



# First/Second Generation Immigrants

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARK ON LANGUAGE USE

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The term ‘second generation *immigrants*’ is actually a contradiction in itself. The concept of ‘second generation’ implies that they are *descendants* of persons who migrated, but do *not* themselves have a migration experience. The fact that this exact contradictory combination of words is so widely used in Europe – similar to the increasingly popular notion of ‘migration background’ – reflects a general view and attitude that continues to see migration processes as an anomaly of a supposedly ‘natural’ and static state of a ‘well-contained’ national population (Glick-Schiller and Wimmer, 2002). Even though most of the Western European countries that have received large numbers of immigrants since the end of World War II have today officially accepted to be ‘countries of immigration’, the consequences of the underlying demographic situation for the respective self-concepts as Nations (and for defining ‘nationality’ or belonging to the ‘national community’) have hardly been sufficiently reflected (Alba, Reitz and Simon 2012; Herzog-Punzenberger, Fibbi, Vera-Larucea, DeSipio, and Mollenkopf 2012; Mannitz and Schneider, 2014).

While the term ‘migration background’ is subject to political criticism, there is equal criticism of the term ‘second generation’, especially from those who are affected by this designation. Firstly, the term associates native-born citizens, who identify fully with the societies in which they grew up, primarily with either the undifferentiated group of ‘immigrants’ or with the ethno-cultural background of the parents. Secondly, it lacks any differentiation within the category (e.g. according to social background, level of education). And finally it associates them predominantly with ‘problems of integration’, while they see themselves neither as immigrants nor as problematic in any aspect<sup>1</sup>. In my view, this criticism is to a large extent justified and needs to be taken into account, but it is also certainly enhanced by the frequent use of the word combination ‘second generation migrants’. In Switzerland, as a contrasting example, the term ‘Secondos’ even became the self-chosen label of an intellectual and social movement of members of the second generation of various cultural origins (Wessendorf, 2007).

## ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS AND USES OF THE TERM ‘SECOND GENERATION’

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Basically, the concept of ‘generation’ behind this terminology originates in Demography and Anthropology: it describes the vertical dimension in kinship-structures, i.e. the relational difference between parents and children (and grandparents/grandchildren etc.) as a universally relevant social categorisation in all cultures and societies. The idea of the concept of ‘second generation’ in the context of Migration Studies is to address the

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Sezgin 2011 for an exemplary collection of essays from mostly second generation authors in Germany. The intellectual production of the second generation in Europe is enormous, as much in academia as in the arts. Certainly, there has to be observed a lack of recognition by mainstream media and politics, but there seems to be also a certain lack of European connections between the respective national productions and representatives.

offspring of parents who migrated to the place where their children were then born and/or raised.

In its most rigid definition, it only includes persons who were actually *born* in the country of immigration. This definition was, for example, applied in what is still the largest survey on second generation offspring of different immigrant groups in Europe, the TIES Study (see below for more details). However, this rigid definition was chosen especially for methodological and sampling issues, i.e. in order to work with clearly distinguishable categories (country of birth of respondents and country of birth of their parents) when drawing samples from register data or similar (cf. Groenewold and Lessard-Philips, 2012; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway, 2008, p. 2). In less rigid definitions the term is applied also to those who migrated with their parents at a very young age or when the entrance age for schooling as the definitional limit is taken<sup>2</sup>. The idea behind all these definitions is to presume that children under a certain age will have (a) very limited memories as regards their pre-migration experiences, (b) received their formal education completely in the country of immigration of their parents, and (c) been fully socialised in the new societal context, including learning the non-familial vernacular language without a particular accent. The less rigid type of definition is applied especially in qualitative research.

## American origins

The term originates in the US and their academic debate on assimilation outcomes in different immigrant groups. For a 'classical' and experienced immigration country such as the USA, the main focus as regards the integration of immigrants lies (a) on the long-term effects rather than on short-term provisions, and (b) on the *children* of immigrants as the ones whom the receiving country expects to become fully part of the society and to whom it offers full membership. This is the logic of the *ius soli*-principle in citizenship regulations and is reflected in a discourse of national belonging that does not operate with religious, linguistic or other cultural definitional criteria – at least officially (Foner and Lucassen, 2012; Herzog-Punzenberger, Fibbi, Vera-Larucea, DeSipio and Mollenkopf, 2012).

