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“The fourth commandment effect”: church attendance and intergenerational support in late parent-child relationships

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“The fourth commandment effect”: Church attendance and intergenerational support in late parent-child relationships

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Manuscripts

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3 **“The fourth commandment effect”: Church attendance and intergenerational support**
4 **in late parent-child relationships**
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8
9 **Abstract**
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11 We examine whether church attendance is related to intergenerational support from children
12 to older parents in Italy. First, we focus on the role of church attendance on different forms of
13 assistance, by distinguishing between practical support and personal assistance. Second, we
14 attempt to disentangle the role of church attendance from that of traditionalism. We analyse
15 data from the ISTAT survey “Family and Social Subject” 2003 using multinomial logistic
16 regression models and the KHB method for the decomposition of direct and indirect effects.
17 Results show the existence of an association between church attendance and the probability of
18 providing practical support to older parents, whereas there is no association with personal
19 assistance. Regular churchgoing daughters are more likely to provide practical support to their
20 parents than the non-religious, with occasional churchgoers falling somewhere in between.
21 We find little support to the hypothesis that the association between religious practices and
22 intergenerational support is explained by traditional family attitudes, although more
23 traditional children are more likely to live with their parents. In the discussion, we argue that
24 church attendance offers the opportunity for adult daughters to learn pro-family teachings that
25 are positively related to supportive behaviours in later life.
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38 **Keywords**
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40 Religiosity, Family relations, Intergenerational solidarity, Traditional attitudes, Italy.
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44 **Word count:** 7.166
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Introduction

Because of increased life expectancy, intergenerational relations are becoming more and more important for the well-being of family members. Parents and their children spend longer years of shared lives and represent an enduring source of mutual support (Bengtson 2001). On the one hand, parents support their adult children, providing housing, financial transfers or help in grandchild care (Albertini et al., 2017; Brandt and Deindl, 2013). On the other hand, children become a fundamental source of assistance when parents are in need (Künemund and Rein 1999). Although older people enjoy good health conditions for long parts of their lives, the ageing process inevitably increases adult children's commitments to provide in-kind support to their older parents (Merz, Schuengel and Schulze 2008; Gautun and Bratt, 2017). In this light, a large and growing body of research focuses on individual factors affecting adult children's propensity to provide support and care to their older parents. However, with some relevant exceptions (Myers, 2004), few studies have examined whether religious values and practices are associated with supportive behaviours in late parent-child relationships.

Over the half past century, religious participation has declined in many Western countries (Crockett and Voas, 2006). The widespread process of secularization has led toward a minor involvement of younger generations in religious institutions and to a greater individualization of religious practices. Some scholars suggest that the diminishing influence of institutional religious messages along with processes of individualization is related to lower pro-family attitudes and weakening relations between parents and their adult children in Western societies (Norris and Inglehart 2007; Komter and Vollebergh 2002). As a matter of fact, the cultivation and maintenance of strong intergenerational familial bonds is a fundamental teaching transmitted by religious institutions.

In the present study, we examine the role of church attendance as a potential factor influencing the provision of support from children to older parents in the Italian context. Italy represents an interesting case in point: the country is characterized by a homogeneous religious market where Catholics constitute about 90% of the total population (Introvigne and Stark 2005; Vezzoni and Biolcati-Rinaldi 2015). Akin to many other religious denominations, Catholicism encourages the principle of parental devotion. But, differently from other denominations, Catholics are explicitly obliged to honour the Lord's Day by attending the Sunday ritual. In addition, the presence of the Vatican City contributes to exert an influence on national mass media, public schools and Italian governments (Vignoli and Salvini 2014). Religious messages permeate several aspects of social life, arguably

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3 reinforcing a sense of belonging to Catholic community and promoting social cohesion within
4 the family.
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6 The raise of secularization could generate intergenerational tensions in societies where adult
7 children have increasing commitment in supporting older parents. It is worth remembering
8 that Italy is one of the oldest countries in the world, and public policies provide few
9 alternatives to outsource family responsibilities (Nazio and Saraceno 2013; Ferrera, 1996).
10 Italian sub-protective welfare state is characterized by low level of investment on elderly
11 support services, which in turn increases the responsibility for adult-children to provide help
12 and care to their parents “by default” (Daatland and Lowenstein 2005; Saraceno and Keck
13 2012). Besides, in “strong family ties” settings, the family is historically the main institution
14 for protecting vulnerable individuals (Reher 1998; Dykstra and Fokkema 2011; Glaser et al.,
15 2004) and family obligations toward parents are generally widespread among the population,
16 especially when parents are in serious need (Kalmijn and Saraceno 2008). The absence of a
17 strong protective welfare state along with a culture of strong family ties and the Catholic
18 religion may lead, for different reasons, Italian adult children to help their parents.
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28 **Background**

