

Finding Italy's lost babies - Cumulative study on policy to shift low birth rates in Italy

Minerva University

SS146 - Practice of Governance

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December 20, 2024

Word count: 1890 (exclluding tables and figures)

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Introduction

Italy is dying.

Or so the statistics say, with Italy recording only 379,000 births in 2023 in a population of 58 million (roughly six newborns per thousand residents or ~0.64% of the population), making this the 16th consecutive annual decline and the lowest number since Italian unification in 1861 (Reuters, 2024; Orlandi, 2024; Rossi, 2024). Italy's fertility rate is now 1.2 per woman, significantly below the 2.1 replacement rate (Migliaccio & Bloomberg, 2024). This poses a comprehensive governance problem that jeopardizes the country's economic sustainability, social security systems, and long-term population stability, given that a declining population challenges Italy with slower growth, labor shortages, and rising dependency, urging increased birth rates, immigration, or acceptance of decline (Jones, 2022; Basso, 2024).

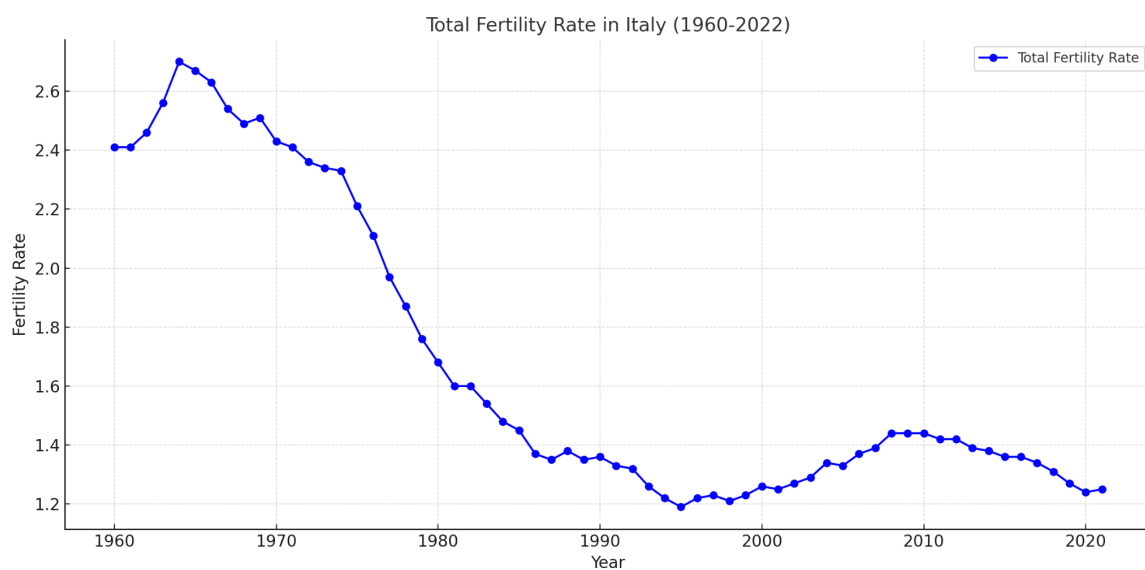


Figure 1. Total Fertility Rate in Italy from 1960 until 2022 (OECD, 2023).

Government policies are not working. This paper explores the challenge of low birth rates, understands the current government's strategy, and compares it with countries in a similar situation through state capacity, social inclusion, and rational choice theory.

Current State — Evaluating Current and Past Policies

1

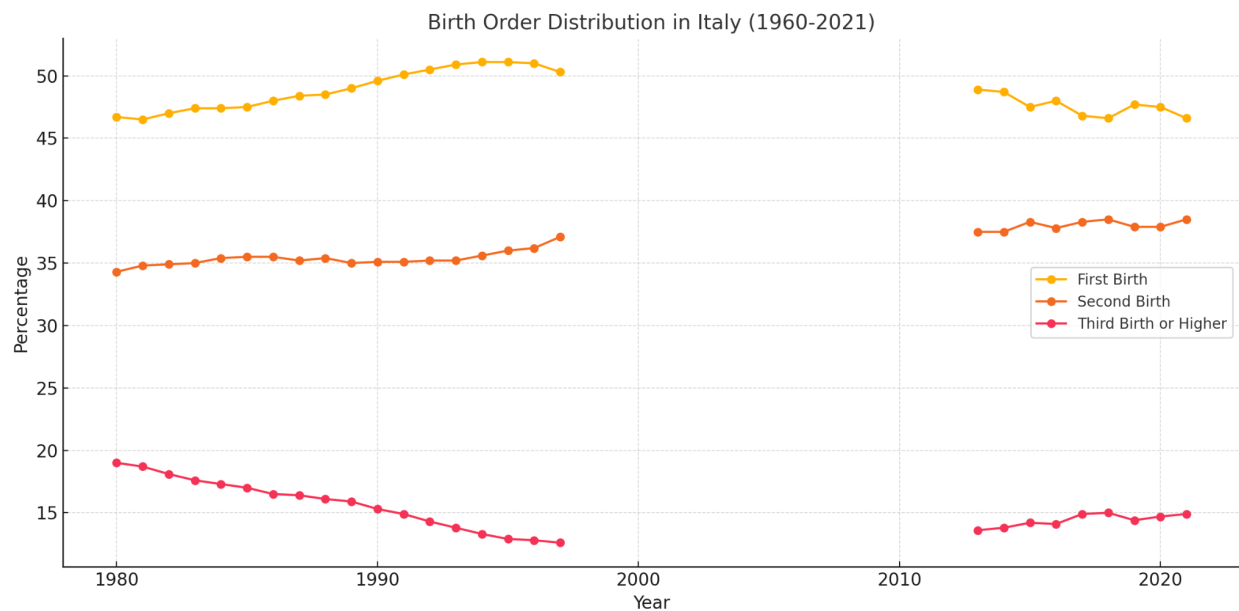


Figure 2. Birth order distribution in Italy from 1960-2021 (OECD, 2023).

The Italian government has implemented several policies to counter declining birth rates, including the "Baby Bonus," which provides financial incentives to families for each newborn child, the expansion of parental leave policies offering extended maternity and paternity, and the provision of tax benefits and deductions for families with children. Studies have shown that the "Baby Bonus" had a limited impact on increasing fertility rates, primarily affecting poorer Italian women with at least two children (Loghi et al., 2008). Expanding parental leave policies has faced

¹ #SS146-Evaluation

challenges related to workplace flexibility and economic constraints, limiting their overall effectiveness (Thomas et al., 2022). Additionally, while tax benefits offer some financial support, they have not addressed broader economic concerns that discourage family expansion (Dalla-Zuanna & McDonald, 2023).

Although birth rates have been declining, the pace has changed over the years, as shown in Figure 1; the birth rate increased slightly in the 2000s to finally started decreasing again in the 2010s. The main reason for this change was the gradual impact of the the 1992-1995 Italian pension reforms that switched from wage-based to contribution-based benefits, aiming for fairness but disadvantaging women and young workers with irregular employment, and Law no. 53/2000 that tried to promote gender equality with limited success (Naldini & Saraceno, 2008). Giovanna Giancesini (2013) contributes to the explanation by including cultural elements in her analysis, such as traditional familism ideology (favoring male breadwinners), budget constraints, and north-south regional divides that created tensions between funding job development versus social protection while failing to address key issues like poverty, housing, and immigrant integration. Additionally, the United Nations (2015) claims that Italy's family policy system is characterized by generous maternity leave (21 weeks at 80% pay) but lacks coherent support overall, with limited child allowances, inadequate public childcare for children under 3, low investment in family benefits (1.58% of GDP versus OECD's 2.61%), and a welfare system that prioritizes pension transfers over family services, hindered by public debt and political disagreements between Catholic and non-Catholic visions.

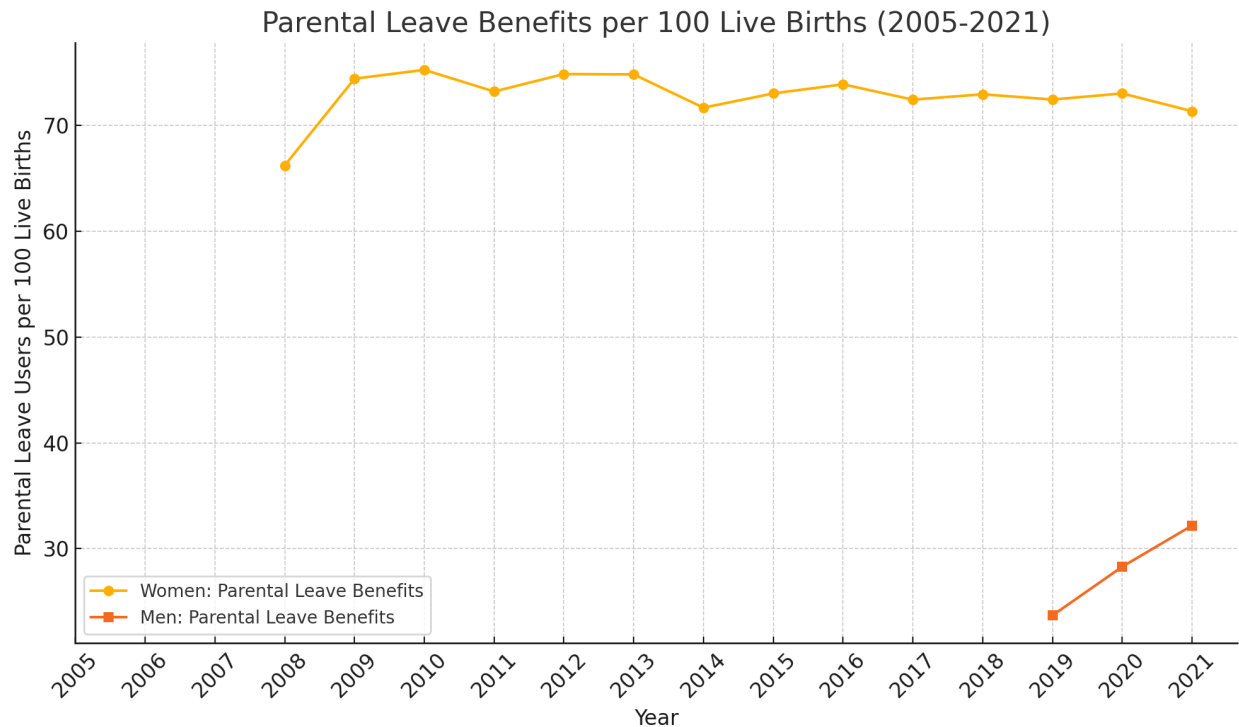


Figure 3. How many parents (separated by gender) use public parental leave benefits per 100 births, showing the uptake rate of available leave policies in a given year. Clearly Italian fathers have only been taking parental leave since 2019 albeit at an increased rate. Mothers had it overall stable over the years with some signs of a decreasing rate (OECD, n.d.).

