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Career choices of young people with a foreign background:

the role played by education and social support

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Indice

Introduction

Immigration is not a new phenomenon in Europe. The continent has always been a land both of immigration and emigration. Through the years people, for different reasons such as social problems, wars, or famine, decided to move on from their countries. Due to their history of colonization, and the use of recruitment programs to respond the shortage of workers in their places, a lot of European countries had hosted people with a foreign background. Immigration history in Italy is slightly different. Italy have become a country of immigration from the '70s. Two factors make the Italian scenario particularly interesting as regards immigration: the speed with which the country has experienced the increase of foreign people, that have changed the appearance of the country and of the population as well, and the presence of a huge variety of people from different geographical areas of origin, languages, and socio-economic backgrounds.

During this process of change and shaping of the society, the perception of the phenomenon has evolved over the time. An element that makes this phenomenon increasingly relevant is the presence of families. As a matter of fact, in the last period new entry of foreign people is mostly due to family reunion. Immigrant families and their children, the so-called second generations, today constitute a stable and structural component of the Italian population.

To understand the extent of the phenomenon, it is interesting to examine the trend of the presence of foreign children and adolescents in Italian schools. According to Miur data, the ratio between students with non-Italian citizenship and the total school population was 1.5% in the 1999/2000 school year, ten years later, in the 2009/2010 school year the ratio is almost equal to 8%, to arrive at the 2019/2020 school year with an index of 10%. It means that, if during the '90's there was a regular and contained growth of the school population, starting from the 2000s there was an increasingly consistent rate of growth, which in recent years seems to have registered a slight decrease (MIUR, 2021). Broadening the point of view, statistics reported that in Italy second generations aged between 0 and 35 have reached about 3 million (ISMU, 2021, p. 34) and they or their parents come at least from 200 countries.

Until a few years ago, Italian literature, analysing second generations or children with foreign-born parents, focused the attention on the effects of their presence on the educational system, the connections between sociability and school context or the role played by school in the dynamics of integration. However, issues related to the second generations need to look forward, it means not remaining anchored to school topics by analyzing only aspects such as integration

and inclusion. Young people with a foreign background are not only a reality in the Italian school, but for some generations they have been part of the social context of the country. They find themselves planning the future of their life in Italy, with opportunities and perspectives different from those of their parents. New changes in the dynamics of immigration and the growing awareness of the contribution of human capital that these generations can bring to the society, have led literature in recent years, to analyse trajectories of second generations in tertiary education and the labour market. Their choices will affect the whole society.

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to analyse the second generations focusing on a different period of their lives. What their career choices are, that is what they decide to do after completing their schooling in order to understand if their objective is to find jobs or to enroll in university before entering the labour market.

Presuming that a lot of elements are involved in choosing a career, such as individual personalities, personal experiences, cultural and social contexts factors, and in addition to that, in this case there are also elements related to the foreign background, the study pointed out the role of school paths and the main social contexts encountered by young people with a foreign background when constructing their future lives.

Educational paths will lead to discuss particularly about the role of the choice of high school. The study effort has focused on tracing the effects of some peculiarities of the young people in the choice of the type of high school such as their age at the time of arrival in the country of destination, the presence or the absence of elder siblings and the role of guidance played by them, and parents' cultural background especially their educational level.

Social contexts will lead to discuss about the role of family, friends and teachers in supporting career choices of young people. The analysis was on the kind of help has given by these subjects and their effects. For instance, the presence of special friends or teachers who may become a reference guide and driving force for certain choices.

The completion of high school marks the beginning of the stage of life in which people make the most important decisions for their future, including choosing a job, for this reason the focus was on people with a foreign background aged 19-30. It was carried out a survey through a questionnaire. 45 respondents living in Treviso district participated in the research. It has been chosen Treviso district because Veneto is one of the Italian regions which reported the largest rate of people with a foreign background, moreover Treviso is one of the three areas most populated by foreign people of Veneto region.

The study is made up of six chapters. The first chapter will contain a brief overview of migratory flows in Europe, Italy and in Treviso district. The chapter shows the distribution of the immigrants in the country, examines historical and geographical reasons which make immigration a phenomenon worthy to be understood. The second chapter will provide a description of the second generations in the school context, their peculiarities, structural and multigenerational presence, their relationships with the host society and the issues analysed by literature up to now.

The third chapter will concern the presentation of the research. It will include the aims of the study, research methods, information of participants, as well as the criteria used to select them, and tools used to collect the information. Finally, the chapter will provide in detail the development of the research.

The fourth chapter will focus on the findings of the study; the fifth chapter will provide an analysis of data and their relations with the aims of the study in order to understand if and how the role played by high school and by families, friends and teachers influence the path that young people choose to follow. The last chapter is that of the conclusions: it will explain what it can be deduced from the information revealed by the findings.

Data collected by administering a questionnaire have shown that biographical peculiarities such as the age have led young people with a foreign background to choose a specific kind of high school, moreover other findings revealed that young people whose parents have a medium high cultural capital tend less to make choices for finding jobs, rather prefer enrolling in university before entering the labour market.

To sum up, many factors are involved in career choices. Italian situation displays that young people with a foreign background are strongly overrepresented in some school paths and largely absent in others. This picture hides the risk that second generations may face a future characterized by low social mobility and by their presence in the most vulnerable and least qualified working areas. Therefore, analyzing the reasons which lead young people with a foreign background to make certain choices regarding their future work, can help them to develop a retrospective point of view that make them aware of a fundamental aspect: their role to contribute not only to their personal economic growth, but also to that of the country, and at the same time this analysis could be an instrument of reflection for the host country in order to understand the dynamics of the country as regards immigration.

Chapter I
The migratory flows and the second generations

1.1. The migratory phenomenon in Europe

Immigration is a cultural, political and economic phenomenon. It is a movement of people and therefore, from economic phenomenon it becomes a global phenomenon. It involves the whole person, shows stories of individuals and families. It brings out languages, religions, needs, but also difficulties in accepting these differences and the profound changes which happen in the societies (Dal Lago, 1999).

Immigration has always been part of our societies. It could be a challenge, a responsibility but also an opportunity. Nowadays immigration represents the most visible and controversial element of changing in our countries. On January 29th, 2004, during a talk at the European Parliament, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made an emphatic declaration: "Migrants need Europe. But Europe also needs migrants. A closed Europe would be a meaner, poorer, weaker, older Europe. An open Europe would be a fairer, richer, stronger, younger Europe - provided you manage migration well" (Pastore, 2006).

Even though these words seem to be a warning to European governments, this declaration describes the close connection between Europe and migrations. There are two reasons pushing people to move and make Europe their destination: the first one is its strategic geographic position and the second one is its relative condition of political stability through the years. However, immigration is an inevitable response to worldwide political and economic situation. It is a matter of fact that, economic, political, social and environmental factors are the most important reasons which explain the movement of people (Eurostat, 2021).

Every European country has different relations with migratory phenomenon. There are countries which have a long experience of immigration and others which have begun to receive consistent migration flows only recently. For this reason, European countries could be divided into groups: still stable immigration countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxemburg, Norway, United Kingdom), older immigration countries (France, Germany, Sweden) and countries with a recent history of immigration (Ortensi, 2011, p. 52). The latter are represented by Southern European countries: Spain, Greece, including Italy (Bettin & Cela, 2014, p. 5; Santagati, 2015, pp. 4-5). In addition to that, countries like France, Germany and United Kingdom have an important presence of second generations and, due to their long migratory experience they have also the

presence of people who represent their post-colonial past. Second generations have become a reality in Italy as well. According to Fondazione ISMU, statistics reported that in Italy second generations aged between 0 and 35 have reached about 3 million (ISMU, 2021, p. 34).

There are specific reasons to explain the increase of migratory phenomenon. The economic boom and the shortage of workers during the 1960s, induced many countries to use programs of recruitment in order to open their labour market for foreign citizens. As a result, many countries from north Europe like France, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium and Netherlands, received a lot of foreign workers from many Southern European countries and from North Africa as well.

In addition to that, in 1973 this process had a further transformation caused by petrol crisis and the subsequent economic crisis. The older immigration countries stopped migratory flows to their countries and as a consequence, migratory pressure changed direction: from Northern Europe to Southern. For this reason countries like Italy, Spain, Greece have changed their history, and according to Bello, "they passed from being countries of huge emigration of workers to becoming countries of immigration" (Bello, 2015, p. 10).

Another element which involved migratory flows in Europe, was the end of colonialism period, and the "progressive improvement of life conditions in many ex-European colonies" (Bettin & Cela, 2014, p. 9). Due to this change many people could emigrate towards the so-called mother country during colonialism period.

It is also to be considered the impact of the end of the Iron Curtain. In 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the following dissolution of the Soviet lands, migratory flows started to move towards west direction. Consider, for example the enormous mass of people who moved from their lands. In 1989, about 1.2 million of people left their homes towards western European countries and, the expansion of EU to new countries has confirmed this trend. In order to prevent a mass exodus, many countries belonging to EU adopted a program of progressive entry into the system of free circulation of workers: they set a maximum transition period of 7 years before the entry of a new State member.

Due to the increase of immigration, many governments adopted increasingly restrictive migration policies. As a result, from the '90s onwards Europe has experienced different kind of migratory flows: the decrease of workflows, the increase of new entries for family reunion and unfortunately the increase of illegal flows.

It is particularly difficult to measure the numbers of a such dynamic process. It is a complex work with so many limitations. The difficulties are due to different methods used by every country to collect data, as well as political reasons, that is governments discretion in releasing this kind of information. On the other hand, there are limitations because usually the data of these official statistics are lower than the real number of migratory flows.

According to Eurostat, European population, during the period from 2000 and 2019, has constantly increased mostly because of immigration. During the years 2020 and 2021, due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, there was a slight decrease in the number of citizens, passing from 447.3 million to 447.0 (Eurostat, 2021).

Migratory population has a different distribution in every European country. In 2020 citizens from Romania, Italy, Poland and Portugal were the largest group of European citizens who live in a different European country. This means how the system of free circulation inside the EU is a reality and how the expansion of EU towards east direction would imply the increase of migration flows towards west direction.

About changing demographics, the overall analysis of population age reveals that migratory population is younger than national population and there is also a great difference between the two groups as regards working age. This distribution showed that working age of migratory population is younger than national population. As a matter of fact, in January 2021, median age of national population in EU was 45 years while that of migratory population was 36 years.

In January 2021 in EU there were 23.7 million of people with citizenship of a non-member country. They represent 5.3% of EU population. The largest total number of immigrants are living in Germany (10.6 million people), Spain (5.4 million), France and Italy (both 5.2 million) and they represent 70.3% of total number of immigrants living in all the EU countries. The country with the highest share of foreign citizens was Luxembourg, representing 47.1% of its total population, but a high proportion of foreign citizens (more than 10 % of the resident population) was also found in Malta, Cyprus, Austria, Estonia, Latvia and Ireland.

1.2. The migratory phenomenon in Italy

Historical happenings in Europe, even though a little different, have been a mirror of what has happened later in Italy. Although the arrival of foreign citizens had begun earlier, Italy is considered a country of immigration starting from the mid-'70s (Bettin & Cela, 2014 p. 17). As happened in Northern Europe countries, the improvement of life conditions in The Mediterranean

Europe (Spain, Portugal, Greece including Italy) has prompted the arrival of many workers from abroad. This could be a transformation which could involve countries of west Europe in the near future: as life conditions in these countries improve, they will become an attractive place for citizens coming from countries near Russia and Asia.

New immigration laws applied in 1973 e 1974, by countries with a long experience of immigration, have changed the process of immigration in Europe. Migratory flows moved towards Mediterranean belt. At that time these countries like Italy, had adopted a less restrictive immigration laws.

Immigration phenomenon in Italy is quite different from older immigration countries due to some reasons. Firstly, there were not programs of recruitment for foreign workers. Individuals came by personal initiative or through religious associations. As a result, in the country there is a huge variety of immigrants with different nationalities. For example, statistics reported that in 2019 and 2020 there were immigrants from almost 200 different nationalities. Regarding sex distribution, at the beginning the migratory flows were represented by men without families looking for a job. Nowadays there is a slightly large number of women especially due to the high request in the caring services area; even though the share of women differs according to nationality, usually the highest share of female immigrants was reported by citizens coming from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova, by contrast, African and Asian communities were reported the highest share of male immigrants. However, some nationalities like Romanian, Albanian and Chinese communities, reported an equal distribution: they are communities with older history migration in Italy and it means the presence of family reunions who are living the process of stability in the country.

In addition to that, an important feature of migratory flows in Italy is, in more recent years, the massive arrival of people by sea. In 2014, more than 170 thousand immigrants reached Italian coasts; in 2016 they were 181,000. The adoption of Italy-Libia Memorandum in 2017 decreased the new entries, but from 2020 onwards, statistics reported again a new development in the phenomenon.

The structure of migratory flows has changed in the years. During the 1960s till 1990s the most represented nationalities were people coming from Africa and Asia. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it has been experienced the entry of citizens coming from Eastern Europe like Albania, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, and Poland. In ten years, they exceeded the North African communities and other nationalities already settled in the mid-'90s; going into details, citizens

from Morocco were the most represented nationality, but between 1994 to 2011 things changed. Albanian and Romanian nationalities took the place of Morocco. Chinese citizens, who didn't appear in the chart, from 2004 onwards have represented the fourth position for number of immigrants. On 1st January 2021, as in the table below, the situation is similar to that of ten years ago. Romanian community reported the largest share of immigrants (20.8%), followed by Albanian (8.4%), Moroccan (8.3%) and Chinese community (6,4%).

Fig. 1.1 Distribution of immigrants by citizenship (%), 1st January 2021 (Source: Istat 2021)
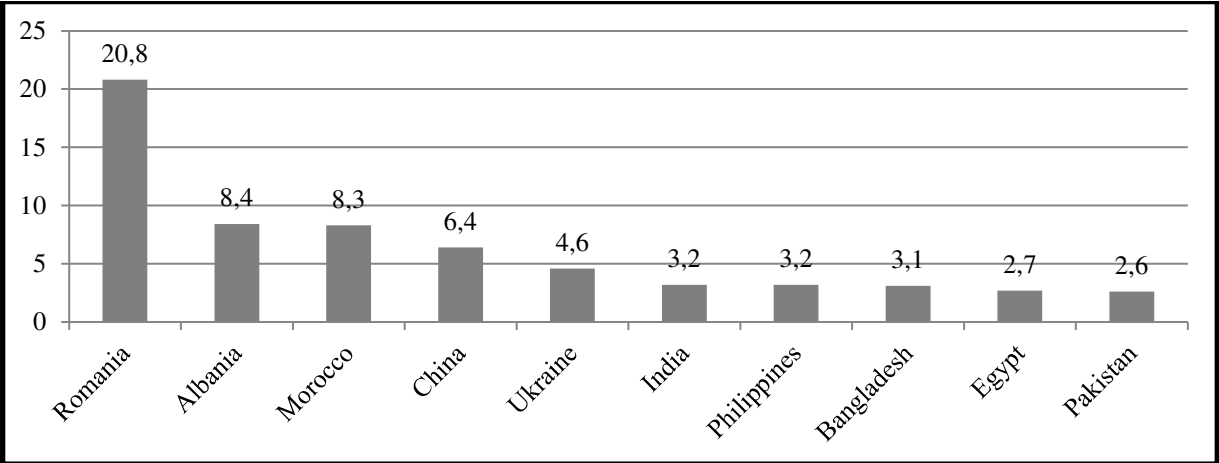
As regards the size of resident population, on 1st January 2021 there were an estimated 5 million immigrants, representing 8.5% of Italian population (values can slightly change depending on the parameters they used). Foreign citizens were much younger than nationals. The median age of the total population stood at 45.9, while it was 35.8 for immigrants. Almost 37% of foreign citizens were aged between 18 and 39 years old; 20.2% of immigrants were less than 18 years old. The share of population over 65 years was 5.5% for immigrants, while was 23.4% for Italian population.

Immigrants were not evenly distributed across the national territory. It is reported that 58.3% of total number of foreign population was found in the north (33.9% in north-west, 24.4% in north-east) and centre regions (24.6%), while only 17% was found in the south of Italy. In absolute terms, the largest number of non-nationals citizens living in Italy were found in Lombardy (23%), followed by Lazio (12%), Emilia Romagna (11%) and Veneto (10%).

1.3. The migratory phenomenon in Veneto

As regards Veneto region, in 2021, 10.5% (509,000) of population was represented by foreign citizens[1]. Consider that, in the school year 2019/2020 students with ethnic origins were 13,6% of total students in the region. Italian students in the region were 598,193 while students with a foreign background were 94,486 and 71.3% of them (67,411) were born in Italy. The largest foreign community is that from Romania, followed by Morocco and the Republic of China. The number of women is slightly higher than that of men (260.383 compared to 249.037 of men) and young people aged 19-30 years were around 79.000 (16% of total foreign population).

The three most populated areas by foreign citizens in the region are Treviso, Conegliano and Montebelluna. Treviso district has a significant presence of foreign citizens. According to statistics in 2021 Treviso district hosted an estimated 92,000 citizens with a foreign background. For a better understanding of the presence numbers of foreign citizens in the region and in the district, it is useful to have an idea of the proportions. On 1st January 2021 the size of foreign citizens population was as follows:

- in Italy there were 5,013,215 foreign people → 8.5% of national population
- in Veneto there were 509,420 foreign people → 10.5% of regional population
- in Treviso district there were 92,110 foreign people → 10.5% of district population

Fig. 1.2 Distribution of foreign citizens in the country

[1] https://www.tuttitalia.it/veneto/provincia-di-treviso/statistiche/popolazione-andamento-demografico/
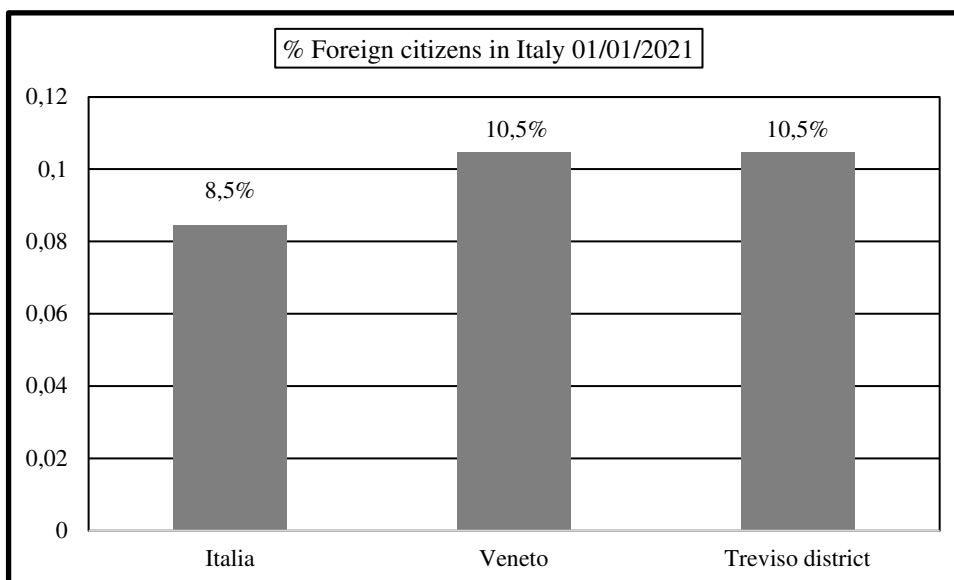
The growing importance of this component of the population is evident not only from the demographic point of view because they play a fundamental and structural role in the territory, mainly due to their consistent presence in the younger age groups (ANOLF, 2021).

The presence order of nationalities in the district is different from that regional. As statistics reported, the largest community is represented by Romanian followed by Chinese and Moroccan community. Exactly as the national and regional trend, also in Treviso district, people with a foreign background come mainly from Europe, Africa and Asia and they represent many different nationalities (156). The stabilization of immigrant population is represented by the presence of women and children and undoubtedly, the presence of children is clearly visible in the schools.

Therefore, although in Italy the decrease in the level of population was mostly driven by negative natural change, foreign citizens have given an important contribution to population growth (even if the contribution is less than past years). Non-national population increase both for net migration and mainly for natural increase. In 2019, sons and daughters of migrants have been 15% of total new-born children (62.918 new-borns, even if, less than 2018 that reported 65 thousand). Consider that, the fertility rate in national women remains at a low level (1,18), while immigrants women reported a slightly increase, passing from 1.94 in 2018 to 1.98 in 2019. It is a matter of fact that in 2019 the fertility rate in non-national women is still on a level to guarantee the turnover (Caritas&Migrantes, 2020).

Immigrants have given an important contribution to the labour market. In 2019 their contribution is to be considered high, even with some differences according to nationalities (Id.). Philippine community reported the highest rate of employment (80,4%), followed by the Chinese (75,5%) and Peruvians (70,7%), and consider that, there are many other communities with considerable rates of employment. Undoubtedly, immigrants are very active in the labour market even though there are some critical situations; for instance, their competence only in some specific job areas which could mean fixed term contracts or low-level qualifications (Id.).

