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# Naturalisation and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Youth of Immigrant Descent in Switzerland

Rosita Fibbi, Mathias Lerch and Philippe Wanner

*Many studies on the generational social mobility of immigrant populations have taken into account the socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant groups on the one hand, and the historical and economic conditions of the receiving society, including the legal framework, on the other. However, little attention has so far been paid to the juridical status of immigrant groups. This paper explores the variation in education and employment performance of young people from different immigrant origins (Italians, Portuguese, Turks, Croats, Kosovars and Serbs) and of different citizenship statuses—naturalised, non-naturalised, and Swiss-by-birth. Inter-ethnic group variations become much more muted when social origin and length of stay are controlled for; however, they do not disappear altogether. Naturalised immigrant youth perform best; indeed in many cases, where they are Swiss-born, they out-perform native Swiss. This performance, however, is overlooked by Swiss society because the acquisition of Swiss citizenship makes it statistically invisible.*

*Keywords: Second Generation; Naturalisation; School Attainment; Economic Integration; Switzerland; Immigration*

In the general literature on the integration or incorporation of immigrants, studies of the conditions of incorporation have focused on the social mobility of immigrants across generations, taking into account both the socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant groups as well as the structural opportunities offered by the legal frame

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and the socio-economic conditions of the receiving society. Little attention has been paid so far to the *juridical* status of immigrant populations, since host countries set up special legal incorporation procedures when immigration has reached a high level. This, however, is not always the case. Switzerland is a country which has not yet acknowledged in its legal frame the fact that, by all possible demographic standards, it *has* developed into an immigration country.

The conjunction of admission and integration models usually shapes the specific configurations of migratory policies, which thus vary from one immigration country to another. *Laissez-faire* admission policies are mostly counterbalanced by high barriers to citizens' civic incorporation, whereas selective immigration is often accompanied by liberal handling of naturalisation for people admitted into the country, since the selection between wanted and unwanted immigrants had already taken place at the border (Wicker 2003). In the 1990s many European countries converged toward a policy combining tightened admission procedures with easier access to citizenship, a major feature of integration policy. Switzerland singles itself out in Europe by failing to converge toward this model. Whereas admission was tightened in the 1990s, naturalisation provisions have remained unchanged since 1952, except for the introduction of dual citizenship in 1992.

### Switzerland: A Country of Immigration

Switzerland, with 1.5 million foreigners—20 per cent of its resident population—in 2000, is one of the European countries with the highest share of foreigners, significantly ahead of Germany (8.9 per cent in 2001), Austria (9.4 per cent), France (5.6 per cent) and Italy (2.2 per cent). This high proportion of foreigners is due in part to a quite restrictive naturalisation law which does not allow the automatic granting of Swiss nationality to native-born children of immigrants.

Switzerland is also a true immigration country because of a significant migrant inflow, notably in the 1990s, as its share (23 per cent) of foreign-born shows. Moreover the last Census revealed that, in 2000, one third of the Swiss population was comprised of immigrants and their offspring. In other words, the presence of 2.4 million migrant adults and children in the country is directly or indirectly due to immigration: two-thirds had immigrated, whereas one third was born in the country to at least one foreign-born parent. One in four foreigners belongs to the second or third generation, and one in ten Swiss citizens (530,000) acquired their Swiss passports since arriving in Switzerland. The increase in the Swiss population since 2002 is due only to naturalisations. Most of the naturalised persons have retained their previous nationality: they are dual nationals.

The last Census reveals the progressive diversification of migrants' conditions over the past 10–15 years. The traditional low-skilled labour migrants recruited from Southern Europe to Switzerland on a temporary ('guestworker') basis have been progressively replaced by a workforce coming from the Balkans, with an explicit preference given to highly skilled workers in recent years. Finally, during the 1990s, a

considerable number of people entered the country (25,000 on average per year) under conditions defined by the asylum law; they came mostly from war-torn areas and were granted special leave to remain which allows limited access to the labour market. Family reunification accounts for two out of five entries into the country, a fact that has increased the proportion of women among migrants. Twenty-eight per cent of women out of the total resident population aged between 14 and 32—a crucial age for family activity and labour participation—are foreigners.

In sum, a radical diversification of the migrant population has taken place over the past 15 years in terms of age, gender, geographical and cultural origin, as well as immigrant status (Wanner and Fibbi 2002).

Conditions for acquiring Swiss citizenship are the most stringent in Europe (Office Fédérale des Migrations 2006). The main feature of Swiss naturalisation law is the lack of any claim to citizenship, in spite of fulfilling legal requirements, even for persons born in the country. The failing of automatic mechanisms makes naturalisation a two-fold selective process, because not all people satisfying the requirements apply for naturalisation and not all candidates are accepted. Despite this restrictive profile, the number of naturalisations between 1992 and 2002 multiplied fivefold; this increase continued, with 35,400 people becoming Swiss in 2003, and 47,600 in 2006 (Heiniger *et al.* 2004).

Citizenship is a crucial criterion for the shaping of opportunities for participation in the host society, not only politically but also socially. However, the expected consequences of acquiring Swiss citizenship vary for EU citizens and for third-country nationals. Whereas the former are entitled to equal social and economic opportunities, even as foreigners, by virtue of the Bilateral Agreements of 2002, the latter may only consolidate their entitlements and secure equal footing by acquiring Swiss nationality. Legislation and implementation of naturalisation procedures have been a highly politicised topic in the last few years between supporters of naturalisation as an administrative procedure and the supporters of naturalisation as a truly political act.

As naturalisation has become a key issue in Swiss politics in the last decade, several studies have dealt with the political aspects of this system (D'Amato 2001; Steiner and Wicker 2004), especially in connection with its implementation or with identity questions (Achermann and Gass 2003; Centlivres *et al.* 1991; Maillard and Ossipow 1989; Ossipow 1997; Piguet and Wanner 2000). There are hardly any studies on naturalised people, except for one essay describing the situation before the introduction of dual citizenship (Buhmann 1993). More recently, however, a survey designed to contrast naturalised with non-naturalised second-generation youth from among the labour migration flows of Italians and Spaniards (Bolzman *et al.* 2003), has identified the high education achievement of naturalised youth.

