Domestic sector, mobility and segregation of immigrant workers.

The case of Italy

1.   Introduction

Over the last two and a half decades, a group of countries on the geographical periphery of the long-established European countries of immigration have seen their traditional patterns of emigration reversed, and have become destination countries. Among these, Italy is now one of the main countries of immigration in Southern Europe, due to the absence of consistent migration policies, repeated opportunities of regularization for undocumented migrants (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007) and large sectors of informal economy (Reyneri 2004). As a result, as of 1 January 2012, according to the latest estimate which includes undocumented migrants, there are presently about 5.4 million foreign citizens in Italy from the main sending countries[1], equivalent to 9.1% of the total present population (Blangiardo 2013).

The new immigration to Italy is predominantly a labour migration (Calavita 2004). As observed by Ambrosini back in 2001, immigrants first entered labour market sectors characterized by a dearth of national labour force, low wages, informal economy and bad working conditions, such as agriculture, fishing, small companies, low urban services, small construction jobs, and domestic work. More than ten years later, the situation is essentially unchanged, given the continued high level of labour segregation. In fact, as Zanfrini (2011: 59) pointed out recently, "even if at the individual level there are several examples of upward mobility processes (…), the data available do not actually support any hypothesis that significant changes are taking place within the range of job opportunities migrants can have access to". The Italian situation is not an exception in Europe: third-country immigrants are over-represented among lower status jobs workers in all EU countries with the exception of Ireland and the United Kingdom (Kogan 2007) and the empirical results (e.g.

Dayan et al. 1996; Fullin and Reyneri 2011) show that upgrading mobility is not very frequent among migrants.

This limited job mobility of immigrants in Italy has been analysed in previous studies which are unanimous in identifying causes connected both to the host society and to the role of migrants' networks. The presence of immigrants tends to reinforce, rather than modify, certain key features of the Italian labour market, such as its territorial segmentation, its significant undeclared employment, and the concentration of unemployment among the young, making it possible to continue to use low-cost human resources in the context of the increasing costs and expectations of a developed society (Fullin and Reyneri 2011; Reyneri 2004).

At the same time, such marked segregation in the informal economy has in itself represented a pull factor towards Italy. In fact, newcomers were generally easily absorbed by the secondary labour market thanks to the important role played by ethnic networks in recruitment. Studies across Italy and Europe have pointed out, however, that in the long run, these networks actively reinforce the concentration of migrants in occupations with restricted access to high status contracts, reduction of social entitlements (e.g. Bettio el at. 2006; del Rio and Alonso-Villar 2012; Fullin and Vercelloni 2009) and limited ability to obtain valuable social resources (Bethoui, 2008).

Given this framework of high segmentation and segregation in low skilled jobs, the present paper aims to analyse the migration trajectories of foreign-born women who entered the labour market as domestic workers, in order to assess the role of personal and group characteristics in determining the exit from this classical niche. Recalling the "Stepping Stone or Traps?" question regarding natives posed by Scherer in 2004 when assessing the consequences for future educational attainments of entering the labour market via underqualified jobs or temporary contracts, we pose the same question for female migrants entering the Italian labour market via domestic work.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 focuses on foreign female domestic work in Italy. Section 3 presents the main research goals and hypotheses. Section 4 introduces the dataset and covariates considered, as well as the methods of analysis. Section 5 contains the descriptive

statistics on female occupational trajectories and the results of the event history analysis. Section 6 provides our conclusive remarks, including policy and theory implications.

2.   Foreign female domestic work in Italy

As stated by Lutz (2008, 2011) domestic and care work "is not another labour market". Its logic is "pre-modern" and it clearly differs from other employment areas because of the intimate character of the social sphere where the work is performed, its social construction as a female gendered area and the special relationship between employer and employee, which is highly emotional, personalized and characterized by mutual dependency.

All the general considerations made in Section 1 regarding other sectors can also be applied to the growing presence of foreign women in the domestic and care work sector, which also relies on pull factors all of its own. Among these, are the growing participation of women in the job market (Bettio 2011; Parreñas 2001) accompanied by little realignment in the sexual division of domestic labour (Anxo et al. 2011; Mencarini and Tanturri 2004), a demographic conjuncture characterized by persisting low fertility (Billari and Kohler 2004, Caltabiano et al. 2009) and aging (Fullin and Vercelloni 2009) and the Mediterranean (Duncan 2002) or Residual (Rostgaard et al. 2011) welfare regime, characterized by rigidity, inappropriateness (Ferrera 2006), cash transfers in the form of pensions and subsidies instead of services (NNA 2011) and limited availability of services for children under 3 (OECD 2012). Furthermore, as a result of the reduction in family size and kin support networks, the availability of carers decreases while the number of elderly people increases continuously (Istat 2011, Glucksmann and Lyon 2006; Zanatta 2005).

As Colombo (2005) has pointed out, however, demand for domestic workers on the part of Italian families has grown more than might be expected merely on the basis of demographic factors, partly because of a change in families' needs and expectations, and partly owing to the characteristics of the new foreign domestic workers. Being a low cost workforce easily affordable to families, they

have changed the way that domestic collaboration was previously defined: from a sign of distinction for a few upper class women, it has become a sign of normality for working women who have to care for children, elder parents and domestic work. The recent large-scale employment of migrant women in the domestic sector is thus central to the modern redefinition of the Italian welfare state resulting from new needs expressed by families (Scrinzi 2008).

