at a preschool age or were even born in the destination country. The school seems to exacerbate rather than reduce the initial gap between Italians and migrants, widening rather than eliminating the differences (Zanfrini, 2006) even though in more recent time these differences have decreased.

2.4.2 Mixed generation

The increase in marriages between natives and migrants, observed in numerous Western societies, is frequently seen as a sign of immigrants' integration into host communities. It has the capacity to diminish ethnic group barriers by promoting relationships and exchanges among families and social networks (Tegunimataka, 2021). Consequently, this promotes enhanced interethnic interactions between dominant and minority groups, encouraging greater tolerance and diminishing prejudice (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2015).

The children of mixed couples, are fully recognized as Italian citizens from birth (even if born abroad), although they share many aspects of the second generation experience in terms of linguistic skills, cultural habits, and religious practices. Their belonging to the immigrant offspring group is reinforced by a peculiarity that, unlike countries with older immigration patterns, in Italy, mixed couples are primarily composed of an Italian father and a foreign mother (as we will further see in chapter 3). The reasons for this are not easy to explain; perhaps Italian parents have greater difficulty accepting their daughter marrying a foreigner; perhaps foreign women are more willing to recreate traditional family models, characterized by a clear

separation of gender roles (Molina, 2014). Children of mixed couples in Italy are more likely to have a foreign mother, in three out of four cases, and since it is generally the mother who takes care of the daily aspects of their upbringing, the influence of the migratory background is of considerable relevance.

Compared to first and second generation immigrant, children of intermarriage tend to have more values in common with natives and tend to have more advantageous socio-economic positions (Kalmijn, 2015). Nevertheless, outcomes of intermarriage are more complex, and aspects such as parental conflict and separation are more spread in intermarriage couples (Dribe and Lundh, 2012).

The outcomes of children with intermarried parents are, in general, more in line with the outcomes of children of the majority groups. However, children of mixed background may also be viewed by the majority population as belonging to the minority group and may be subject to the same discrimination and prejudice of foreign born or second generation (Kalmijn, 2015).

Several factors determine the chances of intermarriage for an individual. An important finding in the literature on intermarriage is that immigrants with higher education and socioeconomic status are more likely to marry natives (Qian and Lichter, 2001) whereas there are well-documented status exchange and income premiums in intermarriages with a native/foreign (Meng and Gregory 2005; Guetto and Azzolini, 2015). In Italy, for example, intermarriages are more likely to take place when less educated older native men marry better educated younger immigrant women, especially this is more likely to happen if the woman is unemployed or does not hold Italian citizenship at the moment of marriage (Guetto and Azzolini, 2015).

A preliminary question to consider is how the children of mixed couples behave and to whom they resonate, whether to their peers born to Italian parents or to the children of foreign couples. These children of mixed couples seem to encounter fewer difficulties in many aspects of life, from academic success to friends' networks, and generally do not show substantial differences compared to their Italian peers (Dalla Zuanna et al., 2009). Their academic performance appears to be slightly below that of natives, while the choices of their educational paths are

indistinguishable from those made by their Italian counterparts (Azzolini and Ress, 2015).

Little is known about the labour market integration of this generation. In this analysis, the children of mixed couples will be used as an intermediate parameter to analyse the success of Italians compared to second generations but also to highlight whether the migratory background constitutes a disadvantage itself even for those who obtain Italian citizenship from birth. The mixed generation represents a unique sociodemographic group with diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. By including them in the analysis, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of intergenerational integration and how it differs from both the native population and the second generation.

2.5 Second generation in Italy: some numbers

In the last thirty years, profound changes have occurred in the demographic dynamics in Italy, which also had repercussions on the social fabric of the country (Golini et al., 2000). The widening gap between births and deaths, coupled with the contraction of the migratory balance, has triggered a demographic distress, accentuated by the imbalance in the age structure. Immigration has also undergone significant changes. The past decade has been characterized by the rooting of migrants who arrived in previous decades and, by a significant shift in the patterns of new incoming migration flows. Entries have decreased, and they exhibit different characteristics and migration patterns. Among non-EU citizens, there has been a sharp contraction in flows for employment reasons, a substantial stability in those for family reunification, and a sudden increase in migrants seeking international protection, with Ukrainian refugees being the latest tragic example (Istat, 2022a; Ismu, 2022).

Significant influx of foreign immigrants to Italy commenced in the 1970s. This primarily consisted of young workers from less affluent regions across the globe, along with a notable, but still restricted, number of refugees. In the 1981 census, the count of foreign residents in our country reached 210,000, with almost 60 percent predominantly coming from Western European nations (Istat, 1993). The considerable increase in immigration during the 1980s appears relatively modest

when compared to the surge in the subsequent two decades. According to the 1981 census, the number of foreign residents was almost 211.000 and already in the 1991 census reached just under 360.000, with over two-thirds hailing from less developed countries and Central and Eastern Europe and grouped mainly in Lombardy and Lazio holding the records for foreign presence in both census (Istat, 1981, 1993). This numbers are likely an underestimate due to struggle of reaching individuals with unstable living, working, and life conditions. This challenge has been likely even more pronounced in the early census surveys compared to the subsequent ones of 2001 and 2011, where the proportion of foreign residents missed by the census was estimated to be around 10 percent (Istat, 2020a). Thus, according to official statistics, foreigners in Italy at the beginning of the new millennium, where almost 2 million, considering both residents and non-residents, whether regular or irregular. Ten years later, reaching unprecedented levels, the demographic balance for the year 2021, the second year affected by the pandemic, shows a modest recovery in the growth of the foreign population in Italy (Ismu, 2022). The year 2022, represents the crossing of the symbolic threshold of six million foreigners, raising the ratio to 10% to the Italian population. If we also consider naturalized individuals (Italians by acquisition) and children of mixed couples, we will need to raise the figure by another approximately two million, bringing the foreign and foreign-origin population from 10 to over 12 percent of the people habitually residing in Italy (Istat, 2020a).

This is undoubtedly a number and a percentage of great relevance, what is striking is indeed the magnitude and the speed of these migratory flows. In just over 25 years, the resident foreigners have increased incredibly, while irregular migrants have continued to be more or less the same amount estimated in the early 1990s, with a significantly lower weight on the total presence compared to the past. The processes of regularization and stabilization of presences since 1986 have led to the transition from immigration of young adults alone, often pioneers, to a broad presence of families formed through reunifications, marriages, and births on the Italian territory.

The heterogeneity of countries of origins (16 different nationalities are necessary to reach 75 percent of resident foreigners) has progressively added complexity due to the statistically significant presence of successive generations, as migrants have been joined by their children and, in some cases, their grandchildren. Available statistics

do not allow for a precise definition of the size and evolution of the second generations (Ismu, 2022). The only administrative sources are thus increasingly insufficient for a correct evaluation of the phenomenon, and there is often the need to cross-reference data from different sources to depict a representative picture of the population of second generations in Italy. In this regard, essential sources include Istat data with their specific insights on second generations conducted in 2015 and 2018; Miur data for the student population and Eurostat data that together with very specific annual reports on the immigrant presence. Further crucial data are provided from the research centres of ISMU and IDOS with their annual reports.

However, some simplifications are sufficient to provide a fairly accurate idea of their relevance. Foreigners under 18 years old residing in Italy were about 26.000 at the 1991 census, 285.000 at the 2001 census, and over 940.000 at the 2011 census (Istat, 2023). According to demographic data in 2022, foreign citizens aged 0 to 18 are approximately 2.7 million (Istat ,2023). However, this numbers do not account for, on one hand, all minors who have become Italian citizens and those born with Italian passports as children of mixed couples (with one Italian parent). Therefore, the complexity of this group with variable boundaries based on the adopted definitions is evident. Regardless of the criteria used, it is clear that young children of immigrants have been a numerous group for several years and will soon constitute an increasingly important component of the adult population in Italian society.

Highlighted above, in the past twenty-five years we witnessed a shift towards greater stabilization in the presence of foreign immigrants in Italy. This trend is notable through specific indicators: a significant increase in the number of children born in Italy to foreign mothers, widespread phenomenon of family reunification, and steady increase of foreign minors in schools. Today migrants leave their countries with a different strategy compared to the past. In Italy, immigration was previously linked mainly to individual histories, a mid-to-short-term passage with the specific goal, of returning to their homeland. This pattern has profoundly changed in recent years and migration is predominantly perceived as a steady and long future project which defines an entirely distinct phase of migrants' and their children's lives.

The distinctive feature of settlement in the population is precisely determined by the second generation. If we look at the number of births since 1999 (table 2.1), we witness a continuous reduction in the number of births from Italian mothers. We move from 507.755 births in the year 1999 to 319.980 births in 2022, a reduction of 37% in just over twenty years. At the same time, the absolute number, of children born to mothers with citizenship other than Italian has grown. We go from 537.242 births in 1999 to 393.330 births in 2022, with an increase of almost 150% points. This growth is due to the increasing number of the immigrant population and their impact on the population on reproductive age along with the stabilization phenomenon. However, it is important to emphasize that despite the increase in absolute values of children born to women with non-Italian citizenship, the growth trend has also slowed for the latter and has been in a decreasing phase in recent years (Figure 2.1). On the other hand, the percentage ratio between births from Italian and non-Italian mothers has progressively expanded in the last 23 years, going from 5.5% to a significant 18.6% of children born from foreign mothers (Istat, 2023). However, not all births from foreign mothers can be identified as second generations. As explored in the previous first chapter, categorizing second generations is not only conceptually but also statistically challenging. The nationality of the mother provides only half of the picture. However, it is interesting to note how the relationship between the birth rates of mothers has progressively grown and evolved.

Table 2.1 Births trends by country of origin of mother, absolute numbers and percentages, 1999-2022.

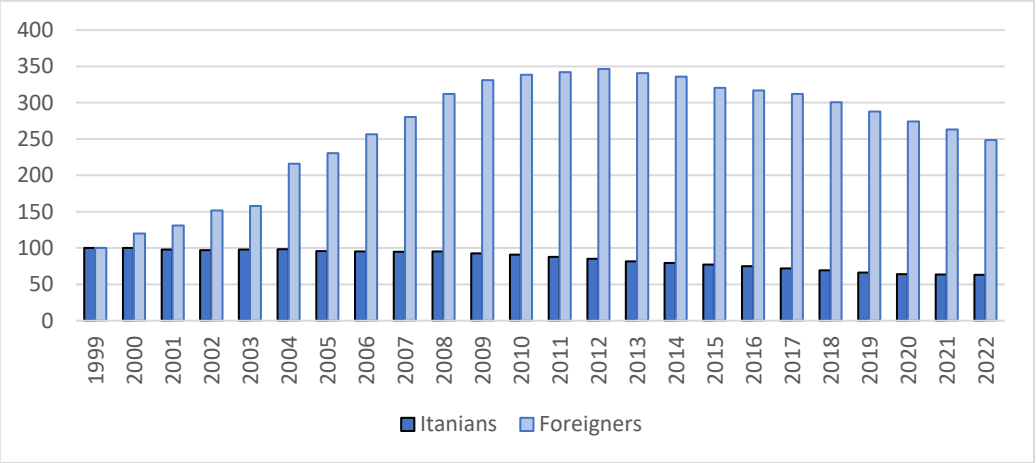
Year	Italian mother	Foreign mother	Total	Italian mother (%)	Foreign mother (%)	Total (%)
1999	507755	29487	537242	94,5	5,5	100
2000	507627	35412	543039	93,5	6,5	100
2001	496692	38590	535282	92,8	7,2	100
2002	493489	44709	538198	91,7	8,3	100
2003	497565	46498	544063	91,5	8,5	100
2004	498932	63667	562599	88,7	11,3	100
2005	486065	67957	554022	87,7	12,3	100
2006	484409	75601	560010	86,5	13,5	100
2007	481235	82698	563933	85,3	14,7	100
2008	484673	91986	576659	84,0	16,0	100
2009	471222	97635	568857	82,8	17,2	100

2010	462125	99819	561944	82,2	17,8	100
2011	445669	100916	546585	81,5	18,5	100
2012	432070	102116	534186	80,9	19,1	100
2013	413849	100459	514308	80,5	19,5	100
2014	403569	99027	502596	80,3	19,7	100
2015	391228	94552	485780	80,5	19,5	100
2016	379925	93513	473438	80,2	19,8	100
2017	366141	92010	458151	79,9	20,1	100
2018	351128	88619	439747	79,8	20,2	100
2019	335192	84892	420084	79,8	20,2	100
2020	324076	80816	404892	80,0	20,0	100
2021	322695	77554	400249	80,6	19,4	100
2022	319980	73353	393333	81,4	18,6	100

Source: Elaboration from Istat data 2023

Hence, since 1999, we have witnessed a growth in children born to foreign mothers, reaching its bulge in the years 2010-2014 and then declining in more recent years, this trend is clear in figure 1 with the year 1999 as baseline. Despite the rhetoric about the fertility of foreigners, the total fertility rate (TFR) for foreigner's women is 1.87, higher than for Italian mothers, which reaches 1.18 but also well below replacement levels of 2.1 meaning that in Italy we would have an even faster declining and aging population without the dampening effect of the TFR of immigrants. Furthermore, age at first birth is rather high also for non-Italian mothers. Istat (2023) data reports that mother's age at birth is 30 years old for foreigners and 33 years old for Italians. Thus, confirming the well-known adherence to the birth rate patterns of the host country, as recognized by many demographers' birth numbers seem to develop towards a convergence to the fertility levels of the population at destination (Sobotka, 2008; Coleman, 2006).

Figure 2.1 Births trends by country of origin of mother, year 199=100.



Source: Elaboration from Istat data, 2023

2.5.1 Second generations in school

Within Italian schools, 10% of students are of migrant origin. Over 65% of those with a migrant background are represented by second generations, which are the only growing component of the student population. Most of the second generation are young individuals currently engaged in their educational journey. According to Miur data, foreign students enrolled in pre-school, primary, and secondary schools were just over 20.000 in the school years 1990-1991, almost 200.000 in the school years 2001-2002, and over 800.000 already from the school years 2013-2014. This extraordinary progression has slowed in recent years if we look at the school years 2016/2017 to 2021/2022, we went from around 645.00 to 876.000 students with non-Italian citizenship. This decrease is also the result of a steady increase in the acquisition of Italian citizenship by young individuals. Thus, measuring this cohorts

becomes increasingly challenging once they leave school and later on when they enter the labour market due to citizenship acquisitions, which often result in the exit from the "foreigner" category.

Table 2.2 Students by geographical distribution and citizenship and School Years 2016/2017-2021/2022.

	2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022	
AREA	**values**	**%**	**values**	**%**	**values**	**%**	**values**	**%**	**values**	**%**	**values**	**%**
Non-IT citizenship												
North-West	244.203	3,47	313.139	3,72	314.881	3,78	315.027	3,83	317.454	3,92	335.047	4,15
North-Est	164.346	2,34	210.409	2,50	212.207	2,55	213.221	2,59	214.599	2,65	228.024	2,83
Center	152.116	2,16	189.425	2,25	189.893	2,28	190.576	2,32	187.998	2,32	196.362	2,43
South	58.906	0,84	73.485	0,87	75.836	0,91	76.770	0,93	76.085	0,94	83.016	1,037
Islands	25.554	0,36	31.907	0,38	32.365	0,39	32.149	0,39	32.554	0,40	33.584	0,41
Tot. Non-It Citizenship	645.125	9,17	818.365	9,72	825.182	9,91	827.743	10,06	828.690	10,22	876.033	10,87
IT citizenship												
North West	1.543.612	21,94	1.860.336	22,09	1.837.339	22,07	1.818.839	22,10	1.788.644	22,06	1.765.993	21,91
North Est	1.053.130	14,97	1.262.119	14,99	1.250.811	15,02	1.240.604	15,08	1.217.079	15,01	1.194.345	14,82
Center	1.226.711	17,43	1.464.983	17,40	1.450.136	17,42	1.436.460	17,46	1.416.517	17,47	1.401.964	17,40
South	1.771.471	25,17	2.078.362	24,68	2.043.372	24,54	2.005.027	24,36	1.976.146	24,38	1.948.692	24,18
Islands	796.991	11,33	936.807	11,12	919.573	11,04	900.516	10,94	879.876	10,85	870.064	10,79
Tot. Italians	6.391.915	90,83	7.602.607	90,28	7.501.231	90,09	7.401.446	89,94	7.278.262	89,78	7.181.058	89,12
TOTAL STUDENTS	7.037.040	100,00	8.420.972	100,00	8.326.413	100,00	8.229.189	100,00	8.106.952	100,00	8.057.091	100

Source: Elaboration on Miur data, 2023

Across Italy, foreign students are concentrated mainly in the northern regions (more than 60%), with around 25% in central regions and just above 10% in southern Italy. Certainly, it is in primary schools where the highest number of non-Italian citizens are enrolled. The enrolment rate (percentage indicating how many young people enrol in school) of foreign students is similar to that of Italian students up to the first three years of upper secondary school (third year of high school); the significant discrepancy occurs in the following two years, where the enrolment rate of Italian students aged 17 to 18 is around 81%, while that of foreigners decreases to about 73% (MIUR, 2021).

Data, in table 2.2, for the school years 2021/2022, shows a new increase in the total number of students and children with non-Italian citizenship enrolled in school. Overall, the number reached 876.000, with an increase of more than +5% compared

to the previous year, which had experienced the lowest growth for the first time (Miur, 2023).

The geographical distribution of foreign student is not homogenous within the Italian territory. The share of students with non-Italian citizenship represents 10.87% of the total school population in a.y. 2021/2022 with the highest portion in the northern regions (North-west in particular), followed by the Center and smallest presence in the South and in the Islands where the non-It populations does not even reach the 1%.

The territorial distribution of foreign minors in the Italian school system is not homogeneous but rather reflects the broader migratory phenomenon (table 2.3). If we look only at those students born in Italy with foreign parents, the data for 2021/2022 confirm a higher concentration in the northern regions together (68%), followed by the central regions (22%), and finally, the southern regions (10%). Lombardy remains the region with the highest number of students with non-Italian citizenship (155.312 units), constituting a quarter of the total population in Italy. However, if we look at the ratio to the total student population, Emilia-Romagna records the highest percentage of students with non-Italian citizenship at 17.4% (Miur, 2023).

Thus, the non-uniform distribution in the country, reflects the different settlements of migrant communities in various local contexts across the country. As highlighted in table 2.3, the largest concentration is in the North (Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, etc.), with a significant incidence in school population also in some areas of central Italy (Tuscany, Umbria). Clearly, their number is higher in the larger Italian provinces (Rome, Milan, Turin, etc.), but with relevant percentages also in smaller and medium sized provinces (like Prato, Piacenza, Mantua) (Ismu, 2020). Among southern regions, Sicily has the largest number of students with a migratory background, but still well behind the northern and central regions.

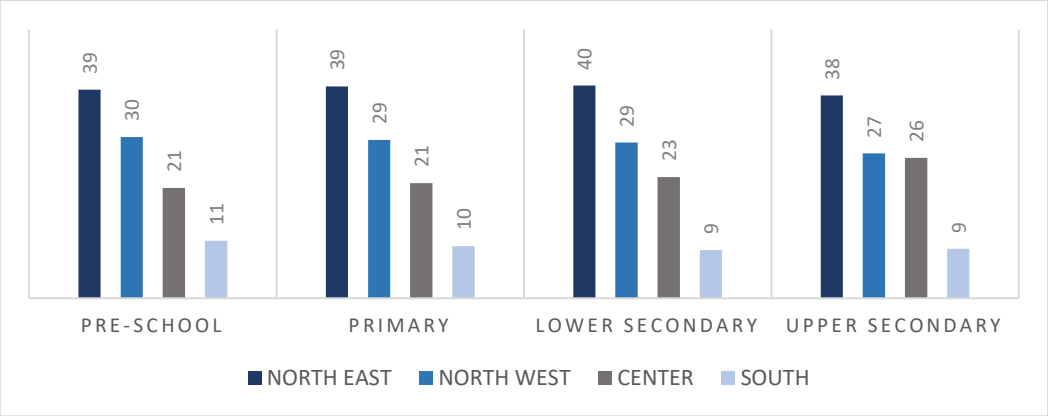
Table 2.3 Students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy by geographical area and school level, School Years 2021/2022.