Both the tight regulation of Swiss nationality acquisition and the lack of any automatic granting of nationality indicate that naturalisation is mainly conceived as a reward granted to those who have already successfully walked the path to integration. The

positive selection of naturalised youth in comparison to their fellow-country(wo)men appears as confirmation that this policy is implemented in naturalisation praxis.

### Research Questions

Meantime, census data allow us to study this issue in a more comprehensive way. The latest Population Census (2000) offers a new and unique basis for investigating integration processes beyond the nationality screen. First we are going to present the dataset and the way ‘origin groups’ were constructed for the purpose of this analysis. We will then outline the profile of these young people with a migratory background in Switzerland before presenting our analysis of the interactions between naturalisation and the structural integration process.

Our aim is to understand whether and to what extent naturalised young people differ from the non-naturalised and from their Swiss-by-birth counterparts. We discuss characteristics of the structural integration process of second-generation youth aged between 20 and 24 years old. The paper focuses on naturalised youth—a minority among young people with a migratory background in Switzerland, as they have formally undergone the whole process of integration—and we distinguish between Swiss-born and foreign-born.

We will try to answer the following three questions. First, are naturalised youth better school performers than their counterparts from the same country of origin but Swiss-by-birth? Second, are they less affected by unemployment than their counterparts from the same origin country and Swiss-by-birth? Finally, is there consistency between school performance and labour market performance?

The relevant categories under analysis fall within the two main defining criteria in migration matters: nationality and birthplace. Table 1 offers a systematic view of the

**Table 1.** Definition of the populations under study

Nationality		Birthplace	
Nationality at birth	Present nationality	In Switzerland	Out of Switzerland
Swiss		Swiss-by-birth, native-born	Swiss-by-birth, foreign-born
Non-Swiss => migratory background		Second generation (2G)	One-and-a-half generation (1.5G)
Youth with a migratory background:			
	Swiss => naturalised	Naturalised, Swiss-born (Natur.2G)	Naturalised, foreign-born (Natur.1.5G)
	Non-Swiss => non-naturalised	Non-naturalised, Swiss born (N-Nat.2G)	Non-naturalised, foreign-born (N-Nat.1.5G)

categories and their definition. The denominations will be used both in the tables and in the text, as far as possible.

Swiss-by-birth, born in Switzerland, will constitute the reference population. Swiss-born youth with a migratory background will be designated as second generation (2G) according to the strict demographic definition of the concept of second generation; foreign-born youth with a migratory background (with more than five years of residence in the country) will be indicated as 1.5 generation (1.5G), as they may have been partly socialised in Swiss society and attended Swiss schools. Among these two groups a distinction will be drawn between naturalised and non-naturalised youth.

The present article is based on a systematic analysis of the Census 2000 carried out at the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies: the full study gives a comprehensive account of all origin groups, including Germans, French, Spaniards, Bosnians, Macedonians and other Yugoslavs (see Fibbi *et al.* 2003, 2005). In this paper, however, we focus only on a few key origin groups in order to give a sharper picture of the situation. The origin groups selected are either the most numerous (Italians, who stand also for 'old' immigration groups), or they represent major immigration groups that consolidated their presence in Switzerland in the 1980s and are well-represented among youth of immigrant descent: Portuguese, Turks Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs (Kosovar Albanians), Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs and Croats. Italians and Turks have already been studied (Bolzman *et al.* 2003; Hämmig 2000; Juhasz and Mey 2003); as such their trajectories stand paradigmatically for rather successful vs. rather limited integration. On the other hand, little research has been carried out on other groups' structural integration and participation in the various spheres of Swiss society; this is the case of youth from Portugal and the Balkan area.

Moreover, it must be noted that studies on Italians and Turks generally focus on non-naturalised youth.<sup>1</sup> Since naturalisation entails a positive selection on the educational indicator—as Bolzman *et al.* (2003) demonstrated for youth of Italian and Spanish origin—one may wonder whether patterns of integration and degrees of success of naturalised youth from various migratory backgrounds differ as much as the ones observed among non-naturalised youth, or if they converge upwards toward the Swiss average. In that latter case, the structural profile of naturalised youth will tend not to differ according to country of origin.

### Second-Generation and Origin Groups

'*Secondos*' and '*Secondas*' have become a popular denomination, after the children of immigrants in Switzerland started using this self-categorisation in 2002—see Wessendorf's paper in this issue. The social understanding of this notion compounds native and foreign-born young people, with migratory background, both naturalised and non-naturalised. The introduction of new questions in the Census—nationality

at birth ('Swiss' or 'foreign') and year of naturalisation—allows distinguishing youth according to place of birth and naturalisation status.

Nationality-based definitions of populations, which are more of a hindrance than a help for the correct illustration of integration process, can be left aside. In this paper we will operate with 'origin groups',<sup>2</sup> which are identified in the following way:

- people who hold the nationality of their country of origin;
- naturalised people whose first nationality (their own at birth or their parents') is the one of their country of origin.

Since the Swiss Census has no systematic data on previous nationality, this information is estimated on the basis of the following criteria. Considered as belonging to a migrant group are:

- those people, naturalised during their lifetime, who hold as second nationality the nationality of their country of origin (holding dual citizenship);
- those people naturalised during their lifetime who were born in their country of origin;
- those people, naturalised during their lifetime, who were born in Switzerland and live with their parents, one of whom still holds the nationality of his/her own country of origin;
- those people, naturalised during their lifetime, who were born in Switzerland and live with their parents, one of whom at least has naturalised during his/her lifetime, having been born in a foreign country of origin.