29 *Religion, church attendance and intergenerational support*

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32 Religiosity influences several aspects of family life, such as union formation (Corijn and
33 Klijzing 2001; Xu 2005), sexual and reproductive behaviour (Caltabiano, Rosina and Dalla
34 Zuanna 2006), parenthood decisions (Zhang 2008) and socialization practices (Mahoney
35 2010). As Mahoney (2010) illustrates in her exhaustive analysis of the literature, religious
36 values and practices affect and structure all stages of family life since the very beginning. In
37 the U.S. churchgoing mothers tend to establish warmer relationships with their young
38 children, and religious fathers devote a greater amount of time to them, compared to their
39 non-religious counterparts (Wilcox 1998, 2002). The evidence suggests a higher involvement
40 of churchgoing parents in children’s lives, regardless of their specific religious affiliation
41 (Petts and Knoester 2007). Positive aspects of religious participation seem also to be carried
42 over into later parent-adult child relationships. For example, Kalmijn and Dykstra (2006) find
43 that in the Netherlands, parents who attend Catholic rituals are more likely to maintain
44 frequent face-to-face contacts with their adult children compared to non-religious people. In a
45 similar vein, considering a three-generation perspective, King and Elder (1999) point out that
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3 social and private dimensions of religiousness including the participation to religious services
4 are positively correlated with grandparents' involvement in childcare.
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7 Concurrently, religious affiliation and participation affect the way in which adult children
8 relate to their older parents. It is well known that attendance to religious services is an
9 indicator of people's orientations, including values regarding parent-child bonds and family
10 relationships (Mahoney 2010; Norris and Inglehart 2007). Religious institutions often transmit
11 messages about parental respect and devotion through church teachings, sermons, and
12 publications. As Silverstein, Conroy and Gans (2012) argue, the imperative to honour one's
13 mother and father can be traced in all religious tractates. The norm that one should love and
14 respect one's parents may be translated into stronger feelings of responsibility and obligation
15 toward parents. Previous research findings indicate that in many Western countries religious
16 adult children report having stronger feelings of filial obligation than the non-religious
17 (Daatland and Herlofson 2003; Dykstra and Fokkema 2012; Gans, Silverstein and Lowerstein
18 2009; Killian and Ganong 2002; Liefbroer and Mulder 2006). It is unclear, however, whether
19 filial responsibility makes churchgoing adult children more prone to provide support to older
20 parents, compared to their non-religious counterparts. In fact, Myers (2004) highlights that in
21 the U.S. church attendance *per se* is not significantly related to intergenerational assistance,
22 while the effect of religious denomination is marked only among religious congruent parent-
23 child relationships. Other studies on the European context indicate that while religious
24 practices may not be related to supportive behaviours between non-co-resident family
25 members, churchgoers are likely to postpone residential independence and returning home
26 when parents need it (Corijn, 1999; Billari et al., 2001).
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40 Beside differences between religious and non-religious people, the frequency of ritual
41 attendance may play a role in reinforcing religious messages and recommendations. The
42 extent to which adult children are exposed to religious messages about parental devotion
43 varies according to their involvement in church rituals and religious organizations. Attending
44 services is a means through which adult children interiorize religious teachings such as
45 parental devotion, pro-family attitudes and the importance of maintaining intergenerational
46 solidarity (Gans, Silverstein and Lowerstein 2009; Myers 2004). Religious beliefs and values
47 toward the family apprehended during church rituals constitute a stock of internalized social
48 values that may foster traditional family behaviours and feelings of solidarity between parents
49 and their children (Silverstein, Conroy and Gans 2012). Moreover, religious organizations
50 tend to stress the importance of altruism and help outside and within the family (King and
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3 Elder 1999). Previous research consistently shows that altruism promotes intergenerational
4 family transfers and thus encourages adult children to provide care assistance and support to
5 their older parents (Kohli and Kunemund, 2003; Albertini et al., 2007). Furthermore, as Lim
6 and Putnam (2010) argue, regular churchgoers tend to create homogeneous networks that
7 reinforce their religious identity. A strong sense of belonging to religious community may
8 then strengthen religious prescriptions, including feelings of filial devotion and the propensity
9 to provide support to older parents.
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14 ***Traditional attitudes and family oriented socialization***