Countries with a long experience of (and being strongly formed by) immigration have limited expectations as regards the assimilation/integration outcomes of adult immigrants, because they know that, in general, immigrants want to preserve important parts of their culture of origin (and pass it on to their children), have their emotional ties and childhood memories attached to their home country, maintain more or less intensive relations with relatives and friends there, and might even go back at a later time in their lives (Kasinitz Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway, 2008, p. 53f.). Again as a general rule, this is entirely different for those who were raised in the new country: If not actively prevented from it (e.g. by discrimination, marginalisation or social isolation), children of immigrants will feel most at home in the neighbourhood, city, region and country where they come of age, collect their childhood memories and establish their first extra-familial social relations

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<sup>2</sup> These definitions seem to be widely accepted and similarly applied. To my knowledge, there has never been a published debate on definitional issues as regards the second generation. Even in publications that provide state-of-the-art-overviews on specified research definitional questions do not play any central role (cf. e.g. Crul and Vermeulen, 2003 p.971; Juhasz and Mey, 2003).

(Schneider, Chávez, DeSipio and Waters, 2012, pp. 217, 228ff.; Schneider, Fokkema, Matias, Stojčić, Ugrina, Vera-Larucea, 2012, pp. 322ff.).

For this reason, in US studies, the second generation is clearly distinguished not only from their immigrated parents, but also from the so-called '1.5 generation' of persons who migrated in their mid-teens or were of school age. In the US this distinction is of relevance not least for legal reasons. While the native-born second generation is granted US-citizenship by birth, many foreign-born children of immigrants find it hard to even get a permanent residency permit. A significant number of them only find out that they have been undocumented throughout their childhood and youth when they try to obtain a driver's license or to enroll in higher education (González and Chávez, 2012; Eisema, Fiorito and Montero-Sieburth, 2015). Indeed, in US studies this generational distinction brings up significant differences also with regard to practically every relevant integration outcome, from education and work to social relations and sense of belonging. The term 'second generation' goes back here to a first body of research on assimilation in the 1920s, but its current use is generally referred back to the seminal work of Milton Gordon, first published in 1964.

## European usages

In the last 10-15 years there has also been a rapidly growing body of research in Europe into the second generation (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Thomson and Crul, 2007). Since the distinction between the 1.5 and the second generation is legally far less relevant in most EU Member States, the differentiation between the two is also far less prominent in European research. Since the discursive focus in Europe is centrally on 'having a migration background', this tends to obscure any generational differentiation in the wider political debate and equally in large parts of the research body.

But here, there are some national differences to be observed *within* Europe, because research definitions still very much depend on national idiosyncrasies as regards the way immigration is looked at and defined. In **France**, for example, ascribing any relevance of ethnic background to native-born citizens is considered to be politically undesirable (for this reason, the TIES Survey in France was heavily criticised by anti-racist groups). The negative side of this is that research into racist structures and discriminatory practices along the lines of ethno-cultural categorisations, suffered by native-born children of immigrants, is difficult and problematic. The positive side is a wider societal discourse that tries to avoid associating native-born French citizens with ethnic stereotypes etc. simply because of their family background (Simon, 2003). In the **Netherlands**, public discourse still operates with a basic distinction between 'autochtoon' (being of ethnic Dutch descent) and 'allochtoon' (being of any non-Dutch descent), which has also tainted large parts of the relevant research body into integration outcomes. Here, the term 'tweede generatie' is well established – also beyond the realm of academia – but it has been largely interpreted within this basic dichotomy. In **Germany**, by contrast, the term is uncommon in public discourse, but has mostly stayed within an even quite specialised section of Migration Sociology – not infrequently also in word combinations such as 'zweite Migrantengeneration' (Kalter, Granato and Kristen, 2011). In much of the German literature on integration outcomes there is a clear lack of differentiation between children of immigrants and immigrant children – which tends to be reproduced even in current

research e.g. on educational outcomes that actually focuses predominantly on the *third* generation. In the **United Kingdom**, being 'British-born' or not is the most important definitional criterion in census data and the second generation literature in general. The other almost omnipresent criterion is the ascription to one of the 'ethnic minorities' within the country's general 'ethnic makeup' (and in contrast to the 'British White'-majority population; see Dustmann, Frattini and Theodoropoulos, 2010; Dustmann and Theodoropoulos, 2010). Thus, especially in contrast to France, *ethnicity* is not seen as a 'problematic concept' in the UK, although the research literature tends to overstate the role of belonging to rather unspecific categories, such as 'race' and 'ethnic group'.