Actually, data describes how immigration is part of the Italian society. Thinking about immigration as a new or emergency phenomenon is unachronistic. Sometimes political and public debate seem to have a lack of awareness of the current situation in the country. This kind of attitude is evident for instance by the adoption of *ex-post* laws or procedures called *sanatorie*[2] (Cagiano &

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[2] Sanatoria: it is a special law passed by Italian government to legalize situation of irregular immigrants in order that they can obtain residence permits.

Paparusso, 2018) to legalize the residence of immigrants in the country. Focusing constantly the attention on the new waves of immigrantion, the security and cultural threat that this phenomenon pose, could obscure an important truth: many of the country's immigrants are long-term residents. For some of them Italy have become a home for years and in many cases we are talking about not only of children of migrants but also their grandchildren, that is the second and third generation. It is a matter of fact that, the main reason of new arrivals in Italy, is due to family reunion (Istat, 2021) and, population growth is to be found mostly in the children who were born in Italy by foreign-born parents who live in Italy. Family means children and the constant presence of families with a foreign background is an evident indication of the stabilization of the migratory process. The most considerable sign of a new step in this phenomenon is the presence in Italian schools of multi-coloured classes. Classes made up both of children who were born abroad and coming with their families and children whose parents are migrants.

1.4. The second generations in Italy

Children of immigrants, the so-called second generation, represent a very relevant group of Europe population, for their demographic weight, and, for they being "a bet at stake for economic competitiveness and social cohesion" (Zanfrini, 2018, p. 53). For a better understanding of the phenomena involving migrants' children, first of all, important questions need to be answer: the meaning of the term "second generations", to whom the term can be applied and, the numbers about the presence of second generations population.

Sometimes they are called young migrants or children of immigration. Actually, there is a discussion about the suitable name to be used as most of young people with foreign background have not experienced migration. Many of them reached the country as children, with their parents or later; lot of them were born in Italy. Their favourite food is pasta, they dream in Italian, they cheer on Italy, mostly, each of them imagines their future here and despite the origin of their parents, they are Italian, at least this is the feeling they have. "…Never call me a foreigner or an immigrant, it's up to you, you can call me Italian Arabic or Italian Moroccan, but I'm not a foreigner; many years ago, my parents decided to come and live here. But I have never migrated, I was born in Italy, and I'm feeling Italian. I feel it from the inside, and this is it" (Caferri, 2014, p. 13). The words of Lamia, a girl who was born in Italy by Moroccan parents, well represent what these young people feel. In the international context they are best known as second generations.

Second generations represent on one hand the visible result of their parents' migratory project and on the other hand the ability of accepting people, from different origins, by the country of destination. They represent a change in the society and the evolution of the migratory process. The migration of families or their reunion means a transformation in the society they are going to live. As a result of this transformation, the country of destination has experienced an increase in the demand of services like homes, schools, hospitals or simply areas for business activities and according to Sayad, migrants bring their history, traditions, language religion as well as everything that represents their culture (Sayad, 2002).

They live in a complex reality: the continuous comparison between their parents' culture and that of the country of destination (usually their own country as they were born in Italy) and the challenge of making important and personal choices. There is an interesting difference between the first generation (parents) and the second one (children): whether the first generation have faced the problem of being accepted by the receiving country, the future generation in addition to that, have faced other challenges. Firstly, they live the need of building their own project of life which could be or not the expression of desires and expectations of their parents; secondly, their life is permeated by variety of opportunities and motivations, that could be an advantage if they rely on personal resources of cultural and social capital (Besozzi et al., 2009).

Therefore, it is to be considered that these youths during their life develop different and hybrid identities; according to Marinaro and Walston "they are often multilingual and well-travelled and have global competences which, if encouraged, could potentially make them part of Italy's future political and business elite" (Marinaro Clough & Walston, 2010, p. 6). These identities are expressed in many ways in relation with the events they live at home, school, in the country of birth and in their parents' country as well.

It is said that second generations life is suspended between two worlds or cultures, but it does not represent the reality. There is not a very defined line which indicates their identity or belonging, they constantly transform and renegotiate themselves according to goals they have to achieve and the social contexts in which they live. For this reason, it is more appropriate talking about the ways second generations deal their multiple belongings. Their ethnic origin could be considered as a social flexible strategy used according to daily life and interpersonal relationships (Granata, 2011). The issue of the identity is a question related not only to the young people who constantly live and mold their personalities, but it also involves the relationship between them and the society where they live; a society with its perceptions, glances, and prejudices (Id.). Children

of immigrants do not live in different spaces. Their worlds and cultures are in connection, they act in a single social space where develop different contacts and abilities to be used in specific ways in order to face life. As Levitt stated, some children of immigrants decide to be molded by the norms and organizations of the place they are living, others do not simply choose between their parents' country and the host-land, but "they strike a balance, albeit tenuous, between the competing resources and constraints circulating within these fields and deploy them effectively in response to the opportunities and challenges that present themselves" (Levitt, 2009, p. 1239). Rather than living between two worlds, second generations became equipped with the necessary skills for navigating them both successfully. They do not experience the continuation of first generations' lives, rather their desire is to be an integral part of the society they are raised. Therefore, they do not feel the pressure to belong both to the receiving society and to preserve homeland traditions, second generations "create a complex set of practices of their own" (Ibid.), acrobats between two worlds.

1.5. The second generations and the hosting society

Obviously, second generations experiencing the influence of their parents' origin and that of the society they grow up at the same time. Their growing participation at school, their visibility in places and spaces shared with the host community implies the ability to build social exchanges with the surrounding social context. This prompts them, knowingly or unknowingly, to adopt strategies that make them more similar to their Italian peers. This process of acculturation[3] to the country of destination is made up of two dimensions: on the one hand the need and desire, also an unconscious desire, to maintain one's parents' cultural heritage and on the other hand becoming part of the larger group, for example searching relationships with different groups. The interrelationship with these two aspects produces the development of different strategies of acculturation (Besozzi et al., 2009):

- Assimilation: the process of full absorption in the receiving society;
- Separation: the firm decision to maintain one's identity, almost considering it as the opposite of the receiving society culture;

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[3]Acculturation: usually the term acculturation is different from inculturation. Inculturation means a process of making the cultural heritage your own and adopting the peculiarities of your own culture. This usually happens starting from the birth and keep on during the entire life of a subject; by contrast, acculturation means access to another culture or some peculiarities of the culture by those who have already experienced the process of inculturation in their own culture of origin. Immigrating to a new society implies both the development of acculturation strategies towards the receiving country and forms of mutual acculturation. (Besozzi et al., 2009)

- Marginalization: the process of put distance between receiving society culture and sometimes that of one's origin. It is the condition of those who find themselves suspended between two worlds. People who have few relationships between different groups and a weak sense of belonging to the culture of origin;

- Integration: it is the most adaptive strategy. It means having a multiple vision of both cultures; that is maintaining one's cultural heritage while seeking to participate in the life of the larger society;

In the last decade second generations have caught the attention of the society. Actually, they have gained an important visibility in the artistic, music, sport and politic scene of the country (Riniolo, 2019). Despite this new trend, they are still very little represented in some decisive work environments. For example the "shortage of journalists of immigrant origin and the tendency to give very little voice to non-institutional and non-Italian actors" (Marinaro Clough & Walston, 2010, p. 7) need a serious reflection. For this reason, they want to be active players in the construction of meanings and metaphors, about them, and share their own experience. These feelings can be found in the organizations which work is to spread the voices of these young people all over the country. Reggio Emilia, one of the most multiethnic cities of the country, and from 2008 one of the founder members of the ICC (Intercultural Cities Network) is a centre of challenges and projects in order to create a feeling of a united community which is not 'us and them', but 'we'. From 2008 the city hosts Mondinsieme Foundation. This foundation aims to be a bridge between local government and other organizations, but its mainly mission is to make migrants and second generations not as targets of policies but actors in the application of these policies. In order to achieve this goal, Mondisieme is acting in three different areas: working on enterprise and employment (developing the awareness that migrants are not only beneficiaries but also advantageous resources for economy), education and training and giving value to diversity in the urban context[4].

At the same time second generations hope people consider them as they are, normal people. In Caferri, for example, this opinion can be found in the words of Tarek Es Safi, one of the first children with a foreign background to be born in Treviso's hospital: "We are normal people: we study, we have fun, you find us in the social, and we play sport. Moreover, we are interested in the issues related to citizenship and social participation of people who, like us, have a foreign background, but they were born or they have grown up in Treviso" (Caferri, 2014, p. 36). Those

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[4] www.coe.int/interculturalcities (visited on August 2022)

of Tarek are the same feelings shown by Maria Ilena. She expressed her opinion using very strong words:

> "...I'm very upset for the attitude of this last period: people increasingly talking about children with a foreign background. It seems Italy discovered a new world, even though it has been existed for many years. In the media there are questions about second generations: I would like to know how many of them have realized that now we have to speak of third generations, and we have to speak of girls of 12 years, grandsons called as immigrants…stop call us as foreigners or "new Italians" …I'm Italian and stop. Maybe till now all of us have made a mistake: talking about our stories, asking people to listen to us…we don't need to explain anything: we need to show you our abilities and then you judge. We are a bridge for Italian future, a pass: we are not a problem" (Id. 105).

The words pronounced by Maria Ilena need a reflection. It seems second generations live constantly like ants under a magnifying glass. For many reasons within the society, they have received a different treatment and this attitude has led to several research aimed at focusing on differences. Studies have analysed why youths of second generation have continued to be used in marginal positions of the labour market even though they have improved their marks at school; or another question linked to education is the constant orientation that second generations have received to undertake a specific training path, usually technical and vocational education, which means a preference for shorter educational careers, aimed at a quicker entrance in the job market with low level qualifications (Eurostat, 2011). The roots of these beliefs and situations could be found in the idea that people with a foreign background have a supposedly different and "inferior" culture (Besozzi et al., 2009).

A lot of progress has been made in this direction but there is still a lot of work to do. The attention should be directed to the right of indifference asked by second generations. People who have the label of "immigrant" or "ethnic" usually feel obliged to give explanation, about their feelings, religion, food, and all kind of information people with a native background absolutely do not use to give, invoking the right to privacy but, it seems that the other, the "immigrant" does not have the same right. It seems that people with a foreign background have to ask sorry because they are different, even if in real life everyone is different from another (both nationals and non-nationals), therefore like everyone they have the right to go unnoticed (Delgado, 2007).

It is interesting how nowadays studies are oriented towards this reflection, focusing on the fact that people with a foreign background are not to be seen in a different way. They are children, youths, exactly as the others with the same desires, reactions, aspirations. According to this idea, an example can be found in the study developed in Genoa by Lagomarsino and Erminio. The aim

of the research was to know social condition of young ones both with and without a foreign background. The focus was on aspects who make young ones as similar as their peers starting from the analysis of their experiences at school no matter their nationality. The result was enthusiastic. They realized that first of all, in the school context the foreign background fades away because of many factors, involved together, which design similarities and differences. It is not only a peculiarity of the school context, but the same thing happens in different social contexts; this is a further confirmation of the need to focus not on differences but seeing these youths as they are, youths with the same dreams and projects of the others (Lagomarsino & Erminio, 2019).

1.6. Second generations: meaning, composition and numbers

Based on these arguments the first aim is to understand who the people referred to "second generations" are and their relationship with the country of destination. The issue of labelling is the first topic related on the debate because speaking about second generations needs a semantic and conceptual attention.

Making a comparison between older immigration countries and Italy, it is evident the difficulty found in the country to feel second generations as integral part of Italian society. Suffice it to say that current citizenship law is not equipped to deal with the challenges that Italy's new reality as an immigrant destination country presents: this most recent law governing citizenship dates to 1992 and is a restrictive reform of the previous law, passed in 1912 (Bianchi E., 2011). Undoubtedly also this factor reflects on the confusion linked to the debate on the use of the word "second generations".

Even though scholars and commentators keep on discussing the proper name to be used, "second generation" is the most used term in international literature. Using this category means, first, underline the difference between first generations, those who have emigrated, and their sons and daughters who were born or have immigrated in the countries chosen by their parents, during childhood or adolescence. Secondly, this category allows the distinction of the future generations, for example a third generation, a reality that still Italy has been experienced.

When the category second generations is used, it refers to a migratory experience of someone who often has not experienced the migratory process, someone who undoubtedly has lived totally or partially in the country of destination.

Despite various opinions or beliefs, there are some concerns related to the use of this term. According to Sayad the label "second generations" reminds the concept of "colpa genetica". It

means the idea that migratory condition is a human trait that is handed down and not a specific part of life of a family or people that has a limited period (Sayad, 2002). "Children of immigrants are like hybrids […] they are immigrants who have emigrated from nowhere. Although called "second generations" they are not non-nationals as the other foreign-born people, it means they are not non-nationals in the literal meaning. From the cultural point of view they are not foreigners, but they are subjects fully integrated in the society" (Sayad, 2002, p. 382).

"Second generations" is a useful category to describe young people sharing the same experience, the foreign background, but in the public discourse it could also amplify the distinction and distance between "we" and "them", persons who are native born and immigrants, or citizens and non-nationals. Therefore, even if the term could have a neutral meaning or could appear just like a label, this label, could, wrongly, convey the concept of a category of people in which the cultures of origin are genetically transmitted because considered as monoliths that are passed from father to son through blood ties (Lagomarsino, 2021).

In real life to describe children with foreign-born parents, in addition to "second generations" they use a variety of words such as new generations, new Italians, bridge generation, immigrants of second generation and more but there is the awareness that the meaning of each term has different nuances which can influence the interpretation of migratory process.

The label "second generation" cannot be referred to a defined social group or to a homogeneous category. Queirolo Palmas tried to explain the use and the meaning of many terms used to define young people with a foreign background. Each of them, although tries to explain the concept, are misleading and none of them can completely represent what these young people are. All these terms could reduce the history of someone just to his/her origin, and moreover, could deny the right of people to freely define themselves (Queirolo Palmas, 2006b).

Accordingly, second generations are people with plural identifications. They are neither immigrants nor a fixed category but people with their own slightly different shades. It is important to remember that being children with a foreign background means a great variety of origins mixed with a wide variety of generations. In conclusion, a correct point of view about the meaning of second generations should be developed. The category "second generations" should not be used to categorize a specific group of people and it is not an exclusive definition to describe the identity of youths with a foreign background, rather it is a frame to talk about young people who have their own migratory experience, a personal experience or that connected with their parents' path, which have influenced their lives as well (Lagomarsino & Erminio, 2019). Undoubtedly, the meaning of

the term is a bit opaque because for example, it does not distinguish between children born in Italy or abroad; those who have Italian citizenship and not, whether they have both foreign-born parents and not. Therefore, using this category is a conventional choice as used in the international context.

In the light of this information, after the analysis of the complexity connected with the category second generations, for the research it is crucial to answer the second question, that is to whom the term applies in Italy. In the academic debate there are different views on this. Rightly, as previous considerations, defining second generations is not as easy as it may seem. Many subjects can be included, from children born in the country of destination to teenagers who are long socialized abroad, and in addition, there are also mixed background children and nomads' children.

Due to their heterogeneous composition, second generations could partially not be detected by traditional statistics. As a matter of fact, the coexistence of two phenomena linked to the increase of second generations can influence the total number of young people with a foreign background. The first one is that of native-born children and the continuous arrival from abroad of people, even a lot of young people. The second one is the progressive dissolution of a still strong barrier in the society imagination of a difference between citizens and foreign citizens. This phenomenon is evident in the difficulty of accepting the increase of the acquisition of citizenship and the increase of children with a mixed background (Ceravolo & Molina, 2013).

Literature tried to explain and gives reasons on the subject. According to Ceravolo and Molina, second generations can be divided in three groups. Firstly, young people who belong to the category in the strictest sense of the word, it means native-born children.

Secondly, young people with a mixed background; unfortunately, they represent the part of population that sometimes could not be recorded by statistics because as they have one native-born parent, for statistics they are Italian citizens, but it is very interesting their relationship with a foreign background. Statistics reported that usually mixed marriages in Italy are made up of native-born father and foreign mothers. As usually mothers spend more time with children than fathers, and take care of children education, sometimes proposing the same education they have received, it is evident the link between these children and the migratory condition, even though they are neither foreigners nor immigrants (Id.).

1.7. Classifying second generations

In order to better define this group, it is interesting analyse Rumbaut's numerical classification of generations. The factor involved in this classification is the age of the children when they immigrate in the country of destination. Generation 1.75 has similar conditions and peculiarities as generation 2 (second generations in the strictest sense of the word). They immigrate at ages 0-5 (pre-school), the period that children live in the present time, for this reason they have great abilities to adapt to the new social context. Generation 1.5 refers to children who begin primary schooling and create first bonds abroad but immigrate before adolescence (about age 12) and complete their education in the country of destination. It means that they leave their language, teachers, and some friends. Sometimes they miss their origin country and face the new life with more difficulties than previous generation. Eventually, there is generation 1.25. They represent the most critical stage and in many aspects their experience could be compared with that of first generations even though they did not make a migratory project. They immigrate at ages 13-17 when they had already built important friendships and this change can generate strong conflicts in the family. They have serious difficulties to learn the language, and usually they do not complete their education (Ceravolo & Molina, 2013; Rumbaut, 1997; Santagati, 2015).

In addition to that, to define who should be included in the category in the Italian context, there is also the contribution of Ambrosini and Molina (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004) which is the result of the analysis of a Graziella Favaro's work, who divided the second generation considering their stories and immigration journey. Therefore, Ambrosini and Molina identify six supposed people who should be part of second generations category: children born in Italy, children reunited with their families (they can be divided into children immigrated before begin schooling and children who have already begin their education abroad), unaccompanied children (educational associations take care of them), refugee children, children immigrated through international adoptions and eventually mixed marriage children.

Really, a broad scenario to analyse, but it is already reflecting the present and the near future of our societies. Identity is not a standard, is not unique to these young people, therefore it is more appropriate talking about plural identities, a dynamic set of elements closely connected to each other. In conclusion, every group is different and every young people, even though culturally belonging to a group, have their own peculiarities, as for example there are differences between native-born children with foreign-born parents, and children immigrating during puberty. For the purposes of this study, the term "second generations" is referred to all groups of young people

with a foreign background. This category includes children with a mixed background (it means people who have one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent), children with a foreign background in the strictest sense of the word (it means native-born people with both foreign-born parents) and children immigrated in Italy during their childhood or later.

At this point the subsequent question to be answered is to quantify people belonging to second generations in Italy. As mentioned, the complexity of the category makes difficult calculate an exact figure. The issue is linked to an analytic and methodologic problem: to whom the term applies in Italy, and the kind of data. The first point has been widely discussed previously. As regards the second point, it depends on the ways national statistical authorities collect data. Usually, about Italian population, statistics data include sex, age, and citizenship, but there is not information about the age of arrival in Italy of foreign citizens. This data could be very useful to exactly quantify second generations. Accordingly, Riniolo (Riniolo, 2019) states that, it is possible to estimate the presence of second generations by adding up some groups of people with foreign background: the first group is that of foreign citizens children. According to ISTAT, in 2020 they were 1,023,046. This group includes Rumbaut's numerical classification of generations. The second group is made up of foreign people aged 18-35 born in Italy but for many reasons do not have Italian citizenship and the third group is that of foreign citizens aged between 18-35, that immigrated when they were children. In addition to that there are the new citizens, that is those who have acquired citizenship, and eventually there is the group of mixed background children. They were born in Italy and have Italian citizenship, but they share some aspects with children with both foreign-born parents. According to this, in Italy second generations aged 0-35 is about 3 million (ISMU, 2021, p. 34).

Chapter II
The second generations in the education system and new focus to analyse

2.1. Second generations at school

Education is said to represent an important indicator to have information about second generations and to understand their level of integration in the receiving country (destination country/their own country). According to MIUR, in the report "*Alunni con cittadinanza non italiana"*, in the school year 2019/2020 non-national students were 877,000. About this data, it is interesting to know that most of the students with a foreign background belongs to second generations category (65.4%). Their presence is mostly visible in primary school, but in the last period is still increasing in secondary school. However, it is recorded also a decrease of non-national students at pre-school, important stage for language learning and integration. This tendency "is reported mostly in families coming from north Africa and south-west Asia" (Caritas&Migrantes, 2021) and it affects mostly girls (82.8% attend pre-school) than boys (84.6% attend pre-school). The reasons of the differences usually are to be found in cultural and religious background of the families.

In the age groups 6-13 and 14-16 years the school attendance rates of students with a foreign background are similar to those of their Italian peers, about 100% and 96% respectively. Although this trend is encouraging, in contrast, in the age group 17-18 years there is a significant difference: school attendance rates of students with a foreign background decrease to 73.3% against 81.1% of Italian students. It can be deduced that a third of second-generation students are at greater risk of leaving the education and the training system without having obtained an high qualification.

Fig. 2.1 Students' distribution in the country
Source: MIUR - Portale unico dei dati della scuola, Anagrafe studenti

About geographical distribution of students with foreign background, very closely it reflects peculiarities of immigration in Italy. This distribution is influenced by patterns of migratory flows that may have taken place many years ago. Accordingly, most of the second generations live in the north of the country. Lombardy reported the largest rate of students with a foreign background (25.6%), followed by Emilia Romagna (12%) and Veneto (11%). South regions, even though are densely populated, reported lower rates: Campania (3.2%), followed by Sicilia (3.1%) and Puglia (2.1%). Second generations together represent 200 countries; however, some countries are significantly overrepresented compared to others. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the size of migrant populations living in different countries vary according to both current and past history of migratory flows. Thus, a predominant nationality of migrants in a country may reflect specific migration flows that took place decades earlier.

