PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE FAMILY IN ITALY

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Abstract
Italy is part of Mediterranean Model of Welfare as defined by Ferrera in 1996. Since the '80s a significant sociological and political science literature has shown comparative abnormalities in the Italian welfare as part of the more general weaknesses of the political, economic and social system. Over the past three decades, the intensity and the type of social needs were deeply modified in Italy as a consequence of demographic, social and economic changes. The aim of our paper is to understand how and if social policies in the last twenty years have taken into account the evolution of men and women's role in society, both in the private and in the public sphere and if intergenerational redistribution has evolved in a more egalitarian way compared to the past. In order to answer to our research question we will scrutinize the evolution over time, gender and generations of Italian social policies.

Introduction
Almost 20 years ago Ferrera (1996) published his seminal paper on the “Southern Model” of welfare in social Europe, identifying four main characteristics of the welfare states of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. Since then the Southern or Mediterranean Model has assumed his own place in the literature among the other three already existing Welfare Models: the social-democratic (or Scandinavian or Nordic), the liberal (or Anglo-Saxon) and the Continental. The main traits that allow to define a Southern European Welfare model according to Ferrera are (1996): 1) an income maintenance system characterized by high fragmentation, dualism and corporatism; 2) the establishment of an universalistic National Health Service; 3) a low penetration of the State in the welfare sphere and a mix of public and non-public actors in this domain; 4) the persistence of clientelism and the selective distribution of cash benefits based on “patronage machines”. The main features of this model are the strong attention toward old-age pensions at the expense of
unemployment, sick benefits and family allowances measures (Andreotti and Sabatinelli, 2004). In order to compensate such imbalances, Southern European Welfare models are characterized by the large presence and the strong role of the family acting as “social clearinghouse” (Ferrera, 1996, 21). The system is largely inspired to a male breadwinner family/kinship solidarity model where the gender division of labour is asymmetrical and women should provide assistance and care that are essential for the welfare of the kinship (Naldini, 2003). In this context, women participation to the labour market is generally low: as they are traditionally involved in the care of the children and the older they struggled to conciliate work and family life; often working women gave up their job after the birth of the first child (Luis Moreno & Pau Marí-Klose, 2013). Among the main factors that influenced such an evolution of the Southern European Welfare models, several scholars have stressed the importance of culture and social norms prevalent in Catholic societies in particular the gender division of labour and gender roles within the family and the strong family values (Leon and Pavolini, 2014; Saraceno, 1998; Pfau-Effinger 1998). Intergenerational solidarity expressed through late emancipation from parental home, frequent co-residence or spatial proximity with parents after marriage, have been among of the main distinctive traits of the Southern European family since several centuries (Luis Moreno & Pau Marí-Klose, 2013). Intergenerational solidarity is used to protect the young member of the families from economic crisis and unemployment, in return, when parents reach old age, they can count on strong help from their children.

Almost twenty years after the conceptualization of the Southern Model of Welfare, the debate is still there: furthermore it has been renewed and reinvigorated as a direct consequence of the economic turmoil that affected Europe and in particular Southern European countries since 2008. Nevertheless, other factors of change, together with the economic turmoil, should be taken into account in order to analyze the evolution of the Mediterranean Model of Welfare since its first definition by Ferrera in 1996. These factors are largely linked to the evolution of the demographic, socio-economic and political/institutional situation in Europe during the last two decades. First of all, from the demographic point of view, the main consequences of the so called demographic transition, i.e. low fertility and population ageing have dramatically evolved since the beginning of the Nineties and they constitute major challenges for the modern welfare system and for the relation between gender and generations. Second, the socio-economic arena has also witnessed major changes during the last two decades: female employment rate has raised and dual-earner families are now widespread in the Mediterranean, the employment in the services sectors have also dramatically increased and together with informal jobs, new vulnerabilities and new social risks are among the main characteristics of the globalized world economy. Finally, from the political and
institutional side, the Southern Mediterranean countries have been constantly under pressure as they entered the process of the European and economic and monetary Union (EMU) and they had to respect rules imposed by the European Union (EU) treaties.

