

## Culture portability from origin to destination country: The gender division of domestic work among migrants in Italy

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*Research Article*

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# **Culture portability from origin to destination country: The gender division of domestic work among migrants in Italy**

**Elisa Brini<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

### **BACKGROUND**

The relative importance of a cultural component in the gender division of unpaid labour is still debated.

### **OBJECTIVE**

Drawing on the epidemiological approach to the study of culture, we investigate the cultural component of gender inequality by examining whether gender asymmetries in housework and childcare in families with a migrant background relate to gender equity in the country of origin.

### **METHODS**

Through multilevel models based on microlevel data (Istat SCIF survey), we examine the extent to which the division of household labour between immigrant partners living in Italy relates to gender equity in their origin country, proxied by the Global Gender Gap Index. We further analyse the changing importance of gender equity in the country of origin at different lengths of stay in the destination country.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Immigrants from more (less) gender-equal countries display greater (lower) equality in the division of routine housework and childcare activities. However, gender equity in the origin country loses its importance for couples living in the destination country for a longer time. These findings point to a significant contribution of culture of origin to gender inequality in the intra-couple division of unpaid labour. Yet nonnegligible differences exist between specific housework and childcare tasks and depending on the time spent in the hosting country.

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## **CONTRIBUTION**

Our study contributes to the literature on gender inequalities by providing new evidence on the relationship between culture of origin and the division of specific housework and childcare tasks in families with a migrant background.

## **1. Introduction**

The pace of changes toward greater gender equality that have transformed Western societies since the 1960s appears to have slowed down in recent decades (England 2010). Stagnation is also visible in the way partners allocate time to unpaid labour, as gender inequalities in the intra-household division of housework and childcare persist across all OECD countries (Dotti Sani 2018; Zamberlan, Gioachin, and Gritti 2021, 2022).

The discussion about gender disparities in housework and childcare has focused mainly on whether they are rooted in shared gender norms and values (i.e., cultural factors) or in institutional, social, and economic conditions that influence individuals' and couples' decisions (i.e., institutional and structural factors). However, empirical assessment of the potential effect of culture on the division of household labour has remained underdeveloped. Identifying the cultural component of gender inequalities is particularly complex, primarily because it is endogenous to individuals' behaviour and the broader socioeconomic and institutional context in which they are embedded. Drawing on the 'epidemiological approach' to the study of culture (Fernández and Fogli 2009; Polavieja 2015), we address this issue by studying the portability of culture in households with a migration background living in the same hosting country. As migrants move from origin to destination country, they carry with them norms and values specific to their different contexts of origin, while being exposed to the same cultural, institutional, and structural conditions of the hosting country. This situation enables us to isolate the role of culture of origin.

Specifically, we focus on heterosexual couples with a migrant background living in Italy, a country that lags behind other European countries with regard to female employment (Dotti Sani and Scherer 2018; Scherer and Reyneri 2008) and the gender division of household labour – although with nonnegligible differences between types of couples and geographical regions (Craig and Mullan 2010; Dotti Sani 2012). Similar to other Southern European countries, but unlike Central and Northern European as well as American countries, Italy has seen a steady increase in immigrants only since the 2000s (Colombo and Dalla Zuanna 2019; Panichella, Avola, and Piccitto 2021; Reyneri 2004; Reyneri and Fullin 2011). Most migrants living in Italy arrived as adults, while only a

small minority were born in Italy with at least one foreign parent (the so-called second generation).

As little is known about gender disparities among migrant couples in Italy, we first document how partners with a migration background residing in Italy divide their housework and childcare tasks. We then investigate whether and to what extent the gender division of domestic tasks relates to the level of gender equity in immigrants' countries of origin. Finally, we assess the persistence of cultural heritage from the origin country by examining whether the relationship between gender equity in the country of origin and the division of unpaid labour varies over years since migration – that is, during time spent in the destination country.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Housework, childcare, and their allocation between partners**

Household labour is usually understood as the set of unpaid activities undertaken to take care of both the house and the wellbeing of household members. A vast literature, mostly focusing on non-migrant couples, shows that gender inequality in household labour, although decreasing, is persisting over time (e.g., Leopold, Skopek, and Schulz 2018 for Germany; Zamberlan, Gioachin, and Gritti 2021, 2022 for the United Kingdom; Dotti Sani 2018 across European countries). Despite women's increasing education and labour market participation, with a corresponding reduction in their time spent performing housework activities, in the early years of the 21st century the growing male involvement in domestic work has levelled off or even reversed (Bianchi et al. 2000; Kan, Sullivan, and Gershuny 2011). Trends are similar across countries, although there is nonnegligible variation in levels of male (and female) involvement in household labour. Among European countries, Italy shows one of the largest gender gaps in the performance of household labour. Italian women carry most of the burden of both housework and childcare, spending on average about three more hours than men on housework activities every week, and twice the time men dedicate to taking care of children (Pailhé, Solaz, and Tanturri 2019).

Existing analyses of household labour typically refer to the broad category of housework tasks, which includes several different types of activities. A relevant distinction is the one between routine and nonroutine tasks. While the former are repetitive activities that can rarely be postponed, the latter term describes occasional tasks that allow for more flexibility.<sup>3</sup> This distinction is of crucial importance when analysing

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<sup>3</sup> For example, cleaning, cooking, and doing the laundry are part of the first group, while home repairs, shopping, and bill payments are in the second category (Coltrane 2000).

heterosexual partners' involvement in unpaid labour, as the two types of activities are usually found to be associated with female and male roles, respectively. Not only do women perform more housework chores than men but they are also usually responsible for routine tasks, while the more flexible and often enjoyable nonroutine activities are typically performed by men (Berk 1985). Only by differentiating between types of tasks and paying attention to the less commonly studied nonroutine activities is it possible to provide a comprehensive picture of gender inequality in unpaid labour, as well as a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms.

Previous literature also highlights important qualitative differences between housework and care activities (especially childcare), which are worth considering when studying gender differences in unpaid labour (Bianchi et al. 2012; Gracia 2014). While housework tasks are generally perceived as boring, with both partners trying to avoid them (Deutsch, Lussier, and Servis 1993), childcare is usually described as a more pleasant and rewarding activity (Coltrane 2000; Sullivan 2013). Unlike housework tasks, it is usually impossible for parents to entirely avoid spending time with their children, not least because neglecting childcare has detrimental consequences for both children's growth and parental wellbeing and self-esteem (Deutsch, Lussier, and Servis 1993). Thus, mothers and fathers do not seem to face a binary trade-off between time spent in paid work and in taking care of children (Bittman, Craig, and Folbre 2004; Hofferth 2001); rather, time devoted to childcare tends to remain constant, at the expense of leisure time (Craig 2007). As a result, childcare appears to be shared (increasingly) more equally among partners than housework (Craig and Mullan 2011; Gracia 2014; Yeung et al. 2001). However, as in the case of housework, increasing female labour market participation has not resulted in a perfectly equitable gender division of childcare activities (Bianchi et al. 2000; Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Sayer and Gornick 2012).

## **2.2 What lies behind inequality in the gender division of household labour? The role of culture and its identification**

The debate around the drivers of partners' division of household labour is still contentious and is based on two often competing traditions: the neoclassical economic approach and the constructivist perspective (for an overview see Brines 1993, 1994; Coltrane 2000; Geist and Ruppner 2018). While the former stresses the role of structural factors, the latter focuses on the cultural component of gender disparities.

