# Chapter 7
# A Country of Settlement for Migrant Families




**Elisa Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Stefania Maria Lorenza Rimoldi, Laura Terzera, and Eleonora Trappolini**

## 7.1 Introduction

Through a long history of immigration, the migrant population of Italy has undergone a well-documented transformation (Strozza, 2018). In the early stages, the migrant population was predominantly composed of male workers who acted as forerunners, with the exception of certain nationalities in which women were more represented. In the last quarter-century, these initial flows have been followed by family reunification or have made possible the creation of new families in the host country. Today, the immigrant population in Italy is largely settled.

The ongoing quantitative and structural consolidation of families of immigrant origin is one of the most apparent dimensions of the evolving presence of foreign- or foreign-background populations in Italy. Various elements confirm this process of consolidation, reflecting different stages of incorporation into the territory, often marked by the family characteristics of migrants.

In this chapter, we firstly analyse the profile of 'immigrant' families (i.e., families living in Italy in which at least one of the partners—and often all members—hold only foreign citizenship) over the past few decades. We illustrate the transformations in these family forms — whether arising from the reunification of families already established in the country of origin or from newly formed relationships in Italy — using the available data on residence permits, marriages, and reproductive behaviour. Unfortunately, the structure of the available data limits our ability to include in the analysis the growing number of families formed by former foreign residents who have subsequently acquired Italian citizenship. The following section examines how families' needs change over time. Our focus is on how migrant families address (or struggle to address) the demand for childcare, considering the

E. B. di Belgiojoso · S. M. L. Rimoldi · L. Terzera (✉) · E. Trappolini
Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy
e-mail: laura.terzera@unimib.it

© The Author(s) 2027

C. Bonifazi et al. (eds.), *Beginners No More*, IMISCOE Research Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-37942-9_7

**Table 7.1** Families with at least one foreign-citizen member and families with only foreign-citizen members in Italy, 2001, 2011 and 2022 (absolute values)

| | 2001 | 2011 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Families with at least one foreign-citizen member | 672,506 | 1,828,338 | 2,663,103 |
| Families with only foreign-citizen members | 416,192 | 1,357,204 | 1,900,500 |

Source: Martire and Zindato (2005); Census ISTAT 2011; Permanent Census ISTAT, 2022

opportunities and constraints of the Italian context, which, like other Southern European countries, is characterised by a *familistic* welfare model. Finally, we analyse the role of grandparents in providing childcare for migrant families, exploring how this role intersects with the growing care needs of ageing migrants themselves.

## 7.2 Reunited Families, New Families, and Descendants

The settlement process of migrant families is evidenced by their growth between 2001 and 2022, as shown in Table 7.1. In the 2001 Census, only 672,506 families had at least one member with foreign citizenship. By the 2011 Census, this figure had tripled to 1,828,338 families, with 1,357,204 composed entirely of foreign citizens. By 2022, these families had increased by an additional 40–45% (see Chap. 2 for general trends in the foreign population). The (slow) decline in the percentage of families composed solely of foreign citizens (from 74% in 2011 to 71% in 2022) reflects the maturation of the settlement process. This trend is likely driven by an increase in citizenship acquisition, mixed marriages, and informal unions. Another official indicator underscoring the consolidation of this process is the trend in residence permits issued for family reasons[1] (Fig. 7.1 and Table 7.2). Italian legislation, like that of most Western European states, permits the reunification of spouses and children. However, the reunification of other family members, such as parents and siblings, is strictly restricted. The available data show that the reunification of spouses is prioritised over that of children, who often follow the migration of both parents (Table 7.2).

The first waves of migrants to Italy primarily established themselves through the reunification of pre-existing families or through engagement in 'marriage migration' (Niedomysl et al., 2010), while the formation of new family units within the Italian marriage market was relatively limited. Overall, family settlement patterns in Italy appear to follow a fairly traditional structure. The first migrant (the forerunner) pursues a stable project, subsequently followed by the arrival of family members reunited over time (Kraler et al., 2011). Such a process, however, varies considerably by gender and country of origin. Two distinct paths to reunification can be

[1] The observable discontinuity between 2008 and 2011 is due to changes in official accounting. Since 2008, minors registered on the permit of stay of an adult have started to be also counted in the number of 'family reasons'. Since 2011, foreign citizens with a long-term permit-of-stay (quasi-permanent migrants) are counted separately, thus disappearing from the number of residence permits granted for family or other reasons.

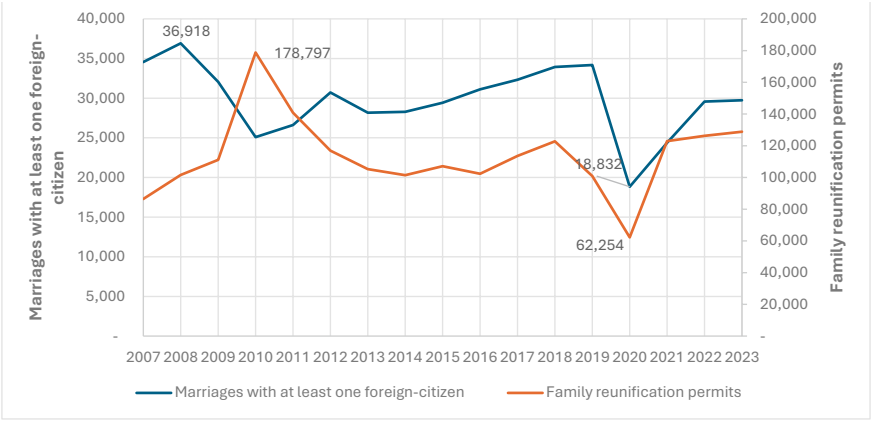



**Fig. 7.1** Trend in marriages with at least one foreign-citizen member and family permits in Italy, 2007–2023 (absolute values). Source: Authors' elaboration of ISTAT data (2024)

observed. In some cases, reunifications may occur in a tight time frame, typically within two years of the first migrant's arrival. In other cases, reunification takes place after a considerable period of time. Notably, three quarters of married migrants are reunited within ten years of the arrival of the first spouse (Terzera & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018).