	Regions	Total	Pre-School	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total
ITALY		588.986	128.293	230.090	125.868	104.735	100%
North-Est	Piemonte	56.656	12.449	21.807	12.301	10.099	39,00%
	Valle d'Aosta	709	255	294	114	46	
	Liguria	17.034	3.611	6.760	3.521	3.142	
	Lombardia	155.312	33.439	61.837	33.833	26.203	
North-West	Trentino A.A.	12.649	3.328	5.057	2.739	1.525	29,02%
	Veneto	70.074	14.962	28.095	15.520	11.497	
	Friuli V.G.	13.769	3.224	5.310	3.015	2.220	
	Emilia Romagna	74.420	16.976	29.297	15.177	12.970	
Center	Toscana	50.044	9.782	18.714	11.151	10.397	22,30%
	Umbria	11.667	2.282	4.149	2.557	2.679	
	Marche	15.507	3.201	5.709	3.366	3.231	
	Lazio	54.142	11.039	20.753	11.281	11.069	
South	Abruzzo	8.117	1.767	3.254	1.700	1.396	9,68%
	Molise	613	175	230	124	84	
	Campania	13.597	3.140	5.408	2.577	2.472	
	Puglia	10.298	2.521	4.081	2.003	1.693	
	Basilicata	1.469	475	538	258	198	
	Calabria	5.261	1.355	2.000	1.048	858	
	Sicilia	14.607	3.651	5.561	2.947	2.448	
	Sardegna	3.041	661	1.236	636	508	

Source: Elaboration on Miur data, 2023

Analysing the composition by school level of the variation in students with non-Italian citizenship (figure 2), a large portion of students are concentrated in primary school followed by pre-school and lower secondary school with a similar distribution and finally, upper secondary school. Unsurprisingly, Northeast has the largest population of Italian born foreign students with higher concentrations in lower secondary school while southern regions present the lowest share and have higher portion of very young students, also a phenomenon that could reflect the migratory path of their parents that manage to move to northern regions later on in their life.

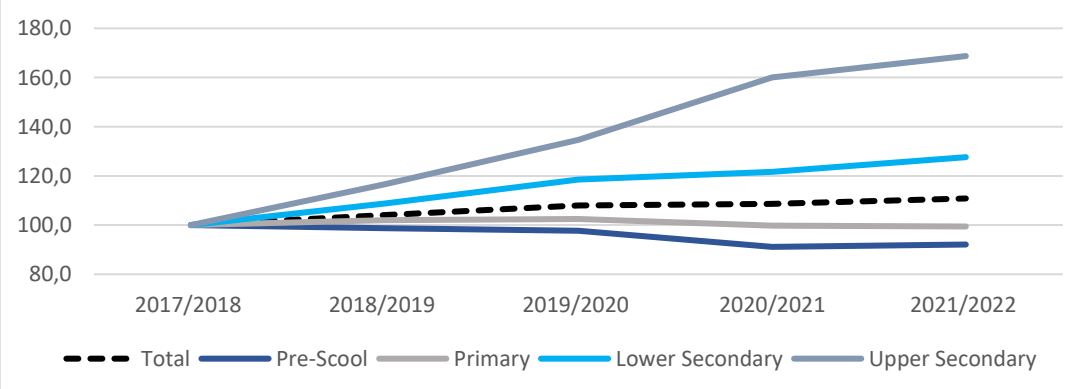
Figure 2.2 Students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy by geographical area and school level (percentage), School Years 2021/2022.



Source: Elaboration on MIUR data, 2023

The constant growth of the second generation significantly characterizes the evolution of students with a migratory background. In the five-year period from 2017/2018 to 2021/2022, according to Miur (2023), the number of students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy has increased from 531,467 to 588,986, showing an increase of over 57.000 units (+10.8%). In the school years 2021/2022, despite a total growth of 11.915 units (+2.1%), the proportion of those born in Italy among students of migratory origin reached 67.5%, marking an increase of almost one percentage point compared to 2020/2021 (66.7%) while students with non-Italian citizenship born abroad in 2021/2022 has decreased.

Figure 2.3 Trends of Students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy by school grade - School Years 2017/2018 - 2021/2022 (2017/2018=100).



Source: Elaboration on MIUR data, 2023

Analysing the trend of second generations in figure 2.3, which has overall experienced growth over the school years 2017-2022, a slight decrease is observed in the last years in primary schools and in pre-school in particularly whereas the population of upper secondary students has speed up the trend and close to doubling. These trends reflect also the demographic evolution of the second generation in Italy which is progressively slowing, and the previous younger generation are growing and moving in their school paths.

Table 2.4 - Students with non-Italian citizenship for the top ten countries of origin (absolute values and percentages) - School Years 2021/2022.

	Non-IT citizenship	***Born in IT***	**Every 100 foreign students**
	a.v.	a.v.	%
Romania	150.106	110.870	17,4
Albania	115.558	85.065	13,4
Morocco	110.837	83.707	12,8
China	48.763	42.748	5,6
Egypt	34.251	18.193	3,9
India	30.773	18.463	3,6
Moldova	25.275	15.084	2,9
Bangladesh	24.561	12.418	2,8
Philippines	23.775	17.861	2,7
Pakistan	21.876	10.002	2,6
Subtotal	585.757	414.411	67,8
Other countries	302.200	168.506	32,2
Total	887.957	582.917	100

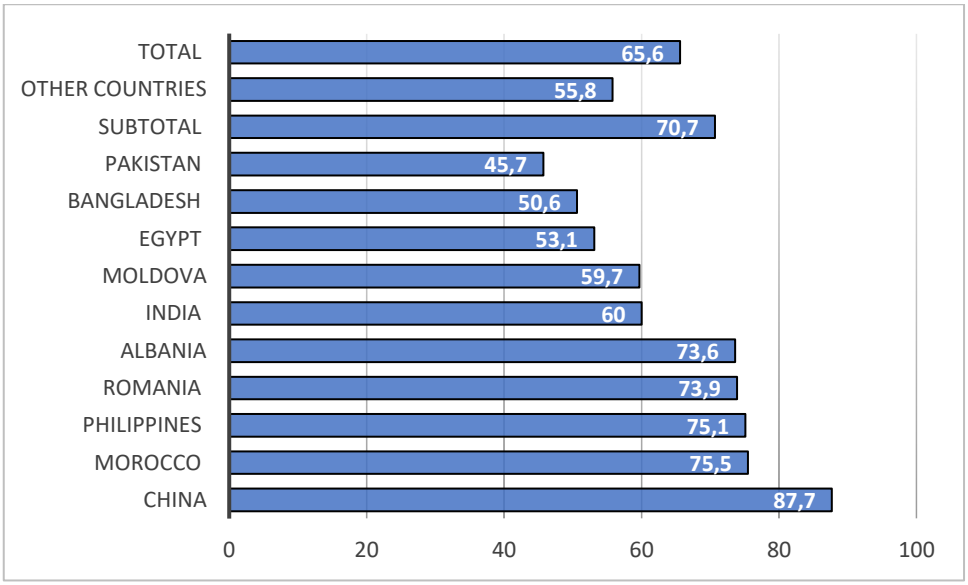
Source: ANS data, 2023*[2]

As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, a significant number of students with non-Italian citizenship were born in Italy and attend Italian schools during their academic

*The values in table 4 differ slightly from those reported in the previous tables because, are aggregate from the National Student Registry (ANS) data instead of Miur 'General Data' survey

cycles. It is interesting to analyse which citizenships are most represented in this specific category of students. There are almost 200 countries of origin for students with non-Italian citizenship. Data divided by continent, table 2.4, shows that the majority of students, more than 44%, are still of European origin, followed by students from Africa (28%) and Asia (21%). Among European countries, Romanian citizenship, although decreasing, remains the most represented with over 150 thousand students of these almost 111 thousand are born in Italy. Albanians are the second largest group with more than 115 thousand students of which 73,6% born in Italy. Overall, these two groups represent almost a third of students with non-Italian citizenship (30.8%). Moroccan students, almost 111 thousand, constitute the largest community from the African continent and the third largest in absolute terms in Italy. Chinese remains the most numerous citizenships within Asian communities with over 48 thousand students.

Figure 2.4 Students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy for the top ten countries of origin (percentages) School Years 2021/2022.



Source: Elaboration on Miur data, 2023

The list of the top ten citizenships of students born in Italy presents the same countries reproduced already in the list for the total number of students with non-Italian citizenship, shown in figure 2.4. However, the ratio between students of a given citizenship born in Italy and the corresponding total with the same citizenship

suggests a different ranking of countries. For example, the Chinese community stands out, with 87,7% of students born in Italy (42.748 out of 48.763). They are followed by the second generations of Moroccan and Philippines, accounting for 75.5% and 75.1%, respectively, of the total students of the same nationality group. Fourth in the ranking are students with Romanian citizenship born in Italy, representing 73.9% of the total group of reference. On the other hand, Pakistan represents the country with the highest share of foreign-born students in Italy with more than half born abroad (almost 46%).

2.5.2 Educational challenges of second generation students

From the literature and data available, it emerges that students of immigrant origin have lower achievements and attainments compared to their native peers. The risk of an educational gap has a major drawback on the performance of the labour market vulnerability and low social mobility with the risk of downward assimilation, which has wide potential in the Italian context (Minello and Dalla Zuanna, 2013).

Track choices are typically studied using the primary and secondary effects framework. According to Boudon (1974), this depends on the effects of migratory background, which the author distinguishes into primary and secondary. Primary factors concern language proficiency; indeed, being born in Italy or arriving at preschool age greatly reduces language difficulties during the school journey. The later one arrives, the more likely they are to be placed in lower classes and to experience difficulties in learning the current language. Other factors that influence second generations and their path are broadly defined as cultural differences, as foreign students may not be exposed to the prevailing culture as much as natives (Heat and Brinbaum, 2007). Parental involvement is also crucial; less parental involvement in students' lives can negatively impact their success. Second generations are less likely than Italians to be questioned by parents about their school career and discuss their future academic choices (Mantovani et al., 2018). The active presence of the families as a whole, is recognized as an essential intervening factor which can affect their academic performance (Azzolini and Ress, 2015; Grasso, 2015).

As for secondary effects, it is more difficult to build a complete and coherent picture because language, cultural context, and parental involvement are easily identifiable and analysable variables, while other mechanisms are more hidden and less generalized. Among these are: access to information before choosing an academic path, structural obstacles such as lower job and salary opportunities for immigrants compared to natives, cultural differences regarding the importance or incentives for education, and the discriminatory behaviour of teachers.

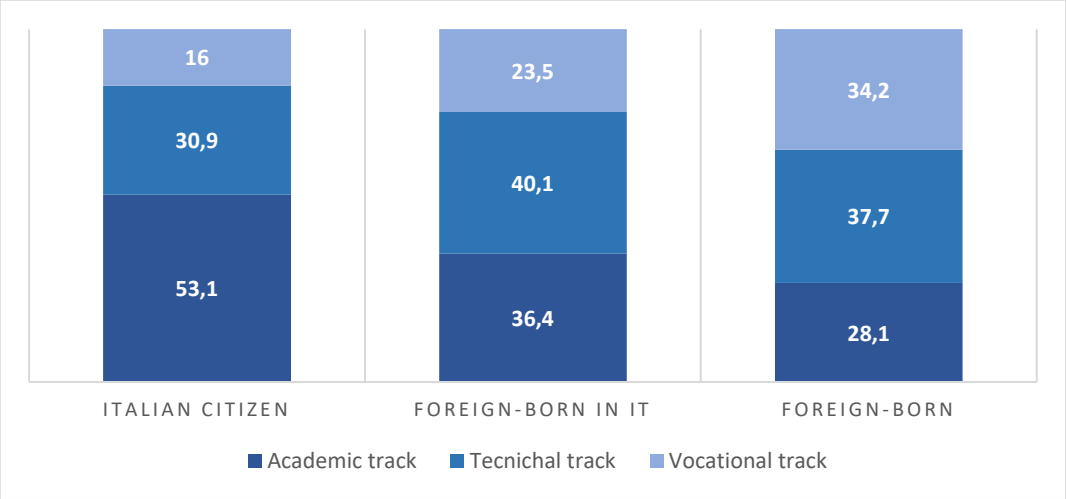
A significant aspect in Italy (but also in different European countries) concerns the ways in which the school and teachers articulate, over time, the advice given to students about their future. Suggestions are formalized in orientation council, usually at the beginning of the third year of lower secondary school, where teachers express a non-binding opinion regarding the continuation of higher studies. It is interesting to observe how this opinion is formulated by teachers based on the student's results and potential, but without a real exchange and dialogue with the student and their family regarding their ideas, expectations, and resources to invest in such a path (Lagomarsino and Bartolini, 2019). An example of this concerns the assumptions made by teachers regarding the economic needs of the families of origin. In many cases, the indication to continue towards a technical or vocational institute stems from the belief that the family cannot afford to support the child for a long period of study and that these students need to enter the job market early. In these cases, teachers also consider the feasibility of the paths they propose, avoiding suggesting school experiences that could prove frustrating and unattainable. However, in this discourse, there is always the risk of paying too much attention to the variable of migratory origin. While it is important to try to propose personalized paths and avoid suggesting unsustainable long-term investments, there is also the risk of accentuating the exclusion from academic paths because, especially classical and scientific ones, are considered too difficult and, at the same time, because it is thought that university outcomes are hardly achievable for student from a less favourable socioeconomic background, especially in economic terms (Lagomarsino and Bartolini, 2019; Romito, 2016).

Therefore, the aspect of tracking selection is crucial, as Bozzetti (2018) highlights, second generation youth are increasingly accessing higher levels of education, as

obtaining higher qualifications enables (or at least should) access to more prestigious job positions, and smooth social mobility. Students, therefore, do not accept the subordinate integration model of their parents and tend to reject following their parents' career paths (Ambrosini, 2020a; Mantovani, 2013).

Differently from foreign-born students which opt for technical or vocational institutes, the second generation tend to favour technical tracks. Regarding students' choices, it is important to consider various factors, including personal aptitudes, family and peer influences, and initial inequalities such as socio-economic status, gender, and ethnic differences, which influence the preference for one school over another. These factors do not end with enrolment in a higher institute but influence the entire educational path and, of course, also university choice, blending with other variables, including the easiness or speed of finding employment. Students born abroad who had to repeat a school are almost 27.3% and those born in Italy account for 14.3%. Furthermore, school dropout rates, are again, higher among students without Italian citizenship (35.4%) compared to natives (11%) (Istat, 2020a). Lastly, as shown in picture 3.5, foreign students enrol more frequently in technical and vocational pathways compared to students with Italian citizenship. This is often due to teachers recommending students with a migrant background to follow vocational/technical, rather than academic, tracks in upper-secondary education, even when these students have good educational achievements (Bonizzoni et al., 2016).

Figure 2.5 Upper Secondary School students by citizenship and educational track (percentages), School Years 2021/2022.



Source: Elaboration on ANS data, 2023* [3]

If we look at the distribution of upper secondary school tracking for the school years 2021/2022 by citizenship, in general, students with non-Italian citizenship seem to behave more similarly to Italian students (figure 2.5). However, Students with non-Italian citizenship born in Italy are more inclined towards Technical Institutes (40%) followed by academic tracks (36%) than students with Italian citizenship whereas students born abroad, are a little less inclined towards Technical and definitely more for Vocational tracks with almost 38% and 34% respectively than their Italian born classmates. Academic paths are still much more prevalent among the population with Italian citizenship, while technical school paths remain a preference for those without Italian citizenship. Meanwhile, vocational paths remain the prerogative of those born abroad but are not disregarded by foreign students born in Italy.

Azzolini and Barone (2013) also focus on this selection bias. The authors examine differences in high school choices and dropout risks and confirm the tendency of first generations of higher risks of dropout and tendency to choose for vocational pathway. However, these differences compared to natives, decrease for children of immigration born in Italy and disappear for children of mixed couples. Furthermore, the study highlights some interesting country of origin peculiarities, such as the significant recovery ability shown by second generations of Asian origin, who

*Data for Bolzano Province and the Valle d'Aosta region are not included.

manage to bridge the gaps significantly better than second generations of North African origin.

2.5.3 Students with immigrant background at university

Before focusing on students with a foreign background, it may be useful to briefly mention the current numbers of the Italian university system. According to OECD (2023), despite a significant and general expansion over the past decades in tertiary education, there are considerable differences among individual countries. Italy ranks among the last positions among OECD countries for graduate individuals, with a percentage of around 28%, significantly lower than the OECD average (around 47%) and the European average (45%).

If we take a look at enrolment in Italian universities, the percentage of foreign students stands around 6%. Of these students, around 45% are of European origin. Territorial distribution of university students is again very diversified and again, there is a lower presence of foreign graduates in southern regions. In particular, the disciplinary subjects with the highest number of second generation graduates are Economic (24.3%), Linguistic (13.7%), and Medical-Health and Pharmaceutical (12.9%) (AlmaLaurea, 2021). For university study paths of children of immigrants, a similar trend to that of upper secondary school paths is observed. Second generation individuals choose university courses with disciplines that allow the acquisition of technical skills (with very few enrolled in humanities disciplines) and offer greater job opportunities (Bozzetti, 2021). The access of immigrant children to university is one of the recent developments of migration stabilization processes. While internationally the topic is more established, with various comparative studies, in the Italian context, there are no longitudinal data available, and the initial exploratory research is primarily qualitative and local in nature (Lagormarsino and Bertozzi, 2014; Bertozzi and Lagomarsino, 2019).

The barriers encountered along their educational paths by second generation migrants resemble those faced by the lower strata of the native population (Lagomarsino and Ravecca, 2014). These difficulties stem from the disadvantaged position of their parents in the labour market. While traditional theories attribute educational opportunity disparities to the scarcity of socioeconomic resources, this

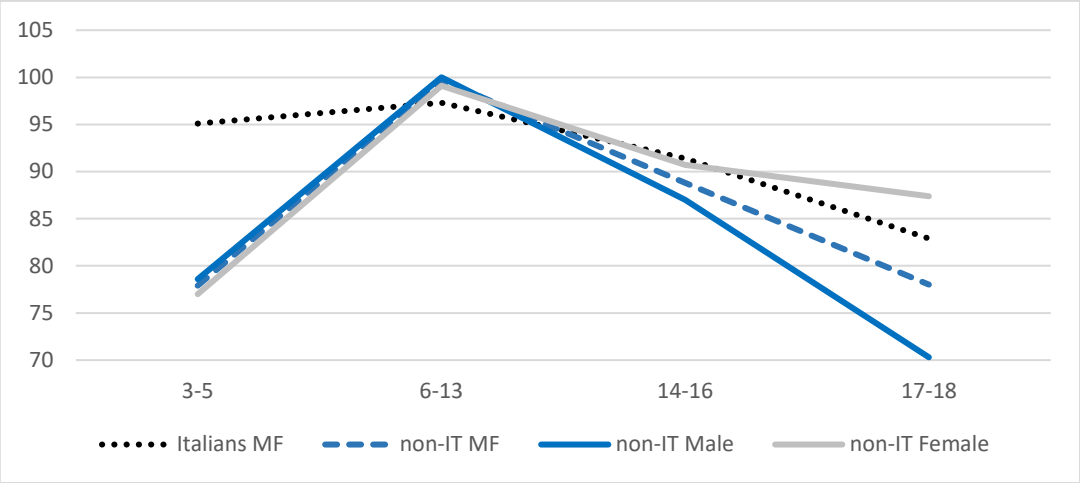
framework can be applied to the experiences of young adults of foreign origin, but to a certain point. Conventional measures used to assess family socioeconomic status such as, for example, parental occupation and family education, do not function the same way for second generations and native peers. The main challenge lies in recognizing that the gap in educational returns between natives and immigrant children arises from mechanisms that transcend socioeconomic positions, manifesting instead additional disadvantages linked to the immigrant background (Lagomarsino and Ravecca, 2014).