Some further information is needed to explain the national attribution of youth from Yugoslavia and the identification of naturalised people. Nationals from countries formed after the break-up of former Yugoslavia are identified by their nationality at birth: for the purposes of this article, this is the case of Croatians. The distinction to be made among the various groups from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> was however more of a problem. Their 'main' language was chosen as the marker of their origin: they are therefore divided into Albanian-speaking and Serb-Croatian-speaking people.<sup>4</sup>

We will differentiate among the young people in the age group 20–24 years:

- youth with a migratory background born in Switzerland (2G), corresponding to the demographic notion of second generation who are not, properly speaking, 'immigrants';
- foreign-born youth with more than five years of residence in the country. The lack of the variable 'age of arrival' in our dataset prevents us from rigorously delimiting the 1.5 generation; we consider the variable 'foreign-born with more than five years of residence' a proxy for 1.5 generation. These young people most likely came into the country as family members of an adult who had been granted the right to

reside in Switzerland, but it is not possible to know whether they attended Swiss schools.<sup>5</sup>

### **Youth with Migratory Background: A Quantitative Profile**

One resident person out of three in Switzerland is either an immigrant or the child of an immigrant and at the same time one Swiss citizen out of ten is naturalised; 57 per cent of the naturalised young people (20–24 years old) are Swiss-born. Considering young people aged between 20 and 24, those with a migratory background represent almost one third of the resident population. Table 2 summarises the main demographic features of population fractions according to country of origin. At 5.5 per cent, the Italians represent the largest group, followed by the Yugoslavs (4.8 per cent); but the Balkan group becomes the largest one if migrants coming from all the former Yugoslavian countries are counted together (8.1 per cent). The Italians constitute the most settled group as they belong to the first migration wave of the 1950s and 1960s, whereas the other groups immigrated later. With 30 per cent of their youth native-born, the Turks are quite stabilised; this contrasts sharply with Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs who have less than 10 per cent native-born.

Historical data show that a fairly balanced proportion of men and women of all ages have acquired Swiss citizenship (Piguet and Wanner 2000); however, among young people between 20 and 24 (Table 3), naturalisation concerns more men than women, in spite of the resultant national service obligations.

Naturalisation rates differ quite markedly from group to group, from more than 25 per cent for the Italians and Croatians to only 3.8 per cent of the Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs. Descriptive data on naturalisation behaviour show that native-born (2G) tend to apply successfully for naturalisation more often than foreign-born (1.5G) in all origin groups. Since requirements concerning length of stay are particularly demanding (12 years of residence), much of the variation seems to be due to the average period of presence in Switzerland of the origin group. Piguet and Wanner's (2000) analysis of factors influencing naturalisation on data from the Central Aliens' Register controlled for place of birth, age and length of stay, but could not take into account social background variables. Our dataset allows us to do this.

The logistic regression analysis of the factors influencing the decision to naturalise proves that the candidate's school credentials play a significant role; lack of any secondary qualification lowers significantly the chances of naturalisation and tertiary education increases sharply the probabilities of success. Educational credentials have an accrued impact on naturalisation chances for women. Lack of national language skills proves to be a real barrier to the acquisition of the Swiss citizenship.<sup>6</sup> Parents' background proves to be more relevant than expected. This is probably due to the importance of naturalisation applications concerning the whole family as well as by the relatively young age of candidates, who apply when they are under 18 or shortly after that age. Naturalisation chances for men are more affected by parental level of education than is the case for women (see Fibbi *et al.* 2005: 51–3).



**Table 2.** Youth aged between 20 and 24 years by origin, birth-place, length of stay and residence permit

20–24 years	Resident population	IT	PT	TR	Y.AL	Y.SC	HR
> 5 years in CH	90.9	92.9	71.1	80.6	70.5	78.4	91.5
Swiss-born	76.3	73.0	5.1	30.5	3.4	14.2	30.5
Long residence permits	13.9	68.3	62.2	48.7	48.3	45.4	48.5
N	431,272	23,879	11,970	9,746	9,290	5,253	3,622
% total		5.5	2.8	2.3	2.2	1.2	0.8

Source: Swiss Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

**Table 3.** Proportion of naturalised youth aged 20–24 by origin, gender and birthplace and naturalisation status

	Men	Women	Native born (2G)	Foreign born (1.5G)	Total
IT	34.5	25.5	28.3	16.8	25.8
PT	5.5	3.9	15.6	3.2	4.1
TR	25.0	20.8	31.8	15.0	21.3
Y. AL	3.8	3.6	10.0	3.5	3.8
Y. SC	15.3	16.1	51.5	9.1	16.7
HR	29.0	26.5	55.8	12.3	26.8

Source: Authors' computations of Federal Population Census 2000.

IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serbo-Croat-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

### School Attainment

Relying on census data, we will first describe school attainment for the various immigrant groups under study. Our indicator for school success is the proportion of persons having attained or being enrolled in tertiary education.<sup>7</sup>

The overall distribution in tertiary education of youth by country of origin seems to indicate that school success parallels the average length of stay of the various groups (Table 4, column 1). However, those sharp differences fade remarkably away when only Swiss-born young people are taken into account (Table 4, column 2), as length of stay in the immigration country affects educational outcomes. Performance of Swiss-born (2G) is definitely better than the average in the group: Serb-Croatian-speaking 2G have three times more chances, Portuguese 2.5 times, and Croatians and Turks 1.5 times more chances than the average in the respective group. Among

**Table 4.** Proportion of youth aged 23 and 24 with or in tertiary education, according to origin, place of birth and naturalisation status

	TOTAL (average for the origin group: naturalised and non-naturalised, 2G and 1.5G)	Swiss-born (2G) (naturalised and non-naturalised)	Naturalised (2G)	Naturalised (1.5G)
CH	29.6	29.5	30.3	
IT	20.3	21.5	34.4	33.5
PT	6.0	16.4	28.6	31.1
TR	10.2	14.5	22.4	25.0
Y.AL	3.6	0.0	20.0	11.3
Y.SC	7.6	21.0	32.8	20.9
HR	14.7	23.8	32.5	28.4

Source: Authors' computations of Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serbo-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

Italians, however, this difference is less sharp, signifying that the proportion of Swiss-born is relatively high in this origin group.

Among Swiss-born youth with migratory background, the naturalised distinguish themselves as good performers: Italians, Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs and Croatians all fare better than the Swiss average (30 per cent) whereas Portuguese, Turks and Kosovars converge toward the Swiss average. Furthermore, the acquisition of Swiss nationality is strongly associated with better school qualifications, since naturalised foreign-born (1.5G) youth fare (column 4) noticeably better than average in their origin group (column 1). Yet they generally lag somewhat behind their naturalised fellow country(wo)men born in Switzerland (2G), with the exception of Portuguese and Turks. Hence, even among groups with higher propensity to naturalise, naturalisation is socially selective, as has been observed in previous studies for Italians and Spaniards.

Going beyond descriptive data, we use logistic regression analysis to test the impact of each variable on school success among young people of immigrant descent, born in Switzerland (2G), aged 23 to 34.<sup>8</sup> The test outcome is the proportion of youth enrolled in tertiary education in various immigrant groups.