It is important to note, however, that family trajectories can vary significantly depending on the gender, cultural background, and country of origin of the forerunner. Gabrielli et al. (2019a, 2019b) have demonstrated that migrant women arrive in Italy with diverse marital histories: some are already married, others migrate following a marital breakdown, and some form a partnership around the time of migration. In contrast, many migrant men arrive in Italy single, forming a union only after spending a sizable period of time in the country, often involving a temporary return to their country of origin. The same authors have emphasised that cultural background also plays a significant role in shaping patterns of couple formation. For example, migrants from North Africa exhibit a significant gender gap in the proportion of singles at the time of migration. This disparity arises from a specific migratory behaviour in which the male forerunner migrates first, followed by couple formation and either the simultaneous or delayed migration of the bride. This process is commonly referred to in the literature as 'importation of a spouse' and 'trailing spouse' (see, among others, González-Ferrer et al., 2016; Heering et al., 2004).

Between 2007 and 2023, there were, on average, over 100,000 arrivals per year for family reasons, even if in 2020, owing to the pandemic, the number was remarkably lower (Fig. 7.1). Overall, from 2007 to 2023, there had been a total of almost two million family permits. More than the volume of admissions, what is particularly noteworthy is the percentage of residence permits issued for family reasons relative to the total number of permits. This percentage has grown steadily over time (see Table 7.2). From 28% in 2009, it has grown to 59% in 2020. It then declined due to the increase in the number of residence permits for humanitarian

**Table 7.2** Reunifications by family permits and characteristics of marriages with at least one foreign-citizen in Italy, 2009–2023 (absolute and percentage values)

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Family member reunited* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % Child | 23.0 | 40.8 | 20.6 | 36.2 | 34.7 | 34.6 | 45.4 | 47.3 | 47.4 | 44.5 | 45.4 | 54.1 | 57.2 | 52.9 | 49.9 |
| % Groom/ Bride | 58.7 | 43.2 | 45.8 | 46.1 | 46.2 | 45.6 | 37.1 | 34.3 | 33.2 | 35.0 | 34.8 | 28.6 | 25.0 | 25.4 | 25.2 |
| % Other family members | 18.3 | 15.9 | 33.6 | 17.7 | 19.1 | 19.8 | 17.5 | 18.4 | 19.5 | 20.5 | 19.8 | 17.3 | 17.9 | 21.7 | 24.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| A.V. | 111,145 | 178,797 | 140,846 | 116,891 | 105,266 | 101,422 | 107,096 | 102,351 | 113,549 | 122,812 | 100,912 | 62,254 | 122,918 | 126,244 | 128,862 |
| % family permits out of total new permits | 28.3 | 29.9 | 38.9 | 44.3 | 41.2 | 40.8 | 44.8 | 45.1 | 43.2 | 50.7 | 56.9 | 58.5 | 50.9 | 28.1 | 39.0 |
| *Citizenship of spouses* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % Foreign groom, Italian bride | 15.0 | 11.8 | 12.0 | 14.4 | 15.1 | 16.2 | 17.5 | 17.9 | 16.8 | 18.1 | 18.3 | 18.3 | 18.8 | 18.7 | 19.6 |
| % Foreign bride, Italian groom | 51.7 | 56.7 | 55.6 | 53.2 | 54.5 | 54.7 | 54.8 | 55.1 | 54.1 | 52.4 | 52.4 | 57.7 | 56.2 | 51.2 | 51.8 |
| % Spouses both foreign citizens | 33.4 | 31.5 | 32.4 | 32.4 | 30.3 | 29.2 | 27.7 | 27.0 | 29.1 | 29.5 | 29.3 | 23.9 | 24.9 | 30.1 | 28.7 |

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| A.V. | 32,059 | 25,082 | 26,617 | 30,724 | 28,173 | 28,278 | 29,425 | 31,116 | 32,323 | 33,933 | 34,185 | 18,832 | 24,380 | 29,574 | 29,732 |
| % marriages with at least one foreign citizen out of the total number of marriages in Italy | 13.9 | 11.5 | 13.0 | 14.8 | 14.5 | 14.9 | 15.1 | 15.3 | 16.9 | 17.3 | 18.6 | 19.4 | 13.5 | 15.6 | 16.1 |

Source: Authors' elaboration of ISTAT (2024) and EUROSTAT (2024) data

reasons. The marked increase in the percentage of residence permits for family reasons, however, derives mostly from the sharp reduction, over the period considered, in the number of residence permits granted for work reasons. Nor should it be forgotten that residence permits for family reasons allow the holder to access the labour market. Consequently, some of the migrants arriving for non-working reasons may also be labour migrants under a different name.

Reunification shapes the family structures prevalent in each territory, owing to the operation of two key factors: the legislation regulating family inflows and the priorities embedded in the decision-making of family members regarding with whom to reunite.

Up to 2014, partner reunification was the most common form of family reunification, accounting for approximately 46% of cases on average. However, from 2015 onwards, children have become the family members most frequently reunited, representing 50% of reunited members in 2023. Therefore, sponsoring the family members turns out to be primarily functionally linked to the migratory project: 'Migrants with persistent temporary intentions usually exclude family reunification in the host country, while migrants with a strong orientation to settle in Italy reunify the family' (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018, p. 763). Permanent settlement in the host country is a goal generally shared by the members of families that existed prior to the emigration of some of their members. Therefore, it is often strategically advantageous to prioritise the reunification of only the spouse, leaving the children in the country of origin. This approach allows the family to invest in a dual income, maximising the family's economic performance due to the absence of children. Conversely, single-parent families, mostly headed by female breadwinners, represent an exception to this model. For these families, the reunification of children is often essential due to the absence of support networks for childcare in the country of origin (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018).

However, reunification patterns (and their timing) are strongly contingent upon nationality, which serves as a proxy for cultural background, including established gender roles in the countries of origin. As a result, men are more likely to complete the family reunification process, as they are more frequently the forerunners. The reunification of brides is more common and more accessible than the reunification of grooms, as the latter typically involves families from countries that do not stigmatise female salaried employment and are more accepting of female migration (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017; Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018).