On the one hand, neoclassical economic theories and their extensions (Becker 1981; Brines 1994; Coverman 1985; Hiller 1984) underline the economic function of the family to illustrate the division of work between genders. The main argument is that each couple divides unpaid labour regardless of gender, via a rational process of resource allocation

(about this point, see also Gough and Killewald 2011; Van der Lippe, Treas, and Norbut 2018; Voßemer and Heyne 2019). On the other hand, a growing body of empirical research suggests that decisions taken within the household are not always the result of rational economic reasoning (Álvarez and Miles-Touya 2019; Barigozzi, Cremer, and Roeder 2018; Blau and Kahn 2006; Fortin 2005) and focuses instead on the cultural component of gender, particularly its social construction (Brines 1994; Coltrane 1989; Connell 1985; DeVault 1994; Ferree 1990; Hochschild and Machung 1989; Potuchek 1992; Shelton and John 1996; West and Zimmerman 1987). According to the latter perspective, women perform the lion's share of household duties because of internalised gender norms which are transmitted and maintained through socialisation and 'doing gender' practices (Cunningham 2001, 2008; England 2006, 2010; Ridgeway 2011; West and Zimmerman 2009). Following this gender-based perspective, doing (or not doing) household work and specialising in tasks of a certain kind (typically female or male) represent culturally established behaviours displaying gender.

Despite a vast and growing body of research focusing on the source of gender inequalities and specifically on the cultural component, conceptualising and measuring the role of culture has always been a challenge. Culture is one of the most critical concepts in the social sciences, being generally defined as a complex repository of norms, preferences, and beliefs shared by a given group of individuals (Fernández and Fogli 2006; Polavieja 2015). Identifying the role of culture is even more complex than defining it, owing to the mutual influence of the cultural and the structural domains (Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2006; Pfau-Effinger 2005). The role of culture is difficult to isolate not only because socioeconomic and institutional factors influence preferences and beliefs, but also because gender norms may influence individual behaviours and the broader institutional context. To put it differently, although cross-national differences in gender-role attitudes and behaviours might mirror the cultural component of gender inequalities, establishing whether they are the result of cultural norms or of socioeconomic and institutional conditions is far from straightforward.

To separate the influence of culture from that of structural factors, our analysis relies on a proposal developed within the new cultural economics and known as the 'epidemiological approach' to the study of culture (Fernández and Fogli 2006; Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales 2006; Polavieja 2015).<sup>4</sup> This approach draws on the notion of culture's portability and on the study of migrant populations: immigrants living in the same hosting country but coming from different origin countries differ in their cultural heritages while sharing the same institutional and economic (structural) environment of the destination context. The geographical mobility of migrants thus enables us to isolate

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'epidemiological approach' derives from the attempt to identify the influence the environment has on behaviour, an approach also applied by medical epidemiologists to disentangle the effects of genetics and of the environment on human health (see also Fernández 2008; Polavieja 2015).



the cultural component of gender disparities. In other words, we look for variation in the outcome of interest, the division of unpaid labour within the couple, conditional on culture of origin, proxied by an index of aggregate gender equity in the origin country. Keeping all relevant individual, household, and macrolevel features constant, any remaining differences among immigrant households conditional on the country of origin are likely to reflect the cultural component of gender inequality.<sup>5</sup>

Among the studies looking at migrant populations to capture the cultural component of gender inequalities, Scoppa and Stranges (2019) focus on the influence of female labour force participation in the origin country, used as a proxy for cultural heritage and gender norms, on migrant women's likelihood to be in the labour force in Italy. Their results support the relevance of gender culture in shaping economic outcomes, thus corroborating earlier findings focusing on women with a migration background living in the United States (Blau, Kahn, and Papps 2011; Fernández and Fogli 2009). Existing research has also relied on the study of migrants to investigate the role of culture in influencing how household labour is divided between partners. In their study of immigrants in the United States, Hicks, Santacreu-Vasut, and Shoham (2015) show that differences in the gender division of household tasks are related to immigrants' linguistic backgrounds. The more intense the gender distinctions encoded in the grammatical structure of immigrants' mother tongues, the wider the inequalities in handling housework. Similarly, and more closely related to our work, Frank and Hou (2015) report that gender roles in the country of origin influence immigrant couples' division of paid and unpaid work in Canada, the destination country. This finding is consistent with a recent study by Blau and colleagues (2020), showing that first-generation immigrants in the United States coming from countries with greater gender equity share unpaid labour more equally than immigrants coming from less gender-egalitarian societies. Beyond North America, Carriero (2021) finds a positive correlation between gender norms in the home country and the gender division of domestic work in the country of destination by analysing immigrants in different European countries. Interestingly, he also finds evidence of a process of cultural assimilation, as the role of culture of origin weakens across immigrant generations.

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<sup>5</sup> Arguably, any variable proxying aggregate gender equity captures both structural features of the country of origin and societal preferences and norms, including those deriving from structural aspects. As more extensively discussed in section 4.2.3, we introduce a range of macrolevel controls for structural characteristics of the origin country to attain a conservative estimate of the role of culture (see also Fernández and Fogli 2006).

### **3. Research questions and expectations**

In this paper we address three research questions. First, we ask whether and to what extent the intra-couple division of housework and childcare reflects gender culture in the country of origin, as measured by the related Global Gender Gap Index (GGI). If cultural heritage matters in partners' behaviours, we should expect a positive relationship between gender equity in the country of origin and equality in the division of housework and childcare in the country of destination. If, instead, culture of origin is irrelevant and structural features of individuals and of the destination context have greater importance, we should expect the division of unpaid labour to be unrelated to gender equity in the country of origin.

Second, we address the question of whether gender equity in the origin country influences the division of specific types of tasks. We add to the existing literature by also considering the division of childcare activities, thus extending knowledge deriving from previous studies (e.g., Carriero 2021; Frank and Hou 2015), and by distinguishing routine (typically female) from nonroutine (typically male) housework tasks. So far, studies aiming to identify the cultural component of gender inequality in household labour have analysed either an aggregate measure of unpaid labour or its routine component, neglecting heterogeneity among domestic tasks. This limitation hampers the possibility of observing gender asymmetries in the performance of different types of tasks and, consequently, of answering the question of whether a more egalitarian culture of origin leads men to get more involved in typically female activities and women in typically male ones. If culture of origin matters also for the performance of qualitatively different household tasks, we should expect men to be more involved in typically female activities and women in typically male ones when arriving from more gender-egalitarian countries.

Finally, we ask if the role of culture of origin varies depending on the amount of time spent in the destination context. Although only seldom addressed in the literature on the cultural component of gender inequality (for an exception, see Carriero 2021), cultural assimilation may be a crucial process to consider. Immigrants are not immune to the cultural context in which they live, and they may adapt their own cultural heritage as they acquire the norms of the host country (Alba and Nee 2003; Gans 2007). Previous research has addressed this question by providing separate analyses by immigrant generation (Carriero 2021), but this may be problematic for countries with shorter histories of immigration, such as Italy. Accordingly, we follow existing research relying on Italian data (Scoppa and Stranges 2019) and utilise information on years since migration to investigate whether the association between gender equity in the country of origin and partners' division of housework and childcare varies over time spent in the destination country. If cultural assimilation is occurring, we should expect culture of

origin to have a smaller or negligible role with greater time spent in Italy, and thus with greater exposure to the cultural norms of the destination context.

## **4. Data, methods, and research design**

### **4.1 Data and sample**

Micro-level data comes from the Social Condition and Integration of Foreigners (SCIF) survey, carried out by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) in 2011–2012.<sup>6</sup> Participants were selected using a two-stage procedure: first by municipality, then by household units containing at least one foreign citizen. Each member with a migrant background (i.e., with foreign citizenship and/or born abroad) living in the household was interviewed using a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technique, while Italians with no migration background were not interviewed.

Most commonly, data based on time-use diaries is used to examine the intra-couple division of housework and childcare. However, these data sources are rarely designed to collect information about immigrants, which results in a limited number of individuals and households with migration background being included in the sample. The SCIF survey overcomes this limitation by gathering information on a large sample of immigrants coming from several different countries. An additional advantage of this survey lies in the set of questions aimed at capturing the gender division of household labour. Survey questions are framed to ask the respondent's relative contribution to household chores and collect information about specific household and childcare tasks, thereby enabling us to model the gender division of unpaid work and to distinguish routine from nonroutine tasks.