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16 Churchgoers and non-religious individuals are often characterized by opposite attitudes. In
17 general, the former tend to adopt conservative views on several aspects of family life, hence
18 promoting traditional spousal roles within the household. The latter, conversely, are usually
19 more libertarian and individualistic. Some scholars have coined the term “religious familism”
20 for indicating how in the U.S. religious people tend to defend a view of the heterosexual
21 married couples with children as the central unity of societal order (Mahoney 2010).
22 According to this view, the family is often perceived as the “natural” source of help for older
23 people (Daatland and Herlofson 2003). These conservative attitudes toward the family may be
24 related to parental respect and may encourage adult children to maintain high levels of
25 intergenerational solidarity, including geographically close relationships, frequent contacts
26 and exchange of various forms of help with their parents (Silverstein and Bengtson 1997).
27 Regular churchgoers may be more likely to have a traditional view of family life, which
28 includes the idea of the provision of support as a behavioural expression of filial
29 responsibility.
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40 Religious beliefs and practices are usually formed within the family of origin during
41 childhood and adolescence. Both religious practices and family obligations are often
42 transmitted through the channel of the family of origin and tend to persist throughout the life
43 course (Bengtson *et al.* 2009; King *et al.* 2006; King and Elder 1999). Religious family
44 members are likely to attend the same church rituals and are engaged in religious celebrations.
45 Church activities and rituals offer the opportunity for family members to share experiences,
46 thus fostering relationship quality and family norms about the importance of maintaining
47 strong family ties (Kalmijn and Dykstra 2006; King 1994). Therefore, the association between
48 religious service attendance and intergenerational support may reflect people’s family
49 oriented socialization and the quality of their relationships. As previously mentioned, Myers
50 (2004) finds support to this idea, showing that parent-child consensus on religious values as a
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3 sign of a successful socialization promotes high levels of assistance between generations.
4 However, the effect of religious similarity in parent-child relationships can be debated. For
5 example, Liefbroer and Mulder (2006) point out that in the Netherlands individuals' religious
6 affiliation is much more relevant than parent-child religious congruence in explaining filial
7 responsibilities toward parents.
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11 *Hypotheses*

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13 In light of the results from previous studies on religious participation and parent-child
14 relations, we formulate the following hypotheses. Firstly, we argue that the frequency of
15 church attendance exposes adult children to prescriptions about parental devotion and pro-
16 family messages as well as feelings of altruism and belonging in a community where family
17 bonds are valued. Thus, we expect to find that regular churchgoers are more likely to provide
18 support to parents than not-religious people, with occasional churchgoers falling somewhere
19 in between (Hypothesis 1).
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23 Secondly, we attempt to partly account for individual traditionalism considering individual
24 orientations about marriage and divorce. Notably, traditional family orientations include
25 attitudes toward marriage, divorce and other aspects of family life that may only partly be
26 connected to the intergenerational exchange of practical support. Hence, our second
27 hypothesis states as follows: The association between church attendance and intergenerational
28 support from children to parents is partly explained by traditional attitudes toward the family
29 (Hypothesis 2).
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33 Thirdly, churchgoers may be more likely to have close relationships with parents and their
34 overall family network, compared to individuals who never attend religious rituals. Close
35 relationships with other relatives may be an indicator of orientations toward the extended
36 family network (Kalmijn and Dykstra 2006). Hence, we expect that the association between
37 church attendance and intergenerational support from children to parents is partly explained
38 by having close relationships in the family network (Hypothesis 3).
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47 **Methods**

48 *Data and Sample*

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50 The empirical analysis is based on the survey Family and Social Subject (FSS) that took place
51 in 2003. This is the Italian version of Generation and Gender Survey (GGS) and is a five-year
52 module of the Multipurpose survey conducted by Italian National Statistical Office (Istat).
53 The survey is representative of the Italian population and involves more than 19,000 families
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(almost 50,000 individuals). The database contains detailed information about parental characteristics and intergenerational relations including proximity, contact frequency and support exchange.

The total sample is restricted to individuals who had at least one of the two parents aged 64 or older to investigate late parent-child relationships (mean equal to 75, see Table 1). We also exclude respondents and their parents who are born or live abroad (3.3 %), since foreigners and people living abroad may be less affected by Italian religious context. Data on parents are gathered separately for mothers and fathers which allows us to consider two dyads for each respondent when both parents are alive. Adopting the parent-child dyad as unit of analysis makes it possible to examine a broader set of variables and parents' characteristics than conventional analyses based on respondents. For example, adult children may have different relationships with their mothers and fathers when divorced or in case of declining health conditions of one of the two parents. The final sample can count on 7,157 sons and 7,818 daughters, and 10,098 parent-son dyads and 10,930 parent-daughter dyads.

