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Contact between adult children and their divorced parents: Italy in a comparative perspective

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**Contact between adult children and
their divorced parents: Italy in a
comparative perspective**

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Summary

This paper, based on a Multipurpose survey on a large national sample of Italian households which has made possible to analyse parent-child and grandparent-child dyads, explores the impact of marital instability on relationships with adult children and with grandchildren. As in other countries, the impact is more negative in the case of divorce than in case of widowhood and, in both cases, more negative for men than for women. It affects the three-generational relationship and is not compensated by stronger horizontal kinship ties. The impact is most negative in the case of contacts, while in the case of material support it is more neutral – and even positive for widowed parents, confirming the strong role played by need in Mediterranean countries in the case of the latter. Not only divorce/separation, also remarriage has a negative impact on intergenerational contacts. And in this case the impact is stronger for women than for men. An exploratory comparison with countries where divorce rates are higher and have a different gender culture suggests that although the impact of marital instability is negative in both cases, its intensity is higher in Italy. These results offer new insight into the working of “strong family ties”. These ties, particularly in the case of men, are more vulnerable to the dissolution of marital bonds than in countries with “weak family ties”. Finally, family ties are strongly mediated and constructed by women and through relationships between women. When a mother is no longer present alongside the father, even in the case of widowhood, fathers and grandfathers risk weakening the intergenerational link.

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1 Preface

Marital instability has increased throughout Europe since the mid-1960s, albeit at a diverse pace and with varying intensity in the different countries. The number of adults who experienced the break-up of their parents' marriage or partnership while growing up has therefore increased. And a growing number of parents – particularly fathers – has had to learn how to maintain meaningful and lasting contact with their children, notwithstanding the fact that they no longer co-reside with them and in many cases have remarried and formed new families. In developmental psychology terms, the two generations involved have been faced with a developmental task for which there were – and to some degree still are – no established norms and practices.

While a substantial amount of research has been carried out on parent-child relationships in the years immediately subsequent to parental divorce, much fewer studies have addressed its long term consequences for intergenerational relationships. In most cases, marital break-up means that a child has asymmetrical relationships with his/her parents, living with one – usually the mother – and maintaining at best intermittent contact with the other. One might, therefore, hypothesize that this different relational experience while growing up produces different patterns of bonding and relational skills in both parents and children. In particular, the father-child bond and relational framework might be more or less weakened by the experience of divorce, with consequential diminished contact in later life compared both to divorced mothers and to non-divorced fathers. Divorced fathers (and especially those that do not re-partner) together with single men and women might, therefore, face much higher risks of social isolation in later life than men and women who are still married/partnered or are widowed. In fact, research has indicated that the social networks of the elderly are not only strongly age segregated, but are also much more restricted to kin than those of the under-65s (see, e.g., Uhlenberg and De Jong Gierveld 2004). Adult children are often the only non-elderly that belong to these networks, constituting a major part of elderly people's kin alongside the latter's siblings. Moreover, adult children mediate the relationship with the younger generation – that of grandchildren. Marital instability, therefore, and particularly in the case of fathers, is counteracting to a degree the lengthening of intergenerational ties that has been made possible by the increase in life expectancy. While more fathers than a century ago may now, in principle, see their children become fathers themselves and meet all their grandchildren, an increasing proportion of fathers risks not being able to do so because of the weakening of relationships when their children were young.

Marital instability occurs in different social and cultural contexts. In some countries it concerns a substantial share of all marriages, while in others, such as Italy, it involves only a small proportion. Moreover, family cultures differ – as regards intensity of contacts and patterns of interdependence beyond childhood and with respect to the social stigma

attached to divorce across countries and within Europe (see, e.g., Höllinger and Haller 1990, Reher 1998, Tomassini et al. 2004). Children and parents who experience divorce may, therefore, find – and have found thirty or fifty years ago – different cultural resources to deal with it.

In this paper we aim to explore this issue in Italy, a country usually characterized as having a strong family culture and a high density of contacts between kin, the latter also being fostered by a substantial degree of residential proximity between adult children and their parents. Divorce was introduced relatively late in Italy (1970), but marital instability through legal separation had already begun to increase in the mid-1960s; while this trend involved all cohorts of marriage (Barbagli 1990), it still remained at a level well below the European average. In 2003, 26.6% of all marriages ended in separation, compared to 9% in 1980; 13.9% ended in divorce, compared to 3.7% in 1980 (ISTAT 2001, 2005).¹ Thus, people now aged 65 and over belong to the cohorts that first saw an increase in marital instability, which eventually prompted the introduction of divorce in this country. The specific objectives of this paper are, first, to see whether there are different patterns of intergenerational contact and support in Italy between divorced/separated men and women, and between divorced/separated parents and parents that are still married or are widowed. Second, we will examine whether remarriage has a role in generating these differences. Finally, on the basis of existing data and literature, we wish to see whether these patterns differ from, or are similar to, those found to be prevalent in other European countries, such as in Scandinavia, which has a different history of marital instability and also different family arrangements and family culture.

2 State of the art

Even though changing family structures are a common trend across Europe, research on the impact of family break-ups on intergenerational relations has mainly been pursued by American scholars, only recently capturing the attention of European researchers. According to the studies that have been carried out, divorce and separation have a strong impact on intergenerational relations. Divorce weakens parents' relations with their children (Uhlenberg 1994, Lye 1996, Dykstra 1997, White 1994). Children of divorced parents tend to live further away from, have less contact with, and provide less support to their parents. This holds true for both mothers and fathers, but relations between divorced fathers and their children are much weaker than those between children and their divorced mothers (Cooney and Uhlenberg 1990, Seltzer 1991, Eggebeen and Knoester 2001). If the divorce takes place before the child reaches adulthood, parent-child contacts are less

frequent than if divorce happens at a later point in the lifetime of the child (Lye et al. 1995). Custody arrangements of course play an important role in parent-child relations. Given that the custodial parent (or co-resident parent in the case of joint-custody arrangements) is predominantly the mother, children of divorced parents are therefore likely to develop closer ties with their mothers. And fathers who no longer daily co-reside with their children and can no longer benefit from their wives' mediating role risk becoming estranged from their offspring (see review by Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan 1997). In a recent study, Amato (2003) found that 35% of children who were affected by a divorce had a weak relationship with their father. This mainly concerned daughters. Aquilino (1994) found that the strongest decline in parent-child relations occurred between non-custodial fathers and their children. Another US study (Eggebeen and Knoester 2001) confirmed that fathers' behaviour and social networks are particularly sensitive to the presence of children and that this also has lasting consequences later in life. In particular, this study found that the level of involvement with their children has consequences for fathers' lives. The effect is most pervasive for fathers who live with their children for the duration of their growing-up period. For them, involvement is associated "with the nature of kinds of social connections, their family ties and their work lives" (p. 391). But "once men step away from co-residence, the transforming power of fatherhood dissipates" (ibid.). Hence, the circumstance of parental divorce has a lasting effect on intergenerational relations, which might also affect the bonds between grandparents and grandchildren.

