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Title:

Data and policy report for Italy. Deliverable D3.2 within the MAJORdom project[1]

Despite being the Europe's oldest society, with 22,9% of people aged 65 years old and more and 7,2% aged 80+ (OECD 2019), Italy spends only 0,9% of the GDP on long term care (OECD 2018). Italy is a Mediterranean welfare state with a "migrant-in-the-family" care model and a fundamental role of the family in care provision, with direct cash support from the central and local governments (Da Roit 2010, Da Roit 2021).

The role of domestic workers, especially in the care for the elderly is important against the background of a lack of widespread institutional and in-home publicly funded forms of care (Da Roit 2010). According to the most recent statistical data, 848,987 domestic workers are employed regularly in Italy, 70.3% of which are migrants, while an estimated additional 1.2 million are employed irregularly (Zini 2020, Dossier statistico 2020). The care and domestic sector workers come principally from Romania, Ukraine, Philippines, and Moldova[2]. The countries grouped under the label of Eastern Europe clearly dominate the elderly care sector (73,6% of in-home care workers) while among the housecleaners (*COLF*) their share is still prominent but lower (47,1%) (DOMINA 2020)[3]. Among the non-Italian workers, the migratory projects are rather longer, and circular care migration is not dominant (Redini et al. 2020, Cojocaru 2020, Kordasiewicz 2014).

Italy, a country which has a long and rich tradition of emigration, has become an immigration country since the 1970s (Pugliese 2002a). In 2018, there were more than five million registered migrants in Italy, over eight percent of Italian population (ISTAT 2018). Countries like Italy, Greece, and Spain share some

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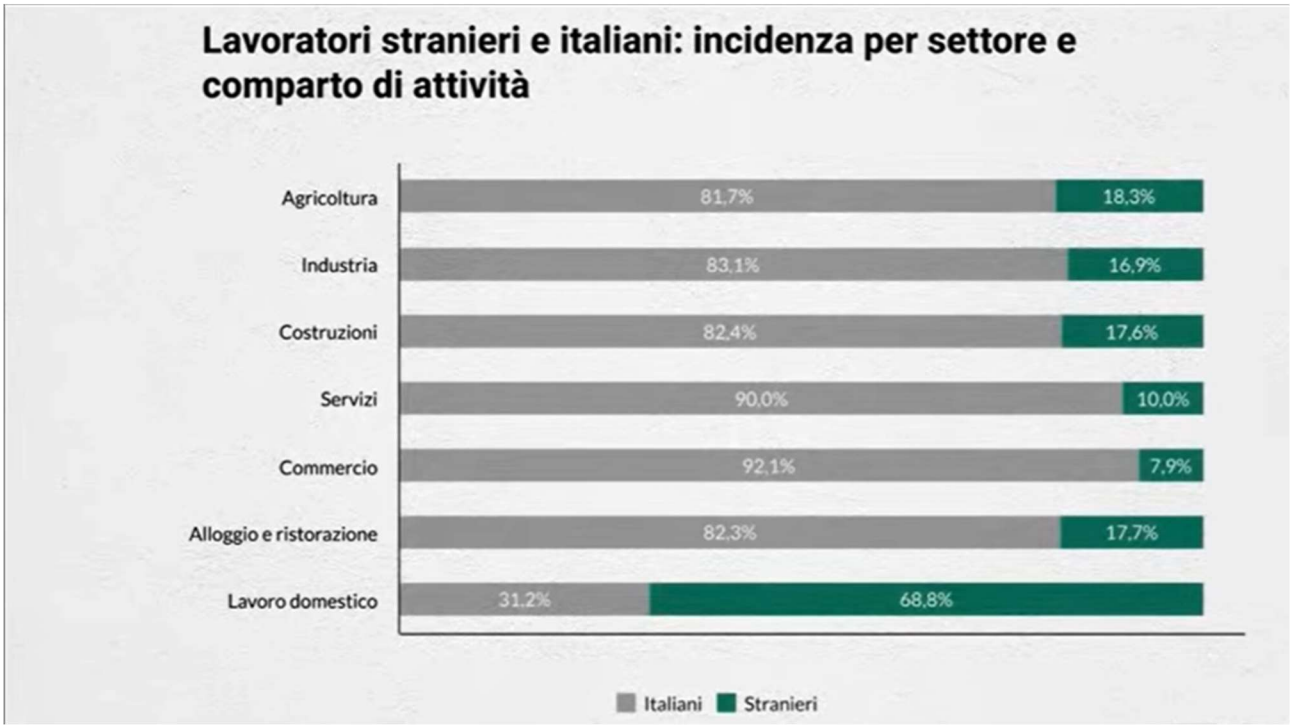
[2] https://www.osservatoriolavorodomestico.it/la-presenza-dei-lavoratori-domestici-stranieri-in-italia