Dependent variable

In order to construct our dependent variables, we consider the question asking whether the respondent has provided support to someone living outside the household in the last four weeks. Among respondents who provided support, further questions are asked regarding the type of the most important support and to whom they provided it. Our measure of intergenerational support refers to the most important help provided by the respondent to his/her father and/or mother. It is important to note that adult children might provide multiple forms of support to multiple receivers without considering the support given to parents as the most important one. However, we are confident to include all transfers of time in our analysis. Indeed, as it is possible to notice from Table 1, the diffusion of intergenerational support from adult children to older parents is in line with previous findings on other databases (Albertini et al., 2007). Among the original ten forms of support, we distinguish between practical support and personal assistance. The former includes household help, keeping company, help with paperwork, groceries and shopping. The latter refers to health service (e.g. medical injections), nursing and care-giving (e.g. dressing, washing, spoon-feeding). From the list, we exclude economic support (0.6 %), since monetary transfers from adult children to old parents are relatively rare in Western societies (Brandt and Deindl, 2013). We include a further category concerning co-resident adult children, since living together is an important form of support that family members can provide to each other.

Independent variables

The main independent variable is the frequency of church attendance. We distinguish between three categories: regular churchgoers who attend the mass at least once per week; occasional churchgoers who go to church less than once per week; and non-religious people who never attend church rituals. The choice of these three categories derives from the necessity to identify those who follow the Catholic precept of attending the Sunday ritual (regular churchgoers) and religious individuals who disregard it. Moreover, weekly attendance can be considered as a reliable measure of individual's adherence to religious precepts (Ballarino and Vezzoni 2012). Unfortunately, the questionnaire does not provide any information about religious denomination. However, after excluding foreigners and those living abroad the distribution of our independent variable is consistent with the findings of previous research showing that about 90% of the Italian population belongs to the Catholic religion (Vezzoni and Biolcati-Rinaldi 2015). Church attendance thus refers to the attendance to Catholic rituals.

As for traditionalism, the questionnaire contains different questions asking respondents whether they totally agree (1) or disagree (5) with regard to several claims. We run a Principal Component Factor analysis (PCF) in order to extract a latent dimension and we construct a measure of traditionalism using the four variables associated with the first component (Cronbach's alpha = 0.75). Our index of traditionalism includes the following items: "Marriage is an outdated institution", "People can cohabit without marriage", "Women can have a child even without a stable relation" and "Unhappy couples can interrupt their marriage even when they have children". We sum all the items together in the final index ranging from 4 (less traditional attitudes) to 20 (more traditional attitudes).

Furthermore, we consider an indicator of family network as possible confounding factor that may be associated with a religious attendance and the likelihood of providing support in later life. Respondents are asked whether they are in a close relationship with other relatives they can count on. This is a dummy variable indicating the quality of the relationships with the extended family network.

We also include a range of socio-demographic variables that are known to be correlated with church attendance and intergenerational support from adult children to older parents: age, region of residence (living in the south), number of siblings, educational level, employment status, marital status (living with a partner), and the presence of children aged 7 or less in the

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3 household. We also include a set of parental characteristics: sex, age, education, marital
4 status, and health conditions. Parents' poor health refers to having (severe or not) limitations
5 in daily activities. Parents' age, marital status and health conditions refer to needs of support
6 that are often included as predictors of intergenerational time transfers (Evandrou *et al.* 2016).
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9 10 *Analytical Strategy*