As far as the citizenship of individuals who have entered with a residence permit for family reasons is concerned, over the last few years (2019–2023), the top two positions are held by the second and third largest groups in Italy: Albanians and Moroccans (see Table 7.3). The subsequent positions in the ranking are less stable over time. Considering three five-year periods (2009–2013, 2014–2018, and 2019–2023), the third, fourth, and fifth positions have shifted. In the first decade (2009–2018), Chinese were the third-largest group, but in the most recent (2019–2023) period they have disappeared from the list of the most representated nationalities. Currently, India, Bangladesh, and Egypt have emerged among the most represented groups. Moldovans appear in the ranking only during the first

**Table 7.3** Top five countries of citizenship among holders of family permits, by gender, in Italy, 2009–13, 2014–18, 2019–2023 (percentage values)

| | *Men* | | | | | | *Women* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2009–2013* | | *2014–2018* | | *2019–2023* | | *2009–2013* | | *2014–2018* | | *2019–2023* | |
| | *Citizenship* | *%* | *Citizenship* | *%* | *Citizenship* | *%* | *Citizenship* | *%* | *Citizenship* | *%* | *Citizenship* | *%* |
| 1 | Morocco | 12.4 | Morocco | 13.8 | Albania | 16.3 | Morocco | 13.8 | Morocco | 13.9 | Morocco | 14.2 |
| 2 | Albania | 9.9 | Albania | 11.6 | Morocco | 13.8 | Albania | 12.0 | Albania | 11.2 | Albania | 13.1 |
| 3 | China | 9.1 | China | 7.1 | Egypt | 5.9 | China | 6.8 | India | 6.4 | Bangladesh | 7.1 |
| 4 | Moldova | 6.7 | India | 5.1 | Bangladesh | 5.7 | India | 4.8 | China | 5.6 | India | 6.2 |
| 5 | Philippines | 5.0 | Egypt | 5.1 | India | 4.9 | Moldova | 4.6 | Egypt | 4.8 | Egypt | 5.3 |
| Subtotal | | 43.1 | | 42.7 | | 46.6 | | 42.1 | | 41.9 | | 45.9 |

Source: Authors' elaboration of ISTAT data (2024)

five-year period (2009–2013). Regardless of the five-year periods considered, the first five countries of citizenship consistently account for nearly 45% of permits for family reasons. The breakdown by citizenship is similar for men and women, with the same five countries of citizenship ranking at the top over the years, though with slight variations in their order.

The analysis of residence permits is not sufficient to fully understand the trend of migrant family settlement in Italy. Foreign citizens from European Union countries, for instance, are not required to have a permit to live in Italy. Additionally, two important considerations should be taken into account: first, some families are formed directly in Italy through marriage or cohabitation; second, there is a growing number of Italians with a migratory background, as a result of the acquisition of Italian citizenship over time.

Furthermore, transnational families, often overlooked, should be taken into account. These families represent the other side of the coin concerning family reunification. Families reunited in the host country often experience periods of transnational living because migrants may lack a well-defined migratory project and/or because they do not meet the requirements for reunification (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018). However, studies have highlighted the existence of long-term transnational families. As in other European countries, Italy has a sizeable number of stable transnational families among certain nationalities. The formation and persistence of these arrangements are shaped by factors such as gender, marital status, and age of the first migrant (Baizán et al., 2014; Caarls & Mazzuccato, 2016). Complete or incomplete transnational families are more frequent among sub-Saharan African, Latin American, Ukrainian, Moldovan, and Filipino migrants (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018; Cvajner, 2018).

The second crucial aspect that can be inferred from official sources regarding definitive settlement concerns marriages involving at least one foreign citizen. Specifically, official data show that since 2007 (see Fig. 7.1), there have consistently been over 25,000 marriages annually involving couples with at least one spouse with foreign citizenship, with two exceptions: 2020, when the number of marriages plummeted to less than 19,000 due to the pandemic, and 2009, when a change in the law for citizenship acquisition through marriage led to a decline. In the last three years, however, the trend has rebounded, with nearly 30,000 marriages recorded in 2023. Furthermore, this contingent has steadily increased its share of total marriages celebrated in Italy, rising from 14% in 2009 to 16% in 2023 (see Table 7.2). However, during the same years, the percentage of marriages with both spouses with foreign citizenship has gradually decreased, dropping from one in three to nearly one in four marriages. A possible explanation for this trend could be the increasing number of marriages in which one of the spouses has a migratory background but has acquired Italian citizenship. As a result, the prevalence of marriages with at exactly one foreign citizen has increased. The 'Italian groom and foreign-citizen bride' pattern has consistently remained above 50%.

Using official data on marriages, Paterno et al. (2023) highlight that most marriages involving both spouses with foreign citizenship are first marriages, a characteristic that has remained constant over time. However, they observe that second

marriages are significantly more common when the couple consists of an Italian man and a woman with foreign citizenship, compared to other types of marriages (e.g., man with foreign citizenship and an Italian woman or both foreign citizens). Additionally, these marriages often feature brides with foreign citizenship who are better educated and, on average, younger than their Italian grooms. These structural differences in mixed couples have been explained in the literature through 'exchange theory' (Maffioli et al., 2014), which suggests the presence of a form of exchange in which an Italian man's better economic and legal status is traded for a first-marriage partner who is younger and better educated. This theoretical framework is further substantiated by the findings of Guetto and Azzolini (2015), who identify significant deviations from the standard patterns of positive assortative mating in migrant/native marriages in Italy, especially in contexts of low immigrant integration. Their analysis of Italian Labour Force Survey and Register of Marriage data provides robust evidence for the status exchange hypothesis, showing that such marriages are more likely to involve less-educated, older Italian men marrying better-educated, younger migrant women, particularly those from non-Western countries. They also find that migrant women are more likely to marry an Italian man if they are unemployed at the time of marriage. Moreover, the patterns of assortative mating in migrant/native marriages begin to align with those of native couples when migrant women possess Italian citizenship at the time of marriage, underscoring the critical influence of integration levels on intermarriage dynamics.

The nationalities most frequently involved in marriages differ from those involved in family reunification, and the dynamics also vary by type of marriage (Table 7.4). For marriages in which both spouses are foreign citizens, the top five countries of citizenship – accounting for more than half of the cases (59% over the period 2019–2023) – have remained largely unchanged since 2014. Romanians, the largest community in Italy since the EU enlargement in 2007, play a significant role, representing roughly one in four marriages in which both spouses have foreign citizenship. Since 2014, Nigerians have ranked second among the top five countries of citizenship, accounting for 16% of marriages in Italy in which both spouses had foreign citizenship in 2019–2023. Despite their relatively smaller community size and limited role in family reunification, Nigerians consistently stand out for their notable involvement in family formation over time. Albanians also stand out for both family reunification and for forming new families. This trend reflects the presence of an active and robust marriage market, characterised by high rates of both reunification and marriage. Similarly, two other Eastern European countries, Ukraine and Moldova, are prominent in these statistics. In marriages between foreign-national women and Italian men, the distribution of brides by nationality has remained relatively stable over time, with women from Eastern European countries—such as Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Albania—accounting for the largest shares. Brazilian women, who are also prominent in this category, constitute a notable exception to this pattern. By contrast, in marriages between foreign-national men and Italian women, the most common non-EU nationalities are Moroccan and Albanian, with Tunisian grooms also appearing in this group. Spouses from More