The challenge of increasing the birth rate lies in the different levels of analysis since individual choices are creating nationwide governance issues, posing the question: what is the average Italian thinking? Since current strategies are not working, let's pivot and dive into the people's minds.

Attitude-Policy Misalignment

Deciding whether or not to have children is a process that involves multiple variables, including access to contraception, work-life balance, stability, and income. The Generations and Gender

Programme (2023) surveyed people about their families in two waves in 2004 (wave 1) and then in 2020 (wave 2); the results for Italy indicate that most respondents were already leaning toward not having children. In 2020, even more respondents have solidified their decision into "Definitely not," suggesting that the overall trend is toward rejection of having children within three years.

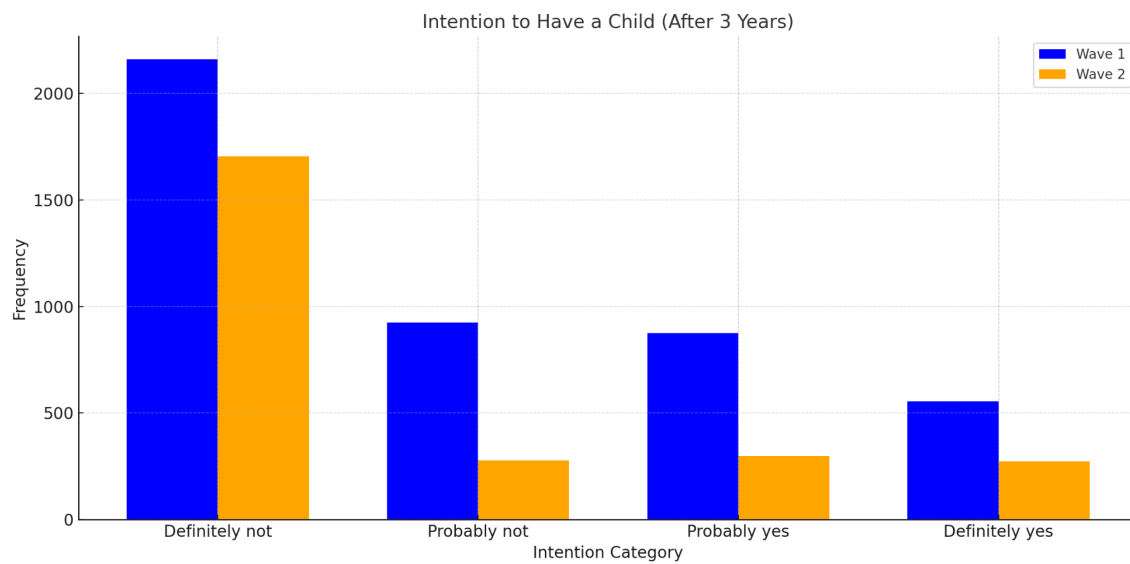


Figure 4. *Intention to have a child after three years from the first to the second wave of the survey*
(Generations and Gender Programme, 2023).

Correlated with the intention not to have children, as shown in Figure 5, women have been increasingly satisfied with family planning methods over the past 50 years.

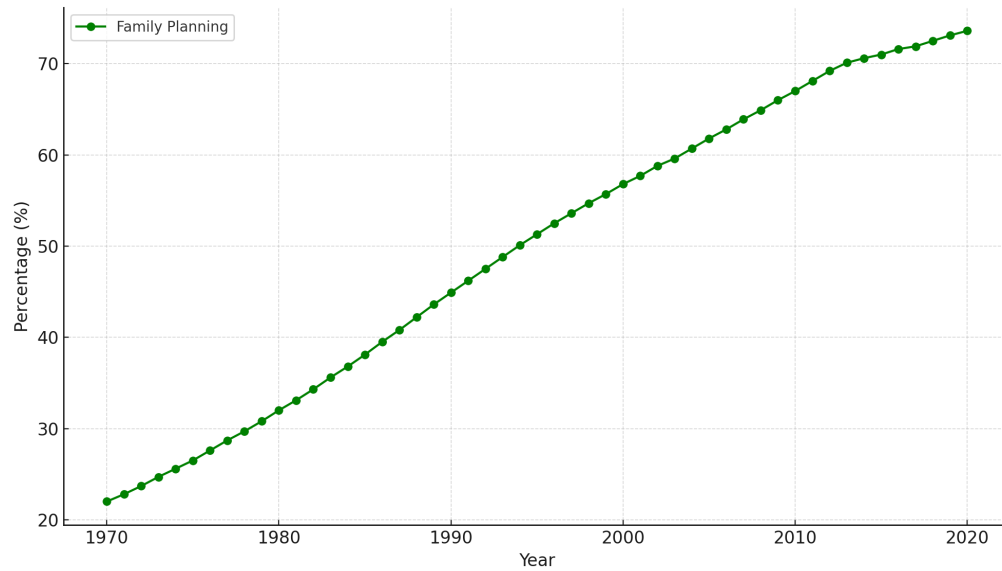


Figure 5. *Percentage of women in Italy (aged 15–49 years, married or in-union) whose need for family planning was satisfied with modern family planning methods from 1970 to 2020 (World Health Organization, 2023).*

While Italian women are optimistic about family planning methods, Italians are not, on average, satisfied with their country's economic situation (Figure 6).

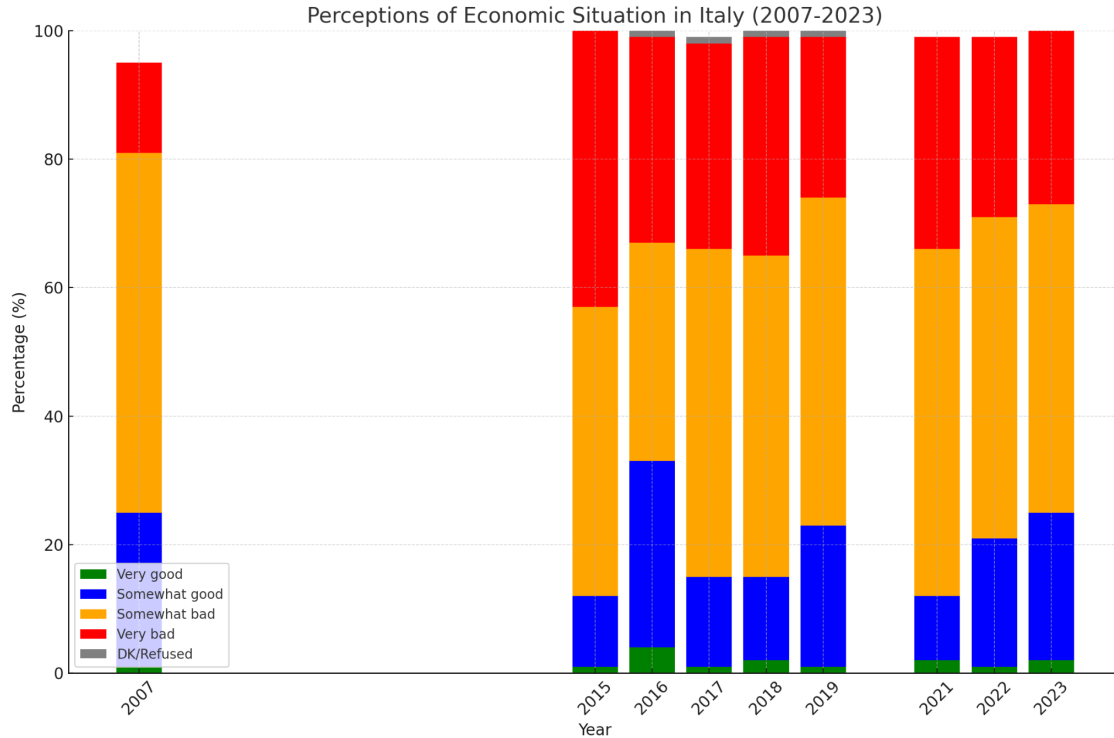


Figure 6. A stacked bar chart displays the perceptions of the economic situation in Italy from 2007 to 2023. Each bar represents the distribution of survey responses across categories like "Very good," "Somewhat good," "Somewhat bad," "Very bad," and "DK/Refused" (Pew Research Center, 2023).

In parallel to the increasing desire for fewer children, Italians have been increasingly against immigrants in their country while the number of Italians emigrating, with the United Kingdom being their favorite destination increased (Figure 8) (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica², 2019). Notably, "new Italians," a term coined by ISTAT to describe a group of people born abroad who acquired Italian citizenship through naturalization or ancestry, also leave Italy for other EU countries (Figure 7) (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2019).

