



**Successful Pathways for the
Second Generation of Migrants**

**Comparative Report about Second Generation Migrants
in Europe**

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1. Introduction

The aim of the comparative report is to present the major results, that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative sociological research realized in the eight European countries involved in the Bridge project ‘Successful Pathways for the Second Generation of Migrants’. These countries are those of the 7 partners i.e Italy, Austria, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and that of the associate partner from Switzerland.

The objective of the research was to find out what are the main difficulties and obstacles for low-skilled second generation of migrants in these eight different European countries when entering in the labour market and why the use of autobiographical narratives in intercultural pedagogy can be useful for this specific target group.

With second generation of migrants we understand ‘children of immigrants’. Furthermore, the sociologist Rubén Rumbaut (1997), distinguishes different kinds of second generations of immigrants depending on the age of arrival in the country of destination of their parents. The generation so called ‘2G’ refers to those children of immigrants who are born in the country in which their parents have emigrated (host country). Then, follows the generation ‘1.75’ which is constituted of those children of immigrants who arrived in their early childhood in the host country (no later than five years-old) and the generation 1.5 that is constituted of those arrived in the country of destination of their parents when they were 6 to 12 years-old. Finally, he distinguishes the generation 1.25 constituted of all children of immigrants that arrived in the country of destination when they were 13 to 17 years-old (Rumbaut, 1997, p. 950). Our research has focused mainly about 2G and 1.75 generation.

The methodology used for the comparative analysis about second generation of migrants in eight European countries is based on one side on statistical quantitative data concerning the quantification of the phenomenon in each country, the educational attainments and the achievements in the labour market and major national research on second generation of migrants which have been described in the national country reports. On the other side, on 80 in-depth autobiographical narrative interviews and 80 synthesis interviews (qualitative data) which analyzed more in-depth different life phases during their life course: the early childhood and the first experiences in the host country in which their parents emigrated, the education and the educational achievements, the entry in the labour market and the major opportunities and obstacles, they daily life and the different form of discrimination and racism that they may have experienced.

Our theoretical and methodological approach of the qualitative sociological research is based on autobiographical narratives which emphasizes both the subjective dimension of how second generation of migrants make sense of their reality than the objective constraints that the social context has on their daily life and on their social actions.

The concern of the Bridge project is that the social and economic integration of second generation of migrants in the society in which their parents emigrated is not a linear and easy process. Indeed, already during the '90s of last century some American scholars that studied the second generation in the United States such as Gans (1992) have highlighted that many second generation of migrants due to the low social class of their parents could not afford to achieve high level of human capital (educational achievements and professional competences) needed to climb the social ladder of a 'knowledge society', in which the level of education becomes more and more important to achieve a high performance in the labour market. Some years later other scholars such as Alejandro Portes, William Haller, Patricia Fernández-Kelly (2010), Zin Mhou (1992, 1993) have pointed out that the assimilation of second generation in the society in which they live is a segmented one. The segmented assimilation theory points out that the result of the assimilation process of second generation have different outcomes: for some second generation of migrants it leads to a upper social mobility, for others to a downward mobility (downward assimilation). In other words, some will achieve the better paid jobs and achieve a high level of social recognition while other maybe blocked in low-paid jobs risking to form a new underclass and to live in marginalized areas. These scholars identified three main external factors that influences the different outcomes of the integration: 1) the human capital of the parents (educational achievement and professional competences); 2) the social context (open or hostile); 3) the family composition. Broader families have stronger social control on their children in order to avoid the risk that they join marginalized peers (gangs) and can support them better economically than single parents families.

Although our research will concentrate more on the subjective dimension of the integration process it holds in mind also the structural factors that influences the entry into the labour market such as the human and social capital of the family of origin and the institutional framework concerning citizenship.

2. The childhood and the ambivalent relationship with the family and the peers

The phenomenon of second generation of migrants has different dimension in the eight European countries because of their different immigration history. In addition also the countries of origins of the parents of second generation of migrants are very different.