Migrants' choice of destination may be influenced by a variety of factors such as the presence of established communities from a particular country of origin living in a country of destination. Furthermore, patterns of migration may also reflect past colonial and language links, as seen for example in the long history of migration from the Indian subcontinent to the United Kingdom, or in migration between Ireland and the United Kingdom. In Italy, Romanian nationality has been the most represented for ten years, followed by Albanian nationality. The two groups together represent about a third of students with a foreign background (31.4%), followed by Moroccan students (12.3%) and Chinese students (6.4%). It is interesting how this distribution reflects exactly the distribution of foreign population in Italy; the rest of foreign students have a rate from 0.03% (Oceania) to 20.5% (countries of Asia).

A key factor which indicates the complete integration and acclimatization of second generations to the country is mostly their attitude to attend secondary school. They tend to make the same choices as their Italian peers. In the school year 2019/2020 it was reported that, 39.6% of second generations attended Technical Schools (istituto tecnico), 35.7% attended Grammar Schools (liceo), and 24.7% attended Vocational Schools (istituto professionale). It is also interesting to see that they tend to choose more challenging education. Thus 15.4% of second generations attended Scientific High School, 8.8% attended Foreign Language High School and within Technical Schools it is increasing the rate of young people who choose technologic (20.1%) and economic (19.4%) sectors.

The great difference between students with a foreign background and their Italian peers is that youths with a foreign background display different final marks, higher risk of school drop-

out, and school delay. Data reported that Italian students complete their education with higher marks than native-born students with a foreign background. Furthermore they have a higher risk of school drop-out, "which can be considered an inevitable effect of migration, together with the difficulties deriving from the transition to a different educational system and belonging to social groups that often lack the necessary resources and skills to achieve positive school outcomes" (Santagati, 2015, p. 299). School delay is a still present problem of many children of immigration. This happens because usually they are placed in classes lower than those corresponding to their age or because during their schooling they had the experience of repeating the school year or non-admissions.

Analysing the school year 2019/2020, it seems that, at the age of 14, period that a young one is supposed to attend first year of secondary school, students with a foreign background, at right level of education were 61%, while 37% still were enrolling in classes lower than those corresponding to their age reporting a school delay of one year (29.4%), two years (6.6%) and three years (1%). Eighteen-year-old students at right level of education were 39.5% compared to 60.5% of students with school delay and surprisingly 38.4% of pupils aged 19-20 were still in the first or second year of secondary school, even though there are differences between boys and girls. Although a progressive decrease of the phenomenon if compared to the past (in the school year 2010/2011 the school delay was 40.7% and in 2014/2015 by 34.4%) the gap between Italian students and students with a foreign background is still quite relevant: in the school year 2019/2020 the delay was 8.9% for Italian students compared to 29.9% for students with a foreign background.

The decrease of school delay compared to the past, although still very high, as well as the presence of students with a foreign background in Higher Education (for example University), give hope for a gradual change. However, in this context, it must be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought an additional risk. A complete understanding of the implications and how this health crisis will affect school performances of the following years is still forming. The education response during the early phase of Covid-19 pandemic focused on implementing remote learning modalities as an emergency response. Undoubtedly remote learning allowed the continuation of teaching and learning activities and this response was intended to reach all students but was not always successful. The health crisis has amplified disadvantages and inequalities for many students with a foreign background due to the lack of availability of technology, suitable places dedicated to study and digital skills to face this new challenge.

2.2. An overview on the second generations research

In the international scenario Italy can be considered a significant case, as a country that has experienced an exponential and quick increase of students with a foreign background in the last two decades, consequently, the presence of the second generations is a topic developed in many studies. A lot of studies have been conducted by Italian scholars, even though often confined to local areas, and published only in Italian. The studies can be divided in three parts which correspond to three periods. The first period (1999-2007) is the realization that Italian schools have become multicultural due to immigration. Thus, the studies focus on compulsory education and place emphasis on immigrant pupils and their specific characteristics, it means their difficulties, risks, and outcomes of school integration. In the second period of the research (2008-2012) there is a significant increase of studies on school and immigration. These studies display inequalities and disadvantages that immigrant students face in terms of access to secondary education, school choice, educational progression and relational problems. Eventually, in the third period (2013-2014) it has experienced a phase of consolidation but also innovation in the research with the introduction of more sophisticated methodologies (for example trying to identify integration indexes) and the investigation of new issues such as racism, discrimination and prejudice, or transition to higher education (Santagati, 2015).

In terms of territories covered by the Italian research, most of the studies is conducted within specific regional areas where the presence of students with a foreign background is highest. Thus, the first region is Lombardy, as it hosts the most of Italy's immigrants, followed by other regions of Northern Italy like Piedmont, Liguria, Veneto, Trentino, Emilia Romagna. Only few studies are conducted in the Centre and in the South as the presence of students with a foreign background is significantly less (Santagati, 2015).

The studies have investigated positive aspects or other more critical ones related to second generations. Many scholars have indicated that the migratory background can represent a real advantage for young people living in societies with growing ethnic variety, because as Zanfrini states second generations "feel and imagine themselves as citizens of the world" (Zanfrini, 2018). By contrast, other studies have analysed more controversial and problematic issues, such as the formation of gangs involving second generations (Queirolo Palmas, 2006a) or the persistence and transmission of socio-economic disadvantages from the first to the second generations (OECD, 2017). Among the various challenges faced by second generations, that of combination of different belongings is one of the most significant topics. The dimension of multiple belongings and the

strict adherence to multiple cultural codes are stratagems and real possibilities they develop to balance their lives. Thus, they build their own biography as the result of a process of negotiation between different cultural codes. Studies have investigated the contrasts between the demands of the family and those of societies in which second-generation young people have grown up (Valtolina & Marazzi, 2006), because, living in a society with cultures and very different traditions from those of their families, sometimes could mean adaptation and compromises.

After the escalation of terrorist attacks of various type, the religious radicalization of youths with a foreign background or youths grown up in Europe is a topic of very interest discussed by research (Mezzetti, 2016; Mezzetti & Introini, 2017). According to Hirshman, who analysed the role of religion in the lives of people immigrated in the United States, religious beliefs can be a ballast as immigrants struggle to adapt to their new life context. As they arrive in the new context, immigrants need to find housing and employment, enroll their children in schools, learn a new language, and begin to create a "new" social life. Thus, churches and other religious institutions are one of the most important sources of support for the practical problems faced by immigrants (Hirschman, 2004). Religion in youths with a foreign background could not be only something related to religion faith ant its practices, rather to social aspects, such as the development of forms of sociability, the organization of services that young people use, spaces for discussions and educational experiences (Ambrosini et al., 2011).

A crucial part of the research focuses on the complex issue of identity and belonging. Sociology research has displayed the complexity process of building identities in a critical stage of life such as adolescence (critical period for all teenagers, no matter the nationality). Obviously, this complexity is amplified in second-generation youths, who are supposed to combine cultural aspects of the context of origin (country of origin culture and specific orientations of the family context) with those of the receiving country (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004; Orioles, 2015).

In this kind of analysis there is the constant risk that cultures are described as static and clearly separated realities which can be more or less interrelated. A matter of fact is that, building your own identity is a set of processes which depend on multiple factors related to different life experiences, people someone met, family support, economic, social and also legislative context in which you find yourself living.

There are studies which have analysed the connection between sociability and school context. According to Goldsmith, schools play a role in shaping race relations (Goldsmith, 2004). This study examines how schools influence interracial friendliness and interracial conflict. It is

true that school integration raises perceptions of both friendliness and conflict, with conflict increasing more quickly. Fewer minority teachers, less group work, and segregated extracurricular activities worsen racial relations. Evidence has suggested that students are particularly likely to avoid interracial contact in biracial schools with equally sized groups; the study also displays that integration will likely result in more conflict than friendliness unless proactive steps are taken. Cvajner's research focus the attention on high schools as in this social context there is a higher proportion of youths with a foreign background emigrated in Italy during pre-adolescence. The study displayed what happens in high school classes from a sociability point of view, analysing the results of a research project conducted in seven high schools in Trentino region, in North Italy. The project included a survey administered to the students, interviews, and group discussions both with parents and students and their teachers. The aim was to understand if segregation and polarization could occur in this context and if ethnically based models of sociability could emerge. The results have displayed that, social and symbolic boundaries are partially present in school contexts but mostly that, isolation and segregation phenomena are, significantly concentrated among teenagers immigrated very recently in the receiving country.

There are numerous studies focusing on the role of school in integration processes and most Italian studies investigated on these crucial themes to understand conditions of youths with a foreign background and consequently to make an evaluation of integration results of the first generation, their parents. The main topics are the impact of migratory process in education and how school results could be an indication of integration. In *Il successo scolastico dei giovani figli dell'immigrazione,* Grasso analysed how families, as an index of social capital, can play the role both of a promotional resource and of a negative agent with respect to the results of success or failure in school and more deeply to the processes of inclusion or exclusion. Different family models and migration experiences does not always guarantee the necessary conditions of containment and support in the growth process. Factors such as loneliness, the trauma of migration can affect the life paths (Grasso, 2015).

In the past, studies had highlighted quite clearly a big risk of Italy: to ignore legitimate growth aspirations of the second generations by applying to them the same stereotypes built for their parents. The risk was a possible collision between the desire of the second generations (who have grown up in Italian schools) to project different lives from their parents and a mechanism of social acceptance of immigration process, defined by Ambrosini as subordinate integration (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004). This reasoning leads a reflection on educational and labour market

horizons of the second generations. The phenomenon that catches the attention of scholars is the overexposure of the second generations to the risk of work and social exclusion. For example, second generations with a foreign background are overrepresented among young people Neet, it means young people who are no longer in school and do not have a job or are not training to do a job. It is not easy to quantify the phenomenon because of the difficulties related to the availability of the second-generations data (Zanfrini, 2018). Some studies have displayed the weaknesses of many young people with a foreign background such as poor skills (usually linguistic skills). Furthermore, there are studies that reveals disadvantages related to living in some neighborhoods or belonging to a religious minority. Actually, it is true that disadvantages in the labour market can be traced back to school careers. Accordingly, a relevant data is that students with a foreign background suffer a constant disadvantage compared to their native peers. This is an important information as it is closely linked to the equity and the effectiveness of educational systems as well as the ability of schools to welcome and promote not only the "unequal" ones, but also the "different" ones (Id., 69), therefore it is an issue that should push educational systems to make a self-evaluation of their work.

In addition to that, it seems that in Italian social context, the important element of school success is for native-born people the family's social and economic capital, while for people with a foreign background it is also the age at emigration and the quality of relations within the family unit (Santagati, 2015). According to this, studies, exploring the influence of students' migratory history on school success and based on Rumbaut's (1997) numerical classification of generations, agree that there has been a tendency to suggest that being born in Italy or immigrating at a young age make easier the process of integration because it could mean more chances of a regular educational path, reduction of school delay, better school results, and a greater chance of continuing on to higher education. These data emerge for example in a quantitative study conducted in 2005 in many schools of Emilia Romagna (Bargagli, 2006).

According to Heckmann, all these factors related to educational disadvantages, can be grouped in three categories (Heckmann, 2008). The first one is related to macro factors which comprise specific national education system and migration policies.

Meso factors comprise school and teacher-student relationship. The research on this topic has displayed that the absence or distorted presentation of people with a foreign background in textbooks, in other materials and in school life, has a negative influence on the self-image and self-esteem of minority group children and youths and negatively affects their chances of school

success. Concentration of students with foreign background in schools hinders their academic performance, by contrast minority children exposed to classmates with better performance and higher educational aspirations tend to increase their own; furthermore, teachers' attitudes and low expectations towards students with a foreign background generally have a negative influence on their performances. As Santagati states "often the educational institution doesn't recognize their previous school experience and, consequently, constructs a delay through the habit of enrolling the student in grades lower than those correspondent to age" (Santagati, 2015, p. 17). Institutions play a significant role in the reproduction of social and ethnic inequalities. Romito's ethnographic study conducted in two lower secondary schools in the city of Milan, has considered the influence of teachers' guidance counseling on their students at the transition to high school. Teachers typically advise students with a foreign background to make lower educational choices, directing them towards less ambitious training options, considering immigrant students inadequate for the more prestigious lyceums. Usually these students are represented by the teaching staff as unable to make it in schools that require high language skills, also because they often suffer the stereotype of not having the economic or social support of families (Romito, 2014).

Eventually, the third category of Heckmann is the micro factor, that is the difficulties related to families' socio-economic conditions. The truth is that, even though immigrant families hope a better future for their children, their weak resources and activities for the socialization of children cannot help them to support the school career and moreover not all immigrant communities are equally capable of producing models of success to emulate and to interact effectively with educational institutions (Heckmann, 2008).

Obviously socio-economic condition alone, cannot explain school results of students with a foreign background, but a relevant fact is that both for native-born students and students with a foreign background, success is correlated with school climate, defined as the quality of relations with teachers and peers, the quality of students' experience in the classroom and as discussed by Ravecca it depends also on the gender of the students (Ravecca, 2010).

Despite these difficulties, some pupils are very brilliant and with their determination, perseverance, and dedication, they prove that being a person with a foreign background does not mean necessarily academic failure (Zanfrini, 2018). Personal redemption, the desire of being active part of the society where they were born or grown up move them to develop an amazing ability to make the most of available educational opportunities (Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019).

Therefore, as second generations constitute an important and growing part of the population, there are a lot of studies and research about them. As mentioned, the main topics are their life trajectories, their conditions of access and use of opportunities, the constraints, and obstacles they face towards the process of integration.

In the last time a topic in the centre of the migration debate both in Europe and USA is the success and the achievements of the second generations in educational and labour market. Accordingly, the research project *Elites. Pathways to Success*[5] (Crul et al., 2017) is a representative one. This study examined and compared the steep upward mobility of the second generations in France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands by studying how they overcome obstacles on their regular pathway. Factors like individual and relational skills, ethnic capital and support from the family only explains part of the variation in outcomes within ethnic minority groups. ELITES study shows the role of the so-called multiplier effect[6] that becomes visible as children with a foreign background take more advantage of opportunities in education and on the labour market than their peers of native descent and therefore, moving into new socioeconomic circles offers them opportunities that were previously unavailable.

2.3. Research gap and the idea of the study

Achievements of the second generations in the labour market is an issue which deserves special attention. It is time to go beyond the topics strongly analysed up to now (such as the issues of identity, belongings, or integration), since our societies have been experiencing new transformations. For this reason, a reflection in other critical areas involving people with a foreign background is necessary. A further step is to reflects how second generations "can represent the most progressive forces within their own communities and a resource for the future development of our societies" (Santagati, 2015).

Access to university and career opportunities of the second generations are issues on which Italian research have started to discuss. In *University Students With Migrant Background in Italy,* Bertozzi focuses on the choices and opportunities that these students find. The article also focus the attention on the effects of factors like limited economic resources, social and cultural capital,

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[5]The project "Elite" was supported by the European Research Council
(ERC). https://www.elitesproject.eu/. Last visit 10 luglio 2022
[6]The idea of the multiplier effect is that people with a foreign background virtually propel themselves forward in their careers. Essential is that each successful step forward offers new possibilities on which they build, thereby accumulating cultural and social capital and multiplying their chances of success. (Crul et al., 2017)

type of high school attended and information bias on these students' opportunities (Bertozzi, 2018). In international context the topic is more developed and there are many comparative studies of the second generations starting from primary to tertiary education system, as well as, as previously mentioned, research projects on their career opportunities (Crul et al., 2017); while in Italy research on these topics are still at local level (Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019).

It is a very challenging topic, but nowadays a reflection is needed considering the future, in order to avoid a general slowdown in the processes of building human capital useful for the Italy of tomorrow. On the other hand, the country has already suffered an important delay in the production of human capital and neglecting the job trajectories of these young people would further aggravate the Italian disadvantage compared to the rest of Europe (Ceravolo & Molina, 2013).

As analysing the role of school in integration processes is crucial to understand conditions of students with a foreign background and consequently to make an evaluation of integration results of the first generation, similarly, analysing job trajectories of the second generations is fundamental to obtain useful information for our society such as to understand social conditions of these young people and consequently those of the country in the future. What is more, this analysis lays the basis for creating a realistic image of this part of the population which represents an important part of those who, in terms of contribution to public resources and generational investment, could be among the protagonists of the future of the country.

Many elements are involved in choosing a career, such as personal, cultural and social context factors, opinions and attitudes related to the labour market. The aim of this study is to present an overview of second generations career choices, trying to determine the extent to which their choices were influenced by the schools they attended and social support they received (family, friends and teacher's guidance). These two factors have been taken into consideration because they are constantly present indicators in a person's life. Future trajectories, as children, are in several ways influenced by school and sociability, later as young adults these two indicators are still present, for this reason the study aim to understand how career choices are in some ways inspired by the education path undertaken and the relationships built.

Accordingly, this paper examines the role played by the choice of high school and social support in second generations occupational trajectories. Literature documents that in all advanced societies education plays a fundamental role in the process of placing people within the social context. As qualifications increase, the chances of entering the professional jobs increase too,

while the chances of occupying the most disadvantaged social positions decrease (Bargagli, 2006). What is more, education is the means by which someone can obtain social and economic intergenerational mobility because the achievement of school goals could mean success in social and work environment (Giannetti & Rama, 2015), for this reason education is considered by many young people and their ethnic families as a possibility of redemption.

As regards social support, processes related to the construction of relationships change according to the connections with the country of destination. Time is a critical factor that influences socialization process in young people with a foreign background. Experiences and relationships can have a changing and a transformation based on the time spent in many contexts and the age of immigration and the years spent in the country of destination are crucial. Thus, children who are socialized abroad but immigrate before puberty and adolescence have to rebuild new social networks and will tend to socialize with co-ethnic communities, while native-born children with a foreign background or children immigrated during childhood, quickly develop the ability to integrate themselves into the social context of the country of destination (Ambrosini et al., 2011). Their contacts with people of native origin can help them to know new economic and work environments.

School environment again, even though can be a resource related to the success (success not intended as a guarantee of a promising and satisfying career, rather as a source of personal satisfaction that strengthens the ideal and future self) of these young people, indeed can become a driving force for sociability. School represents a perfect cross-section of society, an environment of culture at various levels and, according to Eve, the relationships built at school, for young people with a foreign background, are crucial for the process of inclusion and exclusion not only at school, but also in the social context (Eve, 2010), and consequently in the choice of a career as well.

Social support from parents can also contribute to the access of people and communities (Ambrosini et al., 2011) who can drive youths to a specific career and successful pathways. However, sometimes families can lead to work areas which preclude children from expressing their individuality, exploring other contexts and making choices which harmonized with the country of destination's convention.

Therefore, the relationships and bonds young people with a foreign background choose to build could produce a significant influence especially in specific periods of life (Ambrosini et al., 2011). The ability this young people develop to juggle within these contexts (school, family, social

network) can become a resource that directs them towards specific job careers and successful pathways.

School, social support (family, friends, teacher's guidance) and many other interrelated factors usually, have been related to integration. They are the key to social success and as studies have indicated in young people with a foreign background, they contribute to obtaining prestigious positions (Crul et al., 2017). All these elements explain stability and level of integration in the society and outline too possibilities of growth and development within the country of destination.

According to this, the object of this study is to investigate how these indicators, school and social support, usually used to evaluate conditions of young people with a foreign background could also be useful to analyse their job career and social conditions. These are decisive choices which represent the synthesis of their individual aspirations and the assumption of a responsible commitment to the society which also means redemption, that is the wish to act consistently with the investment made through migration by their families.

Chapter III
The Research

3.1. Research aims

Second generations are a very relevant group of Italian population not only in terms of their demographic weight, but also because they will contribute to the level and the quality of human capital that the economy of the country will need to compete with other countries. (Zanfrini, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, there are lot of studies about second generations. Many studies have focused on children with a foreign background, analysing different topics such as their impact on the educational system, the complex issue of identity and belonging, the connection between sociability and school context or the role played by school in the integration processes.

More recently, post-secondary education and career opportunities among students with ethnic origins are topics on which Italian research have started to discuss. It is an issue that needs an important reflection as second generations' job trajectories affect not only individual but also the social and economic growth of the country.

Presuming that a career choice can be the result of different elements such as variety of life experiences, personal opinions and attitudes related to the labour market, family's cultural and social capital as well as aspects linked to a foreign background, the purpose of this study is to analyse second generations' job trajectories and to try to determine the extent to which their choices were the result of a specific guidance. By analysing the background of the respondents, the research aimed to investigate second generations peculiarities related to the choice of a job, what factors can influence the decision, and to understand what role is played by high school and social support they have received (family support, friends support and teachers' guidance). Eventually another aspect to be analysed is the impact of these choices in the life of the young ones, in terms of personal satisfaction or the need to make changes.