2.5.4 Gender differences

When analysing data on female students separately from male students, schooling rates, distribution within upper secondary schools, delays, and dropouts undergo significant changes. Typically, female students exhibit more positive performances.

If we look at figure 2.6 this trend seems clearer. Schooling rates are higher for female students in general and. particularly progressing over time. During preschool the distribution among males and females is balanced, the divergence is notable only if compared to Italian students but in general around 78% of pupils with foreign background attend pre-school classes. The trend increases until they reach 13 years, here the share of attendance is almost 100% and even higher than Italian peers. The downfall starts with upper secondary enrolment for male of non-Italian citizenship. Among 14-16 year-olds school enrolment is 87%, a significant number of male students start to drop out of school. The schooling rate for females decreases from 99% to 91%, thus maintaining the same levels of natives. Interestingly, among the 17-18 cohorts, girls reach the highest share of attendance and are positioned even above Italian students. At this year, the gap between males and females with a migrant background has reached the highest divergence with attendance of 70% for the former and 87% the latter. Consequently, the dropout rate is lower for females than for males. Furthermore, female students are more prevalent in lyceums compared to their male counterparts, with an increase of enrolment by more than 10% for female students.

Figure 2.6 School attendance rate by age group, citizenship, and gender - School Years 2021/2022.



Source: Elaboration on Istat and MIM data

A concerning issue related to gender is the number of NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training), which is the second highest in the EU according to Eurostat (2023). According to Eurostat data, NEET aged 15-29 years represent almost 20% of the population, while the EU average is 12%. Non-Italian citizens have an even higher incidence of NEET, accounting for 34.4% (INAPP, 2020). While the gap between Italian and foreign young people is almost the same for males, there is a difference of 20% between Italian and non-Italian women while for males the gap between Italian and foreign youngsters is irrelevant, there is a difference of 20% between Italian and non-Italian women (Santagati, 2019). The NEET rate in Italy recorded very high values soon after the pandemic, with 1 out of 4 young people out of the workforce and educational or training paths. This rate, net of some minor fluctuations, has remained substantially stable over the last decade, consistently above the European average by about ten percentage points, and the female population is constantly in disadvantage.

2.6 The Italian citizenship framework

The citizenship legislation currently in force in Italy was introduced more than 30 years ago with law 91/1992, which established that Italians are those citizens whose parents, or either the father or mother, is an Italian citizen (*ius sanguinis*). Such legislation does not facilitate the second generation and for those born in Italy to foreign parents, becoming Italian can be a very lengthy process. Italian citizenship can be transmitted from foreign parents to a cohabiting child if at least one of the parents has the right to become Italian. Otherwise, those born in Italy from foreign patents must wait until reaching the age of eighteen to have the opportunity to acquire citizenship by election, provided they have legally and continuously resided in the country since birth and formalize their intention before turning nineteen (Art. 4, paragraph 2). For those who were not born in Italy but perhaps arrived at a young age, the situation appears even more complex, as they cannot benefit from this short temporal window. Therefore, many of them, upon reaching the age of 18, will be forced to scout between a residence permit for study or work in order to legally stay in the country.

According to Action Aid (2022), between 1.8 and 2.5 million people are excluded from citizenship (at least 3% of the entire foreign population), among whom we have about a million adults who, for the most part, are born, raised, and schooled in Italy. Despite the call from numerous scholars for a broader reform of citizenship legislation, only in March 2022, the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies adopted a first draft for a citizenship reform which was voted by many political parties. Over the years, there has been a lively debate around the reformation of the 1992 law and several attempts to update it have failed. The new draft proposes Italian citizenship for those that have attended school in the country. In particular, it affirms that Italian citizenship can be obtained upon request by the parents for a child born in Italy to foreign parents, who holds legal residence and has consistently attended at least a school cycle, within the national territory, for a minimum of five years at institutions belonging to the national educational system. This option is also available for those children born abroad but arrived before reaching twelve years old. The adoption of this recent proposal represents a step

forward in the legislative process of facilitating access to citizenship. However, during the last 20 years several attempts to reform it have failed. Citizenship reform is not perceived as a political priority and many recent attempts to change it have failed. Over time, there have been several proposals, all essentially based on two possibilities: the expansion of *ius soli*, with some restrictions and, access to citizenship through *ius culturae* (grounded on school attendance and/or completion of an academic cycle).

Istat, in its Annual 2022 Report, had calculated that the estimated number of eligible individuals would be around 280.000 youngsters. This is a rough estimate based on the assumption that the youngster attended school from the age of 6 and did not interrupt their studies before the age of 16. In 26% of cases, these are from Romanian origin, followed by citizens from Albania (10.1%), China (9.6%), and Morocco (9.1%). China appears among the countries most affected because, while many youths from other backgrounds acquire Italian citizenship through the transmission of rights from parents to minor children, for the Chinese population this has happened in a much more limited number of cases. These because double citizenship is not allowed and thus, when a Chinese citizen acquires the citizenship of another country, such as Italian citizenship, they lose their Chinese citizenship. However, is important to keep in mind that the actual figure of 280.000 suggested by Istat (2022a) could be much lower, as not all eligible individuals will take advantage of this potential opportunity. Many European citizens, for example, may not see the need for acquiring an Italian passport.

We must also consider the reaction that these young generations may have in the face of a country that, in fact, tolerates them but does not fully accept them, and the significant waste of economic investment and social potential that occurs when these second generations are let go (Ricucci, 2017).Thus, it is not granted that these young generations of foreign origin will continue to live in Italy. In recent years, a significant number of foreign-born individuals have also emigrated. In an Istat survey conducted in 2021 on the behaviours, attitudes, and future plans of upper secondary school students, was detected that 59% of those with non-Italian citizenship would like to live abroad in the future compared to 42% of their Italian

peers (Istat, 2022b). This is a signal that should not be overlooked and should be addressed by promoting greater integration opportunities. Access to Italian citizenship is important not only to resolve the condition of hundreds of thousands of young people who spend a significant part of their education in a suspended situation but also to ensure equal treatment and opportunities for the younger generations, fostering that sense of belonging that only a welcoming and inclusive society can nurture.

Italy is a country experiencing demographic decline with a population that has been aging intensely and rapidly for some time (Golini, 1997). Consequently, there is an undeniable necessity for youthful cohorts both from a demographic and social perspective (Livi Bacci, 2018). Including these young generations and providing them with effective opportunities for integration can result in a greater likelihood of retaining a valuable resource on the territory, on which the country has also made a considerable investment, given the number of school years attended in Italy (Strozza and Conti, 2022).

Chapter 3: The data source

3.1 Aim and Research Question

In sharp contrast with its history of emigration, towards the end of the 20th century, Italy has transformed into a new immigrant-receiving destination. This new immigration phase accelerated at the beginning of the 1990s, when Italy experienced a rise in the number of migrants as part of the worlds' South-North migration trend, with immigrants coming primarily from sub-Saharan and North Africa (Bonifazi et al., 2009; Colombo and Sciortino 2004). After the fall of the "Iron Curtain," East-West migration from Central and Eastern Europe also accounted for a large part of the positive net immigration.

This transition from a migration to an immigration country, coupled with the dualistic structure of its labour market and the wide range of source countries makes Italy an interesting scenario to assess the magnitude of inequalities between natives and non-natives regarding the socio-economic integration.

The aim of this study, considering the unique characteristics of the Italian context, is to evaluate the labour market performance of the second generation by examining both the likelihood of employment and a measure of the socio-economic status of their respective jobs. By concurrently examining these outcomes, is possible to assess whether the offspring of immigrants in Italy achieve better outcomes than the first generation or if they face penalties similar to those experienced by their parents' generations.

Consequently, three sets of research questions and hypothesis will guide this study:

R.Q.1 Are discernible differences in employment status evident among Italians, second generation migrants, and mixed generations? Additionally, do regional disparities contribute to these differences?

R.Q.2 Do second generation migrants in Italy occupy similar job positions compared to Italians, or do they experience divergent employment outcomes from the outset?

R.Q.3 What discernible variations can be observed within the second generation concerning labour market outcomes?

The theories on educational and labour integration gap discussed in the previous chapters, have highlighted aspects that may have had a significant impact on the propensity of second generation success. Drawing on the theoretical and empirical literature is possible to formulate a list of hypotheses which can be tested using econometric analysis. The lack of socioeconomic stability, educational barriers, and the aversion towards the subordinate employments of their parents suggest that second generation migrants incur in higher risks of gaining adequate job positions compared to native peers.

Hypothesis 1: Second generation migrants in Italy will exhibit higher chances of unemployment compared to Italians and individuals of mixed heritage. These disparities will be particularly pronounced in southern regions where economic opportunities are more limited.

Hypothesis 2: Second generation migrants will encounter distinct working conditions compared to Italians from the onset of their entry into the labour market.

Hypothesis 3: Between and within disparities in employment status and job positions will be observable for second generation, suggesting that the labour market may not be entirely meritocratic for these individuals.

3.2 Methodological considerations

In light of the limited prevalence of quantitative studies on this topic in Italy, the decision to employ a quantitative methodology reflects the intention to fill a gap in the existing literature and contribute to the empirical understanding of labour integration among second generation migrants. Methodological considerations may include ensuring the representativeness of the sample, addressing potential sources of bias or confounding variables, and selecting appropriate statistical techniques to analyse the data effectively. Additionally, researchers may need to consider the limitations of quantitative approaches, such as the inability to capture the full complexity of individuals' experiences or the potential for data aggregation to obscure nuanced dynamics within the migrant population.

However, in the context of analysing the labour integration of second generation migrants using data from the Labor Force Survey (LFS) in Italy, several reasons have driven the options to quantitative research. First, as already mentioned above, quantitative studies would be advantageous, especially considering the limited prevalence of such investigation in the Italian context. Secondly, quantitative methodologies allow for rigorous statistical analysis, providing concrete numerical data that can be analysed statistically. This is particularly important when dealing with large datasets like the LFS, which can provide a wealth of information on labour market outcomes, employment patterns, and socioeconomic characteristics of second generation migrants. Furthermore, by employing quantitative methods, researchers can potentially generalize their findings to broader populations of second generation migrants in Italy. This is crucial when seeking evidence-based insights into labour market dynamics and integration processes. Quantitative analysis enables researchers to identify trends, patterns, and correlations. Also, quantitative methods facilitate comparative analysis by allowing researchers to examine differences and similarities across various demographic groups, geographic regions, and time periods as well as enabling replication and further examination of the results. Replication could be considered among the most effective processes to assess objectivity and a natural part of quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2005; Creswell, 2009). This can help in identifying disparities in labour market outcomes between second generation migrants and the native population or other migrant groups. In addition, quantitative studies promote objectivity and reproducibility in research findings. By adhering to standardized data collection procedures and statistical techniques, researchers can minimize bias and increase the reliability of their results.

Quantitative research aims at examining theories by assessing relationships among variables. Variables which often are estimated by instruments which enable statistical procedures to be performed on the data. The process could be described as deductive and recognises the importance of controlling against the existence of alternative explanations and bias as well as the possible replication of results (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative approach is however not lacking criticism. One aspect that have been criticised is the collection process of data which is argued to vigorously limit the amount of processed information. This can lead to a situation where researchers

just find what they are looking for while neglecting other useful information (Jacobsen, 2002).

3.3 Source Material

The Labor Force Survey (LFS) was the first sample survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics. The initial survey took place in the early 1950s, but it wasn't until 1959 that it acquired the systematic nature that still distinguishes it today, involving quarterly surveys with rotation of the family sample. Since its inception, the survey has undergone multiple changes that have profoundly altered its characteristics, progressively and completely transforming the overall structure of the survey.

In 2003, there was the last methodological redesign of the survey, leading to modifications in aspects of the sampling design to comply with European regulations. The questionnaire that has arrived at these days includes the gradual introduction of sample rotation groups. Finally, with the European Regulation 2019/1700, in effect since the first quarter of 2021, more precise and binding requirements were introduced to promote harmonization among countries regarding the collection of data necessary to define key indicators (Istat, 2006).

The LFS is a sample survey and represents the main source of statistical information on the Italian labour market. This data is therefore essential for tracking the employment trends of the second generation, as well as being one of the few official statistical sources. The information collected from the population forms the basis for deriving national estimates of the employed and unemployed, information on key labour supply aggregates such as profession, sector of economic activity, hours worked, type and duration of contracts, and education.

The survey is of a sampling nature[4] and involves each year over 250,000 families residing in Italy, totalling approximately 600.000 individuals, distributed across

[4] In sample surveys, only a portion of the population is observed, considered representative of the entire population. The advantages of these types of surveys, compared to censuses, theoretically include lower costs, reduced execution times, and higher data quality (as, by observing only a small fraction of the population, well-trained enumerators and supervisors can be used, with the possibility of implementing various follow-ups in case of non-response). The sample selection is based on a probability law (sampling design) known in advance because it is determined by the statistician. This

around 1.400 Italian municipalities. The families to be interviewed are randomly selected using the National Resident Population Registry (ANPR), following a sampling strategy aimed at creating a statistically representative sample of the resident population in Italy with respect to the variables under investigation.

The families included in the sample are interviewed four times over a period of 15 months. Each family is interviewed for two consecutive quarters, followed by a break of two quarters, and subsequently will be interviewed again for another two consecutive quarters. In essence, the adopted sampling approach involves the partial overlap of samples from different quarters, following a rotation scheme. This means that a family is included in the sample for two consecutive interviews, then excluded for two quarters, and subsequently reintroduced for another two interviews. This process creates a theoretical sample overlap that guarantees statistical stability.

To implement this scheme, a quarterly rotation is employed: families are interviewed for two consecutive quarters, followed by a break of two quarters, and then reinterviewed for another two quarters. In each four-quarter cycle in which a family is interviewed, the survey week remains constant. For example, if a family was interviewed for the first time in the second week of a quarter, it will be interviewed in the same week in the subsequent quarters it is involved.

The goal of overlapping quarterly samples is to reduce fluctuations in level estimates across different quarters. Additionally, this specific rotation technique helps to reduce the estimation of net changes between consecutive quarters and quarters one year apart.

3.4 Methodological aspects of the Labour Force Survey

The survey aims to gather information about the work situation, job search, and attitudes towards the labour market of the working-age population.

The population of interest includes all members of families residing in Italy, including those temporarily emigrated abroad, while excluding permanent members

means that each unit of the population is selected according to a random mechanism, and each unit has a non-zero probability of being included in the sample. The simple adopted in the LFS is also a quota sample, meaning that the sample must reflect the existing proportions in the population (Conti and Marella, 2012; Chichitelli et al., 2022).

of cohabitations such as shelters, religious institutions, barracks, and so on. The family is considered as a de facto unit. This means that all group of people bound by marriage, kinship, affinity, adoption, guardianship, or emotional ties, cohabiting, and having habitual residence in the same municipality are included; in the event that the selected family cohabits with other families, only the selected one is interviewed.

The parameters of interest in the survey are expressed in terms of the number of individuals possessing a specific attribute "z" and concern population aggregates such as the labour force, employed individuals, and those seeking employment. For each of these aggregates, the main parameters to be estimated include the number of individuals with the attribute "z" in quarter "t" and year "a" (calculated as the average of the four quarters of year "a") and the difference between the number of individuals with the attribute "z" in quarter "t" and the number of individuals with the same attribute in a previous quarter "t'" (Istat, 2018a, 2019a, 2020b, 2021a, 2022b).

The geographical domains of study include the entire national territory, geographic divisions, and regions. Starting from 1993, provinces are also considered solely for the construction of annual average estimates.

3.5 The sample design

The sampling design used for each quarterly survey is based on a monthly temporal stratification. In fact, the quarterly sample of final sampling units (i.e., families) is divided into three distinct groups, and each group is randomly assigned to a month within the quarter. This way, each of the three groups constitutes a sample representative of the reference population for the respective month.

Unlike families, which rotate according to the previously introduced scheme, the sampled municipalities remain constant over time. Overall, in each quarterly survey, approximately 1.400 municipalities are involved, totalling around 70.000 families.

The first interview is conducted in person using the Capi technique, while the subsequent ones ideally take place over the phone using the Cati technique. Two types of errors are addressed: structural errors related to the questionnaire's structure and logical-formal errors resulting from inconsistent information. In the electronic questionnaire, rules are implemented to manage the flow and logic of the

questionnaire. After corrections, the data undergoes the "family procedure," which checks and corrects demographic information, constructs family units, and classifies them into specific types.

The estimator chosen for the LFS is a constrained weighting estimator. In this context, the final weights are set so that, within different geographical domains (regions, autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, provinces, large municipalities), the estimates of the resident population (by gender and age groups) match the known totals from demographic sources. Weights are calculated at the family level, meaning that each individual belonging to the same family is assigned the same weight, ensuring consistency between family and individual estimates.

3.6 The structure of the LFS questionnaire

In this paragraph, we examine in more detail the questionnaires for the years analysed from 2018 to 2022. Each survey year is divided into four trimesters corresponding to four datasets and thus four identical questionnaires for each year, with overall around 250 individual questions with little variation from one year to another. It is important to highlight that the methodology and structure remain consistent throughout the years; what may vary between editions is the question code or an additional question. The questionnaire for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 are almost identical whereas those for the years 2021 and 2022 diverge slightly as they add section J and the section relative to questions related to the GIG economy. The core sections are listed below and represented in in figure 3.1.

In the general form, demographic information, marital status, and citizenship of all family members, along with the educational attainment of members aged 15 and above, are recorded. The first section records the number of actual family members. In the subsequent screen, the recording of information about the first member begins. Once the questions for the first member are completed, the program automatically moves to the second and so on until the last family member is reached. It is important to note that the number of members for whom information is recorded in the general form is linked to the number of actual family members, not to the one related to the registry family.

An adult family member is responsible for completing the general form for everyone (called Reference Person). After completing the general form, the questions move to a summary screen displaying the name, age, and interview status of each family member. Initially, all family members of working age have an interview status “to be started," while for members under 15, the interview is considered complete without gathering further information (interview status "complete").

In section A, the start date of the individual interview is recorded, along with who is responding to the questions about the selected individual (personal interview or proxy interview), the reason for any proxy interview, and the family member responding in the case of a proxy interview. In addition to monitoring the number and quality of proxy interviews, the information recorded in section A allows for the management of question formulation and the appearance of certain response modes on the screen.

In Section B, information is collected about the work situation during the reference week. The questions in this section aim to determine whether the respondent meets the criteria established at the community level to be considered employed. Respondents classified as employed move on to Section C and then to Section D, which are dedicated to their main and secondary work activities, respectively. Non-employed individuals, on the other hand, proceed directly to Section E, which pertains to their previous work experience.