According to the National Institute of Social Security, the number of foreign women legally employed in the domestic sector grew by 74% between 2002 and 2011, to stand at nearly 766,000 regular workers (INPS 2013). Over the same period, the proportion of foreign citizens among female domestic workers continued to increase, rising from 73% to 80%. According to the latest data available (2011) the mean age of foreign domestic workers is 44. They are mainly from Eastern Europe (67.2%), Latin America (10.8%) and the Philippines (8.8%): 64.3% of them are third country nationals. Despite some signs that Italian women are returning to work in the domestic sector, especially in the southern regions of Italy, foreign domestic workers account for nearly 90% of new domestic workers registered in 2012 (Unicredit Foundation and IDOS Research Centre 2013). However, domestic work is estimated to be much more widespread than official data suggest, since irregular contracts are the most widespread type of employment in this sector. Censis estimates (2013) that the overall number of domestic workers has risen by 53% since 2001, reaching 1.655 million workers: this number is expected to rise to 2.151 million by 2030.

Certain gradual transformations led over time to this present situation dominated by foreign domestic workers and the informal economy. The first domestic workers arrived in Italy in the 1970s, beginning a gradual process of replacement of the native domestic workers of rural origin who had come from southern Italy and the Islands (Tognetti Borgogna 2012). These first flows, mainly from Cape Verde, the Philippines and Eritrea, were facilitated by the active role of the Catholic Church and similar associations (Scrinzi 2008), and the migrants were mainly employed as full-time live-in workers for wealthy families (Andall 2000) a condition that provided elements of warranties and security (such as having a home and supplies on arrival) but also implied extreme

dependence upon the family, strict segregation and a social life limited mainly to their own community network. During the 1980s and 1990s, this live-in work model developed into a predominance of employment relations no longer based on cohabitation, a phenomenon usually considered by scholars to have been like a process of emancipation (Tognetti Borgogna 2012). The 2002 regularization of undocumented migrants led to even greater visibility of domestic workers, as it privileged care assistants of the elderly, commonly known as *"badanti"* (Scrinzi 2008). This more recent and usually live-in, type of domestic work, is particularly common among older, educated women from Eastern Europe (especially Ukraine, Moldova and Romania) and Latin America, and is again characterized by strong segregation, isolation and widespread recourse to non-standard employment relations and irregular work. Patterns of emancipation from full-time live-in work caring for the elderly are usually characterized by the transition to employment as housekeepers or social workers in retirement homes (Tognetti Borgogna 2012).

3.   Research goals and hypotheses

The process of migration produces a break in the biography of migrants with serious consequences for their professional careers (e.g. Dayan et al. 1996; Condon 2000). The lack of complete transferability of language, job-related skills, and work credentials together with the characteristics of the job market in the country of immigration usually translate into a process of downward mobility (e.g. Tavan 2006) when the position occupied before immigration is compared with the first post-immigration job. However, as the length of stay increases, new skills specific to the destination are acquired and the transferability of skills developed in the former home country improves. This recurrent U-shaped pattern of occupational mobility among immigrants first hypothesized by Chiswick (1977) has been identified in numerous studies carried out on this issue in various receiving countries, such as Canada (Green 1999), Germany (Bauer and Zimmermann 1999), Australia (Chiswick et al. 2005), the USA (Redstone Akresh 2006), Sweden (Rooth and

Ekberg 2006), and Spain (Simón et al. 2011) and the same effect has been observed for Senegalese immigrants in Europe (Obucina 2013).

As regards Italy, we are not aware of any studies testing the U-shaped hypothesis or surveys which include information on first work in Italy and last work in the former home country. However, there are a few interesting studies about the working trajectories of foreigners in Italy (Censis 2013; Fullin et al. 2009).

Given this theoretical frame, we will analyse trajectories regarding women who had their first job in Italy in the domestic sectors, working as full-time or part-time housekeepers, as live-in servants, as babysitters or caregivers to the elderly.

Our research has a variety of goals. The first is to provide a brief description of our sample, including the women's characteristics. The second is to test the U-Shaped hypothesis on this particular sub-sample of workers in the Italian context, to assess whether exiting the domestic niche does indeed go along with a return to pre-migration job typologies or at least leads to an improvement in self-reported working conditions. We wish to investigate whether women who entered the labour market as domestic workers suffered a downgrade compared to their previous work (if any). As for the process of exiting the domestic niche, we wish to analyse the relationship between years spent as domestic workers and exit rates. We are also interested in assessing the role of key factors such as personal skills, working experience in the niche, and community characteristics in facilitating or preventing the exit process. Finally, we want to consider some of the key policy implications emerging from our results.