Accordingly, the analysis considered some aspects such as an overview of the respondents (age, origin, social status), educational path of the respondents and their parents, parents' job, and social relationships (family support, friends support and teacher's guidance).

First of all, in order to achieve the aim of the study it was fundamental to make a distinction between children who were born in Italy or those immigrated at ages 0-5 and young people immigrated later that is, making a distinction between generation 2.0, 1.75, 1.50 and 1.25 according to Rumbaut's numerical classification of generations.

The reason to this acting is why, as suggested by literature, integration process seems easier for native-born people or people who have spent their whole socialization process in the country of destination, while it seems more difficult with the increase of migration age. Therefore, it has been a useful distinction to investigate any differences between respondents of different age groups.

Another important information collected was the origin country of the parents. This aspect is related to parents' educational level and their ability to provide to their children practical help at school and afterwards to lead them to specific career choices.

3.2. Methods

It was carried out a survey among young people with a foreign background living in the district of Treviso between the ages of 19-30. The sample includes young people with a mixed background, second generations in the strictest sense of the word and young people immigrated in Italy during their childhood or later. The data was collected by using an on-line multiple-choice questionnaire alternating with additional short-answer and open-ended questions.

The aim of the study was to investigate the career choices of the second generations and find possible relations between education and social support they have received.

3.2.1. Factors involved in the analysis of the data

Many studies related to the second generations were analysed in order to have an idea of the information have been collected till now, and to make the research question more precise and cohesive. There were studies about uses and meanings of the category "second generations" (Riniolo, 2019; Santagati, 2015), statistics about the size of the migratory phenomenon in Europe and in Italy and studies which focused on the success and the achievements of the second generations in education and labour market (Bertozzi, 2018; Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019; Crul et al., 2017). Research on the main factors which drive young people to make their choices and preferences for certain professional careers were examined. Many reasons are involved in the choice of a job. Starting from childhood and adolescence, social experience undergone in the family or friendship play a significant role, as well as gender, social class, intellectual capacity, professional interests and values are equally important factors related to career choices (Cohen-Scali, 2003). Furthermore, according to Santagati (Santagati, 2009), educational path, parents'

origin as well as the cultural capital of the family are other factors that explain the choices and successful training paths.

In addition to these factors, it seems that in second generations, foreign background is particularly significant. According to Rinaldi usually, the educational and professional mobility project of parents is reflected in directing and supporting, also economically, the children in specific work or long-term study paths. The hope that guides parents is that higher educational credentials increase the children's chances of accessing better jobs, in terms of income and prestige, with positive effects on the family of origin too (Rinaldi, 2009).

The presence or absence of parents (and possibly other family members such as brothers or sisters) is another determining element in the life experience of the children, the result of a specific migratory path of the family that becomes distinctive of the present of the children. Furthermore, the economic status of the family seems to have a significant influence on the choice of school paths first and then on career choices. It is a matter of fact that sometimes families ask children to contribute to families' income. As a result, young people have to interrupt their studies and sometimes enter an unskilled career path early. Consequently, it is not the lack of trust in the Italian school that could drive young people with a migrant background to abandon their studies, but in order to help families they have to "choose" in this direction. In this context, other relevant factors in the choice of a career are the opportunities that public institutions offer to the new generations in terms of education and training, in the transition to the labor market and, in particular, in access to citizenship (Santagati, 2009).

3.2.2. *Sampling and data collection procedures*

The most suitable instrument to investigate the issues was found in the construction of a multiple-choice questionnaire alternating with additional short-answer and open-ended questions; Google Form was used to build the questionnaire. It was organized into categories, each of them had the objective of measuring different aspects involved in the research question.

Before the administration, the questionnaire was tested to people who were similar to the target group of the research in order to improve the instrument, if necessary, and make secure the cooperation of the respondents.

A special effort and time were spent to identify physical and on-line contexts in which find participants belonging to the population of the study. Some respondents were personally contacted

in informal meeting places, while other respondents were contacted thanks to the kind collaboration of associations and organizations that offered their help to spread the questionnaire.

Even though the numerous people contacted, the response was not so quick and furthermore, as imagined, the numbers of response was not that hoped, but although this inconvenience the number of participants who filled the questionnaire was sufficient to the development of the study.

After the designing and the administration of the questionnaire, the data were processed: each questionnaire was checked to verify aspects such as their fully completion, the presence of contradictory or "strange" answers for instance due to the comprehension of the language, the presence of mistakes made by respondents when filling in the questionnaire or the presence of missing data. After reading the contributions, the data were organized in a table. Each participant was coded, receiving a numerical code, based in the order they filled out the questionnaire. Thus, the numerical code of the respondents was inserted in the vertical side and the questions in the horizontal side of the table and each response was recorded inside the table. After tabulation, all data were printed in paper sheets to have a better image of the information. Finally, to make data readable and interpretable, descriptive statistics were used in order to categorize the information and to understand what data reveal about the research question.

The last step was the analysis and the interpretation of the information. Several comparisons have been made, such as the behavior of genders about career choices, the behavior of the individual generations (2.0, 1,75, 1.50, 1.25 generations), differences between workers and workers who had enrolled in higher education, the effect of the presence of elder siblings, and the influence of parents' origin and their education level on the children level of qualification.

3.3. Instruments

In order to find the answers to the research question it was carried out a survey. The aim of the survey research is to collect self-report information from individuals. The typical instrument used for this objective is the written questionnaire. It allows one to collect a significant quantity of data in a reasonable time, and it is an instrument than can be spread in many different ways. Thus, the data were collected by using an on-line multiple-choice questionnaire alternating with additional short-answer and open-ended questions that was filled by 45 participants aged 19-30.

The challenge was to design a questionnaire using a rigorous process to have an instrument that could provide reliable and valid information, for this reason during the process the questionnaire has had several changes.

It was useful to identify some instruments published for other studies. The analysis of aspects such as the structure of the questionnaire, the construction of the items or the way of posing the questions was fundamental in the process of the questionnaire design. The focus was on national and international studies concerning young people and precisely second generations, for instance *University Students With Migrant Background in Italy. Which Factors Affect Opportunities?* (Bertozzi, 2018*), The multiplier effect: how the accumulation of cultural and social capital explains steep upward social mobility of children of low-educated immigrants* (Crul *et al*., 2017) and *Giovani stranieri, nuovi cittadini: Le strategie di una generazione ponte* (Besozzi *et al*., 2009). At the end of the analysis the instruments in the following studies have been consulted:

1. *Giovani e territorio: percorsi di integrazione di ragazzi italiani e stranieri in alcune province del Piemonte*, Bonapace *et al*. (2009);
2. *Giovani immigrati di seconda generazione, formazione professionale, occupabilità e cittadinanza attiva*, Daniele (2014)

Thanks to the analysis of the questionnaires and the literature, it was possible to identify four thematic groups to be explored: respondents' personal information, parents' information, educational experience, and social support.

In the questionnaire design process, the focus was on the following aspects: indicating the contents of the items in explicit terms, choosing types of questionnaire items, writing items that work, designing the format of the questionnaire and piloting it.

In order to achieve the first step, it was helpful to make the problem research easier to understand by explaining it in more details, eliminate all the questions that were not directly related

to the issues that the questionnaire has been designed to investigate and avoid making the questionnaire too long.

As regards the types of questionnaire items, the first part of the questionnaire was made up of closed-ended items, to ask about very specific information. The purpose was to know general information of the respondents and have a brief idea of their lives but at the same time being very polite in asking sensitive information. For example, that was the result of eighteenth and twentieth items about parents' educational level and occupations. Giving various response options for the respondents to choose from was the best solution than asking the respondents to produce any free writing:

18. *What is the educational level of your parents?*
   No one……………………………………………. ☐
   Primary school…………………………….... ☐
   Secondary school………………………….... ☐
   Upper secondary school…………………... ☐
   University………………………………..... ☐

20. *What is your parents' work occupation?*
   Worker…………………………………………. ☐
   Employee……………………………..……….. ☐
   Business owner…………………………....…… ☐
   Manager……………………………………..... ☐
   Other…....………………………………....… ☐

The second part of the questionnaire was made up of short-answer and open-ended items. In this case the purpose was to deepen some answers and to encourage respondents to give more reasons or explain better their thoughts.

In order to produce items that work, it was important to structure them in a precise way. It meant the construction of short and simple items and the use of simple and natural language. Since the respondents come from different life experiences and different linguistic level a special attention has been made in making the items easy to read and to understand avoiding ambiguous or loaded words and sentences. Furthermore, as negative constructions can be problematic to be

managed, and double-barreled questions can confuse the mind, all these constructions were avoided in writing the items.

Finally, the questionnaire was organized in 65 statements divided into four categories: respondents' personal information, parents' information, educational experience, and social support. The aim of the division in categories was to measure different aspects but it was also a visual help to allow the respondents to understand better the area of interest of the statements.

Consequently, a special attention was given to the structure and the progression of the statements, for this purpose thinking about the order of the questions was very important. The first part of the questionnaire aimed also to create the right atmosphere which could contribute to the compilation of the questionnaire. In a slow and progressive way respondents were prepared to give fewer automatic responses but more opinions, reasons, and feelings.

At the beginning the questionnaire aimed to gather personal information of the respondents asking questions such as:

- age
- sex
- occupational status
- information of friends

The following part gathers data about the family, asking information about parents' educational level and their current job. Some questions were:

- parents' educational qualification
- parents' current job

After asking information about respondents' educational path and experience, the next parts of the questionnaire gather information related to social support they have received. In this case the questions did not aim to know only the information, but also the reasons and the opinions about the responses respondents have given. Some questions were about:

- parents' advice about high school and career choices
- teachers' guidance about high school and career choices
- friends' opinions/advice about high school and career choices
- providing reasons for having or not having followed the advice

The questionnaire ends with two general questions aimed to know respondents' opinions about the choices they have made:

- being or not being satisfied about their choices
- choices they could have made

Questions regarding the identity process related to the possession or not of the citizenship were excluded from the research. Even if having the citizenship makes such a difference on career choices as reported in some responses of the participants.

A special effort has been made in the format and layout of the questionnaire. It was very practical the use of Google Form because it allows one to write and design the structure of a questionnaire, but there was a point to consider: the length of the questionnaire. Therefore, the completion time was a factor considered to motivate respondents to produce reliable and valid data.

The last step involving the construction of the questionnaire was to pilot it. The aim was obtaining a final version of the questionnaire in order to eliminate for instance too difficult or irrelevant items, improving the language clarity of the items and time the completion of the questionnaire. Therefore, the period during the construction of the questionnaire, all the contexts and places which have been chosen to search the respondents were visited to gather as much information as possible about the environment and the subjects who attended those places. Thus, a test questionnaire was administered to a group similar to the target group. They answered the questions and provided detailed feedback about the questionnaire logical structure, its linguistic comprehension and administration time. After many revisions, ccompletion time of the questionnaire was around 12 minutes and a final version of the questionnaire was completed.

The final version of the questionnaire was administered to the target group of the study. The respondents were informed that there were no right or wrong answers, the objective was simply an opportunity to get information and to grasp their opinions. After that, all the data collected were checked to verify aspects such as the completion of the questionnaire or possible missing responses. After checking the data, they were codified, tabulated and then they were ready for the analysis and the interpretation thanks to the use of descriptive statistics.

3.4. Data processing

All data, both personal and those related to the questionnaire, have been collected anonymously, did not be disclosed to third parties, and processed in full compliance with the principles of correctness, lawfulness, and transparency of privacy, such as provided for by 163/2017 Legislative Decree ex art. 13 of Legislative Decree 196/2003, exclusively for research and teaching purposes.

3.5. Participants

At the end of the administration time, 45 questionnaires have been selected for the analysis. The target population of the study was represented by young people with a foreign background aged 19-30 living in the district of Treviso. They are young people born in Italy or arrived in the country during childhood or adolescence, who in any case had carried out a significant part of their school career in Italy.

The reason of choosing Treviso is due to the presence of a significant ethnic population in the territory. Veneto (fourth region in Italy for the number of foreign people living in the area) with Lombardy region host the highest share of foreign citizens, the highest share of students with a foreign background and consequently second generations young people[7].

The sampling procedure used to find the respondents was a non-probability sampling. This choice was motivated by two reasons: this procedure is less expensive than others and what is more, even using limited resources, it is possible to try to achieve a reasonably representative sample.

Two strategies of non-probability sampling have been used: convenience or opportunity sampling and snowball sampling. Thanks to convenience sampling, members of the target population that meet specific criteria have been selected. Selection requirements were: people with a foreign background, living in the district of Treviso, belonging to Rumbaut's numerical classification of generations (2.0, 1.75, 1.50 and 1.25 generation), between the ages of 19-30. For this purpose, different places have been used to find the sample. Respondents have been contacted in different contexts: public libraries, educational institutions for adults (CPIA), outside religious associations and outside park areas of some factories in Treviso. People who have been personally contacted were informed about the research and its objectives, the techniques used to collect the

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[7] http://site.cislveneto.it/Notizie/Scuola.-Veneto-oltreil-10-degli-alunni-sono-stranieri

data and the appropriate use of their sensitive information. At the end of the conversation people received a sheet containing a brief explanation of the project and the QR CODE to access the questionnaire.

After the identification of few participants, the snowball sampling procedure was used to extend the project to other participants. Like a chain reaction, participants were asked to identify suitable further members of the population to participate in the project.

Moreover, thanks to the kind collaboration of associations and organizations (Veneto Lavoro, CISL-ANOLF Giovani di Belluno e Treviso), that offered their help to spread the questionnaire, further subjects have been invited to participate. Associations that did not participate in spread the research project explained that due to the lack of time and people they could not work in the project.

3.5.1. Sample composition

At the conclusion of the administration of the questionnaire, 47 people participated in the project. Two questionnaires were disqualified and not used in the analysis of the results because in the tabulation of the data it was clear the linguistic difficulties they had. The difficulties can be strictly related to the age of arrival in the country. As reported in their questionnaires the respondents were seventeen when they arrived in Italy, and it meant not attending the school or facing several problems in the process of integration at school. Thus, in order to avoid wrong interpretations, they have not been taken into consideration. Therefore 45 questionnaires were selected for the analysis. As indicated in the table, 9 respondents were university graduates, 30 school graduates (16 of them are attending university), and 6 were without any graduation.

Fig. 3.1 Sample Composition

	Gender	Age	Educational Qualification	Employment Status
1°	F	25	University Graduation	Student
2°	F	25	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Working Student
3°	M	26	Vocational Sch. Qualification	Worker
4°	F	28	University Graduation	Worker
5°	F	25	Vocational Sch. Qualification	Working Student
6°	F	20	Lower Second. Sch. Diploma	Unemployed
7°	F	30	Technical Sch. Graduation	Young Mother
8°	M	30	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Worker
9°	F	29	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker
10°	F	30	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Worker
11°	M	25	Technical Sch. Graduation	Working Student
12°	F	30	University Graduation	Worker
13°	F	23	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker

14°	F	25	Technical Sch. Graduation	Student
15°	M	20	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Student
16°	F	19	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Working Student
17°	F	19	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Student
18°	F	24	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Working Student
19°	F	26	Lower Second. Sch. Diploma	Worker
20°	F	28	Technical Sch. Graduation	Young Mother
21°	F	20	Technical Sch. Graduation	Working Student
22°	F	19	Vocational Sch. Qualification	Working Student
23°	F	30	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Worker
24°	F	29	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Worker
25°	F	30	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Housekeeper
26°	F	29	Lower Second. Sch. Diploma	Worker
27°	M	27	University Graduation	Worker
28°	F	28	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker
29°	F	23	Technical Sch. Graduation	Student
30°	F	21	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Working Student
31°	F	24	University Graduation	Worker
32°	F	30	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Student
33°	F	30	University Graduation	Working Student
34°	F	23	Grammar Sch. Graduation	Working Student
35°	M	22	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker
36°	F	27	University Graduation	Worker
37°	F	27	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Worker
38°	F	25	University Graduation	Unemployed
39°	M	27	University Graduation	Worker
40°	F	30	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Worker
41°	F	29	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker
42°	F	28	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker
43°	F	23	Technical Sch. Graduation	Student
44°	F	25	Vocational Sch. Graduation	Working Student
45°	F	29	Technical Sch. Graduation	Worker

3.5.2. *Personal data and age of arrival*

Participation in the research project was voluntary. Respondents were young people aged 19-30, with an average of 26 years. The most representative ages were 30 (20%), 25 (16%) and 29 years (11%).

The sample had a significant presence of women, (38 women compared to 7 men). It has been chosen the range age 19-30 years because it is interrelated with the research question, that is *career choices*, furthermore this age range represents the period that people acquire more independence (the reaching of their majority) and at the same time they become more aware of their responsibilities. They pass from being adolescents to becoming first young adults and then adults. Factors usually considered limits to the expression of one's personality such as parents' advice or belonging to an ethnic group seem to fade away. Choices in this period of life has a fundamental impact. In this stage of their life, young ones become their own masters.

Focusing the attention on the age of arrival in the country of destination, the respondents have been divided in four groups of age. This aspect is significant because the age of arrival is closely linked to the emotional and cognitive development of a person and to the environments where socialization takes place. It is suggested that being born in the country of destination or immigrating at a young age can make such a difference to the chances of a regular educational path and to the process of socialization. 36% of participants were born in Italy, children who immigrate at ages 0-5 represent 13%; children who immigrate at ages 6-12 represent 29% and children who immigrate at ages 13-17 represent 22%. They are 2.0 generation, 1.75 generation, 1.50 generation and 1.25 generation, respectively (Rumbaut, 1997).

Fig. 3.2 Age of arrival in the destination country

	Frequency	%	Generation
Born in Italy	16	36%	2.0
Immigrate at ages 0-5	6	13%	1.75
Immigrate at ages 6-12	13	29%	1.50
Immigrate at ages 13-17	10	22%	1.25
Total	45	100%	

Fig. 3.3 Numerical classification of generations
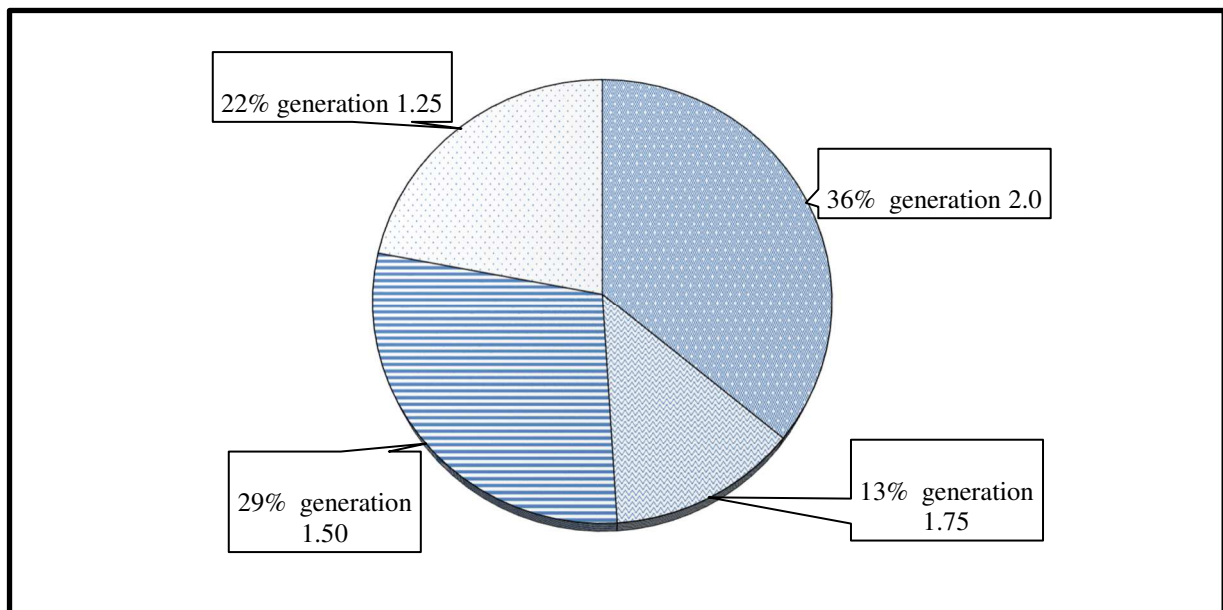
The study also includes respondents with a mixed background (11%), since usually the foreign background is represented by their mothers who tend also to convey their ethnic origin. The average number of years spent in Italy for those who have immigrated to the country (64%) is 16 years. Since the range of age considered in the study is relatively narrow, the number of years of residency is a variable that is strongly related to the age at the time of arrival in the country of destination.

The age at the time of arrival is linked to the attendance to Italian L2 courses. Language skills appear to have a decisive role in determining educational path, not only regarding the good level in the use of the Italian language, but also for the general linguistic heritage. Excluding 16 respondents who were born in Italy and those belonging to 1.75 generation, among 23 respondents belonging to 1.25 and 1.50 generations 35% of them (8 participants) attended Italian L2 courses. There are not elements to identify the reasons why the rest of the respondents have never attended Italian L2 courses, but for 8 respondents the reason could be found in the fact that the language of their origin country is very close to Italian language.