Italy has the lower percentage of second generation of migrants (0.9%) compared with the total population since it is a country that only from the '80s of last century became a country of immigration while it has been for a long time a country of emigration. While Switzerland has the highest percentage of second generation of migrants (7.5%) since it became a country of immigration already in last decades of the 19th century with the industrialization process. The immigration flows increased also after the Second World War II. The origin of second generation of migrants are still mainly from European countries in particular from Italy and Germany (boarder countries). Germany has the higher absolute figures (1,700,000) of second generation of migrants mainly coming from Turkey which started to arrive from the 60s of last century. Austria has in recent years increased its migration flows especially from ex former Yugoslavia while the first country of origin of second generation of migrants is Germany.

United Kingdom has rather high percentage of second generation of migrants coming from Asia (ex Common Wealth countries).

Table 1 – Second generation of migrants

<i>Country (year)</i>	<i>SGM (absolute numbers)</i>	<i>% of total population</i>	<i>Major countries of origin</i>
Italy (2009)	518,700	0.9%	Switzerland Germany France Morocco
Austria (2008)	363,500	4.3%	EU countries, mainly Germany Former ex-Yugoslavia countries (Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia) Turkey
United Kingdom	1,645,895	2.8%	Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)
Slovenia	No data available	No data available	No data available
Sweden (2004)	326,031	3.5%	No data available

The Netherlands (2006)	378,180	2.3%	Turkey Russia Federation
Germany (2008)	1,700,00	2%	Turkey
Switzerland (2009, on 2001 census)	558,780	7.5%	Italy Germany Portugal France

Source: own calculation on national statistical data

From our findings the early childhood is different for second generation of migrants ‘2G’ (born in the country in which the parents have emigrated) than for the generation 1.75 or 1.5. The 2G are socialized to the norms, values of the ‘host country of their family from their birth while 1.75G not.

Indeed for the 1.75 generation not only they are exposed during their childhood two different socialization – that of the country of origin of their parent and the one of the host country – but they are strongly exposed to a very often traumatic process of adaptation in the host country.

In many cases the children of immigrant arrive in host country after one or even both parents have emigrated.

Indeed, this great change in life is on side accepted and experienced as a positive experience because they join their parents and they go often in countries where the standard of living generally are higher. Some remember the first moments as being in ‘wonderland’, especially in Central and Northern European country such as Austria or Sweden.

On the other side this change has often also negative consequences on second generation of migrants. Indeed, the change means that when they join their parents they have also to leave the persons who had taken care of them – generally the grandparents – and their beloved friends.

This can have a strong impact on their adaptation in the new country and some have suffered from deep depressions as remember Désirée and Ali:

«When I arrived in Italy I suffered more than one year of depression because I was away from my friends and in particular from my grandmother (*with whom she lived*). It was as they have teared off something that I need for living. When I arrived I didn’t wish to do anything, not even to go out. I *was depressed*. For this reason also my

parents *suffered*. I was not as my sister who cried for a while but then they have overcome it and they integrated. For me it was different I missed everything, I missed also the *freedom to move*. Here people do not have big houses with garden where one can stay outdoor. In Ecuador we had a house. I just had to go outside, stay in the garden. Then always some friends passed by to say hello and talk with you or I just went out to walk with my bird in a cage. I was very closed even with my parents I was not able to talk to my parents because they had other view than me. At home I felt always oppressed, I felt very *lonely* also when my parents where there» (Désirée, 21-years-old unemployed).

«When I arrived we lived in a very small apartment with other relatives. I remember that I slept in one room with my parents. This *was not very funny*. I didn't *felt well* at all» (Ali, 21-years old, IT assistant).

It has to be noticed that the new living conditions can in many cases be less comfortable than those in the country of origin. The houses are generally smaller and at the beginning the parents can offer only small apartments which very often at the beginning are shared with other relatives. In addition, the parents with low level of human capital and social capital have to struggle to make up their living conditions accepting low-paid jobs. They have few time to dedicate to their children. Hence, the suffering of immigrant children is often not understood and recognized by their parents which can have negative consequences for their future identity development.