As part of the Labor Force Survey, Section C, dedicated to the main work activity, constitutes the most detailed section of the individual questionnaire, comprising a total of sixty-three questions. Of these, twenty are directed to all employed individuals, covering aspects such as occupational position, profession, economic activity, usual working hours, desired working hours, questions related to work performed during inconvenient hours, workplace location, and the year of starting the job. The remaining questions, administered only in specific cases, aim to delve into particular work situations. For instance, there are specific questions for those in dependent employment (nature of the occupation, type of contract, etc.). Some questions are directed only at those working part-time (reason for part-time work,

desire for full-time work, etc.); others explore the reasons for the difference between the declared working hours in the reference week and the usual working hours.

Section D, much shorter than the previous section (comprising a total of 9 questions), records the presence of any secondary work activity and its main characteristics.

Section E is addressed to respondents who are classified as not employed in Section B. First, it is determined whether the respondent has ever worked during their life. For those who have worked in the past, the year of completion of the last work activity is recorded. For those who have concluded a job in the last seven years, some characteristics related to the last job performed are also recorded. Respondents who have never worked in their lives due to permanent disability skip the next two sections, proceeding directly to Section H.

The paths of the employed and the non-employed, with the exception of those permanently unable to work, converge in Section F, dedicated to job searching. Within this section, the paths vary partially depending on employment status. For the non-employed, the path is more detailed, as this section contains the information needed to identify individuals seeking employment. For the employed, on the other hand, the path is shorter.

Section G is dedicated to the respondent's relationship with public employment centres, the perception of unemployment benefits, as well as any relationships with private placement agencies.

Section H focuses on educational activities. In this section, enrolment in a school or university course, participation in other training courses in the last four weeks, and the attainment of a qualification awarded upon completion of a regionally recognized vocational training course are recorded.

Section I records the respondent's predominant employment status perceived in the reference week and the previous year, any changes of residence in the past one and two years before the survey. At this point, the individual interview is concluded. If there are other family members to interview, the summary screen is accessed, and the process is repeated, from Section A to Section I, for the next respondent. After

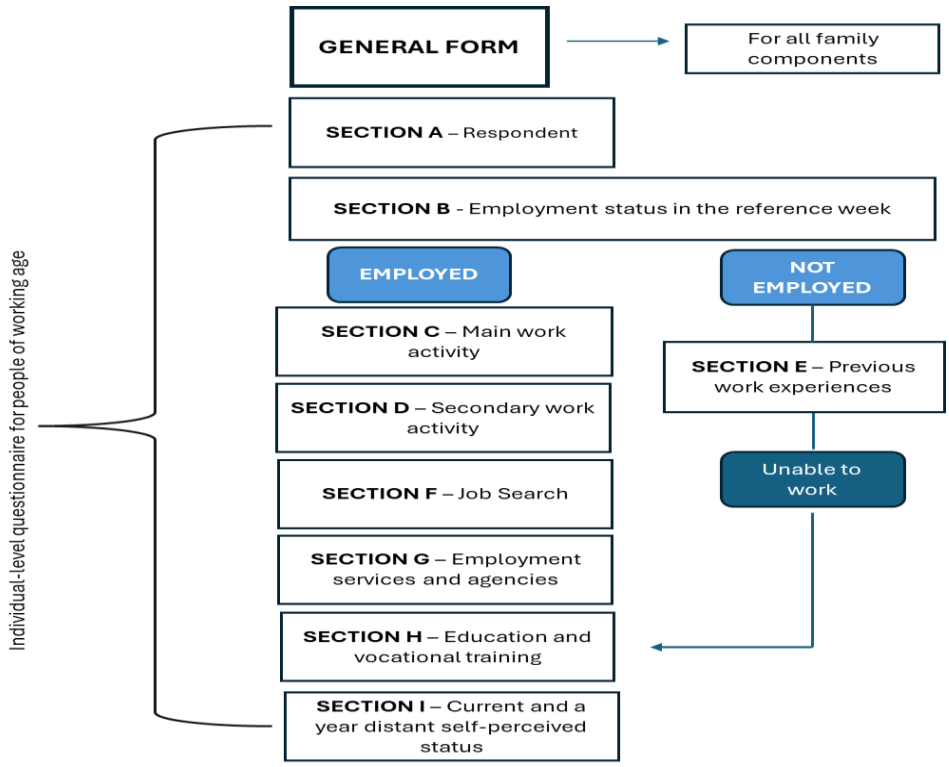
interviewing all family members, Section L is accessed for the closure of the family interview.

Section L, for the last interviewed family member, records some family information useful for facilitating subsequent contact with the family: additional phone numbers, new contact details, and the family's preferred time for the next interview.

Section M, managed by the interviewer, provides some information on the interview's progress. In this section, the interviewer records the family's willingness to provide answers during the interview and the availability for a subsequent interview, any difficulties that emerged during the interview, and the location where it took place. Considering the sensitivity of the questions, especially in problematic situations, the interviewer may decide whether to fill out the section immediately or close the interview and complete Section M later.

Finally, Section N is used to record any pending codings of the occupation and economic activity using a different coding criterion.

Figure 3.1 General structure of the questionnaire years 2018-2022.



Source: elaboration on Istat, LFS questionnaire 2018-2022

3.7 Selection of variables

The dataset lacks information on the migration history of parents. Consequently, only individuals categorized as second generation immigrants can be identified when residing with their parents. Notably, the survey does not inquire about family background unless the respondent is still living with their mother/father (or partners). This limitation results in the inability to trace second generation immigrants once they move out of the household. Upon acquiring Italian citizenship, they become indistinguishable from other Italians since information on whether they have Italian citizenships from birth is restricted and information on their parent's place of birth is not included in the questionnaire.

To address the research questions, a conceptual framework derived from a holistic review of the literature was used. A set of intervening variables are considered as main explanatory factors driving the immigrant disadvantage gap.

Sociodemographic background which are divided in:

Gender (female/male), is a dummy which takes value of 1 for women.

Respondents' *Education level*, which is a categorical variable split in three: low education for those that have no formal education or only elementary education; upper Secondary includes those that have completed the respective school cycle and university that encompass those that have a tertiary education. Also, *Age* divides the population by categories of number of years ranging from 18 to 35 (categories are: 18-21; 22-25; 26-30; 31-35). The variable *Education* is constructed for each member of the family, one for the respondent, one for the father and for the mother in order to acquire a certain degree on information on the cultural background of the whole family. Parents' education may serve as a proxy of home resources and human capital accumulation.

Although the young age of the sample, also a categorical variable for *Family Status*, which displays whether the person is single/married/separated, was added.

Furthermore, the variable *Father's Nationality* has been built from the fathers' citizenship of second generation migrants and grouped into geographic areas (EU for countries in the European Union – including UK; Other EU for those Central and Eastern countries that are not in the European Union; Asia; Africa; South America and a residual category of Other Western countries which includes USA and Oceania). A specular variable for *Mother's Nationality* was also made.

Household components is a categorical variable dividing the number of people living in the same family into three different typologies: up to 4; from 5-6 and, more than 7 for very large families. Considering that the sample was restricted to sons and daughters living at home with both parents, no household has less than three components.

Furthermore, *geographic area* divides the territory in regions belonging to the North, Center or South (which includes Sicily and Sardinia) of Italy.

Employment divides the sample in those already working and those non in the workforce but proactively searching for one. Also, *type of contract* provides information on whether the respondent has a full-time job, or a part-time job calculated on the numbers of hours worked weekly.

The variable *second generation* was recoded from a different set of questions and constructed on whether the individual has mother and father with foreign citizenship, was born in Italy or has arrived before turning 7 years old, never left the country and has Italian citizenship. The decision to include those arrived before age seven implies that they have been schooled in Italy and learnt the language in school at a very young age.

Italians are recorded with the same characteristics of living at home with both parents born in Italy. Another further variable distinguishes in *mixed generation* those with one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent. All three generations (Second generation, Italians and Mixed) are under *Workforce* and have between 18

and 35 years old. *Workforce* takes values of 0 for Italians, 1 for second generation migrants and 2 for mix generation.

The necessity to restrict the second generation to only those individuals living at home led to the decision to limit the *workforce* to individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The age threshold starting from 18 years has been chosen not only because it represents legal adulthood in Italy and, very few individuals work before reaching majority, but also because in cases where the immigrant parent acquires foreign citizenship, they can transmit it to their underage child hence, an immigrant family could have been selected as an Italian one.

Furthermore, according to Istat parameters, 35 years is the age that distinguishes young adults from the rest of the adult population. The need to narrow down the sample was chosen due to the still young age of the second generation in Italy and the negligible number of those among the children of immigrants who still live at home after this age and have a job.

Hence the age span was specifically chosen to capture the unique challenges and experiences of the second generation during the critical period of early adulthood. It allows for a focused examination of their educational and employment trajectories, shedding light on their integration into Italian society. Finally, the choice to exclude individuals over 35 living at home was influenced by the observation that this practice is more prevalent among the Italian population, particularly in the southern regions, making it less relevant to the specific inquiry of this study.

There are two outcome variables. The first one is *employment* status, assessed by a binary variable where 1 indicates employed and 0 for those who are unemployed but actively seeking work. For the latter group, we utilize the standard definition of unemployment as outlined by Istat, which excludes individuals not actively participating in the labour force, including students, homemakers, retirees, or those otherwise not engaged in work. Hence, the unemployed is referred to as those individuals who have undertaken at least one active job search in the four weeks

prior to the reference week and are available to work within the next two weeks (Istat, 2006).

Our second dependent variable is dichotomous and regards *type of contract*, is divided into whether the job position is a full-time or a part-time job. Within those that have a part-time position only those individuals who have a part-time contract not by choice have been included. Thus, non-voluntary part-time for these individuals was due to the fact that full-time job was not available, or it was not offered. The type of contract often reflects the conditions of employment, including the number of hours worked, job stability, benefits, and career prospects. Full-time contracts typically offer more stability and benefits compared to part-time contracts, which may be more precarious. The two dependent variables have been selected as more suited to the research questions, namely whether immigrants are trapped into the lower segments of the labour market. The two outcome variables contain no missing values. For the control variables, missing answers were listwise deleted (missing values did not exceed 2% of the sample).

3.8 Methods

This study analysis the relationship between employment and characteristics of young second generation migrants and their background. In order to properly analyse the determinants of employment performance, two main econometric methods will be used. One for employment achievements and one for employment status, both involving a logit model. Hence, the dependent variables are a) the likelihood of employment (0 = employed; 1 = unemployed but searching for a job); b) the contract type (measured through the type of contract part-time/full-time).

For the first analysis, the relationship proposed can be expressed as the following:

$$V = f(\,workforce\ status, family\ backgroun, geographic\ characteristics,\ inherent\ workforce\ characteristics)$$

Where V represents the dependent variable of employment. In order to explore this relationship with the available data, an econometric model will be performed. Since this variable is dichotomous, a logit regressions represent the best way to analyse the data. In specific, the models will be estimated following the equation:

$$p_emp(x) = \ln\left(\frac{p(x)}{1-p(x)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{workforce} + \beta_2 F + \beta_3 S + \beta_4 Z + \beta_5 G + \varepsilon_i$$

This equation models the log odds of the probability of the dependent variable employment status being 1 (for “success") relative to the probability of it being 0 (or "failure"). P_emp(x), represents the probability of the dependent variable (employment status) being 1; $\ln\left(\frac{p(x)}{1-p(x)}\right)$ is the natural logarithm of the odds of the dependent variable; β_0 is the constant, indicating the log odds of the dependent variable being 1 when all independent variables are 0. Furthermore, $\beta_1 + \beta_2 F + \beta_3 S + \beta_4 Z + \beta_5 G$, represent the coefficients associated with the independent variables (workforce status, family background, geographic characteristics, inherent student characteristics). These coefficients indicate the change in the log odds of the dependent variable. Finally, ε_i represents the error term.

The basic model will only include a constant and the worker status. A second one will add demographic variables while a third and fourth will insert sociodemographic and year fixed effects while the last model will add an interaction between workforce and region (North, Center, South).

The second outcome variable is *type of contract*. The relationship can be expressed as:

$$A = f(\,workforce\ status, family\ backgroun, geographic\ characteristics,$$
$$work\ position,\ inherent\ workforce\ characteristics)$$

Where A is the dependent variable. Because of the nature of these variables a logit model will be conducted, where the probability of having a full-time job will be the baseline. Similarly, to the employment models the basic model will only include type of contract and workforce. A second model will again add demographic characteristics; a third, fourth and fifth will include sociodemographic characteristics

and year fixed effects finally interaction between region (North, Center, South) and workforce are included in the sixth model.

$$p_work(x) = \ln\left(\frac{p(x)}{1-p(x)}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{workforce} + \beta_2 F + \beta_3 S + \beta_4 Z + \beta_5 G + \varepsilon_i$$

Where p_work(x) represents the probability that the dependent variable is equal to one of the categories and ln means natural logarithm. Also, β_0, represents the intercept term, indicating the log odds of being employed when all other independent variables are zero. $\beta_1$workforce is the coefficient associated with the variable representing generation status. This coefficient indicates the change in the log odds of the type of contract belonging to a specific generation group, compared to a reference group. Furthermore, $\beta_2 F + \beta_3 S + \beta_4 Z + \beta_5 G$ are the coefficients associated with the variables representing family background, geographic characteristics, job position and inherent student characteristics, respectively. Finally, ε_i represents the error term, which captures unexplained variability that is not accounted by the independent variables included in the model.

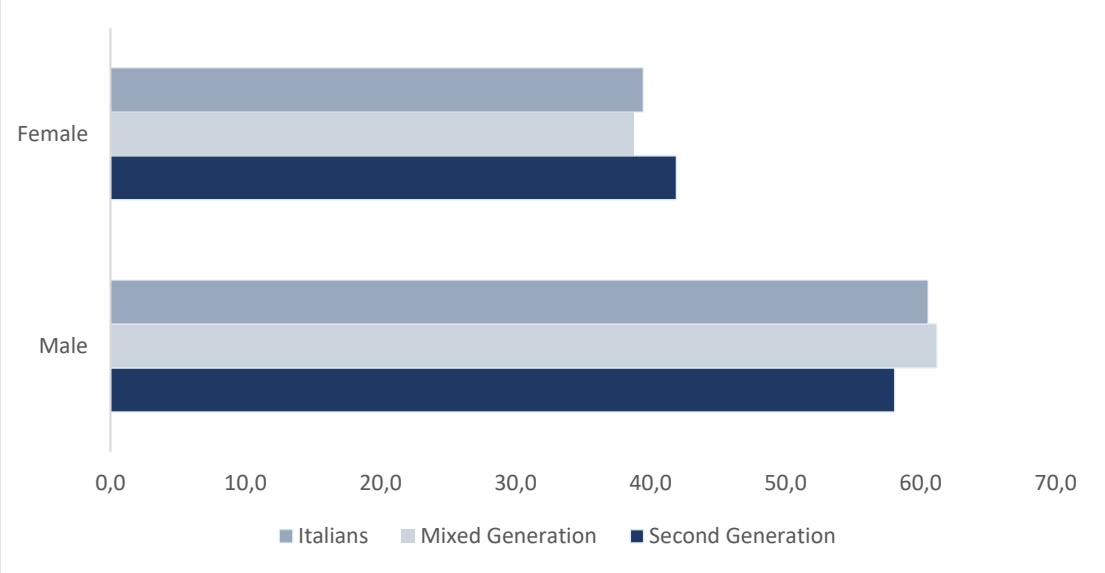
3.9 Descriptive statistics

From the Labour Force Survey (LFS) conducted by Istat for the years 2018, 2019,2020 and 2022, the data used in this study was restricted to include only the workforce of second generation, mixed and Italians of those living at home with both parents ranging from 18 to 35 years old. Hence, being the focus of the study the employment gap of second generation, the first generation was excluded. The sample includes 85.140 individuals of which 637 are second generation and 964 are from the mixed generation. Italians represent the wide majority of the observations. The number of second generation workforce progressively increase with time (complete summary statistics for individual year sample are in Appendix A).

Descriptive statistics of our dependent variable and selected independent variables are displayed in the following section. Table 3.1 displays the variables for *gender*, *age*, *education* of respondents' and *parents' education*, *family status*, *household*, *nationality* of parents, *Geographic area*, *employed*, and *type of contract.*

The variable *gender* provides insights into the gender distribution within the different groups. All three generations present gender imbalances skewed towards males implying that the numbers of young men living at home between 18 and 35 years old is larger than the share of women (figure 3.2). Among the second generation, 58.1% of individuals living at home with parents are male, while 41.9% are female. This indicates a higher proportion of males within this group. Similarly, in the mixed generation, there is a higher percentage of males (61.2%) compared to females (38.8%) living at home with parents. For Italians, the gender distribution is also unbalanced, with 60.6% male and 39.4% female individuals staying at home. The sample suggests some consistency in gender distribution across the three population groups, with males comprising a wider proportion than females among individuals sharing the same roof.

Figure 3.2 Gender distribution by status.



If we look at the age distribution of the sample in figure 3.3 below, unexpectedly second generations are more represented in the younger strata of the population while the opposite is true for Italians. The mixed generation seems more balanced trough age classes. Within second generation, the highest percentage of individuals is in the 18-21 and 22-25 age groups implying that a significant portion of children of immigrants living at home with both parents falls within this younger age range. The

percentage decreases in older groups, with the lowest percentage in the 31-35 cohorts (5.2%).

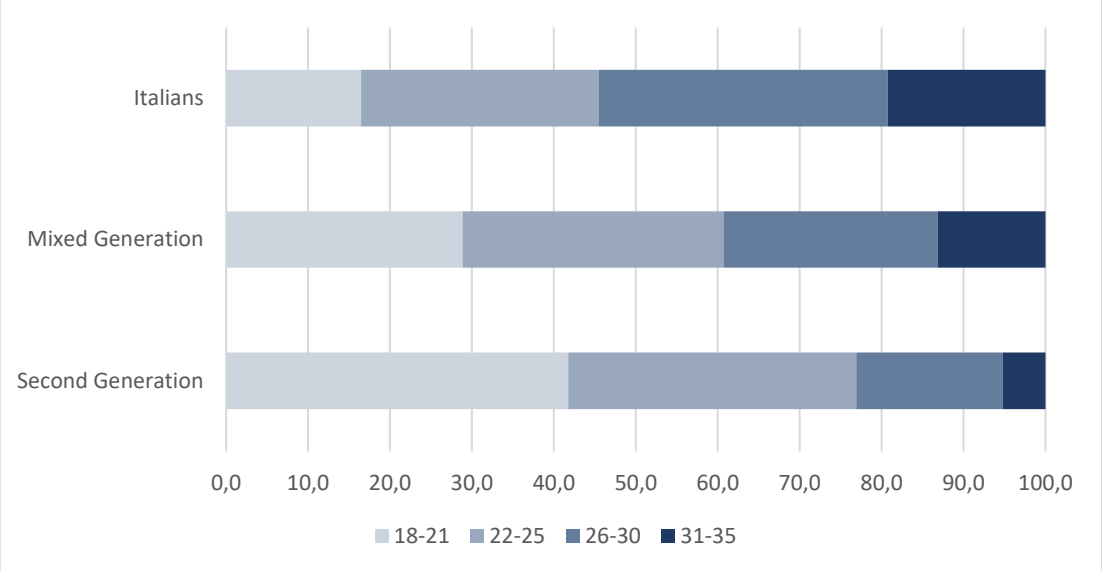
In the mixed generation the age distribution is relatively more evenly spread, with the highest percentage in the 22-25 age group (31.8%). However, there is a noticeable decline in the 26-30 group compared to the previous one.