4.   Data and methods of analysis

4.1 Data

The data were collected as part of the PER.LA project, aimed to study working trajectories of migrants in Italy. The project was financed by the European Integration Found 2007-2013, by the Italian Ministry of Work and Social Policies and by the Italian Home Office. The survey was

conducted during 2009 by ISMU Foundation on 13,000 migrants aged 18 and over, living in Italy at the moment of the interview and born in heavy pressure countries (Ismu et al. 2010). The interviewees were randomly selected on the basis of the Centre Sampling or Aggregation Centres Method (Baio et al. 2011) an approach used successfully in both Italian and European projects (e.g. Eurostat 2000; Huddleston and Dag Tjaden 2012; Accetturo and Infante 2013). Surveys based on Centre Sampling are specifically designed to collect information on a representative sample of immigrants. The method is based on a three-stage design. In the first, the total number of questionnaires is allocated across the 18 provinces involved in the survey; this is aimed at obtaining significant estimates at the provincial level. In the second stage a number of representative municipalities (around 360) are selected according to their demographic and economic characteristics. In the third stage, interviewers visit all possible aggregation centres, including immigrant dedicated services within selected municipalities and randomly meet the potential interviewees. Interviews are performed face-to-face by interviewers with a foreign background, most of them cultural facilitators, who have undergone specific training.

Since the focus of our study is to analyse the transition of migrant women whose first job in Italy was in the domestic sector to other typologies of employment, only women in the sample who entered the Italian job market as housecleaners or caregivers to children or the elderly were selected. In addition, in order to reduce the bias linked to memory effect, we only selected women arriving after 1995. The final subsample is made up of 2,404 subjects. The analysis is based only on the first transition out of the domestic sector.

4.2 Methods and measures

We used a piecewise exponential model with random intercept for citizenship, with origin time the beginning of the first work in the domestic sector. This choice was based on two considerations: firstly, on the hierarchical structure of the data (with migrants nested in communities) and the relation between the time spent in the domestic sector and exit rates. More specifically, since

migrants from the same country of origin share common exposure to observed and unobserved community characteristics, the hierarchical structure of the data could not be ignored. Second, we hypothesized that we would find evidence of a "cumulative inertia" (Obucina 2013: 566) according to which "the longer an individual stays in a particular state (place of residence, occupation etc.) the less likely he or she is to move out of that state in the immediate future".

We also include some variables to explain the transition from the ethnic niche.

The first variable indicates membership of an "embedded citizenship", which is defined as a citizenship with at least 50 per cent of female workers in domestic service according to ISMU estimates[2] in order to verify the effect of ethnic networks, previously discussed.

In order to test the hypothesis that the educational level and the working experience gained in the country of origin have no effect on labour market outcomes, while the educational and professional experience acquired in the host country are more valuable (e.g. Bean et al. 2004; Obucina 2013), we consider three variables in the model. We defined a first variable accounting for professional status in the country of origin: those who had no previous job in the country of origin were assigned code 0, while those who had a high-skilled job (according to the ISCO-08 classification) were assigned code 1 and otherwise code 2.

The second variable is based on the number of years of schooling, considered as a proxy of personal abilities or "potential" level of job in the host country[3], with the underlying hypothesis that is not the school-leaving qualification that affects the career, but rather being proactive in cultivating social networks and social capital[4]. Considering that only 2% of women have acquired formal education in Italy, there is no risk of performing an anticipatory analysis (Hoem and Kreyenfeld 2006).

Thirdly, we used the number of jobs held in Italy as a proxy for experience gained in the host country. It would also be interesting to study the impact of formal education acquired in Italy, but, given the fact that we are dealing with first-generation migrants, there were only a few cases in the dataset and this information had to be dropped from the analysis.

According to previous studies, cultural proximity (e.g. Obucina 2013) plays an important role in the process of social mobility. We therefore speculate that in the case of domestic work, cultural proximity to the person being cared for (especially an elderly person), namely being a Christian woman, may be a desirable feature, and contribute to reduced mobility out of the niche.

Another condition that can influence the transition out of the domestic service is the "migration project". As a proxy of this important dimension we constructed two variables. First, a dummy indicating the time spent without a job after arrival in Italy (0= no time; 1= at least one year). The underlying hypothesis is that those who start work immediately have migrated on the basis of a project aimed primarily at finding a job (e.g. autonomous first migrants or female breadwinners), while those who were able to spend some years in emigration without an individual income are more likely to be family migrants. Second, a variable indicating whether the first job held in emigration was a live-in one, an arrangement typically suited for first migrants. Thus we speculate that trajectories of workers may differ according to the status of the first job held in Italy. Specifically, we expect live-in domestic workers on their first job to have a lower risk of transition away from the ethnic niche.

We also control for some demographic characteristics such as age and number of years elapsed since migration. All the variables in the model are fixed, except age and length of stay, which are time-dependent.

Before proceeding, it seems wise to point out some of the limits of the present study. First, the survey is not completely event-oriented. In fact, while some information is collected for all the job positions held since arrival in Italy, household and personal characteristics were collected following a cross-sectional design. As a consequence, some key information, such as the family's characteristics or the legal status of migrants was known only as of the moment of the interview, and was thus not suitable for use in the model.

Second, as numerous studies have suggested (e.g. Chiswick 1977), the assimilation process of foreign people may be biased by the presence of selectivity in return migration among immigrants.