Because of such changes, the Southern Model could be mined and could be witnessing a new configuration. Evidences from previous studies have stressed the capacity to evolve from the model of some countries and the persistence to more traditional behaviours of other countries (Leon and Pavolini, 2014; Naldini and Jurado 2013; Naldini and Saraceno, 2008). In such perspective, Italy seems to be witnessing strong resistances to renew its welfare configuration therefore the changes occurred till now are mainly driven by EU reforms. In the next sections we will scrutinize the evolution over time, gender and generations of social policies in Italy in order to find out how if the Italian social policies take into account the above mentioned demographic, social and economic changes. Second, we will study the role of economic and institutional factors in the development of policies. Our aim is to understand how and if social policies in Italy in the last twenty years have taken into account the evolution of men and women's role in society, both in the private and in the public sphere and if intergenerational redistribution has evolved in a more egalitarian way compared to the past. Our paper is organized as follow: the first section will deal with major demographic changes since the 1960. The second section is dedicated to the analysis of the Italian Welfare model taking an economic history perspective. The third section will scrutinize weather the Italian Welfare model has changed over the years in order to take into account of the main social, demographic and economic changes occurred in the last twenty years and their effect of gender and intergenerational equity.

1. Main demographic changes in Italy

Italy has witnessed deep economic and political transformations during the last 60 years. At the end of World War II, the Italian economy was mainly based on agriculture; nowadays it has become one of the wealthiest post-industrial economies in the world panorama; nonetheless the current financial crises has, like in many other European countries, slowed down the economic performance and generated many problems such as economic downturn and unemployment. The Italian population has also increased substantially during the same period of time. During the last decades, Italy, like Western European countries, has been involved in the first and second demographic transition (Chesnais, 1986; van de Kaa, 1987). The major consequences of the demographic transitions are population increase, due to a non-simultaneous decrease of mortality and fertility (in the first transition), and the process of deep changes in the marriage and family formation patterns that have
followed the legalization of divorce in several European countries (in the so called “second demographic transition”). Nowadays, couples decide to marry later or eventually to forego marriage. As a consequence, in countries like Italy, where birth outside marriage is still low compared to other European countries, fertility has fallen to very low levels (Salvini, 2011).

The decreasing trends of general and infant mortality started after the WWII, have steadily led to high levels of life expectancy at birth. Italy has become, over the last 60 years, one of the countries with highest life expectancy at birth. In the first period after WWII, the number of marriages and the birth rate increased rapidly in Italy. At the beginning of the 1950’s the total fertility rate (TFR) was 2.5 children per woman, and it increased during the so-called “baby boom” period of the 1960s. It reached its maximum in 1967, when a rate of 2.7 children per woman was recorded (Baldi and Cagiano, 2005). Since then, the TFR has started to decrease: it fell to 1.4 in 1990, 1.24 in 2000 and 1.4 in 2013 (ISTAT, 2015). Marriage was quite stable until the 1970’s when the marriage rate started to decline. This trend continues today. At the same time, the divorce rate has increased (divorce became legal in 1970), but it remains quite low compared to other European countries.

New patterns of family formation have emerged in Italy during the last decades: single and two components families have increased from the end of the Eighties till today and they represent nowadays more than half of the families in Italy. Families with 3, 4 and in particular with 5 and more members are decreased constantly over the same period of time (figure 1). This new configuration of the family is the results of a series of factors: first of all population ageing. More than half of the families composed of only one member are women over 60 years old. The percent of not married cohabiting couples (7%) and recomposed households (7%) is still low in Italy, denoting a preference for more traditional family formation (marriage). The traditional late departure of youth from the family is still today one of the main characteristic of the Italian family.

Over the observed period the Italian population increased from about 47 millions of inhabitants in 1951 to about 60 million in 2011. Italy is nowadays the fourth largest European country in terms of number of inhabitants after Germany, France and UK (Salvini, 2011).

Figure 1 Households by number of components in Italy 1988-2013
2. An economic-history perspective: the "Italian" welfare model in literature

2.1 The distortions or the peculiarities of the Italian model

Since the '80s a significant sociological and political science literature has shown comparative abnormalities in the Italian welfare as part of the more general weaknesses of the political, economic and social system (Ascoli, 1984; Ferrera, 1984; Ranci, 2004). Some historical literature has begun to reconstruct in detail the development paths of various social policies (Giorgi, 2004; Minesso, 2007; Silei, 2004) although different aspects and the evolutionary dynamics of our welfare state still remains to be explored.