To complete the definitional picture: children of the 1.5 generation would be considered as the '2.5 generation', as the 'third generation' would be the appropriate term for the offspring of the second generation. In most Western European countries, these are predominantly the grandchildren of the so-called 'guest workers', with by far the largest share of them still being of school age. It is also interesting and relevant to observe that there is a popular and everyday usage of this generational terminology that tends to 'confuse' the generational order within families with the different waves of immigration from certain countries to Europe. Immigrants from Turkey, for example, started to come with the bilateral agreement between Germany and Turkey in 1961, but there have been several further waves of immigration since the official end of the Guest Workers Program in 1973. In popular discourse, young descendants of Turkish immigrants are not infrequently declared to already represent the fourth or fifth generation, while – in sociological terms – they still belong to the second or, at the most, third generation.

## Methodological challenges

Obviously, all these definitions contain a lot of potential for inaccuracies and fuzziness. To mention just a few examples: It makes a big difference whether a child of immigrants came to the new country at the age of 8 or at the age of 16, even though they would both be considered '1.5 generation'. Many second generation young adults marry partners from the country of origin of their parents, so that, theoretically and by definition, their children are third and second generation at the same time, depending on the parent one refers to. It also makes a difference whether a child has been in early childcare facilities before starting school, so that the threshold of school age to define the second generation can be problematic. For example, in France, where almost all children are enrolled in child-care institutions at the age of two, children from immigrant families also generally speak French fluently when they reach school age, while this is obviously not the case for an immigrant child below school age that has just arrived from a non-French speaking country. Also, within the European second generation we can find age cohorts that range from the teens to the early fifties, and it obviously made a difference whether a child from an immigrant family went to school in the late 1960s or in the early 2000s. Finally, the actual deeper meaning of the term must be questioned in relation to children from bi-national parents where one of them is not an immigrant. It would obviously be interesting to know whether such a child learned both parental languages, but as regards the school performance – in contrast to those where both parents are immigrants – there is, at least, one parent who speaks the school language well and has first-hand knowledge of the educational system. In the European studies mentioned below, the numbers for bi-cultural parentage in the second generation are very low, so that this group is generally not considered further.

However, the numbers are rising and it remains to be seen how this group can (and should) be addressed in the future.

In methodological terms, we can say that, particularly in quantitative data collections, a more rigid definition is certainly necessary, while qualitative research can frequently operate with more open definitional criteria – if they are discussed in the methodological section of the research reports. Moreover, while the 1.5 and the second generations are still quite ‘manageable’ in sampling procedures and definitions of research questions, this becomes increasingly difficult when addressing subsequent generations. In North American research, for example, the term ‘third generation’ is mostly used to address the ‘native’ or *non-immigrant population*, which reflects the statistical procedure when drawing samples from population registers. This means that the respondents’ parents are native-born – and that is generally the maximum level of accuracy that can be aimed at with register data.

Beyond Migration Sociology (and related disciplines such as Demography, Anthropology and Psychology) the generational terminology is rarely used, despite the effect that ‘second generation effects’ can also be fruitfully studied in relation to social mobility in general or to internal migration for example (Eve, 2010). In particular, it has no connection to the so-called ‘Sociology of Generations’, going back to Karl Mannheim’s essay on the ‘Problem of Generations’ from 1922. Here, ‘generation’ is looked at as a socio-cultural rather than a demographic phenomenon. This understanding of the term is reflected also in intellectual and public discourse in concepts such as ‘Generation X’ (Douglas Coupland) or ‘the Generation of 1968’ – or even the ‘Baby boomers’, even though this actually refers to a demographic criterion<sup>3</sup>.

## RELEVANT OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH ON THE SECOND GENERATION

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As the US-usage of the concept demonstrates in particular, research into the second generation brings in the long-term aspects of integration. In the wider public debate in Europe, and even more so after the beginning of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015, the main focus of discussion is the integration of newly arrived immigrants. While this is of high importance as regards the satisfaction of the immediate basic needs, such as shelter, food, health, language instruction and education for the children, it hardly allows a long-term perspective, because nobody knows how long many of these refugees will stay and where they will finally settle for good. Moreover, as stated above, the expectations as regards the factual possibilities for structural participation of the adult refugees and other immigrants should not be too high.