A number of studies have also been conducted on the impact of re-partnering on parent-child relationships. A study of a Dutch sample, for instance, found that when a parent not only re-partners, but also lives together with his/her new partner, the quality of his/her relationship with his/her children is negatively affected (De Jong Gierveld and Peeters 2003).

Other changes in patterns of family formation also have an impact on intergenerational relations. Some research has shown that cohabiting couples are significantly less likely than married couples to be in an exchange relationships with their parents. Particularly, cohabiting young adults seem to be much less likely than married or single adults to give and/or receive assistance with household tasks and other kinds of support (Eggebeen 2005). An older study found that they are also less likely to receive financial transfers from their parents (Hao 1996). However, this negative impact of cohabitation on intergenerational support may differ across countries and time, depending on the degree to which cohabitation without marriage is widespread as a pattern of partnering and household formation.

Studies on material (financial, care) support present a slightly different picture to those parent-child contacts and affective support. Parents who live alone, including divorced and separated parents, receive more material support from their children, although these effects are most evident in cases of widowhood and are also stronger for women (Barrett and Lynch 1999; Eggebeen 1992; Roan and Raley 1996; Silverstein, Parrott and Bengtson 1995). Thus, contacts and material support do not seem to follow the same logic. The former seem to respond more to the quality of the relationship, the latter more to need. A

recent study based on SHARE data examined the role of need in prompting material support and also confirmed for Europe these previous findings on support, which had mostly been based on US data (Kalmijn and Saraceno forthcoming). Parents who live without a partner are more likely to receive support from their children. Parents with poor physical health are also supported more often, as are parents with limitations on their daily living capacities. The effect of need is stronger in the Mediterranean countries, including Italy. This study also looked at the interaction with the gender of the parent receiving support and found that gender differences interact with marital status. Among mothers, divorce has a positive effect on support received, whereas among fathers there is a (non-significant) negative effect. Although the difference between these two effects is only marginally significant ($p = .08$), it still suggests that living alone because of divorce has a less positive effect on intergenerational support for fathers than for mothers. In cases of widowhood, by contrast – contrary to the findings of previous studies (Ha, Carr, Utz and Nesse 2006) – the effects are found to be more positive for fathers than for mothers, and this difference is significant. This finding, however, is not surprising, given the emphasis in the SHARE questionnaire on household help, which – as a consequence of the gender division of labour during marriage – is a form of support that older single fathers generally need more than older single mothers. The same study showed that the effect of divorce is positive for mothers and strongly negative for fathers with regard to co-residence with a child. Widowhood also has a positive effect on co-residence, and the effect is stronger for mothers than for fathers. Hence, the findings on gender differences are ambivalent with respect to widowhood. Widowed mothers more often live with their children, but widowed fathers receive more outside support from them.

If these are the effects of parental divorce on the intergenerational exchange of material support, it is also interesting to see how children's divorce affect this exchange. It has been found that the divorce of adult children generally speaking has a positive impact on parent-child relations. In other words, social and financial support from parents to children tends to be stronger when a child divorces, and also when he/she becomes widowed (Kohli 1999; Kohli and Albertini 2007). Moreover, a divorced child's gender has an impact on parental support. Divorced daughters receive more support from their parents, in particular when they have a child (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000; Marks and McLanahan 1993). Divorced sons, by contrast, neither receive nor provide as much help as married sons (Dykstra 1997; Spitze et al. 1994). The impact of children's divorce on their relations with their parents remains rather small, however, compared to the changes in parent-child relations when parents are divorced.

The long-term intergenerational consequences of divorce not only concern parent-child relations. Research has also suggested that there is an intergenerational transmission of divorce from parents to their children. Children of divorced parents are more likely to experience marital break-up (Amato and DeBoer 2001). This has also been confirmed by studies focussed on Central and Eastern Europe (Diekmann and Engelhardt 1999; Manting 1994; Traag et al. 2000).

3 The impact of parents' divorce on their relationship with their adult children in Italy. Preliminary hypotheses

Only a few studies have been carried out on separation and divorce in Italy. The first such study, based on a survey in selected cities and on qualitative interviews, was made in the early nineties (Barbagli and Saraceno 1998). Among other things, it aimed at studying the relationship between non-custodial parents (by and large fathers) and their children two years after separation. The authors found that about 25% of fathers never, or almost never, contacted their child after separation. This percentage was higher among fathers who had re-partnered, as found in other studies, as well as in cases where the mother had re-partnered, among less educated fathers and among fathers living in the south of Italy. Among non-custodial mothers (a tiny minority of all non-custodial parents), the experience of estrangement was very reduced. Finally, this study found that fathers re-partnered more often and more swiftly (even before the waiting period before divorce had expired) than mothers, confirming statistical data on remarriage. This is also true in the case of widowhood (e.g., ISTAT 2007). Furthermore, remarriages are more widespread in the centre-north of Italy than in the south. Evidently, not only age, but also previous marital status plays a different role for women and men on the Italian marriage market. Whether this asymmetry in the likelihood of marrying is due only to the functioning of the marriage market, or also to cultural reasons, should be the object of specific research. Some of the findings presented here suggest, however, that there might also be a role for cultural reasons: that is, for a societal or, better, a family-culture resistance to a parent's, and particularly to a mother's remarriage.

Our hypotheses are the following.

- 1) Material support and contacts respond to different logics: that of need and obligation, on the one hand, and that of closeness, trust and affection, on the other. Contacts are more sensitive than material support to quality of relationship. Therefore, divorced/separated fathers have fewer contacts with their adult children not only than parents who are still married, but also than divorced/separated mothers and widowed fathers. However, since previous research has indicated that children in Italy, as in all Mediterranean countries, are more responsive than elsewhere to their parents' needs (Kalmijn and Saraceno forthcoming), the negative impact of parents' separation/divorce on their ability to receive support is attenuated compared to the negative impact on parent-child contacts.

