

**Title**

Partnership formation and labour market status among children of immigrants in Switzerland.

**Authors:**

*Andrés Guarín*, University of Lausanne NCCR-LIVES ([ederAndres.GuarinRojas@unil.ch](mailto:ederAndres.GuarinRojas@unil.ch))

*Laura Bernardi*, University of Lausanne NCCR-LIVES ([laura.bernardi@unil.ch](mailto:laura.bernardi@unil.ch))

*Helga A.G. De Valk*, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute & Interface Demography, Vrije Universiteit Brussel ([valk@nidi.nl](mailto:valk@nidi.nl))

**Theme**

International migration and migrant population

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**Abstract**

In Europe, early researches interested in children of immigrants have started in the 1990s, these early works were heavily influenced by the theories developed in the United States. However, in comparison with these American theories, in Europe the differences within ethnic groups take an important role (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Doornik, 1998; Fibbi, Lerch, & Wanner, 2010; Lucassen, 2005). Using the SHP (Swiss Household Panel) survey this paper investigates the relationship between partnership formation and the labour market position among children of immigrants in Switzerland. More precisely, we will look at the processes of partnership formation (covering both married and unmarried cohabitation) and aim to understand how partnership formation can play a role in the professional status (employed-unemployed, occupational attainment) of children of immigrants. The Swiss case is an interesting and relevant one given the growing share of children of immigrants (Marks, 2005), those who were born in Switzerland but have at least one foreign born parent. Furthermore Switzerland has a migration history with people coming for different reasons and from both the neighboring countries as well as from other parts of the world. This allows for a comparative approach that pays attention to diversity in different paths into adulthood both in the private and public domain. First preliminary findings show that there exist differences in partnership formation and professional work, between natives and population with immigrant origins. The timing of the transition to a first union, and cohabitation (married or unmarried) are relatively different for the population with immigrant origins. We can also find greater disadvantages as regards the labour market status for certain groups of children of immigrants.

**Keywords:** Partnership formation, Professional status, Children of immigrants

## Background

In the decades after the Second World War, the massive inflow of “temporary” migrants in response to labor force scarcity has allowed for the settlement of a large numbers of immigrants in most Western European countries (Coleman, 2006; Mens, 2006). This settlement was followed by family formation. The children of these new arrivals commonly referred to as “second generation” immigrants, have been educated and socialized in the host country of their parents. Today, children of immigrants are presented as the future of the large cities of Western Europe and the United States (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012).

Early research in the American society explained that the difficulties encountered by the first generation fade away generation over generation, migrants following a linear process of assimilation. According to this literature a progressive structural integration of migrants through the generations would take place. Today, the alternative model of segmented assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993) rather focuses on factors that could make such linearity not so obvious, such as the quality of training (academic or professional), the substitution of the old wave of immigration by new waves, economic conditions, etc. (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005).

In Europe, early researches interested in children of immigrants have started to 90s, these early works were heavily influenced by the theories developed in the United States. However, in comparison with this American theories, in Europe the difference within ethnic groups take an important role. The significance of the national context for integration pathways has received more attention in Europe (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Doornik, 1998; Fibbi et al., 2010; Lucassen, 2005). In fact, the authors argue that participation and belongings of the children of immigrants in European cities is highly dependent on the integration context and membership in an ethnic group<sup>1</sup> (Schneider & Crul, 2012).

### *Partnership formation and labour market status*

Partnership formation is an important event for young adults' life course. Study the timing of this event can help us to understand the meaning attached to these transitions and how they should best fit into the life course (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Holland & De Valk, 2013). Actually, the de-standardization (Macmillan, 2005; Widmer & Ritschard, 2009) of family forms

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<sup>1</sup> A lot of works are developed in this way: Fertility of descendants (Milewski, 2011), transition to parenthood (Scott & Stanfors, 2011), school contextual effects (Portes & Hao, 2004), adaptation process in early adulthood (Bolzman, Fibbi, & Vial, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2005; Rumbaut, 2005), professional insertion (Santelli, 2007), trajectories after school (Sweet, Anisef, Brown, Walters, & Phythian, 2010), assimilation outcomes amount children of immigrants (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, Lee, Vallejo, Tafoya-Estrada, & Xiong, 2008; Zhou & Yang Sao, 2005), economic situation (Algan, Dustmann, Glitz, & Manning, 2010).

has increased among immigrants and ethnic minorities as it has among native populations; this compounds the difficulties of establishing a single and unidirectional relationship between immigrant family dynamics and integration (De Valk, 2011; Kulu & Milewski, 2007). For the children of immigrants finding a partner is particularly crucial, because they must negotiate differences between their parents' and their own preferences, which often are very different due to the different contexts in which the two generations have been socialized (Hamel, Huschek, Milewski, & De Valk, 2012). However, "most available studies on children of immigrants don't allow us to distinguish between first and second generation, not do they have a comparative focus across immigration countries or origin groups (Hamel et al., 2012, p. 226)".