Once social origin, language skills and contextual factors are taken into account,<sup>9</sup> we can analyse the chances of attaining tertiary education for young people of immigrant descent according to their ethnic origin and naturalisation status.

Three remarks summarise the findings about naturalised Swiss-born youth (Table 5). The first result is that naturalised young people fare significantly better than non-naturalised. The second is that, once social origin is controlled for, naturalised youth tend to out-perform the Swiss-by-birth. This result confirms at national level the survey findings on Italians that were based on local-scale observations (Bolzman *et al.* 2003). The third observation deals with gender: good performance is a feature concerning mainly naturalised women (2G). They not only do better in comparison to Swiss-by-birth women but they also out-perform men (compared to Swiss-by-birth men) in several naturalised groups. Furthermore, women from more recent flows perform just as well or even better than Italian women, who are from a well-established immigration flow.

It is difficult to comment on the performance outcomes of the various origin groups of naturalised youths, since the statistical significance of the results is compromised by the relatively small numbers of naturalised persons. We will only say that, contrary to the image produced by the mere distribution of tertiary school achievement (Table 5), the chances of being enrolled in higher education among naturalised youth do not strictly reflect variability in the groups' length of stay in the country, with the possible exception of Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs.

On the other hand, non-naturalised youth have significantly fewer chances to reach tertiary education, after control for parent's educational capital, language acquisition and contextual factors, in spite of the fact that they are born in Switzerland (2G). Being based on nationality, school statistics give a somewhat biased picture of the situation. The assessment of school achievement based on people who keep only their

**Table 5.** Factors influencing the probability of attending or having completed tertiary education for Swiss-born men and women (2G) aged 23–34 living with their parents, according to naturalisation status and origin

	Men		Women	
	Odds ratio		Odds ratio	
CH Swiss-by-birth	1.00		1.00	
<b>Naturalised</b>	1.00		1.00	
IT	1.33	***	1.51	***
PT	0.89		1.90	*
TR	1.04		1.03	
Y.AL	0.64		0.27	
Y.SC	0.84		1.90	**
HR	1.24		1.51	*
<b>Non-naturalised</b>				
IT	0.66	***	0.61	***
PT	0.49	***	0.35	***
TR	0.53	***	0.41	***
Y.AL	0.15	***	0.12	***
Y.SC	0.17	***	0.37	**
HR	0.47	**	0.68	
<b>Parents' highest level of education</b>				
None	1.49	***	2.09	***
Compulsory	1.49	***	2.14	***
Vocational training	1.00		1.00	
Other secondary and tertiary education	15.24	***	11.33	***
<b>Main language</b>				
National	1.00		1.00	
Non-national	0.75	***	1.45	***
<b>Habitat</b>				
Urban centre, isolated town	1.08	***	1.50	***
Other municipality in agglomeration	1.00		1.00	
Rural environment	0.74	***	0.67	***
% of 19-year-olds with Gymnasium diploma in canton	1.00	***	1.00	***

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .

Source: Authors' computation of Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

Note: The odds ratios correspond to the estimated relative chance to reach tertiary education, for a given variable, with respect to the reference variable (defined by the unit). A lower value than unity represents, after control of other variables, a lower probability to reach tertiary education with respect to the reference variable.

foreign nationality is excessively pessimistic, as Salentin and Wilkening observe about similar biases in Germany (2003). Moreover, as statistical results and biases contribute to the public perception of immigrant groups, this perception overlooks positive performances, thus confirming negative stereotypes and strengthening a somewhat unpromising image of immigrants.

We can summarise our findings on educational profiles by saying that acquisition of Swiss nationality works in a socially selective way, as it mainly concerns those young people who manage to reach higher educational qualifications. Such individuals converge positively toward the Swiss average. It can be further pondered whether it is possible to disentangle the observed link between positive selection on educational achievement and naturalisation. In other words, the question can be asked whether it is the consolidation of school career which prompts the acquisition of Swiss citizenship, or if the causal relation is reversed.

This is a very intriguing question that is not easily answered. The main reason for this is that, by the time young people reach the required length of stay and apply for naturalisation, they are generally aged 18–20 years, as data on age at naturalisation show. At this age they are also on their way to acquire a higher education, be it in a professional or an academic track. This observation pleads for a conceptualisation of the link between education and naturalisation that departs from a causal relationship by conceiving this link as an interactive one; naturalisation is to be seen as a step in the career of a socially mobile young person, a gamble on the future. Their family backgrounds as well as their promising educational achievements encourage them to consider possible professional prospects where Swiss nationality may be of an advantage.

Despite their obvious pertinence, questions of belonging and identity in naturalisation decisions cannot be analysed in the frame of our dataset; our findings merely point to a rather strong structural link between school achievement and naturalisation. So we reach the second question we intend to analyse: are naturalised youth less affected by unemployment than their counterparts—either non-naturalised youth of the same migratory background or Swiss-by-birth? In order to discuss this crucial indicator of labour market participation, we need to introduce some contextual features of the Swiss labour market.

### **Labour Market Performance**

In the 1990s, for the first time since World War II, Switzerland experienced unemployment, a situation explained by severe restructuring, by an inflow of asylum-seekers, and more generally a loss of flexibility in the immigrant admission policy and by the rights acquired by the more settled foreign population, which made previous ‘unemployment exporting’ policies impossible (Afonso 2006). In 2000, according to Census data, the unemployment rate for Swiss was 2.8 per cent; it reached 8.2 per cent among foreigners. The rates varied from 14.9 per cent among Turks and 12.6 per

cent among people from the former Yugoslavia down to 4.5 per cent for Portuguese (Widmer 2005).

Thus, up to recent years, studies on the labour market integration of the second generation did not tackle the question of unemployment. They rather focused on the degree of social reproduction between first and second generation. In the 1980s they showed how young men of immigrant origin were entering manufacturing industry as part of the skilled labour force, thus following the traditional social mobility track of assimilation into the host society. Among women, however, half of them reproduced their mothers' employment status in non-qualified positions whereas the other half made their way into clerical jobs, a gap probably associated with the difference between the 1.5 and second generations (Fibbi and De Rham 1988).