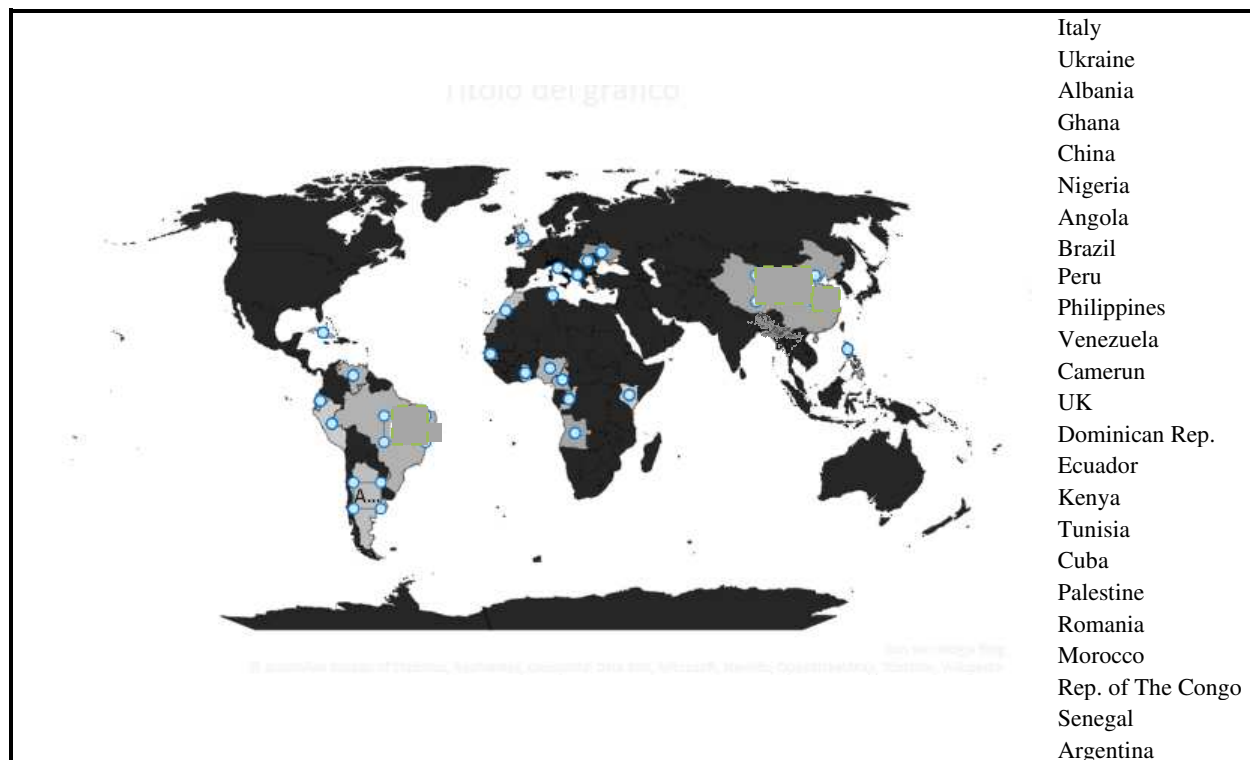### 3.5.3. *Geographical origins of the respondents*

As regards geographical origins, among the respondents, 16 (36%) were born in Italy while 29 (64%) were born abroad. Although from the questionnaire was not indicated the kind of migratory path, since it is a peculiarity of Italian immigration, most of them arrived in Italy through family reunion. They came from 17 different countries while their parents were born in 24 different countries.

The most represented countries in the study are Ukraine (9%) followed by Albania (7%) and China (7%). These rates are slightly different from the national and regional trend that reported slightly different positions for these nationalities (Romania, China, Morocco, Albania and Ukraine (Istat, 2021)). The reason of this difference could be found in the fact that some respondents have been found in the CISL offices. These offices provide a variety of services including the elaboration of paperwork to obtain the citizenship, since countries such as Ukraine and Albania do not belong to EU.

Fig. 3.4 Geographical area of origin of respondents and their families

	Frequency	%
Latin America	10	22%
Eastern Europe	9	20%
Western Europe	1	2%
Asia	5	11%
Sub-Saharan Africa	13	29%
North Africa	2	4%
Mixed background (China, Camerun, Nigeria, Palestine)	5	11%
Total	45	100%

Fig. 3.5 Country of birth/Family's country of origin

Italy
Ukraine
Albania
Ghana
China
Nigeria
Angola
Brazil
Peru
Philippines
Venezuela
Camerun
UK
Dominican Rep.
Ecuador
Kenya
Tunisia
Cuba
Palestine
Romania
Morocco
Rep. of The Congo
Senegal
Argentina

The case in which one of the two parents is missing is only one (lack of the father for a respondent whose mother comes from Latin America). The cases in which respondents' parents do not come from the same country is low (11%). It means that, the sample has a high share of parental homogamy based on the country of origin. This situation reflects the general homogamy of foreign people who live in Italy, it is a matter of fact that, parents whose components are both foreigners, tend to be couples with the same nationality (68%) (Istat, 2021, p.128).

Another component of these families is the presence/absence of brothers and sisters. 8 (18%) respondents reported that they are only children, 37 (82%) had brothers/sisters and among this group 25 (56% of total sample) reported having older brothers/sisters. Considering the three most numerous areas of origin of the sample, 100% of respondents coming from Sub-Saharan Africa had brothers/sisters, while 43% of respondents coming from East Europe, and 50% coming from Latin America reported that they have no siblings.

3.5.4. Integration in the hosting society

As regards the group of friends' composition, respondents gave some information about peculiarities of their friends, such as gender, ethnicity, degree of coincidence with schoolmates and their kind of job.

In the complex, the sample presented an asymmetric distribution: data reported that 60% of respondents had the same proportion of male and female friends, while 40% had friends with the same gender of that of the respondents. By dividing the sample into two groups based on gender, the distribution did not change significantly.

Fig. 3.6 Group of friends' composition
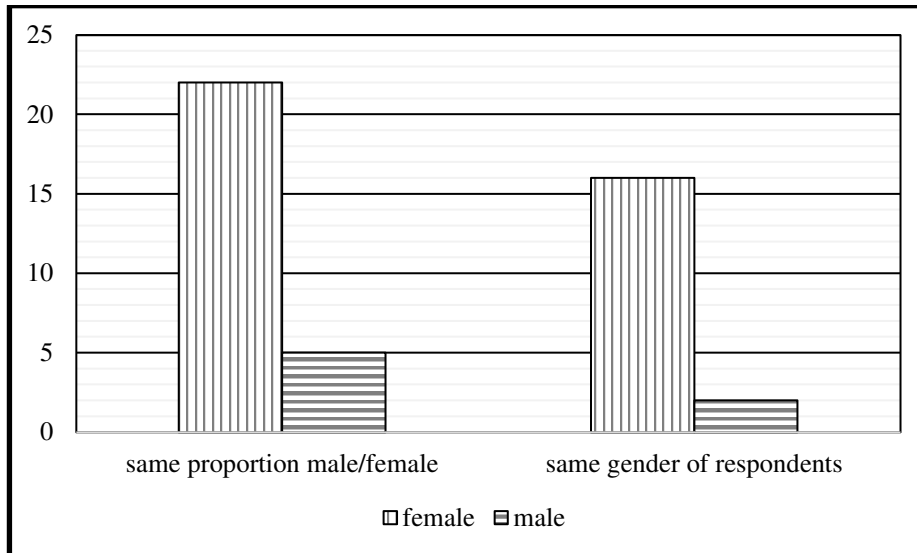
With respect to the place where respondents met their friends, 6 respondents (13%) met their friends at school, it means that the group of friends is made up entirely or mainly of people of the same age. 15 respondents (33%) had the same proportion of friends met at school and outside school environments and 24 respondents (53%) met their friends in environments outside school. Their friends had different occupational status but most of them (64% of respondents) reported that their friends had a job and among the group of those whose friends work, 97% reported that their friends carried out different jobs than theirs.

Moving on to the degree of ethnic heterogeneity of the group of friends, 32 respondents (71%) reported having both Italian and non-Italian friends; 12 respondents (27%) reported having the majority of Italian friends, while only 2% reported having only non-Italian friends.

3.5.5. Parents' socio-economic status

To compare educational qualification of people with different nationalities and educational system means difficulties of evaluation, but it is an interesting data to know because, parents' educational level could have crucial effects on the interest parents show in the education and on the aspirations for the future of their children. Data reported that almost half of parents have high

school qualification (47% fathers and 49% mothers) and it seems that mothers have a slightly high share of presence in higher education (13% of mothers compared to 9% of fathers) while 9% of fathers and 7% of mothers seems did not attend any school or the respondents did not have this information.

As regards parents' employment status, a list with different occupations was not proposed, but for more comprehensive information, respondents were asked to indicate the work of their parents. Jobs were grouped as indicated in the list below. A lot of respondents' families belong to working class (60% of fathers and 62% of mothers) including skilled and unskilled workers, there is the presence of employees (20% of fathers and 18% of mothers) and parents that work in the health care area (2% of fathers and 4% of mothers). Moreover, the sample reported that mothers from countries of Latin America or Asia (Philippines) tend to work as housekeeper. The share of parents that do not have a job is very low for fathers, 2%, compared to that of mothers, 11%. As regards homogeneity inside the families, about 44% of the respondents has both of parents who are workers, or one parent is a worker, and the other does not have a job or works as a housekeeper.

Fig. 3.7 Father employment status

	Frequency	%
Retired	2	4%
Unemployed	1	2%
Field worker	1	2%
Worker	25	56%
Skilled worker	1	2%
Employee	9	20%
Business owner	4	9%
No data	2	4%
Total	45	100%

Fig. 3.8 Mother employment status

	Frequency	%
Unemployed	5	11%
Worker	26	58%
Skilled worker	2	4%
Employee	8	18%
Manager	1	2%
Business owner	3	7%
Total	45	100%

Fig. 3.9 Father employment status vs Mother employment status
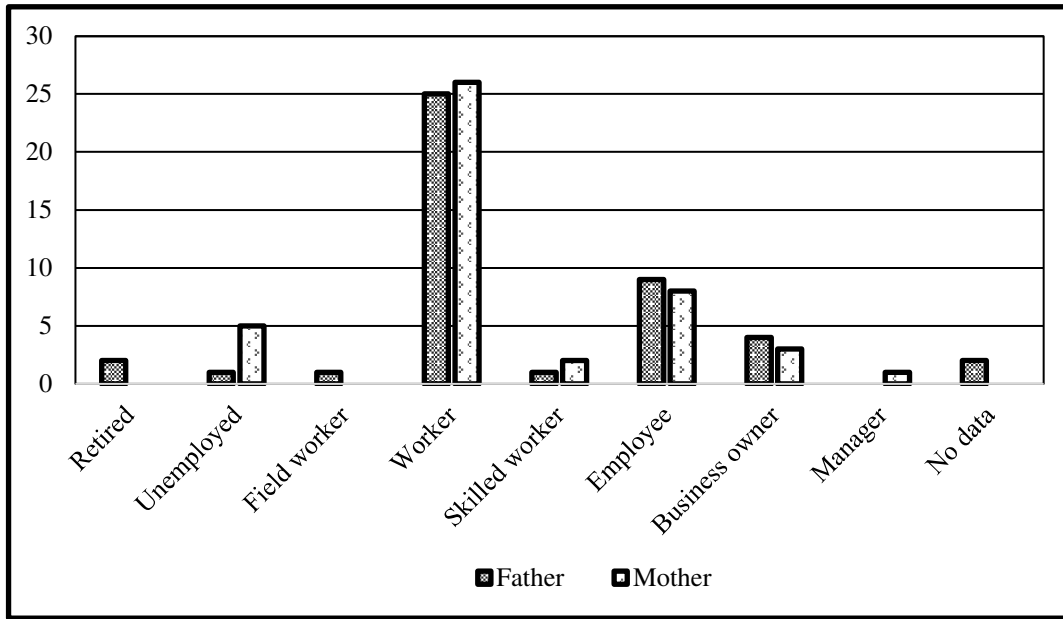
Chapter IV
The results

4.1. Respondents' high school choice

Respondents had carried out a significant part of their schooling in Italy. 67% of them attended the full cycle of studies in Italy (kindergarten, primary school, middle and high school) while 33% of respondents had started their schooling in the countries of origin. In this transition between the school system of the country of origin and Italian schools 27% of respondents, had started the school in Italy by attending middle and high school, while 6% had started by attending high school.
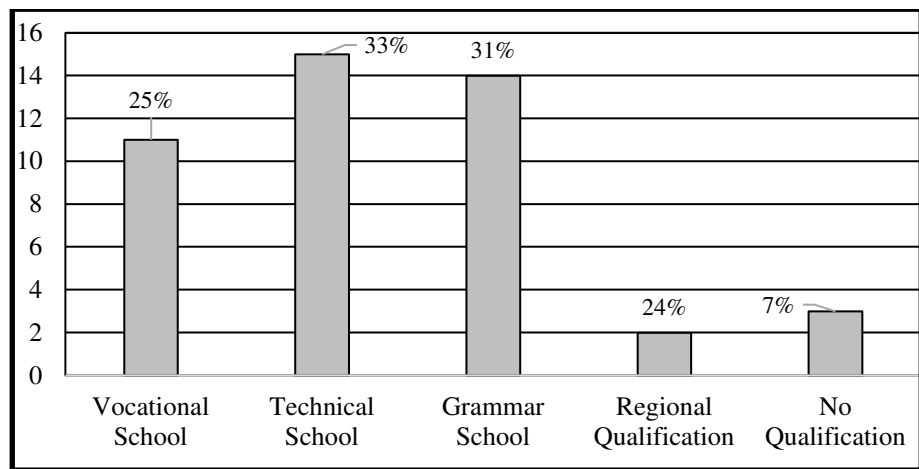
Fig. 4.1 Respondents' educational paths

Data reported that 89% (40 respondents) chose high school rather than regional vocational training (CFP 4%, 2 respondents). In details, the distribution of respondents' school path showed that 33% (11% native born, 22% immigrated) have attended and completed technical schools, 31% (20% native born, 11% immigrated) grammar schools, 29% (4% native born, 25% immigrated) vocational and regional training and 7% did not complete high school. As for national statistics, the presence of people with a foreign background in technical schools is slightly higher than grammar schools.

4.1.1. High school and Age of arrival

Analysing the ages at the time of arrival it seems also that the choice of high school is linked to families' migratory processes. These choices were, in part, planned, not with the objective of placing children in Italian school at a certain age, but rather migratory processes are linked to the time needed to achieve family reunion. This often implies an interruption of children's school path in the country of origin and a new start in the host country with consequences on the stability and continuity of their educational pathways and future employment status.

Fig. 4.2 Foreign background and distribution of school path
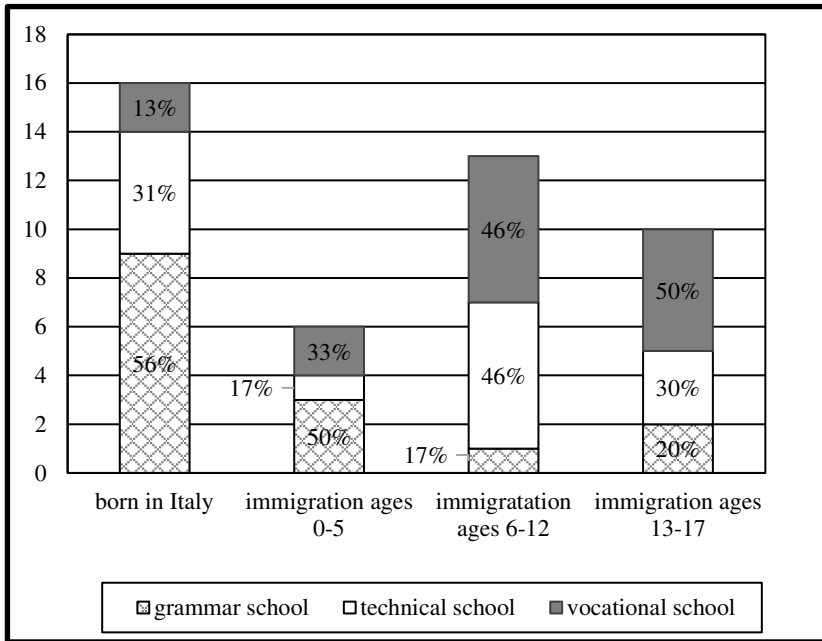
The moment of arrival and consequently time spent in the country of destination, has a significant effect on the choice of the school track. Being born in the country of destination or immigrating at a young age can make such a difference to the chances of a regular school track. For this reason, the choices of second generations in the strictest sense of the word and those who have immigrated in the country are slightly different. The sample reported that young people born in Italy or arrived during the age 0-5 had attended mainly grammar schools (56%, and 50%), while respondents arrived during pre-teens are more represented in technical schools and vocational schools, only 17% have chosen grammar school; finally, young people arrived during adolescence had more possibilities of attending vocational training (50%).

Concentration of students with a foreign background in some kind of schools could be the result of real choices of the families, but sometimes also the (incorrect) recommendations through which teachers support and advice their students at the transition to the high school (Romito, 2014).

4.1.2. High school and Parent's support

Having or not having family support can make the difference since family is a decisive resource. Even when parents do not have a high level of educational qualification, it is their involvement in the school life of young people which can positively affect their choices. On the whole, respondents had linear school paths. Although data show a school delay compared to the natives (for instance the age of entry to university), sometimes due to the age of the arrival in the country of destination, only a few had the experience of repeating one school year (11 out of 45 respondents) or did not complete their educational paths (3 out 45 respondents). In the sample, parents' support during the schooling path of the respondents was considerable; to question n. 32

Did your family support you during your school path?, 67% of respondents answered that they had received family support (Fig. 4.3).

Furthermore, parents' support increase as their cultural capital grows, since parents' educational qualification is used as an orientation for young people, even though the qualifications were obtained in a different educational system. As data sample shows, all parents with university degrees have supported young people, and respondents whose father or mother or both parents have a middle-high level[8] of schooling tend to receive family support.
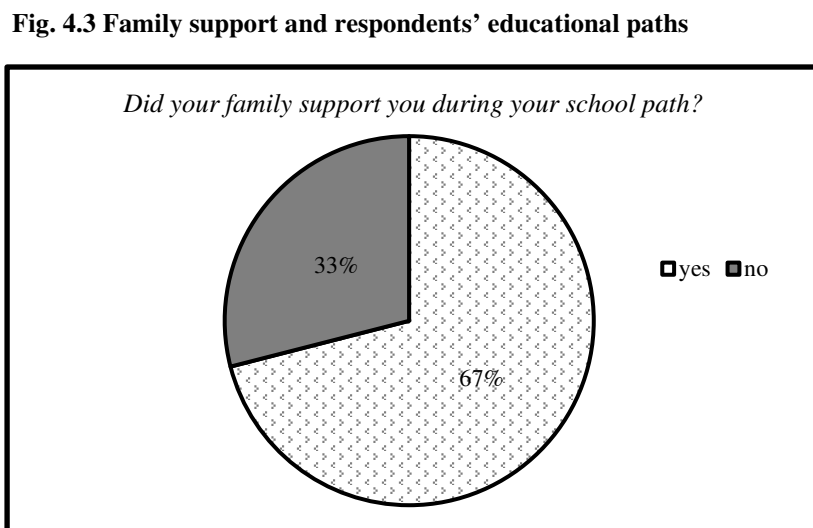
Fig. 4.3 Family support and respondents' educational paths

Did your family support you during your school path?

☐ yes ■ no

33%

67%

Fig. 4.4 Support and Parents' cultural capital

Parents' cultural capital	parents' support frequency	no parents' support frequency
low-level	3	1
middle-low level	6	4
middle-high level	14	10
high level	7	-
Total	30	15

The ways in which this support was demonstrated allowed respondents to develop the motivations that have affected their choices. The kind of support they have received can be grouped into two categories:

- instrumental support: practical help and ways parents used to support young people;
- emotional support: giving advice, and showing interest for young people school path;

On the whole, parents tend to demonstrate both categories of support, but analysing the geographical origins of the respondents, data reported that parents from Latin America, Africa and

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[8]In the study the low level of family cultural capital represents the absence of schooling or parents' attendance to primary school, the middle-low level represents parents' attendance to lower secondary school, the middle-high level represents parents' attendance to upper secondary school, while high level represents parents' attendance to university.

Europe tend to show both instrumental and emotional support, while data show that emotional support driven towards a specific behaviour was demonstrated by parents from Asia.

As regards instrumental support, even though families are employed in the lowest segments of the labour market, the most recurring resource they give to young people is the economic one, followed by practical help. In the sample many respondents lived this experience. The following are some answers to question n.33: *How did your family support your schooling?*

> "Economic support" (F, 21, Nigeria; M, 27, Senegal).
>
> "They paid for a tutor to help me" (F, 25, Dominican Republic).
>
> "Helping me to fill in my educational gaps, paying for private lessons and with their personal help" (F, 29, Angola).
>
> "Paying for school fees" (M, 20, Tunisia).
>
> "Paying for private lessons to help me to fill in the gaps I had in some subjects" (F, 19, Palestine).
>
> "They gave me indications about the kind of school to choose" (F, 26, Philippines).
>
> "They helped me to study subjects I didn't understand" (F, 30, Republic of The Congo).
>
> "They……gave me indications about choices related to higher education" (F, 27. Ukraine).
>
> "They paid my studies and gave me advice" (F, 30, Albania).
>
> "They bought the books I needed to study" (F, 29, China).