As our interest lies in intra-couple dynamics, we restrict the analytic sample to cohabiting couples, which represent the units of analysis. We focus on couples in which both partners are aged between 18 and 65 and no information is missing for any of the macro- and micro-level variables included in the main models. These restrictions yield two separate samples: a 'housework sample' of couples providing information on the division of housework tasks (4,601 couples) and a 'childcare sample' of couples with dependent children who also provide information on childcare division (1,509 couples). These analytic samples include households in which both partners have a migrant background and come from the same country (about 71% of the housework sample and 66% of the childcare sample) or from different countries (between 3% and 4%), and mixed couples in which only the woman has a migrant background (about 26% of the

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<sup>6</sup> Istat (2016). *Condizione e integrazione sociale dei cittadini stranieri: file per la ricerca*. Available at <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/191090>, consulted in August 2022.

housework sample and 30% of the childcare sample). Table A-1 in Appendix Section A provides details about the composition of the analytic samples based on partners' migrant background.<sup>7</sup>

We integrate individual-level data with macro-level information about the country of origin to construct the main independent variable and macro-level controls. Country scores of the Global GGI,<sup>8</sup> GDP per capita (current international dollar equivalent based on purchasing power parity),<sup>9</sup> and information about the total fertility rate (TFR)<sup>10</sup> come from the World Bank. To account for immigrants' selectivity, we further include an individual-level measure of relative education (compared to the distribution of educational titles in the country of origin) based on the Barro–Lee Educational Attainment dataset (Barro and Lee 2013).

## 4.2 Measures

### 4.2.1 The gender division of housework and childcare tasks

In the SCIF survey, housework and childcare activities are investigated through a set of questions asking women how household labour is divided with their partner. All questions have the following formulation: 'Between you and your husband/partner, who deals with [task name]?' The response categories are: 'him exclusively', 'her exclusively', 'mainly him', 'mainly her', 'both equally', and 'don't know'. An extra response option of 'does not apply' is added for childcare tasks only.<sup>11</sup> Housework tasks include cooking, setting the table, washing the dishes, keeping the house in order, doing daily shopping (food, cleaning products, other home products, etc.), buying clothing for the family, buying other goods for the family (furniture, home appliances, car, electronic instruments, etc.), repairs, and administrative matters and other issues regarding the

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<sup>7</sup> We found no relevant differences in sociodemographic variables and the gender division of domestic work between mixed-origin couples and those in which both partners come from the same country. Additional analyses are available upon request.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank (2022a). Overall Global Gender Gap Index. Available at [https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/af52ebe9?country=BRA&indicator=27959&viz=line\\_chart&years=2006.2018](https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/af52ebe9?country=BRA&indicator=27959&viz=line_chart&years=2006.2018), consulted in August 2022.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2022b). GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$). Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD>, consulted in August 2022.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank (2022c). Fertility rate, (total births per woman). Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>, consulted in August 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the SCIF survey does not measure whether a specific activity is outsourced. Nevertheless, the lack of such information seems unlikely to bias our results: 27% of couples answered 'yes' to the survey question 'Does anyone help you with housework and childcare?', but only 6% of these reported receiving help from nonrelatives.

family (bills, insurance, school enrolment, residents' meetings, etc.).<sup>12</sup> Childcare tasks cover taking care of children (washing them, dressing them, taking them to school, etc.) and dealing with their education.

Based on these questions and the related answers, we create a variable indicating the share of male involvement in each household activity. This variable assumes a value of 0 when the woman is entirely responsible for the task, 0.25 if she is mainly responsible for it, 0.5 if both partners contribute equally to the task, 0.75 if the male partner is the one mainly responsible for the task, and 1 if he is entirely responsible for it. 'Don't know' answers are excluded. Thanks to this recoding, we can model this variable as a quasi-continuous measure of male share of household chores, thus providing more straightforward estimates. Despite our interest in detailed household activities, we also build two aggregated measures of total housework and total childcare by combining the housework-related and the childcare-related tasks into two additive indexes (by computing, for each household, the sum of the answers given to each housework or childcare item and dividing the result by the number of items).

#### **4.2.2 Gender equity in the origin country (GGI)**

The explanatory variable of interest is the level of gender equity in an immigrant's birth country, a relevant dimension of culture in the country of origin. Following recent literature (Blau et al. 2020), we proxy this concept by means of the Global Gender Gap Index (GGI), a publicly available country-level index introduced by the World Economic Forum. This index is based on indicators measuring national gender gaps in economic, education, health, and political dimensions. Examples of indicators composing the GGI are female labour force participation rate, female enrolment in tertiary education, and percentage of women in parliament.<sup>13</sup> The final, additive index ranges from 0 (maximum inequality) to 1 (maximum equality). The GGI seeks to capture a country's overall level of gender equity in a given year, with the additional advantage of enabling cross-country comparisons. We follow Blau and colleagues (2020) and consider the average GGI value from the most distant disposable values, i.e., those of 2006 and 2007.<sup>14</sup> Ideally, gender equity in the country of origin should be measured before migration. Although the SCIF data was collected at a subsequent point in time (2011–2012) and thus the measurement

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<sup>12</sup> The SCIF survey also asks who takes care of renewal procedures for residence permits. However, this item is specific to the status of immigrant and thus exceeds the scope of this study. Moreover, another item included in the analyses already covers the more general and informative dimension of family-related administrative matters. We therefore exclude the item 'renewal of the residence permit' from our analyses.

<sup>13</sup> For further details about the methodology underpinning the GGI and the specific indicators, see WEF (2020).

<sup>14</sup> Scores for both years are missing for three countries, so we rely on the first available year: 2009 for Senegal, 2010 for the Ivory Coast and Lebanon.

of the dependent variable is temporally subsequent to that of culture of origin, migrants may have completed their migration before 2006/2007. Nevertheless, it should be considered that culture changes slowly over time, as evidenced by the limited changes in GGI country scores over time and the relatively stable positioning of countries across the GGI ranking (analyses available upon request).

To be consistent with the measurement of the dependent variables, for each household we model the GGI (as well as macro-level control variables) related to the woman's country of origin. Results do not substantively vary when using the origin country of the man (see section 5.3). Second-generation immigrants are assigned their mother's GGI, in order to test the influence (or lack thereof) of cultural features of their migration background. The average GGI value in our pooled analytic sample is 0.66; the lowest value (least equality) is 0.55 for Pakistan and the highest value (highest equality) is 0.81 for Sweden.

#### **4.2.3 Covariates and immigrants' selectivity**

Several macro- and micro-level variables are relevant to the association between gender equity in the country of origin and male involvement in household labour. To correctly identify the role of cultural aspects, we isolate our estimates from the influence of structural features of the origin country by including controls for GDP per capita (as done by Blau et al. 2020; Carriero 2021) and TFR (see Blau et al. 2020; Frank and Hou 2015; Hicks, Santacreu-Vasut, and Shoham 2015). Both a country's level of economic development and its overall fertility rate might influence how household labour is divided between partners, possibly also after migration. For both variables, we rely on average values over the time range 2000–2007 (thus antecedent to the SCIF survey) to improve stability and information quality.

At the household level, we include a series of dummies providing information on the number of children and their ages to capture differences between households in the overall amount of housework and childcare work to be performed. Specifically, we control for the number of dependent children aged 0–5, 6–12, and 13–17. Given the strong regional differences characterising Italy, we also account for the family's region of residence.

At the individual level, we consider age (also squared) for both partners, as it is commonly found to be a relevant predictor of the (relative) performance of household tasks. In addition, to consider the possibility of partners' (relative) resources influencing bargaining dynamics within the couple, we include a control for each member's level of education. Further, we utilise information on marital status and length of stay in Italy (i.e., years since migration), which could be important predictors of the gender division

of housework and childcare. Once again, these variables may reflect the cultural component of gender inequalities – for example, because of cultural values differing between cohabiting and married couples or through a process of assimilation of the host country’s culture. Including these as controls thus enables us to provide conservative estimates of the role of culture.