**Table 7.4** Top five countries of citizenship in marriages with at least one spouse with foreign citizenship, by type of marriage in Italy, 2009–13, 2014–18, 2019–2023 (percentage values)

| | | *2009–2013 Citizenship* | *%* | *2014–2018 Citizenship* | *%* | *2019–2023 Citizenship* | *%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Foreign bride, Italian groom* | 1 | Romania | 17.5 | Romania | 19.6 | Romania | 18.5 |
| | 2 | Ukraine | 10.4 | Ukraine | 12.3 | Ukraine | 12.3 |
| | 3 | Brazil | 7.6 | Russia | 6.5 | Russia | 6.7 |
| | 4 | Poland | 6.3 | Brazil | 5.9 | Brazil | 5.7 |
| | 5 | Russia | 6.2 | Albania | 5.1 | Albania | 4.1 |
| | Subtotal | | 48.0 | | 49.5 | | 47.4 |
| *Foreign groom, Italian bride* | 1 | Morocco | 14.3 | Morocco | 14.6 | Morocco | 13.4 |
| | 2 | Albania | 8.3 | Albania | 10.3 | Albania | 9.3 |
| | 3 | United Kingdom | 6.4 | Tunisia | 5.8 | Romania | 5.9 |
| | 4 | Tunisia | 5.7 | Romania | 5.2 | Tunisia | 5.6 |
| | 5 | Germany | 4.4 | United Kingdom | 4.4 | United Kingdom | 5.3 |
| | Subtotal | | 39.1 | | 40.3 | | 39.4 |
| *Both spouses foreign citizens (bride citizenship)* | 1 | Romania | 20.3 | Romania | 24.7 | Romania | 23.7 |
| | 2 | China | 12.6 | Nigeria | 8.9 | Nigeria | 16.4 |
| | 3 | Nigeria | 9.8 | Ukraine | 7.5 | Ukraine | 8.1 |
| | 4 | Moldova | 6.8 | Moldova | 6.9 | Albania | 5.9 |
| | 5 | Morocco | 5.7 | Albania | 6.3 | Moldova | 5.4 |
| | Subtotal | | 55.1 | | 54.4 | | 59.4 |

Source: Authors' elaboration of ISTAT data (2024)

Developed Countries (MDCs), particularly the United Kingdom, also account for a noteworthy share of these marriages.

As previously mentioned, some recent marriages officially classified as involving an Italian and a foreign citizen may actually be homogamous in terms of national origin, because the Italian partner may have acquired Italian citizenship after migration. Since official statistics are based on current citizenship rather than origin, they may underestimate the number of homogamous marriages by origin and overestimate the number of marriages between Italians and individuals of foreign origins. Strozza et al. (2021; pp. 112–114), analysing ISTAT longitudinal data, provide valuable insights into how naturalisations have affected marriage patterns. Between 2012 and 2019, the share of marriages involving both naturalised spouses increased from 0.3% to 1%, while those between a naturalised spouse and a foreign citizen rose from 3% to 8%. Similarly, marriages between an Italian-born spouse with a naturalised partner grew from 9% to 13%. These trends highlight a general rise in the number of new Italian citizens among those marrying in Italy.

The timing of couple formation varies by gender, influenced by the migratory cultural model that often positions men as forerunners in migration. Migrant men typically show a low likelihood of entry into a couple in the period immediately surrounding the migration event. However, the risk of couple formation increases

with their length of stay in the destination country. Conversely, women have the highest risk of couple formation around migration. This model is, however, attenuated or not evident for nationalities in which women are migration pioneers, such as South Americans (Gabrielli et al., 2019a). Research on Italy suggests that family reunification and formation among first-generation migrants are shaped by geocultural models that influence family and migration decisions (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Terzera, 2018; Gabrielli et al., 2019b). These models underscore the strong connection between the migrants' cultural, traditional, religious, and behavioural origins and their demographic behaviour in the settlement context.

Over time, mixed couples involving an Italian partner have represented most marriages involving at least one foreign citizen. Among these, unions between an Italian groom and a bride with foreign citizenship – mainly from Eastern Europe and, to a lesser extent, South America – predominate (see Table 7.4). Romanians continue to strongly dominate this category throughout the entire period (2009–2023). Conversely, in marriages with an Italian bride, unions with Western grooms are more frequent in the first period (2009–2013), but more recent trends show an increase in marriages with men from established communities, such as Morocco and Albania. This shift suggests that within communities in which integration processes are advanced (see Chap. 10), mixed marriages increasingly involve at least one naturalised individual who continues to marry a spouse within their community (Gabrielli et al., 2019b; ISTAT, 2022).

It is crucial to note that official data only capture information on formal marriages, excluding informal (unmarried) cohabiting couples. The only survey conducted by ISTAT in 2011–2012 on migrant families highlights that informal cohabitation is a widespread family arrangement, particularly in the absence of children. Specifically, the survey found that 22% of couples with at least one partner with foreign citizenship cohabited informally when no children were involved, while this percentage dropped to 11% when children were present.

Looking at reproductive behaviour, data on births of foreign citizens (see Table 7.5) highlight two key trends: (1) the consolidation of migrant families in Italy, and (2) their ongoing contribution to the Italian birth rate. Births to mothers with foreign citizenship initially increased during the observed period, driven by migratory dynamics from the previous decade. Notably, many women who arrived in Italy in the early years of the new millennium or 'emerged' following the 2002 regularisations—so numerous that they were defined as 'boomers' (ISTAT, 2020)—realised their reproductive projects in the subsequent decade. However, these groups gradually aged, and the number of female migrants of reproductive age who arrived in the following years was smaller than in the past. As a result of the smaller size of these cohorts and the declining fertility rates among these women, the peak of 79,872 births in 2012 was followed by a steady decline, with the number of births dropping below 70,000 from 2016 onwards, declining to approximately 50,000 in 2023. European and African women have been the most significant contributors to these births, although over time, women from Asian countries, particularly the Indian subcontinent, have become increasingly visible (Table 7.5). On the other hand, births to women from the American