- 2) Re-cohabitation/remarriage has a negative impact on parent-adult child relationships (on both contact and material support) for both fathers and mothers.
- 3) The weakening of parent-child ties is not compensated by stronger horizontal solidarity (between siblings).
- 4) The weakening of parent-child ties due to separation/divorce also has a negative impact on the three-generation relationship, that is to say, the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

One more general and encompassing hypothesis is that in a society like Italy, which is based on strong family solidarity, there are – or were, in the older generation – high costs for those who break the rules that underpin these ties. This concern not only separation, but to some degree also remarriage, particularly for women, in so far as remarriage (even for widows) visibly severs the “original couple” alliance, while rendering evident the “selfish” needs of the individual.

4 Data and methods

The source of our data is the 2003 ISTAT survey on “Family and Social Subjects” (FSS), which was conducted in 19,227 households for a total of 49,451 individuals (age varies from 0 to 104 years). This survey contained a section, linked to the UNECE Gender and Generation Program, that focuses on kinship networks. Specifically, it collected information on the number of respondents’ siblings and on the number of those siblings still living, on the number of children and on parent/child proximity, on the respondent’s marriage and cohabitation history, including separation, divorce and re-cohabitation/remarriage, on exchanges across the kinship network and so forth.

Since we were interested in reconstructing the intergenerational and, more generally, kinship relations of the older generation according to their marital status, we took a top-down view. That is, we started from the older generation, reconstructing their networks and their perspectives on their networks (on the different generational perspectives, see, for instance, Hagestad 2006). Our sample therefore consisted of all the individuals who at the time of the interview were over 64 years old, and thus born before 1938 (the maximum age we found was 104), for a total of 9,098 respondents. This sample, given the minimum age threshold, is clearly skewed in favour of women: 5,247 compared to 3,851 men. Women

Table 1: Distribution of individuals by “de facto marital status”

Marital status	%	N
Married/cohabiting	60.3	4,699
Separated/divorced	2.1	166
Widowed	35.8	2,789
Remarried/re-partnered	1.8	143
Total	100	7,797

are particularly over-represented among the never married and among the widowed. While the reason for the former is not clear, the reason for the latter lies in the higher longevity of women, coupled with a lower age at marriage. When these cohorts were young, there was an average age differential between spouses of over three and a half years.

Within this broad sample, a significant share of people (86%) has children, for a total of 7,834 individuals. This number also includes a small group (37 respondents) of people who never married but have one or more children. Given their small number, they will not be considered in the analysis. Our actual sample is therefore composed of 7,797 individuals. About 84% of these respondents also have at least one grandchild.

We then created the following “de facto” marital status categories: a) never married; a) married or cohabiting with a partner; c) widowed; d) separated/divorced; e) remarried/re-partnered (see Table 1).² The mean age is over 74; but the separated/divorced are slightly younger (71.5), while the widowed are by far the oldest (77.8), followed by the remarried (73.4) and the married (72.3).

The percentage of divorced/separated is, as expected, relatively small, given the fact that these are the first cohorts to have experienced both the rise in separation and the introduction of divorce in Italian legislation when they were already adults and – for the most part – married. Those who separated and divorced, therefore, were to some degree social innovators.

The FSS contains information both on contacts and on exchange of material support. As regards contacts, we have information on the frequency of face-to-face and telephone contact between the interviewed individual and non-co-residing children, grandchildren and siblings.³ Thus, when analyzing contact, the parent-child (/grandchild/sibling) dyad is the unit of analysis.⁴ After presenting some descriptive analyses, we test the effect of parents’ de facto marital status on the frequency of contact with children (/grandchildren/siblings) using multinomial regression analysis. In particular, we control the relationship in accordance with the following parental characteristics: gender, birth cohort, living arrangement, educational level, limitations on daily living activities. Moreover, children’s age and gender are considered. Another relevant variable that should be controlled is geographical distance between parent and child. Proximity can, in fact, play an important

role in explaining contact behaviour.⁵ Because this would introduce a problem of endogeneity in our models, we test the permanence of the observed effects once this variable is introduced, but we do not include it in our final models. It is worth noting that the results of our model remain unchanged when we introduce this variable, although the pseudo R² of the models have clearly substantially increased. The final step in our analysis is to check if the observed effect of marital status on parent-child contact varies according to the parent's gender. This is done by introducing an interaction between the two variables. Since in many cases the substantial meaning of the estimated parameters of the fitted models is not immediately apparent, we will also present the results in terms of the models' predicted probabilities for the different contact behaviours in a hypothetical case. This will allow us to better evaluate not only the direction of the marital status effect, but also its size.

With regard to material support which is given and received, the format in which the information was collected is slightly different. Information on caring for grandchildren was collected separately for all individuals with at least one grandchild aged under 14. The information was collected for up to three non-co-residing grandchildren. Thus, the analyses utilize the grandparent-grandchild dyads as unit of analysis. For the other forms of material support, both given and received, we only have information at the level of the respondent. We know if he/she received/gave material support from/to someone in the four weeks preceding the interview. We also know the nature of his/her relationship with the donor(s)/receiver(s) (e.g., child, sibling, mother, etc.). But we do not know to/from which particular child/grandchild support was given/received. In this case, therefore, the unit of analysis is the respondent, not the dyad. Furthermore, when performing multivariate analysis (by means of logistic regression) on the likelihood of receiving material support from children, we can control the effect of marital status only for (grand)parent characteristics. Again the regression results are also presented in terms of the model's predicted probabilities.

For our comparative exercise, in addition to what we know from the literature, we used the SHARE data for Denmark and Sweden on parent-adult children contacts. These are two countries with a very different family culture and "divorce history" to that found in Italy. The format of the questions and the data on this issue is actually very similar in the two surveys, which allow quite a good level of comparability. The number of divorced in the samples of the two countries is also substantial enough to support the analysis (which is not the case for other countries).

5 Results

5.1 Living with and living near one's own children: the impact of marital status

As it is well known, in Italy children leave the parental home comparatively late – at around age 30 for daughters and age 32 for sons. This means that the probability that the elderly spend at least part of their old-age years with one or more co-resident children is higher than the average for Europe. This probability is distributed differently across marital statuses, however, as indicated in Table 2. Widowed parents, notwithstanding their comparatively older age, have a higher probability of still having all, or some, of their children at home; divorced and remarried parents, notwithstanding their comparatively younger age, have the lowest probability of co-residing with a child. This is in part due to the fact that among divorced parents there are those who became non-co-residing parents at the moment of separation, interrupting the co-residence often well before their children came of age. But it might also suggest that children of divorced and remarried parents leave the parental household earlier than other children. The numbers are too small to sustain further explorations.