The issue of immigrants’ selectivity is, both theoretically and empirically, core to any study focusing on the migrant population. Individuals choosing to move from their origin country to another one are likely to differ from their fellow citizens in a number of respects (Engzell and Ichou 2020; Ichou 2014; Van de Werfhorst and Heath 2019). Selection based on educational level, skills, or aspirations may influence labour market outcomes and time dedicated to paid work, thus possibly affecting time spent on unpaid work and its division between partners. Furthermore, education may be a proxy for individual gender attitudes and thus a possible predictor of individual propensity to share domestic chores in a gender-equal way. Following the solution proposed by Ichou (2014) and recently applied in various studies (e.g., Brunori, Luijkx, and Triventi 2020; Schmidt, Kristen, and Mühlau 2022), we rely on the Barro–Lee Educational Attainment Dataset (Barro and Lee 2013) and we proxy immigrants’ selectivity by means of relative education, operationalized as the age- and gender-specific position of immigrants in the distribution of educational qualifications in their origin country. We select the closest year to the period covered by the SCIF data, namely 2010,<sup>15</sup> and we assign to each individual included in the SCIF survey the percentage of individuals in the same origin country with the same gender that belong to the same age group (data is provided with age groups in 5-year intervals) with a lower level of education, plus half of those with the same educational level. Appendix Table A-2 provides detailed descriptive statistics for all variables included in the models.

### **4.3 Analytic strategy**

Our analysis proceeds in three steps. First, we provide a descriptive overview of the overall intra-couple division of household labour among immigrant couples residing in Italy. We explore heterogeneity in the gender division of unpaid labour by showing the share of male involvement in specific housework and childcare tasks. We then present the macro-level relation between the GGI and the gender division of housework and childcare by mapping the relative position of different countries of origin.

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<sup>15</sup> When country information is missing in the Barro–Lee dataset, we replace it with the average value for the neighbouring countries (by gender and age group). Following Brunori, Luijkx, and Triventi (2020), we define neighbouring countries using the United Nations’ classification of geographical regions.

Next, we examine the association between gender equity in the origin country and male share of household activities using multilevel regression models taking into account the nested structure of the data, with migrants within their country of origin. Through random-intercept regression models net of individual, household, and macrolevel controls, we estimate the extent to which the male share of housework and childcare depends upon gender equity in the country of origin. We model as dependent variables both the two additive indexes of housework and childcare and the eleven specific activities. As previously mentioned (see section 4.2.3), all models include controls for the linear and quadratic relation with age, educational level, relative education, marital status, years since migration, number of dependent children by age group, area of residence in Italy, GDP, and TFR. All individual-level variables are included for both partners.

In the final step, we analyse whether exposure time to the culture of the host country moderates the relationship between gender equity of the origin country and the division of household labour in the host country. We do so by adding to the model a cross-level interaction between GGI and years since migration – that is, length of stay in Italy. As we mainly rely on first-generation families, we expect their cultural heritage to be less mediated by assimilation dynamics, which instead we expect to matter particularly for the second generation (see also the related discussion by Scoppa and Stranges 2019). This aspect makes our testing of cultural assimilation particularly conservative – relative, for example, to approaches comparing first- and second-generation migrants (e.g., Carriero 2021).

## **5. Results**

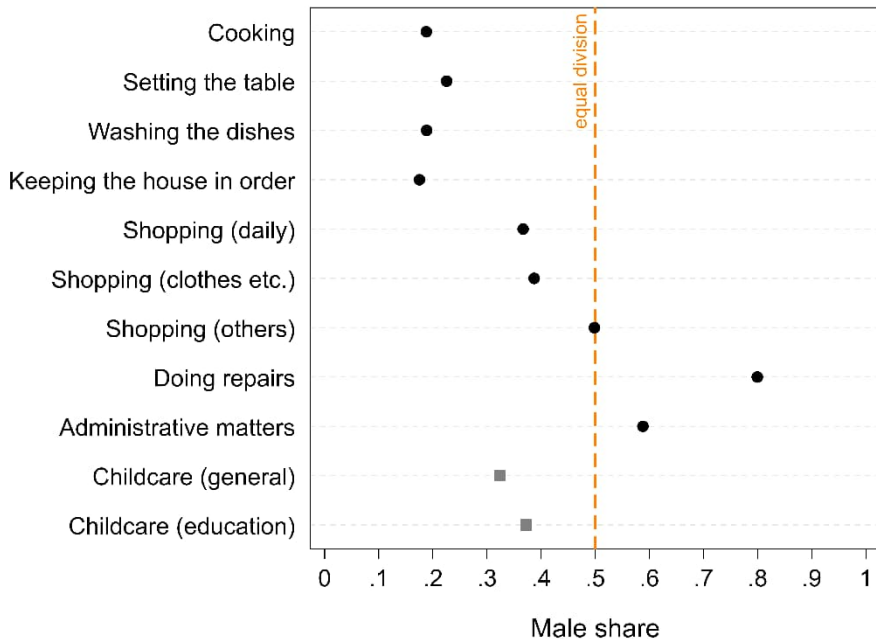
### **5.1 The gender division of unpaid labour: Variation by task and country of origin**

Figure 1 shows the average share of male participation in specific housework and childcare tasks among migrant couples in Italy. The lowest male share, indicating a low level of gender equality, is found for routine housework tasks, including cooking, setting the table, washing the dishes, and keeping the house in order. Male participation in such tasks averages about 0.2, meaning that the woman tends to be fully in charge or, at best, to perform ‘the lioness’s share’ of such duties. Childcare tasks also remain consistently below the equal share line, with male involvement between 0.3 and 0.35, indicating a higher commitment by mothers compared to fathers. Shopping for family goods, whether daily or occasional, is more equally shared between partners: equality is especially evident when shopping for family goods such as furniture, home appliances, and electronic instruments (under the label ‘Shopping (others)’). Lastly, men score higher



than women in administrative matters and domestic repairs, which are typically considered masculine tasks: the male share is around 0.6 for administrative matters and above 0.8 for domestic repairs.

**Figure 1: Average male share of housework and childcare tasks**



Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012 (N housework = 4,601 couples; N childcare = 1,509 couples).

Figure 1 is informative about heterogeneity in the average within-couple division of domestic tasks. While men tend to participate less than women in routine housework and childcare activities, their participation in nonroutine tasks (i.e., occasionally buying goods for the family, taking care of administrative matters, and doing domestic repairs) is comparable to or even higher than that of their female partners. While previous studies have found a relatively high level of fathers' involvement in childcare activities, and thus a relatively equal division of such tasks (e.g., Yeung et al. 2001), the levels of fathers' share of childcare that we observe are well below the equal division line. The analyses that follow will shed light on whether gender equity in the country of origin plays a role in shaping male involvement in these activities.

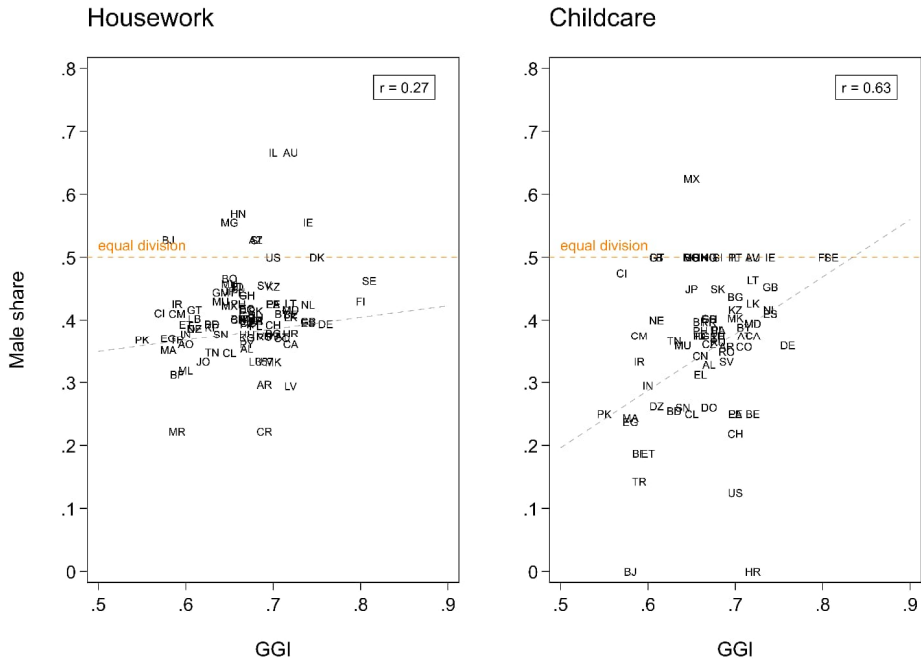
Having found heterogeneity in how different tasks are shared between partners, we now explore whether gender equity in the country of origin is associated with the gender division of unpaid labour. Figure 2 shows the average male share of housework (left panel) and childcare (right panel)<sup>16</sup> according to the GGI scores of the country of origin. Higher GGI scores point to greater gender equity in the country considered. Overall, we find indications of a positive macro-level association between GGI and male share of housework and childcare. This association is weak in the case of aggregate housework ( $r = 0.27$ ), but stronger in the case of childcare ( $r = 0.63$ ).

