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Assimilation, socialization and the living arrangements of Romanian descendants in Italy: an origin-destination approach

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Short abstract (200 words)

This paper provides empirical evidence on the living arrangements of children of Romanian immigrants in Italy, comparing them with both natives in the host country and their non-migrant peers in Romania. Given that the living arrangements of immigrant children are shaped by the norms of the host society and the intergenerational transmission of cultural values, this dual comparison allows us to examine both the adaptation and socialization hypotheses.

We combine data from the 2021 ad-hoc module of the Italian Labour Force Survey with the 2021 Romanian Labour Force Survey, focusing on young adults aged 20-34 years. Using binomial logit models, we estimate the likelihood of experiencing four types of living arrangements: living with parents, living as a couple, living with children, or living alone. Preliminary results indicate that women are more likely than men to live as a couple or with children. Moreover, Romanian children of immigrants exhibit household behaviors more closely aligned with their peers in Romania than with the majority group in Italy.

Extended abstract (2-4 pages)

Introduction

Children of immigrants may experience varied patterns in their living arrangements, shaped by both the dominant norms of mainstream society and the intergenerational transmission of values and practices (Holland and De Valk, 2013). Scholars have developed different hypotheses to explain migrants' household behaviors, such as adaptation and socialization. Despite an increasing number of recent studies (Mencarini et al., 2017; Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2020), there remains a substantial gap in knowledge regarding transitions like achieving residential autonomy and forming families among young adult children of immigrants in Southern Europe (Liu et al., 2019). This is largely due to the relatively young age of the immediate descendants of immigrants, who have arrived in large numbers only over the past three decades, resulting in a lack of data (see, for example, Vitali and Arpino, 2015).

Italy presents a particularly interesting case for analyzing living arrangements. It is known as a "latest-late" transition to adulthood country, where young Italians live with their parents for longer periods and tend to form unions later than their peers in other European countries, coupled with very low fertility rates.

The main contribution of this paper is to provide empirical evidence on the living arrangements of children of Romanian immigrants in Italy, comparing them not only with natives in the host country but also with their non-migrant peers in Romania. Romanians are the largest ethnic group in Italy, representing 21% of the total foreign population. Since children of immigrants shape their living arrangements under the influence of both the prevailing norms of the host society and the intergenerational transmission of cultural values and practices (Gabrielli and Impicciatore, 2020), this dual comparison allows us to investigate the adaptation and socialization hypotheses.

We focused on young adults aged 20-34 years and on four types of living arrangements: living with parents, living as a couple, living with children, and living alone. By adopting an ex-post merging approach, we combined data from the 2021 ad-hoc module of the Italian Labour Force Survey (IT-LFS), which oversampled foreign populations from single-origin countries, with data from the 2021 Romanian Labour Force Survey (RO-LFS) to examine the household behaviors of young adults living in the country of origin.

Theoretical focus

The adaptation perspective suggests that immigrants' household behaviors resemble that of the natives as their exposure to the norms, values, and attitudes of the host society increases. The adaptation perspective suggests that living arrangements for immigrants' children and the population majority should gradually converge as the time of arrival increases (Kulu 2005; Kulu and Milewski 2007), even though this not necessarily imply a process of acculturation since it can result from adjustment strategies intended to cope with the circumstances in the new country (González-Ferrer et al. 2017).

In any case, the convergence in behavior can be hindered by the persistence of cultural traits acquired by parents in the native country and transmitted to their children through the socialization process, that are important in influencing the behaviors in living arrangements. This hypothesis assumes that the childhood environment exerts the greatest influence and being exposed to certain norms and values during childhood, transmitted from immigrant parents, may have long-lasting effects in shaping individual behaviors (Michaël and Tuma 1985). Migrants, and their children, would show household behaviors that are more similar to those observed in the country of origin than to those of the majority group in the country of destination (Baykara-Krumme and Milewski 2017). This idea is reinforced by the fact that cultural and ideational factors are portable from one country to another and can be transmitted to younger generations even outside the original

geographical context (Furtado, 2009). The existing heterogeneity by origin country is another way to identify the influence of cultural background and different migratory model on living arrangements. It is often considered as a proxy for cultural/religious heritage, norms and values which can be maintained after migration (Impicciatore 2015).

This study extends and updates previous analysis by Gabrielli and Impicciatore (2020), on immigrant/native differences in living arrangements in Europe using data from the ad-hoc module of the EU Labour Force Survey conducted in 2014 and taking into account three dimensions of migration, namely, migratory generation, area of origin, and area of destination. Results showed that, in South Europe, differences with the majority group are lower for children of immigrants born in the destination countries (G2) than they are for those who arrived later in the life course (G1.5). However, norms and values transmitted from immigrant parents have a role in shaping different patterns in living arrangements by origin areas among immigrants' children, net of composition effects and despite the limitation of considering only macro-areas of origin. For example, in Southern-Europe, the probability of being in an unmarried union is lower among youth adults originating from South East Asia, Other Europe and North Africa and Middle East.

Data and methods

By adopting an ex-post merging approach, we merge data coming two different sources of data: the Italian Labour Force Survey (IT-LFS) of 2021 which includes *ad-hoc* module on the "Labor market situation of immigrants and their immediate descendants" which oversampling of the foreign population by single country of origin; the 2021 Romania Labour Force Survey (RO-LFS). In particular, we restrict our analyses on individuals aged 20-34 at interview (Table 1).