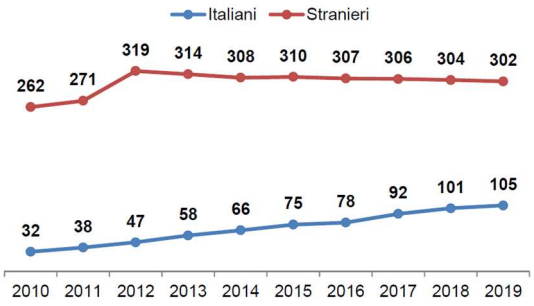
[3] https://www.osservatoriolavorodomestico.it/la-presenza-dei-lavoratori-domestici-stranieri-in-italia

characteristics: the emigration tradition, the demand mainly for seasonal workers in agriculture and domestic services, unemployment among the local population, and the presence of an extensive economia sommersa—an "underground economy" (cf. Pugliese 2002b; Boffo 2003; Reyneri 2004; also referred to as "Mediterranean migration model" [King 1993]). Those phenomena that are linked to the Mediterranean migration model are particularly applicable to the southern part of Italy, which is known as the Mezzogiorno (cf. Putnam, Leonardi, and Nannetti 1993, Näre 2012). Italy is regarded as a pioneer of immigration trends in Southern Europe, namely, in the process of forming "the Mediterranean migration model" (King 1993). A poor and rather non-restrictive immigration policy is one of the reasons that make Italy an attractive target country (Anthias and Lazardis 2000; Näre 2012).



Meanwhile, the role of Italian workers has been growing consistently in the sector since the 2007 economic crisis (Pasquinelli e Rusmini, 2013). In Italy, as in other countries, we witnessed an influx of local labor force into care work previously dominated by migrant workers in the aftermath of the crisis (Di Bartolomeo, Marchetti 2016, Farris, Ranci 2007, Farris 2015, Hellgren, Serrano 2018). Between the years 2012 and 2019, the ratio of Italian workers among regular domestic worker grew from 18.9% to 29.7%, especially among the personal care workers (*badanti*) (DOMINA 2020). Among the growing in-home personal care sector, the numbers of Italian workers tripled in the course of 10 years while the numbers of foreigners have been slowly but steadily falling since 2012 (DOMINA 2020):

Fig 3.7 Serie storica degli assistenti familiari (badanti) per nazionalità (dati in migliaia)



Elaborazioni DOMINA e Fondazione Leone Moressa su dati INPS

From among the factors accounting for an increase in the demand for household workers in Italy, three can be emphasized. Firstly, the transformation of the Italian family model: the rising employment rate of women (Anthias and Lazardis 2000), and the growing share of nuclear families, which translates into growing share of households composed of elderly people (Scevi 2003). Secondly, the aging of Italian society, which has resulted in an increasing number of dependent persons (who are especially advanced in age) (Scevi 2003; Nanni and Salvatori 2004). Thirdly, the deficiencies of the public sector when it comes to attending to the needs of dependent persons have also been emphasized (Nanni and Salvatori 2004; Sciortino 2004).