From the comments of the respondents, it is clear that practical help was represented by concrete economic support such as access to information, investment of money and time.

As regards emotional support, in addition to the meaning of encouragement and advice, also includes interest to the school path of the children. Sometimes for parents it is not easy to show it since they do not have the required information about the Italian educational system, and they tend to fill in this gap by encouraging their children to imitate the choices made by other members of the community, choices which could neglect individual expectations and could reproduce disadvantage elements, but from respondents' comments it is interesting to see parents' commitment in this sense:

"They gave me economic support and indications about high school, and then they help me to choose a university course which could allow me to find a job as soon as I completed higher education" (F, 28, UK).

"They gave me indication about the kind of school to choose" (F, 26, Philippines).

4.1.3. High school and sibling's example

Another factor linked to the choice of school path and indirectly also linked to the future choice of a job is the presence or not of elder siblings. They are great potential for children with a foreign background and their influence should not be underestimated. It is a matter of fact that elder siblings show the acquisition of skills that parents sometimes have not been able to develop. They can help young ones to navigate the school system and especially those in higher education could give practical help and sometimes could become a guide to imitate.

Analysing the sample 25 respondents (56% of total sample) have elder siblings. About the origins the first three most represented geographical areas are countries from Sub-Saharan Africa with 12 respondents, who answered having elder siblings, followed by countries of Latin America, East Europe, and Asia with 4 respondents who answered having elder siblings.

Fig. 4.5 Presence of elder siblings

	Frequency	%
Sub-Saharan Africa	12	48%
Latin America	4	16%
East Europe	4	16%
Asia	4	16%
Palestine	1	4%
Total	25	100%

The sample showed that elder siblings outline a path that siblings tend to follow. Respondents whose elder siblings had attended and completed high school tend to make the same choices: attending high school. At the same time respondents whose elder siblings had attended university tend to complete their schooling path and, in some cases, they continue to university; while those whose elder siblings did not complete their schooling path, for many reasons such as arriving in the country of destination in the most critical ages (13-17 years), do not aspire to continue in higher education, but they attended vocational schools.

Fig. 4.6 Elder siblings' educational qualification vs Repondents

Respondent	Elder sibling educational qualification	Respondents' educational qualification
1°	University Graduation	University Graduation
2°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Vocational Sch. Graduation
7°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
8°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Vocational Sch. Graduation
10°	University Graduation	Grammar Sch. Graduation
11°	University Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
12°	University Graduation	University Graduation
13°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
17°	University Graduation	Grammar Sch. Graduation
20°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
21°	University Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
22°	Vocational Sch. Qualification (not completed)	Vocational Sch. Qualification
24°	University Graduation	Vocational Sch. Graduation
25°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Vocational Sch. Graduation
26°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Lower Second. Sch. Diploma
27°	University Graduation	University Graduation
28°	University Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
29°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
30°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Grammar Sch. Graduation
34°	University Graduation	Grammar Sch. Graduation
37°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Vocational Sch. Graduation
41°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
42°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
43°	University Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation
45°	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Technical Sch. Graduation

4.1.4. High school and parents' example

Several studies reported that for second generations the socio-economic status of parents does not have a direct impact on their educational or career paths, but it is rather their cultural capital that can make such a difference (Colombo & Santagati, 2014). This evidence is clear comparing parents' cultural capital in the sample. The attitude to continue their studies is high for young people whose parents' have a good level of education, and this is the case of the sample. Although in the country of destination many parents belong to the lowest level of the labour market, they have a good level of educational qualifications. As reported by the sample data, an

average of 58% of parents attended high school and university. This condition is reflected on the expectations that parents have on their children. It is evident that, analysing educational level of parents, as indicated in fig. 4.7 and fig. 4.8, young people tend to have the same level of qualifications of their parents or have higher education qualifications which lead them to have more qualified and paid jobs than those of their parents.

Fig. 4.7 Parents' and respondents' school path

	parents	respondents	parents %	respondents %
University/higher education degree	5	9	11%	20%
Upper Sec. School Graduation/qualification	21	33	47%	73%
Lower Sec. School Graduation	13	3	29%	7%
Primary Sch. Education	2		4%	0%
No data	4		9%	0%
Total	45	45	100%	100%

Fig. 4.8 Distribution of parents' and respondents' school path

	Unìversity degree	Upper Sec. School Graduation	Lower Sec. School Graduation	Primary Sch. Education
◼ parents	11%	47%	29%	4%
☐ respondents	20%	73%	7%	

◼ parents ☐ respondents
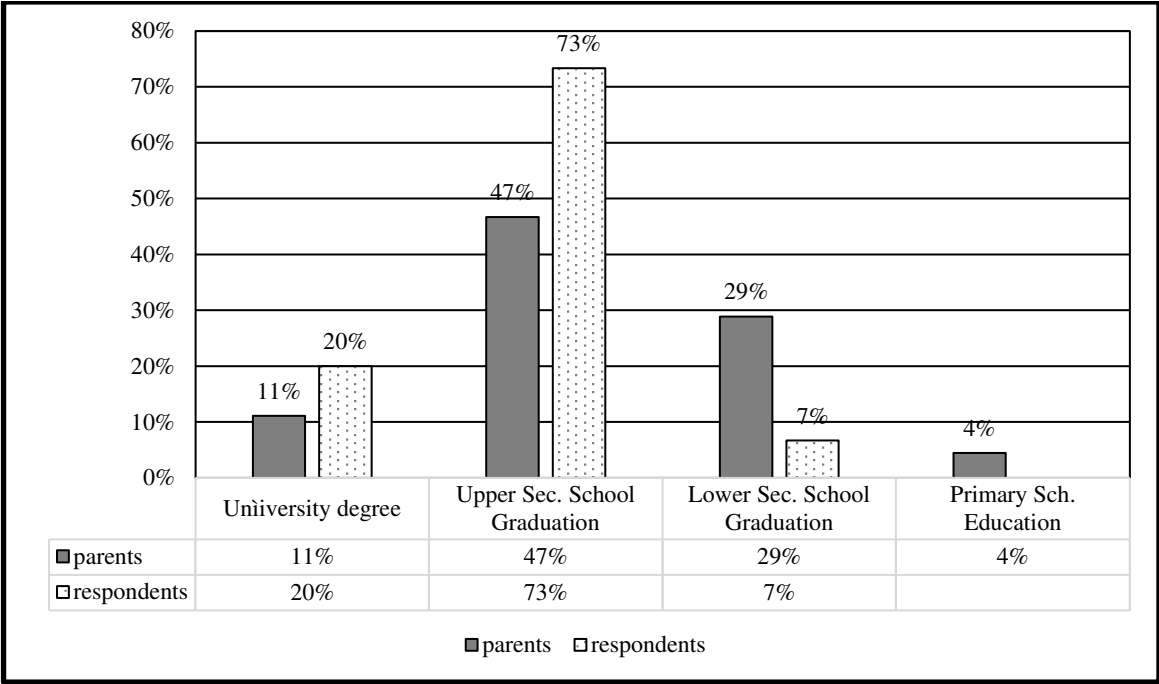
Therefore, from this analysis are evident some aspects. On the one hand, the age of arrival of respondents in the country of destination influences the type of school path, which will then affect career choices. Moreover, it seems that if respondents have elder siblings, they will tend to follow their example, that is to have the same job or to choose a school path that will allow them to have more qualified jobs. On the other hand, parents' socio-economic status drives young people

to follow different paths from their parents. It means moving towards school paths that will lead them to obtain better or higher job positions than those of their parents. The choices seem to be influenced by the desire that some young people have to pay off the debt to their parents that is repay them for their sacrifices, but mainly the choices are due to parents' cultural capital. As data sample reported, even though parents carry out unskilled or manual jobs, they have middle-high/high educational levels (an average of 47% have attended high school and 11% have attended university). It is a matter of fact that, foreign parents give great importance to education and tend to encourage their children to study for a long time (Eve, 2017), therefore this parents' condition moves young people to follow the same educational path or in many cases to surpass their parents level of education.

4.1.5. High school and friends' support

Another resource which could help young people in their choices is friends and peers' influence. Friends, whether they are classmates or friends met in other contexts, can play an important role. Many research reported that receiving crucial forms of

Fig. 4.9 Friends' support and school path

Did your friends guide you in the choice of your school path?

36%

64%

☐ yes ☐ no
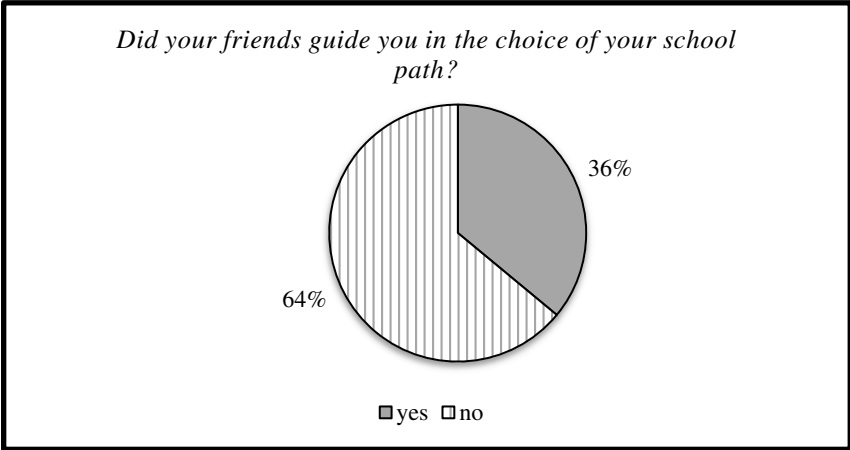
social support from significant others can contribute to successful paths and can help to the achievement of one's projects (Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019; Crul et al., 2017).

Question n. 39 asked to respondents: *Did your friends guide you in the choice of your school path?* Only 36% (16 respondents) answered they received a support from their friends. Respondents were asked to explain how they received this support. The following are some excerpts of the answers:

> "I was undecided between two paths and finally I chose the same one of my friends"
> (F, 25, China).

"They helped me to understand what my abilities were and based on this, to choose the most suitable path for me" (F, 25, Dominican Republic).

"Their opinions affected me" (M, 30, Kenya).

"I wanted to stay in the same class of my best friend" (F, 30, Angola).

"Most of my friends followed the same schooling path as me" (M, 20, Tunisia).

"I attended the same grammar school of a friend of mine from middle school, even though at the beginning I didn't have fully information about the course" (F, 24, Ukraine).

"They gave me advice and told me their personal experience" (F, 28, Ghana).

"I had many friends from different origins and backgrounds. Thanks to their ideas and opinions I understood what the best choice for me was" (F, 30, Venezuela).

"My friend and I chose the same grammar school" (F, 23, Albania).

"My friends and I had an exchange of ideas, but then I chose by myself" (F, 27, Ukraine).

One aspect that emerges from these responses is how some individual paths can be influenced by certain factors such as friendship with a classmate, attending new social environments and meeting significant figures who can become a source of advice and useful ideas to make decisions. Sometimes, it is a matter of fact that the investment choices in education are linked to the presence of best friends who have acted as models and sources of support in studying and making choices (Bonapace et al., 2009; Santagati, 2009).

4.1.6. High school and teachers' support

Individual factors linked to the success of young people also include the role of teachers both as counselors and as channels of access to wider social networks (Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019). Teachers affect young people's opportunities since they can give valuable encouragement to continue to study despite the challenges young people cope; In some cases, teachers' advice is systematically directed to downward choices, highlighting stereotypes and prejudices linked to immigrant origin. Question n. 34 asked to respondents: *Did your teachers guide you in the choice*

of your school path?
More than half of the respondents (27 out 45 respondents) answered that they felt the support of their teachers. Teachers' help related to this choice was demonstrated in different ways. Among the answers, it was possible

Fig. 4.10 Teachers' support and respondents' school paths

Did your teachers guide you in the choice of your school path?

40%
60%

■yes □no
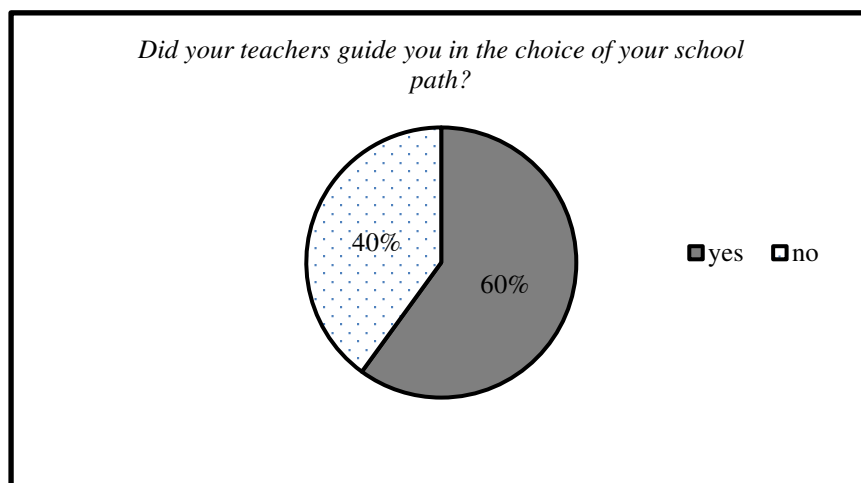
to identify especially instrumental support which means practical advice received by teachers. The following are some suggestions gave by teachers:

"They gave me indications about the suitable school for me" (F, 29, Angola).

"They gave me material to read in order to gather information about different paths" (F, 19, Palestine).

"They encouraged me to deep the comprehension of the Italian language in order to have more chance to go to university" (F, 29, Angola).

In details respondents were asked to indicate what advice they received at the end of middle school. The following are some answers:

"Going to grammar school (*liceo classico*), because I liked study" (F, 28, UK).

"Attending a school that gave me a preparation to enter the labour market but also that gave me the opportunity to enroll in university" (F, 29, Angola).

"I liked study, so they encourage me to attend grammar school" (F, 30, Angola).

"They suggested me to attend grammar school (*liceo linguistico/scienze umane*)" (F, 19, Cuba).

"They suggested me to attend a vocational school" (F, 19, Philippines).

"Attending grammar school" (F, 21, Nigeria; F, 30 Venezuela).

"Going to a vocational school, because it was less difficult for me" (F, 27, Ghana).

Analysing the answers, it was possible to find a relation between some variables linked to foreign background of the respondents and teachers' suggestions. For instance, one variable is the age of arrival in the country of destination. It seems that teachers tend to lead respondents to grammar school if they belong to 2.0 or 1.75 generation, while young people belonging to 1.50 and 1.25 generation tend to be driven to technical and vocational schools. These indications of teachers, to continue towards a technical or vocational school, are based on considerations related to linguistic difficulties that young people may have (for instance, this is the case of Respondent n. 37: teachers' suggestion was going to a vocational school, because it was less difficult for her, since she has been living in Italy for 1 year and her language comprehension was limited) and/or the belief that families cannot have the resources to support young people in longer term education and therefore young people need to enter the labour market.

These suggestions may have different consequences. If on the one hand it is important to try to suggest personalized paths and avoid suggesting long-term investments when they are too difficult to be managed for families, on the other hand there is the risk of intensifying the exclusion from high school paths because these paths are considered too difficult and, at the same time, because it is thought that the university is a difficult destination for young people with a foreign background, especially in economic terms(Cicciarelli, 2019).

In order to value the effectiveness of these advice, question n. 37 asked: *Did you follow your teachers' advice?* Less than half of the respondents had followed the advice they received. Some people perceived the advice not based on their own personality and their potential but only on the basis of the results they had achieved. That was the impression of Respondent n.14 who answered: "…the orientation was based on my results, but they didn't consider my personality". On the other hand, other students followed the advice because they were consistent with those who were their projects or because they were confident in their teachers. According to that, the following are some answers of the respondents:

"Luckily, the advice I received matched with my attitude towards the humanities" (F, 28, UK)

"I think that when you are fourteen, you are not able to make by yourself a choice which will affect all your life" (F, 29, Angola).

"I thought my teachers were right" (M, 30, Kenya).

"I thought it was the right counsel for me" (F, 26, Philippines).

"I'm very good at manual and creative jobs so I thought it was the right advice for me" (F, 30, Republic of The Congo).

"I knew all the other opportunities and the only school path that inspired me was languages path" (F, 30, Brazil).

"I thought my teachers' advice was reasonable. Moreover, in the second year I could change, and I have to say that teachers were very nice, in the last year of middle school, despite my language difficulties they did not fail me" (F, 27, Ghana).

This relationship established with students also allows the interaction between families and teachers as indicated by Respondent n. 12 who answered: "teachers talked with my parents about pros and cons of different schools and so my parents got more information about school paths". It meant for parents a better comprehension of the school system and the choices of children.

On the whole, regardless of the advice respondents have received, they showed to be very determined and decisive in their choices:

"I am very determined, and I know what I want" (F, 25, Albania).

"I accepted the advice not because my teachers gave it to me, but because among all the opinions, it was the advice I felt most suitable for me at the time" (F, 19, Palestine).

"It wasn't the right path for me" (F, 21, Nigeria).

4.2. Respondents' University choice

Among the respondents there was a group made up of students (8) and working students (10) attending secondary school and university. The group of students represents 18% of total respondents. Their average age was 23 years, but among them one student was 19 and attended the fourth year of high school and the other student was 30 and attended the last year of University (Master's degree in Pharmacy). School delay represents a significant difference between students with a foreign background and their Italian peers. For example, it is a matter of fact that, more than half of students with ethnic origin who attend university, are older than their Italian peers (Zanfrini,

2018, p. 74). Thus in the first case of the sample, school delay was due to the experience of repeating one school year, maybe a consequence related to the age of the arrival in the country of destination (13 years), since 1.25 generation represents the most critical stage and could mean the lack of parents' support; while the mature age in the second case of the sample was due to personal choices and a subsequent awareness: the decision of attending university had been taken years later after reading material, attending environments and events which lead to that choice.

Both students and working students' group had chosen humanities, and social sciences studies rather than physical and life sciences studies. In details 9 were attending Humanities studies, 3 Medical sciences, 4 Social sciences, 2, who were completing their schooling, were attending caregiver studies, and a vocational high school. Data also reported that whether the most chosen area is humanities studies, inside that area respondents prefer language/linguistics sectors.

Fig. 4.11 Educational areas: kind of studies

Educational areas	Kind of studies	Level	Frequency
Humanities	Language Sciences	Master's Degree	2
	European, American and Postcolonial Languages and Literatures	Master's Degree	2
	International Trade and tourism	Bachelor's Degree	1
	Linguistic and Cultural Mediation	Bachelor's Degree	2
	Social work		1
	Educational sciences	Bachelor's Degree	1
Medical sciences	Master's degree in Pharmacy	Master's Degree	1
	Health assistance	Bachelor's Degree	1
	Nursing and midwifery sciences	Master's Degree	1
Social sciences	Economics	Bachelor's Degree	1
	Business administration	Bachelor's Degree	1
	International Relations	Master's Degree	1

	Political sciences, international relations, human rights	Bachelor's Degree	1
Upper secondary school	Fashion		1
Upper secondary school	Caregiver studies		1
Total			**18**

4.2.1. *University and Age of arrival*

Whether the age of arrival could be an obstacle to the development of successful paths, data related to respondents' attendance to university were enthusiastic. 23 respondents (51%) attended or are attending university. Obviously among this category the most significant group is represented by 44% of 2.0 generation (those who were born in Italy), followed by 30% representing 1.50 generation (those immigrated at ages 6-12), while respondents belong to 1.75 generation (those immigrated at ages 0-5) and 1.25 generation (those immigrated at ages 13-17) have both the share, 13%. An interesting reflection is on the different stages which lead them to this choice. Whether academic tracks in secondary school usually lead students to higher education (13 out 14 of those who have an academic graduation have continued their studies), it seems also that people without an academic graduation have decided to carry out unexpected pathways attending higher education, facing the challenge of less academic preparation. The sample reported that 4 out 13 of those who have a vocational graduation have decided to enroll in university. The permeability of Italian educational system gives this opportunity, but it is also an indication of high personal and family aspirations and expectations. The analysis of the cultural and socio-economic status of the family was useful to investigate these aspects.

4.2.2. *University and friend's support*

On the other hand, advice received by friends who belong both to school environment and outside school environment, tend to guide respondents to choose higher education before entering the labour market:

> "Going to university and attending Educational Sciences" (F, 19, Cuba, she was attending the first year of bachelor's degree in Educational Sciences).
>
> "Going to university since it was my goal" (F, 27, Ukraine, she has a degree).
>
> "Going to university and value if I was able to manage it" (F, 25, Albania, she has a degree and she was waiting for the results of an examination to start the profession she studied).

4.2.3. *University and teachers' support*

Excluding those respondents who had the future already written, because they had consistent and linear school path, the others, despite coming from different paths, were encouraged by teachers to continue the academic path by attending university.