The observed correlation provides preliminary evidence supporting the presence of a cultural component in gender inequality: immigrants coming from more unequal countries tend to reproduce inequality within their homes in Italy, while those coming from more egalitarian contexts tend to adopt more gender equality in the division of household labour. Interesting differences emerge between housework and childcare, as the male share of housework is only weakly related to gender equity in the country of origin, while male involvement in childcare shows greater variation and, particularly, a greater positive correlation with GGI scores.

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<sup>16</sup> Note that immigrant couples without children are excluded from the sample used to analyse childcare. In some cases, this led to the loss of entire countries of origin.

**Figure 2: Country-level correlations between GGI (in the country of origin) and the male share of housework and childcare (in the country of destination)**



Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012 (N housework = 4,601 couples; N childcare = 1,509 couples).

## 5.2 Does culture matter?

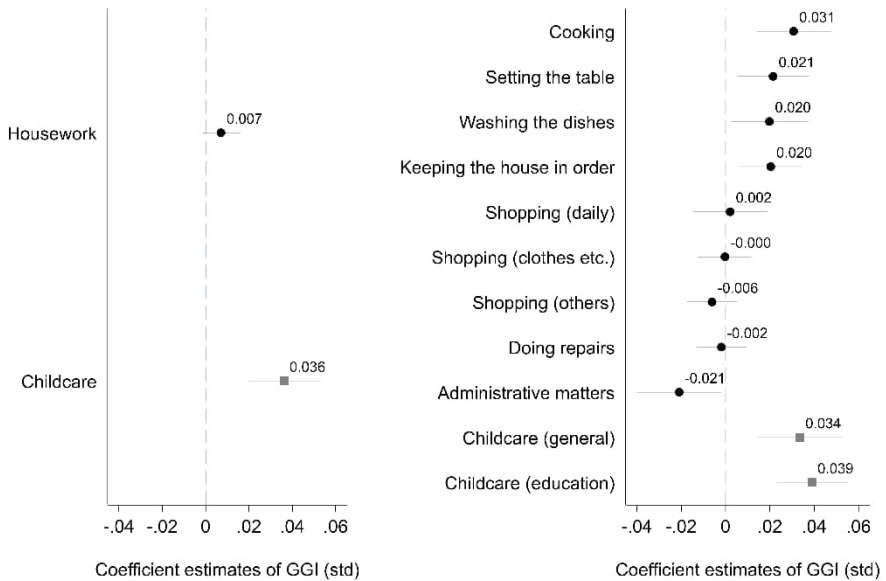
To better examine the role of culture of origin, we turn to the interpretation of the results from multilevel models estimating the role of the GGI in male participation in housework and childcare, net of relevant individual, household, and macrolevel characteristics.

Figure 3 plots coefficients of the GGI (standardised) and the related 95% confidence intervals deriving from models predicting male participation in housework and childcare. Results are presented for the two additive indexes including all housework and all childcare tasks, and for specific tasks (left and right panels in Figure 3, respectively). The coefficients, although small, are overall consistent with the descriptive findings: the higher the level of gender equity in the origin country, the greater the male involvement in housework and childcare in Italy. More precisely, an increase in the GGI by one

standard deviation is associated with a 0.007 increase in the male share of housework and a 0.036 increase in the male share of childcare (see also Appendix Table A-3). While the coefficient related to overall housework is near the 0 value, that for childcare is more relevant. In substantive terms, along a continuum in the GGI distribution moving from the most traditional to the most egalitarian society, the share of male involvement in housework would increase from approximately 0.37 to 0.41, and in childcare from approximately 0.24 to 0.46 (predicted values derived from models presented in Table A-3, calculations not shown).

The descriptive results also point to nonnegligible heterogeneity among specific types of tasks. Therefore, we test whether gender equity in the country of origin influences partners' involvement in tasks typically performed by the opposite gender. The right panel in Figure 3 shows coefficients indicating the change in male share of different housework and childcare tasks as a function of source-country gender equity (Appendix Table A-4). Larger coefficients and major differences between specific housework tasks emerge that are not visible in the more aggregated picture. GGI coefficients are positive for routine housework tasks and range from a 0.02 increase in male participation in the case of washing the dishes and keeping order in the house to a 0.031 increase for cooking. However, coefficients with a nearly null value are found for shopping and for nonroutine activities, including domestic repairs. Interestingly, a negative relationship is present between gender equity in the country of origin and male involvement in administrative tasks, suggesting a greater female involvement in this typically male activity. Specifically, an increase in gender equity in the origin country of one standard deviation leads to a 0.021 decrease in male involvement in administrative matters. Differences in the size and sign of GGI coefficients for different housework tasks are also informative about why such a small correlation was observed in previous analyses (Figure 3, left panel). Housework tasks are qualitatively different from one another, and the influence of culture of origin on the male share of household labour differs depending on the specific activity considered. This was not evident when looking at the coefficient related to overall housework, and points to the presence of fine-grained distinctions between specific activities. Results for childcare tasks corroborate descriptive and aggregate findings: gender equity in the origin country relates positively and strongly (also compared to housework) to male engagement in both general childcare (beta = 0.034) and children's education (beta = 0.039).

**Figure 3: Coefficient estimates of GGI (standardised) on the male share of housework and childcare**



Note: Results from multilevel regression models of men's share of housework and men's share of childcare, including individual, household, and macrolevel controls. 95% confidence intervals. See Tables A-3 and A-4 in the Appendix.  
 Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012 (N housework = 4,601 couples; N childcare = 1,509 couples).

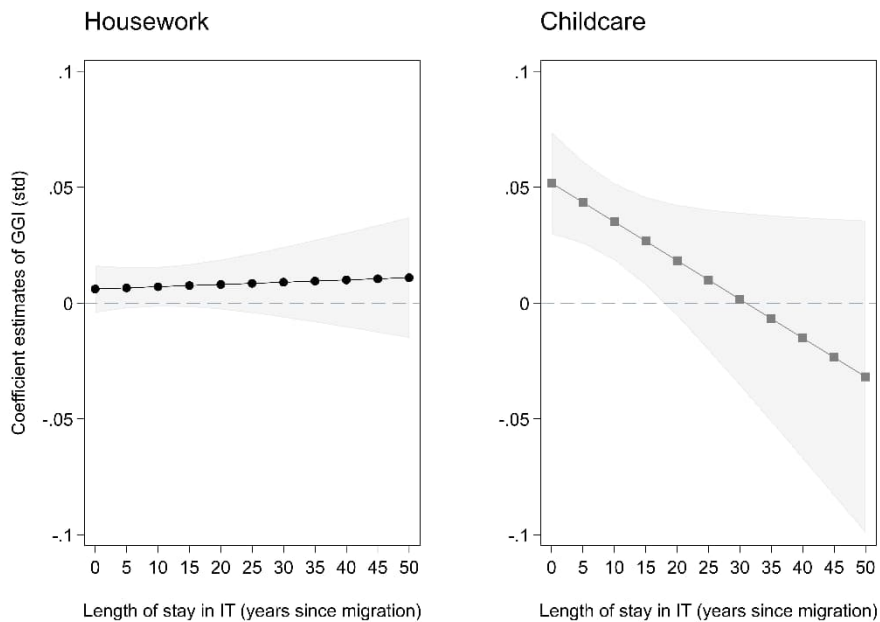
In sum, greater gender equity in the origin country is associated with a more equal division of household labour in the destination country. This relation is valid for routine housework tasks (those on average more unequally shared by partners – see Figure 1) and is particularly strong for childcare.