Besides the above-mentioned socio-demographic conditions, some authors draw attention to the status dimension of employing a domestic worker, particularly in households where the woman employer undertakes no professional activity (Anderson 2000:14). Employing a household worker would then be a means of creating and reproducing the family prestige. The status dimension is particularly important in the context of Southern Italy (cf. Miranda 2002; Zanfrini 2004:189). In many areas, the traditional culture of service has persisted, which manifests itself, for instance, in the fact that in some households domestic workers wear a uniform—a special apron. Apart from its practical advantage, it also plays a representative role and visually marks an identity that is different from those of the other household members.

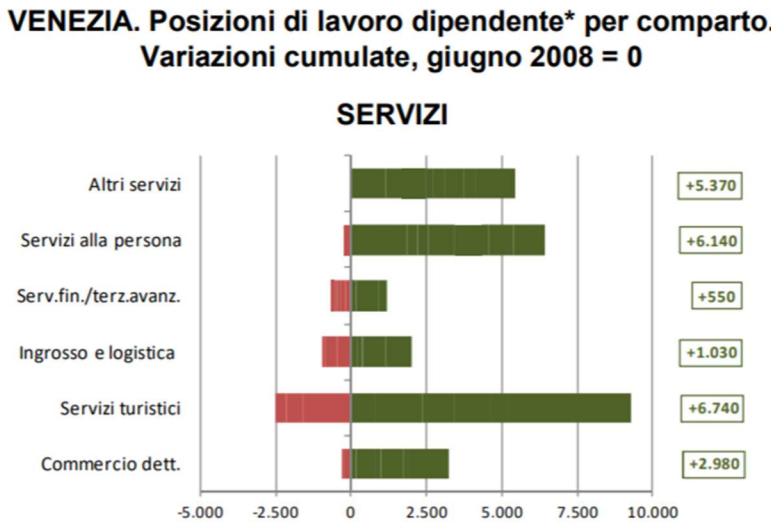
The institution of domestic worker has a long history in Italy, and is part and parcel of Italian social life. Apart from the high numbers of workers, both regular and employed informally, there are also elaborate legal regulations regarding work contracts with a household worker; the presence of active domestic workers' trade unions should also be noted (Andall 2000). The basic regulations are contained in the Act on the protection of domestic employment from 1958, collective labor agreement from 2001 (Ghera 2003:349), and very recent new collective labor agreement (July 2013).

In Italy, the unionization of domestic workers has been high, with the main unions being ACLI-COLF, CGIL, and CISL. A big step for the sector has been the adoption of the ILO Convention 189 on Decent domestic

work in 2012. However, the political position of said organizations is not very strong overall at present (Marchetti et al. 2021); other institutional actors also promote rights in the care sector, including employers' organizations such as DOMINA. Moreover, there are relevant popular and active social media groups (for example, Badanti in famiglia, Badanti_colf).

Venice has a peculiar demographic situation that affects the demand for household services. Venice as a borough (so including Mestre) had around 255,000 inhabitants at the end of 2021[4]. It is one of the fastest aging cities in Italy[5]. The inhabitants of the old town are around only 1/5 of the boroughs population, probably around 50,000, as in the 2018 they were around 53,000, and they are the oldest in the lagoon. Despite being so small in population and modest in the area, Venice has the second largest annual influx of tourists in Italy, after Rome, and only slightly bigger than Milan, with 12 million tourists yearly in 2018, with a 3.7% increase from the 2017 (ISTAT 2020[6]). The "overtourism" and depopulation of Venice due to increasing costs of leaving are of major concerns for the city[7].

Because of the particular demographic, ecological and architectural characteristics, Venice as a city has a very particular labor market, driven in recent decades by mass or overtourism and huge art-related endeavors such as Biennale exhibitions and Mostra del Cinema (see Iannuzzi 2021). Aging population and tourist industry alike require increases in the service sector jobs (data for 2017)[8]:



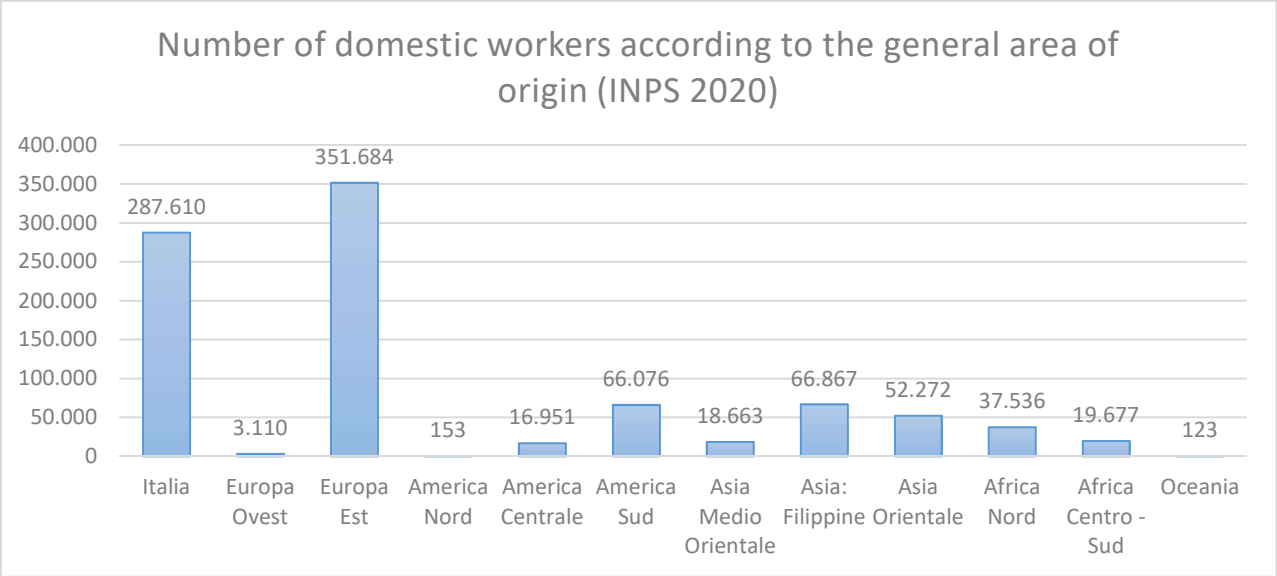
[4] https://demo.istat.it/bilmens/query.php?lingua=ita&Rip=S2&Reg=R05&Pro=P027&Com=42&anno=2021&submit=Tavola
[5] https://www.comune.venezia.it/sites/comune.venezia.it/files/immagini/statistica/Demografia_Venezia_2017_new.pdf
[6] https://www.istat.it/it/files//2019/12/C19.pdf
[7] Present on the agenda of the students' collective Li.S.C, for example, https://www.facebook.com/Lisc.Venezia/posts/4148286675230151
[8] Bertazzon 2017.

In Veneto there are 19.316 Italian domestic workers while workers coming from other parts of the world were 53.191, so the proportion of Italian workers in Veneto (26,6%) was lower than nationally (31%).

Assindatcolf, the association of the employers, makes reference to three basic categories of workers: colf (cleaners), badanti (home care workers) and babysitters (nannies and other child care workers). They carry out regular surveys focus-censis among the families who are associated with them. In the latest report (2022), it turns out that the most common is the employment of housecleaners (79,5%), then home care workers (20,5%) and nannies (7,1%). The share of Italian workers is highest among the nannies (just like it is the case in the US, Rosinska 2020), 47,8% of whom are Italian, while among the housecleaners and home care workers more than 80% of workers are foreigners. Live-in work is common among the elderly care workers (67,1%) and among child care workers and housecleaners, the live-out work is predominant (86,1% and 89,9% respectively). All in all, the largest groupings of workers are: live-out immigrant cleaners (59,3%), live-out Italian cleaners (12,8%), live-in migrant care workers (12,7%), at least among the families associated with Assindatcolf. While these data are not representative, they bear witness to the fact that the presence of Italian domestic workers is quite important in the whole picture of care and domestic work.