Although this research is focused on the Italian case, it will take into account of the historical and comparative framework. The peculiarity of the Italian welfare system lies in the internal composition of spending. The figure below shows that in the period 2000-08 most part of the social spending in Italy was absorbed by the functions "old age" (59.1% of the total against a European average of 43.7%), in particular by the pension system.

Figure 5-Social spending by sector, as % of total social spending, average 2000-08
The functions "family", "unemployment" and "housing to social exclusion" appear markedly undersized, respectively 4.2%, 1.8% and 0.3% in contrast to European values of 7.8%, 5%, 7% and 3.3%. No other country (even the other Mediterranean countries) registered a similar distortion.

Italy also has a second distortion: distributional. Within the various functions of spending, including pensions, there is a clear protection gap (access to benefits and their generosity) among different occupational categories. Even if all of the continental welfare states share a certain degree of segmentation and juxtaposition between included and excluded, Italy has exceptional character within the Bismarckian systems and the southern European systems. In historical perspective between 1980 and 1990 Italy reached its peak in terms of double distortion distribution of its welfare (in terms of old age and unemployment). In the area of pension the "strong" protection reached values higher than the EU average while the "average" and "weak" protection were lower. In the area of unemployment, the “strong” protection (layoffs or mobility) is only granted in Italy, while the average protection is lower than the average EU value. Comparative research showed that the functional polarization on the spending had several peaks during the fifteen years from 1985 to 2000. To find the roots of the double distortion is necessary to go back in time and identify the historical period prior to 1985 when this distortion began to appear. The internal imbalance in social spending in Italy exploded in the seventies of the twentieth century but the engine of the distortion was activated in the previous decade. While the in mid-fifties the expenditure pattern still appeared relatively balanced, at the end of the next decade the imbalance was evident and higher of that of
continental countries.

Which components of the expenditure were responsible for this imbalance? Between 1955 and 1980, in Italy it was recorded a continued and pronounced decline in household spending and a substantial stability of unemployment benefits within the overall spending, against an inexorable rise in pension expenditure. The latter was due to the constant improvement of the retirement pension of the so-called "guaranteed"; minimum pensions remained stable while the relative value of unemployment benefits and family allowances decreased significantly between 1965 and 1980 (Ferrera, 1984).

Building on these considerations we can say that the distortion of the Italian welfare model began in the fifties to accelerate gradually in the next two decades. This process was the result of choices made during the period of "golden age", that has unbalanced the age orientation of the Italian welfare and also its distributive orientation toward pensions and former workers to the detriment of all risks associated with its stages of life before the retirement, i.e. the policies in support of families, children and the unemployed.

The birth of the Italian welfare suffered also of other unbalances that largely affected its evolution since the end of WWII: the development of these characteristics are well documented in literature (Ferrera, 1996; Saraceno, 1998; Naldini, 2003) and go beyond the scope of our research. Therefore we will only proceed to briefly recall them. The Italian welfare model has traditionally left large responsibilities to the family, therefore social policies, and in particular those policies addressed to the family were not developed for long time. During the Fascism (1922-1945) were implemented for the first time in the Italian history, explicit social policies addressed to families and children with the aim to sustain the birth rate and the family. Even if the effects of these policies were limited (Saraceno, 1998), the impact and the echoes of such measures marked the post WWII governments to the point that measures taken afterward were timid “perhaps a social reaction against the pre-war fascist pre-occupation with the idea of increasing the number of people” (Ferrari, 1975, 426). As a consequence, in 1975, 30 years after the end of the war, Ferrari stressed that while the Italian population had witnessed deep cultural, social and economic changes in the fifties and the sixties and in the first half of the seventies, social policies, in particular those directly related to marriage and fertility, remained intact from the pre-was period. The post-war period was also characterized by strong political division between Catholic and secular parties (in particular the Left) on the role of the family, on the field of sexuality and equal opportunities between men and women (Naldini and Saraceno, 2008; Saraceno, 1998). Paradoxically even if the importance of state policies to help family formation was stressed in the new Constitution of 1948 (art. 31), no specific
measures were taken for long time as a result of the above mentioned political divisions. A
constant lack of consensus on priorities and the above mentioned political and ideological
divisiveness on the issues concerning the family are going to be among the peculiar characteristics
of the Italian Welfare model and they will represent important source of resistance in addressing the
structural reforms that we are going to discuss in the following sections (Naldini and Saraceno,
2008).