Moreover, it was interesting to note how some advice given by teachers at the end of middle school was consistent with the advice given at the end of high school and some respondents had followed the advice:

> "They told me to find a job" (M, 30, Kenya: at the end of middle school he was suggested to attend vocational school).
>
> "Going to university" (F, 29, Angola: at the end of middle school she was suggested to choose a school that gave her both preparation for a profession and for university. She attended a technical school and then enrolled in university. She did not complete it but if she could go back, she would complete university studies).
>
> "They told me to enroll in university" (F, 30, Angola: at the end of middle school she was suggested to attend grammar school, then she enrolled in university, and she works as a nurse).
>
> "Keep on studying the humanities" (F, 19: Cuba, at the end of middle school she was suggested to attend grammar school (*liceo delle scienze umane*), then she enrolled in university. She is studying Educational sciences).

There are also respondents that, comparing teachers' advice, made different choices. Undoubtedly, for some of them, circumstances played a decisive role in the decision to make, whether enter the labour market or decide to enroll in university:

"They told me to attend university" (F, 30, Albania: she decided to enter the labour market because as she answered: "I had to work").

"I didn't have economic resources to attend university" (F, 28, Ukraine: she is a young mother).

"They told me that I had the head and the skills to attend university" (F, 28, Peru: she decided to enter the labour market because as she answered: "I had some goals to achieve, and I needed money").

"I didn't want to enroll in university" (F, 29, China).

Responses of the participants also highlight some critical issues. Teachers' advice could prompt a certain decision if only teachers were willing to give advice. Some respondents complain about the absence and the lack of participation of teachers with respect to these decisions unless young people ask for their support; moreover, teachers' attitude towards young people may affect the ways young people may consider the advice they can receive from them.

"There was no spontaneous advice from my teachers. I asked them for information about the university courses and admission tests. Later they gave me the information and materials I needed to study in order to apply for admission" (F, 25, Albania).

"My teachers weren't interested to know me or to give me orientations. They didn't know anything about me, my passions, or my family situation. We were only objects to brag to other teachers since we were studious and diligent girls. The most important thing for them was the arithmetic average" (F, 28, UK).

Information related to university and parents' support, elder siblings and parents' example was not received.

4.3. Respondents' Job choice

In details at the question *What is your employment status?* respondents gave the following answers: 22 (49%) were workers, 8 (18%) students, 10 (22%) working students, 2 (4,4%) were unemployed, 2 were young mothers (4,4%) and 1 (2,2%) was a housekeeper.

Fig. 4.12 Career choices of the respondents

	Frequency	%
Workers	22	49%
Students	8	18%
Working students	10	22%
Unemployed	2	4,4%
Young mothers	2	4,4%
Housekeeper	1	2,2%
Total	45	100%

Among the group of workers 14 of them had a stable job, since they had the same occupation from more than one year, 4 had the same job from more than 6 months, 3 worked in the same place from more than 3 months and 1 worked from one month in the same place; Some of them attended and completed university (6 respondents).

Fig. 4.13 Workers and job stability

|	Frequency	%
More than 1 year	14	64%
6-12 Months	4	18%
3-6 Months	3	14%
1 Month	1	4%
Total	22	100%

Workers carried out different jobs, from cleaners, employees, agents to computer programmers. Some of them have worked in the service sector too. This is a positive aspect since the development of Veneto's economy in this sector has supported also by a constant demand for immigrant work.

Fig. 4.14 Workers: work areas and kind of job

Work area	Kind of job	Frequency	%
Education	Teacher	1	4,5%
Medical/Health care area	Nurse	1	18%
	Midwife	1	
	Caregiver	2	
Employee	Clerk	1	32%
	Secretary	1	
	Business Analyst	1	
	Computer Programmer	3	
	Office Worker	1	
Worker	Worker	2	18%
	Chambermaid	1	
	Cleaner	1	
Trade area	Agent	2	23%
	Store Specialist	1	
	Salesperson	2	
Entertainment area	Actor	1	4,5%
Total		**22**	**100%**

The group of working students (10 respondents) represent 22% of total sample; 6 of them work more than twelve hours per week; 2 respondents work between six and twelve hours, while 2 work less than six hours per week. Their average age is 24, but data showed that 1 respondent is 30 years, and the most fashionable age is 25 years. 3 out 10 were attending a master's degree program, while despite the mature age the rest were attending a Bachelor's degree program.

Fig. 4.15 Students and Working students: educational areas
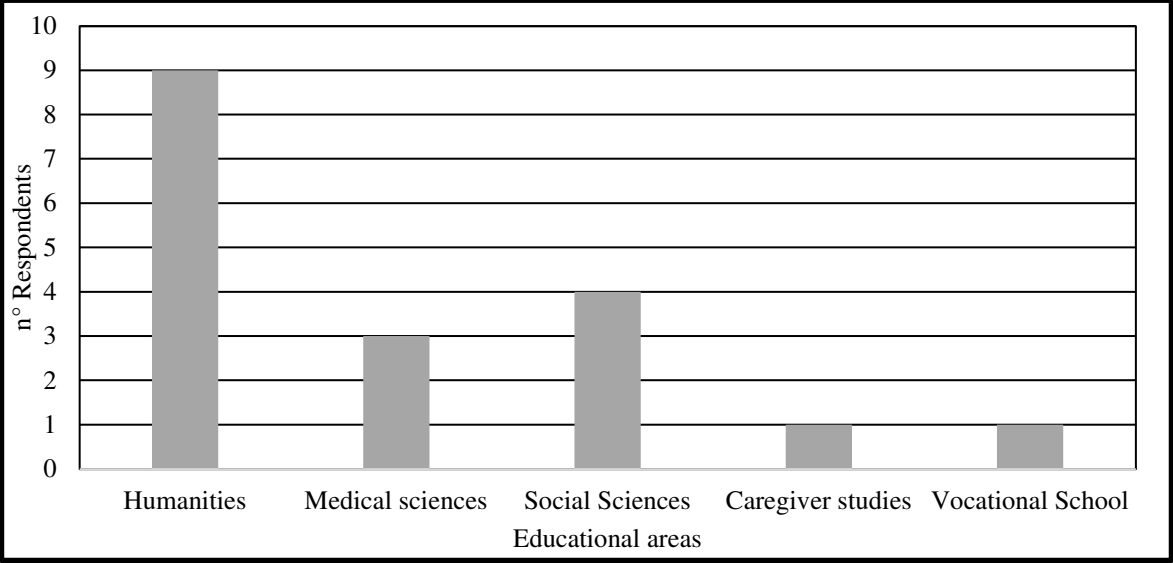
4.3.1. Job and parents' support

As regards parents' support in the decision of a career (job or to enroll in university), it was interesting comparing the differences between choices of the high school and jobs trajectories. While 67% of parents followed young people in their schooling, in this case parents' support

Fig. 4.16 Family support and respondents' choice of a job
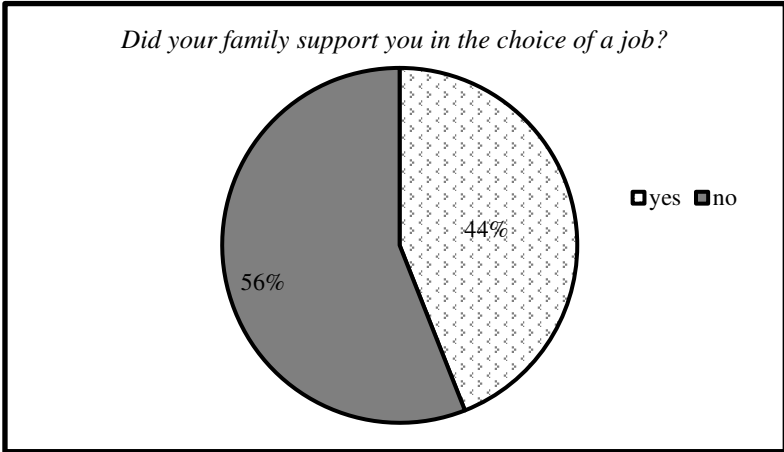
decreases. 44% of respondents answered having received support as regards the choice of a job by their parents. On the whole, it seems that respondents were left alone in this choice, and this might happen because parents could deem young people mature enough to make this decision as

confirmed by some comments of the repondents such as Respondent n.36 who answered: "…As regards my decision to enroll in university, they accepted my choice" (F, 27, Ukraine).

It was possible to identify three ways used by parents to support young people:

- instrumental support;
- emotional support;
- support oriented to a specific behavior;

In this case, the sample showed that parents tend to demonstrate emotional support, followed by instrumental support (practical help). The following are some comments of the respondents to question n. 48 *How did your family guide you in the choice of a job?*

> "Encouraging me to undertake a path that would allow me to work in a short time" (F, 25, Dominican Republic: she was studying to become a social health worker).
>
> "They didn't pressure me, but they supported my choices" (F, 29, Angola: she was working as an employee).
>
> "They gave me courage, they supported my choices" (F, 30, Angola: she has a university degree, and she was working as a nurse in hospital).
>
> "They told me to choose a university course near home, so they could help me" (F, 20, Tunisia: she was a university student).
>
> "They helped me to face my anxieties" (F, 19, Cuba: she was a working university student).
>
> "My family was a guide. They helped me during high school and then in the choice of my university course. They gave me courage to achieve my academic goals and they reminded me the need of becoming economically independent" (F, 25, Albania: she has a university degree, and she was waiting for the results of an exam to start her profession).
>
> "They led me to the choice of a university science course" (F, 24, Nigeria: she has a university degree, and she was working as a midwife).
>
> "Economic support" (M, 27, Senegal: he has a university degree, and he was working as an agent).

At the same time, as indicated in the following comments, there were parents who tend to orient young people to a specific behaviour:

> "Mum told me what I was supposed to do, and I did" (F, 30, Perù: she was working as a salesperson).

> "They forced me to complete my studies and find a job" (M, 22, Ukraine: he was working as an actor).

4.3.2. *Job and sibling's example*

Moving on analysing elder siblings' employments, comparing educational qualification and respondents' employment status, the analogies related to the choices of the respondents appear clearer. The data showed that, if elder siblings have a qualified job, respondents tend to follow the same path, it means achieving the same level of educational qualification and job or decide to enroll in university. At the same time if elder siblings' job is not qualified, then respondents do not tend to aspire to become professionals.
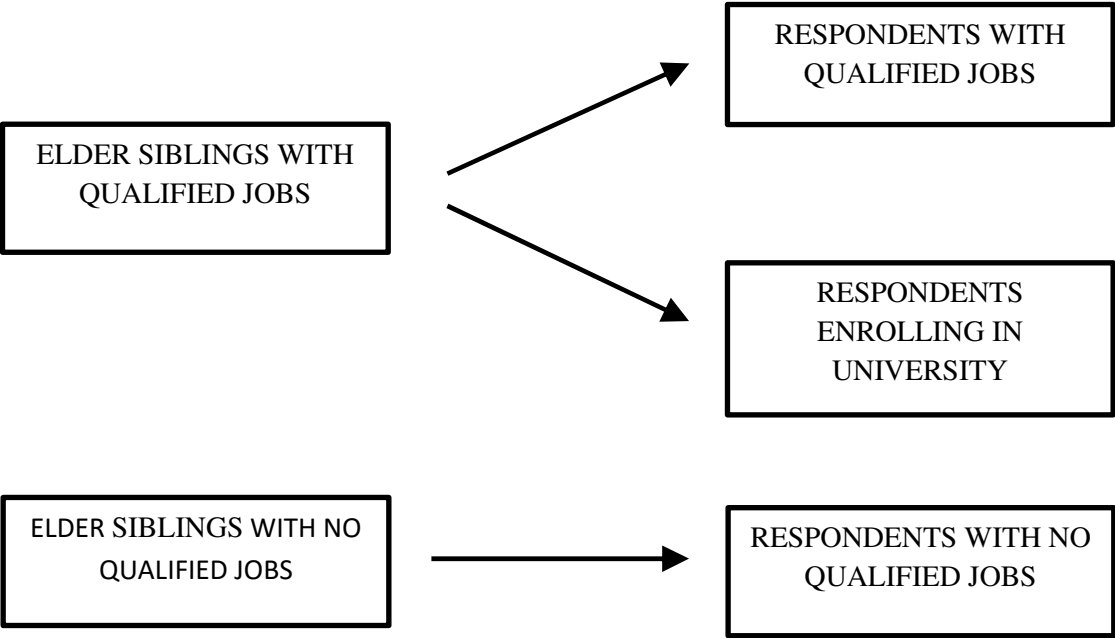
As indicated in the following table, out of 25 respondents 14 elder siblings had qualified jobs/occupations and the result is that respondents make their choices and preferences for certain professionals jobs and sectors; respondents do not tend to aspire to certain job positions when elder siblings have not a highly skilled jobs (see respondents n. 7, 8, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 45); the exception is represented by respondents n. 21 and 27: even though the choices of their elder siblings, they decided to enroll in university or carry out a skilled job

Fig. 4.17 Elder siblings' job and respondents' employment status

Respondent	Elder siblings' job	Respondents' qualification	respondents' employment status
1°	Dental Hygienist	University Degree	University Student
2°	Technician	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Working University Student
7°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Young Mother
8°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Worker
10°	Pastry Chef	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Office worker
11°	Lawyer	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Working University Student
12°	Teacher	University Degree	Nurse
13°	Hotel Receptionist	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Computer Programmer
17°	Manager, University Student	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	University Student
20°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Young Mother
21°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Working University Student
22°	Chambermaid	Vocational Qualification	Vocational School Student
24°	Office worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Caregiver
25°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Housekeeper
26°	Worker	Lower Sec. Sch. Qualification	Store specialist
27°	Sale assistant	University Degree	Computer Programmer
28°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Salesperson
29°	Computer programmer, Secretary	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	University Student
30°	no information	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Working University Student
34°	University Student	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Working University Student
37°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Office worker
41°	Computer programmer	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Computer Programmer
42°	Office worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Office worker
43°	University Student	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	University Student
45°	Worker	Upper Sec. Sch. Graduation	Cleaner

4.3.3. Job and parents' example

A consideration about family's socio-economic and cultural status is relevant. A research, which have been carried out through the administration of a questionnaire to a thousand foreign children in Lombardy region, had clearly indicated the weight of the social situation of the family of origin on school path ((Santagati, 2009).

In this study parents' economic capital was considered by analysing the variable related to parents' employment status.

Fig. 4.18 Parents' employment status

	Father	Mother	father %	mother %
Business owner, manager	4	4	9%	9%
Employee	9	8	20%	18%
Skilled worker	1	2	2%	4%
Worker and unskilled jobs	25	16	56%	36%
Housekeeper	1	6	2%	13%
Unemployed, retired, Houseworker	3	9	7%	20%
No data	2		4%	0%
Total	45	45	100%	100%

As indicated in Fig. 4.18 and 4.19 data reported that most of parents carried out less skilled jobs. In details they are 58% of fathers (excluding 7% who are retired or unemployed) and 49% of mothers who work as housekeepers or unskilled workers (excluding 20% who are unemployed or housework). They are over-represented in the lowest level of the labour market. Some research, which have been conducted through questionnaires and interviews, indicated that young people tend still today to mark a continuity between parental choices and their own choices, showing how, despite schooling is now extended to classes that, up to a few decades ago, were excluded, only exceptionally school is a significant instrument of social emancipation and a way of social mobility (Catarzi, 2006). It would have been logical to apply the same parameters to second generations but, some differences can be found in the case of young people with a foreign background. It is to be considered that employments status of immigrants (first generation) cannot be analysed as those of their children (second generation). Rarely foreign parents' employment status is linked to their educational qualification since unfortunately for most of parents, immigration also means non-recognition and non-use of their qualifications acquired abroad.

Fig. 4.19 Parents' jobs level of qualification

|	fathers	mothers	total
parents' unskilled jobs	58%	49%	54%
parents' skilled jobs	31%	31%	31%
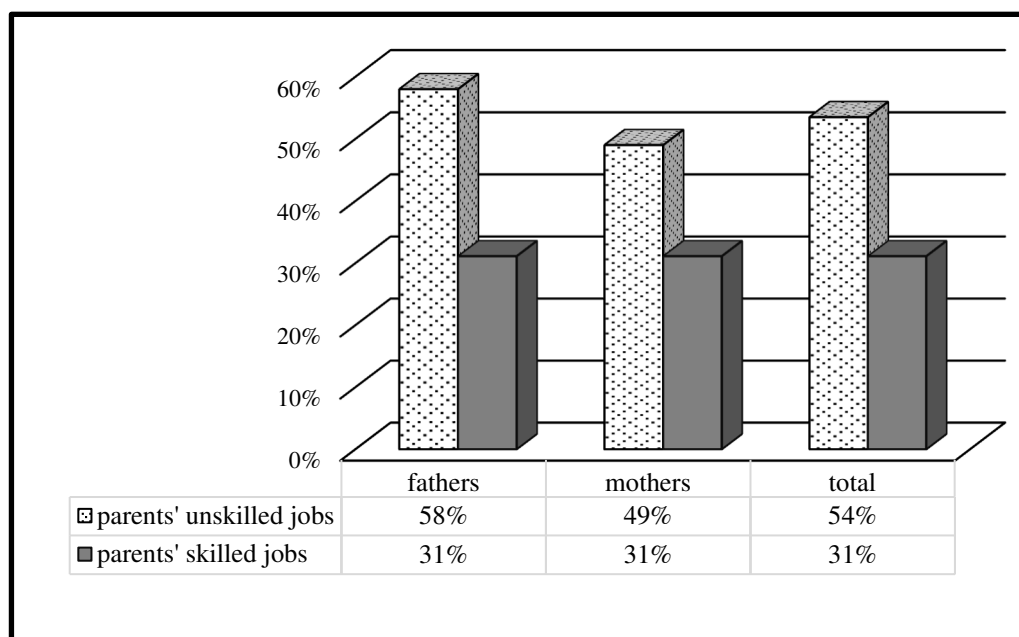
It seems that parents' socio-economic status has a different influence on respondents' choices. Children do not tend to have the same job of their parents; they have no intention of living the same condition of fatigue and inferiority experienced by their parents (Ambrosini, 2001; Bertozzi & Lagomarsino, 2019).

Fig. 4.20 Respondents' employment status

	Frequency	*%*
Employee and teacher	16	36%
Skilled worker, university students	19	42%
Worker and unskilled jobs	5	11%
Unemployed, young mothers	4	9%
Housekeeper	1	2%
Total	45	100%

84

As indicated in fig. 4.20 and displayed in fig. 4.21, data reported that most of the respondents have skilled occupations/jobs. Excluding 11% of respondents who are unemployed, housekeeper or young mothers, 78% of respondents carry out jobs or occupations such as

Fig. 4.21 Parents and respondents' jobs qualification level
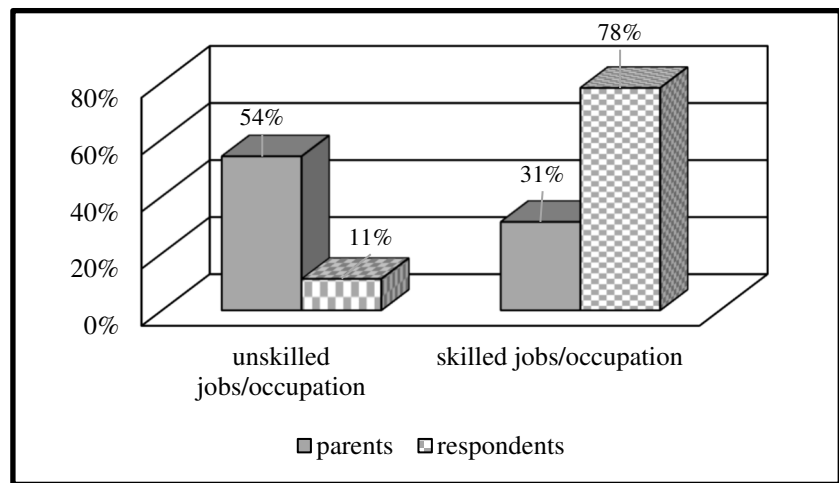
office workers, teachers or computer programmers and a significant number of them were enrolling in university, while 11% carry out unskilled occupations/jobs such as cleaner or chambermaid.

Therefore, the attention was focused on parents' cultural background.

Finally, it seems that the condition of being a foreigner drives young people to undertake school paths and consequently careers that can be strongly linked to the foreign background. For instance, analysing the sample, among students and working students, out of 18 respondents, 10 have studied Languages, Linguistics, Social work, International Relations, and Tourism or in the group of workers, there are respondents who work in social roles (such as teachers, nurses, or midwives). Their work environment is not only a place for foreign people but, part of the users has a foreign background.

4.3.4. *Job and friends' support*

From the questionnaire, it was possible to understand that friends were not necessarily peers, but also older people. This detail can be deduced from the answers to question n. 9: *Did most of your friends carry out the same job as yours?* 44 out 45 respondents answered that most of their friends carried out different jobs than theirs.

From the responses, it was possible to identify two kinds of advice: practical and specific advice and advice related to desires and personalities of the respondents. From the data it seems that the kind of friendship can affect the kind of advice received. Out of 16 respondents who answered the question, those who have received specific advice or advice related to find a job

rather than enroll in university (3 respondents) seem that have friends who belong to environments outside school, the maturity and reasons of the counsels may indicate that friends are older than the respondents; while the rest of the respondents who have both friends met at school and outside school environments tend to encourage respondents to follow their emotions and their attitudes such as "choose what you like most, without thinking of anyone, parents or even what friends can suggest", to follow the same path of best friends such as "going to the same grammar school together" or "choose grammar school (*liceo delle scienze umane*), because it fits with the kind of person who you are".