11 After a brief description of the sample characteristics, we present results from multinomial
12 logit regression models on the likelihood of providing care assistance and practical support or
13 living in the same household. Given the presence of both father-child and mother-child
14 relationships for some respondents, we use clustered standard errors to take into account the
15 correlation between dyads constituted by the same individual. In addition, we employ
16 regression models for adult sons and daughters separately. Women generally occupy the role
17 of "kin-keeper" in the family and are more likely to provide intergenerational support and
18 care to older parents (Rossi and Rossi, 1990).
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21 We employ separated models assuming that the link between church attendance and
22 intergenerational support may be driven by gender-specific mechanisms. Additional analyses,
23 available upon request, are also undertaken to test gender differences and the results showed
24 no significant interactions between church attendance and adult children's sex. Our empirical
25 analysis is developed through two steps: in the first model, we test whether a significant
26 association between church attendance and intergenerational support exists (Hypothesis 1), by
27 distinguishing transfers of practical support from those of personal assistance. We hence
28 introduce the two indicators of traditional family attitudes and extended family relationships
29 to examine their roles as confounding factors (Hypothesis 2 and 3). It is worth-noting that the
30 comparison of coefficients across nested models can lead to misleading interpretations in the
31 context of nonlinear regression models. Karlson, Holm and Breen (2012) provide a method
32 for the decomposition of direct and indirect effects. The KHB method allows understanding
33 whether changes of coefficients across models are due to the introduction of confounding or
34 mediating variables. Thus, adopting this method, we evaluate the role of traditionalism and
35 the extended family network in explaining the association between church attendance and
36 intergenerational support.
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51 **Results**

52 *Sample description*

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3 Table 1 shows that 5% of Italian adult daughters provide personal assistance to their older
4 parents, while only 3% of sons provide such assistance. Similarly, 7.6% of adult daughters
5 provide practical support to older parents, while 6.5% of sons report giving personal support
6 to them. Intergenerational co-residence is, on the contrary, more widespread among sons
7 (about 10%) than among daughters (6.8%) ($\chi^2 = 144$; p -value < 0.001). Italian adult
8 daughters are more prone to attend church rituals: about 39% of women report attending
9 church rituals at least weekly, while this proportion is 23% for men ($\chi^2 = 692$; p -value $<$
10 0.001). Those who never attend church rituals are 7.6 % among adult daughters and 14.2 %
11 among adult sons. 44.7% of sons and 48% of daughters highly value extended family
12 relationships, while the average score of traditionalism is equal to 12 in a scale ranging from 4
13 to 20.

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16 There are other relevant gender differences: 22% of adult sons do not have a job, whereas
17 more than 50% of adult daughters do not have an active position in the labour market (χ^2
18 > 1000 ; p -value < 0.001). This is hardly surprising, since in Italy the female participation to
19 the labour-force is one of the lowest among OECD countries (Esping-Andersen, 2012).

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< Insert Table 1 about here >

Church attendance and Intergenerational support

Tables 2 and 3 present results from multinomial logistic regression models predicting the likelihood of living with or providing practical support and personal assistance to older parents aged 65 or over. Model 1a for adult sons indicates that non-religious adult sons have less propensity to provide practical support compared to occasional churchgoers. Regular churchgoers are more likely than occasional churchgoers to provide support to their parents, although the coefficient is only marginally significant. Among adult daughters (Table 3), non-religious are less likely to provide support than regular churchgoers, while occasional churchgoers fall somewhere in between. The frequency of attendance to Catholic rituals is positively associated with a higher likelihood of providing intergenerational support. In line with our first hypothesis, church attendance tends to foster intergenerational support from adult children to parents, even when controlling for children's and parents' characteristics that *per se* have an important influence on supportive behaviour. For instance, parents'

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3 characteristics such as age, marital and health status are significantly associated with adult
4 children's propensity to provide practical support.
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7 However, church attendance is not associated with sons' and daughters' propensity to provide
8 personal assistance (Tables 2 and 3). Consistent with previous research, the likelihood of
9 giving personal assistance to parents is associated mainly with indicators of parents' need,
10 including parents' physical health. With regard to intergenerational co-residence, we found
11 that non-religious adult sons are less prone to live with their parents than occasional and
12 regular churchgoers. Among daughters attending church rituals at regular basis is positively
13 associated with the likelihood of living with older parents. Although children's needs are
14 usually more important than parents' ones in predicting intergenerational co-residence
15 (Albertini et al., 2017; Smits et al., 2010), we find that parents' poor health and widowhood
16 are associated with living under the same roof.
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30 In tables 4 and 5 we introduce traditional family attitudes and orientations toward the
31 extended family network in the analysis. The association between church attendance and
32 supportive behaviour declines from 0.20 to 0.19 for regular churchgoers and from -0.32 to -
33 0.31 for non-Catholic sons (table 4). Among adult daughters, the coefficients related to church
34 attendance change from 0.25 to 0.22 and from -0.60 to -0.57 for regular churchgoers and non-
35 Catholics respectively (table 5). To understand whether the association between church
36 attendance and intergenerational support is due to these two factors, we adopt the KHB
37 method. Although maintaining close relationships with other relatives is associated with
38 practical support, this factor plays only a marginal role in confounding the association
39 between church attendance and the likelihood of providing practical support. Its confounding
40 capacity is equal to 0.5% and 2.5% for regular churchgoing and non-Catholic sons
41 respectively. Among daughters, the reduction of the coefficient concerning regular
42 churchgoers is equal to 12.8%, and it does not reach the significant level; while it is 5.0% and
43 marginally significant (at 90% level) when considering non-Catholics.
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52 Regarding intergenerational co-residence, regular churchgoers are more likely to live with
53 parents than occasional churchgoers and the non-religious, partly because of their propensity
54 of having traditional family orientations. Among non-Catholic adult sons, about 15% of this
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3 association is due to traditional attitudes. The reduction of the coefficient related to regular
4 churchgoers is not estimated because it is close to zero even when traditional family attitudes
5 are excluded from the model. Among daughters, having traditional family attitudes has a
6 significant role in reducing the relationship between church involvement and children's
7 support to parents. This association is reduced by 29% when considering regular attendance to
8 church rituals and 18.2% when analysing non-Catholic daughters. KHB method indicates that
9 this decrease in the coefficients is significant at 95% level.
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21 Discussion