In Italy, children not only leave the parental home comparatively late, but they also tend to live near their parents. One reason is that parents often financially support their children to buy an apartment (Tomassini, Wolf and Rosina 2003). Once again, the parents' marital status, unsurprisingly, makes a difference to the likelihood of a child living nearby, as indicated in Table 3, which presents data on the proximity between parents and non-co-residing children up to the third child (for a total of 14,309 dyads). Children of divorced parents tend to live at a greater distance away than children of parents who are still married. The main reason is probably that the parents moved geographically apart after separation/divorce, well before the child formed his/her own household. In any case, it means that the great resource of support and contact provided by geographical proximity is, for at least one parent, less available in cases of divorce.

Table 2: Residential situation of children by parents' marital status. Percentages

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered	Total
Only co-residing children	8	7	9	6	8
Both co-residing and non-co-residing children	24	14	28	22	25
Only non-co-residing children	68	80	63	72	66
Total (N)	4,699	166	2,789	143	7,797
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 3: Degree of proximity of non-co-residing children by respondent's marital status. Percentages

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered	Total
Same building	12	8	13	6	12
<1km	26	13	25	17	25
Same municipality	25	27	24	27	25
Another municipality <16km	12	16	12	15	12
Another municipality 16-50km	9	11	9	12	9
Another municipality >50 km	13	16	14	14	13
Abroad	3	9	4	10	3
Total	8,626	290	5,133	260	14,309
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

5.2 The impact of divorce and remarriage on parent-child and grandparent-grandchild contact

Our main hypothesis is that parental divorce can have a long-term impact on parent-child, and indirectly on grandparent-grandchild relationships and that this impact is more negative in the case of fathers and grandfathers. In order to test it, we use as an indicator the frequency of contact between parents and children, and grandparents and grandchildren. Our unit of analysis is always the parent-child (or grandparent-grandchild) dyad.

In the questionnaire, there were two measures of contact: face to face and by telephone. For our indicator, we considered them jointly. We are well aware that the two ways of keeping in contact are not the same (and that the former is greatly dependent on proximity, while the latter may be more difficult for those who are older and less educated). Nonetheless, we believe we can use them as a broad indicator of relationship maintenance. We reduced the various possibilities to three: a) often/systematically, which includes contact more often than once a month; b) monthly; c) rarely/never. The descriptive statistics for parent-child contact are shown in Table 4. The “privileged” situation of parents who are still married compared to all others, including the widowed, emerges clearly. Symmetrically, the unfavourable situation of divorced, and even more so of remarried parents, emerges. Not only are the latter less likely to have co-residing children and not only do their children live further away, but they also have less contact of any kind. In fact, even taking telephone contact into account, they still have less contact overall. Confirming our general hypothesis, as well as the findings of the Dutch study by De Jong Gierveld and Peeters (2003), remarriage even more so than divorce has, at least for these cohorts, a negative impact on parent-child relations. The presence of another partner seems to play a stronger negative role than the break-up of the parental couple. And this negative role is present both in cases of remarriage following divorce and in cases of remarriage following widowhood.

The regression analysis allows us, first, to control the relationship between the parents’ de facto civil status and the frequency of parent-child contact by the other main characteristics for parents and children and, second, to better understand how gender interacts with marital status. The regression results – reported in the Appendix – clearly indicate the following: (i) Contact is considered to be “women’s business”. Mothers are much more likely than fathers to enjoy daily or weekly contact (vs. monthly or less) with their children. At the same time, parent-daughter contacts are much more frequent than parent-son contacts. (ii) Parents who co-reside with a child have fewer contacts with their non-co-residing children. This, however, is not the case when they co-reside with persons other than their own child. This finding suggests that a sort of division of emotional, not only practical, labour occurs among children, with the child still at home performing (but also possibly benefiting from) most of it. It may also be that a parent with no co-resident child, even if not living alone, is perceived as more in need of keeping in contact. (iii) The

Table 4: Frequency of contact (face to face or by telephone) with children according to parental status. Percentages

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered	Total
Often/regularly	77	68	69	59	73
Monthly	20	17	23	23	21
Rarely/never	3	15	8	18	5
Total (N)	8,626	290	5,133	260	14,309
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

parent's educational level seems not to play a major role. At the same time, those who do not have any – not even compulsory – schooling seem to have much weaker ties with their non-co-residing children than those with a university degree. (iv) Parents' limitations in the performance of daily activities seem to play a negative role with respect to the quality of the relationship with their children, to the extent that they reduce the frequency of contacts. (v) Most importantly, we find a confirmation of the very negative role played by divorce and remarriage on intergenerational relations. This negative effect varies a lot, however, depending on the age of the child at the time of divorce. As is shown in Model 3, the relative risk ratio for rare contact vs. frequent contact – with reference to still-married parents – is three to four times higher for parent-child dyads that experienced divorce when the child was very young than for other divorced parents. By contrast, the (relatively) small negative effect of widowhood on parent-child contact is basically the same irrespective of the age of the child at the time one parent died. Finally, the negative effect of marital disruption varies significantly according to the gender of the divorcee.⁶

In order to facilitate the reading of the results, in Table 5 we present the predicted probabilities for the different possible frequencies of parent-child contact according to the parents' civil status and gender. These probabilities are calculated for a hypothetical case.⁷ These results clearly indicate that while widowed fathers have an only marginally higher probability of having less contact with their children than fathers who are still married, this probability increases by 10 percentage points in the case of divorced and remarried fathers. For mothers, widowhood does not have a negative impact, while the negative impact both of divorce and remarriage is much more limited (6-5 percentage points) as regards the risk of having rare or no contact. But re-partnered mothers run a much higher risk of reducing the intensity of contact: the probability of having frequent contact decreases by 14 percentage points compared to mothers who are still married, and by 12 percentage points compared to divorced mothers. In other words, remarried mothers seem to risk losing their status as “deserving” frequent contact more than divorced mothers.

Table 5: Probability that fathers and mothers will have contact with a child by marital status of the former. Parent-child dyads.