Nowadays, all studies on labour integration deal to a greater or lesser extent with unemployment. Limiting ourselves only to studies on second-generation employment patterns, a survey on youth of Italian and Spanish descent shows that unemployment is quite low for those origin groups as well as for their Swiss counterparts (Bolzman *et al.* 2003). However, 40 per cent of the immigrants and 36 per cent of the Swiss had experienced frictional unemployment; for half of them it lasted more than six months. The study showed that men are more affected by unemployment than women. Successful non-naturalised youth holding a university degree are twice as likely to be confronted with unemployment as their Swiss counterparts. Furthermore, unemployment is higher for youth with a vocational training than for those holding other types of secondary education, but differences between young people of foreign origin and natives are limited (Bolzman *et al.* 2003).<sup>10</sup>

A further study seeks to explain higher unemployment figures among foreigners by testing the hypothesis of discrimination in accessing the labour market (Fibbi *et al.* 2003). Using the 'practice testing' methodology standardised by the International Labour Organisation (Bovenkerk 1992), the study compares Swiss youth to immigrant youths who were born abroad but had been educated in Switzerland and hold current Swiss apprenticeship qualifications. The study shows disturbing rates of discriminatory treatment of applications for young men of Turkish and Yugoslavian origin.

It is thus legitimate to consider unemployment as the crucial indicator in our discussion of labour market integration of youth with migratory background born in Switzerland (2G). Available Census data offer useful test variables to account for unemployment, following the hypothesis that the specific reception conditions are a crucial factor in the way the second generation finds its place in society (Brettell and Hollifield 2000; Portes and Böröcz 1989). We test to what extent educational achievement is rewarded in the labour market irrespective of origin; or, in other words, if there are differentials in unemployment rates for young people holding the same educational credentials among the different origin groups.

*Unemployment: Statistical Description*

First, a description of how unemployment affects young people of immigrant origin is provided. Average unemployment rates by origin group (Table 6, column 1) reveal that, compared to the Swiss-by-birth, youth of immigrant descent experience higher unemployment; this is also the case for the Swiss-born 2G (column 2) as well as the naturalised Swiss-born (column 3) youth of immigrant descent. Youth from non-EU countries tend to register higher unemployment rates than youth from EU countries.

Swiss-born (2G) are generally in a better position than the average origin group, with the exception of the Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslav group. Naturalised Swiss-born young people tend to be less affected by unemployment than foreign-born naturalised youth (1.5G), with the exception of Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs.

*Explaining the Unemployment of Naturalised Swiss-Born Youth*

Let us now test the impact of each variable on unemployment in various immigrant groups, according to origin and naturalisation status. The logistic regression considers economically active Swiss-born (2G) youth aged 23 to 34.<sup>11</sup> This makes it highly plausible that they will all hold Swiss qualifications. The analysis is done separately for men and women. The regression computes an estimation of the relative chances of being unemployed among naturalised and non-naturalised people of each origin group, compared with our reference group of Swiss-by-birth.

Education plays a major role in explaining access to employment; thus, a higher level of education may correspond to a lower unemployment risk. The introduction of this as well as other control variables<sup>12</sup> reduces the unemployment differentials among people of different origin. Persisting differences among origin groups after this are 'unexplained' by the factors contained in the model: this unexplained differential can be considered as accounting for specific characteristics of the group

**Table 6.** Unemployment rate of economically active youth aged 20 to 24, according to origin, birth-place and naturalisation status

	Total (average for the origin group: naturalised and non-naturalised, 2G and 1.5G)	Swiss-born (2G; naturalised or not)	Naturalised (2G)	Naturalised (1.5G)
CH	3.8	3.8		
IT	5.6	5.3	5.4	6.2
PT	6.2	4.6	4.0	7.9
TR	10.4	8.5	6.3	8.6
Y.AL	9.1	7.9	8.3	2.8
Y.SC	9.2	11.3	6.8	5.4
HR	7.2	6.5	5.1	4.2

Source: Authors' calculations based on Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

**Table 7.** Factors influencing the probability of being unemployed, among Swiss-born (2G), economically active men and women, aged 23 to 34, according to status of naturalisation and origin

	Men		Women	
	Odds ratio		Odds ratio	
Swiss-by-birth	1.00		1.00	
<b>Naturalised</b>				
IT	1.00		1.13	*
PT	1.09		0.98	
TR	1.77	***	1.37	*
Y.AL	1.61		2.04	
Y.SC	1.78	*	1.05	
HR	1.76	**	0.97	
<b>Non-naturalised</b>				
IT	1.23	***	1.50	***
PT	0.98		1.09	
TR	2.16	***	2.72	***
Y.AL	1.63	*	3.38	***
Y.SC	2.46	***	2.74	***
HR	1.72	**	2.34	***
<b>Educational level</b>				
None	5.85	***	5.54	***
Compulsory school	1.70	***	1.69	***
Vocational training	1.00		1.00	
Other secondary	1.42	***	0.96	
Tertiary	0.74	***	1.00	
<b>Main language</b>				
National	1.00		1.00	
Non-national	1.39	***	2.08	***
<b>Habitat</b>				
Urban centre, isolated town	1.44	***	1.24	***
Other municipality in agglomeration	1.00		1.00	
Rural environment	0.71	***	0.90	***
<b>Age</b>				
23–24 years	1.10	**	1.01	
25–29 years	1.00		1.00	
30–34 years	0.72	***	0.97	
<b>Canton</b>				
% of youth with vocational training	8.89	***	2.37	**
% of unemployed youth	> 999.999	***	> 999.999	***

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .

Source: Authors' computation of Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.



neglected by the model as well as a proxy for discrimination (Widmer 2005). It is plausible, in fact, that second-generation youth holding Swiss qualifications are confronted with a specifically difficult situation: indeed, direct competition with local youth as well as weaker social capital may combine to produce, paradoxically, higher rates of unemployment for the better qualified, who at the same time strive to keep away from typical immigrant jobs.

The logistic regression analysis reported in Table 7 shows, as expected, that education significantly affects the chances of unemployment; however the profiles for men and women differ substantially. Tertiary education is surely an asset for males' labour market participation. However, Swiss-born (2G) women with tertiary education carry as much risk of unemployment as women who have vocational training. The hypothesis that higher educated, Swiss-born (2G) youth with migratory background have a harder time capitalising their educational credentials in the labour market seems to find some confirmation.