For Italians', the age distribution indicates a higher percentage of individuals in the older ages. The 26-30 and 31-35 age groups have the highest percentages (35.3% and 19.2%, respectively) and the lowest percentage is observed in the 18-21 years old.

Comparisons across groups shows that age distribution patterns differ across second generation, mix and Italians, reflecting potential demographic and generational differences. Second generation individuals are more concentrated in the younger age groups, while Italians have a larger representation in the older cohorts.

From a demographic perspective, this distribution is congruent with the age structure of the population living in Italy examined in the previous Chapter 2, in which the second generations are still young, while among Italians, the respective age groups are progressively decreasing. Analysing age patterns helps contextualize the characteristics of individuals living at home with both parents within each population group.

Figure 3.3 Age distribution by status.



Regarding the variable on the educational level (figure 3.4), the majority of the second generation individuals have completed upper secondary education (62.6%). It is important to enphasisis that encompassed in upper secondary educations are also included technical schools and vocational tracks which, according to the litterature, present a high percentage of immigrants' children. Furthermore, a significant portion has only completed lower secondary education (29.5%), while a very smaller percentage holds a university degree (7.8%).

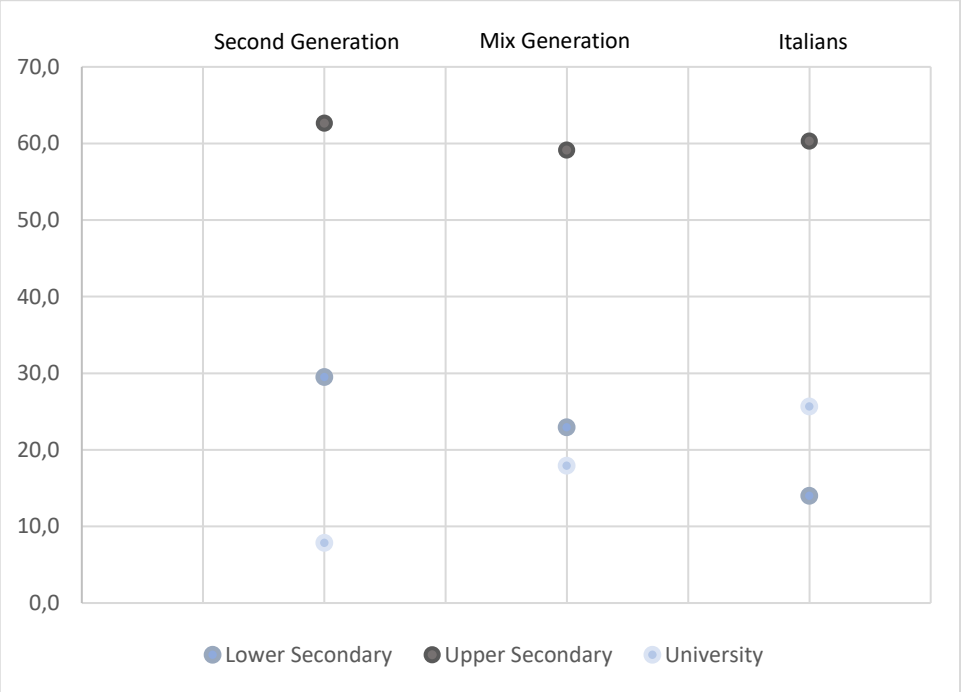
Similar to the second generation, the mixed generation also shows a higher percentage of individuals with upper secondary education (59.1%). The distribution across educational levels for this group is again more evenly spread compared to the second generation, with substantial percentages both among those who have completed lower secondary school (22.9%) but also higher shares of those woth tertiary education (17.9%).

Among Italians, again the highest percentage has completed upper secondary education (60.3%), however the share is similar to both the second and mixed generations.

Italians also have a significant percentage with a university degree (25.7%), suggesting a relatively higher proportion of individuals with tertiary education compared to the other two groups. The percentage of Italians with lower secondary education is the lowest among the three groups (14.0%).

Across all three groups, upper secondary education is the most common level of educational attainment. The distribution of educational levels in the mixed generation is more balanced compared to the other two groups, with notable proportions at both lower secondary and university levels. Educational levels are crucial indicators for understanding the workforce, potential career paths, and socio-economic factors within the sample. The data suggests that, in general, the second and mixed generations have a considerable proportion of individuals with upper secondary education, while Italians have a higher representation in the university-educated category.

Figure 3.4 Educational level by status.



Information on the educational level of parents' is also important to detect. As analysed in the literature, the level of education of parents can provide fundamental elements for socio-cultural analysis as well as an economic proxy of the family environment in which the second generations lives (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Gang et al., 1999).

A significant majority of second generation fathers have completed only lower secondary education (66.9%), indicating a higher prevalence of individuals which have either no formal education or have only completed the first cycle of schooling (see table 3.1). About a quarter of immigrants' fathers have upper secondary education (26.1%), and a smaller percentage (7.1%) have a university degree. Similar to fathers, a considerable majority of second generation mothers have a degree of lower secondary education (68.3%). The percentage of mothers with upper secondary education is slightly higher than their partners (27.3%), and a smaller proportion (4.4%) have a university degree.

For mixed generation, there is a more balanced distribution across education levels. The highest percentage of fathers has lower secondary education (52.4%), followed by upper secondary education (39.5%), and university (8.1%). Mothers show a more uniform distribution, between lower secondary (45.1%) and upper secondary education (42.5%) although reporting the highest share, among mothers of the three groups of tertiary education with 12.3%, respectively.

Italians' fathers show a distribution somewhat similar to the mixed generation, with the highest percentage having lower secondary with percentages of 56.5%, followed by upper secondary education (35.4%) and university education levels with 8.1%. Italian mothers also show a very similar distribution across education levels, with the highest percentage having again lower secondary education (54.2%) and 37.9% having completed the upper secondary cycle with finally university following behind reaching 7.9%.

The educational distribution of parents in the second generation tends to be skewed towards lower secondary education, whereas the mixed generation and Italians show a more balanced distribution across educational levels. Both mixed generation and Italians have a higher percentage of parents with upper secondary education compared to the second generation. The proportion of parents with a university degree is generally lower across all groups.

If we take a look at the marital status in table 3.1, Italians have the highest percentage of individuals who are single (99.2%), followed by the mixed generation (95.0%), and the second generation (92.9%). The data suggests that a relatively smaller percentage of the second generation is single compared to the other two groups. Thus, although being the youngest group, second generation immigrants have the highest percentage of married individuals (5.8%) and also separated, followed by the mixed generation (3.3%), and Italians have the lowest percentage. This also implies that they marry previous in life and that they tend to stay at home, at least for some time, even after marriage. Marital status is a significant socio-demographic variable that can influence various aspects of individuals' lives, including family structures, economic decisions, and social integration. These

differences in marital status among population groups may have implications for understanding family dynamics and employment trends.

Regarding the variable *household* (table3.1), Italians have the highest percentage of families with up to 4 components (85.0%), followed by the mixed generation (66.0%), and the second generation (62.6%). The data suggests that a larger proportion of Italian families have fewer components, underling smaller households. The second generation and mixed generation on the other hand, show a relatively similar percentage of families with 5 to 6 components (32.7% and 28.5%, respectively). The share of families with more than 6 components is relatively low across all groups. The second generation and mixed have similar percentages (4.7% and 5.5%, respectively), while Italians have the lowest percentage not reaching even 1%.

This suggests that very large families, with more than 6 components, are rare in all three groups. Family size can influence various aspects of individuals' lives, including socio-economic dynamics, resource allocation, and social interactions. Furthermore, differences in family size may reflect cultural norms, generational changes, or socio-economic factors within each population group.

The variable on the *nationality* for fathers and mothers of the second generation provides insights into the diversity of backgrounds within this population group (figure 3.5). The distribution of nationalities and the consequent geographical areas of origin of parents of second generation in the sample is in line with the statistics reviewed in chapter 2. The decision to group nationalities by geographical area was dictated by statistical necessity. The division was done following the Istat classification, which assigned a code and a macro geographical area to each nation.

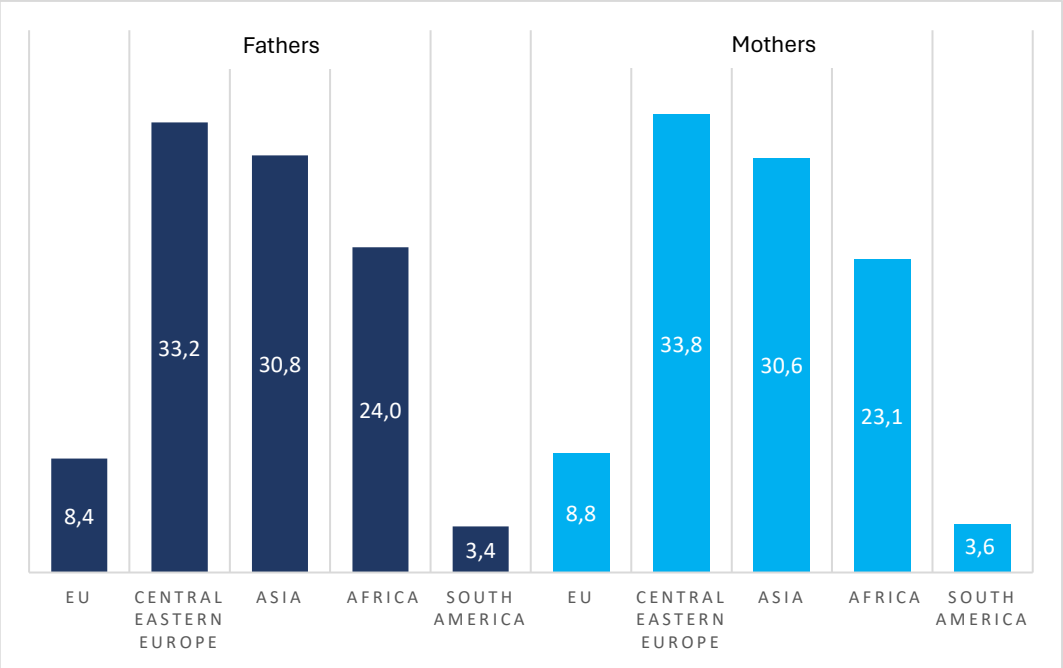
Within the EU area, all the countries belonging to the European Union (the UK has been included in this repartition) are grouped, with Romania and Poland leading the list. In Central and Eastern Europe, the countries contributing the most include the former Yugoslavia and Moldova. In the Asian bloc, China takes the lead, followed by the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan in determining the parents' origin. Finally, under the African category, there is a wide range of countries, from North

African such as Morocco and Tunisia, but also a growing number from West African countries.

The most prominent geographic origins for fathers and mothers are Central Eastern Europe (more than 33%) and Asia (30%), followed by Africa (around 23 %), the EU (above 8.0%), and South America (3%). Thus, the similarity in proportions between fathers and mothers from each region indicates a consistent distribution across different areas of origin and in time.

Notably, the proportions between fathers (bars in dark blue) and mothers (bars in bright blue) from different geographic areas are very similar, suggesting a balanced distribution of origins and the widespread practice also, among immigrant groups, to marry individuals from same places. Thus, the sample indicates a harmonized distribution of fathers and mothers from various geographic regions within the second generation, highlighting a tendency toward marrying individuals with similar origins.

Figure 3.5 Geographic origin of fathers and mothers of second generation migrants.



After analysing second generation area of origin, we now turn to the mixed generation. Here the variable *nationality* outlines the geographic background of fathers and mothers within the mixed generation, where one parent is native-born, and the other is foreign-born (figure 3.6).

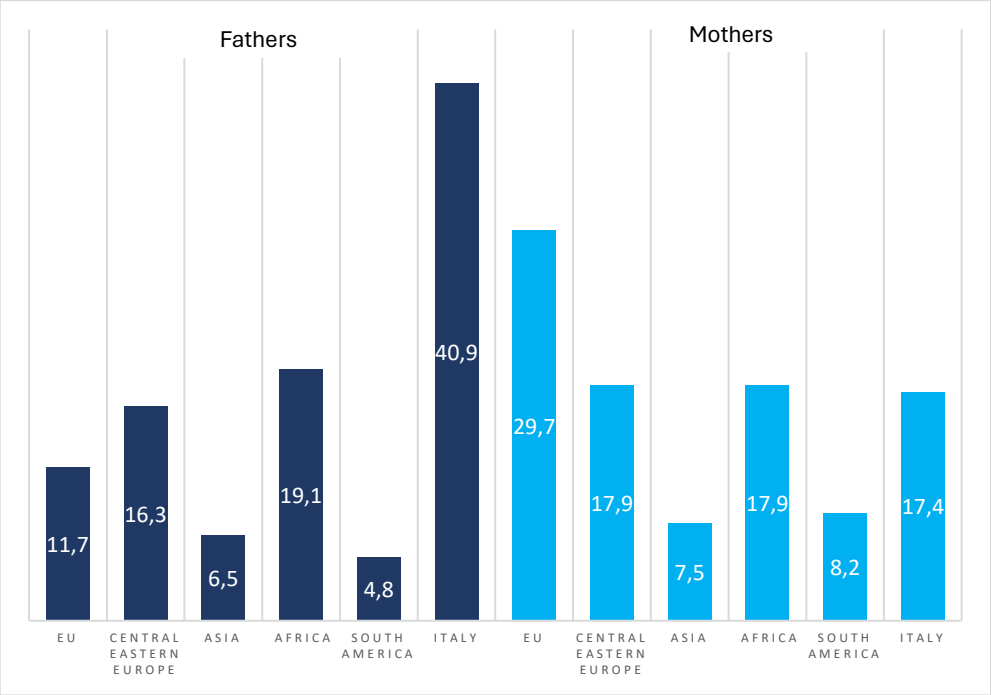
The highest proportion of fathers are Italians (40.9%) implying that among intermarriages the share of foreigners is more predominant in mothers. In line with national statistics, is more common to find a married couple with a native-born father than vice versa. Other notable regions of origin include Central Eastern Europe (16.3%), Africa (19.1%), and the EU (11.7%), indicating a diverse range of backgrounds among fathers in mixed families. Smaller percentages of fathers come from Asia (6.5%), South America (4.8%), and a very residual category (0.7%) are from North America and Oceania.

On the other hand, mothers in the mixed generation are more represented in EU countries, comprising 29.7% of the total. This suggests a notable representation of mothers from European countries within mixed families. Other significant regions of origin include Central Eastern Europe and Africa with the same share (17.9%). Just below this numbers we find Italian mothers (17.4%).

South American mothers constitute 8.2%, and smaller percentages come from Asia (7.5%), and again the least represented from North America and Oceania (1.4%).

Among mixed children, there is a notable difference in the proportion of fathers and mothers from Italy, with a higher percentage of fathers compared to mothers. This suggests potential variations in partner selection. Furthermore, both fathers and mothers in mixed families exhibit a diverse range of geographic origins, reflecting the multicultural nature of these families. The sample underscores the complex interplay of cultural backgrounds within mixed families, which may influence various aspects of family dynamics and identity formation.

Figure 3.6 Geographic origin of fathers and mothers of mixed generation.



The variable on *geographic distribution* among different population groups, including the second generation, mixed and Italians, provides insights into the regional representation of these groups within the national territory (figure 3.7).

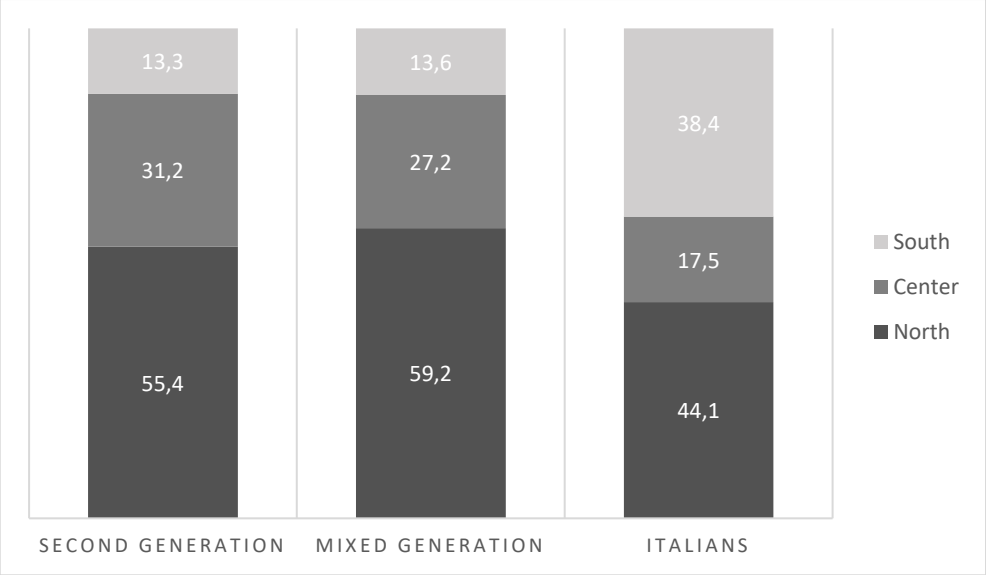
Unsurprisingly, the highest percentage of individuals from the second generation (55.4%) and the mixed one (59.2%) are located in the North of Italy. Italians also have a notable presence in the North (44.1%), confirming that these regions are more populated across all three groups.

The Center of Italy is home to a substantial percentage of the second generation (31.2%) and the mixed generation (27.2%) living at home while Italians have a lower representation in the Center (17.5%), suggesting a relatively smaller population compared to the North. Moreover, the southern regions of Italy have lower percentage of immigrants' children (13.3%) and the mixed (13.6%). In striking contrast, Italians have a higher representation in the South (38.4%), indicating a

larger proportion of the Italian population residing in this region whereas the other two groups are just above 13%.

The data highlights regional disparities in the distribution of those living at home with both parents. The North appears to be a predominant region for both immigrant and native-born populations, while the South is more heavily populated by Italians. In summary, the *geographical distribution* suggests distinct regional patterns in the distribution of the three groups within Italy.

Figure 3.7 Geographic distribution of Second Generation, Mixed Generation, and Italians.



Type of workers (figure 3.8) of three population groups provides insights into the occupational position covered by second generations, mixed and Italians.

The proportion of individuals in managerial positions is very low across all three groups. The mixed generation and Italians both have a 3% representation, while second generation have 1% in managerial roles. These statistics should be contextualized to the observed sample that is represented by young adults living at home. Hence, the quota of those having a high and well-paid working position likely would not still live in the parental house. This suggests why managerial positions are less prevalent within these observed population.

The white-collar category has the highest representation in the Italian group (47%), followed by mixed 39% and 35% for the second generation. Hence, Italians have the highest percentage of individuals in white-collar positions, indicating a potentially higher concentration of professionals and office-based occupations.

On the other hand, the blue-collar category includes the higher and significant proportion of individuals, with 62% for the second generation among the population. This suggests that the latter group has the highest representation in manual and industrial occupations. The other two groups are positioned with 55% for the mixed generation, and 47% for Italians.

Interestingly, although the young age of the sample, the intern category shows a very little share among the three groups with 2% for the second generation, 3% for the mixed one, and 3% for Italians.

Figure 3.8 Type of workers by group.