Exactly like friends support in the choice of the high school, also friends' support in the choice of a profession had not a significant share. Only 11 respondents (24%) answered having received a guide in the choice of a job.

On the one hand, advice received by friends

Fig. 4.22 Friends' support and choice of a job

Did your friends guide you in the choice of your job?

24%

76%

■ yes □ no

who do not belong to school were based on life experiences of respondents' friends and lead them to shorter-term education which allow rapid entry to the labour market:
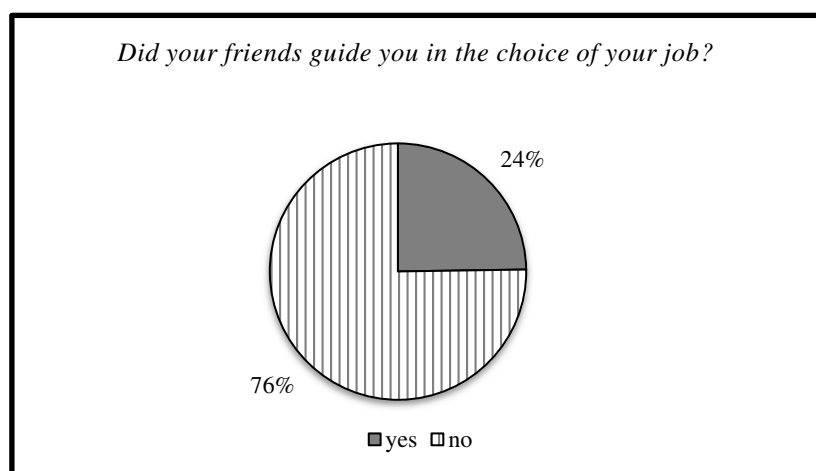
> "They suggested me to study something I liked, but that didn't take too many years to complete" (F, 25, Dominican Republic: she was attending a course to become a social health worker).

> "They gave me suggestions about how to cope with different work environments" (F, 29, Angola: she was working as an employee).

> "Choosing a path that would allow you to find a useful work" (F, 29, Angola: she was working as a caregiver).

> "They suggested me to find manual jobs, and they told me that even if they might not be the best jobs in the world, but they allowed me to maintain myself" (F, 28, Peru: she was working as an employee).

4.3.5. Job and teachers' support

The share of teachers' guidance in the choice of respondents' occupations (enrolling in higher education or deciding to enter the labour market) was slightly lower than that of educational paths. 20 out 45 respondents (44%) answered that

Fig. 4.23 Teachers' support and respondents' future job

Did your teachers guide you in the choice of your future job?

44%

56%

☐ yes ☐ no
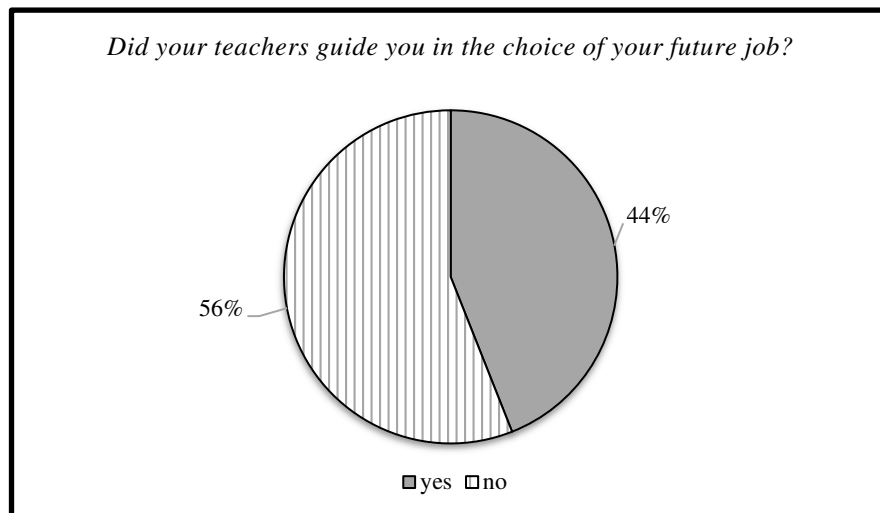
their teachers help them in the choice of a profession. Analysing the advice of teachers, it was interesting to note how perhaps having a more global view of the person (for at least 5 years teachers have known the students) allowed teachers to see the potential of young people.

> "They told me to enter the labour market" (F, 30, Marocco: at the end of middle school she was suggested to attend vocational school. She followed the suggestion, and she is a worker).

> "They advised me to find a job" (F, 30, Republic of The Congo: at the end of middle school, she was suggested to attend vocational school. She followed the advice).

> "Enrolling in university and choosing sciences studies" (F, 24, Nigeria: at the end of middle school, she was suggested to attend grammar school. She followed the advice. She attended university and works as a midwife)

Information related to job and the age of arrival in the country of destination was not received.

Chapter V
Discussions

5.1. A new focus on the second generations

Italian society is getting more and more multicultural, and a sign of this tendency is the increasing presence of the second generations. Several studies on the second generations focused on topics such as their impact on the educational system, the complex issue of identity and belongings or the role played by school in the integration process. More recently, post-secondary education and career opportunities among students with ethnic origins are topics on which Italian research have started to discuss and studies have analysed the benefits that a foreign background can give both to young people with immigrant parents and to society (Eve, 2017). Therefore, the transition to higher education and the labour market of the second generations is an issue that affects not only individuals but also the social and economic growth of the country since, considering the future, second generations represent human capital useful for the development of the society.

As stated previously the aim of the study was to investigate what factors have influenced respondents' decisions related to the choice of a career (a rapid entry to the labour market or to enroll in higher education before entering the labour market). As confirmed by literature, the choice of a job, can be influenced by many factors such as young people social, cultural, and economic background, school path, as well as by the influence of parents or significant others such as adults or friends. Undoubtedly peers, can play a significant role in the choice process, as a matter of fact, young people compare the choices made by friends and can be influenced by them, at the same time the presence of adults such as a teacher can become a guide and a driving force to make some decisions. In addition to that, it is also to be considered individual personalities and different educational aspirations and expectations which can affect young people hopes.

Accordingly, the study focused mainly on the role played by educational paths and social support, young people have received, in encouraging their working choices, in order to understand if the decision to undertake university or enter the labour market was motivated by reasons linked to people around them, their specific interests, personal attitudes or the need to find a job.

5.2. A predictor of the future: the choice of high school

The first aspect investigated was the school path in order to understand its role in the choice of enrolling university or entering the labour market. In this context, the choice of high school, is a structural factor linked to working future. Several studies have indicated the school paths as a variable related to the choice of a job. According to Bonapace, the choice of high school can be reasonably assumed as a good predictor of the immediate professional future (Bonapace et al., 2009).

The choice of high school is a resource to help young people discover their potential and make the best of their choices, projects, and adjustment in their professional life, moreover it should provide a guidance to understand both the labour market and post-secondary education. The type of high school attended (grammar school, technical school or vocational school) could influence subsequent choices and career paths. This awareness is confirmed in many comments of the respondents who indicated how their young age and inexperience could make difficult such an important and decisive decision without any support. It seems from the comments that young people are almost asking a greater orientation in this decision.

5.2.1. The choice of high school and age of arrival

Analysing the sample, findings confirm the connection between the age and the type of high school chosen. Respondents who were born in the country of destination tend to attend grammar schools, while those who immigrated tend to attend technical schools and vocational schools. This choice is strongly related to subsequent work decisions. Those who attended grammar schools decided to go to university before entering the labour market. The decision to make this choice could be related to the opinion that participation in higher education could mean more opportunities of having better employment options.

Those who were born in the country of destination or arrived at early age tend to make similar choices to their native peers. This could be the effect of the longer stay in the destination country linked to certain social environments. For instance, according to Bonapace, those who arrive at the age of primary school, will go to school with their mums, and they will come back home with mum's friends and their children. By contrast those who arrive at middle school age for sure will go to school alone and therefore would not have the same opportunity to meet others (Bonapace et al., 2009) and make relationships that could affect their future behaviors. However, it does not mean that entering the school system during pre-teens can be an obstacle compared to

early entry into the school system. This prerogative did not prevent some respondents to make different choices than those that one would expect. Even though they have attended vocational school, after completing their schooling they decided to go to university. They are confident students that, even though had non-linear school paths, were aware of the advantage of continuing their education and consciously have chosen to enroll in university (Bertozzi, 2018).

5.2.2. *The choice of high school and parents' support*

There are many elements which make family the ideal environment where young people can pursue positive growth paths such as the absence of conflicting relationships, the sharing of long-term objectives, relying on parents' economic support as well as emotional closeness that members of family can show. It seems that, this support given by family have a relevant effect on the choice of high school of young people and consequently it plays an important role in their life choices.

The findings reveal the relevance of family support about school path. Families show it both by giving emotional help (many respondents remembered the encouragement received by parents, or parents' determination in supporting their choices) and economic support demonstrated by afford many costs such as books and private lessons. It seems that the economic support is the most relevant one and parents tend to show it even when they do not have significant economic resources.

5.2.3. *The choice of high school and elder siblings' example*

According to Colombo, elder siblings are a good protective factor from discomfort and contribute to the well-being of the person: the presence of brothers and sisters in Italy implies a long-term immigration and an early entry into the Italian school. Brothers or sisters, having already faced this stage of life, can act as a model and can provide information regarding the choice of school and job opportunities (Colombo, 2009), with their experience elder siblings may have already track the path to follow.

The findings reveal that there is a relation between the level of education reached by elder siblings and that of the respondents. It seems that elder siblings outline a path that siblings tend to follow. As indicated by the sample data, young people whose elder siblings completed high school tend to attend and complete high school as well, and in many cases, findings reveal that they aspire to continue in tertiary education; by contrast findings display that elder siblings' decision of not

completing their schooling has a downward effect on respondents choices and have led respondents to choose vocational schools.

5.2.4. *The choice of high school and parents' example*

Findings indicate that respondents do not want to have the same job as their parents, they have no intention to live the same condition experienced by their parents that is following trajectories of downward assimilation which outline stereotypes and prejudices linked to immigrant origin. The lower the socio-economic level of the parents is, the more young people will tend to reach higher socio-economic levels. This tendency is due to parents' level of cultural capital; actually, even if parents' academic qualifications are often not recognized in Italy, anyway parents have middle-high and high education levels.

Consequently, education level of parents affects education level of the respondents and as a result many young people tend to have their parents' same education level or to do better than their parents, surpassing their parents' education level. If parents have a middle-high education level, youths will also tend to have a middle-high education level, on the other hand, if parents have a middle-low education level data showed that only a slight quantity of respondents did not complete their schooling. This tendency is because parents' opinion is that education is important. They have great respect for education system and for this reason they encourage their children to take advantage of this opportunity (Eve, 2017). Accordingly, some studies indicated that, foreign parents repeat with insistence to their children that having an education is a privilege and that studying is fundamental to find a good job (Colombo & Santagati, 2014).

5.2.5. *The choice of high school and friends' support*

Friends' suggestions are different, and they depend on the kind of friendship. Therefore, friends who belong to school environment suggest respondents to choose a high school which could give the opportunity to enroll in university before entering the labour market, while friends who belong to environment outside school, basing their suggestions on their experience, have encouraged respondents to make choices for finding jobs, attending vocational schools. The share of the answers is not very significant but analysing in detail the comments of the respondents it is evident that more than an exchange of advice, respondents had a comparison with their friends.

5.2.6. The choice of high school and teachers' support

The role of teachers cannot be underestimated because their actions, and words will have a great impact in the life of young people both positive and negative. Thus, the study analysed teachers support in the choice of high school.

Orientations that teachers give to young people will allow them to build their own opinions about post-secondary education and the labour market in order to have all information young people need to make informed decisions. Even though the guidelines teachers give are not compulsory, they can affect the image young people have of themselves and can affect the perception of the pros and cons associated with different choice options.

Sometimes the concentration of young people with foreign background in some school paths may be associated with choices that meet families' expectations but might also drive to wrong orientation. Unfortunately, for many families helping their children to choose the most suitable educational path is difficult because they do not have the means to guide young people since they do not know completely the educational system. Therefore, teachers' guidelines have a double effect: on the one hand orientations fill the gap of information that sometimes families have, allowing them to understand the levels of preparation and the future perspectives of different schools, as a consequence this support would influence parents' willingness to invest in young people educational paths with positive influences in their job trajectories; on the other hand, teachers' orientations allows young people to make decisions considering paths which are also based on their interests and passions (Bozzetti, 2018).

The most relevant support according to the respondents is that instrumental, that is practical advice. Respondents affirmed that they have received practical information about the type of secondary school to attend and the reasons to choose that path. Some advice was more related to young people attitudes and their academic achievements results, while others were more linked to employment chances.

Since the serious role played by teachers' orientations, definitely they must be free from any prejudice. Unfortunately, bias can influence teachers' orientations. Findings also display that teachers' orientations could lead teachers to direct young people to less qualifying educational tracks. This situation represents a real risk as according to literature, sometimes school have low expectations on the educational abilities of students who come from the working class, minorities and immigrant families (Romito, 2014).

After considering factors related to the choice of the high school, the study analysed how these factors affect respondents' decision concerning their future career orientation: enrolling in university before entering the labour market and finding jobs.

5.3. Job orientation

5.3.1. *Parents' support and job orientation*

The tendency is to demonstrate emotional support followed by practical help. For instance, respondents described their tranquility in making choices because they received advice and decided according to their parents.

The support received led young people to choose to enroll in university before entering the labour market rather than make choices for finding jobs. The most significant help was the support received as regards educational path, represented by the choice of high school. Data shows that the support given by parents in the choice of a future job is less than that received for high school. It seems that, at this point, after giving orientations for the choice of high schools, parents consider young people mature and responsible to be able to choose their future. The interesting thing is that regardless of family own history or its migratory experience, parents hope young people enroll in university in order to have better opportunities for work placement and, when parents have high education levels in their countries, their desire is also to maintain their status towards the relatives remained in the countries of origin (Bozzetti, 2018). This aspect can be deduced in some comments of the respondents that affirmed that they saw family's support when the choice to enroll in university usually occurred after an analysis of the chances and employment opportunities and after the collection of detailed information on the university course.

5.3.2. *Elder siblings' and job orientation*

Since good level of school education could also mean more chances of having qualified jobs, findings reveal that the condition of some elder siblings of carrying out professional jobs could have driven young people to reach the same results. As indicated in the study the presence of elder siblings with a good level of school education leads many respondents to decide to go to university before entering the labour market.

5.3.3. Parents' example and job orientation

Parents' socio-economic status have led respondents to choose different career orientations than those of their parents. Their objective is to obtain better or higher job positions and in this context the choices are due to parents' cultural capital. The importance parents give to education leads respondents to study for a long time. Parents' lower socio-economic status and their significant level of cultural capital is a driving force to successful paths. Findings revealed that the majority of young people whose parents have a middle/high cultural capital level tend to enroll in university before entering the labour market.

5.3.4. Friends' support and job orientation

The study investigated how friends have influenced decisive choices such as choosing a career. On the whole, from the analysis of the sample, it was possible to note how these young people keep an open mind, which means the presence of both ethnic and Italian friends. According to literature, non-ethnic social capital and socialization processes break ethnic sociality and, for instance, can become a driving force for, successful choices. The place of socialization affects the kind of suggestion received by friends, therefore friends met at school tend to suggest respondents to enroll in university while friends who belong to other environments tend to suggest a rapid entry to the labour market. As a result, findings reveal that friends do not have so much influence on determining which choice to take, finding jobs, or deciding to enroll in university before entering the labour market, but friends' support is that of encouraging and confirming the choices already made.

5.3.5. Teachers' support and job orientation

Teachers' orientations were based above all on the academic achievements of young people. Few respondents have received support in the choice of a future job. Findings displayed that teachers tend to encourage respondents to follow a consistent path. They tend to encourage young people with academic track to enroll in university, while those with technical track, basing on their school achievements despite coming from different path, tend to be oriented to university as well.

However, the study also displays that, unless young people ask for suggestions, teachers, probably unconsciously, do not tend to give a lot of orientations. As a matter of fact, almost half of respondents say they have not received support, neither at the end of middle school nor at the

end of high school. Some respondents were brave and approached teachers to ask for their opinion and suggestions, but others preferred not to ask. It seems that if this support does not exist or is aimed at other paths than those wished, respondents are quite critical of teachers. As a result, this could lead to forms of disorientation or disincentive towards the education system.

Chapter VI
Conclusion

6.1. Factors concerning career choices

Many reasons have driven people to move from one place to another. In the last time the increase of immigration in Italy is mostly due to family reunion. The most visible sign of this phenomenon is the presence of multi-coloured classes in Italian schools. They are the children with parents with a migratory background. Some of them have been arrived in the country of destination with their parents, but most of them are native born people, those who are usually called as second generations.

Lately, interest in second generations has been growing more and more and recent issues analysed by literature are post-secondary education and future careers of second generations. This study analysed career choices of young people with a foreign background paying attention on the influence of choices concerning high school and social support they have received by families, friends, and teachers in these decisions. Two important career choices found in this study were going to university and finding jobs.

A single factor does not drive young people to make one choice rather than another. It is the interaction of many factors that can contribute to making successful choices for these young people.

First, there is the type of high school that has an important role in the future career choices. In turn, high school can be influenced by different elements such as the age of arrival of respondents in the country of destination, the presence of elder siblings or parents' socio-economic status and cultural background which drive young people to follow different paths from their parents.

Second, it is to be considered the social support respondents have received by parents, friends and teachers in their career choices. Friends' support turned out to be a confirmation of the choices that respondents had already made. Few respondents have decided to make the same choices of their friends who play, above all, the role of confidants and after careful analysis of every possibility, friends have encouraged respondents to make their choices according to their personality and expectations. Parents' support tends to guide young people towards post-secondary education since families' desire is that young people continue their studies because parents see education both as means to have better opportunities for work placement and as a possibility of

social redemption. Teachers' guidance is supposed to give the most possible information about post-secondary education and the labour market environment and in addition to parents' orientation, teacher guidance allows young people to get the whole picture of the issues at stake. The findings reveal that teachers should base their orientations also considering young people attitudes and personalities. They tend to give orientations based on the academic achievements of the respondents. Sometimes the orientations are not according to respondents' desires and for this reason respondents have decided to consider families orientations.

In addition to that, the decrease of parents and teachers' support in giving orientations at the end of the high school needs a reflection. Even though many respondents did not feel discouraged due to this attitude, others considered the role of teachers and parents in providing this guidance as fundamental, therefore, they felt a bit of disappointment. Respondents' comments display that the lack of support may produce disorientation and may reduce the trust in the education system.

Information collected reveal that second generations want to feel more and more part of the society where many of them were born or raised. The findings display that most of them are satisfied of their choices. Only few respondents would change the choice of their high school. The study shows how second generations want to emerge from the difficulties of their families and increasingly they tend to make choices very similar to their Italian peers.

The data are the picture of a small reality, and they cannot be considered representative of the population of young people belonging to the second generations. Participation to the research was voluntary and it was not possible to take into consideration all the contexts in which meet second generations young people. One part of the questionnaire used to collect data was made up of open-ended items therefore it was not easy to determine if the answers represented the real thinking of the respondents. However, the information collected allows people to look at second generations from another point of view, not only as children within the school context, but also as designers of a society that is changing.

6.2. Suggestions and new theoretical insights

However, in this process, an aspect to be underlined is the importance that respondents receive all the guidance they need to make their choices, especially orientations related to the choice of a job after completing high school. Parents and teachers are very involved during school track of young people, but their orientation lack during the decision of job orientation. School has an important task: giving orientation to young people for future choices. It must be said that school

orientation is often relegated to the last year of middle school when children have to choose the type of high school to attend. Thus, to help children cope with objective and emotional difficulties related to these choices, orientation should begin in the years preceding the choice of the high school (Bozzetti, 2018). This action of guidance and information would allow also parents to understand the different degrees of preparation and the different future perspectives offered by the various schools (Ricucci, 2012; Romito, 2016). At the same time school orientation should continue during high school, to support young people presence in university and professional environment enhancing personal, social, and local resources.

This study focuses the attention only on a small group of young people belonging to second generations in a limited geographical area. Therefore, it could be interesting increase the number of respondents and areas involved to have more exhaustive information. However, the information found in this study can help to understand how some variables have an influence in the process of choosing a career in young people with a foreign background. As the study progressed many other variables emerged, the most relevant was the possession of Italian citizenship. Some respondents commented that they made some decisions because the condition of not having Italian citizenship prevent them to carry out the desired job. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyse the effect of citizenship in second generations: does it open the opportunity to different career choices? This implies, in addition to school, the involvement of other subjects and conditions such as public institutions and immigrations policies. Do they have an impact in determining career choices of young people with a foreign background? For sure, time, new steps in the migratory process and political choices may provide an answer to the posed issues.

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