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23 Previous research has argued that religious values and pro-family attitudes constitute latent
24 forms of solidarity that trigger manifest supportive behaviours between generations
25 (Silverstein and Conroy 2008; Silverstein, Conroy and Gans 2012). Also, religious practices
26 tend to have benefits for the quality of parent-child relationships and the amount of time that
27 parents devote to their adolescent children (Wilcox 1998 2002). The findings presented here
28 extend this literature to intergenerational support in late parent-child relations. Our results
29 indicate that church attendance is associated with the provision of practical support to older
30 parents in Italy. This is in line with previous findings focusing on the effect of religiosity on
31 filial obligations (Daatland and Herlofson 2003; Dykstra and Fokkema 2012; Gans,
32 Silverstein and Lowerstein, 2009).
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39 We also provide new evidence that might shed further light on the phenomenon in a threefold
40 manner. First, the distinction we operate between "strong" and "light" forms of assistance is
41 an important one, because it highlights how church attendance is consistently associated with
42 the latter whilst not the former. Burdening forms of care which usually require a daily
43 commitment (i.e. bathing, cooking and dressing) are not related to children's religious
44 involvement. It seems that church attendance and other individual characteristics partly lose
45 their influences on intergenerational support when analysing the provision of care. On the
46 contrary, less intensive forms of support (i.e. paperwork, keeping company, shopping) seem
47 to be affected by personal willingness and individual orientations, including religious
48 practices. We suggest that attending the mass socializes adult children, and in particular
49 daughters, to some widely acknowledged Catholic principles, among which the importance of
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3 maintaining positive family relations and especially “to honour thy father and thy mother”
4 (i.e. the fourth commandment). Our interpretation is that regular churchgoers are more likely
5 to be exposed to religious messages that promote altruism and filial devotion, which in turn
6 encourage supportive behaviours but are not translated into intensive commitment such as
7 care provision.
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11 Second, we attempt to account for individual attitudes toward the family, in order to
12 understand whether they play a role in confounding the association between church
13 attendance and the likelihood of providing support to old parents. Possibly, religious people
14 may be more likely to assist their old parents partly because of their tendency to hold
15 traditional views about the family. However, we find no support to this hypothesis. Our
16 results show that traditional family attitudes are not associated with the provision of practical
17 support and personal assistance from adult children to parents; although traditionally
18 orientated adult children are more likely to live with their parents compared to those with less
19 traditional attitudes. The results shows that the association between religion church attendance
20 and intergenerational co-residence is partly explained by traditional attitudes toward the
21 family.
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30 Third, we consider the idea that a family oriented socialization affects both church attendance
31 and intergenerational exchanges. To partly account for this process, we include an indicator of
32 family network in the analysis. The coefficients related to church attendance change only
33 marginally when we consider adult children’s propensity to value the extended family
34 network, although valuing extended family relationships is associated with supportive
35 behaviours.
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40 There are some limitations in this study. Our measure of traditional attitudes solely includes
41 indicators of marriage and divorce, without considering the broader set of family attitudes and
42 norms. Unfortunately, due to data availability, we could not construct a comprehensive
43 measure of traditionalism, family norms and attitudes that could take into account
44 heterogeneous aspects of family life. In a similar vein, our confounding factors are proxies of
45 parent-child relationship quality and family norms that can be developed during childhood
46 and adolescence. Another limitation should be taken under serious consideration. Differently
47 from Myers’ research (2004), we cannot observe the religiosity level of the parents, thus
48 impeding the investigation of religious congruence within the dyad. However, the literature
49 addressing the role of religious congruence between parents and their adult children reveals
50 mixed results. Liefbroer and Mulder (2006), for example, suggest that the effect of
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3 socialization processes along with parent-child religious congruence tends to lose its influence
4 over the life course. It could be possible, therefore, that parents' religiosity plays a marginal
5 role also in Italy where almost all older people define themselves as Catholic believers.
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8 Nonetheless, our findings support the idea that adult daughters who attend church rituals on a
9 weekly basis are more likely to provide less intensive forms of support to parents than the not-
10 religious, with occasional churchgoers falling somewhere in between. This suggests that the
11 provision of practical support is not only affected by the adherence to Catholic precepts
12 concerning the attendance of rituals and parental devotion, but also by a gradual exposure
13 toward religious messages. In Italy, Catholic practices tend to promote supportive behaviours
14 in late parent-daughter relationships, even accounting for traditional attitudes and family
15 oriented socialization.
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Table 1 Sample characteristics