However, according to a recent study about the re-emigration intention of migrants living in Italy, female workers have a lower risk of re-emigration (XXX XXXX 2013), so the selective effect should have a limited impact.

Lastly, the target population is made up exclusively of migrants regularly employed at the moment of the interview, which undoubtedly represents a selected subgroup. As a consequence, information is lacking about undocumented or unemployed migrants.

Despite these limitations, the information available to us is extremely detailed and allows us to adopt a longitudinal perspective in describing female migrants' transition from domestic labour, an issue still all too unexplored in Italy, due to the lack of retrospective data.

5.   Results

Migrant women whose first job in Italy was in the domestic sector make up nearly 40% of foreign female workers. Rumanian (16%), Ukrainian (16%), Filipino (9.7%), Albanian (8.8%), Moldavian (5.8%) and Peruvian (5.5%) are the most commonly represented citizenships and account for more than 70% of workers in the domestic sector.

Only 49% of women had previous work experience in the country of origin, with higher percentages among the Chinese, Moldavians and Rumanians.

The level of the most recent working experience in the country of origin was generally medium-low[5] with 71% recruited for medium skilled work and 18% for low skilled. Two women out of three started working immediately on arrival, probably needing a personal income (the highest percentages were Filipino, Moldavian, Polish, Rumanian and Ukrainian).

[Table 1 about here]

The median age at the beginning of the Italian professional career was 31 and only 25% was over 38 years old.

Generally, migrants had a medium-high length of stay in Italy: 47% of women had been living in Italy for 5-10 years, and 7% for more than 10 years, while 35% had arrived in Italy between 2 and 4 years earlier. Although the number of job experiences is associated with the length of the Italian career, the professional career of the women in Italy was generally made up of 2 or 3 jobs. Only nearly 8% had had four or more jobs in the host country.

At interview, 60% of migrants were married and 23% single. Among those with a partner and children (over half), most had a transnational family or a reunified family in Italy.

[Table 2 – about here]

Not surprisingly, only 19% of women beginning work in the domestic sector experienced the transition out of this sector. The chances of exiting the domestic sector are therefore quite low. Thus, as stated by previous studies, it "turns into a trap" for migrant women (Fullin and Vercelloni 2009). The time spent in the niche for those women who cross the boundaries is short: above 4 years, confirming the hypothesis of "cumulative inertia".

However, it should be notice that remaining in the niche does not necessarily mean a lack of upgrading mobility or improvement in working conditions, as discussed later. In this regard, it is important to consider that migrants do not always perceive domestic work as a job from which to escape, since they are generally well-paid; women have more autonomy (for example, they can go home periodically without losing their job and can make independent decisions about how to organize their working activity). Moreover, this is a quick and easy way to save money.

[Table 3- about here]

In order to describe the transition away from the ethnic niche, we fitted two different models (Table 3). Model 1 includes the working experience in the country of origin while Model 2 uses the woman's years of schooling (due to the strong association between these two variables, they cannot be considered together). The results are quite similar. In both cases is evident a "cumulative inertia" effect: the risk of transition is highest after one year of experience in the Italian labour market and then it decreases. After five years of experience, female workers specialise in housework and continue to be recruited for this job. Our data confirms the patterns underlined by previous studies: women with higher experience, even while remaining in the niche, improve their economic situation or opt for a better contract by switching from live-in work to part-time work (Parreñas 2001). The study of trajectories within the niche deserves further analysis in the future.

Not surprisingly, the results stress the existence of a strong citizenship effect. The transition from the niche is not only a question of the personal characteristics of migrants; the community to which they belong also plays a significant role in this process.

The transition from the ethnic niche is not determined by the age of the worker. It is rather the professional experience gained in the host country or the strength and the level of personal networks and relationships that bring about a change.

Contrary to our expectations, the risk of transition is not affected by the cultural proximity which is probably a key factor for caregivers of the elderly, while it is less pressing for baby sitters and housekeepers.

Our hypothesis about the non-relevance of the labour experience before migration is confirmed by the results. As stated above, the migration produces a break in the professional career: once in the host country, previous professional experience is shelved. Women with a previous high-skilled job have the same chances of transition from the domestic sector as non-workers and migrants with a medium-low skilled job. Professional experience in Italy, on the other hand, as previous studies have shown, has a positive and strong influence on the risk of transition from the ethnic niche, even when unskilled. Women who gain more experience through a higher number of previous jobs,

extend their personal and professional networks, acquire further knowledge of the labour market and consider the possibility of looking for or applying for a different type of job.

Moreover, Model 2 stresses the important role of ethnic networks expressed by the variable "embedded citizenship". House-workers from communities with higher concentrations of women working in the domestic sector have a considerably lower risk of transiting to another employment, due to the fact that ethnic networks limit the access to different jobs and constantly redirect them to the community's ethnic specialization (Bethoui 2008; del Rio and Alonso Villar 2012).

Not surprisingly, the migration project has an important role. Women with a working migration project (first job as live-in work and no time between arrival and first job in Italy) have lower stirrings of upgrading mobility and continue to be employed in the niche, maximising their income and specialising, while women with a family migration project tend to move on to another job, probably looking for more flexibility so as to reconcile paid work with family care. Therefore, having more (professional and housing) autonomy and being less isolated are factors working in favour of crossing the boundaries of the niche.