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered
Fathers				
Often/regularly	86	71	81	74
Monthly	12	17	14	14
Rarely/never	2	12	4	12
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mothers				
Often/regularly	87	85	85	73
Monthly	11	7	13	20
Rarely/never	2	8	2	7
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

To what extent are these results specific to the Italian case, that is, dependent on the fact that Italy is a country characterized both by strong family ties and by low marriage instability rates? A very quick glance at some descriptive statistics derived from data from the first wave of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (see Table 6) reveals that divorce also has a negative effect on the frequency of parent-child contact in two countries that are deemed to have a family culture quite different to Italy's: Sweden and Denmark. Nonetheless, the relative gap between married and divorced parents is quite different. In Italy, in fact, the probability of having very sporadic contact with one's children is five times higher for divorced individuals than for parents who are still married (see Table 4 above); in the two Nordic countries the same ratio is equal to 1.4. The relative advantage of divorced mothers compared to divorced fathers is confirmed. It seems that, although in the two Scandinavian countries parent-adult children contacts are less frequent overall than in Italy, divorce disrupts them to a lesser degree, and less gender-asymmetrically, than in Italy.

We now turn to contact between grandparents and grandchildren. The results of the regression analysis confirm what has generally been found for parent-child contact. In particular, (i) grandparents' limitations in carrying out daily activities represent an obstacle to their contact with grandchildren; (ii) grandmothers more than grandfathers maintain frequent contact with grandchildren even if, contrary to what was observed for parent-child relations, the grandchildren's gender does not play a significant role in explaining contact behaviour. (iii) the negative impact of widowhood and divorce is also confirmed in the case of grandchildren and, most notably, this effect interacts with the

Table 6: Frequency of contacts (face to face, by telephone or by mail) with children according to parental status. Sweden and Denmark. Parent-child dyads. Percentages

Sweden & Denmark	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Only divorced women	Only widowed women
Several times a week	17	15	20	18	22
One to four times a month	40	24	28	26	30
Rarely/never	43	61	52	56	48
Total (N)	2,882	318	1,051	195	787
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100

Weighted results.

grandparent's gender, strengthening the relative disadvantage of grandfathers. As hypothesized, therefore, parental divorce (as well as remarriage) has an impact that goes far beyond the parent-child dyad in that it also affects three-generational relationships. This means not only that a parent loses, or weakens, his/her access to grandchildren, but that grandchildren also lose access to a grandparent.

Table 7 shows the probabilities for the frequency of contact predicted by our regression model in the usual hypothetical case. First, one should note here that there is a relevant negative impact not only of divorce and remarriage, but also of widowhood, particularly for men. Since widowed individuals are on average older, their grandchildren are more likely to be adolescents or young adults themselves, who are in the process of distancing themselves from family. Moreover, particularly in the case of widowed older men, the lack of a couple, or better of a woman, who performs "kin work", may reduce opportunities to meet the larger family. But this role cannot be surrogated by another wife or companion. On the contrary, the presence of a new companion causes further estrangement. Once again, women seem to have better access to their grandchildren than men, even when they are divorced or widowed. But if they remarry or re-partner, they fare much worse than divorced mothers and slightly worse than remarried fathers, confirming our hypothesis that – at least for these cohorts – there is a cultural resistance against remarriage which is stronger in the case of women.

Table 7: Probability that grandfathers and grandmothers have contact with a grandchild by marital status of the former. Grandparent-grandchild dyads.

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered
Grandfathers				
Often/regularly	77	51	69	57
Monthly	20	28	25	24
Rarely/never	3	21	6	19
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Grandmothers				
Often/regularly	78	79	74	58
Monthly	19	8	21	18
Rarely/never	4	13	5	24
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

5.3 The horizontal kin network

Do divorce and remarriage weaken only the downward vertical ties of generations or also the horizontal ties of siblings? Previous research on marital instability in Italy (Barbagli and Saraceno 1998) indicates that separation/divorce ruptures most acquired kin ties, but to a large degree strengthens those to one's own family, particularly to one's own parents. Parents usually rally to the support of the separated child: they offer more or less temporary accommodation, financial support, childcare. The published findings of the ISTAT survey we use here with regard to support given by parents to separated children also confirm this (ISTAT 2006). However, the study by Barbagli and Saraceno also revealed that family members were not the first port of call for persons who were thinking of separating. And family judgment was perceived as a possibly threat. Asking for material and emotional support seemed to respond to two different logics. Given the age of our sample, only a minority has parents who are still alive, and when they are still alive they are more often a source of demand than a provider of emotional and other support. We focus therefore on the relationship with siblings. Unlike the case of children and grandchildren, the questionnaire asked only about face-to-face contact with siblings. Given the fact that the elderly might have some mobility constraints and that life may have led them to live in different parts of the country, this is a very crude indicator of contact. But interesting differences between

Table 8: Probability that elderly men and women see their siblings, according to marital status. Siblings dyads. Regression results

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered
Men				
Often/regularly	34	27	30	23
Monthly	21	20	20	23
Rarely/never	45	53	50	54
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Women				
Often/regularly	33	21	31	10
Monthly	21	7	20	22
Rarely/never	46	72	49	68
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

marital statuses as well as between men and women emerge nonetheless (see Table 8). First of all, individuals who are still married show the greatest intensity of contact with their siblings compared to all other marital statuses. The widowed men, in this case, are more similar to the divorced men than to the married men, suggesting that in a society based on families and marriage, no longer belonging to a couple excludes one from the social life even of family couples. Second, separated/divorced women appear to be the group most at risk of isolation within the sibling network, much more than widows and remarried women and, also, than widowed, divorced and re-partnered men. At least for these cohorts of men and, particularly, women, obtaining a separation seems to have caused a weakening or interruption of their horizontal ties. Only longitudinal data, of course, can tell us whether this weakening is the consequence of an estrangement intervening at the moment of separation and because of the separation or rather, as in the case of widowhood, is the cumulative consequence of not being part of a couple any longer. In any case, the family networks of divorced people seem to be more reduced than those of the still married on both the vertical and the horizontal axes.

5.4 Less contact but more material support for parents who are no longer married? The logic of need

If we turn to material support, the picture appears somewhat different. Under material support, both given and received, we have included help with household chores, bureaucratic tasks, personal care and keeping company. We have excluded financial help and the provision of material goods (food, clothes). Finally, we have considered help in the care of grandchildren separately. We also looked at the degree to which material support between generations is symmetrical or asymmetrical and, in the latter case, in what direction it is provided and whether there are differences according to the parent's civil status.