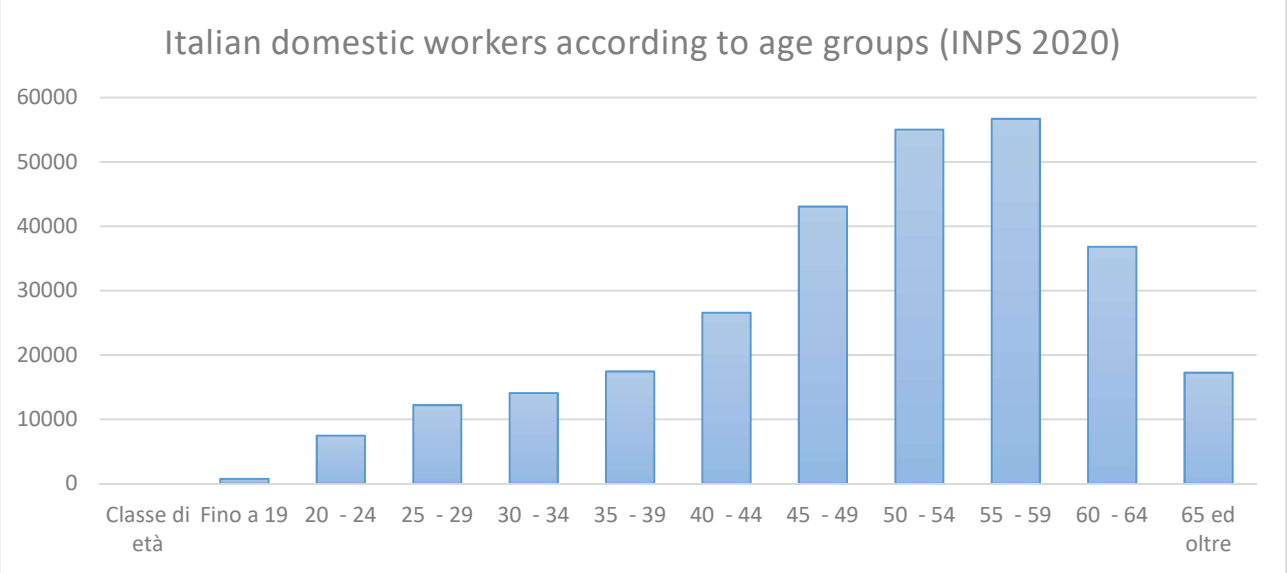
Taking into account several characteristics, Marchetti (2015) came up with a typology that is important to understand the diversity of domestic workers in Italy. First general type of workers are principally older migrant workers who work in in-home care full time, are the principal caretaker of the person in their charge and are usually the breadwinners for whom it is vital to send remittances to their countries of origin to support their families. Second type are workers employed part-time as cleaners or caregivers who can be either migrant workers or Italian workers, whose income is supplementary in their households and whose services are not the only or principal way to meet the care needs of a given family or care receiver (Marchetti 2015: 111). Furthermore, in Marchetti et al. (2021) we read: "The care and domestic work labour market in the country is divided between foreign and Italian workers, with Italians taking up jobs as part-time and live-out housekeepers, while migrants mostly occupy live-in and full-time jobs as caregivers to the elderly (Di Bartolomeo and Marchetti, 2016)."

According to the official data of the Instituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale (INPS), in 2020 there were 920 722 domestic workers in Italy. Among them the most prominent category of workers according to the origin were workers from the so-called Eastern Europe, mainly from Romania, Ukraine and Moldova, that surpassed 351 thousand workers. The second largest category of workers were actually Italian workers, who were 287 610 and constituted 31% of all registered domestic workers in Italy.