Next, we present estimates based on the model testing whether the influence of culture of origin varies depending on the time spent in the destination context. Figure 4 shows coefficients of GGI (standardised) on the male share of housework and childcare over years spent in Italy after migration (Appendix Table A-5). The coefficients' interpretation does not differ from that of the previous figure (Figure 3, left panel), except for the possibility of observing their variation (or lack thereof) depending on the length of stay in the host country.

The coefficients of GGI on housework (left panel) are small and do not differ according to the years since arrival in Italy. This result suggests that gender equity in the

country of origin is weakly associated with the division of housework between partners regardless of time spent living in the destination country. On the contrary, coefficient estimates of GGI on the share of male involvement in childcare (right panel) are positive for families who have lived in Italy for a relatively short period, while they taper off and lose their relevance for families that have been in Italy for 20 years or more. To put it differently, origin culture is less relevant to the gender division of childcare for migrant families that have been in the host country for a longer period of time and have been more exposed to its cultural norms than for immigrants who have arrived more recently.

**Figure 4: Coefficient estimates of GGI (standardised) on the male share of housework and childcare, over length of stay in Italy**



*Note:* Results from multilevel regression models of men's share of housework and men's share of childcare, including individual, household, and macrolevel controls, and a cross-level interaction between GGI and length of stay in Italy. 95% confidence intervals. See Table A-5 in the Appendix.  
*Source:* Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012 (N housework = 4,601 couples; N childcare = 1,509 couples).

### 5.3 Sensitivity checks

A number of sensitivity checks corroborate the validity and reliability of our findings (see Appendix Section C). First, we replicated our analyses using different model specifications. We specified a model including only GDP per capita and TFR, thus excluding microlevel control variables. This is useful as an empty model to study the total association between GGI and the division of household labour. A more parsimonious specification includes only controls for the linear and quadratic relation with male and female age. A less parsimonious specification than the one presented in the paper adds controls for female and male paid work (i.e., number of hours actually worked the week before the interview) beyond usual control variables. Given the simultaneous allocation of time to paid and unpaid work, this specification inevitably suffers from endogeneity issues, which cannot be easily modelled owing to the cross-sectional nature of the data; for this reason, this is not our preferred model specification. We believe it is nevertheless useful to look at the persistence of the role of origin culture even after controlling for paid employment. A second less parsimonious specification adds, beyond control variables included in the main model, a macro-level indicator of female labour force participation (FLFP) rate in the country of origin.<sup>17</sup> Although FLFP rate in the origin country might arguably drive the gender division of (both paid and unpaid) labour in Italy, it could do so through cultural means (Fernández and Fogli 2009; Scoppa and Stranges 2019), and we are therefore interested in capturing it through our main explanatory variable. Appendix Table A-7 shows that the main findings are robust to the exclusion or inclusion of different micro- and macro-level control variables.

Second, we tested the robustness of our findings to different sample definitions and alternative measurements of gender equity in the country of origin, as reported in Appendix Table A-8. The main coefficients for housework and childcare do not substantially vary when selecting migrants for whom Italy is the first destination country, when analysing the division of housework in the subsample of couples with dependent children (to test if self-selection into parenthood plays a role in our estimates), when excluding countries with less than 100 individual observations or industrialised countries of origin, and when modelling GGI as deriving from aggregate geographical regions (instead of specific origin countries).

Finally, the results proved robust to alternative measurements of the main explanatory variable. In our main models we relied on women's information on their country of origin and GGI. Results are the same when GGI is related to the origin country of the men. Finally, we tested a different indicator of gender equity in the country of

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<sup>17</sup> World Bank (2022d). Labour force participation rate, female. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>, consulted in August 2022. FLFP rate is calculated as the proportion of economically active women over the female population aged 15 and older.

origin. We used data from the European Values Study/World Values Survey (EVS/WVS)<sup>18</sup> to construct the Gender Equity scale theorised and validated by Inglehart and Norris (2003). Although the coefficients indicating the role of origin culture on the division of aggregate housework and childcare are smaller, the relation is positive and stronger for childcare compared to housework, in line with our main findings.

## **6. Discussion and conclusions**

Several theoretical and empirical contributions aim to explain the cause(s) of gender disparities in domestic labour. On the one hand, individual and macro-level structural factors have been shown to play an important role in encouraging or hindering a more gender-equal division of household tasks; on the other hand, culture (through socialisation to gender roles and gender display) is often argued to be a crucial driver of gender inequalities. However, the elusive conceptualization and operationalization of culture has usually impeded a proper measurement of its role (Polavieja 2015).

In this paper, we analysed how immigrants from different countries and cultures of origin living in the same destination country (Italy) divide domestic labour within couples. Exploiting the geographical mobility of migrants, we measured the cultural component of gender inequalities in the division of domestic tasks, net of institutional and socioeconomic factors likely to influence individuals' choices and behaviours.

We relied on multilevel analyses based on Italian individual-level data (the Istat SCIF survey) and various macro-level indicators referring to immigrants' origin countries to examine the extent to which the gender allocation of household labour between partners relates to the level of gender equity in their country of origin.

We find that equality in the division of unpaid labour between partners is positively related to gender equity in the country of origin, which is in line with previous studies analysing different destination countries (Blau et al. 2020; Carriero 2021; Frank and Hou 2015). Furthermore, our analysis extends previous research by highlighting the crucial differences between specific kinds of tasks when analysing the role of origin culture in predicting the gender division of unpaid work. Overall, we find that gender equity in the country of origin positively relates to the male share of domestic activities, especially routine housework and childcare. Conversely, male involvement in administrative tasks is lower if migrants come from more gender-equal countries. As the latter activity is usually performed mostly by men, this result points to a greater female involvement in a typically male task when gender equity in the country of origin is greater. We interpret

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<sup>18</sup> WVS data are available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWVL.jsp>; EVS data: study n. ZA4804, release v3-0-0 as of 30 October 2015, doi:10.4232/1.12253.



these findings as an indication of a significant cultural component in the gender division of domestic work.

The influence of gender equity in the home country is evident among migrant families that have been in Italy for relatively few years. However, for people who have left their home country for a longer period of time, its role is smaller and tends to disappear. This might indicate a process of progressive cultural assimilation: over-time exposure to cultural features of the destination country minimises differences related to the culture of origin. Cultural assimilation remains a crucial topic for future research and would benefit from more detailed testing, possibly based on information on second-generation migrants and longitudinal data. Even though it is not uncommon for studies looking at the role of culture to rely solely on the first immigrant generation (e.g., Blau et al. 2020), data on second-generation immigrants in Italy will be crucial to understand whether the influence of culture of origin persists, diminishes, or disappears with socialisation processes and over generations of immigrants. Similarly, longitudinal data measuring behavioural changes within the couple associated with time spent in the host country is needed to provide solid evidence of cultural assimilation dynamics.