Table 9 reports the percentage of elderly individuals receiving/giving some type of material support from/to non-co-residing children, grandchildren and the overall range of relatives. Three clear indications emerge. First, the large part of support, as of contacts, involves the intergenerational lineage. The contribution of other relatives is minimal. Second, widowhood has a quite relevant activating effect on material support. Widowed parents have fewer contacts with children, grandchildren and siblings than parents who are still married, but they seem to be acknowledged as being in greater need of material support. Third, the negative effect of divorce and of re-partnership seems to be much smaller than in the case of contact. We should also note that not only widow(er)s enjoy a much higher probability of receiving support from some of their children. They also are the only group for which the likelihood of support from grandchildren is relevant. All in all, 17% of widowed individuals in our sample had received some form of material support in the previous four weeks from someone in the two following generations. The value is equal to 7.3%, 4.5% and 6.4%, respectively, for still-married, divorced and re-partnered parents. In this case, unlike the case of contact, re-partnered individuals seem to fare slightly better than the divorced.

A different pattern seems to emerge when considering the material support given: still-married parents are those most likely to give to their children, followed at a very short distance by divorced and widowed parents, whereas a markedly lower level is found for re-partnered individuals. More relevant differences between the different groups emerge when help given to grandchildren is considered. While about 10% of married individuals provide material support to their grandchildren, the share of donors is much lower among divorced and widowed grandparents. Interestingly, widowhood appears to most inhibit the capacity of elderly persons to provide material support – excluding childcare and financial help – to grandchildren, probably because this group of parents has a higher average age. A similar pattern is observed when considering help given to someone in the overall range of relatives.

Table 9: Material support given and received from/to children and grandchildren according to marital status. Percentages

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered
Received support from				
Children (1)	6.4	3.2	17.0	5.2
Grandchildren (2)	0.8	-	3.6	-
Children or grandchildren (3)	6.5	3.2	17.2	5.2
Any relative	7.3	4.5	18.1	6.4
Given support to				
Children (1)	6.6	5.8	5.5	0.7
Grandchildren (2)	10.1	6.6	4.8	5.9
Children or grandchildren (3)	13.9	11.0	8.5	5.2
Any relative	15.8	12.5	9.3	10.8
N (1)	4,320	155	2,535	135
N (2)	3,859	122	2,346	119
N (3)	4,361	155	2,600	135
N (total)	5,056	200	3,077	157

(1) Condition: Respondent has at least one non-co-resident child.

(2) Condition: Respondent has at least one non-co-resident grandchild.

(3) Condition: Respondent has at least one non-co-resident child or grandchild.

Overall, these data seem to indicate that, unlike what was observed for contact, widowhood “attracts” support from the following generations, while the disadvantage of divorce appears attenuated. The logic behind the two exchanges/relations (i.e., contact vs. help) seems to be markedly different. Particularly, material support seems to be driven mainly by the logic of need, to some degree irrespective of the quality of the relationship. These findings seem to confirm at the Italian level not only what was found by Kalmijn and Saraceno (forthcoming) at the European level, but also the findings of other studies (see, e.g., Lewis and Meredith 1988).

When we jointly consider the material support given and received to/from children or grandchildren, the data show – as already found in other comparative studies on support (e.g., Saraceno et al. 2005) – acknowledged reciprocity in the support exchange concerns only a very small percentage (less than 1%) of the sample. The best part of the elderly population (about 80%) is not integrated to any extent in a network of informal support exchange, declaring that they have neither given nor received any help to/from the following generations in the four weeks preceding the interview. One should keep in mind that we are concerned here with help exchanged between non-co-residing kin. Thus,

support given and received between co-residing kin and through the means of co-residence is not accounted for here. Furthermore, four weeks may be too short a period for properly assessing the existence of a support network for those who are generally self-sufficient. At the same time, differences by marital status suggest that some kind of selection is in operation. Widowed parents, although they are more likely to have a co-residing child, are also more likely to receive external support. By contrast, the re-partnered, although they are least likely to co-reside with a child, are also most likely (90%) not to have been involved in any kind of support exchange. We utilize a logistic regression model to test the actual impact of marital status on support, and particularly on the likelihood of receiving it from at least one non-co-residing child and grandchild given other characteristics of the respondent (age, health conditions, gender). The results of this analysis (see Appendix) seem to largely confirm what has been previously found at the European level. Widowhood has a very strong activating affect on material support, and this is more true for men than for women. It is as if it were “acknowledged” that men’s socially created inabilities (e.g., in ironing, cooking, administration of daily life) put them in a particularly critical situation when their wife passes away. And for this reason they, more than widows, are believed to deserve special attention and material support. Divorce and remarriage, by contrast, do not activate the social support of the succeeding generations; once more, as for contact, the effect on intergenerational relations seems to be negative. There is, however, an important difference compared to what has been observed for contact: the estimated negative parameters of the model for divorce and remarriage are not statistically significant, not even at a marginal level. In other words, we do not have strong evidence for arguing that divorced or remarried parents have a lower probability of receiving their children’s support than parents who have remained married. Thus, in contrasting these latter results with what has been shown for contact, we could argue that when the need arises, children feel an obligation to provide support irrespective of the quality of the parent-child relationship.

5.5 Care for grandchildren

Grandparents, and particularly grandmothers, are perceived as a crucial childcare resource in Italy – in emergencies, but also at the everyday level, either to substitute for lacking services or to supplement them. The ISTAT survey includes a specific question aimed at assessing how many grandparents take care of their grandchildren aged under 13 and with what intensity. Because the age bracket specified for the children is very broad – including children of both kindergarten and school age⁸ – it is not possible to distinguish between full-time and part-time care. In order to differentiate between regular and occasional/

Table 10: Degree to which grandparents take care of their grandchildren aged under 13 by marital status. Grandparent/grandchild dyads. Percentages*

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered	Total
Regularly	30	12	22	7	28
Occasionally	47	50	44	38	46
Never	22	38	34	55	26
Total (N)	4,681	122	1,521	122	6,446
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

* Multiple answers were possible. We selected the one falling in the highest frequency category.

emergency childcare, we reclassified all the answers in three modalities: (i) when parents are at work; (ii) in other circumstances (including when the child is sick or the childcare facility is closed for holidays and other emergencies); (iii) never.

The results are a further confirmation of what emerged for contacts and material support given to grandchildren, but are consequently slightly different from what was observed for material support given to children: divorced/separated and remarried grandparents provide significantly less grandchild care than those who are still married (Table 10). Widowed grandparents also provide slightly less childcare, but this may be an effect of age, since widowed grandparents are on average older.