	Sons		Daughters	
	% or mean	N	% or mean	N
Type of support				
No support	80.2	8,098	80.5	8,802
Practical support	6.5	659	7.6	836
Personal assistance	3.0	296	5.0	549
Co-residence	10.3	1,045	6.8	743
Church attendance				
Regular	23.5	2,378	39.6	4,329
Occasional	61.1	6,169	51.5	5,627
Never	15.4	1,551	8.9	974
Traditional family attitudes	12.0 (2.9)		12.1 (3.1)	
Valuing extended family relations	44.7	4,522	47.9	5,235
<i>Children's characteristics</i>				
Age	47.4 (12.1)		47.7 (12.5)	
South of Italy	40.8	4,125	39.9	4,368
N. of siblings	2.1 (1.3)		2.1 (1.3)	
Marital status				
Married	77.2	7,802	73.5	8,031
Never married	16.6	1,678	18.5	2,020
Divorced or separated	6.1	618	8.0	879
Having a child < 7	5.4	538	5.1	553
Highly educated	11.1	1,127	11.3	1,240
Not working	22.2	1,242	51.2	5,593
<i>Parents' characteristics</i>				
Fathers	40.6	4,098	44.6	55.4
Age	75.1 (6.7)		75.0 (6.8)	
Education				
Lower than secondary	89.8	9,073	89.5	9,779
Secondary	8.1	821	8.1	891
Tertiary	2.0	204	2.4	260
Poor health	16.8	1,696	17.5	1,921
Widowed	31.8	3,208	31.2	3,408
Divorced	2.1	212	2.5	270
N. of children	7,157		7,818	
N. of parent-child dyads	10,098		10,930	

Note: Standard deviation in parenthesis

Table 2 Multinomial logistic regression models predicting intergenerational co-residence, practical support and personal assistance from adult sons to parents

	Practical Support		Personal Assistance		Co-residence	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	0.20+	(0.11)	0.05	(0.17)	0.08	(0.15)
Never	-0.32*	(0.16)	-0.07	(0.21)	-0.36*	(0.15)
Age	-0.04**	(0.01)	-0.04**	(0.01)	-0.10**	(0.01)
South of Italy	-0.19+	(0.10)	0.09	(0.14)	0.29*	(0.12)
N. of siblings	-0.17**	(0.04)	-0.26**	(0.05)	-0.21**	(0.05)
Highly educated	0.22	(0.15)	0.32	(0.23)	0.02	(0.19)
Not working	0.23	(0.15)	0.15	(0.20)	0.76**	(0.14)
Marital status (Ref. Married)						
Never married	-0.14	(0.19)	0.08	(0.25)	4.53**	(0.16)
Divorced or separated	-0.38+	(0.23)	-0.49	(0.35)	2.60**	(0.21)
Having a child < 7	-0.10	(0.34)	-0.25	(0.79)	-1.05	(0.81)
<i>Parents' characteristics</i>						
Father	-0.22**	(0.07)	-0.05	(0.12)	-0.42**	(0.06)
Age	0.05**	(0.01)	0.07**	(0.01)	0.08**	(0.01)
Education (Ref. Lower than secondary)						
Secondary	0.02	(0.17)	-0.09	(0.28)	-0.44*	(0.19)
Tertiary	0.42	(0.26)	-0.66	(0.62)	-0.03	(0.30)
Poor health	0.61**	(0.11)	1.73**	(0.14)	0.72**	(0.14)
Widowed	0.42**	(0.11)	0.44*	(0.17)	0.34*	(0.13)
Divorced or separated	-0.64	(0.41)	0.08	(0.51)	-2.28**	(0.37)
Constant	-4.37**	(0.55)	-9.08**	(0.77)	-5.99**	(0.72)
N. of sons	7,157		7,157		7,157	
N. of parent-son dyads	10,098		10,098		10,098	