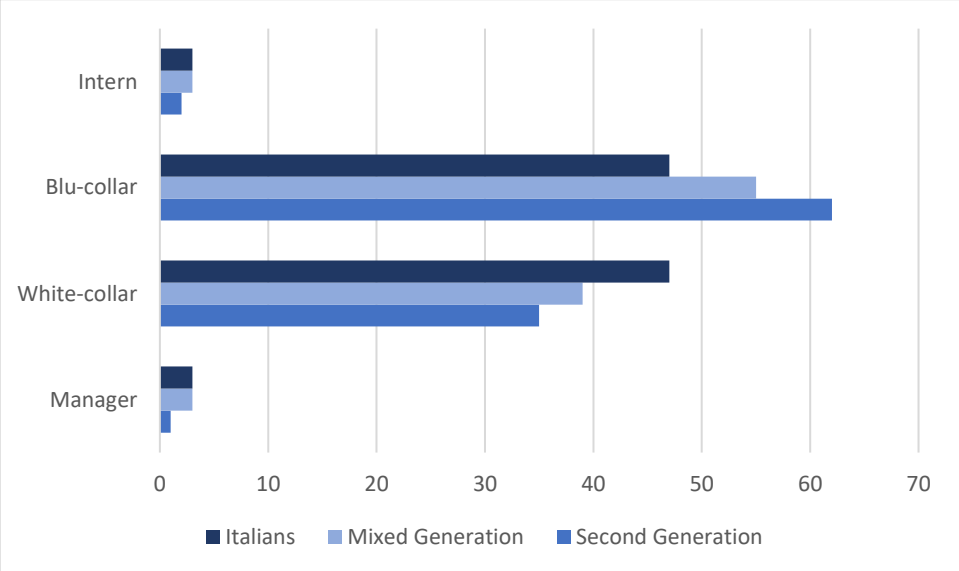


Table 3.1 Sample descriptive statistics by migration status.

	Second Generation		**Mixed Generation**		**Italians**	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	370	58,1	590	61,2	50.375	60,6

Female	267	41,9	374	38,8	32.815	39,4
Tot.	637	100	964	100	85.140	98,1
age:						
18-21	266	41,8	278	28,8	13.697	16,5
22-25	224	35,2	307	31,8	24.127	29,0
26-30	114	17,9	252	26,1	29.353	35,3
31-35	33	5,2	127	13,2	16.013	19,2
Education:						
Lower Secondary	346	64,9	436	52,4	39.510	56,2
Upper Seconday	150	28,1	323	38,8	25.005	35,5
University	37	6,9	73	8,8	58.22	8,3
Education father:						
Lower Secondary	356	66,8	376	45,2	37.854	53,8
Upper Seconday	152	28,5	348	41,8	26.777	38,1
University	25	4,7	108	13,0	5.710	8,1
Education mother:	346	64,9	436	52,4	39.510	56,2
Lower Secondary	150	28,1	323	38,8	25.005	35,5
Upper Seconday	37	6,9	73	8,8	5.822	8,3
University						
Marital Status:						
Single	592	92,9	916	95,0	82.481	99,2
Married	37	5,8	32	3,3	348	0,4
Separated	8	1,3	16	1,7	361	0,4
Household Components:						
up to 4	399	62,6	636	66,0	70.702	85,0
5 to 6	208	32,7	275	28,5	11.876	14,3
6+	30	4,7	53	5,5	612	0,7
Nationality father:						
EU	45	8,4	97	11,7		
Central Eastern Europe	177	33,2	136	16,3		
Asia	164	30,8	54	6,5		
Africa	128	24,0	159	19,1		
South America	18	3,4	40	4,8		
Other			6	0,7		
Italy			340	40,9		
Nationality mother:						
EU	47	8,8	247	29,7		
Central Eastern Europe	180	33,8	149	17,9		

Asia	163	30,6	62	7,5		
Africa	123	23,1	149	17,9		
South America	19	3,6	68	8,2		
Other			12	1,4		
Italy			145	17,4		
Geographic Distribution:						
North	353	55,4	571	59,2	36.702	44,1
Center	199	31,2	262	27,2	14.541	17,5
South	85	13,3	131	13,6	31.947	38,4
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	297	67	541	76	52085	79
Part-time	147	33	170	24	14084	21
Employed:						
Yes	444	69,7	711	73,8	66.169	79,5
No	193	30,3	253	26,2	17.021	20,5

Chapter 4: Unveiling the labour landscape: Empirical analysis

4.1 Navigating second generation pathways in employment

The data for this work, as analysed in detail in the previous chapter, is the Labour Force Survey conducted by Istat for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Results for the employment regressions are shown in table 4.1. In order to better asses the dependent variable, a logistic regression was used as a method to model the probability of the binary outcome (employment status) as a function of the independent variables. In addition, a model building was progressively added to assess the impact of independent variables on the outcome one.

In model 1, the basic model, used as reference for the other results, the categories for the variable *workforce* display significant and negative coefficients for both the second generation and the mixed one. The negative coefficient indicates that second generation individuals have lower odds of employment compared to Italians, and similarly, mixed generation individuals present lower odds of employment compared to Italians. However, the coefficient for second generation has a larger magnitude than the one for mix, meaning that the second generation is the one with the lowest odds of employment.

The inclusion of demographic variables (model 2) does not change the significance of the coefficients for workforce both for second generation and mix. The negative estimate for females suggests that compared to males, women have lower odds of being employed. Also, the positive values for age categories indicate that with advancing of years, older individuals will have increased chances of working compared to younger individuals.

In model 3, further sociodemographic variables were added. The positive values indicate that individuals with higher education levels have higher odds of employment compared to those with lower levels of education. This is especially true for the mixed generation. Age and gender effects remain consistent with the previous model. Also, living in a family with more than four people have a negative and

significant impact on the likelihood of employment and the effect increases with very large households. Thus, the negative coefficients suggests that individuals living in households with more members have lower odds of employment compared to those in smaller households.

The likelihood of being employed continues to display significant and negative results for both second and mixed generations, also in model 4. Married individuals have also increased chances of employment compared to those that are single. Fixed effects are also added to control for the year of survey, to capture the variance in the outcomes due to the change in socio-economic context.

Geographical distribution (North as reference category) is added in model 5 and displays negative and highly significant coefficients both for Center and South, although the magnitude is higher in the latter. Hence, regions located in South and Center of Italy indicate lower odds of finding a job compared to northern ones.

Furthermore, the coefficient for fathers with EU nationality indicates a non-significant effect on the likelihood of employment, this suggests that having a father from an EU country does not significantly impact the probability of employment for second generation migrants. Conversely, second generation migrants with fathers from Central and Eastern European countries exhibit significantly lower odds of employment, as indicated by the negative coefficients. This suggests that individuals with fathers from this area may face additional barriers to labour market integration compared to Italian fathers. Also, the coefficients for Asia, Africa, South America, and Other West vary, but none are statistically significant at conventional levels. Hence, fathers from these countries do not have a significant direct effect on the likelihood of employment. Additionally, individuals with mothers from EU countries and Central and Eastern Europe exhibit significantly higher odds of employment, as indicated by the positive and statistically significant coefficients. This suggests that having a mother from these geographic areas is associated with an increased likelihood of employment for second generation and mixed individuals. Also, mothers from Asia exhibit a mild significant effect while, mothers from Africa have a slightly negative effect on the chances of employment. Similar to fathers' nationality, the coefficients for mothers from Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, South

America and other Western countries are not statistically significant thus, these regions do not influence the likelihood of employment for individuals with a foreign mother.

When geographical distribution and workforce background are interacted (model 6), the coefficient for the interaction is positive and significant for second generation and Center suggesting that individuals in these regions have greater likelihood of employment compared to those in the reference region (North). On the other hand, the coefficient for second generation and South is non-significant. The significance and magnitude of interactions sems more relevant for the mixed generation which displays positive values of employment odds both in Center and South in reference to the North. However, when interpreting interaction coefficients, it's essential to consider the main effects of regions alongside the interaction effects. For instance, the coefficient for Center is negative and highly significant and overall larger than the interactions for region and workforce background hence being in the Center continues to exert a negative change on employment which is not overcome by the positive sign of the interaction for second generation and Center. The same is true for the mixed generation in which the positive coefficients for the interaction between mixed generation and South do not overcome the overall negative impact, although this is not true for Center. In this case the positive interaction seems to mitigate or lessen the disadvantage of the log odds of employment in the Center for the mixed generation. Interpreting interaction effects involves taking into account also the relationship between one variable and the outcome varies depending on the levels of another variable. It's essential to consider both the interaction terms and the main effects of relevant variables to gain a comprehensive understanding of the results.

Control variables have a significant effect when added. Gender remains negative, significant and increases its magnitude throughout the models, implying that the likelihood of employment for women remain unlucky compared to man. On the other hand, education displays positive and significant values and increases its magnitude of odd of employment with higher levels of education, implying that having a university degree in comparison to elementary education pays off. However, if we look at parents' education, while having a mother with upper secondary educations (compared to low levels of education) has positive effect on the likelihood of

employment; a father with a university degree displays a negative log odds for employment and the significance intensify when control variables are added. Also, living in a large household displays negative and significant effects although becoming positive when control variables are added in model five and six. Age is consistently positive and significant compared to younger generations implying that the likelihood of employment increases with older cohorts. Furthermore, being in the Center and especially in the South displays negative and significant coefficients. The magnitude of coefficients increases also when control variables are added suggesting that the likelihood of employment is negative in the southern and central regions compared to the North. Finally, the nationality of parents can influence the likelihood of employment, with significant variations observed across different regions. While having a mother from EU and Central and Eastern Europe countries appears to be positively associated with employment, instead, individuals with a father from the latter countries may face additional challenges in the labour market.

Table 4.1 Employment: results for Workforce (Italians, Second generation and Mix).

Variables	*Dependent variable:* Employment					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Workforce (Ref. Italians)						
Second Generation	-0.524***	-0.293***	-0.154*	-0.185**	-0.736**	-1.246***
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.340)	(0.354)
Mix Generation	-0.324***	-0.214***	-0.163**	-0.168**	-0.790***	-1.070***
	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.270)	(0.292)
Female		-0.249***	-0.323***	-0.322***	-0.343***	-0.343***
		(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Age class (Ref 18-21)						
22-25		0.628***	0.558***	0.562***	0.636***	0.636***
		(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
26-30		0.837***	0.730***	0.740***	0.908***	0.907***
		(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
31-35		0.844***	0.772***	0.776***	1.022***	1.023***
		(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Workforce Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.567***	0.560***	0.501***	0.503***
			(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
University			0.688***	0.675***	0.601***	0.602***
			(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)

Fathers' Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)				
Upper Secondary	0.070***	0.067***	-0.023	-0.023
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
University	-0.092**	-0.098**	-0.141***	-0.139***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Mothers' Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)				
Upper Secondary	0.269***	0.257***	0.074***	0.074***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
University	0.184***	0.162***	0.004	0.002
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Family Status (Ref. Single)				
Married	0.266**	0.251*	0.233*	0.220
	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.136)	(0.136)
Houshold (Ref. Up to 4)				
5-6	-0.084***	-0.075***	0.063**	0.066***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
7+	-0.304***	-0.307***	-0.120	-0.115
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.090)
Region (Ref. North)				
Centre			-0.601***	-0.609***
			(0.028)	(0.028)
South			-1.424***	-1.435***
			(0.021)	(0.021)
Fathers' Nationality:				
Central and Eastern Europe			-1.040***	-0.881**
			(0.388)	(0.386)
Mothers' Nationality				
EU			0.980***	1.118***
			(0.277)	(0.279)
Central and Eastern Europe			1.024***	1.069***
			(0.394)	(0.388)
Asia			0.818*	0.998**
			(0.458)	(0.459)
Africa			-0.564*	-0.173
			(0.313)	(0.339)
Fixed Effects		Yes	Yes	Yes
Second Gen. & Center				0.452**
				(0.206)

Second Gen. & South						0.007
						(0.186)
Mix & Center						0.982***
						(0.270)
Mix & South						0.647***
						(0.241)
Constant	1.357***	0.845***	0.331***	0.154***	0.946***	0.952***
	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Observations	85,140	85,140	85,134	85,134	85,134	85,134
Log Likelihood	-43,292.130	-42,493.350	-41,876.490	-41,733.310	-39,209.810	-39,198.540
AIC.	86,590.260	85,000.700	83,786.980	83,508.610	78,489.620	78,475.090

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

4.2 Exploring variations in work arrangements

Results for the regression on type of contract are shown in table 4.2. As with employment (model 1) the categories for the variable *workforce* have a positive and significant coefficient also for the type of contract. However, this is true only for second generation migrants. The coefficient suggests that belonging to the second generation group significantly increases the odds of having a part-time contract compared to full-time employment (coefficient: 0.602). Hence, they are more likely to be engaged in part-time jobs compared to Italians. For the mixed generation, the coefficient is positive but not statistically significant, implying that individuals from the latter generation may not have a significantly different likelihood compared to Italians of having part-time contracts as opposed to full-time.

The introduction of demographic variables of gender and age variables (model 2) does not substantially alter the interpretation of the coefficients observed in Model 1. However, age classes consistently show negative associations with part-time contracts, suggesting that older individuals are less likely to engage in part-time work arrangements. Older individuals from all groups tend to secure full-time employment more frequently. The coefficient for female is positive and strongly significant,

underlying that women are substantially more likely to engage in part-time contracts rather than a full-time employment.

In model 3, the addition of education variables (both individual and parental) reveals that higher education levels are associated with lower odds of having part-time contracts, consistent with previous models where higher levels of schooling increased the likelihood of having a job. The coefficient for university and upper secondary school are negative and significant also when additional control variables are added implying that better levels of education represent a secure path towards full employment. Family status is significant only for individuals who are separated, presumably, activities that are undertaken without the help of a partner, such as managing household chores or taking care of children, increase the likelihood of having a part-time contract compared to those who have a support network. Similarly, the likelihood of having a part-time contract is higher with medium to large family members compared to household of up to 4 components. Here the coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting a robust association for families of 5-6 members. Instead, very large households with at least 7 components are less statistically powerful although both typologies of households become not relevant in the last two models. The fact that very large households are less statistically significant could be interpreted as these being extended families where the number of children is presumably balanced by a significant number of adults living together. Furthermore, it is understandable to presume that in very large households, the need for full-time work is also necessary for the maintenance expenses of the entire household. On the other hand, families of medium size, perhaps the number of children is high, may struggle more to maintain a work-life balance, thus increasing the likelihood of having a part-time contract.

The inclusion of work position (model 4) does not change the coefficients for the second generation, not even when fixed effects are included. Fixed effects for unobserved time-invariant factors do not show significant associations with part-time contracts, suggesting type of contract remain consistent after controlling for unobserved heterogeneity. Also, work positions are included in this model, with all categories from white-collar, blue-collar and intern showing positive and significant

associations with part-time contracts. Obviously, these work positions are more likely to have part-time contracts compared to managerial positions.

In model 5, the coefficients for regions (Center and South) are positive and statistically significant, indicating that individuals residing in these regions are more likely to have part-time contracts compared to those living in the North. Again, as for the previous employment model, regional repartition is highly relevant. Here, coefficients are positive, significant and the magnitude is higher for the South implying even higher log odds of having a part-time job for young adults residing in these regions. Again, having foreign parents' influences having a full-time job or part-time job. Having a father from the European Union has a positive likelihood on obtaining a full-time position whereas coming from Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa or South America does not significantly impact the type of contract (full-time or part-time) obtained although we can detect variations among the coefficients. Interestingly, values for African mothers are positive and statistically significant. This suggests that individuals with mothers from Africa are more likely to obtain full-time employment.

In the last model, interaction effects between workforce groups and geographic regions are introduced. The coefficient for second generation who reside in the central region is positive and statistically significant suggesting that these individuals have higher odds of having a part-time contract compared to second generation immigrants living in the north. However, the interaction terms for the South and for the mixed generation do not show significant associations with part-time contracts, indicating no associations with part-time contracts.

Across all models, the coefficients for second generation, female gender, education level, household size, and certain region variables consistently show significant associations with part-time contracts. On the other hand, coefficients for the mixed generation show no statistical relevance encompassing this individual to Italians. The introduction of interaction terms and fixed effects does not substantially change the interpretation of the main effects. Finally, both in the employment and in the contract type regression, AIC decreases as more variables are added, indicating improved model fit. Lower AIC values suggest better model fit. Complete results for the two

models on Employment and Contract Type are displayed in Appendix B (table 1 and table 2).

Table 4.2 Type of contract: results for Workforce (Italians, Second Generation and Mix).

	Dependent Variable: Type of Contract					
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Workforce (Ref. Italians)						
Second Generation	0.602***	0.453***	0.395***	0.347***	-0.181	-0.315
	(0.101)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.115)	(0.472)	(0.499)
Mix Generation	0.148*	0.101	0.040	-0.051	-0.284	-0.225
	(0.088)	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.101)	(0.375)	(0.404)
Female		1.060***	1.126***	1.233***	1.260***	1.260***
		(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Age class (Ref 18-21)						
22-25		-0.291***	-0.228***	-0.175***	-0.222***	-0.221***
		(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
26-30		-0.606***	-0.493***	-0.358***	-0.462***	-0.461***
		(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
31-35		-0.685***	-0.567***	-0.351***	-0.510***	-0.509***
		(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Workforce Edu. (Ref. Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			-0.139***	-0.138***	-0.110***	-0.108***
			(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
University			-0.451***	-0.525***	-0.502***	-0.500***
			(0.038)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Fathers' Education (Ref. Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.010	-0.005	0.038	0.038
			(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
University			0.170***	0.161***	0.162***	0.163***
			(0.041)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Mothers' Education (Ref. Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.037*	0.029	0.119***	0.119***
			(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)

University	0.311***	0.294***	0.380***	0.381***
	(0.040)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Family Status (Ref. Single)				
Married	-0.008	-0.002	0.006	0.018
	(0.143)	(0.167)	(0.168)	(0.168)
Separeted/Widowed	0.326**	0.363**	0.381***	0.382***
	(0.134)	(0.143)	(0.146)	(0.146)
Houshold (Ref. Up to 4)				
5-6	0.084***	0.085***	0.015	0.015
	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
7+	0.192*	0.136	0.035	0.029
	(0.107)	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.119)
Fixed Effects		Yes	Yes	Yes
Work Position (Ref. Manager)				
White-Collar		0.495***	0.534***	0.534***
		(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.083)
Blue-Collar		0.699***	0.703***	0.705***
		(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.086)
Intern		0.285***	0.366***	0.367***
		(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Region (Ref. North)				
Centre			0.437***	0.429***
			(0.030)	(0.030)
South			0.754***	0.753***
			(0.025)	(0.025)
Fathers' Nationality				
EU			0.882**	0.888**
			(0.358)	(0.363)
Mothers' Nationality				
Africa			1.163**	1.124**
			(0.489)	(0.518)
Second Gen. & Center				0.568**
				(0.262)
Second Gen. & South				0.078
				(0.246)
Mixe & Center				0.095
				(0.349)

Mix & South						-0.216
						(0.338)
Constant	-1.305***	-1.356***	-1.337***	-1.984***	-2.355***	-2.358***
	(0.009)	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.096)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Observations	67,590	67,590	67,584	56,156	56,156	56,156
Log Likelihood	-35,101.320	-33,281.220	-33,142.820	-27,548.180	-27,063.850	-27,061.080
AIC	70,208.650	66,576.440	66,319.630	55,146.350	54,205.700	54,208.160

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

4.3 Identifying limitations: Challenges in data and interpretation

Before delving into the discussion of the results, it is essential to evaluate the limitations of the study. Firstly, these are data limitations. The findings of the study depend on the quality and representativeness of the dataset used. Analysing second generation individuals is not only conceptually complex but also practically challenging due to the lack of suitable data on this population in the Italian context. Despite Italy becoming a destination country for almost half a century, there is still the lack of sensitivity in data collection, which is widely spread in other European contexts. Specifically, in this study, only the sample of second generation individuals living with their parents could be analysed because information regarding acquisition of Italian citizenship from birth nor information about the nationality of parents once the individual leaves the family nucleus to form an independent one, are provided. These are serious shortcomings often highlighted in literature concerning data collection practices in our territory. Therefore, the results pertain to a very specific subset of the population that makes generalization of the findings challenging.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the data survey sampling methods tend to exclude segments that are difficult to reach which often represent disadvantaged and vulnerable strata of the population. Many studies highlight limitations related to the quality and availability of data on second generation immigrants. Data sources may

lack detailed information on key variables such as ethnicity, immigrant status, or generational status, making it difficult to accurately assess labour market outcomes.