Source: own elaboration of the INPS 2020 data

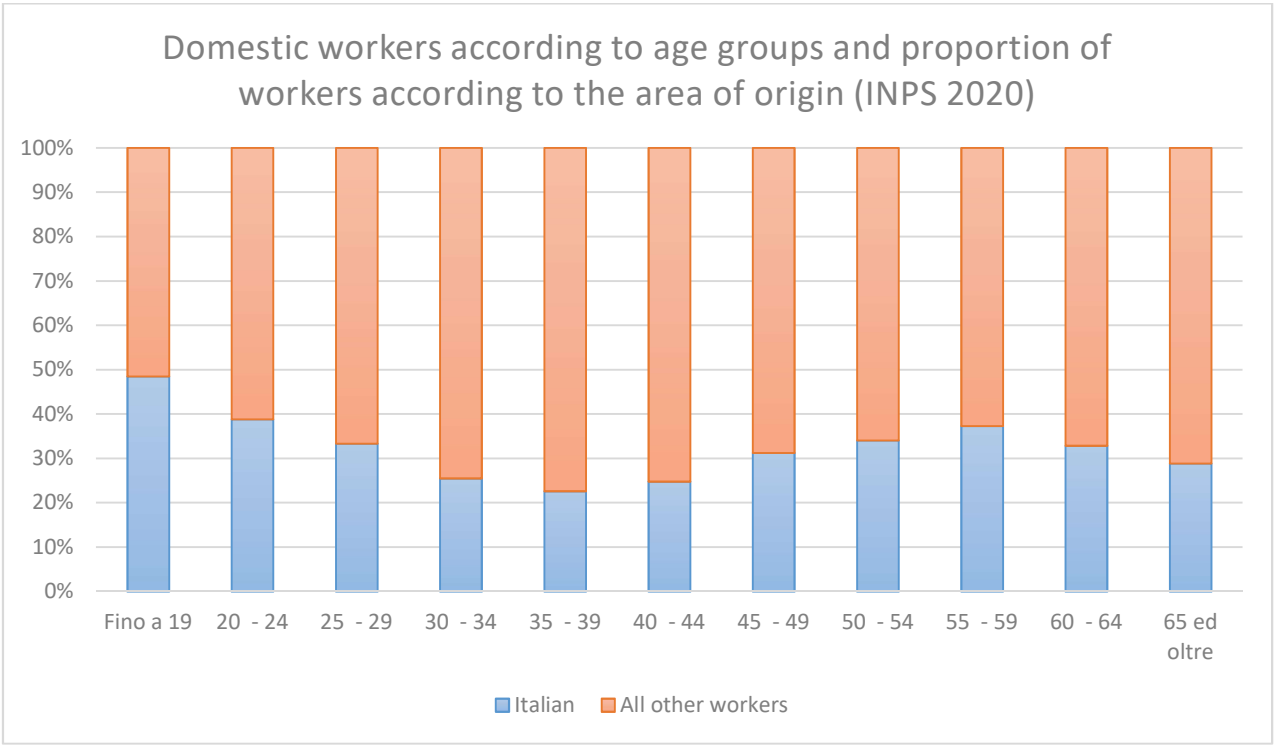
Among 287 610 thousands of Italian domestic workers, the largest age category are people aged 50-59, and in general the category of workers 50+ years old constitute 58% of Italian domestic workers (INPS 2020).



Source: own elaboration of the INPS 2020 data

According to the general Italian data, the regular workers registered at INPS have aged, so now the biggest group is the category over 50 year old (52.4%) while it used to be the 30-49 years old category in 2012, amounting to 54%. In addition, the youngest category of workers, under 29, shrank radically, from 14.5% al 5.3% (DOMINA 2020). The INPS statistics only takes into account cleaners and care workers, not babysitter or nannies, however, combined with the influx of Italians into the sector we can assume it is not

the youngest Italians that are starting to work as elder care workers in the past couple of years, examples of which I found in my sample.



As we see, the largest shares of Italian domestic workers are in the youngest age group (up to 24 years old) and among people approaching the so called 'post-productive' age, so 55+ years old. If we added nannies to the picture, for sure the shares of Italian workers would increase, both among the young ones, but also among the more mature workers, as more established workers in the time of crisis seek domestic jobs as one of the emergency plans, as the preliminary findings of my research suggest.

Unfortunately, as we only have access to the data covering around half of domestic workers in Italy, the actual situation might be very different. We can envisage more problems and challenges in case of people who work informally. This is why it remains vital to carry out smaller scale mixed-method or qualitative studies inquiring given aspects of particular groups, like for example the health and safety issues of Moldovan domestic workers in Padua (Redini, Vianello, Zaccagnini 2020) or Italian workers that I was pursuing in the MAJORdom study.

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