Building on the information on the country of birth of both respondents and their parents, data allow comparisons of Romanian immigrants' children (here defined as born in Romania and arrived before 18 years of age, with both parents born in Romania) with the non-migrants in Italy (G3.00: individuals born and living in Italy with both non-immigrant parents) and the non-migrants in Romania (born and living in Romania with both non-immigrant parents). Unfortunately, we are unable to identify descendants born in Italy to two Romanian-born parents, as the questionnaire does not ask for the parents' place of birth in such cases.

Table 1 - Sample description (unweighted number of cases) by migration history and gender. Adults 20-34 years of age.

Migration history	Men	Women	Total
Non-migrants in Italy	6,459	6,160	12,619
Romanian descendants in Italy	116	139	255
Non-migrants in Romania	3,809	3,604	7,413
Total	10,384	9,903	20,287

Source: our elaborations on *ad-hoc* module IT-LFS 2021 and EU-LFS 2021.

Four living arrangements are considered, namely: a) with parents; b) in couple; c) with children; d) single living. We estimated the propensity to experience each of the four outcomes by applying binomial logit models separately by sex. Models also account for a set of potential confounding factors: age at interview (+ age squared); higher educational level achieved (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, tertiary); educational enrollment (currently studying at the time of the interview or not); occupational status at the time of the interview (employed, unemployed or inactive); the parents' highest level of education (primary or lower secondary, upper secondary, and tertiary).

Preliminary findings

Table 2 shows that the highest percentage of young adults living with their parents is among non-migrants in Italy (66.1%). Meanwhile, Romanian descendants in Italy have significant proportions of individuals living as a couple (41.2%) and with children (33.7%).

Table 2 - Percentage of people in different form of living arrangements by migration history. Adults 20-34 years of age.

Migration history	with parents	in couple	with children	single living
Non-migrants in Italy	66.1	22.6	15.5	9.8
Romanian descendants in Italy	48.6	41.2	33.7	6.7
Non-migrants in Romania	50.8	36.5	19.9	11.2

Source: our elaborations on *ad-hoc* module IT-LFS 2021 and EU-LFS 2021.

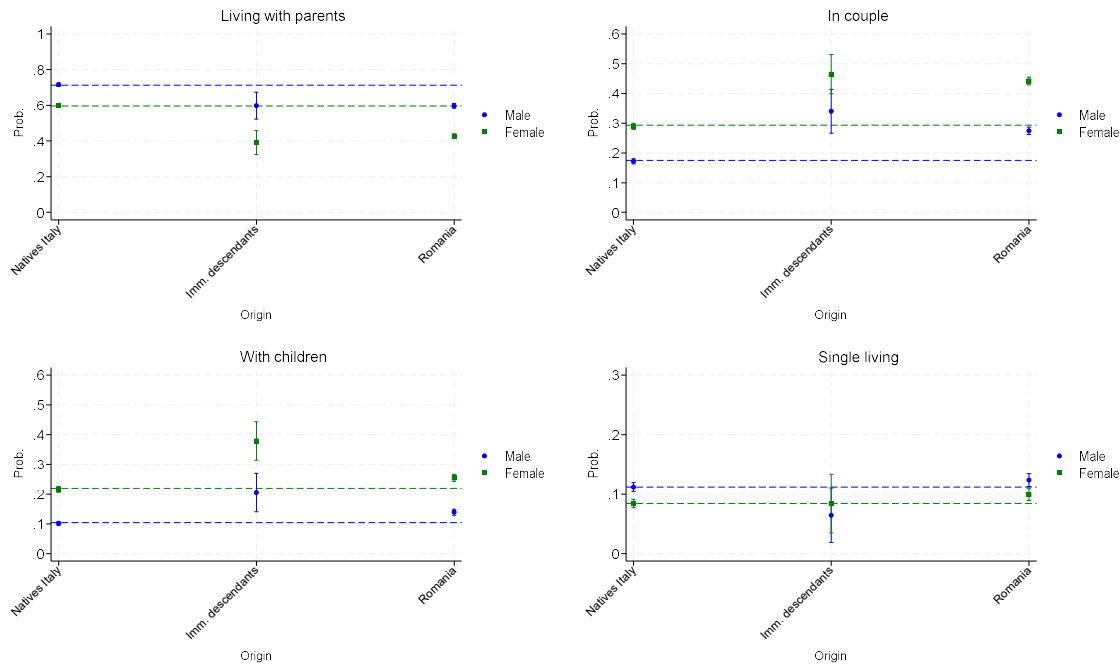
Multivariate regression models tend to confirm these differences (Figure 1). The predicted probability of living with parents for Romanian children of immigrants is much closer to that of non-migrant Romanians than to non-migrant Italians. A similar pattern is observed when examining those who live as a couple (with or without children), applicable to both men and women.

Regarding those living with at least one child, Romanian children of immigrants have a higher probability compared to both the third generation of Italians and those who continue to live in Romania, although the gap with the latter group is smaller. Specifically, male children of immigrants show no significant difference from their non-migrant peers in Romania (the confidence interval [CI] for male immigrant descendants is 0.14-0.27, while for men in Romania, it is 0.13-0.15, indicating an overlap). In contrast, the difference is highly significant for their female counterparts.

No significant differences were found among the three observed groups regarding the probability of living alone.

In conclusion, the results indicate that the living arrangement patterns of Romanian children of immigrants, who arrived in Italy as minors, are much more similar to those observed in Romania than to those of their Italian peers. These findings support the socialization hypothesis.

Figure 1 – Predicted probabilities of living a) with parents; b) in couple; c) with children; d) single living by migration history and sex. Adults 20-34 years of age. Binomial logit model. Y line: G3.00; CI 95%



Source: our elaborations on *ad-hoc* module IT-LFS 2021 and EU-LFS 2021.

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