Table 3 Multinomial logistic regression models predicting intergenerational co-residence, practical support and personal assistance from adult daughters to parents

	Practical Support		Personal Assistance		Co-residence	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	0.25**	(0.09)	0.14	(0.12)	0.31*	(0.13)
Never	-0.60**	(0.19)	-0.32	(0.22)	-0.29	(0.22)
Age	-0.05**	(0.01)	-0.03**	(0.01)	-0.16**	(0.01)
South of Italy	-0.12	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.12)	0.46**	(0.13)
N. of siblings	-0.13**	(0.03)	0.02	(0.04)	-0.26**	(0.05)
Highly educated	0.16	(0.14)	0.18	(0.18)	0.28	(0.17)
Not working	-0.35**	(0.10)	-0.26*	(0.12)	0.31*	(0.14)
Marital status (Ref. Married)						
Never married	0.08	(0.15)	0.03	(0.17)	4.42**	(0.18)
Divorced or separated	0.12	(0.16)	0.24	(0.20)	2.68**	(0.24)
Having a child < 7	-0.55**	(0.20)	-0.54+	(0.30)	-1.43**	(0.39)
<i>Parents' characteristics</i>						
Father	-0.40**	(0.06)	-0.44**	(0.08)	-0.38**	(0.07)
Age	0.06**	(0.01)	0.08**	(0.01)	0.12**	(0.01)
Education (Ref. Lower than secondary)						
Secondary	0.20	(0.14)	0.27	(0.18)	-0.59**	(0.19)
Tertiary	-0.31	(0.31)	-0.31	(0.42)	-0.43	(0.27)
Poor health	0.95**	(0.10)	2.00**	(0.11)	0.92**	(0.15)
Widowed	0.29**	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.13)	0.28*	(0.14)
Divorced or separated	-0.55+	(0.30)	-0.28	(0.37)	-2.48**	(0.59)
Constant	-4.43**	(0.46)	-9.50**	(0.58)	-6.98**	(0.67)
N. of daughters	7,818		7,818		7,818	
N. of parent-daughter dyads	10,930		10,930		10,930	

Table 4 Results from multinomial logistic regression models and KHB methods on direct and indirect effects of church attendance on intergenerational co-residence, support and assistance from adult sons to parents

Sons	Practical Support		Personal Assistance		Co-residence	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	0.19+	(0.12)	0.08	(0.17)	-0.03	(0.15)
Never	-0.31+	(0.16)	-0.10	(0.21)	-0.31*	(0.15)
Traditional family attitudes	-0.00	(0.02)	-0.04	(0.02)	0.06**	(0.02)
Valuing extended family relations	0.53**	(0.10)	0.54**	(0.14)	-0.17	(0.12)
Constant	-4.72**	(0.60)	-9.13**	(0.83)	-6.64**	(0.75)
KHB Reduction in Coefficients (%)						
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	0.5		-		-	
Never	2.5		-		15.2**	
N. of sons	7,157		7,157		7,157	
N. of parent-son dyads	10,098		10,098		10,098	

Table 5 Results from multinomial logistic regression models and KHB methods on direct and indirect effects of church attendance on intergenerational co-residence, support and assistance from adult daughters to parents

Daughters	Practical Support		Personal Assistance		Co-residence	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	0.22*	(0.10)	0.12	(0.12)	0.20	(0.14)
Never	-0.57**	(0.19)	-0.31	(0.22)	-0.25	(0.22)
Traditional family attitudes						
Valuing extended family relations	0.52**	(0.09)	0.36**	(0.11)	0.09	(0.13)
Constant	-4.87**	(0.48)	-9.76**	(0.62)	-7.67**	(0.72)
KHB Reduction in Coefficients (%)						
Church attendance (Ref. Occasional)						
Regular	12.8		13.0		29.1**	
Never	5.0+		4.4		18.2**	
N. of daughters	7,818		7,818		7,818	
N. of parent-daughter dyads	10,930		10,930		10,930	