This is different when we look at the second generation. First, if we could be sure that the children of immigrants would become full members of society and participate fully in all relevant aspects of social life, we would not have to be too concerned about the undeniable limitations as regards their immigrant parents. Second, the ‘integration outcomes’ of the second generation, i.e. the levels of actual structural participation and

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<sup>3</sup> See Schneider, 2010 for an attempt at combining both concepts.

feelings of belonging to the society they were born into, can serve as highly valid indicators for the degree to which the society's relevant social organisations – schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, sports clubs, political parties, trade unions etc. – offer room for full participation and belonging and which factors present obstacles and structural hindrances to particular groups of native-born young people in this regard.

## Large comparative studies

Over the past two decades, several large-scale surveys on the second generation offspring from families of diverse immigrant origins have been carried out in the US and in Europe. The largest and most influential US-studies were the ISGMNY-Survey (Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York), the IIMMLA-Survey (Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles) and the CILS-Survey (Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study); all three were carried out in the early 2000s. In Europe, the first large study with a specific focus on the second generation was the TIES-Survey (The Integration of the European Second Generation) of almost 10 000 respondents in 15 cities in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland; the data was collected in 2007/8. These large projects have also taken part in transatlantic exchange activities or research extensions. One book publication directly compares the data of two US surveys and the European TIES Study (Crul and Mollenkopf, 2012). Data from TIES also entered the transatlantic comparative project Children of Immigrants in Schools (CIS)<sup>4</sup> and the TIES concept and questionnaire were also applied in projects in Estonia (on the Russian second generation; see Helemäe and Vetik, 2011) and Australia (on the Turkish and Lebanese second generation; see Inglis, 2011). The CILS study, coordinated by the University of Princeton, has carried out two waves of data collection in *Spain*, together with the Complutense-University in Madrid (the so-called ILSEG survey). Another European study, the Norface-funded CILS4EU survey, followed the longitudinal design of the CILS study and targeted 18 000 pupils at age 14 in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, in three waves between 2010 and 2013 (coordinated by the Centre for European Social Research in Mannheim). Finally, the Six Country Immigrant Integration Comparative Survey (SCIICS) is a national telephone survey among more than 9 000 Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and their offspring in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden (carried out by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin). Unfortunately, there are still no major comprehensive publications from the two last projects. And, with very few exceptions, the articles and other material from these projects are not specifically related to education, training or work<sup>5</sup>. One particularly significant study in Europe, which collected extensive and detailed data on immigrant groups and also on the second generation, is the French nationwide TeO-Survey (*Trajectoires et Origines*). It has provided many publications on a wide range of issues, but, is obviously limited to France<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://mumford.albany.edu/schools/index.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> See webpages for lists of publications: <http://www.cils4.eu/>; <http://www.princeton.edu/cmd/data/ilseg-2/>; <https://www.wzb.eu/en/research/migration-and-diversity/migration-integration-transnationalization/projects/six-country-immigrant-int>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://teo.site.ined.fr>.

In addition, there are of course many qualitative research projects, focusing on different aspects of integration in the second generation. The broadest internationally comparative effort in this direction is the Pathways to Success/ELITES-Consortium with qualitative data collection on social climbers and professional success in the second generation in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden. Again, there are no comparative publications accessible yet (Crul and Keskiner, forthcoming)<sup>7</sup>. Another relevant and interesting effort is the comparison of youths in four immigrant neighbourhoods in Berlin and Paris, by Ingrid Tucci, Ariane Jossin and others who also analysed the respective local institutional conditions for facilitating or hampering educational and professional success (Tucci, Jossin, Keller and Groh-Samberg, 2011).

## U.S. - American studies

All the above-mentioned surveys, in one way or another, compare different second generation groups to each other and to non-immigrant age peers with regard to a series of issues around different aspects of assimilation/integration. Generally, they do so using the standard categories of structural, social, cultural and identificational assimilation/integration (Gordon, 1964; Esser, 1980; Gans, 1992)<sup>8</sup>. In the US surveys and the TIES-Study educational outcomes and trajectories are of central importance, followed by access to and careers in the labour market. This is generally because the age structure of most of the second generation groups determines that education is still more relevant than labour market performance – and this is equally valid for Europe as well as for the USA. Other aspects are social relations such as partner choice, family and friend relationships, religious issues, language skills and uses in different contexts, questions of feeling ‘at home’ or ‘belonging to’ (to different identity categories), and many more. The surveys observe significant differences between different origin groups and in relation to those respondents of non-immigrant descent. In the US, this gives a mixed result, because ‘native whites’ and ‘native blacks’ practically represent the two extremes in the outcomes, with most second generation groups falling somewhere in between them. The theory of segmented assimilation formulates three different pathways of assimilation: into the predominantly white middle class, into the predominantly black lowest class, and into ‘ethnic niches’ as important springboards for economic success when access to mainstream economic institutions turns out to be difficult (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Stepick and Dutton Stepick, 2010). Other assimilation theories underline the long-term effects of intergenerational mobility and claim that, in the long run, those starting from ‘ethnic niches’ also become fully assimilated into the mainstream (Alba and Nee, 1997) or even that the very concept of ‘ethnic niches’ appears to be too static and closed (Waters, Tran, Kasinitz and Mollenkopf, 2010). Since most of the American scholars working with these data are sceptical about (exclusively) cultural explanations for the diverging outcomes between different origin groups in the second generation, the analytical picture generally combines origin effects (e.g. parental level of education, gender roles) with factors linked to the institutions in the receiving country and the pre-existing immigrant or