There are two other potential limitations related to the quality of the data, particularly to the fact that the survey questions about housework and childcare were posed to women only. First, respondents tend to overestimate time spent on domestic tasks (Bianchi et al. 2000; Godbey and Robinson 1997; Hofferth 1999; Marini and Shelton 1993), primarily because of social desirability bias (Kan 2008). In our case, this might lead to an overestimation of gender inequalities in the performance of household chores. Second, since the SCIF survey provides information for foreign-born members only, we lacked information on mixed-origin couples composed of an Italian woman (not surveyed) and a migrant man (surveyed, but not asked the questions on the division of household chores).<sup>19</sup>

With more detailed information about couples' composition, future research could focus on how partners' characteristics influence their bargaining power, decision-making, and labour specialisation. Moreover, longitudinal information on how partners change the features and the division of paid and unpaid work is crucial to identify the structural and cultural factors contributing to gender inequalities. In fact, while the data and analytic approaches chosen in this paper are appropriate for capturing the cultural component of gender inequality, they do not allow us to explicitly test the role of other factors likely contributing to gender disparities in the division of housework and childcare. Besides individual- and couple-level information, the destination country's

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<sup>19</sup> According to Istat, the most common type of intermarriage in Italy in 2010 was between an Italian man and a foreign woman (57%), followed by couples in which both partners are foreign (32%) and couples composed of an Italian woman and a foreign man (12%). Available at <http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?QueryId=19013>, consulted in August 2022.

institutional, social, and economic characteristics and their change over time might interact in relevant ways with culture of origin, possibly leading to different outcomes for different groups of individuals. Longitudinal and comparative data might shed some light on this relevant issue.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

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## Appendix

### Section A: Descriptive statistics

**Table A-1: Sample composition based on partners' country of origin**

	Housework sample		Childcare sample	
	N couples	%	N couples	%
Migrant background from same country	3,255	70.75	990	65.60
Migrant background from different countries	161	3.50	65	4.31
Migrant background (her), Italian native (him)	1,185	25.75	454	30.09
Total	4,601	100%	1,509	100%

Note: Second-generation immigrants (i.e., born in Italy from at least one parent with migration background) are imputed from their mother's country of origin.

Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.

**Table A-2: Descriptive statistics of dependent, individual, household, and macrolevel variables included in the analyses**

	Housework sample (N=4,601)			Childcare sample (N=1,509)		
	mean/ proportion	std. dev.	min-max	mean/ proportion	std. dev.	min-max
<b>Dependent variables</b>						
Male involvement in housework (aggregate tasks)	0.38	0.13	0–1	–	–	–
Male involvement in childcare (aggregate tasks)	–	–	–	0.35	0.20	0–1
<b>Individual-level variables</b>						
Age (F)	37.14	8.94	18–65	36.96	8.55	19–65
Age squared (F)	1,459.47	704.73	324–4,225	1,438.76	674.00	361–4,225
Age (M)	42.11	9.23	20–65	41.97	8.84	20–65
Age squared (M)	1,858.46	805.87	400–4,225	1,839.48	771.15	400–4,225
<b>Marital status (F)</b>						
Not married	0.11			0.14		
Married	0.84			0.81		
Separated	0.00			0.00		
Separated (legally)	0.01			0.01		
Divorced	0.03			0.03		
Widowed	0.01			0.01		
<b>Marital status (M)</b>						
Not married	0.11			0.14		
Married	0.84			0.81		
Separated	0.01			0.01		
Separated (legally)	0.02			0.02		
Divorced	0.02			0.02		
Widowed	0.00			0.00		

**Table A-2: (Continued)**

	Housework sample (N=4,601)			Childcare sample (N=1,509)		
	mean/ proportion	std. dev.	min-max	mean/ proportion	std. dev.	min-max
<b>Highest education level (F)</b>						
No educational title	0.08			0.07		
Primary	0.05			0.05		
Lower secondary	0.28			0.26		
Vocational	0.16			0.17		
Upper secondary	0.30			0.30		
Post-secondary non-academic	0.01			0.01		
Tertiary	0.12			0.14		
PhD	0.00			0.00		
Relative education, deciles (F)	4.04	2.07	0–10	3.99	2.05	0–10
<b>Highest education level (M)</b>						
No educational title	0.06			0.07		
Primary	0.07			0.06		
Lower secondary	0.35			0.3		
Vocational	0.17			0.17		
Upper secondary	0.27			0.28		
Post-secondary non-academic	0.01			0.00		
Tertiary	0.07			0.08		
PhD	0.00			0.00		
Relative education, deciles (M)	4.60	4.04	0–10	3.59	1.73	0–10
Length of stay in Italy (F)	9.58	5.87	0–52	9.58	5.83	0–42
Hours worked the week before the interview (F)	13.55	18.34	0–144	15.33	19.12	0–100
Hours worked the week before the interview (M)	24.59	21.83	0–160	22.18	22.10	0–100
<b>Household-level variables</b>						
N of children aged 0–5	0.46	0.66	0–3	0.48	0.64	0–3
N of children aged 6–12	0.40	0.66	0–4	0.45	0.70	0–4
N of children aged 13–17	0.22	0.48	0–4	0.23	0.50	0–4
Macro region of residence						
North-West	0.20			0.22		
North-East	0.19			0.19		
Centre	0.17			0.20		
South and Islands	0.44			0.39		
<b>Macro-level variables</b>						
GGI (non-standardised)	0.66	0.04	0.55–0.81	0.67	0.04	0.55–0.81
GGI (standardised)	0	1	–2.74– 3.44	0	1	–2.74– 3.44
GGI relative to IT						
Higher	0.22			0.20		
Lower	0.78			0.80		
GDP	8,230.86	10,751.82	592.81– 620,872	8,486.81	6,256.51	592.81– 41,386.26
Total fertility rate	2.01	0.96	1.2–6.82	1.97	0.92	1.2–6.36
Female labour force participation rate	44.15	12.65	6.65–81.91	45.47	12.51	6.65–81.91

Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.

**Section B: Regression tables**

**Table A-3: Coefficient estimates from multilevel regression models of male involvement in housework and childcare (aggregate tasks)**

	Housework		Childcare	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
<b>FEMALE</b>				
Age	-0.002	[-0.006,0.002]	-0.001	[-0.011,0.009]
Age squared	0.000	[-0.000,0.000]	0.000	[-0.000,0.000]
Marital status (base=not married)				
Married	-0.031	[-0.044,-0.017]	-0.048	[-0.078,-0.019]
Separated	0.018	[-0.034,0.069]	-0.009	[-0.134,0.115]
Separated (legally)	0.004	[-0.046,0.054]	0.014	[-0.109,0.137]
Divorced	0.012	[-0.014,0.039]	-0.087	[-0.152,-0.021]
Widowed	-0.006	[-0.056,0.044]	-0.102	[-0.197,-0.008]
Education (base=none)				
Primary	0.011	[-0.013,0.035]	-0.012	[-0.072,0.049]
Lower secondary	-0.005	[-0.028,0.019]	-0.029	[-0.084,0.027]
Professional diploma	0.008	[-0.016,0.033]	-0.002	[-0.060,0.057]
Upper secondary	0.008	[-0.016,0.032]	-0.001	[-0.058,0.056]
Post-secondary non-tertiary	0.006	[-0.033,0.045]	0.041	[-0.062,0.145]
Tertiary	0.016	[-0.018,0.049]	-0.042	[-0.120,0.036]
PhD	-0.005	[-0.088,0.078]	-0.075	[-0.227,0.077]
Relative education	0.001	[-0.003,0.005]	0.009	[-0.000,0.019]
Length of stay in Italy	-0.001	[-0.001,0.000]	-0.001	[-0.003,0.001]
<b>MALE</b>				
Age	0.003	[-0.001,0.007]	0.005	[-0.005,0.016]
Age squared	-0.000	[-0.000,0.000]	-0.000	[-0.000,0.000]
Marital status (base= not married)				
Married	0.000	[0.000,0.000]	0.000	[0.000,0.000]
Separated	-0.009	[-0.060,0.041]	0.109	[-0.011,0.230]
Separated (legally)	-0.040	[-0.070,-0.009]	-0.042	[-0.119,0.036]
Divorced	-0.013	[-0.042,0.017]	-0.012	[-0.082,0.059]
Widowed	-0.052	[-0.116,0.013]	-0.301	[-0.473,-0.128]
Education (base=none)				
Primary	-0.001	[-0.023,0.022]	0.056	[-0.001,0.113]
Lower secondary	-0.002	[-0.027,0.024]	0.036	[-0.024,0.097]
Professional diploma	0.007	[-0.020,0.034]	0.027	[-0.038,0.092]
Upper secondary	0.017	[-0.009,0.043]	0.050	[-0.013,0.113]
Post-secondary non-tertiary	0.024	[-0.026,0.075]	0.074	[-0.078,0.225]
Tertiary	0.026	[-0.012,0.064]	0.108	[0.016,0.200]
PhD	0.095	[-0.009,0.199]	0.114	[-0.121,0.348]
Relative education	-0.002	[-0.007,0.003]	-0.007	[-0.019,0.005]