The second generation population is diverse, encompassing individuals from various ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Studies may struggle to capture this diversity adequately, leading to oversimplified or generalized conclusions about labour market outcomes. Nevertheless, the Istat survey remains one of the best official statistical sources regarding the trends of the labour market in Italy.

Another element to consider is the young age of the examined sample. This is because second generation individuals entering the workforce are still very young per se, making it difficult to analyse long-term integration and comparison across older cohorts in quantitative studies.

Another important element that should be incorporated in the survey would be the number of years parents have spent in the country previous of having a family. There is a positive relation between length of stay in the host country for first generation immigrants and the educational outcome of their children (Heath et al. 2008). This is mostly due to language improving over time, knowledge on the host educational system and the importance of building a network.

Additionally, adequately capturing the territorial differences in Italy is challenging since the majority of second generation individuals reside in the northern part of the country, while the south is often underrepresented.

Finally, while fixed effects control for year-specific shocks, they may not capture the long-term effects of the pandemic on labour market dynamics. The full extent of the pandemic's impact on employment patterns, and social mobility for second generation immigrants may unfold over a more prolonged period, extending beyond the study's timeframe.

4.4 Employment integretion in light of the findings: Discussions

Logistic regressions were used to estimate the effect of immigrant status on the odds of unemployment and part-time employment. Two models were performed to test the research questions and hypothesis. In this section, each of the hypotheses will be analysed in light of the results and compared to what theory tested for second

generation migrants. It must be stressed, though, that these results are for second generation migrants (and mix generation) living at home with both parents in comparison to Italians and that the quantitative literature in this regard is rather thin and evolving.

The empirical findings pertaining to the first hypothesis, which posited a higher probability of unemployment among second generation migrants compared to their Italian peers, are further corroborated by broader trends observed in educational attainment and socio-economic outcomes. Notably, research indicates that second generation migrants often exhibit lower academic performance, higher rates of enrolment in vocational tracks, and elevated levels of Neet and dropout rates compared to their native counterparts. This phenomenon, which is not unique to Italy, is likely a result of two factors: the efficiency and degree of inclusiveness of the school system in preparing young individuals to perform in the labour market, and specific characteristics of the immigrant population, which vary greatly from North, Center and South (Ambrosini, 2020; Ambrosini and Molina, 2004; Picitto, 2023; Zanfrini, 2006; Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2022; Bertolini et al., 2015).

These disparities, coupled with the regional variations highlighted in the analysis, shed light on the multifaceted challenges faced by second generation migrants in navigating the labour market landscape. The pronounced disparities observed in southern regions, in particular, underscore the intersecting dynamics of regional disparities, immigrant experiences, and socio-economic constraints. These disparities are not merely confined to the labour market realm but are deeply intertwined with the broader landscape and educational trajectories of second generation migrants. Moreover, the observed disparities in employment status are indicative of systemic barriers and structural inequalities prevalent within the Italian education system and labour market. The efficiency and inclusiveness of the school system play a pivotal role in shaping the labour market outcomes of young individuals, with disparities in educational investments and opportunities contributing to divergent trajectories.

Second generation migrants living in the South have the double disadvantage of being in a more deprived area and having a migrant background. This could be

understood in light of the strong territorial differences that characterize the Italian educational and labour environment. The European Commission (2023) trace this North/South differences in the outcome of integrations primary to school endowments, to the teacher/student ratio by class, the "quality" of the teachers, their lower salary, the availability of infrastructure and above all, the economic resources imbued by the central state. Since the economic crisis of 2008, there has been a considerable reduction in educational expenditures across all Italian regions, which was overcome by local regional investments. However, only northern and some central regions managed to invest in education, while due to the lack of financial resources in the southern regions, the gap has widened. In addition, to these structural factors, individual and family characteristics contribute to the lower performance of southern second generation. In particular, Bratti and co-authors, (2007) point out that lower chances of success are attributable to context factors such as worst employment of parents and the overall disadvantaged socio-economic level of the southern territories. With this background frame in mind, we can now understand the double disadvantage for second generation migrants of being in the South and having a migrant history.

The second hypothesis deals with the issue of the working conditions that second generation individuals face once they have obtained a job. Considering these conditions unfavourable for children of immigrants. Research Question 2 examines whether second generation migrants occupy similar job positions as Italians or experience divergent employment outcomes from the outset. The findings reveal that second generation migrants tend to face different working conditions compared to Italians, thus confirming Hypothesis 2. Furthermore, no statistical difference is found between the mixed generation and Italians, implying that only second generation individuals face these challenges in the labour market. This suggests that factors beyond mere employment status contribute to the disparities in labour market outcomes, as suggested from the literature, intervening factors related to discrimination, educational attainment, labour market structure and social networks also play a fundamental role in assessing the degree of employment integration (Ambrosini, 2000, 2003; Ambrosini and Pozzi, 2018; D'Agostino et al., 2016; Greco, 2010).

Adding to the discussion, it's noteworthy that there is a lack of studies comparing the prevalence of part-time employment among second generation migrants, mixed generation individuals, and native Italians. This remains an unexplored area in the literature, warranting further investigation to understand whether second generation migrants are disproportionately more likely to encounter part-time employment arrangements. While several factors may contribute to this outcome, such as labour market segmentation, personal choices and discrimination just to name a few, the result suggests that second generation migrants enter the labour market with more precarious positions and lower wages compared to their Italian and mixed generation counterparts. The literature on part-time employment is extensive, particularly concerning women in the labour market (Goldin, 2002b). Numerous studies have explored the dynamics and implications of part-time and unstable work for women, highlighting its association with various socio-economic factors, including caregiving responsibilities, gender roles, and labour market segmentation (Marchetti, 2022).

Given the parallels between the experiences of second generation migrants and women in part-time employment, it would be interesting to investigate the similarities that unite these two vulnerable segments of the population. Both groups may face similar challenges in terms of access to quality employment, career advancement opportunities, and economic empowerment. Additionally, they may encounter common barriers related to discrimination, work-life balance, and access to social protection measures. Additionally, an interesting question would be understanding to what extent education compensates for "ethnic" and gender disadvantage. Extending the analysis beyond the immediate timeframe from 2018 to 2022 could provide valuable insights into the long-term persistence of these employment disparities. Exploring whether these conditions persist over time would offer valuable insights into the sustainability of labour market integration efforts.

The third hypothesis stated that disparities in employment status and job contracts would be observable, on equal basis, for second generation, suggesting that the labour market may not be entirely meritocratic for these individuals. The analysis uncovers discernible variations within the second generation, indicating that inequalities persist even among immigrant children who have been raised and

socialized in Italy. Factors such as educational attainment, parental resources, and family background likely contribute to these differences, highlighting the complex interplay of socio-economic factors in shaping labour market outcomes. The results suggest that regional disparities exist in the employment and type of contract obtained by the second generation. With the second generation having higher chances of unemployment or, if employed, ending up in a part-time position rather than a full-time job. Furthermore, those living in the South may face higher unemployment rates compared to those in other regions, as indicated by the higher odds ratios observed for unemployment outcomes. However, no statistically significant result was found for working in a part-time job and living in the South. However, this result should also be further explored and contextualized by the fact that southern regions have a greater propensity for undeclared work (Ambrosini, 2013b, 2015; Reyneri and Fullin, 2011), and these types of irregular work would not appear in official statistics.

Furthermore, the results indicate that gender differences play a significant role in employment outcomes for the second generation. It's crucial to analyse the role of gender in shaping labour market outcomes in comparison to males and different immigrant backgrounds. The logistic regression models may reveal significant gender differences in employment status and type of contract, with women facing additional barriers to labour market participation. Thus, women face higher probabilities of being unemployed or having a part-time job, these results are consistent and statistically significant also when control variables are added. Integrating gender into the analysis allows for a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by second generation migrant women, informing targeted policy interventions aimed at addressing gender disparities in employment.

All in all, to sum up the trajectories of these young adults we would find very different paths of labour market integration depending on their sociodemographic characteristics. For example, a native Italian male of more than 30 years old with both Italian-born parents living in the North and with a university degree would have the highest chances of finding a job (and a full-time one), higher even in comparison to a mixed male or to an Italian woman with his same conditions. However, this same woman, would be, presumably, better positioned respectively of a 25-year-old

male of second generation that has dropped out of school before completing upper secondary education and who is living in the Centre with its' parents. Interestingly, this young male of second generation would be, nevertheless, likely better off respectively to a young daughter of a foreign-born couple with 24 years old, a higher educational degree but living in the South.

Overall, these findings underscore the complex interplay of immigrant background, regional, gender, and age factors in shaping the employment outcomes of young adults. Addressing regional disparities, promoting gender equality in the labour market, and providing support tailored to the diverse needs of different age groups are essential steps toward fostering the labour market integration of the second generation. Further research could delve deeper into the underlying mechanisms driving these disparities and explore targeted policy interventions to address them effectively.

Conclusions

This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the underlying disparities in labour market outcome between second generation migrants, mixed generation and Italians. More precisely, three main research question were examined, and three hypotheses were tested. Hence, it is now possible to look back to what the aim of the study was and how the results can be evaluated. In this study, we looked at the role of demographic and sociodemographic factors in the macro framework of the geographic distribution of second generation migrants in the Italian territory. In these final considerations, the results are evaluated in light of previous studies on the phenomenon of labour market gaps in order to assess the proposed analysis. A brief section about policy implications of the results and suggestions for future research on this field conclude this paragraph.

The aim of this study was to detect whether there were any differences in the labour market outcomes of second generation migrants and Italians. In particular, how employment disparities and what type of contract are in effect not only between Italians and second generation migrants in the North or South but also whether differences are observable also within individuals with a migrant background. Considering the results from the models, it is possible to reply that there are evident differences in chances of employment and what type of contract is held between Italians and second generation migrants. Overall, second generation migrants experience a stronger outsider position. The study presents revealing findings for the second generation in the North, Center and South of Italy, as not many empirical analyses have dealt with labour market gaps nor type of contract available for second generation migrants, in the strict sense, instead of the overall migrant population.

Regional differences findings suggest significant disparities in employment status between Italians and second generation migrants, with the latter facing higher unemployment rates, particularly in the southern regions of Italy, although no additional within groups disadvantages are found between second generation in northern or southern regions. Only a positive outcome for second generation in the Centre tough not sufficient to overcome the overall negative effect of being in the

Centre. Hence, regional differences in labour market outcome matter and present an additional disadvantage to the workforce population and, especially, worsen, employment chances of second generation and mixed young adults throughout the models. These divides play a crucial role in shaping the labour market outcomes of second generation immigrants. The results reveal that employment prospects vary significantly across different regions, with the South exhibiting particularly pronounced challenges for second generation and mixed generation.

Furthermore, these disparities underscore the challenges that those with an immigrant background encounter albeit of been born in the country, schooled and socialized in Italy and even if they detain Italian citizenship from birth (mix generation).

Gender differences emerge as further and highly important factors influencing labour market integration. The analysis indicates that females face higher odds of being unemployed or held a part-time job compared to males, regardless of immigrant status. These results are consistent across all models and highly significant even when control variables are added. Therefore, the generally higher levels of education held by women do not provide a protective element for labour market success in Italy. These results are consistent with literature on gender disparities in the workforce (Goldin, 2002b). Thus, women, ceteris paribus, struggle more to find employment, and if they do find one, they are more likely to end up in a part-time contract and this situation is further exacerbated, for young women belonging to the second generations and living in the South. Despite their better academic performance compared to their male counterparts of immigrants' descendants, their efforts are not adequately compensated in the labour market. Therefore, the commitment employed in having completed the school cycle or detaining a higher qualification does not pay off for these young women in the Italian labour market. Evidently for young women of second generation, their background can become a heavy burden, with physical features or linguistic interferences becoming stigmatizing elements especially when the label foreigner is coupled with that of being young (Ricucci, 2020).

Age is another crucial factor influencing labour market outcomes, with younger individuals experiencing higher unemployment rates and part-time work compared to

older age groups. This finding suggests that age-related dynamics may impact the employment prospects of younger cohorts. However, these results are consistent with literature on economic theories that highlight the importance of human capital accumulation and the relevance of tenure in the labour market (Becker, 1975; Mincer and Polachek, 1974). Inevitably, younger cohorts have accumulated less of both compared to older generations. Furthermore, second generation immigrants, being the group with the highest share of young adults, are those who report the greatest disadvantage. Nevertheless, it is still too early to determine whether this initial disadvantage is subsequently compensated for, or if, on the contrary, it will persist throughout the entire work careers of second generation individuals. It is reasonable to assume that the efforts to compensate for these disadvantages will need to be extensive since they start with lower educational resources, participate less in the labour market, and, when employed, earn lower incomes due to the nature of their part-time contracts. In an aging society, not harnessing the potential of young cohorts from the outset could prove counterproductive in the long run for the entire society.

Also, educational attainment emerges as a significant determinant of labour market integration, with higher levels of education associated with better success. Also, these results are congruent with literature as higher degrees of education are associated with better chances of securing employment in general (Ambrosini 2020a, 2004; Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2021) and a full-time one in particular. Individuals with advanced education have usually more stable and rewarding employment trajectories together with better contracts outcomes. This is valid for all generations. The results show that having a migrant background exerts a negative effect on the chances of employment and having a full-time job for second generation young adults. Since these outcomes are also a result of previous school results and school curricula, which are for the second generation on average lower and more oriented to technical and vocational tracks than those of natives, this outcome is not unexpected.

The nationality of parents also influences labour market outcomes, with differences observed between fathers' and mothers' nationality. Having a father from Centre and Eastern Europe is associated with low employment whereas the opposite is true for mothers originating from EU, Central and Eastern Europe and Asia. While having a mother from an African country seems to slightly impact employment chances. These

findings underscore the intergenerational transmission of parental background on the labour market integration of second generation immigrants and highlight the importance of detecting the source country as an important driver of inequalities. Cohorts of immigrants' offspring are still too scarce and too young to assess whether a model minority of integration is also present in Italy as in different Western countries and if certain source origin countries are more prone of tracing a dependency path of downward assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Dustmann et al., 2012). Nevertheless, if for the parents' generation we observe a limited penalty in terms of risks of unemployment but a pronounced difficulty in accessing more qualified positions as employees, the same cannot be said for their children. The results suggests that we are confronting a vulnerable generation grappling with challenges related to both employability and securing higher-skilled employment opportunities.

The inclusion of mixed generation individuals in the analysis provides valuable insights into the heterogeneity of labour market experiences among immigrant populations. They serve as a benchmark for understanding the extent to which migrant background influences success in the Italian labour market. Thus, analysing the labour market trajectories of mixed generation individuals alongside second generation immigrants is essential for capturing the complexities of immigrant integration processes. Together with second generation, also, for the mixed generation, it's more difficult to access the labour market, however, once inside, there are no substantial differences compared to Italians in the type of contract offered to them. Still, for second generation individuals, difficulties lie not only in accessing the job market but also in obtaining equal conditions hence facing a double barrier to employment integration. The migrant background variable affects various aspects of the labour market integration of these young generations and the degree of impact varies across gender, education, age, regions of residence and across generations.

Nevertheless, the concept of labour market integration cannot be limited to a binary distinction of being either employed or not employed, thereby missing its complex multidimensionality. Labour market integration today encompasses a diverse array of arrangements that need a comprehensive understanding of immigrant labour market

integration. Therefore, it is imperative to delve into various dimensions of employment integration such as earnings, working hours, job stability, unionization, and insurance coverage just to name a few. Additionally, distinguishing between different gender and groups is crucial for grasping additional degrees of integration. Finally, it is crucial to investigate not only the factors that influence the level of integration but also the underlying processes that leads to it where concealed elements, such as discriminatory practice, are difficult to trace. Discrimination is not limited only to access to citizenship, but also influenced by elements such as socioeconomic background, gender, and age. When combined with family characteristics and times of economic hardship, these factors can create significant barriers for the children of immigrants entering the labour market resulting in a challenging situation that can lead to a perfect storm (Ricucci, 2022).

Nevertheless, second generations are only recently, and more substantially, entering the labour market. Research and study on their integration in this field are still at an early stage here in the Italian context. Detecting disparities of second generation migrants in the framework of different regional development can be of great use and reference for future research. Very little is known about which types of contracts they are subjected to once they obtain a job. It is, however, important to note that because of the design of the model and data, these results cannot be generalized to the whole second generation population in Italy, although, presumably, some of the conditions experienced by second generations living at home are not too dissimilar from those who have moved out. These findings can be used as input for future research, especially now that the percentage of workforce of migrants' children is growing and becoming more consistent.

In relation to public policies, to improve the labour market outcome of second generation migrants, the key may be to operate before they even enter the labour market. Better access to information about school tracks to migrants' parents and language support could be beneficial since these factors seem to have a great impact on educational achievements and attainments for most immigrants' groups. Furthermore, generous naturalization policies have proven to be beneficial for immigrants, enabling social recognition and economic stability (Helgertz et al., 2014). The findings highlight the multifaceted nature of labour market integration for

second generation immigrants in Italy, shaped by a combination of individual, familial, and contextual factors. Hence, addressing the challenges identified in this study requires comprehensive policy interventions that address regional disparities, gender inequalities, educational barriers, and intergenerational dynamics to promote the full economic participation and social inclusion of second generation migrants in the Italian society. Moreover, investing in the education, skills development, and social integration of these young generations not only enhances their individual prospects but also strengthens the social cohesion and economic vitality of the host country. By providing equitable access to quality education, and employment opportunities, societies can empower these individuals to contribute meaningfully to the workforce, drive innovation, and fuel economic growth in a population where the young Italian individuals are progressively shrinking.