The relationship with their parents are often ambivalent, mixed feeling of love but also of hate and rejection since they have accept again the authority of their parents, the rules and norms which they were not used anymore. In addition they have to make a strong effort to combine two different cultural background, the one of the country of origin of their parents and the country in which they live. This leads often to conflict in the family especially when the cultural of origin of the parents is very different from the society in which they live or when the parents try to impose a more traditional *Weltanschauung* based on religious beliefs such as Muslim which imposes also distinct gender roles as remembers. These different gender socialization can lead than to strong feeling of inadequacy when second generation of migrants compare themselves to female native-born. A feeling of not being able to catch up with a 'more modern female role' of the society in which they live.

The first impact with the native children – their peers – is often experienced as a positive. This came out very clearly with the words of Natasha:

«I remember the daughter of the chief of the pension where we lived. She helped me a lot with the integration. We played together with some other kids. At the beginning going to school was really difficult» (Natasha, 25 years-old, married 3 children, unemployed).

It has to be noticed that the more the children of immigrants differ from their natives in terms of the colour of their skin and traits of the face, the more they become aware since their early childhood of their ‘diversity’ which in some cases is often positively accepted from native children but in other cases not. Native children tend to tend to make joke of them which can have a negative on their self-esteem.

3. Education of second generation of migrants

The first experiences with the school system of second generation of migrants is generally not an easy one especially for 1.75G. Indeed, second generation of migrants who are not born in the country in which their parents have emigrated, have to know and to adapt to a new schooling system, to new teachers and new students.

The adaptation to a new schooling system is experienced as very difficult and demanding. First of all, there is a strong difficulty due to the language. Indeed, in the majority of cases the children of immigrants do not know the language of the country in which their parents have emigrated. This lack of language knowledge makes not only the comprehension in class during the first years very difficult but also the relationship with the teachers and schoolmates. Furthermore, the children of immigrants have to learn new schooling rules, pattern of behaviour and social norms. This leads often to a disaffection toward the school system and the learning process and can lead also to a sense of inadequacy, feeling to ‘being behind’:

«In the primary school the most difficult thing was the German language. It was hard, I was *always behind*. In the secondary school it went better it went better. [...] I never *had fun* at school» (Natasha, 25 years-old, married 3 children, unemployed).

In addition in some European countries such as Austria and Germany the school systems are very demanding and challenging. Moreover, teachers pretend a strict discipline compared to other countries such as Italy, as remembers for example Paul:

«At school my was very demanding. The teacher in Austria said ‘you must’. The discipline is here so strong and teacher gives also an appraisal. When I didn’t *receive an appraisal*, it *hurt*. The feeling to learn with resistance and with no support of the teacher» (Paul, 23-years-old, married, 4 children, unemployed).

The relationship among second generation of migrants and teachers are generally good although in particular in some countries such as Germany and Austria emerged a stronger sense of being victim of discrimination from side of the teachers than in other countries such as Sweden and Italy. This leads to tense relationship, in some cases full of conflicts which a have negative effect on immigrant children’s participation at class and motivation.

It has to added that in some European countries such as Italy very often the teachers at the primary schools offer strong support to immigrant children on a voluntary basis for what concerns the teaching of the Italian language. In many cases these teachers are Catholic teachers who do voluntary activities.

For what concerns the first impact with the schoolmates and the relationship the experiences are similar in all 8 European countries. On side, the diversity’ in terms of colour of the skin, somatic traits of the face and language can attract the reaction and enthusiasm of native-children. On the other side, this diversity is not accepted. This rejection leads to different and sometimes severe forms of racism. Indeed, it is generally at school that second generation of migrants experience for the first time forms of racism. These forms of racism go from verbal attacks – being ridiculized for their names, accents, nationality, colour of their skins until more severe physical harassment (being beaten).

For example, a Swiss Brazilian second generation remembers being teased by her schoolmates for what concerns the colour of her skin and her accent:

«When arrived at the primary school, I heard some negative comments about me from other children such as ‘Do you know that the you have the colour of the shit?’ O think that children learn this kind of expression form adults. [...] At the secondary school there was a schoolmate that teased me because of my accent. He always sang some Brazilian songs to me». (Ana, 24-years-old, cashier in a shop).