² ISTAT

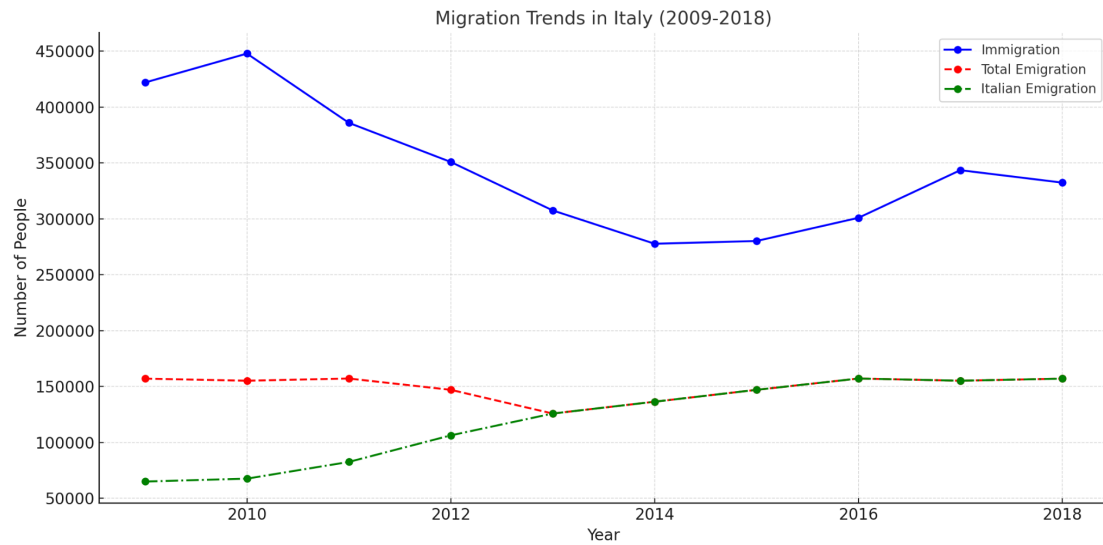


Figure 7. Migration trends in Italy (2009-2018) (Immigration shows the number of people moving into Italy yearly. Total Emigration represents the total number of residents leaving Italy annually. Italian Emigration focuses on Italian citizens emigrating from the country (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2019).

New immigration reversed population loss in some countries over last 2 decades

Population change between 2000 and 2020

	Without immigration	With immigration
 United Arab Emirates	-207,900	+6,061,400
 Italy	-1,576,100	+2,689,200
 Germany	-5,063,800	+1,706,100
 Czech Republic	-23,700	+296,400
 Curaçao	-10,800	+46,400
 Portugal	-314,100	+36,400
 Aruba	-4,900	+18,500
 St. Maarten	-16,100	+12,700
 Liechtenstein	-4,600	+5,800
 Monaco	-200	+4,600
 Dominica	-1,300	+3,200
 Cook Islands	-1,000	+800
 Falkland Islands	-200	+700
 Tokelau	-400	+200

Note: Values are rounded to the nearest 100.

Source: Population change comes from the 2022 update of the UN's World Population Prospects. Migrant stock change comes from the UN's 2020 estimates of migrant stocks.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

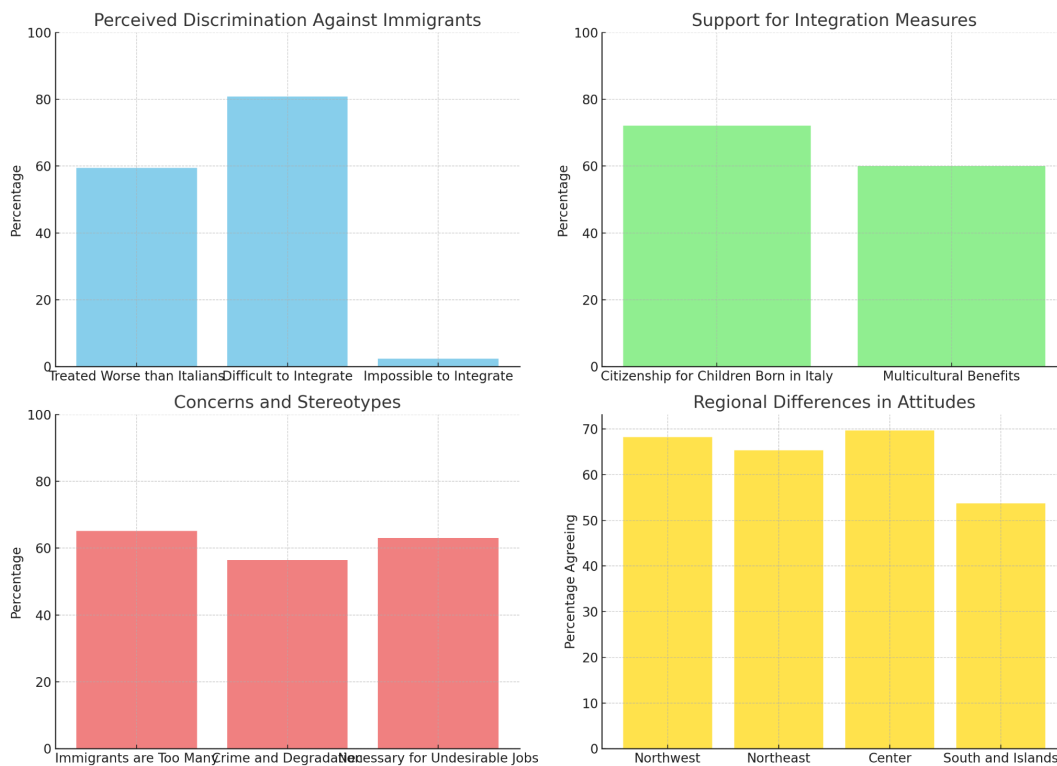


Figure 8. *Comparison between population change with and without immigration and Italian sentiments towards immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2024; Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2012). The graphs indicate that even in 2011, Italians already perceived immigrants negatively.*

Evidently, the government's policies are deviating from its aim, and Italy does not seem to offer what young Italians want. This begs the question: is the Italian government listening to its population? And going a step further, does the Italian government have the *capacity* to change its strategy?

Can Italy solve this?³

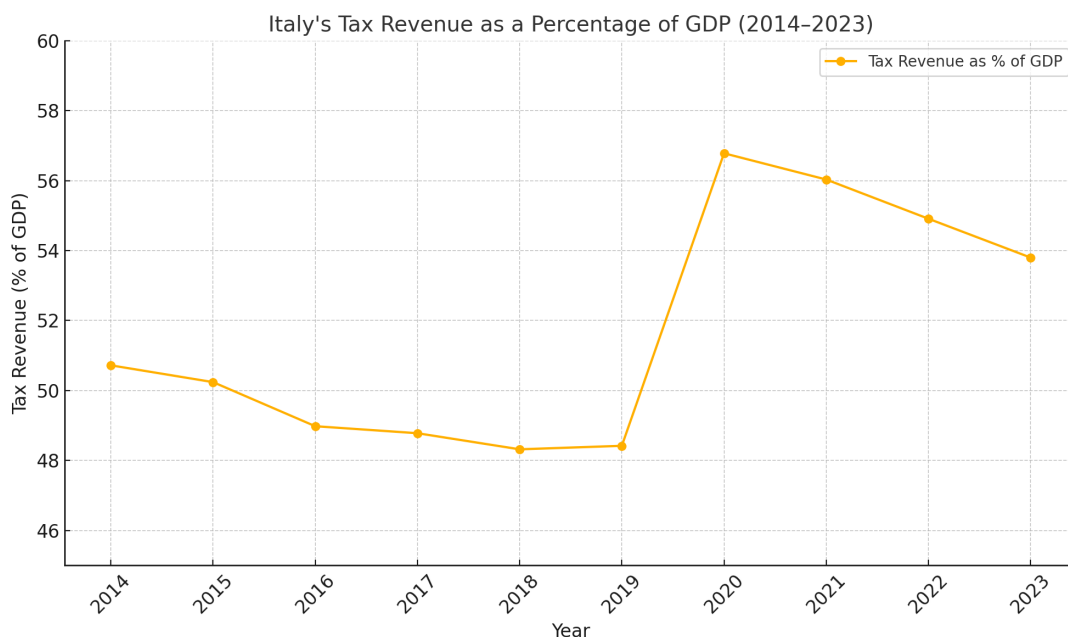


Figure 9. *Italy tax's revenue as a percentage of GDP (2014-2023) zoomed in for easier understanding (Basso, 2024). Despite the drastic increase in during the pandemic, the tax revenue is still higher in 2023 when compared to pre-pandemic levels.*

³ #SS146-GovernanceConcepts

Capacity

Capacity, while difficult to define, includes the management and usage of resources—such as physical, environmental, and financial resources—as well as the presence of infrastructural power to penetrate society and achieve goals (Cingolani, 2013, p. 11). These resources include financial means, administrative capability, organizational cohesiveness, and civil society compliance (Cingolani, 2013, pp. 3-8). Capacity, as a multidimensional notion, includes facets of state power, including budgetary and administrative components, with the Italian government primarily relying on infrastructural power to play the Demiurge role of providing goods and services (Soifer, 2008). One example is the government's taxation capacity, as seen by the fact that roughly half of Italy's GDP is obtained from tax income, proving the state's ability to generate fiscal resources (Figure 10).