2.2 Old and new challenges
Over the past three decades, the intensity and the type of social needs have deeply changed in all
European countries. As already stressed in the first section of this paper the most disruptive change
was undoubtedly population aging that has hit Italy with a particular intensity. In the wake of lower
fertility rates and a gradual increase in life expectancy, the proportion of older people is growing: in
1965 people over 65 accounted for 9.9% of the Italian population; in 2010, they are about 20.2%
(EU average 17.4%) with a large proportion of octogenarians (5.8%). An aging population has
created not only a higher demand for services (pensions, to mention only the most important) and
traditional services, but also new types of needs, both on the side of the old people (for instance
those who are dependent) and on the side of those family members (mostly women) who perform
care.
A second change was due to the deep transformation of modes of production and the transition to a
new post-industrial order. Technological innovation, the service sector, economic integration and
globalization have resulted in striking upheavals in the labor markets of Europe. Fordist
employment (i.e. stable and safe jobs, with permanent positions) recorded a steady decline not fully
compensated by the increase in atypical employment. Italy has recorded a sharp rise in
unemployment and inactivity also of those who are "discouraged": these factors have become
worrying structural especially in the Southern regions and among some categories such as young
people, women and the over 50. The transformations of the labor market and income distribution
have raised new questions related to the need to define from one side adequate protection sets to the
new forms of flexible employment and on the other the need to support the inclusion and increase
the employability of workers, especially those who are most vulnerable.
From the perspective of flexicurity (the so called “Job Act” has been recently approved by the
Italian Government) and more generally of the social investment state (Ferrera, 2010) in several
European countries and now also in Italy with the approval and the implementing a series of new
measures, social policies are granted on a promotional basis rather than on a compensative one and
their range has spread throughout the entire cycle of life, which starts in early childhood, when soft
skills and human capital are built. For example, while other European countries have found a balance between flexibility and social security because the political programs entered in the agenda of the ministries, with the aim of becoming reality – e.g. the fiscal policy for the family in Sweden, reforms care services in the UK, and the welfare mix for the working men and women France - in Italy, because of a greater rigidity of the labor market and the immobility in the welfare state, the reforms are struggling to proceed in harmony because there has been no adjustment of the latter to support the former. The lack of coordination between these two policy areas prevents the achievement of a balance between flexibility and security (OECD Jobs Study, 2004; Della Sala, 2002, Ferrera, 2006).

A third aspect of change is to find in the family and gender relations. While in industrial societies post-war traditional families with a single male income earner (male breadwinner families) and a housewife were the majority, the new post-industrial era is characterized by a greater variety of typologies of families: families with two income earners, single parent, de facto unions and so on (Saraceno, 2008). We are witnessing new social relations that are characterized by much more insecurity than in the past in European societies, with important consequences in terms of economic vulnerability and inclusion. As already stressed in the first section of this paper, Italy is less touched by these dynamics because they are prevented by the "syndrome of family values" but at the price of putting the family to increasing economic and social stress that is more and more difficult to sustain.

Another ongoing trend since the eighties is the increase of female participation to the labor market in large part related to the expansion of services. If this trend has encouraged the expansion of the dual-income households, economically more secure, it has also created new tensions and often an overload of functions within the household, with serious repercussions on women and in particular on working mothers (Del Boca and Rosina, 2009). As a consequence, in the social protection systems has emerged a new need for collective support to the family and for measures able to mitigate the imbalances between work and private life, schemes and programs that are both child friendly and mother-friendly (Esping Andresen, 2001). In the absence of similar policies, not only working women are subjected to heavy penalties in terms of time, effort, career, salaries and so on, but they are often forced to not even enter the labor market: in Italy the employment rates for women have increased much more slowly than in other countries despite the preferences stressed by Italian women (Ferrera, 2008).

We have already said that, as in other Southern European countries, the Italian family has played a role of shock absorber of functional and distributive imbalances, as a clearing house between
income and opportunities of secured and unsecured, elderly and young men and women who met the increasing limits of social efficiency. Italian families have secured subsistence and assistance to its members and they are able to meet the needs of care not covered by the public system. However they could do that only locally: people with special needs were able to count on the protection of their only family leaving in proximity. Under the burden of pressure on them caused by the double distortion of the Italian welfare (and labor market), families have tended to react according local strategies of satisfaction that are natural to them. Let’s think to the frantic search for any possible attachment to the sector of guaranteed employment for a least one of its members, or to the exploitation of every possible niche of the underground economy that has reached in Italy an incidence of 20% of GDP.