Although in many cases this racist attacks are ‘accepted’ as interpreted as ‘children are often mean’ or justified since ‘they say it because they here it from the adults’, in the long run these subtle form of violence have a strong effect on the self-confidence and self-esteem of second generation of migrants has shown clearly Axel Honneth. These impact is often not acknowledged from who is victim. Even after years when they speak about these kind of experiences, they still feel strong emotion of shame, which is the emotion that dominant person use to maintain a power relationship.

For what concern the choice of the education from the quantitative data emerges that in all 8 European countries the choice of the education – which means both the level and type of education and the years of education – of second generation of migrants differs in the majority of cases compared to those of the native born children with no immigrant background.

Most second generation of migrants choose an education which can offer them in the short-run a job. This mean that generally they don’t reach the highest level of education and prefer vocational training. For example, in Italy a majority of them do not go to a *lyceum* (liceo) and then to the University but choose vocational training schools. Similar the situation in Germany in which a majority of they do not enter in the ‘Gymnasium’ but finish the school with the *Realschule*. This education choice may have an impact then on future achievement in the labour market although the research on this topic are in all European countries still very few. Hence, still no official data confirms this hypothesis in the European countries that we have studies differently from the United States in which the phenomenon of second generation have been studied from longer time or from France. Indeed, these researches underline that the economic, social and cultural has an impact on the the educational achievements of their children and that lower educational achievements may lead to a downward assimilation.

The choice for a vocational training school is sometimes also the consequences of negative school experience do to the factors we have cited before (tense relationship with schoolmates, teachers, experience of racism) which lead to the inner rejection and hate of the school system and the learning process as states Martina:

« I always *hated* to learn and to read. This is why I decided to choose the vocational training school to become a cook. My goal was to reach my diploma, go working and to make money. I think this is the most important thing here in Austria. When you don’t have a good job here, it is

difficult since here everybody looks which kind of job you have» (Martina, 29-years-old, married with one child, unemployed).

In addition it has to be underline both from our quantitative than qualitative research that for some ethnic minorities such as Turks in Germany or in Austria or Egyptians in Italy, the choice of the school is strongly gender biased. In some of these families there is still a different role according to gender and a different understanding of the importance of education for men and women. Men are socialised in the family as future male-breadwinner of their future family and are more supported in their education while women are socialised as future wives and mothers and less supported in their educational achievements. These kind of situation are more widespread when the ethnic networks are strong and can offer a future job. As a recent research (TIES) in the Netherlands have demonstrated comparing educational achievements in second generation migrants with Turkish origin these cultural background may lead to a vicious cycle of marginalisation. Indeed, the women socialised in traditional female role tend to leave the school early, marry when they are very young and avoid entering into the labour market or enter in the labour market in very marginalised professions putting them at risk of marginalization.

From our findings it came out that for some ethnic minorities coming from Asia in particular Chinese there is a stronger emphasis and importance concerning education. For example, the families of many second generation of the Chinese in Italy (in particular Milan) put a great emphasis on educational achievements and on success in the labour market. Hence, they strong support their children to study as long as possible and to achieve high level of educational attainments, These results are similar to find in the United States where Asian second generation have generally a higher educational achievement

4. The entry into the labour market between opportunities and risks

The difficult question that we try to answer now concerns the entrance and integration into the labour market. In particular, we would like to know if this particular target group has more opportunities or disadvantages compared with native born population to entry and to stay in the labour market.

From our research findings being a second generation of migrants with low-skilled qualification in some cases can lead to good job opportunities in the present but also in the future under particular conditions, in other cases (the majority) it seems to be a disadvantage due both to individual factors than to structural factor related to the regulation of the labour market and institutional framework concerning the acquisition of citizenship.