For better or for worse, the offspring of immigrant families, regardless of individual intentions, contribute to the emergence of interactions, transactions, and occasionally tensions between migrants and the host country. Consequently, they mark a pivotal juncture in interethnic dynamics, prompting recognition of an irreversible reshaping of the demographic and societal landscape of the countries where they occur (Ambrosini, 2004). It is evident that the children of immigrant families hold a profound influence on the society's' dynamics. Wasting on the potential of these young generations of new Italians signifies a missed opportunity both for their personal development and for the enrichment of society at large. By fostering a sense of belonging and social inclusion, societies can mitigate the risk of marginalization and discrimination, creating a more harmonious and cohesive fabric. Embracing and supporting the cultural heritage of these individuals can unlock a wealth of knowledge, traditions, and perspectives that enrich the collective tapestry. Cultural differences should be regarded as sources of strength, and innovation, fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

Appendix A

Table 1. Summary Statistics, 2018

	Second Generation		Mixed Generation		Italians	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	58	56,9	115	61,8	11358	60,5
Female	44	43,1	71	38,2	7414	39,5
Tot.	102	100	186	100	18772	100
age:						
18-21	35	34,3	57	30,7	3085	16,4
22-25	45	44,1	63	33,9	5483	29,2
26-30	16	15,7	40	21,5	6728	35,8
31-35	6	5,9	26	14,0	3476	18,5
Education:						
Lower Secondary	43	42,2	34	18,3	3092	16,5
Upper Secondary	48	47,1	121	65,1	11336	60,4
University	11	10,8	31	16,7	4344	23,1
Education father:						
Lower Secondary	59	57,8	103	55,4	11221	59,8
Upper Secondary	24	23,5	69	37,1	6261	33,4
University	19	18,6	14	7,5	1290	6,9
Education mother:						
Lower Secondary	71	69,6	104	55,9	10988	58,5
Upper Secondary	25	24,5	59	31,7	6569	35,0
University	6	5,9	23	12,4	1215	6,5
Marital Status:						
Married	2	2,0	2	1,1	109	0,6
Separated	2	2,0	5	2,7	75	0,4
Single	98	96,1	179	96,2	18588	99,0
Household Components:						
5 to 6	31	30,4	54	29,0	2911	15,5
7+	1	1,0	10	5,4	149	0,8
up to 4	70	68,6	122	65,6	15712	83,7
Nationality father						
Africa	24	23,5	38	20,4		
Asia	37	36,3	10	5,4		
EU	11	10,8	22	11,8		
South America	1	1,0	10	5,4		
Central and Eastern Europe	29	28,4	25	13,4		
			1	0,5		
Italy			80	43,0	18772	100,0
Nationality mother						
Africa	23	22,6	40	21,5		
Asia	34	33,3	16	8,6		

EU	14	13,7	53	28,5		
South America	29	28,4	24	12,9		
Other Europe	2	2,0	29	15,6		
Other West			1	0,5		
Italy			23	12,4	18772	100,0
Geographic Distribution						
Center	45	44,1	53	28,5	3224	17,2
North	48	47,1	120	64,5	8006	42,7
South	9	8,8	13	7,0	7542	40,2
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	46	67,6	103	74,6	11098	77,9
Part-time	22	32,4	35	25,4	3145	22,1
Employed:						
No	34	33,3	48	25,8	4529	24,1
Yes	68	66,7	138	74,2	14243	75,9

Table 2. Summary Statistics, 2019

	Second Generation		**Mixed Generation**		**Italians**	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	69	47,9	137	56,9	11007	60,3
Female	75	52,1	104	43,2	7239	39,7
Tot.	144	100	241	100	18246	100
age:						
18-21	71	49,3	79	32,8	3124	17,1
22-25	50	34,7	86	35,7	5293	29,0
26-30	20	13,9	53	22,0	6367	34,9
31-35	3	2,1	23	9,5	3462	19,0
Education:						
Lower Secondary	47	32,6	55	22,8	2798	15,3
Upper Secondary	87	60,4	142	58,9	11118	60,9
University	10	6,9	44	18,3	4330	23,7
Education father:						
Lower Secondary	101	70,1	141	58,5	10719	58,8
Upper Secondary	35	24,3	92	38,2	6189	33,9
University	8	5,6	8	3,3	1338	7,3
Education mother:						
Lower Secondary	107	74,3	103	42,7	10368	56,8
Upper Secondary	32	22,2	107	44,4	6606	36,2
University	5	3,5	31	12,9	1272	7,0
Marital Status:						
Married	3	2,1	7	2,9	77	0,4
Separated	4	2,8	4	1,7	106	0,6
Single	137	95,1	230	95,4	18063	99,0
Household Components:						

5 to 6	51	35,4	72	29,9	2718	14,9
7+	7	4,9	13	5,4	124	0,7
up to 4	86	59,7	156	64,7	15404	84,4
Nationality father						
Africa	44	30,6	38	15,8		
Asia	44	30,6	15	6,2		
EU	11	7,6	24	10,0		
South America	5	3,5	9	3,7		
Central and Eastern Europe	40	27,8	49	20,3		
Other West			1	0,4		
Italy			105	43,6	18246	100,0
Nationality mother						
Africa	43	29,9	37	15,4		
Asia	44	30,6	17	7,1		
EU	12	8,3	78	32,4		
South America	5	3,5	19	7,9		
Other Europe	40	27,1	55	22,8		
Other West			1	0,4		
Italy			34	14,1	18246	100,0
Geographic Distribution						
Center	47	32,6	68	28,2	3013	16,5
North	82	56,9	151	62,7	8165	44,8
South	15	10,4	22	9,1	7068	38,7
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	58	59,8	138	76,7	11187	78,2
Part-time	39	40,2	42	23,3	3113	21,8
Employed:						
No	47	32,6	61	25,3	3946	21,6
Yes	97	67,4	180	74,7	14300	78,4

Table 3. Summary Statistics, 2020

	Second Generation		**Mixed Generation**		**Italians**	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	80	57,1	110	54,7	10046	60,6
Female	60	42,9	91	45,3	6521	39,4
Tot.	140	100	201	100	16567	100
age:						
18-21	62	44,3	58	28,9	2591	15,6
22-25	52	37,1	57	28,4	4628	27,9
26-30	21	15,0	62	30,9	5996	36,2
31-35	5	3,6	24	11,9	3352	20,2
Education:						
Lower Secondary	31	22,1	46	22,9	2188	13,2
Upper Secondary	97	69,3	117	58,2	9925	59,9
University	12	8,6	38	18,9	4454	26,9

Education father:						
Lower Secondary	95	67,9	98	48,8	9161	55,3
Upper Secondary	38	27,1	85	42,3	6026	36,4
University	7	5,0	18	9,0	1380	8,3
Education mother:						
Lower Secondary	91	65,0	91	45,3	8890	53,7
Upper Secondary	42	30,0	86	42,8	6312	38,1
University	7	5,0	24	11,9	1365	8,2
Marital Status:						
Married			5	2,5	63	0,4
Separated	4	2,9	5	2,5	81	0,5
Single	136	97,1	191	95,0	16423	99,1
Household Components:						
5 to 6	51	36,4	69	34,3	2362	14,3
7+	8	5,7	8	4,0	115	0,7
up to 4	81	57,9	124	61,7	14090	85,1
Nationality father						
Africa	46	32,9	39	19,4		
Asia	32	22,9	13	6,5		
EU	10	7,1	20	10,0		
South America	8	5,7	5	2,5		
Central and Eastern Europe	44	31,4	34	16,9		
Other West						
Italy			90	44,8	16567	100,0
Nationality mother						
Africa	45	32,1	37	18,4		
Asia	32	22,9	17	8,5		
EU	11	7,9	71	35,3		
South America	8	5,7	6	3,0		
Central and Eastern Europe	44	31,4	34	16,9		
Other West			3	1,5		
Italy			33	16,4	16567	100,0
Geographic Distribution						
Center	44	31,4	49	24,4	2915	17,6
North	88	62,9	117	58,2	7464	45,1
South	8	5,7	35	17,4	6188	37,4
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	60	65,9	119	80,4	10448	79,0
Part-time	31	34,1	29	19,6	2782	21,0
Employed:						
No	49	35,0	53	26,4	3337	20,1
Yes	91	65,0	148	73,6	13230	79,9

Table 4. Summary Statistics, 2021

	Second Generation		**Mixed Generation**		**Italians**	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	69	67,0	120	71,0	9396	61,2
Female	34	33,0	49	29,0	5953	38,8
Tot.	103	100	169	100	15349	100
age:						
18-21	36	35,0	45	26,6	2538	16,5
22-25	31	30,1	43	25,4	4386	28,6
26-30	23	22,3	52	30,8	5425	35,3
31-35	13	12,6	29	17,2	3000	19,6
Education:						
Lower Secondary	20	19,4	41	24,3	1807	11,8
Upper Secondary	74	71,8	98	58,0	9281	60,5
University	9	8,7	30	17,8	4261	27,8
Education father:						
Lower Secondary	65	63,1	84	49,7	8196	53,4
Upper Secondary	30	29,1	71	42,0	5744	37,4
University	8	7,8	14	8,3	1405	9,2
Education mother:						
Lower Secondary	63	61,2	74	43,8	7710	50,2
Upper Secondary	36	35,0	73	43,2	6226	40,6
University	4	3,9	22	13,0	1413	9,2
Marital Status:						
Married	18	17,5	8	4,7	77	0,5
Separated	1	1,0	1	0,6	32	0,2
Single	84	81,6	160	94,7	15240	99,3
Household Components:						
5 to 6	36	35,0	41	24,3	2016	13,1
7+	3	2,9	10	5,9	124	0,8
up to 4	64	62,1	118	69,8	13209	86,1
Nationality father						
Africa	18	17,5	44	26,0		
Asia	34	33,0	12	7,1		
EU	10	9,7	17	10,1		
South America	3	2,9	8	4,7		
Central and Eastern Europe	38	36,9	24	14,2		
Other West			1	0,6		
Italy			63	37,3	15349	100,0
Nationality mother						
Africa	18	17,5	34	20,1		
Asia	34	33,0	10	5,9		
EU	9	8,7	46	27,2		
South America	3	2,9	11	6,5		
Other Europe	39	37,9	27	16,0		
Other West			5	3,0		
Italy			36	21,3	15349	100,0
Geographic Distribution						
Center	25	24,3	43	25,4	2799	18,2
North	55	53,4	98	58,0	6666	43,4

South	23	22,3	28	16,6	5884	38,3
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	55	70,5	97	76,4	9750	78,6
Part-time	23	29,5	30	23,6	2652	21,4
Employed:						
No	25	24,3	42	24,9	2947	19,2
Yes	78	75,7	127	75,1	12402	80,8

Table 5. Summary Statistics, 2022

	Second Generation		**Mixed Generation**		**Italians**	
Variables	**a.v.**	**%**	**a.v.**	**%**	a.v.	%
Gender						
Male	94	63,5	108	64,7	8780	60,1
Female	54	36,5	59	35,3	5825	39,9
Tot.	148	100	167	100	14605	100
age:						
18-21	62	41,9	39	23,4	2410	16,5
22-25	46	31,1	58	34,7	4423	30,3
26-30	34	23,0	45	27,0	4958	34,0
31-35	6	4,1	25	15,0	2814	19,3
Education:						
Lower Secondary	47	31,8	45	27,0	1821	12,5
Upper Secondary	93	62,8	92	55,1	8725	59,7
University	8	5,4	30	18,0	4059	27,8
Education father:						
Lower Secondary	106	71,6	79	47,3	7906	54,1
Upper Secondary	39	26,4	64	38,3	5363	36,7
University	3	2,0	24	14,4	1336	9,2
Education mother:						
Lower Secondary	103	69,6	63	37,7	7289	49,9
Upper Secondary	39	26,4	85	50,9	5935	40,6
University	6	4,1	19	11,4	1381	9,5
Marital Status:						
Married	10	6,8	7	4,2	57	0,4
Separated	1	0,7	4	2,4	40	0,3
Single	137	92,6	156	93,4	14508	99,3
Household Components:						
5 to 6	39	26,4	39	23,4	1920	13,2
7+	11	7,4	12	7,2	105	0,7
up to 4	98	66,2	116	69,5	12580	86,1
Nationality father						
Africa	36	24,3	41	24,6		
Asia	49	33,1	10	6,0		
EU	10	6,8	21	12,6		
South America	7	4,7	10	6,0		
Central and Eastern	46	31,1	26	15,6		

Europe						
Other West			3	1,8		
Italy			56	33,5	14605	100,0
Nationality mother						
Africa	36	24,3	33	19,8		
Asia	49	33,1	10	6,0		
EU	7	4,7	42	25,2		
South America	7	4,7	15	9,0		
Other Europe	49	33,1	29	17,4		
Other West			5	3,0		
Italy			33	19,8	14605	100,0
Geographic Distribution						
Center	38	25,7	49	29,3	2644	18,1
North	80	54,1	85	50,9	6510	44,6
South	30	20,3	33	19,8	5451	37,3
Type of contract:						
Full-time:	78	70,9	84	71,2	9785	79,8
Part-time	32	29,1	34	28,8	2475	20,2
Employed:						
No	38	25,7	49	29,3	2345	16,1
Yes	110	74,3	118	70,7	12260	83,9

Appendix B

Table 1. Complete results for regression Employment

	Dependent variable: **Employment**					
Variables	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
Workforce (Ref. Italians)						
Second Generation	-0.524***	-0.293***	-0.154*	-0.185**	-0.736**	-1.246***
	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.340)	(0.354)
Mix Generation	-0.324***	-0.214***	-0.163**	-0.168**	-0.790***	-1.070***
	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.270)	(0.292)
Female		-0.249***	-0.323***	-0.322***	-0.343***	-0.343***
		(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Age class (Ref 18-21)						
22-25		0.628***	0.558***	0.562***	0.636***	0.636***
		(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
26-30		0.837***	0.730***	0.740***	0.908***	0.907***
		(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
31-35		0.844***	0.772***	0.776***	1.022***	1.023***
		(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Workforce Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.567***	0.560***	0.501***	0.503***
			(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
University			0.688***	0.675***	0.601***	0.602***
			(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Fathers' Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.070***	0.067***	-0.023	-0.023
			(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
University			-0.092**	-0.098**	-0.141***	-0.139***
			(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Mothers' Edu. (Ref. Elementary/Lower Secondary)						
Upper Secondary			0.269***	0.257***	0.074***	0.074***
			(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)
University			0.184***	0.162***	0.004	0.002
			(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Family Status (Ref. Single)						

Married	0.266**	0.251*	0.233*	0.220
	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.136)	(0.136)
Separated/Widowed	-0.183	-0.155	-0.150	-0.148
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Household (Ref. Up to 4)				
5-6	-0.084***	-0.075***	0.063**	0.066***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
7+	-0.304***	-0.307***	-0.120	-0.115
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.090)
Region (Ref. North)				
Centre			-0.601***	-0.609***
			(0.028)	(0.028)
South			-1.424***	-1.435***
			(0.021)	(0.021)
Fathers' Nationality				
EU			-0.347	-0.207
			(0.279)	(0.280)
Central and Eastern Europe			-1.040***	-0.881**
			(0.388)	(0.386)
Asia			-0.164	-0.192
			(0.436)	(0.432)
Africa			0.295	0.135
			(0.327)	(0.329)
South America			0.246	0.315
			(0.452)	(0.451)
Other West			1.111	1.224
			(1.170)	(1.159)
Mothers' Nationality				
EU			0.980***	1.118***
			(0.277)	(0.279)
Central and Eastern Europe			1.024***	1.069***
			(0.394)	(0.388)
Asia			0.818*	0.998**
			(0.458)	(0.459)
Africa			-0.564*	-0.173
			(0.313)	(0.339)
South America			0.442	0.582
			(0.406)	(0.408)
Other West			1.397	1.671
			(1.069)	(1.074)

Fixed Effects				0.140***	0.134***	0.135***
				(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Fixed Effects				0.186***	0.178***	0.178***
				(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Fixed Effects				0.237***	0.260***	0.260***
				(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Fixed Effects				0.465***	0.489***	0.487***
				(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Second Gen. & Center						0.452**
						(0.206)
Second Gen. & South						0.007
						(0.186)
Mix & Center						0.982***
						(0.270)
Mix & South						0.647***
						(0.241)
Constant	1.357***	0.845***	0.331***	0.154***	0.946***	0.952***
	(0.009)	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Observations	85,140	85,140	85,134	85,134	85,134	85,134
Log Likelihood	-43,292.130	-42,493.350	-41,876.490	-41,733.310	-39,209.810	-39,198.540
AIC.	86,590.260	85,000.700	83,786.980	83,508.610	78,489.620	78,475.090

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2. Complete results for regression type of contract

	Dependent Variable: Type of Contract					
Variables	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
Workforce (Ref. Italians)						
Second Generation	0.602***	0.453***	0.395***	0.347***	-0.181	-0.315
	(0.101)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.115)	(0.472)	(0.499)
Mix Generation	0.148*	0.101	0.040	-0.051	-0.284	-0.225
	(0.088)	(0.091)	(0.092)	(0.101)	(0.375)	(0.404)
Female		1.060***	1.126***	1.233***	1.260***	1.260***
		(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)

Age class (Ref 18-21)					
22-25	-0.291***	-0.228***	-0.175***	-0.222***	-0.221***
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
26-30	-0.606***	-0.493***	-0.358***	-0.462***	-0.461***
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
31-35	-0.685***	-0.567***	-0.351***	-0.510***	-0.509***
	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.039)
Workforce Edu. (Ref. Lower Secondary)					
Upper Secondary		-0.139***	-0.138***	-0.110***	-0.108***
		(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
University		-0.451***	-0.525***	-0.502***	-0.500***
		(0.038)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Fathers' Education (Ref. Lower Secondary)					
Upper Secondary		0.010	-0.005	0.038	0.038
		(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Upper Secondary		0.170***	0.161***	0.162***	0.163***
		(0.041)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Mothers' Education (Ref. Lower Secondary)					
Upper Secondary		0.037*	0.029	0.119***	0.119***
		(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)
University		0.311***	0.294***	0.380***	0.381***
		(0.040)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Family Status (Ref. Single)					
Married		-0.008	-0.002	0.006	0.018
		(0.143)	(0.167)	(0.168)	(0.168)
Separated/Widowed		0.326**	0.363**	0.381***	0.382***
		(0.134)	(0.143)	(0.146)	(0.146)
Household (Ref. Up to 4)					
5-6		0.084***	0.085***	0.015	0.015
		(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
7+		0.192*	0.136	0.035	0.029
		(0.107)	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.119)

Fixed Effects	-0.022	-0.012	-0.012
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Fixed Effects	-0.047	-0.044	-0.043
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Fixed Effects	-0.077**	-0.094***	-0.093***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Fixed Effects	-0.172***	-0.193***	-0.191***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Work Position (Ref. Manager)			
White-Collar	0.495***	0.534***	0.534***
	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.083)
Blue-Collar	0.699***	0.703***	0.705***
	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.086)
Intern	0.285***	0.366***	0.367***
	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Region (Ref. North)			
Centre		0.437***	0.429***
		(0.030)	(0.030)
South		0.754***	0.753***
		(0.025)	(0.025)
Fathers' Nationality			
EU		0.882**	0.888**
		(0.358)	(0.363)
Central and Eastern Europe		0.282	0.169
		(0.502)	(0.510)
Asia		0.408	0.390
		(0.567)	(0.572)
Africa		-0.328	-0.315
		(0.494)	(0.498)
South America		0.332	0.319
		(0.546)	(0.552)
Other West		0.366	0.330
		(1.206)	(1.206)
Mothers' Nationality			
EU		-0.416	-0.476
		(0.373)	(0.384)

Central and Eastern Europe					0.161	0.173
					(0.565)	(0.569)
Asia					0.296	0.237
					(0.608)	(0.627)
Africa					1.163**	1.124**
					(0.489)	(0.518)
South America					0.679	0.585
					(0.550)	(0.560)
Other West					0.396	0.291
					(0.767)	(0.781)
Second Gen. & Center						0.568**
						(0.262)
Second Gen. & South						0.078
						(0.246)
Mix & Center						0.095
						(0.349)
Mix & South						-0.216
						(0.338)
Constant	-1.305***	-1.356***	-1.337***	-1.984***	-2.355***	-2.358***
	(0.009)	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.096)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Observations	67,590	67,590	67,584	56,156	56,156	56,156
Log Likelihood	-35,101.320	-33,281.220	-33,142.820	-27,548.180	-27,063.850	-27,061.080
AIC	70,208.650	66,576.440	66,319.630	55,146.350	54,205.700	54,208.160

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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