On the wake of these major social and economic changes the Italian welfare had to face important challenges. In the next section we are going to analyze how the Italian Governments took into account of the new configuration of the society through the modification of welfare model and social policies.

3. Did Italian policy makers take into account the socio-economic transformations? Was the Italian Welfare model recalibrated?

During the Eighties, the political agenda started to reorient its policies toward the containment of the dynamics of public spending and the introduction of structural reforms to curb pensions, on the one hand, and to change the social security benefits on the other. Many Italian regions, aware of the shortcomings of the system, began to strengthen it through programs to support families by focusing not only on transfers but also on services (Madama 2010). The real breakthrough, however, came in the nineties. Since 1992 a phase of reforms started in all areas of social spending: subtractive in the area of pensions and additive in the area of unemployment and family assistance. The major decisions in terms of policy measures taken between 1990 and 2012 are shown in Table 1. It should be emphasized that the process of European convergence and the establishment of a starting date (1998) for European Monetary Union (EMU) acted as a robust external constraint for the policy’ choices of Italian governments in the nineties, stimulating institutional change; the entry into the euro zone has undoubtedly represented a historic turning point for the Italian economic and social model, at the point that we can argue that the European Union in the nineties has saved not only the welfare system but the entire country.

However, there were also other internal push factors that pushed the Governments to take new social policies measures: in the previous sections we have already stressed the new socio-demographic and economic factors that emerged since the mid-Seventies in Italy. We will briefly
remind here some of these factors: first of all the decline of fertility: as showed in the first section of this paper, total fertility rate reached its minimum values in the mid-Nineties. At that time Italy finally realized to be a low fertility country (Naldini and Saraceno, 1998). Concerns about low fertility were not anymore restricted to the circle of the demographers but came out on the political discourses, on the mass media, on the public opinion. The lack of Work/family reconciliation measures and the consequently low participation rate to the labour market together with the youth leaving later than any other European countries the parental household and the consequently increase of the age at the first union and at the first child, are considered among the main determinants of low fertility. Unfortunately only few measures to contrast such phenomena were taken despite the above mentioned increased awareness of the consequences of low fertility. Furthermore Naldini and Saraceno (2008) argue that the political debate and the measures taken at that time were lacking both gender and intergenerational equity dimensions. In fact the reforms that addressed labour market’s flexibility such as the Treu Act of 1997 and the Biagi Act of 2003 were specifically addressed to working women: the work/family reconciliation debate concerns only women and it does not affect the traditional, gender unbalanced, division of labour and family responsibilities. Men become protagonist of the fertility debate only because their late entry into the labour market compared to other European countries, can delay their family formation and the birth of the first child.

3.1 Major reforms: family and childcare policies and pensions

As stressed by Léon and Pavolini (2014), during the Nineties and the 2000’s four major policy reforms concerning family and children were implemented. The first one was the law 285 of 1997 on children’s welfare: the law established the National Fund for Children and Adolescents. The goal is the implementation of measures at national, regional and local level to facilitate the promotion of the rights, quality of life, development, individual achievement and socialization of children and adolescents. Among other interventions the law promoted care services, but limited financial resources were allocated, therefore although favoring the development of a variety of initiatives, the law was not able to provide structural changes to care needs (Da Roit & Sabatinelli 2013). In 1998 was established a special family allowance for low income families with at least three minors children. In 2000 was established a new law on parental leave (Law 53/2000): the law introduced significant innovations. The leave is from now on flexible in time: as the law gave the possibility to use it within the first 8 years after the childbirth. Parental leave is conceived as an individual right and not a family right as it was in the past when working fathers were entitled to parental leave in substitution of mothers: therefore each parent has the right to take it individually up to six months.
for a maximum length of 10 months in the couple. It was established a sort of quota for the father of one month: in addition if the father takes at least 3 months it could reach the maximum of 11 months for the couple. The new law on parental leave is considered as one on the major policy shifts during the last 15 years toward gender equality: rights and responsibilities on children should be distributed between men and women. Nevertheless even if the law has changed toward a more egalitarian gender division of children care responsibilities, fathers and mothers behaviors are much more difficult to change. According to the data of the Italian Labour Force Survey of 2011 (Istat) only 6.9% of working fathers having a child under 8 years old versus 45.3% of working mothers took up at list once parental leave.