The first advantage that second generation of migrants have when they first enter in the labour market is that they know generally more languages and have at least two different for the culture background which makes them more adapt in a more international work environment. For their language skills they generally find easily a first entry into the labour market although . They work in shops which deal with foreigners, in phone centres and call centres. In these cases the jobs are very modest and the job opportunities very high but the start can in the labour market can be easier than for native population. It has to be noticed that second generation of migrants themselves say that they find easily a first job opportunities also because they have less expectations than natives and are willing to accept any job. The knowledge of not well known language in the European context in particular in Southern European countries for example in Italy such as the Chinese language is, can represent a good advantage and can lead to well-paid jobs and good work opportunities. Many second generation of the Chinese community in Italy (Milan) find their first job very young (from 16 years-old) – supported from the family. The family indeed supports them to start as soon as possible the entrance in the labour market in order to gain success in the labour market both women than men. These young second generation Chinese find jobs as language teachers or as translators for business men/women, lawyers and doctors. In particular these profession in these specific ambits are well-paid and offer interesting work opportunities for the future. The knowledge of particular language can also be a great advantage using in the country of origin of their parents. For example, in our findings Chinese second generation find easily well-paid jobs in China, that has now high development rates, making business with Italian organizations.

A second advantage for second generation of migrants derives of embeddedness in strong ethnic networks or family which have already started their own business (shops, restaurants ect.). In these cases, the children of immigrants take advantage of a business that has already been created from their parents and working in rather 'protected and friendly' environment. If these children are also particular gifted in these professions, they can easily take advantage of the situation and experience upper employment mobility which leads to social mobility

Coming now to the disadvantages that second generation of migrants experience entering in the labour market, we can underline both individual factors than structural factors which are strongly connected.

Indeed, if a person have experienced a lot negative experience due low skill, still a poor knowledge of the language in which they live and have experiences period of unemployment or bad jobs, this can have a negative impact on the second generation of migrants. This means that there is concentration of different negative factors that leads break-down in his/her career. It can lead to depression or lack of motivation to find a job or to rethink in a different manner his/her working career.

For what concerns the structural factors it that in the last decades due to the great transformation in the productive paradigm (from a taylorist-fordist paradigm to a post-fordist paradigm or flexible productive paradigm) in many European countries me see a rising dual labour market. On one side the 'insider' with well-paid, secure jobs and on the other side, the 'outsider' in low-paid and temporary jobs. The risk is that these jobs are offered to the more vulnerable groups which under specific some circumstance are also the second generation of migrants. Indeed, many of our respondents seemed to stucked in bad jobs, not being able to build a more solid profession and career.

A second strong structural disadvantaged is the discrimination of the employers and racist attitude in the workplace which the majority of respondents experienced. The discrimination starts with the selection of the candidate at work and during recruitment as states Mazy:

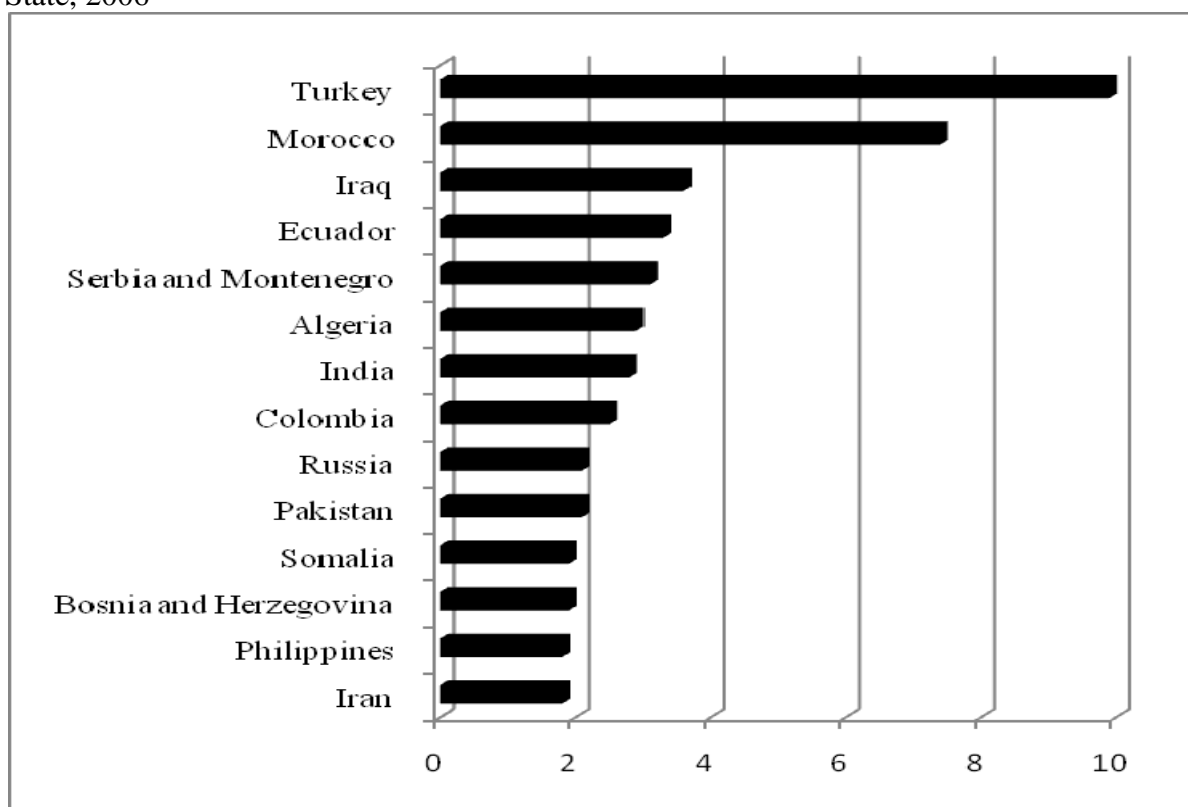
«What I have just said earlier about the way I was treated during orientation was sheer unfair discrimination. I felt that I was not accepted at the factory workplace and because I had performed so well in the interviews, they had to find another way to chuck me out. *This hurt me so much and it still does to this day.* I had worked so hard to apply for that job and to make sure that I pass the interviews, only to be dropped out like that» (Mazy, 20-years-old, unemployed).

The racial discrimination is experienced also once that second generation of migrants are hired due to the colour of the skin. The discrimination comes from the colleagues and from the clients.

A third strong structural factor is related to the institutional framework of the acquisition of the citizenship which in some countries such as Italy. It has to be said, that in the last year the acquisition of European citizenship has increased especially from those originally coming from Morocco and Turkey according to the last Eurostat figures (Eurostat 2008).

The highest proportion of previous Turkish citizens (52%) obtained German citizenship, while the highest proportion of previous Moroccan citizens (46%) acquired French citizenship.

Figure 1: Main previous citizenships of persons acquiring citizenship of an EU-27 Member State, 2006



Source: Eurostat, Migration statistics (Eurostat, p. 4).

In many countries having the citizenship of the country in which one lives helps the entry in the labour market. Hence, the lack of it can represent a great barrier for entry in 'insider' section of the labour market. Not having a citizenship means for many second generation

of migrants to renew constantly their permits of stay which is very difficult in some countries such as Italy and humiliating since they are born or have lived most of their lives in this country. In Italy we can hence speak of an ‘institutionalized racism’ as states Tey:

‘Sometimes I thought I was in one of those movies... you know these movies about the Jews people [during the Second World War] when you see they were standing in a row and they had to obey to orders. It was the same with us. When you are there [public office to asking for the renovation of the permits] the public officers at the police they tell you: ‘You go in row C, you go in row D’. There are generally a lot of people, the rows are full of people. And then when they hear me that I speak Italian, then they say to me: ‘What are you doing here?’. And I just reply that I have renovate my permits [since the citizenship is very difficult to obtain]. We live in constant anxiety and great fear. Fear of not having removal of our permits [...] to be irregular migrants’ [Tey, woman, 27 years-old, unemployed].

5. Concluding remarks

Although it is clear that difficult entry into the labour market is not only do to individual factors but are strongly related to the structural factor related to regulation of the labour market and regulation, to strong racial discrimination of the employers and acquisition of citizenship, the different traumas and negative events that many second generation have experienced during their life courses have a negative consequences on the self-.esteem of second generation of migrants. Hence a pedagogical method based on autobiographical narratives that helps to empower them, will be useful especially when supported by structural interventions.

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