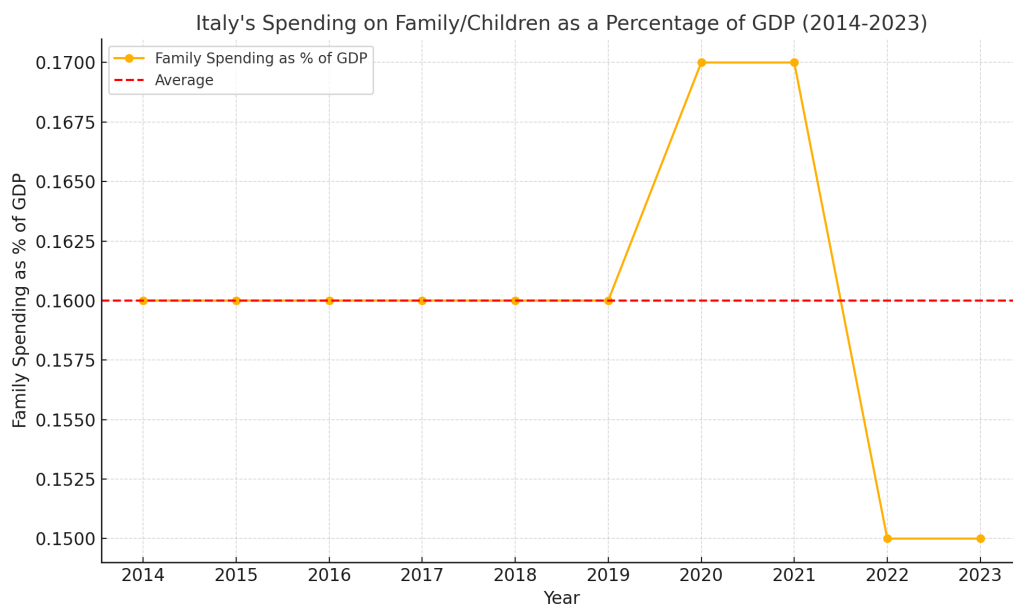
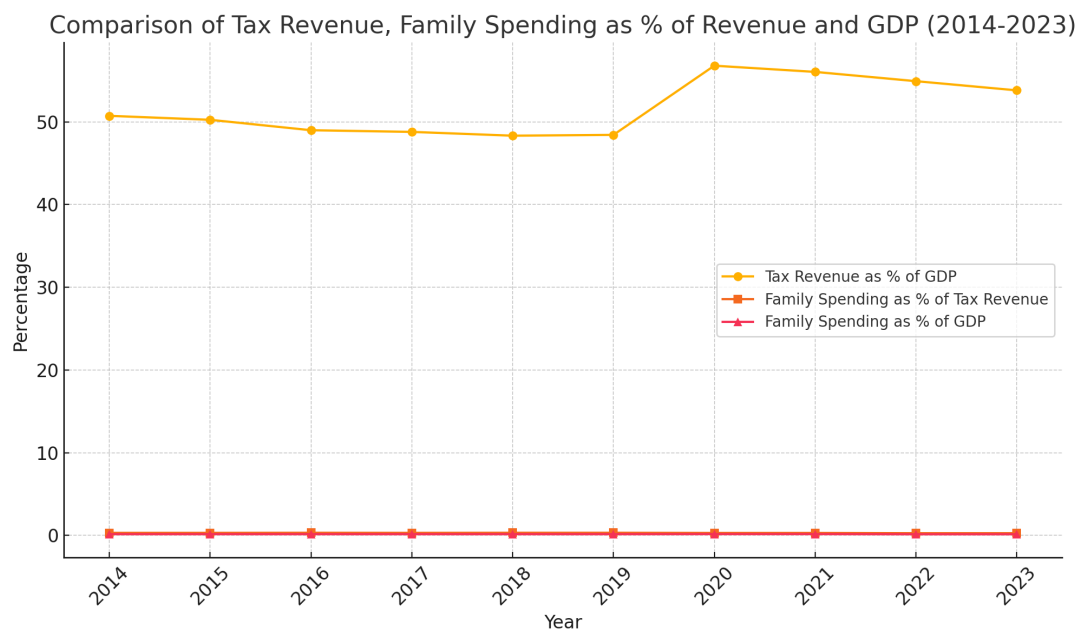


Figure 10. Italy's spending on family/children as a percentage of GDP (2014-2023) (Basso, 2024). Note that the red line is the average.

As a proxy for administrative capacity, Italy's public spending on family policies was relatively high, especially during the Covid-10 pandemic, and is now decreasing. Nevertheless, these investments correspond to, on average, about 0.3% of the tax revenue and about 0.16% of the national GDP and have remained relatively stable even during the pandemic (Figure 10). In 2014, Italy spent 96.25% of its total expenditure on social protection benefits, increasing to 96.86% in 2021 (EuroStat, 2023).



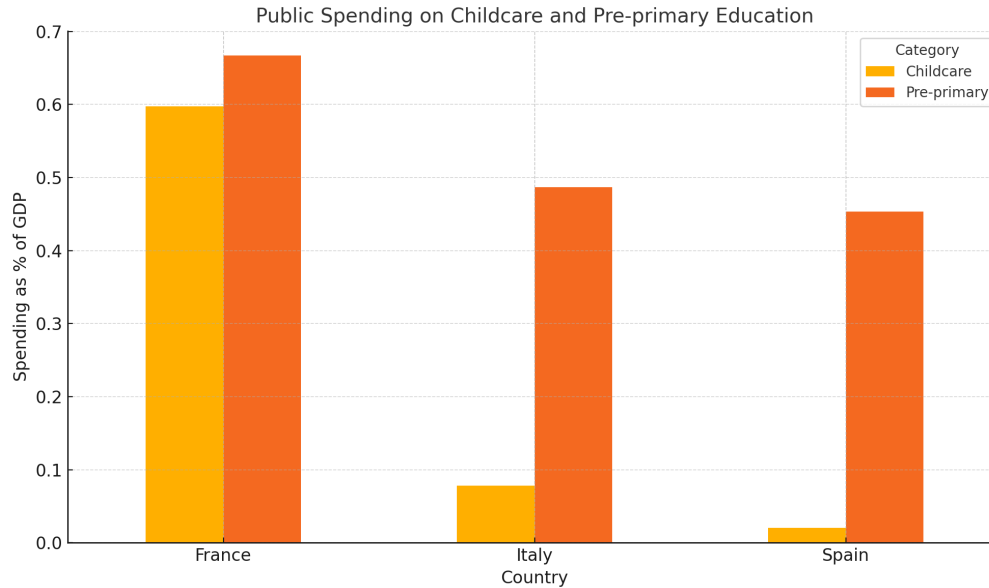


Figure 11. *Compares the percentage of tax revenue to GDP, family spending as a percentage of tax revenue, and family spending as a percentage of GDP from 2014 to 2023 (Basso, 2024). It highlights the proportionally small allocation of family spending relative to both tax revenue and GDP, despite fluctuations in tax revenue as a share of GDP. The second graph compares Italy's public spending on childcare and pre-primary education to France and Spain' (OECD, n.d.)⁴.*

Fertility rates often correlate with childcare services (Golovina et al., 2023), as formal childcare reflects access and use of family services. Although both Italy and Spain spend a significant amount in pre-primary education (Figure 11), France spends more in childcare; Italy has a proportionally small allocation of family spending relative to both tax revenue and GDP, giving rise to high informal childcare regardless of the child's age (Figure 12).

⁴ I opted to compare Italy to France and Spain because France has the highest fertility rate in the EU, at 1.79, and Spain has a lower rate compared to Italy, at 1.19 (Reuters, 2024; Eurostat, 2024).

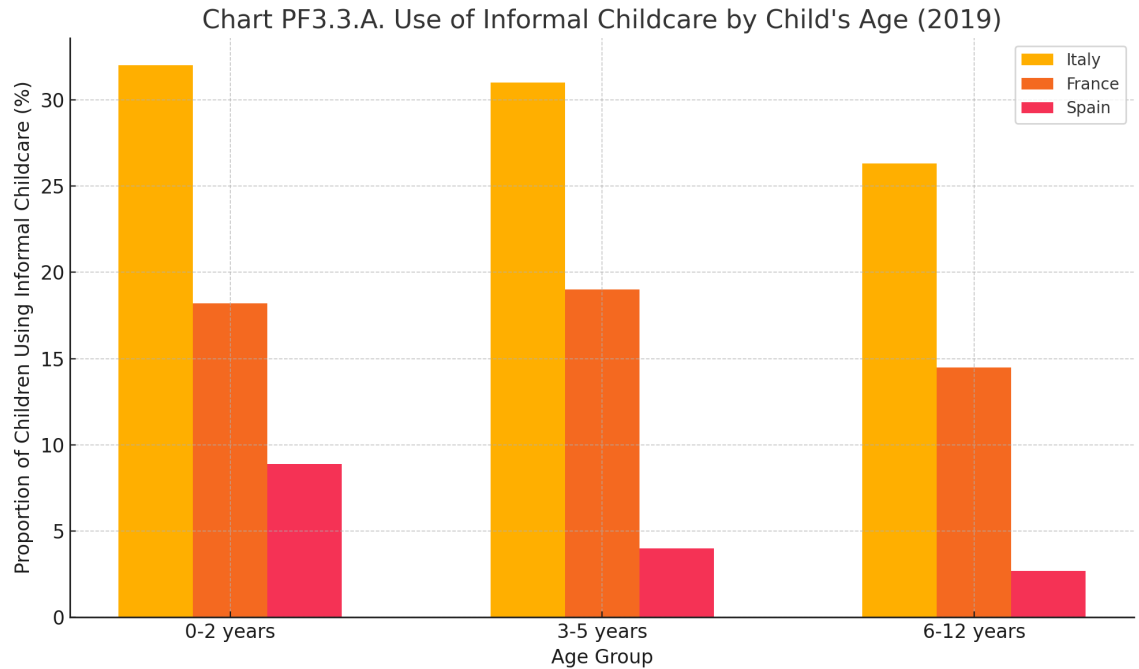


Figure. 12. Comparison between Italy, Spain, and France's use of Informal childcare by child's age in 2019 (OECD, n.d.).

Social Inclusion

A key debate in Italy and Europe involves immigration and cultural integration (Ambrosini, 2013). Figure 13 shows that about one-third of non-EU immigrants in Italy participate in the labor force, highlighting the impact of social inclusion on demographics.

