

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO

Abstract

Economics

Department of Economics and Statistics

Doctor of Philosophy

**Doomed to Separation or Ready for Integration? Second-Generation
Immigrants in the Italian Primary School**

by *Mariagrazia* CAVALLO

The integration of second generations is crucial for the well-being, the stability and the social cohesion of the receiving societies. However, childhood years can be decisive for the development of a national identity as well as for adult labor market performance. While the former is important for a proper cultural adaptation, the latter can determine future economic and social outcomes. In this work, I study second-generation immigrants in Italy up to the age of 10. First, I analyze the evolution of the educational gap between natives and immigrants. Then, I evaluate the importance of early language acquisition as a prerequisite for satisfactory school performance and the acquisition of further skills. Finally, I focus on the different role of native and non-native peers' age effects in this performance, investigating whether a double disadvantage exists among second-generation children.