Table 7 presents the odds ratios of being unemployed calculated by logistic regressions conducted on Swiss-born (2G) men and women separately for the various immigrant groups, taking the Swiss-by-birth as the reference group. When controlling for educational attainment, naturalised youth systematically show a weaker exposure to the risk of unemployment than non-naturalised Swiss-born youth. In other words, with similar human capital, it can be said that naturalisation protects youth with a migratory background from unemployment.

This does not mean, however, that differences with Swiss-by-birth fade away since, controlling for educational credentials, naturalised youth face higher risks of unemployment than the Swiss-by-birth. But a distinction is to be made between youth with and without EU origin: Italian and Portuguese men perform as well as Swiss-by-birth, whereas Turkish, Croat and Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslav men are exposed to significantly higher unemployment risks than their Swiss-born ethnic counterparts.

As observed in the previous discussion on educational attainment, here again there is a gender issue. Naturalised women perform better than non-naturalised but worse than Swiss-by-birth; but naturalisation seems to be more of an asset to women. Naturalised women's odds ratios are generally closer to those of the reference population than is the case for men.<sup>13</sup> The divide between EU and non-EU migrant origins is also blurred.

### *Explaining the Unemployment of Naturalised Foreign-Born Youth*

The picture of naturalised youth would be incomplete if we neglected the foreign-born (1.5G) naturalised youth, who represent 2 out of 5 persons naturalised. How do they perform in school and on the labour market?

Let us remember that this category is not as rigorously defined as would be ideal, since it includes all the people with more than five years of residence in Switzerland, at Census date. In other words it is impossible to properly control for length of stay and

hence amount or stage of schooling, which may indeed have an impact on school attainment. With the exception of Italians and Portuguese who over-perform in comparison to Swiss-by-birth, naturalised 1.5G's school achievement tends to lie below those of naturalised Swiss-born (2G): refer back to Table 4. Such an outcome is not a surprise since foreign-born youth has to go through language and school adjustment upon migration. Indeed the naturalised foreign-born (1.5G) have better chances of attaining tertiary education than is the case for non-naturalised foreign-born. So here again, although to a lesser degree, naturalisation functions in a selective way.

We are mainly interested here in unemployment risk on the basis of the logistic regression analysis, which controls for school attainment, so that labour market performance can be discussed, all other conditions being equal.<sup>14</sup> Table 8 shows that the expected pattern of naturalised foreign-born (1.5G) running higher risks of unemployment than Swiss-by-birth, and lower risks than non-naturalised foreign-born (1.5G), is generally—but not always—confirmed.

What comes as a surprise is what the comparison between Table 7 and Table 8 shows: risks of unemployment for foreign-born (1.5G) tend to be lower than for Swiss-born (2G) youth with migratory background. Upon closer scrutiny, it appears that this is the case for naturalised and non-naturalised youth alike, at least as far as men are concerned; for women, the trend is less evident.

Such a finding is counter-intuitive. Having 'progressed' along their integration path, Swiss-born youth are expected to have an advantage over equally qualified foreign-born since they are supposed to be more similar to native Swiss-by-birth. One possible explanatory way out of this paradox is that Swiss-born and foreign-born tend to enter different segments of the local employment structure and thus compete with very different competitors. Whereas the Swiss-born with migratory background (2G) compete with Swiss-by-birth for much-sought-after jobs, the foreign-born (1.5G) compete with other foreign-born for rather 'immigrant' jobs. Such a hypothesis of segmentation in the labour market deserves further investigation.

Altogether, three patterns of unemployment risk can be identified. They will be described on the base of data on men from three origin groups which are emblematic in the Swiss migration scene: Italians, Turks and Portuguese, cross-cut by place of birth and naturalisation status.<sup>15</sup>

As Figure 1 shows, naturalised native Italian men face risks of unemployment similar to the rates of the Swiss-by-birth; all other categories, foreign-born and naturalised, and non-naturalised, are confronted with higher risks. Figure 2 on Turkish men gives a different picture: all categories have higher risks of unemployment than the reference population, although the naturalised fare better than non-naturalised. Surprisingly, however, foreign-born are in a somewhat better situation than natives, both among naturalised and non-naturalised. All groups from the Balkan Peninsula present a somewhat similar pattern of unemployment risks. Finally Figure 3, on Portuguese men, shows the reverse pattern to the Italians. Non-naturalised face lower chances of unemployment than the reference groups, the native-born and, even more so, the foreign-born; while the naturalised, to the

**Table 8.** Factors influencing the probability of being unemployed, among foreign-born (1.5G), economically active men and women, aged 23 to 34, according to status of naturalisation and origin

	Men		Women	
	Odds ratio		Odds ratio	
Swiss-by-birth	1.00		1.00	
<b>Naturalised</b>				
IT	1.16		1.24	*
PT	1.02		0.90	
TR	1.53	**	1.59	***
Y.AL	0.97		1.50	
Y.SC	1.45		1.19	
HR	0.90		1.34	
<b>Non-naturalised</b>				
IT	1.21	***	1.98	***
PT	0.61	***	0.78	***
TR	1.76	***	2.36	***
Y.AL	1.53	*	2.67	***
Y.SC	1.33	***	1.37	***
HR	1.18	*	1.23	**
<b>Educational level</b>				
None	3.59	***	2.97	***
Compulsory school	1.50	***	1.57	***
Vocational training	1.00		1.00	
Other secondary	1.31	***	0.92	**
Tertiary	0.72	***	0.89	***
<b>Main language</b>				
National	1.00		1.00	
Non-national	1.25	***	2.19	***
<b>Habitat</b>				
Urban centre, isolated town	1.43	***	1.24	***
Other municipality in agglomeration	1.00		1.00	
Rural environment	0.69	***	0.87	***
<b>Age</b>				
23–24 years	1.04		0.98	
25–29 years	1.00		1.00	
30–34 years	0.68	***	1.01	
<b>Canton</b>				
% of youth with vocational training	7.78	***	1.81	**
% of unemployed youth	> 999.999	***	> 999.999	***

\* p &lt; 0.05; \*\* p &lt; 0.001; \*\*\* p &lt; 0.0001.

Source: Authors' computation of Federal Population Census 2000.

CH = Swiss; IT = Italians; PT = Portuguese; TR = Turks; Y.AL = Albanian-speaking Yugoslavs; Y.SC = Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs; HR = Croatians.

contrary, are exposed to higher risks of unemployment, and the native among them are the worst off.