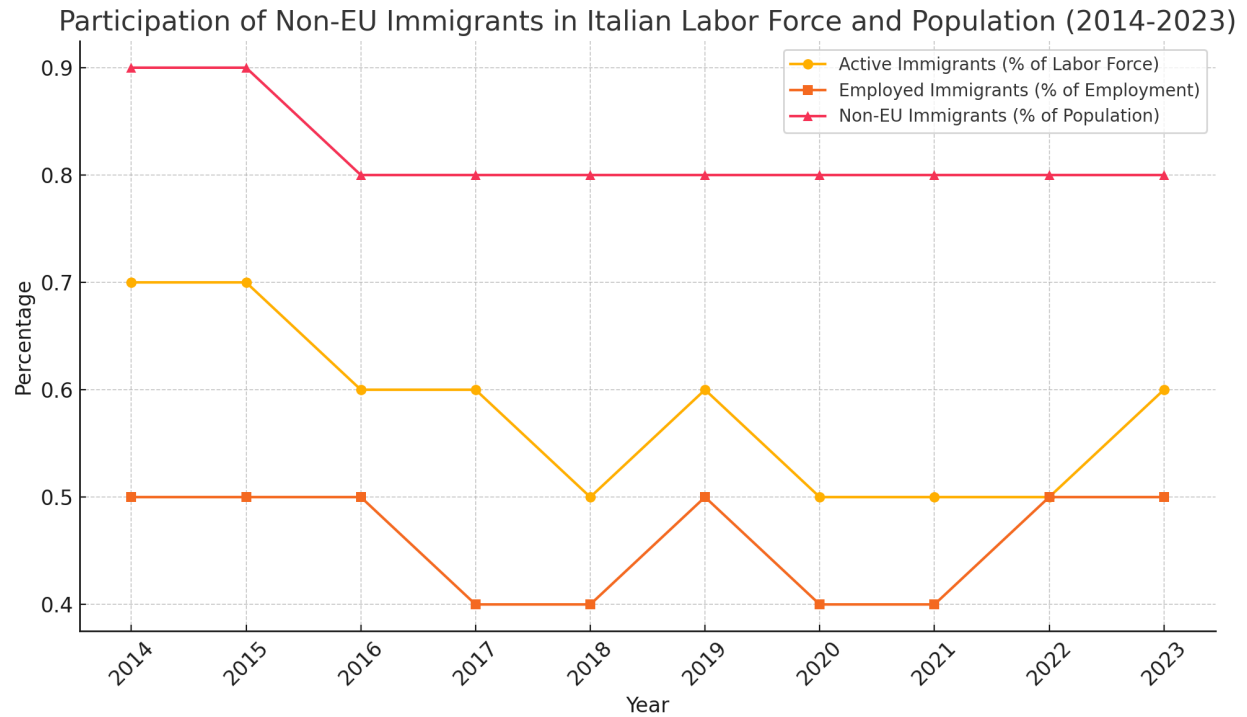


Figure 13. Participation of non-EU immigrants in the Italian labor force compared to their share of the population from 2014 to 2023 (Basso, 2024). It highlights the relatively low percentage of active and employed immigrants in the labor force compared to their proportion of the total population.

Around 75% of live births in Italy are to non-EU mothers, sustaining the country's birth rate, while only 30% of immigrants participate in the labor force (Figure 15).

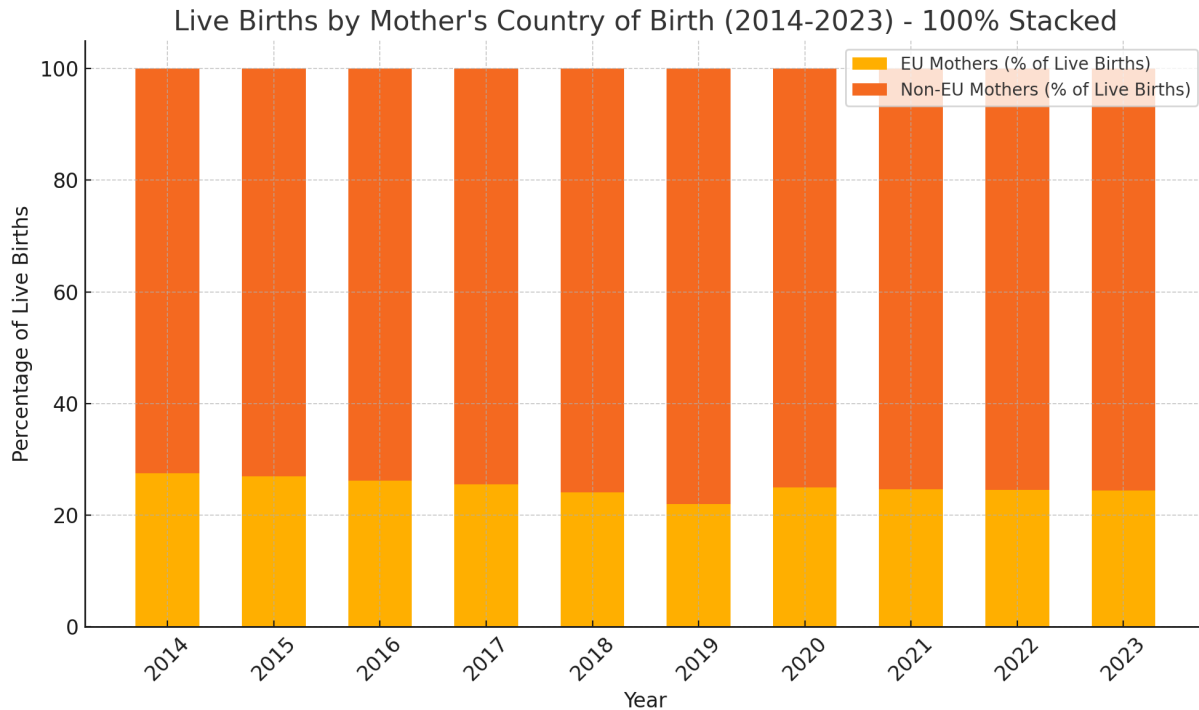


Figure 14. Live births by mother's country of birth as percentage (Basso, 2024). Nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of births are from non-EU mothers.

Obstacles⁵

Informal institutions

As hinted at by the figures above, there are informal institutions, such as cultural norms, practices, and narratives that, according to new institutionalism and the iceberg model of culture (Figure 16), shape Italian's perception of fertility (Ostrom, 2005; Bervir, 2009, pp.110-114).

⁵ #SS146-GovernanceTheories

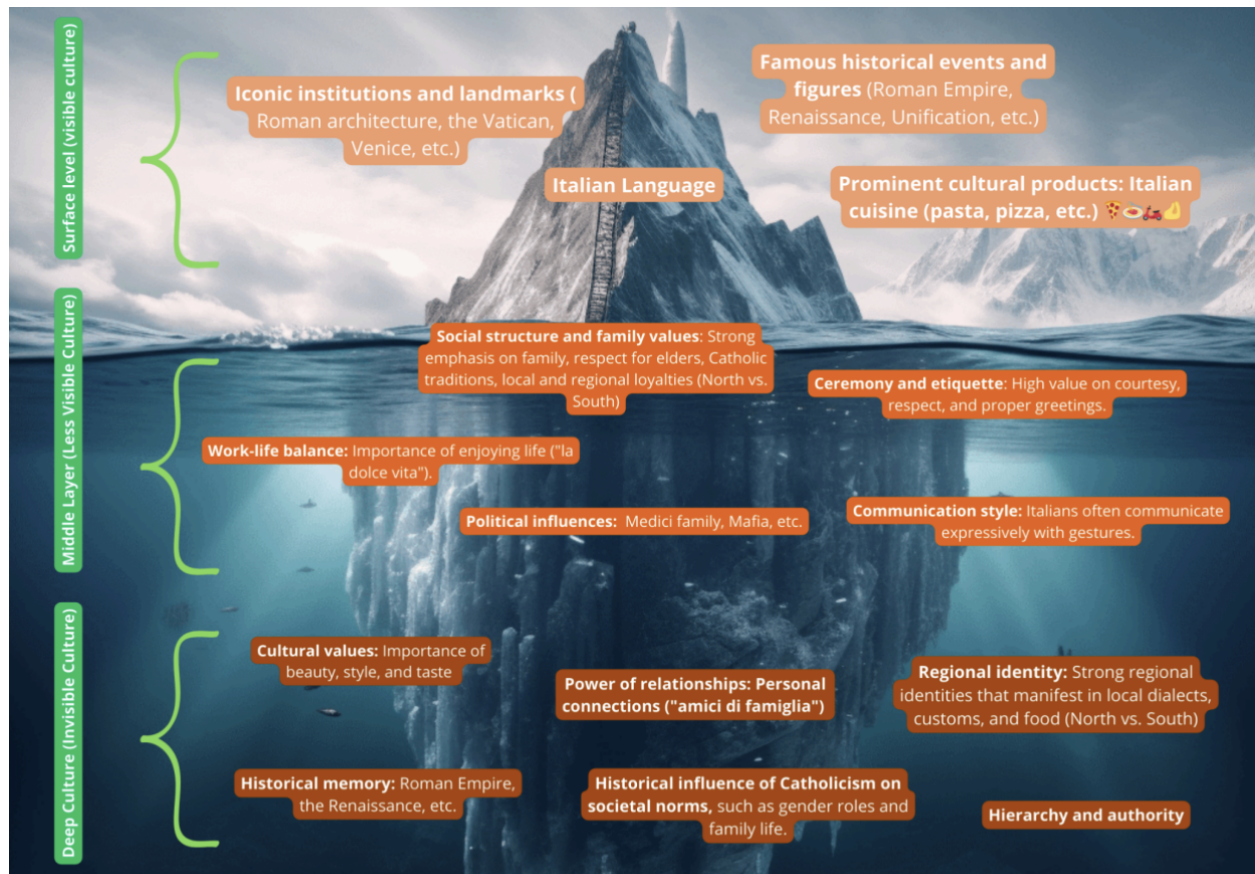


Figure 15. Iceberg model of culture (Basso, 2024-b).

A prevalent informal practice in Italy, as indicated by Figure 12, is the gendered division of household labor, where societal norms and deep Catholic ideologies compel women into caregiving and domestic roles (Meggiolaro & Scioni, 2024). This unwritten rule limits women's participation in the labor market due to the burden of unpaid work, often leading to delayed or fewer children and creating a conflict between professional growth and family life that discourages larger families (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Bianchi et al., 2006).