Although childcare is a form of material support, it also involves relations of trust and affection between parents and grandparents. It is, therefore, highly sensitive to the quality of relationships. Moreover, since it is often a shared task between women in the generational chain, the lack of a woman's presence may have a negative effect particularly for widowed grandfathers, and in cases of divorce it may reduce the option of childcare being shared with the paternal grandmother. The results of the regression analysis confirm this (see Appendix and Table 11). Divorced and remarried grandparents have a much higher probability of never vs. regularly performing childcare, as well as performing it occasionally vs. regularly. But this negative impact is much stronger for grandfathers than for grandmothers. It might also be worthwhile noting that, apart from civil status, level of education also has an impact on the likelihood of a grandparent performing childcare, and this time counter-intuitively. Less educated grandparents are least likely to perform childcare regularly as against never or occasionally. This finding might have two different explanations that would require a further analysis. On the one hand, it may point to the issue of trust. Since in this generation young parents are on average more educated than their parents, they might not wish to entrust everyday care and education of their children to a less educated grandparent. On the other hand, in Italy mothers' employment is highest

Table 11: Probability that grandparents take care more or less regularly of their grandchildren aged under 13, by marital status. Grandparent/grandchild dyads. Regression results

	Partnered	Divorced	Widowed	Re-partnered
Grandfather				
Regularly	36	6	18	6
Occasionally	47	29	52	44
Never	17	64	30	50
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Grandmother				
Regularly	35	22	33	28
Occasionally	46	70	46	29
Never	19	8	21	43
Total %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

among the better educated, who are also likely to have better educated parents. Since we defined regular help in childcare as providing it when parents are at work, there may be a selection mechanism operating here. Table 11 shows the predicted probabilities of providing grandchild care on a regular, occasional or never basis for a hypothetical case.⁹ The most striking difference concerns divorced and remarried grandfathers compared to grandfathers who are still married. But it is also noticeable for widowed grandfathers. This confirms that childcare is a highly gendered activity also in phases of life in which paid work no longer organizes men's daily life. But it also confirms that when a man lacks the mediation of the mother of his child, he is likely to weaken the opportunities for establishing a sustained relationship through routine interaction.

6 Conclusion

In this study, we have analyzed the impact of marital dissolution on intergenerational relationships in old age in a country characterized by strong family ties. We have found, as expected, that the impact is more negative in the case of divorce than in case of widowhood and, in both cases, more negative for men than for women. It affects the three-generational relationship and is not compensated for by stronger horizontal kinship ties. We also found that the impact is most negative in the case of contacts, while in the case of material support it is more neutral – and even positive for widowed parents. This confirms the strong role played by need in Mediterranean countries in the case of the latter. This finding is also confirmed by the fact that parents' limitations in carrying out daily living activities have a negative effect on contact, but a positive one on support. Finally, we found that remarriage also has a negative impact, even if it is prompted by widowhood rather than by divorce. And the impact is stronger for women than for men.

Taken together, these findings are not very different to those of studies carried out in other countries with different family cultures and a longer and more widespread history of marital instability. However, a preliminary comparison with two Nordic countries – Sweden and Denmark – seems to suggest a much stronger negative effect of divorce in Italy than in these two countries, which have a more “established divorce history” and where households are less strongly embedded in kinship networks. From this dual perspective – an overall similarity in the direction of impact, but a higher intensity – these results offer new insight into the working of “strong family ties”. These ties, particularly in the case of men, are more vulnerable to the dissolution of marital bonds than in countries with “weak family ties”. At the same time, although in this case we do not have comparative data, the vulnerability of those who violate the norm of marital loyalty, particularly women, seems to extend to hostility to remarriage even in the case of widowhood, at least where there are children. One marriage, especially for women, should be enough. A symmetrical explanation might be that those who remarry/re-partner have on average a weaker attachment to their first family. Finally, family ties are strongly mediated and constructed by women and through relationships between women. When a mother is no longer present alongside the father, even in the case of widowhood, fathers and grandfathers risk weakening the intergenerational link. Whether these hidden rules of the working of strong family ties are specific to the age group that first experienced an increase in marriage instability and the legalization of divorce, or are still also operating for the younger cohort, is a question that must be left to future research.

Notes

- ¹ Marital breakup is a two-step process in Italy. Before divorcing, a couple must first obtain a legal separation and then remain in this status for at least three years. Only about half of all separations eventually ends in divorce; the remaining couples remain legally separated.
- ² We did not distinguish between married and cohabiting because cohabitation is rare in Italy in these cohorts. We also did not distinguish between separation and divorce, in view of the two-step process of marital dissolution in Italy. There is no double counting, however, since one is either divorced or separated. We also did not distinguish, given the small number of cases, between remarried/re-partnered after divorce and remarried/re-partnered after separation. But it should be kept in mind that in this group the large majority of cases (107 out of 157) are people whose previous marital status was widowed and not divorced/separated.
- ³ This information is available for a maximum of three children/grandchildren/siblings. Where there were more than three, those living closest to the interviewee were selected. We combine the two types of contact in one variable. More information on how we generate this combined variable is available in the Appendix. For siblings, only information on face-to-face contact is available.
- ⁴ Since dyads are not independent, all the standard errors of the estimated parameters are corrected for clustering of cases within households.
- ⁵ Given that we consider telephone contact as well as face-to-face contact, this issue might not be very relevant for our analysis.
- ⁶ Due to the low number of cases, when considering the interactions between parents' gender and marital status we cannot simultaneously take into account the age of the child at the time of marital disruption.
- ⁷ Characteristics of the hypothetical case: parent aged between 70 and 74, no other co-residing individuals besides the partner (for couples only), secondary school educational level, no daily activity limitations, child's gender female, age of child average.
- ⁸ Children start elementary school at age six in Italy, while about 90% of all children aged three to five are in kindergarten. Thus, full-time care would concern only the under-threes. In the questionnaire, there was also a set of questions addressed to parents of small children asking whether they availed of a child-care service and, if not, who took care of the children, and another symmetrical question addressed to grandparents. We cannot use these questions here, however, because when the question was addressed to young parents the civil status of – caring or not caring – grandparents was not defined.
- ⁹ Characteristics of the hypothetical case: Age 70-74, no other co-residing person apart from the spouse for those still married, secondary education, gender of own child female, gender of grandchild female.