The most important and promising reform approved at the beginning of the years 2000’s was the Framework law 328 of 2000. The Framework law was particularly important because Italy lacked such kind of legislation in the fields of social assistance and social services. The law has been judged has quite good in terms of principles and general aims because it finally stated the “idea of national ‘basic levels of social intervention’ (LEAs) to be guaranteed everywhere in different policy areas and for several types of intervention” (Léon and Pavolini, 2014, 355). In addition the law defined the responsibilities of the different level of the government: state, regions and municipalities and set uniform basic standards and coverage levels to be achieved across the country (Naldini and Saraceno, 2008, 744). However, no enough resources were allocated to implement the reform, in addition, in 2001 was approved a Constitutional reform that transferred almost entirely the responsibility on social services and assistance to Regions and local authorities, as a consequence the task of the state in these fields were largely limited.

During the 2000s the reforms on social and family policies were much less relevant than in the previous decade: the Berlusconi government (2001-2006) introduced two new policies related to children under 3 years old. The law 53 of 2003 gave the possibility to children aged two years and a half to enter kindergarten (previous legislation stated that the entry age was 3 years old). The second intervention (inserted in the National Budget Planning Law of 2003) was the introduction of the possibility to fund firm’s crèches and similar childcare activities (Léon and Pavolini, 2014). The reforms adopted by the centre-left government (2006-2008) tried to invest in more traditional childcare facilities such as Crèches: a National Extraordinary Crèches Plan was adopted in order to improve the coverage of children under three years old by 4% (Sabatinelli, 2010).

To conclude our analysis of social and family policies reforms in Italy we can argue that till there is the need of large structural reforms (Naldini and Saraceno, 2008): the lack of reforms can be ascribed to several factors and obstacles resulting from socio-cultural, economic and political
factors. Even though the public opinion and the governments have realized the need of such reforms because of major social and demographic changes occurred since the mid-Seventies, there is still a lack of changes in attitudes and behavior towards women and motherhood in the Italian society. From the economic point of view financial constraints such as the public deficit prevented Italy to implement several structural reforms, in addition the centrality of pension system that we are going to discuss below hindered reforms in other sectors of the public expenditure, lastly the actual economic crisis is also another preventing factor (Léon and Pavolini, 2014).

As largely stressed in the previous sections another major challenge that Italian society is facing since the Nineties is population ageing. Contrary to the family and children care field, where few reforms were implemented, in the field of old age, major reforms have been implemented in Italy in the last twenty-five years (see table 1) in particular on pensions. The two major reforms of the Nineties are the Amato reform of 1992 and Dini reform of 1995: they changed the principle to calculate pension benefits. Till 1995 pension benefits were calculated on the basis of the years of contributions and last wage earned (non-contributive system); while from 1995 on pension’ benefits are based on a combination of years of contributions and the actual amount of contributions paid (contributive system). These reforms were slowly implemented in order to affect directly only the younger workers. Among other changes the Fornero’s reform adopted in 2011 accelerated the reforms legislated in the 1990s- whose implementation had been slow for political reasons- raised the retirement age and linked it to longevity, it moved towards equalising retirement ages for men and women, and it improving the mechanism for adjustments in the future, linking future benefits with gross national product, it finally tried to eliminate early retirement rights (the so-called ‘seniority pensions’). From the gender and intergenerational perspective, pension’ reforms can be considered as positive because their aim was to address intergenerational redistribution and to equalize the treatment of men and women within the social security system.

Table 1 Main legislation adopted in the Italian welfare (1990-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Pensions</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Family/Assistance</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1998: minimum insertion income (experimental), third child allowances, maternity care allowances</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Reform</td>
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<td>Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Ciampi reform</td>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>Increase of the mobility allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Dini reform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Maroni/Tremonti reform</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Increase of the mobility allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Damiano reform</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Increase of the mobility allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Sacconi reform</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Increase of the mobility allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Fornero reform</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Redundancy Fund (CIG) in derogation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Fornero reform</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Fornero reform</td>
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Source: Author’s elaboration

3.2 Economic consequences of the reforms

The nineties were also a turning point on the amount of public expenditure allocated to each sector (see figure 3): looking at the internal composition of expenditure, it can be noted that the incidence of pensions has decreased only by 4 percentage points between 1995 and 2009, while the expenditures for the family and children has increased by only one point and a half, and the expenditure for social safety nets has remained almost unchanged.