**Table 7.5** Live births to foreign-citizen mothers by area of citizenship and TFR of foreign-citizen women by geographical division of the mother's residence in Italy, 2008–2023 (absolute and percentage values)

| | *2008* | *2009* | *2010* | *2011* | *2012* | *2013* | *2014* | *2015* | *2016* | *2017* | *2018* | *2019* | *2020* | *2021* | *2022* | *2023* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Live birth to foreign-citizen mothers* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *A.V. total* | 72,402 | 77,055 | 77,989 | 79,037 | 79,872 | 77,671 | 75,058 | 72,084 | 69,373 | 67,927 | 65,439 | 62,913 | 59,785 | 56,926 | 53,079 | 51,447 |
| *Europe %* | 41.4 | 40.7 | 41.9 | 43.2 | 44.1 | 43.8 | 44.0 | 44.6 | 44.2 | 43.4 | 41.6 | 39.5 | 38.3 | 40.3 | 37.4 | 35.3 |
| *Africa %* | 33.3 | 34.0 | 32.2 | 30.8 | 29.5 | 29.6 | 29.3 | 28.9 | 28.6 | 29.9 | 30.9 | 31.3 | 32.1 | 32.7 | 33.9 | 34.1 |
| *Asia %* | 20.1 | 20.4 | 21.0 | 20.9 | 21.4 | 21.5 | 21.9 | 21.7 | 22.6 | 22.2 | 22.9 | 24.7 | 25.1 | 22.3 | 23.9 | 25.5 |
| *America %* | 5.1 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 5.1 |
| *Total %* | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | *TFR (children per woman)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Italy* | 2.53 | 2.43 | 2.31 | 2.22 | 2.18 | 2.09 | 2.06 | 2.01 | 2.04 | 2.06 | 2.03 | 1.99 | 1.89 | 1.87 | 1.86 | 1.82 |
| *North-West* | 2.66 | 2.64 | 2.50 | 2.34 | 2.29 | 2.18 | 2.16 | 2.11 | 2.13 | 2.16 | 2.11 | 2.09 | 1.99 | 1.92 | 1.92 | 1.86 |
| *North-East* | 2.61 | 2.52 | 2.38 | 2.29 | 2.27 | 2.18 | 2.14 | 2.11 | 2.15 | 2.18 | 2.17 | 2.13 | 2.02 | 2.01 | 2.00 | 1.94 |
| *Centre* | 2.43 | 2.21 | 2.15 | 2.11 | 2.05 | 1.98 | 1.92 | 1.84 | 1.88 | 1.84 | 1.84 | 1.77 | 1.65 | 1.63 | 1.61 | 1.60 |
| *South* | 2.14 | 2.08 | 1.98 | 1.96 | 1.93 | 1.91 | 1.88 | 1.84 | 1.88 | 1.95 | 1.85 | 1.83 | 1.83 | 1.82 | 1.84 | 1.80 |
| *Islands* | 2.42 | 2.22 | 2.18 | 2.13 | 2.13 | 2.02 | 2.03 | 2.01 | 2.03 | 2.15 | 2.10 | 1.97 | 1.93 | 2.00 | 1.92 | 1.83 |

Source: Authors' elaboration of ISTAT data (2024)

continent have remained marginal, consistently accounting for less than 6%. The children of mixed couples, Italian by birth, are not included in these data.

The data indicate that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of women with foreign citizenship has been declining over time, falling below two children per woman since 2019 (see Table 7.5). In addition to the abovementioned evidence of the decline in the most recent migrant flows, it is worth noting that in Italy, an increasing number of migrant communities are characterised by women who work, primarily in family services, and have lower fertility levels. Examples include the Ukrainian, Moldovan, Filipino, Peruvian, and Ecuadorian communities. For this reason, the contribution of foreign citizens to the birth rate among the Italian resident population (particularly low and still dropping) is slowly decreasing (ISTAT, 2020; Ortensi, 2015).

The geographical distribution of families with new births, concentrated in central-northern Italy (ISTAT, 2020), reflects the more advanced settlement process in these areas of the country, which have historically been characterised by a long-established regular presence of foreign citizens (Paterno et al., 2023). In recent years, more than 80% of foreign citizens have resided in the central-northern regions of the peninsula (Strozza, 2018).

The current mature stage of settlement of the migrant population, spanning at least two decades, has transformed Italian society into a multi-ethnic and multicultural landscape. This society is now characterised by a plurality of origins, each differing in demographic profiles, socio-economic attributes, and behavioural patterns. As a result, families with at least one member with foreign citizenship increasingly represent a significant proportion of Italian households. These families, however, are often more vulnerable than native ones and less endowed with the support networks that characterise the Italian 'familistic' welfare model. This vulnerability has important implications for family decisions, particularly with regard to childcare choices. As we will show in the following section, the type of welfare system plays a crucial role both in reconciling work and family life and in shaping fertility outcomes.

## 7.3 Childcare for Migrant Families: Needs and Arrangements

Like other Southern European countries, Italy has a 'familistic' welfare regime, characterised by strong family and intergenerational solidarity, limited public childcare services, and inadequate measures for reconciling working life and parenthood or integrating women into the labour market (Esping-Andersen, 2016). This context drives households to rely heavily on informal childcare (ISTAT, 2022), often provided by parents (especially mothers) or grandparents (especially grandmothers).

Given the lack of public services and the cost of private options, the Italian enrolment rate in early childhood education and care services for children aged 0–2 remains significantly below the EU average (26 vs. 35%) (ISTAT, 2021).

Nearly half of the households did not use any childcare services because one of the parents was caring for the offspring or the children were autonomous. Italian mothers face considerable challenges in balancing work and childcare responsibilities, as evidenced by the high percentage of stay-at-home mothers compared to the rest of Europe (11 vs. 4%) (ISTAT, 2022). Consequently, Italian women, along with Greek women, have the lowest employment rate in Europe, with only 57% of Italian women employed compared to the EU-27 average of 70% (Eurostat, 2024). Extended working hours exacerbate these difficulties, further hindering parents, particularly mothers, from fully participating in the labour market (ISTAT, 2022).

It is also well established in the literature that in Italy, grandparents play a relevant role in supporting their children and grandchildren (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 2016; Santero & Naldini, 2017). For natives, access to childcare is often facilitated by an extended family network. In contrast, migrants, especially in the early stages of migration, face greater challenges due to a lack of social and family support (Bojarczuk & Mühlau, 2018; Ryan, 2011a; Ryan, 2011b).