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Statistical Appendix

The three levels of contact variable

	<i>Phone contact</i>					
<i>Face-to-face contact</i>	Daily	Several times a week	Once a week	Several times a month (less than 4)	Some times a year	Never
Daily	often	often	often	often	monthly	monthly
Several times a week	often	often	often	often	monthly	monthly
Once a week	often	often	often	often	monthly	monthly
Several times a month (less than 4)	often	often	often	monthly	rarely	rarely
Some times a year	monthly	monthly	monthly	rarely	rarely	rarely
Never	monthly	monthly	monthly	rarely	rarely	rarely

Parent-child contact regression results (RRR)

		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		Monthly vs. Often	Rarely vs. Often	Monthly vs. Often	Rarely vs. Often	Monthly vs. Often	Rarely vs. Often
De facto civil status of parent (ref. in couple)	Divorced >13	1.075	6.481**	1.635	8.420**	1.025	5.585**
	7-13					1.895	5.232*
	0-6					0.533	16.605**
Widowed	>13	1.183*	1.830**	1.212	2.566**	1.172*	1.762**
	7-13					1.101	2.388**
	0-6					1.696*	2.313*
Re-partnered	>13	1.496*	6.976**	1.347	8.010**	1.303	6.800**
	7-13					3.716**	6.041**
	0-6					4.106	23.165**
Gender of parent (ref. male)	Female	0.872**	0.739**	0.890**	0.983	0.865**	0.737**
Age of parent (ref. 65-69)	70-74	0.893	1.188	0.897	1.194	0.897	1.163
	75-79	0.966	1.200	0.968	1.217	0.970	1.177
	80+	1.029	1.501	1.032	1.537*	1.029	1.442
Living with (ref. alone)	Other people, of whom at least one is a child	1.094	2.344**	1.096	2.366**	1.095	2.347**
	Other people	1.326	1.183	1.339	1.196	1.333	1.188
Educational level of parent (ref. tertiary)	Upper secondary	0.820	0.909	0.821	0.894	0.808	0.907
	Lower secondary	0.801	0.792	0.803	0.792	0.795	0.801
	Primary	1.112	1.037	1.113	1.026	1.104	1.044
	None	1.663**	1.922	1.666**	1.884	1.650**	1.920
Limitations on daily living activities (ref. no)	Yes, sometimes	0.923	1.378*	0.924	1.364*	0.927	1.387*
	Yes, always	1.192*	1.596**	1.193*	1.576**	1.197*	1.601**
Gender of child (ref. male)	Female	0.697**	0.687**	0.697**	0.687**	0.696**	0.687**
Age of child		1.005	1.016	1.006	1.016	1.006	1.018*
Interactions civil status * gender	Divorced*Women			0.379*	0.566		
	Widowed*Women			0.960	0.569**		
	Re-partnered*women			1.542	0.611		
	Observations	14309	14309	14309	14309	14309	14309

Grandparent-grandchild contact regression results (RRR)

		Model 1		Model 2	
		Monthly vs. Often	Rarely vs. Often	Monthly vs. Often	Rarely vs. Often
De facto civil status of grandparent (ref. in couple)	Divorced	1.186	3.927**	2.185*	8.845**
	Widowed	1.259**	1.614**	1.389**	1.855**
	Re-partnered	1.553*	7.397**	1.643*	7.280**
Gender of grandparent (ref. male)	Female	0.877**	0.918	0.932	1.030
Age of grandparent (ref. 65-69)	70-74	0.896	1.005	0.901	1.027
	75-79	1.018	1.291	1.024	1.313
	80+	1.236*	1.523*	1.244*	1.554**
Living with (ref. alone)	Other people, of whom at least one is a child	1.042	1.417**	1.046	1.426**
	Other people	0.990	1.377	1.000	1.424
Educational level of grandparent (ref. tertiary)	Upper secondary	0.858	0.799	0.865	0.816
	Lower secondary	0.809	0.840	0.818	0.861
	Primary	1.119	1.048	1.126	1.070
	None	1.436	1.804	1.443	1.842
Limitations on daily living activities (ref. no)	Yes, sometimes	1.218*	1.440**	1.212*	1.433**
	Yes, always	1.171	1.687**	1.166	1.682**
Gender of grandchild (ref. male)	Female	0.963	0.911	0.964	0.913
Age of grandchild		0.994	1.039**	0.994	1.039**
Interactions civil status * gender	Divorced*Women			0.327*	0.237**
	Widowed*Women			0.862	0.799
	Re-partnered*women			0.791	1.202
	Observations	15558	15558	15558	15558

Help from children or grandchildren

De facto civil status of grandparent (ref. in couple)	Divorced	0.496	0.845
	Widowed	1.939**	2.631**
	Re-partnered	0.684	0.655
Gender of grandparent (ref. male)	Female	1.039	1.273**
Age of grandparent (ref. 65-69)	70-74	1.704**	1.717**
	75-79	2.245**	2.274**
	80+	3.095**	3.149**
Living with (ref. alone)	Other people, of whom at least one is a child	0.230**	0.232**
	Other people	0.388**	0.394**
Educational level of grandparent (ref. tertiary)	Upper secondary	1.147	1.126
	Lower secondary	1.123	1.117
	Primary	1.648	1.630
	None	2.084*	2.053
Limitations on daily living activities (ref. no)	Yes, sometimes	2.804**	2.801**
	Yes, always	3.617**	3.602**
Interactions civil status * gender	Divorced*Women		0.340
	Widowed*Women		0.629**
	Re-partnered*women		1.426
	Observations	7218	7218

Care for grandchildren

		Model 1		Model 2	
		Never vs. Regularly	Occasionally vs. Regularly	Never vs. Regularly	Occasionally vs. Regularly
De facto civil status of grandparent (ref. in couple)	Divorced	5.678**	2.840**	21.292**	3.470
	Widowed	1.585**	1.228	3.619**	2.199**
	Re-partnered	10.047**	3.282*	16.982**	5.396**
Gender of grandparent (ref. male)	Female				
Age of grandparent (ref. 65-69)	70-74	1.312*	0.973	1.323*	0.965
	75-79	1.904**	1.214	1.934**	1.225
	80+	4.129**	1.441	4.214**	1.443
Living with (ref. alone)	Other people, of whom at least one is a child	1.189	1.221	1.222	1.236
	Other people	2.034	1.719	2.004	1.730
Educational level of grandparent (ref. tertiary)	Upper secondary	0.978	0.949	0.959	0.933
	Lower secondary	0.934	1.070	0.941	1.061
	Primary	1.104	0.989	1.093	0.983
	None	2.642**	1.396	2.624**	1.388
Limitations on daily living activities (ref. no)	Yes, sometimes	2.044**	1.303	2.008**	1.307
	Yes, always	3.788**	1.335	3.728**	1.326
Gender of grandchild (ref. male)	Female	1.093	1.138	1.092	1.138
Age of grandchild		1.054**	1.048**	1.057**	1.048**
Interactions civil status * gender	Divorced*Women			0.033**	0.726
	Widowed*Women			0.327**	0.484**
	Re-partnered*women			0.175*	0.151**
	Observations	6446	6446	6446	6446

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