[table 4 – about here]

The analysis of trajectories of women who crossed the boundaries of the ethnic niche confirms our hypothesis regarding the "U-shaped" path. Most of the trajectories show that, after a period in low-skilled work, these migrants attain the same or almost the same level they had in their country of origin. One migrant out of three exiting domestic service, is employed in a job at the same level as that done in the country of origin: 6% place themselves above the unskilled level but below the previous level, while 11% reach an even higher status. It is interesting that 49% of those who transit away from the niche were non-workers in the country of origin. Nevertheless, they still find a medium skilled job.

The hypothesis of the "U-shaped" trajectory is confirmed also when the last work experience in the niche is compared with the first outside. Generally, 60% of women who left the niche reported

having improved their income and nearly half decided to change job because they found a better one.

[table 5 – about here]

According to our results, those who left the domestic sector did not experiment mobility within the niche: they started as live-in workers and continued to be recruited by the same profession. Those who remain in the niche, on the other hand, have higher internal mobility (both upward and downward). Although they have lower increases in earnings, these women say they are generally satisfied with their work contract. Moreover, professional specialisation was evident, especially among those migrants who were recruited for the first time as "*badanti*" (nearly 90% are still employed as carers of the elderly).

6. Discussion

This paper analyses the migration trajectories of foreign-born women who entered the labour market as domestic workers, in order to assess the role of personal and group characteristics in determining the exit from this ethnic niche.

Our results show low exit rates from the domestic sector: only one woman out of five experienced the transition out of this sector. However, we identify personal and group characteristics which facilitate the exit from this niche. Working experience in the host country, even if unskilled, has a positive effect on the transition, whereas professional and educational training in the country of origin have no effect, and ethnic networks limit the access to other occupations. The aim of the women's migration project (working or family) is also strongly associated with occupational mobility.

Our study finds furthermore evidence of a U-shaped pattern of occupational mobility for foreign women from main sending countries who enter the Italian job market as domestic workers. In

particular, we find an interaction between mobility outside the niches and mobility within the niches. As hypothesized in Chiswick's 1977 study, we observe that the U-shaped pattern is relatively steep for high-skilled immigrants and is shallow for immigrants who were very low-skilled or unskilled in the country of origin. There is also a high percentage of women who were not working in the country of origin and entered the job market for the first time in Italy, having been housewives or unemployed before migration. For these, the U-shaped pattern holds if we consider the number of years spent in education as a proxy for the type of job that such migrants might have had, if they had had the chance to get into the job market properly in their former home country. Basing our analysis on the number of years spent in education, it emerged that higher educated women experience a decline in the type of skills required for their work in Italy, which are not related to education, but they have higher rates of exit from the domestic niche.

The exit from the domestic niche is also related to an upgrade mobility that is usually greater among women with higher educational levels and is also related to a self-perceived improvement in wage and working conditions.

The presence in Italy of foreign women in the domestic sector can be considered as a real "epoch-making change" for the migration process and the female flows, both for the significant number of women involved and for the active role that these flows have played in legitimating and making widespread a de-professionalized private source of welfare in a society characterized by a family-based welfare state (Tognetti Borgogna 2012). As a consequence, the presence of such a high number of foreign caregivers in the welfare system has brought great changes, and has produced four main effects.

First, the presence of foreign women in the domestic sector affects the kind of services provided by the state and consequently, overall social policy. Care in the first and last phases of life has gradually shifted to a surrogate and de-professionalized model, removing caregiver activity from the sphere of public regulation (Tognetti Borgogna 2012). This de-regulation of the care system has meant great savings for the Italian state. Estimates about care services for the elderly suggest that if

caregivers were not available to families the State would have to spend 45 billion Euros in order to provide the same service to families (Unicredit Foundation and IDOS 2013). As a consequence, public provision of home help is reduced, except for cases where specific medical skills are needed, and the cash-oriented nature of the Italian system has been reinforced (NNA, 2011).

Second, the phenomenon also affects gender equality in Italy. In fact, the replacement of the male breadwinner family model with the dual worker model has brought little or no realignment in the sexual division of domestic labour (Andall 2000; Anxo et al. 2011; Kilkey 2010). This has produced a growing demand for housemaid services which serve to mitigate and deflect gender and generational conflicts over domestic work in the labour market (Anderson 2001). As a consequence, domestic work is usually not redistributed between the two members of the couple; instead, the excess of domestic work for women is outsourced. We are therefore witnessing an international transfer of caretaking between middle-class women in receiving nations, migrant domestic workers, and third-world women who are too poor to migrate (Parreñas 2000). The possibility for some Italian women to outsource part of the domestic work is also a new source of inequality compared to working women who cannot afford to hire a domestic helper. Without focused policies, inequality will remain between women who can afford to outsource their extra quota of domestic work and those who cannot. Vigorous measures therefore need to be adopted on behalf of women (both native and immigrants) to support work opportunities for them, by increasing child-care services and fostering gender equality. These conditions weigh heavily upon the Italian economy, as the OECD has noted (2012) who recently reiterated the damage caused to the Italian economy by the absence of so many women from the labour force, and called for better work/family policies as well as for greater gender equality in unpaid housework.