**Table A-3: (Continued)**

	Housework		Childcare	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
HOUSEHOLD				
Region of residence (base=N-W)				
N-E	0.015	[0.003,0.027]	0.053	[0.023,0.084]
Centre	-0.010	[-0.022,0.002]	-0.006	[-0.036,0.024]
South and Islands	-0.021	[-0.032,-0.011]	-0.004	[-0.030,0.022]
N kids aged 0-5				
1	-0.010	[-0.019,-0.001]	-0.069	[-0.092,-0.046]
2	-0.017	[-0.032,-0.002]	-0.083	[-0.123,-0.043]
3	-0.037	[-0.084,0.011]	-0.121	[-0.271,0.030]
N kids aged 6-12				
1	-0.008	[-0.017,0.001]	-0.048	[-0.071,-0.025]
2	-0.027	[-0.042,-0.012]	-0.083	[-0.123,-0.043]
3	-0.011	[-0.053,0.031]	-0.041	[-0.131,0.049]
4	0.050	[-0.074,0.174]	0.091	[-0.119,0.301]
N kids aged 13-17				
1	-0.014	[-0.024,-0.003]	-0.033	[-0.060,-0.005]
2	-0.020	[-0.044,0.003]	-0.035	[-0.094,0.024]
3	-0.093	[-0.181,-0.006]	-0.184	[-0.395,0.026]
4	-0.092	[-0.339,0.155]	0.102	[-0.262,0.466]
MACRO LEVEL				
GGI (std.)	0.007	[-0.002,0.016]	0.036	[0.020,0.052]
GDP per capita	0.000	[-0.000,0.000]	-0.000	[-0.000,0.000]
TFR	0.005	[-0.002,0.013]	0.008	[-0.007,0.023]
Constant	0.391	[0.311,0.472]	0.295	[0.074,0.517]
Variance (origin country)	0.018	[0.126,0.027]	0.011	[0.002,0.049]
Variance (household)	0.125	[0.123,0.128]	0.183	[0.177,0.190]
N	4,601		1,509	

Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011-2012.

**Table A-4: Coefficient estimates from multilevel regression models of male involvement in housework and childcare (detailed tasks) on standardised GGI**

	beta	95% ci
Cooking	0.031	[0.014,0.048]
Setting the table	0.021	[0.005,0.038]
Washing the dishes	0.020	[0.002,0.037]
Keeping the house in order	0.020	[0.006,0.035]
Shopping (daily)	0.002	[-0.015,0.019]
Shopping (clothes etc.)	-0.000	[-0.012,0.012]
Shopping (others)	-0.006	[-0.017,0.005]
Doing repairs	-0.002	[-0.013,0.010]
Administrative matters	-0.021	[-0.040,-0.002]
Childcare (general)	0.034	[0.015,0.052]
Childcare (education)	0.039	[0.023,0.055]
N housework	4,601	
N childcare	1,509	

Note: All control variables included (see Table A-3), estimates not shown.  
Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.

**Table A-5: Coefficient estimates from multilevel regression models of male involvement in housework and childcare (aggregate tasks) on standardised GGI. Interaction by GGI and (female) length of stay in Italy (i.e., years since migration)**

	Housework		Childcare	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
GGI (std.)	0.006	[-0.004,0.016]	0.052	[0.030,0.074]
Length of stay in IT	-0.001	[-0.001,0.000]	-0.001	[-0.003,0.001]
GGI#length	0.000	[-0.001,0.001]	-0.002	[-0.003,-0.000]
Variance (origin country: length)	0.007	[0.003,0.016]	0.001	[0.003,0.016]
Variance (origin country)	0.011	[0.003,0.041]	0.000	[0.003,0.041]
Variance (household)	0.125	[0.123,0.128]	0.182	[0.123,0.128]
N	4,601		1,509	

Note: All control variables included (see Table A-3), estimates not shown.  
Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.

**Table A-6: Coefficient estimates from multilevel regression models of male involvement in housework and childcare (aggregate tasks) on standardised GGI. Interaction by GGI and a dummy capturing if GGI is higher/lower than the Italian one**

	Housework		Childcare	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
GGI (std.)	0.023	[0.001,0.044]	0.061	[0.023,0.099]
Higher GGI than IT	-0.005	[-0.042,0.032]	-0.012	[-0.084,0.060]
GGI#higher	-0.028	[-0.052,-0.003]	-0.046	[-0.092,-0.001]
Variance (origin country)	0.016	[0.011,0.024]	0.006	[0.000,0.235]
Variance (household)	0.125	[0.123,0.128]	0.183	[0.176,0.190]
N	4,601		1,509	

Note: All control variables included (see Table A-3), estimates not shown.  
Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.

## Section C: Sensitivity checks

**Table A-7: Sensitivity checks: coefficient estimates of standardised GGI of male involvement in housework and childcare (aggregate tasks). Different model specifications**

	empty: only macrolevel controls		+ age (also squared)		main model + N hours worked the previous week (both male and female ones)		+ macro-level FLFP	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
Housework	0.010	[0.001,0.019]	0.011	[0.002,0.019]	0.006	[-0.002,0.014]	0.003	[-0.006,0.012]
Childcare	0.045	[0.029,0.060]	0.043	[0.028,0.058]	0.040	[0.024,0.057]	0.037	[0.019,0.054]
N housework	4,601		4,601		4,169		4,582	
N childcare	1,509		1,509		1,368		1,504	

Note: Estimates of control variables not shown. The lower number of cases of the last two model specifications is due to missing cases in the variables added (individual paid work and macrolevel FLFP, respectively).  
Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.



**Table A-8: Sensitivity checks: coefficient estimates of standardised GGI of male involvement in housework and childcare (aggregate tasks). Alternative macrolevel control variables, sample definition, and measurement of culture of origin**

	Italy first destination country		division of housework in the childcare sample		excluding countries with less than 100 obs.		excluding industrialised countries of origin	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
Housework	0.009	[-0.000,0.018]	0.018	[0.005,0.031]	0.015	[0.000,0.030]	0.007	[-0.003,0.018]
Childcare	0.037	[0.020,0.053]	–	–	0.043	[0.018,0.068]	0.039	[0.022,0.057]
N housework	4,423		1,424		3,217		4,405	
N childcare	1,434		–		1,031		1,435	

	aggregate geographical regions		male GGI		EVS/WVS gender equity scale <sup>a</sup>	
	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci	beta	95% ci
Housework	0.006	[-0.005,0.017]	0.007	[-0.000,0.015]	-0.001	[-0.010,0.007]
Childcare	0.028	[0.012,0.045]	0.036	[0.021,0.051]	0.014	[-0.004,0.031]
N housework	4,793		4,660		3,924	
N childcare	1,560		1,521		1,291	

Note: All control variables included (see Table A-3), estimates not shown.

<sup>a</sup> The EVS/WVS gender equity scale was theorised and validated by Inglehart and Norris (2003). We rely on EVS/WVS data preceding 2011–2012 (years in which the SCIF survey was collected). When more than one wave is available for a country, period averages are used. The scale is constructed as an additive index of five individual-level items aggregated at the country level. Specifically, we rely on the level of agreement with the statements: 'On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do'; 'When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women'; 'A university education is more important for a boy than a girl'; 'Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled or is this not necessary?'; 'If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent but she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man, do you approve or disapprove?'. All items are recoded so that higher values represent higher gender equity. An exploratory factor analysis confirmed the presence of one single latent factor. The final index is constructed using confirmatory factor analysis and it is then normalised and transformed on a 0–100 scale.

Source: Istat SCIF survey 2011–2012.