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.ELITESproject.eu> for first publications and further details.

<sup>8</sup> The terms “assimilation” and “integration” are taken here as almost synonyms: while the first dominates the academic debate in the US, the second is more common and accepted in Europe (and Canada and Australia). However, with regard to their content, they basically operate with very similar categorisations and presumptions (Schneider and Crul, 2010).

religious or ethnic communities. To give just one example: many new immigrant groups find housing only in poor areas with a predominantly black population which takes their children to the worst and most socially segregated schools, strongly limiting the outlook for good professional and well-paid jobs. In the case of Russian Jews and the Chinese second generation, however, pre-existing ethnic networks, economic capital and in-group solidarity tend to facilitate different possibilities also for children, whose parents are low educated and work in low-paid jobs.

## European studies

Studying the second generation in Europe has long suffered from either a purely national focus in many data collections or the lack of comparability of available national data. The EFFNATIS project in 1998-2000 was the first attempt to bring together national outcomes from eight countries under a common analytical umbrella (Heckmann, Lederer and Worbs, 2001; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003). In particular it revealed the difficult data situation in many countries – e.g. to have no register data available at all or data that does not contain the necessary information for identifying the second generation in relation to the first and 1.5 generations – and the serious constraints for cross-country comparisons<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, in most national research, following the model of the US studies, the focus was on the comparison of diverse immigrant group and the differences between them – e.g. with regard to educational outcomes – while the interplay with structural and system factors was hardly assessed.

As a consequence, the TIES-Survey – as the first European attempt to collect first-hand data specifically on the second generation – also compared different origin groups, but the same groups were followed across several national and local contexts, using the same questionnaire and sampling criteria<sup>10</sup>. The most relevant overarching outcome here is that the same origin groups in the second generation fare very differently in the different contexts. This becomes especially visible in the field of education – also after controlling for background characteristics in a series of aspects (parental education, regional origin, year of migration, current occupation, religion of the family, siblings etc.). To mention just a few examples: among the native-born children of low-educated Turkish immigrants, the numbers of those who attained a higher education access diploma and went to university range from 5 % in Germany to almost 33 % in Sweden and France. Sweden (9 %) and Switzerland (15 %) have by far the lowest numbers of early school leavers (ESL) in the same group. The number of ESL is between 25 % and 33 % in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the

<sup>9</sup> See Dronkers and Fleischmann, 2010 and Dustmann, Frattini and Lazara, 2011 for the limitations in performing detailed comparative analyses even with the huge datasets of PISA, the European Social Survey (ESS) and the European Union Labour Force Survey (EULFS). These obviously provide rich evidence for general observations on differences between children of immigrants and their parents as much as their peers of native-born parentage. They fail, however, in providing sufficiently detailed explanations for the huge disparities across countries and within origin groups. This is mainly due to the extremely broad scope of these data collections, which were not originally designed for the purpose of second generation studies.

<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the survey targeted the second generation of Turkish origin in seven of the eight countries (exception: Spain), of Moroccan origin in Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, and of former Yugoslavian background in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Furthermore, in all the countries, a group of age peers – in most cases sampled in the same neighbourhoods as the second generation – of non-immigrant descent was interviewed.

Netherlands (Crul, Schnell, Herzog-Punzenberger, Wilmes and Slooman, 2012). We find similarly large differences in labour market access, in the share of women in jobs (and even more so, if they have children) and in the levels of segregation in schools (and neighbourhoods). The TIES data thus demonstrates the huge influence of *context factors*, relating to institutional arrangements, particularly in education and on the labour market.