Figure 3 Social expenditure by function (as a % of total social spending), Italy and EU-15, 1995-2009
The distortion of the Italian welfare remains clear because the weight of old age expenditure even when compared to other EU 15 (euro zone countries) in relation to GDP, unfortunately, remains high (figure 4); in addition, other social indicators (heath, family and children, social exclusion, unemployment) have increased their weight within the GDP, although in lower percentages compared to old age.

Source: Author’s elaboration on Eurostat online database
This is symptomatic of an economic model whose institutions need a strong shift to give hope to younger generations. The crisis that began in 2008, however, has had a profound effect on the levels of growth and wealth of the euro area countries with particular reference to Italy; this had an impact on its GDP: it decreased steadily in recent years; the decrease of Italian GDP should be considered while assessing the trend of social expenditure in proportion of GDP. In addition, the 2008 crisis has dealt a severe blow to the economy and to the Italian society, highlighting once again the persistent structural weaknesses of its welfare model. As in 1995, the financial emergency caused heavy political turbulence and the formation of a new government of technocrats led by Mario Monti. At the end of 2011 it was launched a new pension reform (the above mentioned Fornero’s reform) in order correct the anomalies distribution still existing and further contained the dynamics of spending for the coming decades. In summer 2012 was approved an ambitious reform of the labor market that has changed the institutional architecture of the system of social safety net: as in the past the main reason to address these reforms in terms of the sustainability of the Italian model was the European Union.

**Preliminary conclusion**

Framing Italy in the Southern European model of welfare, this paper has tried to explain the main
peculiarities of the Italian model by taking a socio-economic perspective. We have showed that the Italian model is characterized by a double distortion. First a distortion in the internal composition of spending largely absorbed by the old age function, in particular by the pension system at the expense of the other functions. Second a distributional distortion: within the various functions of spending, including pensions, there is a clear protection gap (access to benefits and their generosity) among different occupational categories. Demographic change together with socio-economic transformations posed new challenges to the above described Italian model. Lowest-low fertility, population aging, the deep transformation of modes of production and the transition to a new post-industrial order and as a consequence a sharp rise in unemployment and inactivity, changes in family formation and gender relations, the increase of female participation to the labor market are among the most important factors that urged the Italian governments to reform the welfare system. As a consequence during the Eighties, the political agenda started to reorient its policies toward the containment of the dynamics of public spending and the introduction of structural reforms to curb pensions, on the one hand, and to change the social security benefits on the other. It should be emphasized that the process of European convergence and the establishment of a starting date (1998) for European Monetary Union acted as a robust external constraint for the policy’ choices of Italian governments in the nineties, stimulating institutional change. We have discussed the most important reforms in the family and childcare field and in the pension system, their effect on the gender and intergenerational equity and on public expenditures. We have argued that although in the last twenty-five years, important new legislations have been introduced in the field social and family policies that included new responsibilities for fathers and relevant measures for gender equity, there is still the need of large structural reforms (Naldini and Saraceno, 2008): the lack of reforms can be ascribed to several factors: few changes in attitudes and behavior towards women and motherhood in the Italian society, financial constraints such as the public deficit and lastly the actual economic crisis (Léon and Pavolini, 2014). On the contrary, from the gender and intergenerational perspective and from public expenditure perspectives the numerous pension’ reforms introduced since 1992 are positive, because their aim was to address intergenerational redistribution and to equalize the treatment of men and women within the social security system and to cut public expenditure. However, as in the Nineties, these reforms were implemented under the financial constraints imposed to Italy by the European Union and they are slowed by the sharp decrease of the Italian economic since the beginning of the economic downturn of 2008. As a consequence public expenditure is still largely unbalanced toward old age.
Further research

These preliminary results need to be test through a multivariate statistical analysis. The analysis will be performed using macro data on the trends of family and old age social benefits from the Sixties till nowadays together with the trends of main economic and economic variables in the same time frame. Data stems from several sources: the OECD Family and Social Expenditures database, the Social protection systems – MISSOC Eurostat database, the Comparative Family Policy Database and the Population and Policy Database of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and from the Italian National Statistical Institute (ISTAT):
References


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