Third, despite the continuing demand on the part of Italian households for domestic workers, the government needs to pay particular attention when planning future quotas or regularizations. In fact, due to the ongoing economic crisis, there is likely to be a sizeable return of Italian workers to the

domestic sectors, while judging from the results of our analysis, exit rates from the domestic work sector are low and thus little turnover is to be expected among migrants.

In the light of the current economic situation, which prevents the State from making any sizeable investments in new public care services, its role should be shifting instead to monitoring and regulating the care sector. An active role of the State in matching demand and supply for these services would therefore be particularly beneficial (Censis 2013).

Four, investments in domestic workers' education and specific training (language, basic medical and caregiver skills, cultural mediation) would appear to be a useful way of improving the quality of services available to families (especially care of the elderly). Indeed, these women will presumably be working in this sector for many years to come and as our study shows, it is the women with less education who are more likely to remain in the domestic ethnic niche. Moreover, a better definition of the role of caregiver, some checks on the persons hired through a voucher system and for example, an official register for this type of profession could help limit irregular work and combat workers' exploitation. Finally, tax breaks for families are also needed to help families, especially given the worsening economic situation of families resulting from the crisis.

Endnotes

1. Blangiardo's estimates consider as main sending countries all countries except the former EU15, Malta, Cyprus, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Israel.

2. Authors' elaborations from the 2010 ISMU Dataset

3. In fact, nearly half the women in our sample had no job in the host country

4. We also fitted a model using the level of formal education achieved instead of the number of years of schooling, but unsurprisingly, this variable was not significant, since foreign degrees are generally neither recognised nor useful in the host country. Thus we opted to use the information about the length of the schooling process.

5. According to the ISCO-08 classification

References

Accetturo A and Infante L (2013) Skills or culture? An analysis of the decision to work by immigrant women in Italy. IZA Journal of Migration 2:2

Ambrosini M (2001) The Role of Immigrants in the Italian Labour Market. International Migration 39(3):61-83

Andall J (2000) Gender, Migration and Domestic Service The Politics of Black Women in Italy. Ashgate, Aldershot

Anderson B (2001) Why Madam has so many bathrobes? Demand for migrant workers in the EU. Tijdshrift voor economische en sociale geografie 92(1): 18–26

Anxo D, Mencarini L, Pailhé A, Solaz A, Tanturri M L and Flood L (2011) Gender Differences in Time Use over the Life Course in France, Italy, Sweden, and the US. Feminist Economics 17(3): 159-195.

Baio G, Blangiardo G C and Blangiardo M. (2011) Centre Sampling Technique in Foreign Migration Surveys: a Methodological Note. Journal of Official Statistics 27(3): 451–465.

Barbiano di Belgiojoso E., Ortensi L.E. (2013). Should I Stay or Should I go? The case of Italy. Rivista Italiana di Economia Demografia e Statistica (forthcoming).

Bean F D, Leach M and Lowell B L (2004) Immigrant Job Quality and Mobility In The United States. Work And Occupations 31(4): 499-518

Bauer T and Zimmermann K F (1999) Occupational mobility of ethnic migrants. IZA − Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Discussion Paper no. 58

Bethoui A (2008) Informal Recruitment Methods and Disadvantages of Immigrants in the Swedish Labour Market. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 34(3): 411-430

Bettio F, Simonazzi A and Villa P (2006) Change in care regimes and female migration: the 'care drain' in the Mediterranean. Journal of European Social Policy 16:271-285

Bettio F (2011) Women, the state and the family in Italy: problems of female participation in Italy. In: Rubery J (ed) Women and Recession, Taylor & Francis

Blangiardo G C (2013) The statistical aspects. In: Cesareo V (ed), Eighteen Report on Migrations 2012, Mc Graw Hill, Milan

Billari F C and Kohler H P (2004) Patterns of low and lowest-low fertility in Europe. Population Studies: A Journal of Demography 58(2): 161-176

Calavita K (2004) Italy: Economic Realities, Political Fiction and Policy Failures. In: Cornelius W A (ed) Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective, Stanford University Press, Stanford

Caltabiano M, Castiglioni M and Rosina A (2009) Lowest-low fertility: Signs of a recovery in Italy? Demographic Research 21(23): 681-718

Censis (2013) Servizi alla persona e occupazione nel welfare che cambia, Roma http://www.censis.it/7?shadow_comunicato_stampa=120912. Accessed 15 June 2013.

Chiswick B R (1977) A longitudinal analysis of the occupational mobility of immigrants. In Dennis B D (ed) Proceedings of the 30th Annual Winter Meetings, Industrial Relations Research Association, Madison

Chiswick B R, Lee Y L and Miller P W (2005) A longitudinal analysis of immigrant occupational mobility: A test of the immigrant assimilation hypothesis. International Migration Review 39(2): 332-353

Colombo A (2005) Il mito del lavoro domestico: struttura e cambiamenti in Italia (1970-2003) Polis 3: 435-466

Condon S (2000) L'activité des femmes immigrées du Portugal à l'arrivée en France, reflet d'une diversité de stratégies familiales et individuelles. Population (French Edition) 55(2): 301-330

Dayan J L, Échardour A and Glaude M (1996) Le parcours professionnel des immigrés en France: une analyse longitudinale. Economie et statistique 299: 107-128.

del Río C and Alonso-Villar O (2012) Occupational Segregation of Immigrant Women in Spain. Feminist Economics 18(2): 91-123.