This is not to say that background characteristics of the parents/families and factors related to social class and/or culture would not have an important influence. But the latter do not exert their influence ‘for themselves’. TIES and some of the other comparative surveys allow for specific analyses of the ‘interaction effects’ between context and institutional factors, on the one hand, and what children bring with them from home, on the other. For example, analyses show that a lack of educational opportunities increases the probability that the educational and professional careers of young women are truncated by traditionalist patriarchal attitudes in their families. If, by contrast, these young women are offered the low-threshold chance to access and complete higher education, they are very likely to seize the opportunity, and this in turn will have a very strong influence on their further pathway – e.g. becoming more independent of the parents, postponing starting a family and finally adding significantly to the income of their own family. Similar mechanisms apply to identity formation, social relations, residential patterns, the role of (and attitude towards) religious belief etc. This therefore leads to great variations *within* the second generation origin groups and, at the same time, to substantial similarities along other lines, such as social class. Children from non-immigrant working-class families very frequently experience similar obstacles in education and the transition to work to those of children of immigrant workers. At the same time, detailed analyses of these exclusionary mechanisms show that the immigrant background of the children tends to intensify the negative effects of exclusion as much as the positive effects of good support practices (Crul and Schneider, 2012).

## SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL RELEVANCE

As regards *integration*, understood here as *participation* in (and access to) the most relevant social organisations and developing a sense of *belonging* to society, differences in education, country of origin and the specific circumstances of migration are strong determinants – for the first generation, i.e. the actual immigrants. Here, expectations in Europe tend to be too high or too encompassing. The ‘guest workers’ experience in Europe shows that even if low-educated workers never really learn the language of the host country well and depend on a certain ‘ethnic infrastructure’ of shops and social relations for their daily needs for decades, they find work and earn money. They pay taxes and rent, and – most importantly from the perspective of the immigration country – they support their children in becoming educated and building-up a professional perspective. Unfortunately, the levels of support provided by these parents are often not perceived by the schools (Lang, Pott and Schneider, 2016). Research in more experienced immigration countries also shows that under ‘normal conditions’ the third and subsequent generations are completely inserted into the existing social structure of the receiving society (with all its advantages and disadvantages).

The second generation thus occupies a specific intermediate and transitional position that makes it particularly interesting when looking at ‘integration’. The second generation are

part of the parents' 'migration project' much more than the third and subsequent generations of these descendants, and they are also connected to the parental origins and family in the country of origin. At the same time, this second generation has the potential for full and unconditional participation and belonging in the society into which its members were born. The degree to which this potential unfolds directly points at a country's (or city's) capacity for creating structural conditions and institutional arrangements that are inclusive to *all* native-born children, independent of their familial origins and conditions, and solely according to their individual ideals, talents and potentials. Theoretically, significant differences between children of immigrants and children from non-immigrant families, for example, with regard to their educational outcomes are by no means a 'natural given'. All the educational systems that were analysed in the studies mentioned above show positive and negative elements here. The political question is, of course, whether this idea of equality in chances and prospects is at all an ideal to which all the relevant actors subscribe.

In sum, under the condition of operating with a clear-cut definition, focusing on the second generation can be a very suitable tool for assessing the gains and failures particularly of educational and training systems for young people and for finding out about structural obstacles in the transition to work. Demographically, it can be clearly delineated and its social position in relation to the immigrant parents and age-peers of non-immigrant background is sufficiently specific to allow answering many relevant questions as regards the relative openness of education and training systems. This distinguishes the 'second generation' as an analytical category from e.g. the 'migration background' – not to speak of the still used juxtaposition of 'migrants' vs. 'natives' – which are simply too broad and all-encompassing in their definitional boundaries to be operational. Looking at the 'second generation' is particularly useful for the field of education and the transition to the labour market, but its relevance also extends to the broader questions of identity formation, the role of religious institutions and the general discursive framework in a given society with regard to 'integration'.

At the same time, its relevance and informational value should also not be overstated. It does not, for example, either help to assess the successes or failures in the integration of refugee children or to analyse the situation of children from long-established ethnic minorities, such as the Roma or Sami populations in Europe, or the subsequent generations of established former immigrant groups. For this reason, especially with regard to the latter and coming back to the introductory remarks of this statement, it is imperative to operate with an analytical language that clearly distinguishes within the generational order and that avoids culturalist and essentialising designations to the children and grandchildren of immigrant families – a fallacy that is unfortunately still rather frequently committed also by researchers in the field (Dahinden, 2016).

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