Most studies on childcare consider migrants only as childcare providers (Williams & Gavanas, 2008). However, once they settle with their families in the destination country or when a new family is formed, they also become consumers of childcare services. Previous studies on migrants' childcare arrangements suggest that they tend to favour informal childcare over formal services (Barglowski et al., 2015; Biegel et al., 2021), a trend observed in Italy as well. Indeed, migrants have a lower enrolment rate in formal childcare compared to natives: among children aged 3–5, the overall enrolment rate in pre-school (in 2022–2023) was 95%, but only 87% among children of migrants.[2]

According to previous studies, the explanations for this pattern refer to both constraints and preferences. Regarding constraints, migrants may lack knowledge of the host country's educational system (Biegel et al., 2021; Sprong & Skopek, 2022), face limited availability of formal childcare services (Burchinal et al., 2008), or encounter difficulties in balancing work and childcare responsibilities (Bonizzoni, 2014; see Chap. 5). In terms of preferences, migrants may prefer family-centred or informal care provided by compatriots to maintain ethnic and cultural identity or ensure similarities between caregivers and children, such as a shared language (Burchinal et al., 2008; Chaudry et al., 2011). In any case, preferences strongly depend on the country of origin. For example, Albanian families usually entrust childcare to their grandparents, for whom caring for grandchildren is seen as a *raison d'être* (King et al., 2014). Conversely, sub-Saharan migrants are more likely than natives to rely on extra-family support, reflecting cultural norms where child-rearing is considered a community task, with childcare provided free of charge (Mugadza et al., 2019; Obeng, 2007).

[2] These percentages are based on the authors' own elaborations of ISTAT and MUR data (demo.istat.it; https://dati.istruzione.it/espscu/index.html?area=anagStu)

A recent study by Trappolini et al. (2023) using two surveys[3] conducted by ISTAT in Italy during 2011–2012 pointed out the differences between migrants and natives as regards both the need for informal childcare and its arrangements. As far as need is concerned, migrants use informal childcare less frequently than natives and declare more often that they do not need it. Regarding arrangements, migrants rely on grandparents less frequently than natives, likely because grandparents are left behind. Instead, they are more likely to entrust their children to adult siblings or non-relatives. The authors also observe that the household composition, the presence of children of school age, and the parents' occupational status serve as determinants of migrant choices. Couples and composite households (compared to single-parent families) and households in which the mother is outside the labour market (compared to households with both parents in the labour market) are less likely to use informal childcare and more likely not to report a need for it. However, according to the aforementioned study, despite these differences, grandparents remain the most frequently used caregivers among both migrants and Italians and across all countries of origin. As for non-relatives and adult siblings, while they are more commonly relied upon by migrants, they remain rarely used as sources of childcare overall.

Are these results particular to the Italian context? Trappolini et al. (2024), comparing migrants in Italy with those in France, found that migrants in France use informal childcare less frequently. The greater availability of formal childcare in France compared to Italy reduces migrants' need for informal childcare; in addition, the longer average length of stay of migrants in France allows them to build stronger and broader support networks (familial and non-familial).

Nevertheless, in both destination countries, some particularities emerge based on country of origin, highlighting how origin shapes parental choices. Latin Americans, Eastern Europeans, and sub-Saharan Africans are more likely to rely on informal childcare than other groups. In terms of arrangements, sub-Saharan Africans are more inclined to use non-relatives for childcare, while North Africans (excluding Moroccans) tend to rely on relatives other than grandparents. Finally, Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans typically rely on family members (grandparents, adult siblings, or other relatives) for childcare.

## 7.4 Grandparents as Caregivers or Care Recipients?

The involvement of grandparents in caring for grandchildren, particularly among women, has been broadly studied in both international and national literature (Thomese & Liefbroer, 2013; Zamberletti et al., 2018). In Western cultures, grandmothers are often regarded as 'kin keepers', taking on central roles in maintaining

[3] 'Social Condition and Integration of Foreign Citizens', a sample of households with at least one migrant with foreign citizenship, and 'Multiscopo—Aspects of Daily Life', a sample of households in Italy.

family bonds and providing care (Friedman et al., 2008; Sear & Mace, 2008). This gendered dynamic may stem from differing expectations and desires that grandfathers and grandmothers have concerning family involvement and caregiving roles (Di Gessa et al., 2016). However, grandparental childcare is strongly connected to grandparents' health. Some studies suggest that occasional caregiving is associated with improved physical and psychological health, compared to both intensive commitments and no involvement at all (Arpino & Bordone, 2014; Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2001). Conversely, other studies highlight negative health outcomes linked to caregiving, such as worse self-rated health, as well as increased physical health issues (Blustein et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2003).

In Italy, many migrants live together with their descendants (Terzera & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018), and the cohabitation of multiple generations is more common among foreigners (12%) than among Italians (8%) (ISTAT, 2018). This arrangement offers advantages, particularly the flexibility and cost-free nature of grandparental childcare. However, grandparents may themselves need care due to health issues. It should be noted that migrant grandparents may have been the first to arrive in the destination country or joined the family later to provide childcare, as is the case among Albanian families (King et al., 2014).

A study by Trappolini et al. (2021) comparing Italian and migrant families found that migrant co-resident grandparents are more likely to be healthy and provide care than their Italian counterparts. This finding suggests that, in migrant families, co-resident grandparents play an active role in supporting the family in rearing children by providing childcare in the host country. However, caution is necessary when interpreting these results. The selection of individuals into multigenerational households may be linked to other factors. Financial hardship is another important reason families may rely on extended family support through intergenerational co-residence (Baker et al., 2008; Dunifon et al., 2014). This could apply more to Italians than to migrants, given that Italians report a higher share of households with a poor or insufficient perception of their economic condition. Such a result might also reflect a higher share of multigenerational households with a single parent among Italians than among migrants. Indeed, previous studies show that even in the case of a single father or a single mother, those with co-resident grandparents tend to fare better financially (Mutchler & Baker, 2004).

As for gender differences, women are more likely than men both to report poor health and to look after their grandchildren. This result might suggest that foreigners also adopt (or adapt to) the 'familistic' model: women mostly take on caregiving responsibilities, even when they perceive their health to be poor (see Chap. 4 for gender comparisons).

Trappolini et al. (2021) suggest that cohabitation with grandparents often reflects either a need for care or the provision of care. Besides migrant status and self-reported health, their study highlights that gender is a determining factor in grandparents' provision of childcare: women look after grandchildren more than men, even in poor health.

The increase in the elderly and migrant populations, including the ageing of the migrant population, and the widespread economic austerity in all European

countries, would lead us to expect an increase in multigenerational households and a greater role for grandparents in childcare, especially in 'familistic' countries.