These particular findings point toward a negative answer to the research question as to whether naturalisation is a favourable condition for employment. Although legally equal, Swiss-by-naturalisation differ from Swiss-by-birth in all origin groups since, for equal educational credentials, they face higher unemployment risks. The observed differences between Turks and Yugoslavs on one side, and Portuguese on the other, echo research conducted on discrimination in labour market access for these two groups, which signalled a critical situation for Turkish men—a discrimination rate three times higher than for Portuguese (Fibbi *et al.* 2003).

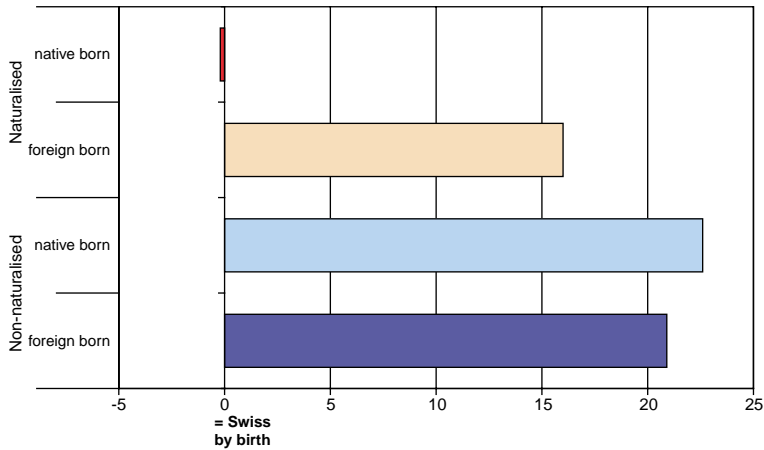
### **Conclusions**

In this article we have tried to answer the following questions. Are naturalised youth better school performers than their counterparts from the same country of origin and the Swiss-by-birth? Are they less affected by unemployment than their counterparts from the same origin country and Swiss-by-birth? We analysed Census data for young Italians, Portuguese, Turks, Croats, Albanian-speaking and Serb-Croatian-speaking Yugoslavs. Thus the main focus of the study was on new immigrant flows compared to the Italians, who stand for a well-established flow, and to the Swiss-by-birth.

Inter-ethnic group variations fade away when social origin and length of stay are taken into account. However they do not disappear altogether, pointing to the importance of some specific factors, either endogenous to the ethnic groups, or exogenous, such as the diverse segments of the labour market each group is received into.

In terms of school achievement, naturalised youth are the best performing ones among people with migratory background. When they are Swiss-born, they may even fare better than the native Swiss. This performance, however, is socially ignored by the host society, as the acquisition of Swiss citizenship makes it invisible to standard statistical observations which are based on current nationality. So, as far as school attainment goes, naturalisation proves to be a quite positive selective device, as had already be demonstrated on naturalised youth from the well-established older migratory flows. The present findings establish that the same pattern seems to be at work for more recent immigrant groups.

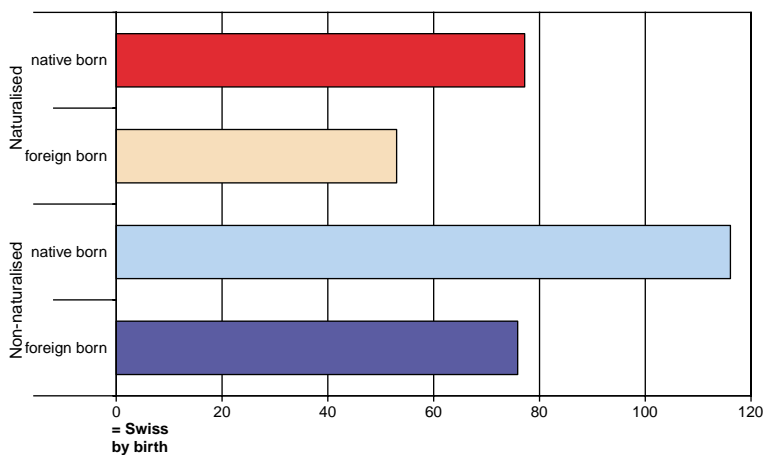
In terms of chances on the labour market, the promise represented by school qualification fails to materialise, since naturalised people of all origins face higher risks of unemployment in comparison to Swiss-by-birth, all other conditions being equal. Unemployment of second-generation youth with qualifications acquired in Swiss schools is quite high; recently immigrated groups are more exposed to this risk than established ones. This fact lends further plausibility to the already advanced hypothesis of unfair treatment in the host society towards these immigrant groups.



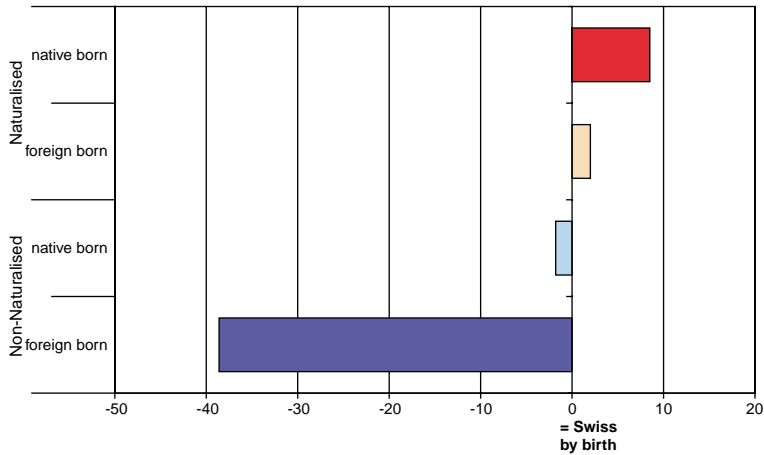
**Figure 1.** Risk of unemployment faced by Italian men, aged 23–34, of selected origin groups, by nationality and place of birth.

Thus our study shows an intriguing finding, namely that naturalisation is positively associated with school performance but not with labour market performance.<sup>16</sup> It is not easy to account for this twist. We can only sketch some ideas.