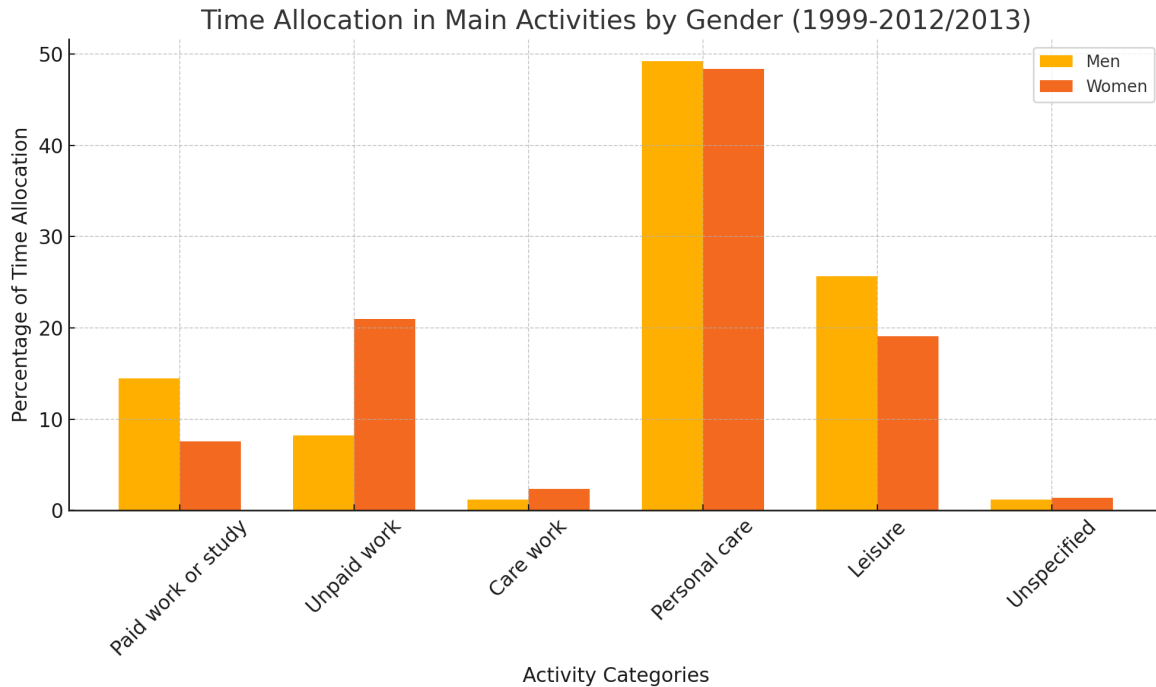


Figure 16. Time allocation in main activities by gender (1999-2012/2013) (OECD, n.d.). It highlights the differences in paid work, unpaid work, care work, personal care, leisure, and unspecified activities.

The belief that dual incomes are essential for improving living standards and financial security forces Italian couples to prioritize two incomes amidst high living costs and economic uncertainties (De Cirio, 2018). Combined with inadequate childcare and parental leave support, this expectation promotes smaller families as more economically viable, thereby contributing to Italy's low birth rates (Friedline et al., 2021; Belloni & Dal Lago, 2013). Aprea et al (2024) explains that the Italian Citizenship Income (Reddito di Cittadinanza, RdC) provides monthly financial support to low-income Italian households while requiring beneficiaries to actively seek employment and participate in job training programs.

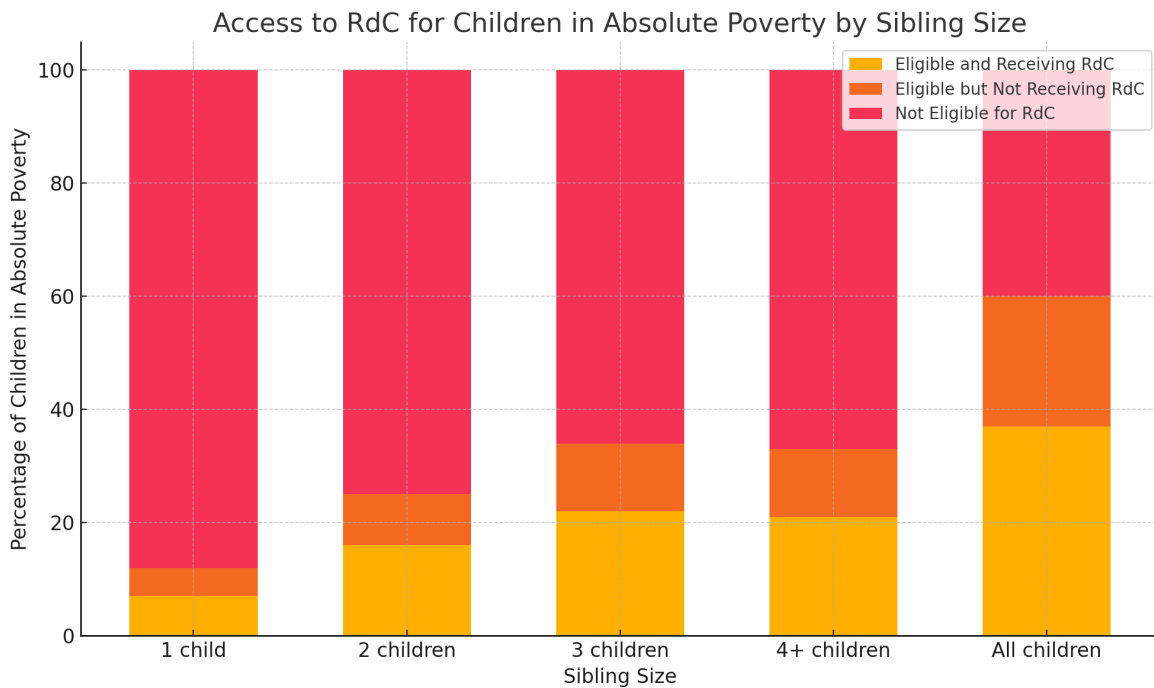


Figure 17. Stacked bar chart showing access to the Reddito di Cittadinanza (RdC) for children in absolute poverty by sibling size. The chart breaks down the percentages of children who are eligible and receiving RdC, eligible but not receiving, and those not eligible, across different sibling sizes.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is relevant to this analysis because individual choices are creating nationwide governance issues and, thus, we must take into account individual's cost-benefit analysis. According to this theory, an average Italian would assess the financial, social, and personal costs associated with having children and make reproductive choices that maximize their utility (Peters, 2011). High economic uncertainty, limited access to childcare, and insufficient financial incentives for families create substantial perceived costs for potential parents and despite the government's incentives through programs such as the "Baby Bonus" and expanded parental

leave, many still view raising children as an economic burden that outweighs the benefits. Adding cultural factors (informal institutions) into the analysis, traditional gender and religious expectations influence individual choices, with women being burdened by unpaid work especially with men’s low participation in domestic work (Figure 16).

RCT says that when individual choices aggregate, they pose significant governance issues by making utility-maximizing decisions that collectively lead to equilibrium states that are not going to be changed with simple government interventions (Peters, 2011). In Italy’s case, the persistent decline in birth rates results in a shrinking workforce, increased dependency ratios, and greater pressure on pension systems, necessitating comprehensive policy responses. Governance systems must therefore recalibrate incentives to better align individual choices with societal goals, such as by enhancing financial support for families, improving work-life balance through more flexible parental leave policies, and investing in affordable childcare infrastructure. By leveraging Rational Choice Theory, policymakers can design targeted interventions that address the underlying motivations and constraints faced by individuals, thereby fostering an environment where having children becomes a more attractive and feasible option.

Disincentives (costs)	Incentives (benefits)
Financial burden: With consistently "bad" or "very bad" economic perceptions (shown in Figure 6), having children appears financially risky	Baby Bonus program: Limited impact and only affected poorer women with 2+ children. RdC actually penalizes larger families (Figure 17).
Time costs: Your time allocation data shows Italian women bear disproportionate unpaid care	Tax benefits: Are insufficient to offset broader economic concerns.

work, making childbearing especially costly for them (Figure 16).	
Career impact: Limited childcare spending (0.16% of GDP) forces reliance on informal care, making work-family balance difficult (Figure 10).	Parental leave: While generous at 80% pay for 21 weeks, figure show decreasing uptake by mothers (Figure 3).
<p>The institutional incentives (bonuses, tax breaks, etc) are too weak compared to the perceived costs, so young Italians act as rational actors by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaying/avoiding children (fertility rate dropping to 1.2) • Emigrating (increasing emigration trends in Figure 7) • Using family planning (rising satisfaction with contraception in Figure 5) 	

Table 1. Comparing disincentives and incentives for young Italians to have children as per Rational Choice Theory.

Goal state— Improved Reforms⁶

As the analysis above indicate, Italy’s declining birth rate is driven by a widespread reluctance to have children, negative attitudes toward immigrants, a tendency to emigrate, gendered childcare roles with inadequate support, and cultural factors such as delayed child independence and strong Catholic influences.

⁶ #SS146-Policy

Returning to the question, “*Can Italy solve this problem?*” the short answer is *yes*. A more complex answer is *perhaps*. Italy has the state capacity to execute welfare programs, as was indicated over the years; however, the solution does not lie with government spending alone, but in multifaceted solutions, especially on the individual level according to Rational Choice Theory (Table 1).

Looking at the discentives column on Table 1, the easiest cost to change is time cost, since we cannot change people’s need for a career and economic stability. What is possible to redirect the efforts into providing actually good childcare, perhaps in the same way that France does, and shifting cultural norms to encourage men to perform more childbearing work. This paper, thus, proposes the Comprehensive Family Support and Gender Equality Initiative (CFSGEI), a policy aimed at creating a supportive environment for families by integrating affordable childcare services, enhancing parental leave provisions, providing substantial financial subsidies, and promoting gender equality both in the workplace and at home.

Proposal’s unique features

- Universal Affordable Childcare: Establishing a nationwide network of high-quality, affordable childcare centers accessible to all families, regardless of income level to ensure that women can balance work and family life without the prohibitive costs of private childcare.
- Enhanced Parental Leave with Incentives for Fathers: Extending parental leave to include generous provisions for both mothers and fathers, coupled with financial incentives for fathers who take active roles in childcare.

- **Substantial Financial Subsidies for Families:** Introducing significant tax credits and direct financial subsidies for families with children, particularly targeting those with 1-2 children. Larger families don't benefit as much from the system and are increasingly rarer; accepting that families will have 1-2 children is more realistic.
- **Gender Equality Programs:** Implementing comprehensive programs in workplaces and communities to promote gender equality, especially towards shared domestic responsibilities.