## 7.5 Conclusions

The reflections presented in this chapter challenge the cliché that Italy serves primarily as a transit country for most migrants and as a destination country for only a selected few. If emigrating with one's family, reuniting a pre-existing family, or forming a new family in the host country are commonly regarded as indicators of a long-term or permanent migration project—and therefore an intention to settle—then Italy should be recognised as a country of settlement for migrant families. As previously mentioned, official data and surveys reveal significant changes in migration patterns over time. The initial flows in the 1990s, predominantly comprising male workers who acted as forerunners, have been replaced by migrants who settled in Italy. Today, migrants represent a well-established and settled population. According to a national survey (Social Condition and Integration of Foreigners 2011), three out of four migrants want to settle in Italy permanently. Moreover, official data show that new arrivals in Italy come mainly for family reasons, which accounted for nearly 60% of total permits in 2020. The reunification of spouses and children represents an important channel of subsequent migration inflows, alongside the steady increase in marriages among migrants and mixed marriages. The formation of new families in Italy through marriage is also encouraged by the growing number of individuals who have acquired Italian citizenship and show the intention to settle through marriage, often within their own ethnic communities. Families originating from countries that predominated in early migration flows, such as Romania, Albania, and Morocco, continue to form the bulk of this population. However, even smaller communities, such as Nigerians, have increasingly chosen Italy as their destination country for permanent settlement. In addition, newer waves of migrants (i.e. those from the Indian subcontinent) show a trend towards family settlement. This ongoing family settlement process has driven significant demographic and social changes in Italy, contributing to the development of a more stable, multi-ethnic society.

Family settlement introduces new challenges for migrants; as the migration process matures, the number of generations within migrant families increases. This evolution has significant implications, particularly regarding childcare, work-family balance, and the care of older parents. The impact of being in emigration on families is especially notable in Italy, given its 'familistic' welfare regime.

Migrants have lower enrolment rates in formal childcare compared to Italian natives (see Chap. 10). Additionally, they use informal childcare less frequently than natives and more often report that they do not need it. These differences largely stem from the absence of an extended family network. When such a network is present, migrants tend to rely on internal family resources; otherwise, they more often turn to non-family members. Finally, previous results (Trappolini et al., 2023, 2024)

highlight that migrants' use of informal childcare is strongly influenced by the country of destination and its availability of services, as well as by cultural norms from their country of origin that shape their childcare decisions.

## References


Arpino, B., & Bordone, V. (2014). Does grandparenting pay off? The effect of child care on grandparents' cognitive functioning. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 76*(2), 337–351.

Baizán, P., Beauchemin, C., & González-Ferrer, A. (2014). An origin and destination perspective on family reunification: The case of Senegalese couples. *European Journal of Population, 30*(1), 65–87. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-013-9305-6

Baker, L. A., Silverstein, M., & Putney, N. M. (2008). Grandparents raising grandchildren in the United States: Changing family forms, stagnant social policies. *Journal of Societal & Social Policy, 7*, 53–69.

Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E., & Terzera, L. (2018). Family reunification–who, when, and how? Family trajectories among migrants in Italy. *Demographic Research, 38*, 737–772.

Barglowski, K., Krzyżowski, Ł., & Świątek, P. (2015). Caregiving in Polish–German transnational social space: Circulating narratives and intersecting heterogeneities. *Population, Space and Place, 21*(3), 257–269.

Biegel, N., Wood, J., & Neels, K. (2021). Migrant-native differentials in the uptake of (in)formal childcare in Belgium: The role of mothers' employment opportunities and care availability. *Journal of Family Research, 33*(2), 467–508.

Blustein, J., Chan, S., & Guanais, F. C. (2004). Elevated depressive symptoms among caregiving grandparents. *Health Services Research, 39*(6p1), 1671–1690.

Bojarczuk, S., & Mühlau, P. (2018). Mobilising social network support for childcare: The case of Polish migrant mothers in Dublin. *Social Networks, 53*, 101–110.

Bonizzoni, P. (2014). Immigrant working mothers reconciling work and childcare: The experience of Latin American and Eastern European women in Milan. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society, 21*(2), 194–217.

Burchinal, M., Nelson, L., Carlson, M., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2008). Neighborhood characteristics, and child care type and quality. *Early Education and Development, 19*(5), 702–725.

Caarls, K., & Mazzuccato, V. (2016). Transnational relationship and reunification: Ghanaian couples between Ghana and Europe. *Demographic Research, 34*(21), 587–614. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2016.34.21

Chaudry, A., Pedroza, J. M., Sandstrom, H., Danziger, A., Grosz, M., Scott, M., & Ting, S. (2011). *Child care choices of low-income working families*. Urban Institute. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://www.urban.org/research/publication/child-care-choices-low-income-working-families

Cvajner, M. (2018). *Sociologia delle migrazioni femminili. L'esperienza delle donne post-sovietiche*. Il Mulino.

Di Gessa, G., Glaser, K., & Tinker, A. (2016). The impact of caring for grandchildren on the health of grandparents in Europe: A lifecourse approach. *Social Science & Medicine, 152*, 166–175.

Dunifon, R. E., Ziol-Guest, K. M., & Kopko, K. (2014). Grandparent coresidence and family well-being. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 654*(1), 110–126.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton University Press.

Esping-Andersen, G. (2016). *Families in the twenty-first century*. SNS Förlag.

Eurostat. (2024). *Data*. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsi_emp_a__custom_14114837/default/table?lang=en

Fresnoza-Flot, A. (2017). Beyond migration patterns: Understanding family Reunion decisions of Filipino labour and Thai marriage migrants in global reproductive systems. *Migration Studies, 6*(2), 205–224. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnx038

Friedman, D., Hechter, M., & Kreager, D. (2008). A theory of the value of grandchildren. *Rationality and Society, 20*(1), 31–63.

Gabrielli, G., Terzera, L., Paterno, A., & Strozza, S. (2019a). Histories of couple formation and migration: The case of foreigners in Lombardy, Italy. *Journal of Family Issues., 40*(9), 1126–1153. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19833115

Gabrielli, G., Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E., Terzera, L., & Paterno, A. (2019b). What role does timing play in migrants' transition to marriage? A comparison between endogamous and exogamous marriages. *Journal of Family Research, 31*(3), 333–360. https://doi.org/10.3224/zff.v31i3.05

González-Ferrer, A., Hannemann, T., & Castro-Martín, T. (2016). Partnership formation and dissolution among immigrants in the Spanish context. *Demographic Research, 35*, 1–30. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2016.35.1

Guetto, R., & Azzolini, D. (2015). An empirical study of status exchange through migrant/native marriages in Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 41*(13), 2149–2172.

Heering, L., van der Erf, R., & van Wissen, L. (2004). The role of family networks and migration culture in the continuation of Moroccan emigration: A gender perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 30*, 323–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183042000/200722

ISTAT (2011). 15° *Censimento della popolazione e delle abitazioni 2011*. Retrieved October 7, 2026 from https://www.istat.it/statistiche-per-temi/censimenti/censimenti-storici/popolazione-e-abitazioni/popolazione-2011/.