A first line of thought points at the opening up of status lines in immigration society. Socio-economic life may be ruled in a less universalistic way than school. Thus, parallelism between access to nationality (where access is left to the discretionary power of the authorities who may rely on educational records to help their appraisal of the candidate) and access to employment should not be rigidly postulated.<sup>17</sup> The influences in charge of the selection process in these two social spheres are different: political actors vs. economic actors. Moreover, although they



**Figure 2.** Risk of unemployment faced by Turkish men, aged 23–34, by nationality and place of birth.



**Figure 3.** Risk of unemployment faced by Portuguese men, aged 23–34, by nationality and place of birth.

both have discretionary powers, the two sets of gate-keepers preside over two different social goods: access to citizenship and access to employment. The logic which governs these two spheres is different: access to citizenship is not ruled according to competition, whereas access to employment takes place in a competitive environment and, as such, it is more of a zero-sum game. What the political-administrative actor acknowledges as being worth recognition (in this case school attainment, which stands for motivation to integrate in society) in a non-competitive sphere (nationality), may not be—and indeed is not—similarly acknowledged in a competitive market, where established interests and power positions are not easily challenged by newcomers. That is where discrimination is more likely to appear.

Another way of approaching the question is centred on migrants' strategies. It has also been signalled that people apply for naturalisation mostly in their early adulthood, when school attainment is already completed but achievement in the labour market still lies ahead. In this context, it is tempting to consider naturalisation as a tentative mobility consolidation strategy enacted by young persons with a migratory background, rather than a goal in itself. Their gamble on the future succeeds more or less according to the segment of the labour market they strive after. As long as they confine themselves to 'immigrant' jobs, they find a reasonably secure access to the labour market; but when they try to gain a foothold in labour market segments which are subject to wider competition, they face serious obstacles, as evidenced by higher unemployment.

The study points up another perplexing finding, namely the sharp inter- and intra-group polarisation—the groups being defined along the two criteria of naturalisation and place of birth. While for the first type of factors the usual arguments—segregation and discrimination—can be made accountable for the results together with shorter length of stay, for the second type of differences we lack suitable answers.

The fact that, among the Swiss-born, a sharp difference in structural integration remains between naturalised and non-naturalised people suggests explanations relating to the selectivity of the naturalisation mechanism—which is a specificity of the Swiss political system. However, the fact that, among naturalised people, a difference in structural integration exists between native-born and foreign-born seems to contradict the previous argument by showing that even lower-performing youth do find a way to pass the naturalisation screening. And the fact that the variable of social origin is controlled for rules out a highly plausible explanation for intra-group differences in structural integration. We are thus left with the image of sharp polarisation within ethnic groups, despite similar length of stay and/or similar civic status.

These findings call for further research. We recall here that naturalisation is predominantly understood as a process where the demand for similarity prevails over the principle of equality. Our study shows it is only a step in the quest for more equality.

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### Notes

- [1] The reason lies with the way Swiss statistics are constructed: they distinguish populations only according to nationality, with no account of place of birth.
- [2] A previous study on second-generation Italians and Spaniards has proved such a reorganisation of concepts and data to be very effective (Bolzman *et al.* 2003).
- [3] This is the denomination of the country at Census date (2000). In early 2006 this political entity further split into the two independent states of Serbia and of Montenegro. Formally, the Albanian-speaking province of Kosovo is still part of the Serbian state. Negotiations on the future status of this province are ongoing.
- [4] Some young people, however, mention as their main language one of the four official languages in Switzerland. A group of ‘Swiss-regional-language-speaking-Yugoslavs’ was therefore created; they represent the most integrated group among the Yugoslavs, from a linguistic point of view. For the sake of clarity, we do not report on this group in this article.
- [5] Foreign-born youth with fewer than five years of residence most probably were not socialised in Switzerland and probably came not as dependants (family reunification) but as adults. They are not included in these analyses since they did not attend local schools and are therefore to be considered as first-generation immigrants.
- [6] The provision explicitly placing the condition of mastering the local language upon naturalisation was introduced only in 2005.
- [7] Census data do not allow taking into account people who enrolled in tertiary education without completing it, nor do the data single out those who are enrolled at Census date but will not complete tertiary education.
- [8] The age group was extended in order to have enough observations to run the model.

- [9] As confounding factors we take into account various variables: it is expected that parents' human capital will explain to a great extent differences in school achievement of the offspring, thus reducing significantly the inter-group disparities. The results indeed confirm this expectation. The impact of language assimilation (local language as 'best mastered' language) seems effective only in the case of men. For women, predominance of a non-national language apparently not only does not hamper school success but it promotes it; an intriguing result. Finally, contextual factors play a role: since tertiary education institutions are mainly situated in bigger towns and cities, inhabiting urban centres is positively associated with higher education, whereas the rural environment is more of a barrier to it. Openness of school system (i.e. above national average proportion of youth enrolled in tertiary education) is of course positively associated with better educational chances.
- [10] This finding is surprising since the dual apprenticeship system typical of German-speaking countries is often credited with a good labour market integration for foreigners (Faist 1993).
- [11] Once again, the age group was extended in order to have enough observations to run the model.
- [12] This time the confounding factors are: age (following the hypothesis that the risk of unemployment becomes lower with age); education (following the hypothesis that the higher the qualification, the lower the risk of unemployment); language (according to the hypothesis that preference for national language is associated with lower risks of unemployment); contextual factors, such as the percentage of people with vocational training in the canton (on the assumption that the higher this proportion, the lower the chances of unemployment); the age-group-specific unemployment rate at cantonal level, which is supposed to raise unemployment risks for the population under study, in order to level off discrepancies in the distribution of 2G groups across the country.
- [13] Interestingly, research in France by Frickey and Primon (2003) comes to the opposite observation with respect to women of Maghrebi ancestry.
- [14] For the confounding factors, refer to note 9 above.
- [15] These three national groups present the greatest variety of outcomes according to the four configurations of birthplace and naturalisation. Men's configurations have been chosen by analogy with the previous study on labour market outcome of youth with migratory background (Fibbi *et al.* 2003). Women's patterns for most of the selected groups are similar to men's.
- [16] This divergent pattern of success in school *vis-à-vis* work reminds us of the pattern observed between women and men. Girls' school success over boys' might indeed be well established, but their participation in the labour market—in terms of employment/unemployment—remains more problematic than that of boys.
- [17] Indeed, the democratisation of school access has increased discrepancies between school mobility and labour market mobility.

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