Evaluating strengths and weaknesses⁷

Strengths	Weaknesses
Economic Relief for Families: By reducing the cost of childcare and providing financial subsidies, families can better afford to have more children, directly addressing one of the key economic disincentives to higher birth rates (Golovina et al., 2023).	High Financial Cost: Implementing universal affordable childcare and providing substantial financial subsidies require significant government expenditure, which may strain public finances, especially given Italy's existing high public debt (EuroStat, 2023).
Promotes Gender Equality: Encouraging fathers to take parental leave and share caregiving responsibilities helps dismantle traditional gender roles, fostering a more balanced and equitable household dynamic (Gornick & Meyers, 2003).	Implementation Challenges: Establishing a nationwide childcare network and ensuring the quality and accessibility of services can be logistically complex and time-consuming, potentially leading to delays and inconsistencies in

⁷ #SS146-Evaluation

	service provision.
Increases Workforce Participation: With reliable and affordable childcare, more women can remain in or re-enter the workforce, enhancing overall economic productivity and reducing the gender gap in employment (Thomas et al., 2022).	Cultural Resistance: Shifting deeply ingrained gender norms and encouraging men to take active roles in childcare may face resistance from segments of society that uphold traditional familial structures, potentially slowing the policy's effectiveness (Bianchi et al., 2006).
Cultural Shift: Comprehensive gender equality programs can gradually change societal norms, making larger families more socially acceptable and desirable, thus supporting higher birth rates (Ambrosini, 2013).	Administrative Burden: Managing and distributing financial subsidies and ensuring compliance with enhanced parental leave policies can create additional administrative burdens for government agencies, potentially leading to inefficiencies and increased bureaucracy.

***Table 2.** Strengths and weaknesses of the policy proposal.*

In conclusion, addressing Italy's declining birth rate requires comprehensive policy reforms that integrate both economic support and cultural shifts. By enhancing family support systems and promoting gender equality, Italy can create an environment that encourages higher fertility rates and ensures long-term demographic and economic stability.

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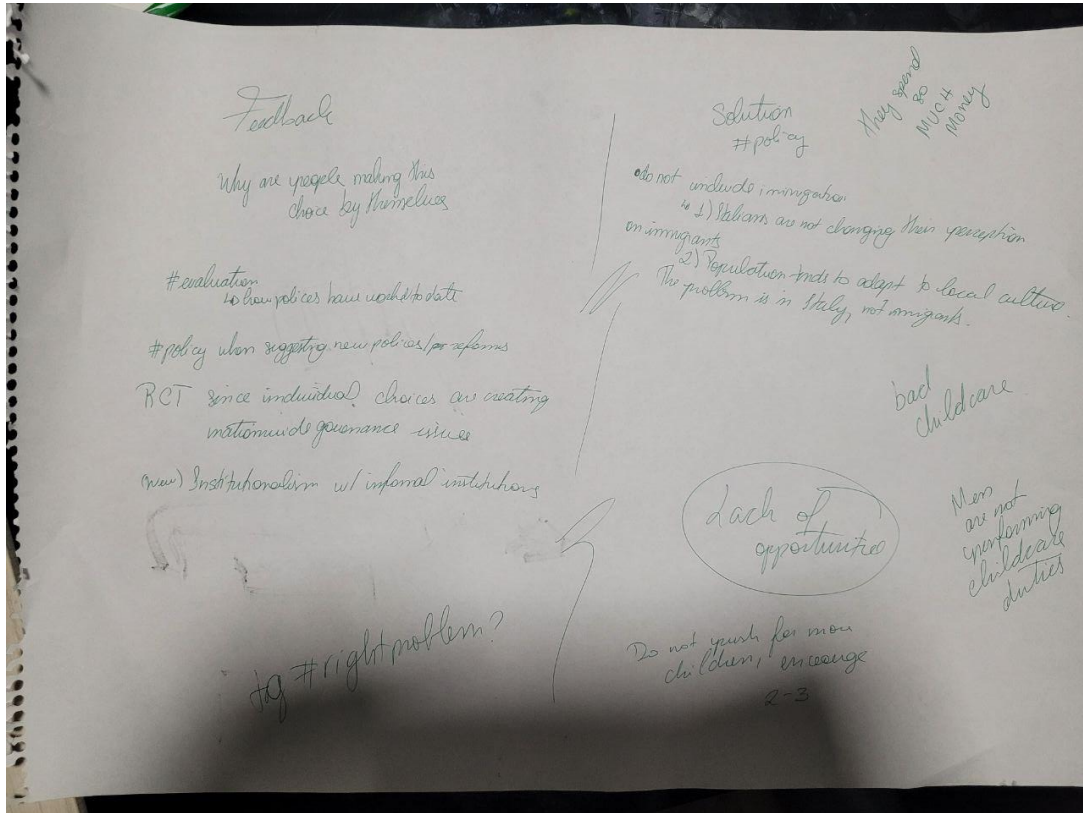
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Appendix A - HC and LO application

My messy notes on how to apply the LOs based on feedback from the Prospectus assignment.




#descriptivestats

Compared to my first assignment, I had more trouble finding data that I could use for this assignment, notably because Italy is gravely fragmented, with different provinces issuing different datasets without

making a national comparison. This was the case when using Data. Europa.

An official website of the European Union

How do you know?



European Union

Login

English

Search datasets

Search

European data

data.europa.eu

The official portal for European data

Home

Data

EU Open Data Days

Academy

Community

Publications

Documentation


Home

Datasets

Average family size

Dataset

Average family size

 dati.gov.it

Publisher: Provincia Autonoma di Trento

Updated: 07 March 2020

Dataset

Quality

Similar datasets

API

Cite

Metadata

Embed

RSS

Sector: Family and social behaviours

Algorithm: Resident population in households on number of households

Phenomenon: Stock

Created: 23 August 2021

Updated: 07 March 2020

This remains a strong topic, and I am glad to see you pursuing it. I'm not sure the WVS will actually offer good data on attitudes. I checked it myself for questions on children and found little. Your other data sources are likely to have more of what you need. It is essential in this analysis to determine what exactly is stopping couples from having children. I read several news articles on the trend, and many of them suggested that economic insecurity is the leading cause. But I saw no data featured to indicate this. That certainly would seem like an important factor. But are there other factors? In your analysis be sure that you can make a clear diagnosis on why people are making this choice for themselves. Without that, policies will be difficult to craft. On the LO applications, use #evaluation to assess how well policies have worked to date. Apply #policy when suggesting new policies or reforms to existing ones. RCT is certainly a relevant theory since individual choices are creating a nationwide governance issues. And I think institutionalism is best applied as you outlined with informal institutions, like big families. A good application using that concept will measure, through attitudinal surveys, the erosion of informal institutions surrounding families in Italy.

And this feedback from the Prospectus assignment was right because the WVS did not have enough data on this topic, much less in a way that I could use. So I changed strategies and went

for international databases, especially the OECD, and found interesting data (Generations and Gender Programm). I then included multiple types of graphs that would help visualize the information. Lastly, I improve my data visualizations from the first assignment, make them more polished and on theme without changing the values. Look at Appendix B for an explanation of how I filtered the data.

#SS146-GovernanceConcepts:

Building on my first assignment, I also analyzed birth rate through the lens of capacity and social inclusion, which are two governance concepts that linked to Italy's new policies regarding births and immigration. I applied this LO mostly under the section "can Italy solve this?", where I explain the different types of state capacity, and measure downstream capacity (Cingolani, 2013; Soifer, 200) by including multiple analyses on service delivery efficiency (ex: childcare), tax revenue and spending, showing how it also gives rise to informal childcare (Figure 12). I also included social inclusion because it is directly linked to immigration, which, according to Figure 14 is keeping the already low birth rate still afloat at 1.2. Lastly, I also analyzed the participation of non-EU immigrants in the Italian labor force. A question I was unable to answer given the constraints of time and word count is where the government money going since Italy spends a lot of its GDP and Tax Revenue in welfare but that is not reflecting in family policies.

#SS146-GovernanceTheories:

I used the [document created in class](#) about the different theories to apply this LO.

This remains a strong topic, and I am glad to see you pursuing it. I'm not sure the WVS will actually offer good data on attitudes. I checked it myself for questions on children and found little. Your other data sources are likely to have more of what you need. It is essential in this analysis to determine what exactly is stopping couples from having children. I read several news articles on the trend, and many of them suggested that economic insecurity is the leading cause. But I saw no data featured to indicate this. That certainly would seem like an important factor. But are there other factors? In your analysis be sure that you can make a clear diagnosis on why people are making this choice for themselves. Without that, policies will be difficult to craft. On the LO applications, use #evaluation to assess how well policies have worked to date. Apply #policy when suggesting new policies or reforms to existing ones. RCT is certainly a relevant theory since individual choices are creating a nationwide governance issues. And I think institutionalism is best applied as you outlined with informal institutions, like big families. A good application using that concept will measure, through attitudinal surveys, the erosion of informal institutions surrounding families in Italy.

Based on the feedback I received on the Prospectus assignment, I opted to include rational choice theory as well as a bit of new institutionalism because the graphs indicated that there was a gender imbalance and when I researched more about it, I realized that it was mostly caused by ideologies (Peters, 2011). Table 1 outlines the incentives and disincentives to have children, which I used to create my own policy recommendation. I then also included informal institutions (new institutionalism) by explaining the narrative and practices of gendered division of labor under cultural norms (Bervir, 2009).

#SS146-Policy:

As mentioned in my prospectus, I was unsure about how to apply this LO, but according from notes from our Q&A session in class, I focused on the other LOs and applied this LO for about

20% of the assignment. I focused on being realistic and not trying to change people's mindset regarding children and immigrants given that, according to Migliaccio and Bloomberg (2024), cultural integration encourages immigrant communities to progressively adopt local cultural norms. The problem is not with the people or immigrants, but how the government spends its welfare programs as well as the lack of opportunities for young Italians (emigration).

#policy:- ideating potential ideas

- how can you tell if one application is better than the other?