Duncan S (2002) Theorizing Comparative gender inequality. In Duncan S and Pfau-Effinger B Gender, Economy and Culture in the European Union, Routledge, London

Eurostat (2000) Push and Pull factors of international migration. A comparative report. Theme 1 General Statistics, European Communities.

Ferrera M (2006) Le politiche sociali. Il Mulino, Bologna

Fullin G and Reyneri E (2011) Low Unemployment and Bad Jobs for New Immigrants in Italy. International Migration 49(1): 118-147.

Fullin G and Vercelloni V (2009) Dentro la trappola. percezioni e immagini del lavoro domestico e di cura nei percorsi delle donne immigrate. πόλις XXIII(3): 425-461.

Fullin G, Vercelloni V and Reyneri E (2009) Percorsi bibliografici e itinerari lavorativi. In Catanzaro and Colombo (eds) Badanti & Co. Il lavoro domestico straniero in Italia, Il Mulino, Bologna

Glucksmann M and Lyon D (2006) Configurations of Care Work: Paid and Unpaid Elder Care in Italy and the Netherlands. Sociological Research Online 11(2)

Green D A (1999). Immigrant occupational attainment: Assimilation and mobility over time. Journal of Labor Economics 17(1): 49-79

Hoem J M and Kreyenfeld M (2006) Anticipatory analysis and its alternatives in life-course research. Part 1: The role of education in the study of first childbearing. Demographic Research 15(6): 461-484

Huddleston T and Dag Tjaden J (2012) Immigrant Citizens Survey, King Baudouin Foundation and Migration Policy Group, Bruxelles

Kilkey M (2010) Men and domestic labor: a missing link in the global care chain. Men and Masculinities 13(1): 126–149

Kogan I (2007) Working through Barriers. Host country institutions and immigrant labour market performance in Europe, Springer, The Netherlands

Inps (2013) Observatory on domestic work. http://www.inps.it/webidentity/banchedatistatistiche/menu/domestici/main.html. Accessed 10 June 2013.

Ismu Censis and Iprs (eds) (2010) Immigrazione e lavoro. Percorsi lavorativi, Centri per l'impiego, politiche attive, Quaderni ISMU 1/2010

Istat (2011) Il futuro demografico del Paese: previsioni regionali della popolazione residente al 2065, Statistiche Report 28.12.2011. http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/48875. Accessed 4 June 2013.

Lutz H (ed) (2008) *Migration and Domestic Work. A European Perspective on a Global Theme*, Ashgate, Aldershot

Lutz H (2011) *The new maids: transnational women and care economy*, Zed Books, London

Mencarini L and Tanturri M L (2004) Time use, family role-set and childbearing among Italian working women. Genus 60(1): 111-137

Network Non Autosufficienza (ed) (2011) L'assistenza agli anziani non autosufficienti in Italia 3° Rapporto, Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna

OECD (2012) Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now, OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/9789264179370-en

Obucina O (2013) Occupational trajectories and occupational cost among Senegalese immigrants in Europe. Demographic Research 28(19): 547-580

Parreñas R S (2001) Servants of Globalization. Women, Migration, and Domestic Work, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California

Parreñas R S (2000) Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and The International Division Of Reproductive Labor. Gender & Society 14(4): 560-580

Reyneri E (2004) Immigrants in a segmented and often undeclared labour market. Journal of Modern Italian Studies 9(1): 71-93

Redstone Akresh I (2006) Occupational mobility among legal immigrants to the United States. International Migration Review 40(4): 854–884

Rooth D O and Ekberg J (2006) Occupational mobility for immigrants in Sweden. International Migration 44(2): 57-77

Rostgaard T, Chiatti C and Lamura G (2011) Tensions Related to Care Migration – The North-South Divide of Long-term Care. In Pfau-Effinger B and Rostgaard T (eds), Care between Work and Welfare in European Societies, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills

Simón H, Ramos R, and Sanromá E (2011) Occupational mobility of immigrants in a low-skilled economy. The Spanish case. IZA – Institute for the Study of Labor. (IZA Discussion Paper n.5581)

Scherer S (2004) Stepping-stones or traps? The consequences of labour market entry positions on future careers in West Germany, Great Britain and Italy. Work, employment and society 18(2): 369–394

Scrinzi F (2008) Migrations and the Restructuring of the Welfare State in Italy: Change and Continuity in the Domestic Work Sector. In: Lutz H (ed) Migration and Domestic Work. A European Perspective on a Global Theme, Ashgate, Aldershot

Tavan C (2006) Migration et trajectoires professionnelles, une approche longitudinale. Économie et statistique 393-394: 81-99

Tognetti Bordogna M G (2012) Donne e percorsi migratori. Per una sociologia delle migrazioni, Franco Angeli, Milan

Triandafyllidou A and Gropas R (2007) *European Immigration. A sourcebook,* Ashgate, Aldershot

Unicredit Foundation and IDOS Research Centre (2013) Indagine sull'assistenzafamiliare in Italia: il contributo degli immigrati Rapporto di Ricerca. https://www.unicreditfoundation.org/content/dam/ucfoundation/documents/publications/Report_immigrazione.pdf. Accessed 15 June 2013.