Having a job and a job with a good social position, remain clearly essential aspects of personal autonomy, claimed to contribute to self-esteem and positive recognition by others (Avenel, 2006). Thereby, successful access into the professional world becomes a main objective to accumulate resources and to pull through. Active participation in the labor market is essential to ensure social cohesion and empowerment of immigrants and their children. Nonetheless, remaining disadvantages in some ethnic minorities are attested and could indicate the presence of discrimination in the labour market (Simon, 2003). The work of Heath and Cheung (2007) explain that there exist an 'ethnic penalties' if ethnic disadvantages is still present and an 'ethnic premiums' if ethnic advantage is present.

### *The Swiss case*

In Switzerland, an important history of immigration is reflected in the Swiss population. As in other European countries, a lot of immigrants from Italy and Spain come to Switzerland. Bilateral agreements govern the entry and residence of these temporary 'guest-workers', who have come to settle and to become part of society. Thereafter, immigrant groups were joined by a workforce arriving from the Balkans, France, Germany, Turkey (Fibbi, Lerch, & Wanner, 2007). The presence of these two layers in the immigrant population leads to a large and heterogeneous second-generation immigrants' population. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, in 2012 about 34% of the population have migrant origins. Four-fifths of people from migration are migrants of first generation foreign and Swiss by birth or by acquisition and a fifth are second generation migrants and Swiss by birth or by acquisition<sup>2</sup> (Bader & Fibbi, 2012).

Studies conducted on children of Spanish and Italian migrants in Switzerland indicate that "in terms of training and professional integration, there is very little difference between young Spanish and Italian immigrant and Swiss-born from the working classes and lower middle classes"

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<sup>2</sup> Marks (2005) estimate the incidence of children of immigrants in Switzerland at 8% of the cohort aged 15 in 2000.

(Bolzman, 2007, p. 39). Though, for some other populations of young migrants highly represented in the Swiss community, as the Turks and the Albanians, the results tend to change. Various researchers (Fibbi, Lerch, & Wanner, 2005; Fibbi et al., 2010; Wanner, 2004) were able to show that the migrant populations belonging to Turks and Albanians are more likely to experience difficulties when they enter adulthood, compared with migrants of different nationalities, and the Swiss lower middle class. Notwithstanding, with the exception of work done by Bolzman (2003 and 2007), Fibbi (2003 and 2010), Lagana (2011) and Marks (2005) that confirm the idea of a possible existence of structural problems in these categories of people, this work focuses on the first generation of migrants, use the last census in 2000 as the basis for its analyses or categorize second generation immigrants as a homogenous group.

### **Aim of the research**

In the present paper we are interested in the partnership formation and in the professional status in the labour market among children of immigrants in Switzerland. More precisely, we will look the processes of partnership formation (covering both married and unmarried cohabitation) and the way in which it is inter-wined with professional status (employed-unemployed, occupational attainment) for both the children of Swiss and the children of immigrants. We focus on Switzerland because of the high share of children of immigrants in the young population and because of the heterogeneity of their background (Marks, 2005). First we study partnership formation, professional status, and occupational attainment, separately and then we examine the relationship between these two dimensions of the life course.

### **Data and techniques of analysis**

To answer these questions we will use the Swiss Household Panel (SHP). This survey is a stratified random sample of private households whose members represent the non-institutional population resident in Switzerland. It collects data on various issues, particularly on family life trajectories and working conditions. Data collection started in 1999 with a sample of 5,074 households containing 12,931 household members. In 2004 a second sample of 2,538 households with a total of 6,569 household members was added. The SHP database currently holds longitudinal information for the years 1999 to 2011.

Since we are interested in the trajectories of family life and professional work, we selected individuals aged between 17 and 50 years and who participated at least once during the period 1999-2011. We constructed the variable that allowed us to identify the ethnic origin of respondents. We created this variable using the determiner of being born in Switzerland or

having moved to Switzerland before the age of 10 and the place of birth of parents (nationality are use as proxy). We then built the variables that indicate if the person is married, has a partner, and the number of unions observed. We used variables that tell us the labour market status of the respondents (employed-unemployed and occupational attainment). Finally, we can include a wide range of control variables that are found in previous research to be relevant for labour market position (gender, age, cohort, education, education of father and mother, number of participations in the survey). The research methodology involves two steps: first we apply survival analyses for try to understand in a descriptive way the differences existents between natives, immigrants and their children. Secondly we used as the dependent variables (employment status and occupational attainment) in a multivariate analysis allowing to estimate the difference in pathways between natives, immigrants and their children.

### **Preliminary results**

Preliminary results show differences in partnership formation and work status between natives and population with immigrant origins. The time of transition to first union, and cohabitation (married or unmarried) are relatively different for population with immigrants origins, they life this event earlier in their path. We can see also greater disadvantages as regards the labour market status for certain groups of children of immigrants.

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