ISTAT. (2018). *Vita e percorsi di integrazione degli immigrati in Italia*. Istat. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://www.istat.it/it/files//2019/05/Vita-e-percorsi.pdf

ISTAT. (2022). *Permanent Census*. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://esploradati.istat.it/databrowser/#/it/censpop/dashboards

ISTAT. (2020). *Natalità e fecondità della popolazione residente*, Anno 2019. Statistiche Report, 21 dicembre 2020. Retrievbed December 6, 2024 from https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/12/REPORT-NATALITA-2020.pdf

ISTAT. (2021). *Nidi e servizi integrativi per la prima infanzia* | anno educativo 2019/2020. Statistiche Report. 4 novembre 2021. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://www.istat.it/it/files/2021/11/REPORT_ASILI-NIDO-2019-2020.pdf

ISTAT. (2022). *Matrimoni, unioni civili, separazioni e divorzi*. Anno 2020. Statistiche report, 21 febbraio 2022. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/02/Report_Matrimoni-unioni-separazioni-2020_21_02.pdf

ISTAT. (2024). *Online database*: Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://demo.istat.it/index.php

King, R., Cela, E., Fokkema, T., & Vullnetari, J. (2014). The migration and well-being of the zero generation: Transgenerational care, grandparenting, and loneliness amongst Albanian older people. *Population, Space and Place, 20*(8), 728–738.

Kraler, A., Kofman, E., & Kholi, M. (2011). *Gender, generation and family in international migration*. Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_418151

Lee, S., Colditz, G., Berkman, L., & Kawachi, I. (2003). Caregiving to children and grandchildren and risk of coronary heart disease in women. *American Journal of Public Health, 93*(11), 1939–1944.

Maffioli, D., Paterno, A., & Gabrielli, G. (2014). International married and unmarried unions in Italy: Criteria of mate selection. *International Migration, 52*(3), 160–176.

Martire, F. & Zindato, D. (2005). *Le famiglie straniere: analisi dei dati censuari del 2001 sui cittadini stranieri residenti. Contributi anno 2005 n. 19.* Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://lipari.istat.it/digibib/Contributi%20ISTAT/2005_19-1.pdf.

Minkler, M., & Fuller-Thomson, D. E. (2001). Physical and mental health status of American grandparents providing extensive child care to their grandchildren. *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association (1972), 56*(4), 199–205.

Mugadza, H. T., Mujeyi, B., Stout, B., Wali, N., & Renzaho, A. M. (2019). Childrearing practices among Sub-Saharan African migrants in Australia: A systematic review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28*, 2927–2941.

Mutchler, J. E., & Baker, L. A. (2004). A demographic examination of grandparent caregivers in the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey. *Population Research and Policy Review, 23*(4), 359–377.

Niedomysl, T., Östh, J., & van Ham, M. (2010). The globalisation of marriage fields: The Swedish case. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 36*(7), 1119–1138.

Obeng, C. O. (2007). Immigrants families and childcare Preferences: Do immigrants' cultures influence their childcare decisions? *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(4), 259–264.

Ortensi, L. (2015). Engendering the fertility-migration nexus: The role of women's migratory patterns in the analysis of fertility after migration. *Demographic Research, 32*(53), 1435–1468. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2015.32.53

Paterno, A., Bonifazi, C., Gabrielli, G., Paluzzi, E., & Terzera, L. (2023). Le famiglie di e con stranieri. In C. Tomassini & D. Vignoli (Eds.), *Rapporto sulla popolazione. Le famiglie in Italia. Forme, ostacoli, sfide* (pp. 87–114). Il Mulino.

Ryan, L. (2011a). Migrants' social networks and weak ties: accessing resources and constructing relationships post-migration. *The Sociological Review, 59*(4), 707–724.

Ryan, L. (2011b). Transnational relations: Family migration among recent Polish migrants in London. *International Migration, 49*(2), 80–103.

Santero, A., & Naldini, M. (2017). Migrant parents in Italy: Gendered narratives on work/family balance. *Journal of Family Studies, 26*(1), 126–141.

Sear, R., & Mace, R. (2008). Who keeps children alive? A review of the effects of kin on child survival. *Evolution and Human Behaviour, 29*(1), 1–18.

Sprong, S., & Skopek, J. (2022). *Childcare utilisation by migration background: Evidence from a nationally representative Irish cohort study*. Preprint SocArXiv Papers. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/s24yv

Strozza, S. (2018). Immigrazione e presenza straniera in Italia: evoluzione, caratteristiche e sfide attuali e future. In D. Frigeri & M. Zupi (Eds.), *Dall'Africa all'Europa. La sfida politica delle migrazioni* (pp. 297–330). Donzelli Editore.

Strozza, S., Conti, C., & Tucci, E. (2021). *Nuovi cittadini. Diventare italiani nell'era della globalizzazione*. Il Mulino.

Terzera, L., & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E. (2018). Tempi e modi di fare famiglia tra gli stranieri in Italia. In *Vita e Percorsi di Integrazione degli immigrati in Italia* (pp. 53–68). ISTAT. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from https://flore.unifi.it/retrieve/handle/2158/1147758/393468/Integrazione%20degli%20immigrati%20%28ISTAT%29.pdf

Thomese, F., & Liefbroer, A. C. (2013). Child care and child births: The role of grandparents in The Netherlands. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 75*(2), 403–421.

Trappolini, E., Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E., Rimoldi, S. M. L., & Terzera, L. (2024). Migrants' choices pertaining to informal childcare in Italy and France: A complex relationship between the origin and destination countries. *Population, Space and Place, 30*(1), e2736. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2736

Trappolini, E., Rimoldi, S. M. L., & Terzera, L. (2021). Co-resident grandparent: A burden or a relief: A comparison of gender roles between Italians and migrants. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics, 3*, 642728. https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2021.642728

Trappolini, E., Terzera, L., Rimoldi, S., & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, E. (2023). Informal childcare arrangements: a comparison between Italians and migrants. *Genus, 79*(17). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-023-00196-8

Williams, F., & Gavanas, A. (2008). The intersection of childcare regimes and migration regimes: A three-country study. In H. Lutz (Ed.), *Migration and domestic work: A European perspective on a global theme* (pp. 13–28). Ashgate.

Zamberletti, J., Cavrini, G., & Tomassini, C. (2018). Grandparents providing childcare in Italy. *European Journal of Ageing, 15*(3), 265–275.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