- very lenient in how he grades policy that has never been attempted.

- so long as the policy conforms with the principles and the concepts we learned in this course.

- A bad application would be proposing a policy but then Prof can use the readings and say that it would work according to Author X.

- What about the constraints that we have? (word count, time, etc)

- Think of it as a balance, characterizing the problem and describing previous solutions and assessments.

- Essentially, 1) what is the problem, 2) what has been done before, 3) is it working? Yes or no and why not?

- A bad application would be 1) describing the policy and 2) how the policy has been implemented. Better to focus on ideation.

- But if you are dealing with a problem that has been ongoing for a long time, maybe you can focus on implementation, but keep the policy proposal to about 20% of the assignment?

I also analyzed how government policies have been somewhat effective in the 2000s-2010s, as outlined in the section "current state - evaluating current and past policies". I focused on the pension reforms as well as the "Baby Bonus", explaining how the RdC is actually counter productive. Lastly, I tried to make my proposal stronger by mapping out its strengths and weaknesses.

#SS146-Evaluation

As mapped out in my Prospectus outline, I started the assignment with my strongest application of this LO, particularly by evaluating attitude-policy misalignment by trying to think like an “average Italian”. I included figures on desired versus actual family size (Figure 4) as well as sentiments regarding immigration (Figure 8). I then assess current policy effectiveness through a structural support assesment of family spending and childcare accessibility, comparing Italy’s performance to France and Spain’s. Essentially, as the title of the sections suggests, I tried to apply a #rightproblem analysis in the bigger picture, and this LO represented the current state and the obstacles.

Appendix B - #descriptivestats calculations

You can find all the calculations on this [spreadsheet](#).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1		Active recent immigrants by sex, age and citizenship (% of pop in the labor force and non EU countries)	Employed recent immigrants by sex, age and citizenship, as % of total employment, age 15 to 64	Recent immigrants by sex, age and citizenship, Non EU, percentage of total population	Live births by mother's age and country of birth, number, EU	Live births by mother's age and country of birth, number, NON EU	Inequality of income distribution (ratio, sex total, age total)	Percentage of the Population with at Least Upper Secondary Educational Attainment (%)	Unemployment rate by sex total, from 15 to 74, % of pop in the labor force
2	Year								
3	2014	0.70%	0.50%	0.90%	31,430	82,818	5.78	0.593	12.9
4	2015	0.70%	0.50%	0.90%	29,656	80,341	5.84	0.599	12
5	2016	0.60%	0.50%	0.80%	28,567	80,394	6.27	0.601	11.7
6	2017	0.60%	0.40%	0.80%	27,378	79,972	5.92	0.609	11.3
7	2018	0.50%	0.40%	0.80%	24,995	78,840	6.09	0.618	10.6
8	2019	0.60%	0.50%	0.80%	21,004	74,298	6.01	0.623	9.9
9	2020	0.50%	0.40%	0.80%	26,210	78,765	5.75	0.626	9.3
10	2021	0.50%	0.40%	0.80%	25,729	78,426	5.86	0.627	9.5
11	2022	0.50%	0.50%	0.80%	25,403	78,195	5.62	0.63	8.1
12	2023	0.60%	0.50%	0.80%	25,199	78,064	5.27	0.655	7.7

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1		Government revenue, expenditure and main aggregates in Million units of national currency (sector: general government)	GDP per year in current prices (million of euros)	Tax revenue as % of GDP	Italy's spending on family/children, including services, cash benefits, structures (total in million of euros)		Family spending as a % of tax revenue	Family Spending as a % of GDP	
2	Year								
3	2014	829,632	1,635,871	50.72%	2,669		0.32%	0.16%	
4	2015	835,694	1,663,278	50.24%	2,670		0.32%	0.16%	
5	2016	835,037	1,704,857	48.98%	2,732		0.33%	0.16%	
6	2017	851,015	1,744,493	48.78%	2,763		0.32%	0.16%	
7	2018	859,018	1,777,744	48.32%	2,837		0.33%	0.16%	
8	2019	873,598	1,804,067	48.42%	2,860		0.33%	0.16%	
9	2020	948,296	1,670,012	56.78%	2,898		0.31%	0.17%	
10	2021	1,032,343	1,842,507	56.03%	3,161		0.31%	0.17%	
11	2022	1,096,597	1,997,055	54.91%	3,094	Predicted values	0.28%	0.15%	
12	2023	1,144,854	2,128,001	53.80%	3,154	Predicted values	0.28%	0.15%	

Appendix C — Prospectus outline

a) **#ss146-evaluation Framework** (implementing feedback received on the first assignment.)

i) Evaluate Attitude-Policy Misalignment

- Analyze World Values Survey data to understand:
 - Italian attitudes toward family formation
 - Desired vs. actual family size
 - Cultural shifts in life priorities (career vs. family)
 - Anti-immigration sentiments and their policy implications
- Compare attitude data with policy spending to identify disconnect:
 - Why isn't 0.3% tax revenue spending effective?
 - Are services targeting the wrong barriers?

ii) Assess Current Policy Effectiveness Through Two Lenses: A. Structural

Support Assessment:

- Family spending impact
- Childcare accessibility
- Work-life balance policies
- Economic incentives

iii) Cultural/Attitudinal Impact Assessment:

- How do policies address (or fail to address) cultural shifts?
- Do young Italians want different lifestyles incompatible with current support structures?
- Are anti-immigration sentiments limiting policy options?

iv) Comparative Analysis:

- Study successful cases where countries increased native birth rates:
 - France's pro-natalist policies
 - Nordic countries' family-work balance approach
 - Focus on how these countries addressed attitudinal barriers
- Identify what worked in culturally similar contexts (e.g., Spain, Greece)

v) Gap Analysis:

- Identify disconnects between:
 - Policy design and cultural attitudes
 - Service provision and actual needs
 - Government spending and desired outcomes
- Special focus on why generous support isn't translating to higher birth rates among native Italians

b) #ss146-governanceconcepts (2 governance concepts from the first assignment; I will not include other concepts due to constraints of time and word count.)

i) State Capacity

1) Resource Allocation Efficiency

(a) Evaluate distribution of the 0.3% tax revenue:

- Types of family support programs
- Balance between direct financial aid vs. services
- Regional disparities in resource allocation

(b) Compare with other EU countries' spending patterns:

- Is Italy underspending relative to peers?
- Are resources targeted effectively?
- Does spending align with stated policy goals?

2) Policy Implementation Effectiveness

(a) Analyze the governance structure for family policies:

- Coordination between national and regional governments
- Inter-agency cooperation
- Policy coherence across different support programs

(b) Examine bureaucratic capacity:

- Administrative efficiency in delivering benefits
- Program accessibility
- Monitoring and evaluation systems

3) Service Delivery Mechanisms

(a) Evaluate current service infrastructure:

- Childcare facility distribution
- Healthcare support for families
- Parental leave implementation

(b) Assess service utilization:

- Why aren't services increasing birth rates?
- Are services matching family needs?
- Barriers to accessing available support

ii) Social Inclusion

1) Cultural Attitudes and Values

(a) Examine shifting societal norms:

- Changed expectations about family size
- Work-life balance preferences
- Delayed marriage and childbearing trends

(b) Analyze generational differences:

- Young Italians' life priorities
- Economic security concerns
- Career vs. family trade-offs

2) Socioeconomic Barriers

(a) Investigate economic factors:

- Housing costs and availability
- Youth unemployment
- Economic uncertainty
- Gender wage gap

(b) Assess work-related challenges:

- Workplace discrimination against parents
- Career advancement barriers
- Flexible work arrangements

3) Regional and Social Disparities

(a) Analyze geographic variations:

- North-South divide in birth rates
- Urban vs. rural differences
- Access to services across regions

(b) Examine class-based differences:

- Income level impact on family planning
- Educational attainment correlation
- Professional status influence

4) Policy-Culture Alignment

- (a) How well do current policies reflect cultural realities?
- (b) Are services designed with cultural preferences in mind?
- (c) Do policies address both structural and cultural barriers?

5) Implementation-Inclusion Balance

- (a) Does service delivery consider diverse needs?
- (b) Are policies accessible to all social groups?
- (c) How do implementation methods affect different demographics?

c) **#ss146-governancetheories** (I will analyze this paper through the lens of New Institutionalism Theory and will not include Policy Network Theory and Rational Choice Theory due to constraints of time and word count)

i) New Institutionalism Analysis

1) **Formal Institutions:**

- Key policies: parental leave, workplace protections, childcare, tax incentives, family support programs, housing policies.
- Structures: government agencies, inter-agency coordination, service delivery systems.

2) Informal Institutions:

- Norms: family values, gender roles, career expectations.
- Expectations: family size ideals, timing of marriage/childbearing, work-life balance.
- Behaviors: family formation decisions, response to incentives, service utilization.

3) Institutional Interactions:

(a) Alignment:

- Conflicts: policy vs. cultural norms, legal frameworks vs. societal values.
- Synergies: policies supporting cultural shifts, successful blending of traditions and modernity.

(b) Effectiveness:

- Gaps: why formal support fails to raise birth rates, disconnects between policy and culture.
- Adaptations: demographic responses, policy flexibility, innovative service delivery.

4) Institutional Change:

(a) Path Dependence:

- History: evolution of policies, cultural shifts, resistance to change.
- Legacy: traditional family models, gender roles, religious influence.

5) Reform Opportunities:

- Needs: policy updates, cultural support, institutional adaptability.
- Mechanisms: aligning institutions, overcoming inertia, driving cultural adaptation.

6) Cross-National Comparison:

- **Similar Contexts:**

- Lessons from Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Portugal).

- **Different Models:**

- Insights from Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Norway) on family policy, work-life balance, and gender equality.

I am still unclear about how to apply #SS146-Policy in this assignment, but it seems like the broad application will be answering the questions (1) what is the problem?, 2) What has been done before?, 3) Is it working? Clearly not, 4) so why?) through the other LOs, particularly through #SS146-Evaluation.

AI Statement: I used Grammarly to correct grammar mistakes and ChatGPT to find databases online as well as to create my citations.