Zanatta A L (2005) Lavoro di Cura, Genere e Migrazioni. In: Osservatorio nazionale sulle famiglie e le politiche sociali di sostegno alle responsabilità familiari Famiglie e Politiche diWelfare in Italia: Interventi e Pratiche. Vol. II. Il Mulino, Bologna

Zanfrini L (2011) Labour. In Fondazione Ismu (ed) The Sixteenth Italian Report on Migrations 2010, McGraw-Hill, Milan

Table 1 – Foreign born women labour experience in the country of origin and in Italy (2009).

	%
Previous labour experience in the country of origin	
yes	48.5
no	51.5
Labour experience in the country of origin	
low skilled	18.4
medium skilled	71.2
high skilled	10.4
Time between arrival and first job in Italy	
less than one year	63.8
one or more years	36.2
First job as	
live-in workers	57.3
Number of works in Italy	
1	37.8
2	37.9
3	16.8
4+	7.5

Note: Only migrant women whose first job in Italy was in the domestic sector are considered
Source: Author's elaborations on PER.LA database

Table 2 – Personal characteristics of foreign born female domestic workers in Italy (2009).

	%
Years since migration	
less than 2	10.6
between 2 and 4	35.2
between 5 and 10	47.3
more than 10	7.0
Citizenship	
Rumanian	16
Ukrainian	16
Philippine	9.7
Albanian	8.8
Moldovan	5.8
Peruvian	5.5
Marital status	
single	23.0
married	60.2
divorced	8.1

Note: Only migrant women whose first job in Italy was in the domestic sector are considered
Source: Author's elaborations on PER.LA database

Table 3 – Piecewise Exponential Model with Random Intercept (citizenship). Incidence Rate Ratios (IRR), Standard Error (S.E.), significance.

	MODEL 1			MODEL 2		
	IRR	S.E.	Sign.	IRR	S.E.	Sign.
0-1	0.066.	0.052	***	0.017	0.014	***
2-3	0.101	0.085	**	0.025	0.023	***
4-5	0.075	0.069	**	0.018	0.018	***
6-10	0.060	0.059	**	0.014	0.015	***
11+	0.028	0.044	*	0.008	0.013	**
Age	0.986	0.045		0.966	0.044	
Age squared	1.000	0.001		1.000	0.001	
years elapsing since migration	0.700	0.109	*	0.707	0.105	*
years elapsing since migration squared	1.031	0.015	*	1.030	0.015	*
number of jobs	1.525	0.059	***	1.521	0.057	***
years of schooling	-	-		1.262	0.081	**
years of schooling squared	-	-		0.994	0.002	*
embedded citizenship	0.721	0.138		0.634	0.131	*
First job Live-in work [ref.no]	0.502	0.053	***	0.446	0.048	***
At least one year before enter in the labour market [ref no time]	1.539	0.283	**	1.576	0.284	*
Christian [ref. Other]	1.195	0.157		1.139	0.156	
Work experience in the country of origin [ref. No experience]						
skilled job	1.462	0.306		-	-	
medium-low job	1.129	0.119		-	-	
/lnalpha	-2.556	0.684		-2.353	0.636	
alpha	0.078	0.053		0.095	0.060	
	Wald test sing. 0.000 test alpha=0 sign. 0.008			Wald test sing. 0.000 test alpha=0 sign. 0.006		

Note: *p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.
Source: Author's elaborations on PER.LA database

Table 4 – Working trajectories: distribution of occupational level of last pre-migration employment and first outside niche.

Occupation level of last pre-migration job	Occupational level of first outside niche job			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
High	11 (32.4%)	23 (67.6%)	0	34
Medium	17(9.4%)	158 (87.3%)	6 (3.3%)	181
Low	1 (2.3%)	39 (90.7%)	3 (7.0%)	43
No work	13 (5.2%)	230 (91.3%)	9 (3.6%)	252
Total	42	450	18	510
Comparison of occupational level of last pre-migration job and first outside niche				
Lower level				5.7%
Same level				33.7%
Higher level				11.2%
No previous job				49.4%

Note: Only migrant women who exit from the domestic sector are considered
Source: Author's elaborations on PER.LA database

Table 5 – Working trajectories of women within domestic sector: distribution of workers first pre-migration employment and current.

First post-migration work	Current work				Total
	Live-in domestic	Part-time domestic	Caregiver	Baby sitter	
Live-in domestic	79.0%	3.7%	15.0%	2.2%	100%
Part-time domestic	13.3%	60.8	23.4	2.6	100%
Caregiver	3.7%	3.9%	90.0%	2.4%	100%
Baby sitter	4.1%	11.1%	17.5%	67.3%	100%

Note: Only migrant women who remain in the niche are considered
Source: Author's elaborations on PER.LA database